

DATE: February 22, 2024**FILE:** 1850-20**TO:** Chair and Directors
Regional District Board**FROM:** Marc Rutten
Acting Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Marc Rutten
Acting Chief Administrative
Officer**M. Rutten****RE: Funding Request for Comox Valley Food Policy Council****Purpose**

To bring forward a request from the Lush Valley Food Action Society for funding to support the coordination and administration of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

None. This report is presented for information.

Executive Summary

- The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has received a request for \$20,000 in funding from the Lush Valley Food Action Society (attached as Appendix A and B). The funding is being sought to support the continued coordination of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) which is described as a forum for advocacy and policy development regarding regional food systems.
- In 2022 and in 2023 the CVRD Board provided Lush Valley with one-time regional grants from the Administration and General Government Function as a regional grant or contribution service for social initiatives does not exist. While the Board has provided such grants under its corporate authority to provide assistance for the purpose of benefiting the community, the ongoing provision of funding that is not directly related to regional district's administrative functions should be considered through an appropriate service.
- In response to these and other funding requests and the lack of a suitable service, in 2022 the Board undertook a preliminary investigation of a regional service for social initiatives. The report, entitled [Social Development Activities in Local Government](#), identified four areas of potential activity by the CVRD, including resource provision (i.e. partner, funder, asset provider). The report was subsequently identified for consideration as part of strategic

planning. In January of 2023 the Board conducted its strategic planning session in which social development supports and other topic/service areas were considered. Direction was provided to staff to send correspondence to member municipality councils and the Electoral Areas Services Committee to solicit interest in a new regional grant service that could provide funding for community societies and non-profit organizations to develop social development support activities.

- At current, responses have been received from all but one of the potential service participants. While obtaining the feedback from all the members of the CVRD is strongly desired, given the elapsed time staff are planning to bring forward a report with the feedback received in the near term.
- The proposed 2024-2028 Financial Plan and Capital Expenditure Bylaw is scheduled to be considered for three readings on March 12, 2024. Currently there are no funds budgeted for provision of such a grant to Lush Valley.
- Should the Board wish to provide a regional grant to the Lush Valley Food Action Society for the administration of the CVFPC the following resolution could be considered:

THAT the 2024-2028 Recommended Financial Plan for the Comox Valley Regional District Administration and General Government Service, Function 110, include a one-time regional grant of \$20,000 in 2024 to the Lush Valley Food Action Society for administration and coordination of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

J. Martens

L. Wiwcharuk

Jake Martens
General Manager of
Corporate Services

Lucy Wiwcharuk
Chief Financial Officer

Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Lush Valley Food Action Society	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – Lush Valley Food Action Society Funding Request
 Appendix B – Comox Valley Food Policy Council Backgrounder



February 22, 2024

CVRD Chair, Board of Directors and CAO
770 Harmston Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8

RE: Request for administrative funding support for the Comox Valley Food Policy Council for the 2024-25 fiscal year

Dear Board Chair, CVRD Directors and CAO:

I am writing to you today in my capacity as the Coordinator of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC). With your support and leadership, the CVFPC held its inaugural meeting in the Fall of 2019 and is now into its fifth year of operation. The CVRD's support is integral to the operation of the CVFPC, which provides an essential function in our community.

The CVFPC provides a forum for advocacy and policy development that works towards the creation of a food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable and socially just. It aims to examine the operation of local food systems and provide ideas and policy recommendations for how it can be improved.

The CVFPC has been financially supported on an annual basis by the CVRD since its inaugural meeting in 2019. The CVRD provided support to the CVFPC through its administrative function in the last two fiscal years (2022-23 & 2023-24), and prior to 2022, provided funding through the grant-in-aid and/or Rural Community Grants.

I am requesting that the CVRD provide core annual funding for the 2024-25 fiscal year in the amount of \$20,000 (the same funding level as in previous years) to support the coordination and administration of the CVFPC. With rising costs, it is unlikely the CVFPC will be able to function without this base funding.

The work of the CVFPC is of great regional importance. Within the last fiscal year, it has contributed to the CVRD's planning processes, including the CVRD Agricultural Area Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy and Emergency Planning. The CVFPC also contributes to all other food-systems related policies and opportunities across the region on an ongoing basis. The CVFPC is recognized as a leading model across the province and has provided guidance to 5 other BC communities on starting their own regional Food Policy Councils using the model of the CVFPC.

The CVFPC has a number of ongoing priorities and specific annual priorities.

