



Institute for Sustainable Food Systems



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Coastal Communities Food Policy Forum: Final Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	iii
Introduction	1
Food Policy Context	1
Coastal Communities Context	2
Coastal Communities Virtual Food Policy Forum	3
Forum Purpose	3
Forum Process	3
Ways Forward	8
Challenges to Advancing Local Food Policy in Coastal Region	8
Opportunities for Advancing Local Food Policy in Coastal Region	8
Putting the Pieces Together: Towards a Food Policy Framework for the ACRD Coastal Region	11
Food System Vision(s)	13
Stakeholders and Engagement Processes	14
Policy Objectives	16
<i>Increase local food production, processing and wild harvest</i>	16
<i>Emergency Food Response</i>	17
<i>Conservation</i>	18
<i>Broadly Supporting Policy Objectives</i>	18
Policy and Regulatory Tools	19
<i>Comprehensive Plans</i>	19
<i>Zoning Bylaws</i>	20
<i>Regulatory Bylaws</i>	21
<i>Other Municipal and First Nation Government Plans and Strategies</i>	22
Implementation Strategies	23
<i>Governance</i>	23
<i>Funding</i>	23
<i>Programs</i>	24
<i>Evaluation & Metrics</i>	24
Conclusion	25
References	26
Appendices	28
A. Session 1 Meeting Notes	28
B. Session 3 Meeting Notes	32
C. Session 1 Feedback	36
D. Session 2 Feedback	38

Executive Summary

Food policy can be defined as the decisions made by government agencies, businesses, or organizations that impact how food is produced, processed, distributed, sold, consumed, and disposed of. In Canada, food policy has been developed by siloed agencies at provincial and federal levels. Over the last two decades, local

governments, communities and individuals have begun to engage in food policy development. Local level activism, and community-led processes have been at the centre of these movements.

Policies are the collective choices we make. Local communities have demonstrated that they have the power to advance the food system they want to see through strategic decision-making at the local level.

In 2018, the Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan was released in recognition of the unique coastal context and need for region-specific approaches to agriculture and food policy development. The Coastal Communities food policy forum (The Forum) builds off this work, with the specific aim to convene stakeholders collectively identify key policy directions for local food system development. The Forum engaged participants in discussions utilizing the “6 Hat” Thinking Method. This method encourages participants to approach a problem or question by exploring logical, emotional, fearful, positive, and creative responses.

Challenges & Opportunities

Coastal communities of the ACRD face a number of challenges to advancing local food policy that are both specific to the coastal context and common across all communities, including: policy and regulatory barriers, erasure of Indigenous perspectives by colonial, agriculture centred food systems, capacity limitations to develop and work on food system projects, land availability, access and suitability for food production, and funding.

At the same time there are a number of opportunities that indicate support for food policy development and implementation across the region. The ACRD has recognized the unique food and agriculture context of coastal regions through development of the Coastal Addendum. This has resulted in dedicated resources from the ACRD to convene the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable (CAR) and support food related projects in communities. Municipalities and First Nations governments and councils are supportive of food policy development and have already begun considering food systems in development of plans and policies. Many local organization and businesses are also supportive of local food systems and have made significant investments in their development within the coastal region.

A Coastal Region Food Policy Framework

Information gathered through large and small group discussions during the Forum informed the preparation of this report which presents a framework for food policy development in the coastal region that considers five key elements:

- Food System Vision(s)
- Stakeholders and Engagement Processes
- Policy Objectives
- Policy and Regulatory Tools
- Implementation Strategies

Food Systems Vision(s)

Within the coastal region there are diverse communities with unique needs and challenges. Clear visions for coastal food system development for all communities can help to align policy goals across communities, and support strategic investment in projects and initiatives that will help to advance these visions. During the Forum, participants discussed the potential for local food systems to broadly support improved community, individual and ecological health, build stronger relationships, and highlight the unique culture and ecology of the region.

Stakeholders and Engagement Processes

Food policy development and implementation engages a number of stakeholders. Municipalities and First Nations governments can integrate food system considerations into their existing policy and planning work. Participants also recognized that municipalities in particular can play a role in allocating funding and resources through municipal budgets. Community organizations can support policy development, as well as implementation by creating and funding key programs and initiatives. Businesses and schools were also identified by participants as important stakeholders.

