

**District of Saanich
Agriculture and Food Security Plan**

Draft Potential Action and Comments provided by individuals following the Jan 18, 2017 open house.

Theme #1: Connecting Gaps in the Local Food System to Improve Food Self-Sufficiency		
Potential Action	Comments and/or Suggestions	Top Priority
<p>1. Perform a regular review of the OCP and Zoning Bylaw to ensure that a commitment to agriculture and local food system is embedded and reflected in these key documents.</p>	<p>Specify period for review. Every 5 years. Proactive enforcement of bylaws rather than complaint driven enforcement. I live in the urban area of Saanich (Duplex property) and I would like to request that the municipality allow us to have monthly truck pick up of plants to sell off site, quarterly onsite sales, online seed sales, a road side farm stand in our front yard and to operate a family run permaculture consulting service from our residence. Commit to addressing the lack of industrial zoned land in Saanich to stop the fragmentation of agriculture land. Include Ministry of Agriculture (on referral at time of policy amendment). Encourage developers and building owners to provide green roofs and vertical gardens.</p>	<p>III</p>
<p>2. Integrate food system terminology into Municipal plans and policies. "Food systems" may include aquaculture, gleaning, foraging and wild-crafting as well as traditional farming.</p>	<p>Make the local resources more accessible to the public. So much gets wasted. Should include front yard farming. Integrate terminology for Indigenous food security, Indigenous food sovereignty, as well as native food plants.</p>	<p>III</p>
<p>3. Participate in (or host) annual meeting(s) with government, First Nations, NGOs, and farmers to discuss plans, bylaws, and initiatives.</p>	<p>Share info with community i.e. at annual CRFAIR meetings etc.</p>	<p>I</p>
<p>4. Conduct an inventory of urban food production opportunities. This may include: community gardens, public parklands, institutional areas, rooftops and boulevards. This could involve looking at underutilized space for community gardens.</p>	<p>Creating a map of these opportunities that is displayed in public places (parks, on buildings etc.) Underutilized space could be used for incubator farming too. Make community gardens easier to establish. Modify future plantings on public boulevards.</p>	<p>III</p>

	<p>Public food forest parks – integration of resilient native and non-native edibles into existing parks. Encourage home owners to plant perennial edible trees, shrubs and herbs. Current uses on agriculture lands needs to be inventoried with a view to finding out what non-compliant ALR and A zoned uses are currently out there. Support and funding for public food forests and gardens. Map the non-profit food access and literacy organizations within Saanich. Identify what the “local food system” is in Saanich and an accurate context including the Indigenous Food System that has been here for +8,000 years, as well as our local ecology and how it relates to the management practices of Indigenous People (e.g. Camas harvest). Research food forest examples i.e. Seattles Beacon Food Forest and use it as a model to integrate edible trees, shrubs and herbs into existing Saanich Parks.</p>	
<p>5. Support the CRD’s Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy and participate in the Regional Agriculture and Food Security Task Force. The CRD F&A Strategy includes action such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Con’t organic matter recycling and consider benefit of organic waste recycle for agriculture. • Provide info regarding flooding to local governments, • Wildlife management • Maintain agriculture water rates • Extend agriculture water rates to urban agriculture 	<p>The Task Force should function like a properly governed board with clear priorities and more importantly measurement and evaluation of its action. Raise funds for Farm Land Trust through amenity contributions. Purchase lands with funds and lease out to farmers. We need to grow healthy soil which means composting. We need to retain our food scrap collection on the local lands to build nutrients in the soil and not divert it elsewhere. Supply all residents with backyard composters. Use of green bin program for bio-gas production. Also highlight support for the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network (including the Vancouver Island Traditional Foods Conference).</p>	<p>I</p>
<p>6. Shorten the local food supply chain by enhancing connections between producers, small businesses, NGOs, Small Scale Food Producers Association, storage opportunities, and distributors.</p>	<p>Create job opportunities for small farm bokers and shared storage within the city. Link with resources in the rest of the region (CRD). Support Lifecycles Food Hub mission. Link education around soil health & composting. There is a need for a small producers processing facility. I would suggest a broader examination of missing infrastructure</p>	<p>III</p>