These ongoing priorities are:

1. Supporting the development and implementation of a regional Agricultural and Food Security Area Plan.
2. Supporting the CVRD's Regional Growth Strategy, other Official City Plans, and municipal and regional planning processes.
3. Acting as an advisory board for local government and others seeking information and support on food policy development, engagement, and implementation.

Our current specific priorities are:

1. Emergency planning and preparedness in relation to food security, the local food economy, and climate change mitigation/adaptation
2. Advocating for and developing policy related to healthy school food access and food-systems education.
3. Supporting and advocating for policy development relating to food access and poverty.
4. Developing local food procurement policy for institutions.

Thank you for your support and consideration. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurita Prato". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Maurita Prato
Coordinator, Comox Valley Food Policy Council



About

The goal of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) is to provide a forum for advocacy and policy development that works towards the creation of a food system that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable, and socially just.

Vision: The Comox Valley has a thriving local food system where food is celebrated, and farmers, food growers, and harvesters are supported. Through local food systems, the region strives toward reconciliation, ecological sustainability, and climate change mitigation. Community food security ensures access to healthy and culturally appropriate food for all, and food systems education is a priority.

Mission: To support and work with decision-makers and community members to implement policy and practices aligned with its vision.

Background: In October, 2019, the CVFPC had its inaugural meeting. The CVFPC is guided by its own Terms of Reference that outline specific details for the composition, membership, and governance of the council. The CVFPC is an initiative of LUSH Valley Food Action Society (LUSH Valley), which provides funding and coordination as the ‘backbone’ organization.

Structure: The CVFPC is a hybrid committee of civil society organizations and local government representatives. The CVFPC is supported in principle by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and holds positions for appointed representatives from municipal and regional governments, as well as the K’ómoks First Nation.

The CVFPC maintains significant linkages to local government via staff and elected officials. The CVFPC is funded by the CVRD and LUSH Valley.

Lens: When moving forward, the CVFPC considers how the proposed policy or action contributes to:

- Food equity/access
- Climate change mitigation/adaptation
- Reconciliation
- Systems-change

Ongoing Priorities:

1. Supporting the development and implementation of a regional Agricultural and Food Security Area Plan.
2. Supporting other Official City Plans, the Regional Growth Strategy, and municipal and regional planning processes.
3. Acting as an advisory board for local government and others seeking information and support on food policy development, engagement, and implementation.

Strategic Priorities for 2023:

1. Emergency planning and preparedness in relation to food security, the local food economy, and climate change mitigation/adaptation.
2. Advocating for and developing policy related to healthy school food access and food-systems education.
3. Supporting and advocating for policy development relating to food access and poverty.
4. Developing local food procurement policy for institutions.

Learn more about the CVFPC at
lushvalley.org/cvfpc/about

If you are interested in becoming a member, we would love to hear from you. Please complete the Expression of Interest form on our website or contact Maurita at maurita@lushvalley.org if you have specific questions.



Members

Maurita Prato

Co-Chair, Comox Valley Food Policy Council; Executive Director, LUSH Valley Food Action Society

Amanda Jekums, Sustainable Food Systems Consultant, Global Alliance for the Future of Food

Arzeena Hamir, Farmer & Owner, Amara Farm; Member, Mid Island Farmers' Institute

Brenna Wasylenki, Public Health Dietitian & Healthy Schools Lead, Island Health

Cristi May Sacht, School Board Trustee, School Board 71

Edwin Grieve, Director Area C, Comox Valley Regional District

Hudson McLellan, Planning & Policy Analyst; Community Member

James McKerricher, Owner, Farmer's Kitchen Food Truck; Food Access Manager, LUSH Valley Food Action Society

Jan Slomp, Dairy Farmer, Slomp Farm; Member, Comox Valley Farmers' Institute

Jenn Meilleur, Councillor, Town of Comox

Jessie Ketler, Councillor, Village of Cumberland

Joanne Bays, Community Services Coordinator, City of Courtenay

Lisa Bowie, Community Health Representative & Elders Coordinator, K'ómoks First Nation

Mary-Catherine Williams, Regional Coordinator Community Impact & Investment, United Way

Naomi Robert, Research Associate, Institute for Sustainable Food Systems, KPU & Food Systems Lab, SFU

Sandra Viney, Co-Owner, Atlas Café

Sheila McDonnell, Retired School Board Trustee, School District 71

Twila Skinner, General Manager, Comox Valley Farmers' Market

Vickey Brown, Mayor, Village of Cumberland

Wendy Morin, Councillor, City of Courtenay