

Saanich Agriculture & Food Security Plan Public Input from May 26, 2016 Open House Saanich Commonwealth Place

The first open house for Saanich's Agriculture and Food Security planning project was held on May 26, 2016 from 3pm to 7pm at Saanich Commonwealth Place in a meeting room off the front lobby of the centre. The date, location and purpose for the open house was advertised in the Saanich News and the Times Colonist. Post cards were also distributed at coffee shops, recreation centres and local community events.

Information on the planning process and the background information was available for review on large display boards. Staff and the consultant for the project (Upland Consulting) were available to talk about the project and to hear and record input from people who attended. Approximately 40 people attended the open house and provided input to this first stage of the planning process.

Comments on Vision Statement

- Saanich leads by example
- Very ambitious vision. It is too complex to comprehend and achievable. Please simplify it.
- Access to affordable food. How are engaging with other factor such as cost of living and housing?
- When people are hungry it will be too late.
- Every home should have a garden! Plants, herbs, food.
- Yes! But it will be difficult.
- Nothing specific is stated. No hard examples. Talks about food security but doesn't mention local food.
- The word local is missing! Acknowledge that we are on an island and therefore local and resilient is even more critical here.
- Would love a farmers market, with alcohol sales, live music, lots of activities and community involvement.
- Youth / school connection to stewardship initiatives.
- Too long. This is a goal (or strategy), even an objective with a date! Vision = everyone has access to food.
- Should be: Saanich is a leader in localizing food systems.
- This is big. More specificity is needed. What about some comments about infrastructure?

Public Input on Strengths and Challenges for agriculture & food security

Climate & Environment

- Impacts of climate change: 8
- Water (availability, cost, management): 5
- Not enough protection from wildlife incursions: 2
- Great soil & climate can be used to attract more producers: 4
- Water is available if planned for correctly: 8



Education

- Education around value of farmland: 8
- Not enough public education about local food and agriculture: 4
- Lack of education on healthy food choices: 1
- More connection with schools, farm immersion, work with youth services: 1

Support & incentives for farmers & food growers

- Profitability of farming is too low: 10
- Difficult to attract farmworkers to the area: 5
- Ideas for making land available to new farmers (leases, cooperatives, incubator farms): 11
- Agri-tourism potential (leverage “foodie” culture): 6
- Farmland is too expensive due to speculation and urban growth pressures: 12
- “Land linking” – connecting retiring farmers with new farmers: 1
- Promote / encourage / grow social venture model approaches like Lifecycles project: 1
- Maybe landholders on small acreages could have tax breaks if they produce food in high intensity small scale farming (e.g. less than 2 acres): 1
- Create registry of homeowners with available space to share with those with no access to land: 1
- Create incentives for landowners to utilize their arable land. So much land sits unused: 1
- Make “farm status” available to land owners with less than 2 acres of land: 1
- Provide incentives to wealthy landowners to share their land with young potential farmers: 2
- Take hay off farm tax status as a viable crop: 1.
- Give incentives to private landowners to allow a community gardens on unused property.
- Support co-Farming - a cooperative where farmers pool their resources in certain areas of activity. Cooperative farming can benefit from economy of scale.
- Consider legal equity for work investment where a farmer makes equity in the land based on work that the farmer puts in.
- Encourage the Provincial Government to decrease the farm tax assessment rules.
- Not enough production by residents (on private properties): 3
- Difficult to attract farmworkers to the area: 5

Access to economical and local food

- Cost of local food is relatively high, imported food is cheaper: 10
- Access to local food is difficult: 1

Land uses on ALR & agriculture zoned lands

- ALR is being used for non-farm activities and is not being enforced: 6
- Lack of supportive policies and regulations: 7
- Corporation of Saanich ALR is used for non-ALR purposes: 1
- “Broken windows” We see District not using it’s ALR for farming: 1
- The ALR represents a strong urban rural boundary: 1
- Enforcement of activities allowed on ALR: 4
- Lack of buffers between urban and rural edge leads to conflict: 3

Infrastructure

- Not enough processing & storage available locally: 5
- I am concerned about the possibility of allowing piped water outside the urban containment boundary. This would be a big mistake!: 1



- Local processing & value-added infrastructure is available: 2
- A labour force is willing and able to work on local farms: 2
- Encourage small meat producers and processors.

Wildlife

- Not enough protection from wildlife incursions: 2
- Deer and geese are already forcing land out of production. We must deal with this!: 1

Community Gardens

- Community gardens and allow production of food on Saanich property: 1
- Continue to work towards one community garden per local area.

Farm Markets

- Farmers market like @ Esquimalt great community and support for farmers: 1
- Amend bylaws to allow and encourage farmer markets in Saanich.

Urban agriculture

- Start looking towards urban growing in private suburbia. Support share economy approaches like sproutingtrade.com :1
- All this seems geared to farms. What not some lines here on backyard opportunities?: 1
- Huge potential for more home gardens if wildlife issues dealt with: 1
- Increase focus on urban agriculture.
- Not enough production by residents (on private properties): 3

Other

- Marketing and pricing will be key elements which will determine the outcome: 1
- A labour force that is willing and able to work on local farms: 2
- Partnerships between the university, municipality, and non-profit food security organizations: 9
- Promote / encourage / grow social venture model approaches like Lifecycles project: 1
- Food security coordinator at the City of manage and drive the action items forward: 1
- Allow / encourage extras at farmstands such as home baking, refreshments: 1
- Look into the economics of roof top growing. Review the building code and structural requirements.
- Consider aquaculture and the seaweed market in policy planning too.
- Panama Flats land should be used for permaculture (agriculture ecosystem that is sustainable and self-sufficient.
- Collect data on urban farming through UVic or Camosun students.
- Have an inventory available to residents and farmers that inventories the community resources showing current rural & urban agriculture land use, growing capability, soil capability, drainage patterns (hydrology), rain patterns & levels, etc.
- Should consider doing an economic development review of agricultural activity in the Municipality.
- Consider adding Development Cost Charges to future development to go towards an agricultural trust fund.

