



Sooke Region
Food CHI
SOCIETY

STRATEGIC
PLAN
2020

Message from the Board

Since its creation, the Sooke Region Food CHI Society has proven itself to be a non-profit society dedicated to furthering awareness of local food production through building community and partnerships.

Sooke Region Food CHI Strategic Plan 2020 provides a blueprint for how that continued commitment to education, partnerships and awareness can be improved to see Food CHI through the coming years and beyond.



Food Art Apple Fest



Seedy Saturday



Harvest Feast

Sooke Food CHI History | 2007

Sooke Region Food CHI Society (Food CHI) was formed in 2007 and incorporated as a non-profit society a year later. For the first two years a grassroots group of farmers, citizens and backyard gardeners met monthly to plan, develop and implement a food security strategy. This strategy has been our vision and blueprint since 2008/2009.

Since 2009, Sooke Food CHI with its directors and volunteers created and sustained the following programs for our region:

- Building and sponsoring of Sunriver Community Gardens
- Annual events (Seedy Saturday, Harvest Feast, Food Art Apple Fest, Farm & Food Tour, Awareness Film Night)
- Sooke Region Food & Farm Guide
- Farmer2Farmer support network (Value Our Food, Farmers and Community Campaign 2014, farmer mentorship)
- Charitable Food Production and Recovery (Grow and Share, Fruit Tree Gleaning)



Ploughing Sunriver Garden Field

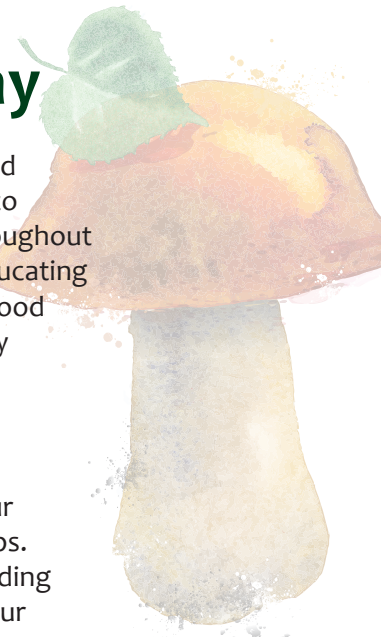


First Allotment Gardens at Sunriver

Sooke Food CHI | Today

Food CHI works in partnership with its members, food producers, local governments and funding partners to advance food security awareness and education throughout the Sooke region. The society's mandate includes educating the community on local food production, providing food to support the hungry and establishing food recovery programs.

The culture within the Sooke Food CHI organization is the identity we all have for our home community – our involvement, our volunteerism, our pride, and our willingness to collaborate results in many partnerships. Our organization has over 250 members, over 20 funding partners in the last seven years, and the support of our citizens, our media, and local and provincial governments.



Our Goals | The Future

Our goals help guide the development and decision making for our future. The Sooke Region Food CHI Strategic Plan 2020 reflects this vision.

Our Goals

- To grow and provide food and food growing opportunities to support the hungry in the community by establishing, operating and maintaining community gardens and food recovery programs
- To educate the community about the need for and importance of local food production through workshops, seminars, community consultation, training, collaboration and mentoring
- To educate the public on agriculture and farming

Key Services | Key Deliverables

Food CHI fulfills our goals by providing continued direction, services and support in the following areas:

Farm Programs	Special Events	Food Recovery	Agricultural Land Conservancy	Sunriver Community Gardens
Farm Mentorship Farmer2Farmer Farm Tour Regional Food & Farm Guide	Seedy Saturday Awareness Film Night Support Sooke Fall Fair, Sooke Rotary Auction & Spring Fair Support Communities in Bloom Workshops & Lectures Food Art Apple Fest	Fruit Tree Gleaning Grow-a-Row (9 helping agencies)	Support OCP AG* policies Support local governments' food security and agriculture plans Lobby for ALR* protection Promote local food production	Allotment Gardens Grow-a-Row Community Plots Orchard Native Garden Healing Garden Family Engagement

OCP AG: Official Community Plan Agricultural Plan
ALR: Agriculture Land Reserve

Member | Consultation

We asked our members to define Food CHI's priorities beginning with a stakeholder meeting held in December 2013. Current board directors and past directors identified six priorities:

1. **GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY**
2. **ENGAGING MEMBERS**
3. **BUILDING COMMUNITY GARDENS**
4. **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**
5. **NETWORKING COMMUNITIES**
6. **SUPPORT AND PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS**

The stakeholder meeting was followed with an online survey of members, member engagement at the January 2014 AGM and by an online survey of the draft plan (Fall 2014).

