



Comox Valley Food Policy Council  
Delegation to CVRD BOD  
January 14th, 2020

# Who we are

Our delegation is lead by the newly formed **Comox Valley Food Policy Council** (2019). The CV Food Policy Council is an innovative collaboration between citizens and government officials with a focus on three core values: **increased local food production, food literacy and food security.**

## **Our Partners**

Mid Island Farmers Institute

CV Community Health Network

CV Social Planning Council

CV Farmers Market

LUSH Valley Food Action Society

CV Social Planning Council

CVEDS (Pending Approval)

Farmers Institute (Pending Approval)

# Our request to CVRD BOD

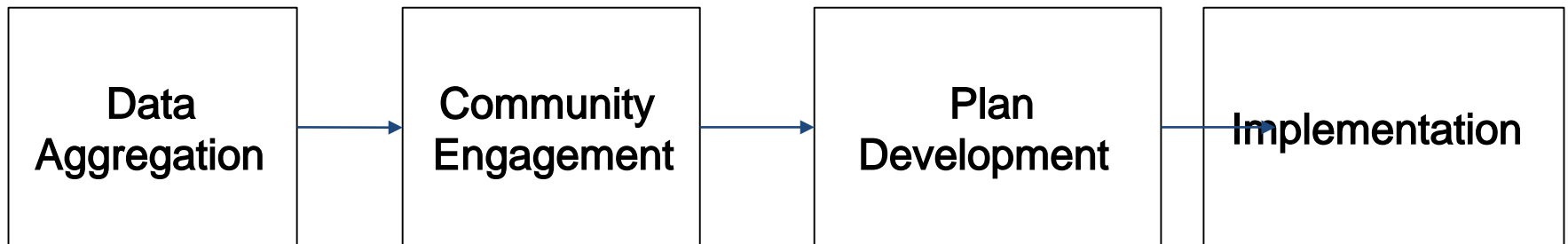
The members of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council and partners are bringing forward a request for the development of a Comox Valley Agricultural Plan to be started in 2020

We are asking for the CVRD to make a 70K investment over two or three years which would include implementation support.

# What is an Agricultural Area Plan?

An **Agricultural Area Plan (AAP)** combines information from multiple data sources through a series of research and community engagement processes to provide a snapshot of the current state of agriculture in a target region. The resulting AAP consolidates information from the past and present to provide outlooks/action items for the future.

## 4 Phase Agriculture Plan



# Why now?

Current plan is 18 years old (5 year renewals are average)

Considered in the 2020 Budget

Completed in this term (implementation 2021-22)

Other community groups are in support (partners)

Supporting Plans (CVSS, RGS etc.)

CV Food Policy Council is in a position to support the process

Increasing market opportunities and collaboration

Funding opportunities and to leverage further funding

The timing is opportune to bring to bring together the agriculture and food-systems communities and create a plan that focuses on the CVRD's strategic divers (lenses) 1. Community Relationships 2. Reconciliation 3. Climate Change 4. Fiscal Responsibility.

# Regional Impact

*“Coordinates regional, local government and community action in support of agriculture within a region. It is generally considered the most effective means for integrating agricultural, farming and local food system priorities into local and regional government policies, practices, and functions”* - Sunshine Coast Agricultural Area Plan (2014)

An agriculture plan serves to **focus priorities** in a specific region while **providing valuable metrics** on the current state of farm-based economies. **Immediate impacts** include:

- Identification of opportunities and constraints facing local agriculture
- Coordination of government, industry and community initiatives in support of agriculture and local food security
- Consideration of the interrelationship of agriculture, resource management, ecology and biodiversity
- Development or supplementation policies and strategies for land and water management
- Increase the public awareness and education of agriculture

# Building on the 2002 Plan

The original CV AAP provides a valuable starting point - the original objectives align with modern CV visions:

- Water management
- Land management
- Agricultural/Environmental stewardship
- Agricultural opportunities
- Food security, Market development, Safety and Quality
- Agricultural awareness.

The CV AAP was completed in 2001 and the state of agriculture has changed:

- New data (original data was pulled from 1996 and 2001 census)
- Changing crop distribution and Value-add opportunities
- Environmental issues
- Best farm practices
- Community engagement strategies
- Lack of implementation plan

# Examples of Regional Agriculture Plans

## **Sunshine Coast Regional District Agricultural Area Plan**

Final plan: This project was accomplished in three phases and included an agricultural land use inventory completed as part of the project. The budget allowed for the opportunity to bring in guest speakers from other parts of BC to discuss topics such as agri-tourism, value-added enterprises, farmworker housing, and more.

The implementation of the plan has been stewarded by the regional district. One specific next step was to better characterize the type of irrigation infrastructure being used by Sunshine Coast Farmers in order to better inform regional watershed planning and water allocation during summer droughts.

## **Regional District of Nanaimo Agricultural Area Plan**

This project was completed a few years ago and the implementation has been tremendous. Examples include the development of a specific go-to information webpage for agriculture, the creation of an emergency livestock relocation plan, updates to the Regional Growth Strategy and zoning bylaws, and more.