	to “close” the local food system. A processing hub is one example.	
7. Update the District of Saanich Community Grants Policy to create an Operating Grant category and Project Grant category that specifically supports initiatives that focus on the local food system.	Support grants and require metrics. Hunger and food security are not issues to be left out of public funding options or accountability. Funding, scholarship, or bursary for new Eco-Farm School at Haliburton farms (a hands-on farming ed program)	
8. Support the visions of other local organizations who are working in the areas of food security, food access, and food self-sufficiency.	Look for ways to increase access to healthy food for families with young children. Support Compost Education Centre via \$ or offering our education programs. Look for a pilot project for growing in a multi-family development or housing project. This could include therapeutic programs or micro businesses for individuals that are under-served (e.g. Nigel Valley project is in design stage)	
9. Create a Food System Coordinator staff position for the District of Saanich.	What rights/powers/duties would this position have? Don't see a clear way it would help. This is not helping farmers by growing city staff. Spend the money on farmers with grants, lower water rates, etc. What would they do? Disagree you don't need a staff position. Position could work to provide advice and connections for non-profit organizations who work with Saanich residents. Research and document ideas for “social enterprise” options to help organizations become sustainable. Should have knowledge on what it takes to be a small scale producer.	
10. Establish a Food Policy Council with volunteer and/or elected members to assist in directing and implementing food system actions.	This group could run a Saanich scholarship or bursary for applicants to the new Haliburton Ecofarm School (like the Saanich Heritage Foundation model) Not necessary, work with Farm Trust and other existing resources.	
11. Support First Nations efforts to re-establish an Indigenous food system.	Native ecosystems are food ecosystems. All farms, orchards, community gardens dwell within a larger ecosystem. What are we doing to learn more? Connect with FN coordinate traditional food feasts, fund restoration work. Specific and intense education on food sources in the	

	<p>environment (indigenous food systems) and uses for weeds (introduced).</p> <p>(Re)Consider wording here because it reads like Indigenous food systems aren't active. "Support Indigenous food systems by determining what the needs and goals of the Indigenous community are as they relate to food security and sovereignty."</p>	
<p>12. Seek ways to expand on existing programs with the local school boards to support food production on school grounds and take it to the next level (e.g. greenhouses, orchards, honey).</p>	<p>Municipality / municipal public works could support in-school composting system.</p> <p>Support communication between local school teachers and Haliburton farms.</p> <p>Young farmers need land, Schools have land. Support this connection.</p> <p>Possibly an additional career track for students.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>13. Support the work of local NGOs and the CRD to establish a community food hub to connect food access organizations i.e food banks in the Region connecting people with fresh food.</p>	<p>Mustard Seed and Lifecycles have a food hub project.</p> <p>Coop grocery stores.</p> <p>Mustard See and BC Food Share are currently working on an agreement and distribution centre (in Esquimalt) for unused fresh food to food banks across the region.</p> <p>Vancouver has a Farmers Market association that builds awareness and provides a website (eatlocal.org) of information of all the Farm Market's in the Vancouver area.</p> <p>Provision of a community based "mobile delivery truck" for local farmers to increase access. Particularly elderly, busy parents etc.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>14. Explore policies and programs with the CRD that could result in food waste reduction across the community and region.</p>	<p>See Rainbow kitchen, Our Place & Dumpster Divers @ Uvic.</p> <p>Saanich could support organizations and local farmers in distributing un-saleable produce by providing \$\$ to help in the pick up of the food for distribution at their Food Rescue warehouse.</p> <p>See Mustard Seed and Lifecycles Food Rescue project and comment for #13 above.</p>	<p> </p>
<p><i>Other suggestions?</i></p>	<p>It is vital we ensure the longevity and viability of our existing allotment and community gardens. To create more of these to accommodate the growing need.</p> <p>Consider ways to improve the economics of small scale food production.</p>	

	<p>Support residents to grown food at home. Partner with local orgs to educate residents on planning “food for ???” or perennial edibles.</p> <p>Look at ways to connect all community and allotment gardens so knowledge and opportunities can be shared.</p> <p>Increase a focus on urban farming.</p>	
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Theme #2: Strengthening Local Awareness of the Local Food System		
Potential Action	Comments and/or Suggestions	Top Priority
1. Showcase local farms, food businesses, food organizations both online and in print. (e.g. Maps of restaurants, farms, farm gate sales, and retailers could be linked to the District website.)	Showcase food box programs too. Support farmers with their marketing. Works better to create biographical articles with photos that can be posted (blog or facebook) and does not have the need to be maintained.	
2. Undertake mapping projects with local First Nations to explore traditional food uses in the District of Saanich.	Work with ongoing projects at WSANEC School Board and UVic community mapping.	III
3. Assist and support review of local branding for food and products from Saanich or the region with interested producers.	There are many local food branding opportunities for farmers to choose from, including land Farm Fresh with was started by farmers. They also maintain an updated farm list for members. It would be redundant to compete with this. Instead host events such as a Farm to Table which would highlight Saanich producers.	IIII
4. Join the CRD in exploring opportunities and interest for an agri-tourism strategy. This could include clarity around agri-tourism accommodation regulations.		I
5. Support efforts to introduce farms to the general public, such as Circle Farm Tours or other self-guided tours.	Island Chef, CRFAIR, Island Farms	IIII
6. Develop appropriate regulations and guidelines for agri-tourism activities in consultation with farmers and other stakeholders.		I
7. Consider development of interpretive signage on trails	Very important consideration with economic viability of small	III