“My daughter and I volunteered this summer (and will continue) and felt welcomed and helpful. We were provided information, advice and answers from the coordinators. I agree fully with your supporting actions above.” – *Survey response*

After consultation, the six priorities were refined to four priorities.



Visioning workshop

Major Priorities 2020

1. **ENGAGE MEMBERS**
Our success depends on seeking, welcoming and engaging our members and partners in meaningful and adaptable roles to deliver programs and events to advance our vision.
2. **ENSURE HEALTH AND STABILITY**
Our Society's success and health depends on securing the long term stability of Food CHI through our revenue sources, volunteer resources, structures and internal processes.
3. **SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS**
Food CHI will facilitate increased understanding between the public and the food producers through communications, marketing opportunities and education activities.
4. **BUILD COMMUNITY**
Food CHI will build public and business support in growing and sharing food in the region through improving how we share information and by teaching people about our role and the benefits of food security.



Major Priorities

The following four sections present the priorities and summary of actions that will enable us to continue to improve the effectiveness of Food CHI and provide the best possible value to our communities.

1. Engage Members

Our success depends on seeking, welcoming and engaging our members and partners in meaningful and adaptable roles to deliver programs and events to advance our vision.

Current actions that engage volunteer participation:

- Deliver workshops and lectures
- Host Food CHI public awareness and fundraising events (Awareness Film Night, Seedy Saturday, Farm Tour, Food Art Apple Fest, Harvest Feast)
- Deliver farm support programs (Farm Tour, workshops)
- Participate in community events (Sooke Fall Fair, Sooke Rotary Auction & Spring Fair, Communities in Bloom)
- Maintain and operate Sunriver Community Gardens (allotment and community)



Food CHI volunteers dig in

Strategy 1.1 Increase our accountability

Food CHI will increase its accountability to our members by maintaining and implementing programs and events that align with our goals, and ensuring comprehensive transparent decision-making.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- a. Communicate to members about upcoming activities
- b. Welcome new members and provide specific examples of how members can contribute

Strategy 1.2 Attract and retain volunteers

Food CHI will offer its members volunteer opportunities that are meaningful, and that contribute to the Society's sustainability.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- c. Create "position descriptions" to ensure clear responsibilities and outcomes for volunteers
- d. Provide volunteer development
- e. Identify opportunities, expectations and volunteer experience to build a Volunteer Recognition program that members value
- f. Partner with Sooke Region Volunteer Centre to build volunteer engagement (e.g. volunteer brochure)



2. Ensure Health and Stability

Our Society's success and health depends on securing the long term stability of Food CHI through our revenue sources, volunteer resources, structures and internal processes.

Current activities to generate stability:

- Community fundraising activities and events: Seedy Saturday, Farm Tour, Awareness Film Night, Harvest Feast, Food Art Apple Fest and workshops
- Grants: local governments, provincial and federal government, business and non-profit funds
- Membership fees, Sunriver Allotment garden fees
- Donations

Strategy 2.1 Develop stable, predictable and growing revenue sources

Food CHI will ensure revenue sources will contribute to a sustainable financial environment to enable the Society to achieve its short and long term vision.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- a. Assess approaches to develop stable revenue sources (e.g. financial review of workshops, membership categories, programs, projects, events, promotion of collaborations)
- b. Diversify revenue streams through collaboration to leverage resources (e.g. CASA/CHI)
- c. Establish a grant writing committee to ensure approved projects have required funding

Strategy 2.2 Review governance structures and accountabilities

Food CHI will periodically review its governance structures, processes, and levels of authority and accountability to enhance longer term decision making and ensure the structures are appropriate for the sustainability of the Society and its Board recruitment.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- d. Establish governance policies and procedures that include a decision-making process on expenditures, create flexibility to foster new partnerships and revenue opportunities, and clarify roles and responsibilities
- e. Strengthen understanding of budget management and areas of responsibilities and expectations
- f. Foster board development and succession planning by mobilizing membership
- g. Review Goals and Vision and by-laws

“Create opportunities for active member involvement in the governance and operations of the society – bring us in to work on policy development, grant writing, fund development, advocacy and Board support.” – Survey response



3. Support Local Food Producers

Food CHI will facilitate increased understanding between the public and the food producers through communications, marketing opportunities and education activities.

