

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 within 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!