# Supporting Documents/ Processes

- 2002 CV Agricultural Plan
- Regional Growth Strategy
- CVRD Sustainability Strategy 2010
- Land Use Inventory 2013
- Rural Area Community Climate Action Plan (date ?)
- Innovate 2030 (2019)
- Exploring Social Planning in the Comox Valley Report- Nov 7, 2019
- Ministry of Agriculture Local food to Schools Feasibility Study (in-process) 2020
- BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative (in process)

# Timeline

- Requesting starting the plan in late 2020 for best engagement with farmers.
- Plan generally takes one year to complete
- Implementation would start late 2021 or early 2022

# Costs and Support

- This will require a financial commitment from the CVRD to hire a consultant
- In speaking with a consultant and suggesting that a 3 phase agriculture plan with significant engagement and implementation phases the cost is \$60K- \$70 K
- Communities have seen the greatest impact by supporting the plan with around a \$30K budget for implementation (phase 4).
- The Real Estate Foundation currently supports Agricultural plans with matching funds (up to \$35, 000)
- Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC also funds ag plans and is currently re-assessing which types of plans it will support

# How the FPC and Partners Can support the process

- Access to information and experts to support all phases of the process.
- Building of partnerships and networks to help with engagement
- Funding proposal support
- We can help with implementation of the 'non- local government' elements of the plan (and help leverage funds to do so).
- We can share information/ policy from our expertise with staff and board along the way and will help lighten the load.

# THANK YOU, QUESTIONS?



# Alignment with Regional Growth Strategy

- Objective 6-A: Protect land for existing and future agriculture and associated activities and allow for the growth and expansion of such activities.
- Objective 6-B: Protect shoreline areas for existing and future aquaculture and associated activities
- Objective 6-C: Improve and expand agricultural irrigation practices and infrastructure
- Objective 6-D: Increase farming activity in the Comox Valley
- Objective 6-E: Raise awareness of the regional importance of the local food system

# Steering Committee

*Sunshine Coast - A regional coordinating body needs to form to implement this Plan. Administrated as an Agricultural Advisory Sub-Committee, the coordinating body should act as a regional plan steering committee. The committee could be composed of Agricultural Advisory Committee members, SCRD Planning & Development staff, representatives of the District of Sechelt, Town of Gibsons, shíshálh Nation, local chambers of commerce, and key community groups and organizations, either on an 'ongoing' or 'as needed' basis*

# CVFPC Alignment with CVRD

- “THAT the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) endorse the formation of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council (CVFPC) and direct staff to identify opportunities for collaboration with the CVFPC, once established, in support of CVRD services and strategic priorities and provide in-kind assistance as requested by the CVFPC (i.e. provision of meeting space).



## DELEGATION REQUEST

**Names of persons speaking:** Maurita Prato, Spenser Stern, and partners

**Organization you are representing:** Comox Valley Food Policy Council, LUSH Valley Food Action Society, CVEDS, Mid Island Farmers Institute, CV Farmers Market

**Primary purpose of the organization:** Community Food Security, Economic Development, Local Food Economy

**Number of members:** 400

**Mailing address:**

PO Box 20008  
Courtenay, BC V9N 0A7

**Contact name:** Maurita Prato

**Subject matter:** The members of the Comox Valley Food Policy Council would like to bring forward a request from our membership and a collaboration of partner groups interested in the development of a Comox Valley Agricultural Plan in the near future. We are seeing developing markets and opportunities for local food procurement and want to ensure that there is a plan in place to support local growers to meet this demand and build the local food economy- while also increasing community food security (access to healthy food). We feel it is important that this plan consider the lens of Climate Change and Reconciliation.

**Specific request of the regional district, if any (i.e. letter of support, funding):** This will require a financial commitment from the CVRD to hire a consultant to complete the plan. The cost of an Agricultural plan is usually \$70, 000. The Comox Valley Food Policy Council and partners would be interested in supporting the CVRD in this work- and would look for other funding opportunities and/or support the CVRD to find matching funds through the IFA, Real Estate Foundation or other funders. We assume costs to the CVRD would be \$35, 000- but will have a better break-down at the delegation. We would suggest another \$30, 000 for implementation- we have seen the value of this implementation amount in other communities.

We recognize that staff are very busy and know that this request would likely not be able to be started until the second half of 2020 or later- we understand this and hope that this delegation will 'plant the seeds' for getting started on an Agricultural plan for the region sometime in 2020. Many thanks.

**Requested meeting date:** January 14 4:00 COW

**Audio-visual equipment needed:** Projector for Slideshow



January 10, 2020

To Whom it May Concern

The Comox Valley Farmers' Market has been deeply rooted in the agriculture sector of the Comox Valley since 1992. Our mandate as set out by our founding members is to promote the economic health of the farm and food community, to provide quality locally grown farm products, to educate the community in agriculture issues and to promote and support local agriculture. We have grown from a dozen vendors in our opening year to over 100 vendors nearly 28 years later with vendors making, baking, growing, raising and wild harvesting their products withing the Comox Valley and Strathcona Regional Districts.