on/near farmland. This could include parts of the Galloping Goose trail.	scale farms. Also Lochside trail i.e. Blenkinsop Valley Where on Galloping Goose in Saanich is there farmland??	
8. Continue to assist with the promotion of agricultural events, festivals, and celebrations, such as the Saanich Fair.	Yes – Farmers need flexibility in how they get their food to consumers. Reduce red tape for consumers and producers. Saanich could do more to encourage seedy Saturday type activities.	
9. Explore bylaw changes that could allow for a variety of opportunities to sell local food in the community.	Try community farm stands. Farm stands that are shared by several small farmers. Allow individuals to sell produce from their front yards.	
10. Install roadside signage to indicate farming areas, slow moving farm vehicles, and showcasing specific farms and specific crops.	Make it easier to get signage for farms.	
11. Seek ways to engage First Nations communities (whose traditional territory is within the District of Saanich) to share information and hear about their challenges and barriers regarding the harvesting of food from traditional lands.	Support restoration work and capacity building for revitalization of traditional practices. Maybe (grow indigenous plants) at Saanich city hall grounds. Seek the opportunity to connect with and support Indigenous food events held annually in the region.	
12. Include native plants, forest ecosystem restoration and traditional food systems, as part of the curriculum used to provide food education in Saanich-based schools.	Also encourage volunteers to remove non-native invasive species. See PEPAKEN HAVTW native plants garden program pepakenhautw.com (juditharney@gmail.com) Add certified organic and small scale farming to this list. Support (connect with) projects that have been instrumental towards the reinvigoration of Indigenous food security in Saanich (e.g. Nick Claxton and the Reef Net Fishery (Tsawout), PEPAKEN HAUTW Native Plants and Garden Program, LAU, WELNEW Tribal School, Cheryl Bryce.	
13. Work with local NGOs and the CRD to establish a community food hub.		
Other Suggestions?		

Theme #3: Improving the Interconnection between Food Production and the Environment.		
Potential Action	Comments and / or suggestions	Top Priority
1. Work with the Capital Region Invasive Species Program (CRISP) to promote proper management and disposal of invasive species in agricultural areas on a regional scale.	Look into making BioChar. Stop stores from selling plants like English ivy.	ii
2. Develop public education materials to assist residents to comply with the Noxious Weeds Bylaw to minimize noxious weeds in agricultural areas.	Incentives for composting organics. Some stores still sell invasive plants.	
3. Participate in CRD initiatives to reduce deer and waterfowl damage to crops. The CRD is exploring this as a possible new service area for local/regional governments.	Encourage hunting and local processing in rural Saanich. (The main barrier to growing food at home is perceived to be deer.) Harvest the deer and water fowl for food.	iiii
4. Continue to enhance agriculture and food content in Saanich's Climate Adaptation Plan.	Also important to create a strategy for earth quake preparedness.	iii
5. Encourage farmers to participate in the province's Environmental Farm Plan program. Promote tours of existing EFP farms and their best practices.		i
6. Develop a strategy to balance drainage for agriculture with fish and wildlife habitat in floodplain areas such as Panama Flats, Tod Creek, etc.	Investigate "Chinampa" farming method for Panama Flats project. Balances water management, biodiversity, and high productivity with minimal inputs. Cumberland Creek & Colquitz Creek & Cecilia Creek Panama Flats should be a key hub for agriculture in Saanich....I believe that ... 10 hectares can become usable farmland that can be managed for lease to young beginning farmers under supervision of an experienced farm manager, along with community gardens and permaculture food forest.	iii
7. Continue to support a special water rate for agriculture.	And for small urban gardens. Education on other water management strategies.	iiiiii
8. Support efforts of farm operators and other agencies to enhance farmland and increase crop yield, by improving water supply and undertaking drainage improvements and improving soil capabilities, while considering environmental impact.	Could this also include existing allotment and community gardens? Saanich leaf program is an excellent example of a program that the municipality runs to help individuals to improve soil capabilities with undertaking drainage improvements at the same time.	iiii