Current activities to support local food producers:

- Promote farms through Farm Tours and annual Food & Farm Guide
- Deliver marketing and business workshops
- Engage public with food producers through sales venues and communication with farmer issues (Seedy Saturday, Awareness Film Night, Food Art Apple Fest)

Strategy 3.1 Increase awareness of local food producers

Food CHI will engage with local food producers to identify ways to increase awareness of and demand for local foods.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- a. Build and maintain new webpages to promote local food producers
- b. Promote local restaurants and caterers who use local foods
- c. Encourage volunteering activities at food producer events, projects and campaigns (Farm Tour, Food & Farm Guide, Value Your Food/Farmers/Community Campaign)

Celebrating local food production

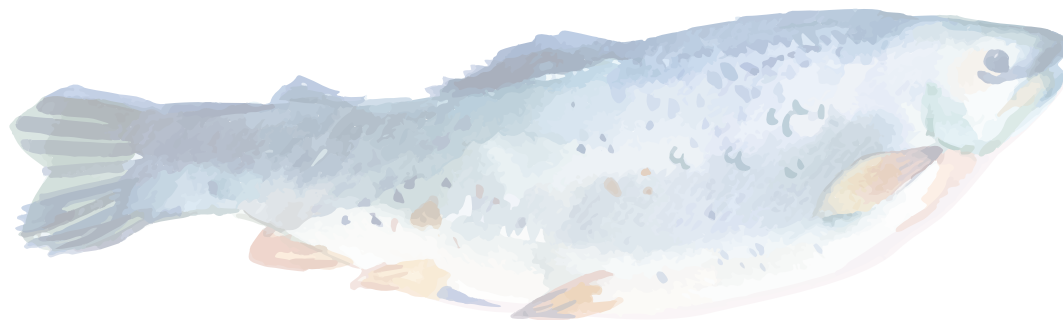


Strategy 3.2 Support local food production

Food CHI will participate in opportunities to support education and information for local food producers.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- d. Develop and share resources including webpage site for local food producers information
- e. Participate in food security plans and policies with local governments



4. Build Community

Food CHI will build public and business support in growing and sharing food in the region through improving how we share information and by teaching people about our role and the benefits of food security.

Current actions that build community:

- Maintain and operate Sunriver Community Gardens (allotment, community, orchard, native wetlands)
- Deliver grow-a-row program to help people in need in the Sooke region
- Deliver farm programs (Farm Tour, workshops)
- Develop and participate in community events (Sooke Fall Fair, Sooke Rotary Auction & Spring Fair, Communities in Bloom, Awareness Film Night)

Strategy 4.1 Strengthen Community

Food CHI will participate in opportunities to strengthen and engage with its stakeholders and community organizations.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- a. Engage in networking and collaboration with similar organizations to leverage opportunities (e.g. Sooke Fall Fair, Transition Sooke, Chamber of Commerce, CASA, Sooke Region Volunteer Society, Sooke Region Farmland Trust, CR Fair, CRD regional food initiatives, Sooke Family Resource Society, Sooke Community Arts Council, Sooke Country Market, Sooke Region Farmers Club)
- b. Ensure effective liaison with other local agencies
- c. Strengthen and maintain relationships with local governments and staff, and local decision makers

Strategy 4.2 Strengthen Community Gardens

Food CHI will continue to maintain and seek opportunities to strengthen and engage with its stakeholders and our communities.

Summary of Supporting Actions

- d. Evaluate Sunriver Community Gardens to determine how best to support and sustain the SRG, by involving the SRG garden council, SRG members and key community players
- e. Research need for other community food production programs with local governments and planning staff. If we can support a second community garden, choose site options and consider different operating models through member and community engagement using Sunriver Community Gardens as a model community garden
- f. Continue evaluating needs and defining sustainability strategies in order to strengthen the region's food security through specific targeted programs, where resources (human and dollars) permit

Sooke Fine Arts Show - Taste of Sooke



Moving Forward

The Sooke Region Food CHI Strategic Plan 2020 is a living document that will be reviewed annually by the Board to build and evaluate annual work plans. A comprehensive member engagement review and update of the plan is recommended to be undertaken every five years to address emerging trends and opportunities along with a mid-term review.

Contact Us

You can view this plan at www.sookefoodchi.ca/2020

To make a comment on the plan or to volunteer, contact Food CHI at info@sookefoodchi.ca

Annual Work Plans will be posted on the website.



Harvesting food at Sunriver Community Gardens



“I applaud you all at Food CHI for what has been achieved. My own experience of involvement with SRG right from the beginning when I stood in the empty field right through to what it is today, has been a truly heartwarming and inspirational experience of community spirit in action. Bravo! That said, as your action plan shows, there is much more important work to be done. Our children and grandchildren will thank you for clearing the way to a more sustainable future.” – Survey response