Agriculture is at the forefront of our existence which is why we understand the need to have a current agriculture plan for the Comox Valley. The agriculture sector in the Comox Valley, the province, in Canada and around the world has changed significantly in the nearly 20 years since the Comox Valley Agriculture Plan was initiated. With issues such as climate change and food security, the Comox Valley needs to be able to grow enough food to feed a larger portion of its population that is currently does.

An updated Agriculture Plan would be a benefit to the Comox Valley Farmers' Market as it has the potential to be a tool for farm development for both existing and new vendors. Available land has been a limiting factor for farmers, particularly ones new to the agriculture industry. Other potential opportunities include land quality, underdeveloped markets, demand and the synergies with other farming operations.

As demand for fresh local food increases, the agriculture sector in the Comox Valley will need to respond in an effective manner. An updated Agriculture Plan will help prepare for this. The Comox Valley Farmers' Market supports the Food Policy Council's decision to request the Regional District to update the Comox Valley Agriculture Plan.

Sincerely,

Twila Skinner

General Manager

On Behalf of the Comox Valley Farmers' Market Association

## **Comox Valley Food Policy Council and Partners- Request for development of a new Regional Agricultural Plan- January 14, 2020**

**Request of CVRD:** An investment by the CVRD of \$70, 000 over 2-3years to support the development and implementation of a new regional Agricultural Plan.

**Timeline:** We suggest a 3- phase plan including a wide-ranging engagement strategy, the development of recommended actions, and an implementation strategy. We suggest starting in late fall 2020 for maximum farmer engagement. Agriculture Plans typically require a year to complete, allowing for implementation to begin late 2021 or 2022. The budget of \$70,000 is intended to span the full extent of this initiative from development to implementation over 2 to 3 years.

### **Why are we requesting this?**

- We wanted to make the request now so it can be considered in the 2020 budget and subsequent budgets .
- Owing to the time required to complete an Agriculture Plan, we hoped to start soon so it can be completed within this term.
- Agriculture Plans are usually renewed about every 5 years and the CVRD's is now 18 years old (2002 it was finalized).
- Other community organizations groups (e.g. Social Planning Council) are identifying an updated Agriculture Plan as a priority for our community.
- The timing is opportune to bring to bring together the agriculture and food-systems communities and create a plan that focuses on the CVRD's priority areas:
  - 1. Community relationships
  - 2. Reconciliation
  - 3. Climate Change
  - 4. Fiscal Responsibility
- Many existing documents/ discussions point to the need for and/or are in alignment with the development of an Agriculture Plan (e.g. CVSS, RGS, Social Planning Report)
- Increasingly, we are seeing opportunities to expand local markets but farmers, organizations and others require a plan to support their efforts.
- We believe this is a part of our role as the Comox Valley Food Policy Council to make this request, and if it goes ahead, to support CVRD staff with resources, assist with engagement and implementation, and raise funds.
- There are funding opportunities through the Real Estate Foundation and Investment Agriculture to support Agriculture Plans.

## **Examples of quality BC agricultural Plans:**

We like these examples because they all included a wide-ranging engagement strategy, the development of recommended actions, and an implementation strategy. Since endorsement/adoption, all of the plans have resulted in many on-the-ground results.

This includes a short descriptions and links to the project websites and final plans for further information.

### **Sunshine Coast Regional District Agricultural Area Plan**

Project website: <https://www.scrd.ca/Ag-Plan>

Final

plan: <https://www.scrd.ca/files/File/Community/Planning/Agricultural%20Area%20Plan/2015%20Feb%2023%20Final%20Ag%20Plan.pdf>

This project was accomplished in three phases and included an agricultural land use inventory completed as part of the project. The budget allowed for the opportunity to bring in guest speakers from other parts of BC to discuss topics such as agri-tourism, value-added enterprises, farmworker housing, and more. We also developed a video to highlight agriculture on the Sunshine

Coast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-4g-ScYuzs>

The implementation of the plan has been stewarded by the regional district. One specific next step was to better characterize the type of irrigation infrastructure being used by Sunshine Coast Farmers in order to better inform regional watershed planning and water allocation during summer droughts. This report is also available: <https://www.scrd.ca/files/File/Infrastructure/Water/ag-water-study.pdf>

### **Regional District of Nanaimo Agricultural Area Plan**

This project was completed a few years ago and the implementation has been tremendous. Examples include the development of a specific go-to information webpage for agriculture, the creation of an emergency livestock relocation plan, updates to the Regional Growth Strategy and zoning bylaws, and more.

Project website: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/growing-our-future>

Final plan: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID2520atID5166.pdf>

Action plan follow-

up: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID2520atID5971.pdf>

We have lots of other agriculture plan examples to share if you are interested. Please let us know if you have any questions!