9. Establish a partnership with a foundation or NGO that could develop Ecosystem Services Initiatives for agriculture in Saanich.		I
10. Expand the oil tank replacement program to farms and farm buildings.		I
11. Consider the needs of farmers and food safety when managing public health issues (mosquito control, etc).	Assist farmers in red tape with VIHA and Fed Regs.	II
12. Encourage gardeners and small-scale urban farmers to participate in composting, rainwater harvesting, and other actions to minimize the impact of food production on the environment.	Provide educational opportunities for allotment and community gardeners to embrace and practice composting. Greywater system. Special water rate for urban gardeners. Should include processing and could be part of a food (& farmer) hub. Encourage community gardens to do more composting to create better soil. Hire Compost Ed Centre to offer workshops for free to residents in Saanich or promote Compost Ed Centre workshops on Saanich website. Try incentives for grey water use.	IIIIIIII
13. Ensure that all development permits work to improve the overall integrity of farming areas.	There is too much disconnect between departments in the municipality so that one office passes an approval without seeing the ramifications to the whole community e.g. agriculture.	IIII
14. Recognize the foreshore environment as having an important role to play in healthy aquaculture operations and that the quality of freshwater coming from our watersheds can impact the quality of the foreshore.		
15. Identify areas with the potential for traditional First Nations shellfish and other ocean based food harvest for consideration for future protection and/or restoration to reinstate this food system.	Please look at SNIDOEZ/Tod Inlet beach restoration effort in partnership with Tsartlip First Nation – seachange@shaw.ca See also Uu-a-thluk Aquatic Management on the west coast for info and example.	IIIIII
<i>Other suggestions?</i>	Need to look at (Farm) Assessment to allow farm designation for native seeds. Encourage gardeners to develop gardens that bring pollinators to the area. Create a subsidized body for organic certification. More soil/water testing, and more compost testing. Promote native pollinator conservation through education and	

	<p>supporting local farmers to enhance pollinator habitat on farms (e.g. hedgerows, native plantings, no till areas, artificial nests for native bees, avoid pesticides)</p> <p>Promote the protection, enhancement and restoration of habitat on farms to increase the ability of farmlands to support essential ecological services like stabilizing water flow, pest control services, protecting soils, and pollination services. Farmland can also improve ecosystem connectivity on a larger scale in Saanich.</p> <p>Work with the existing natural ecology to improve the sites value rather than draining a wetland or removing trees, select alternative crops or methods of growing.</p>	
Theme #4: Managing Land Use to Support Farmland		
Potential Action	Comments and/or Suggestions	Top Priority
1. Encourage and support landowners of underutilized farmland to develop farm plans, in order to increase the amount of food production currently occurring within the ALR.	<p>Support potential leases.</p> <p>There needs to be incentives or benefits to the land owner. What about offering small grants or tax breaks for agriculture production that benefits the community?</p> <p>Lack of available industrial land is putting pressure on farmland and ALR land.</p> <p>Protect the UCB policy and strengthen it.</p> <p>Create an affordable industrial park in Saanich and do not support the loss of any more industrial zoned lands.</p> <p>See Farm Folk City Folk for this kind of thing. Perhaps a partnership.</p>	IIIIIIII
2. Review bylaw enforcement strategies to improve the enforcement process regarding bylaw infractions on agriculture land.	<p>Enforce bylaws and fine non-compliance. \$\$ to go towards farmland conservation.</p> <p>Monitor truck weight restrictions on Blenkinsop Road.</p> <p>Need to look at what is currently being done in contravention of existing rules.</p>	III
3. Work with the Agriculture Land Commission to develop a compliance and enforcement strategy for the Agriculture Land Reserve to address ongoing issues over the longer term.	<p>Industrial and non-permitted uses are degrading soils, riparian areas and destroying wildlife/bird/bee habitat important for supporting agricultural production.</p>	III
4. Review business licence requirements for all agriculture zoned land.		

