

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

Potential Action
DRAFT

The potential actions are specific and implementable tasks that the District of Saanich could undertake in order to help meet the Key Priorities, which relate back to the overall Vision for the AFSP. Developed at Task Force meeting #4 and amended following Task Force October review.

Provide comments and identify what you think are the top priorities for the future.

Theme #1: Connecting Gaps in the Local Food System to Improve Food Self-Sufficiency		
Potential Action	Comments and/or Suggestions	Top Priority
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.		
2. Integrate food system terminology into Municipal plans and policies. “Food systems” may include aquaculture, gleaning, foraging and wildcrafting as well as traditional farming.		
3. Participate in (or host) annual meeting(s) with government, First Nations, NGOs, and farmers to discuss plans, bylaws, and initiatives.		
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.		
5. Support the CRD’s Regional Food Strategy and participate in the Regional Agriculture and Food Security Task Force.		

6. Shorten the local food supply chain by enhancing connections between producers, small businesses, NGOs, Small Scale Food Producers Association, storage opportunities, and distributors.		
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.		
8. Support the visions of other local organizations who are working in the areas of food security, food access, and food self-sufficiency.		
9. Create a Food System Coordinator staff position for the District of Saanich.		
10. Establish a Food Policy Council with volunteer and/or elected members to assist in directing and implementing food system actions.		
11. Support First Nations efforts to re-establish an indigenous food system.		
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).		
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.		
14. Explore policies and programs with the CRD that could result in food waste reduction across the community and region.		
<i>Other suggestions?</i>		

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.)		
2. Undertake mapping projects with local First Nations to explore traditional food uses in the District of Saanich.		
3. Assist and support review of local branding for food and products from Saanich or the region with interested producers.		
4. Join the CRD in exploring opportunities and interest for an agri-tourism strategy. This could include clarity around agri-tourism accommodation regulations.		
5. Support efforts to introduce farms to the general public, such as Circle Farm Tours or other self-guided tours.		
6. Develop appropriate regulations and guidelines for agri-tourism activities in consultation with farmers and other stakeholders.		
7. Consider development of interpretive signage on trails on/near farmland. This could include parts of the Galloping Goose trail.		
8. Continue to assist with the promotion of agricultural events, festivals, and celebrations, such as the Saanich Fair.		
9. Explore bylaw changes that could allow for a variety of opportunities to sell local food in the community.		
10. Install roadside signage to indicate farming areas, slow moving farm vehicles, and showcasing specific farms and specific crops.		

<p>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.</p>		
<p>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.</p>		
<p>13. Work with local NGOs and the CRD to establish a community food hub.</p>		
<p>14. Explore policies and programs with the CRD that could result in food waste reduction across the community and region.</p>		
<p>Other Suggestions?</p>		

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.		
2. Develop public education materials to assist residents to comply with the Noxious Weeds Bylaw to minimize noxious weeds in agricultural areas.		
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.		
4. Continue to enhance agriculture and food content in Saanich's Climate Adaptation Plan.		
5. Encourage farmers to participate in the province's Environmental Farm Plan program. Promote tours of existing EFP farms and their best practices.		
6. Develop a strategy to balance drainage for agriculture with fish and wildlife habitat in floodplain areas such as Panama Flats, Tod Creek, etc.		
7. Continue to support a special water rate for agriculture.		
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.		
9. Establish a partnership with a foundation or NGO that could develop Ecosystem Services Initiatives for agriculture in Saanich.		
10. Expand the oil tank replacement program to farms and farm buildings.		

11. Consider the needs of farmers and food safety when managing public health issues (mosquito control, etc).		
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.		
13. Ensure that all development permits works to improve the overall integrity of farming areas.		
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.		
<i>Other suggestions?</i>		

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.		
2. Review bylaw enforcement strategies to improve the enforcement process regarding bylaw infractions on agriculture land.		
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.		
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.		
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.		
8. Consider adopting a Development Permit Area that could act as a buffer strategy to reinforce the urban growth boundary and protect farmland.		
9. Buffer rural and agricultural lands from adjacent urban residential development as part of redevelopment and subdivision proposals, where appropriate.		

<p>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.</p>		
<p>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.</p>		
<p>12. Create communications tool that would allow concerned citizens to report infractions to zoning bylaws, such as an anonymous tip line.</p>		
<p>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.</p>		
<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><i>Other suggestions?</i></p>		

Theme #5: Supporting Multi-Generational Farmers and Emerging Farmers		
Potential Action	Comments and/or Suggestions	Top Priority
1. Partner with academic and/or non-governmental organizations to investigate how farmers and/or food producers wish to expand their businesses.		
2. Provide links/access to reports and information on alternative business models (stratas, co-ops, corporations) and alternative tenure models.		
3. Identify current on-farm or near-farm housing options for farmworkers and use this info to update/create farmworker housing policies.		
4. Support the CRD in efforts to initiate a process to establish a regional food and farmland trust.		
5. Promote and support land-linking and mentorship program(s) that match land with people who want to farm.		
6. Support infrastructure for processors within Saanich to extend the seasonal availability of local foods.		
<i>Other suggestions?</i>		