5. Require Agricultural Impact Assessments, performed by a Professional Agrologist, to be accompanied by landowners along with ALR non-farm use, exclusion, and/or subdivision applications.	Look into called “organic soil” companies that use dubious materials (non organic) to mix in with soil. Ensure that agriculture use and food growing are a part of future development of agriculture zoned land and ALR lands that may currently be occupied by non-agriculture use. Examples are Royal Oak golf course and Prospect Lake golf course lands.	III
6. Support the use of the dispute resolution process established in the “Farm Practices Protection Act” to resolve concerns and complaints about agricultural practices that may be inconsistent with normal farm practice.		
7. Work with the Real Estate industry to develop a “good neighbour” policy to encourage farmers and non-farm neighbours to reduce conflicts.		III
8. Consider adopting a Development Permit Area that could act as a buffer strategy to reinforce the urban containment boundary and protect farmland.	Should read “strengthen the urban containment boundary.”	IIIIII
9. Buffer rural and agricultural lands from adjacent urban residential development as part of redevelopment and subdivision proposals, where appropriate.		
10. Update the 1986 <i>Soil Removal Bylaw</i> to ensure that it reflects current industry best practices. Consider tying it to the 2008 <i>Deposit of Fill Bylaw</i> and identifying priority areas, such as the ALR, whereby soil removal and deposit will be severely restricted.		
11. Encourage the Agricultural Land Commission to review current deposit of fill practices on ALR lands, in order to preserve the agricultural capability of ALR lands and discourage the deposit of fill on rural and ALR lands that results in the soil’s agricultural capability being diminished.	Put covenants of ALR land with sensitive ecosystems such as wetlands.	III
12. Create communications tool that would allow concerned citizens to report infractions to zoning bylaws, such as an anonymous tip line.	Include education outreach like Neighbourhood Watch or Police officer liason at schools.	II
13. Maintain a minimum parcel area of 2.0 ha for the A-1 (Rural) zone and 4.0 ha for the A-4 (Rural) zone.	Larger. Include unusual (innovative) forms of farming i.e. shipping container farms on unusable land.	

<p>14. Support the development and operation of specialty crop farms to diversify farm production, increase economic development, increase local food production, and improve farm income.</p>	<p>Insects for protein. Hydroponic container farming.</p>	<p> </p>
<p><i>Other suggestions?</i></p>	<p>All agricultural land is within a larger food system. They can co-exist when the relationship is acknowledged. Consider more options for low scale agriculture in urban areas. Work with farmers and new farmers to improve housing policies for ALR land e.g. there is no restraint on building footprint for primary dwelling (Mansions paving over workable land and increasing land cost.) But no allowance of multiple small homes for larger parcels of collectively managed land or tiny homes for farm staff or leasing land. Work with farmers to advocate ALC policies that reflect new generations of farmers. Help farmers to understand how environmentally friendly changes to farming practices can benefit farm productivity. Improve pollinator habitat, planting hedgerows, retaining natural spaces within and adjoin food productions areas and restoration within farmlands are activities that can produce bigger crop yields. Please ensure farmland is protected from development. Support programs and policy that will enable young farmers to be successful.</p>	
<p>Theme #5: Supporting Multi-Generational Farmers and Emerging Farmers</p>		
<p>Potential Action</p>	<p>Comments and/or Suggestions</p>	<p>Top Priority</p>
<p>1. Partner with academic and/or non-governmental organizations to investigate how farmers and/or food producers wish to expand their businesses.</p>	<p>...--> and farmers. Why with academic and NGOs? If you want to help producers and farmers talk to them.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>2. Provide links/access to reports and information on alternative business models (stratas, co-ops, corporations) and alternative tenure models.</p>	<p>Allow for planning changes to facilitate mulit-family farms to increase affordability for young families/farmers. See Farm Folk City Folk for info and ideas. Maybe a partnership.</p>	<p> </p>

<p>3. Identify current on-farm or near-farm housing options for farmworkers and use this info to update/create farmworker housing policies.</p>	<p>More flexibility for additional housing options within Saanich and planning in regards to farming and multi-family properties. Zoning for ALR is unfavourable for the reality of people's needs. Look into "Tiny homes" or housing coops for farmers. See Good Work Canada or Young Agrarians.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>4. Support the CRD in efforts to initiate a process to establish a regional food and farmland trust.</p>	<p>A farm land trust does not support the economic viability of farms as business. Saanich should take a leadership role in the regional farmlands trust and support the CRD in preparing a detailed proposal for Saanich Council consideration. ...and equipment.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>5. Promote and support land-linking and mentorship program(s) that match land with people who want to farm.</p>	<p>Property stewardship by NFP Fieldstone Community Farm Society. Communal farming and transportation systems to get urban workers to rural farms. Hasn't been entirely successful (elsewhere). An urban farmer needs to be able to stay on land for 5 years or more in order for their investment to pay off, which is often not possible on land owned by other private owners.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>6. Support infrastructure for processors within Saanich to extend the seasonal availability of local foods.</p>	<p>Let's get some abattoirs back on the island for all livestock types. Re-establish abattoirs on farms that produce meats. Include wild meat processing. One idea is rentable greenhouses on municipal land.</p>	<p> </p>
<p><i>Other suggestions?</i></p>	<p>Look into land use / designation for agritourism. PEPAKEN HAUTW native plants garden program PEPAKEN HAUTW.com Farmers transitioning from incubator farms now need help finding land to move their operation on to. Traditional farm financing does not apply to small and urban farmers who are the key to our region's food plan.</p>	<p></p>