Forum participants recognized that there have been challenges related to stakeholder collaboration and relationship development in the past. Policy development processes must acknowledge these challenges and work to address them. These processes must be community-led, and grounded in the unique context of coastal communities.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of the Forum was to generate concrete policy directions that would help to advance three areas of food system development: 1) food production, processing and wild harvest, 2) emergency food response, and 3) conservation. Policy objectives articulate the tangible impacts that policies aim to achieve. Through small and large group discussion the participants explored a number of policy objectives to advance the identified policy priorities areas, as well as those that could successfully advance all three food system development areas. Possible policy objectives discussed during the forum include:

Food Production, Processing and Wild Harvest

- Increase local access to seafood
- Increase small-scale commercial food production
- Secure sustainable access to wild food for local people
- Increase local food processing infrastructure for local use

Emergency Food Response

- Integrate food systems considerations into local government emergency planning efforts
- Increase food self-reliance in coastal communities and across the region

Conservation

- Increase local food production while mitigating wildlife conflict
- Increase education about sustainable wild harvest

Broadly Supporting Policy Objectives

- Formalize food system roles and responsibilities within governments
- Increase coordination of food policy initiatives across the coastal region

Policy and Regulatory Tools

At the local level, there are a variety of policy tools that can be used to help advance local food systems. While jurisdictional limitations have the potential to impact how and to what degree local governments and stakeholders can influence food system development, there are increasing examples of successful food system policy actions at the local level. This report explores a number of tools common to municipal and First Nations governments, including:

- Comprehensive Plans (Municipal OCPs, First Nation Community Plans etc.)
- Zoning Bylaws
- Regulatory Bylaws
- Other local level plans (Food Strategies, Emergency Plans, Sustainability Plans etc.)

Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies are a critical consideration in food policy and local food system development. This must consider the resources (physical, humans and financial), and operational capacity that exists or must be created to advance the policy. Forum participants explored policy implementation with respect to: governance, funding, programs, evaluation and metrics.

Introduction

Food Policy Context

Healthy and functioning food systems are integral to the environmental, economic and social well-being of communities. Food not only supports individual and community health, but is also critically linked to equity, affordability and socio-economic conditions in communities (Reece, 2018; Robert & Mullinix, 2018). The production and procurement of food significantly impacts land and water use, and the allocation of other shared resources. Food systems also impact local level sustainability by influencing community level waste management and greenhouse gas emissions (MacRae & Donahue, 2013). The food system is a significant economic driver. The agri-food sector, which includes primary agriculture, aquaculture, food and beverage processing, input and service suppliers, food distribution, retail, wholesale, and food service industries, is estimated to employ 2.3 million Canadians (CAHRC, 2014). Food is also deeply connected to cultural expression, social cohesion, and belonging within communities.

The last two decades has seen a surge in food systems planning and policy development at the local level, including formalized food systems planning initiatives within municipalities (MacRae & Donahue, 2013; Robert & Mullinix, 2018; Scherb et al., 2012), the emergence of food policy councils (Gupta et al., 2018), as well as a variety of community-based initiatives. In 2019, the federal government introduced Canada's first food policy which makes significant strides in connecting siloed food policy domains such as agriculture, health, economic development, and waste management (Government of Canada, n.d.).

Despite significant progress made over two decades, there is still considerable work to do in translating community food system priorities into actionable food policy at the local level. From a policy perspective, overlapping policy regimes, and conflicting objectives between policy domains remain significant barriers to advancing local level food policy. Additionally, limited capacity and influence at the local level can make it difficult for communities to collectively articulate and advance their vision for local and resilient food systems.

What is Food Policy?

Food policy can be defined as the decisions made by government agencies, businesses, or organizations that impact how food is produced, processed, distributed, sold, consumed, and disposed of (Growing Food Connections, n.d.; MacRae & Donahue, 2013). In Canada, food policy has historically been developed by siloed agencies at provincial and federal levels, with agricultural interests as the primary drivers (PFPP, 2011; MacRae & Donahue, 2013). This has resulted in a fragmented food policy landscape that is largely disconnected from the needs of local communities. In fact, it has been documented that municipalities in particular have largely neglected food at the local level through most of contemporary planning history (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). As a result, food policy development and planning has defaulted to higher levels of government (federal and provincial) and resulted in a food system that does not reflect the needs of local communities, and in some cases act as a significant barrier to community food system development.

Coastal Communities Context

The coastal communities within the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) present a unique context for understanding and developing local food systems, and supportive policy. Located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the coastal region comprises 3 municipalities, and 8 Nuu-Chah-Nulth governments and councils (Shobe & Roessler, 2018). The coastal region is home to 6,400 residents, of which one third identify as Indigenous (Vital Signs, 2018). The region sees upwards of one million tourists per year, and has a high transient population of workers to support the tourism sector.

Food is central to many Nuu-Chah-Nulth cultural practices, which include harvesting in both marine and terrestrial coastal ecosystems (Cote, 2015; Shobe & Roessler, 2018). A vibrant food culture also exists on the coast with significant engagement from local chefs, restaurants, and small-scale producers and processors. At the same time, remote geography, and high costs of living present significant challenges to food access and security across coastal communities. Between 2014 and 2017, the Food Bank on the Edge served over 6,000 clients and distributed over 100,000 lbs of food. The number of food bank clients increased by 12% between 2015 and 2017 (Vital Signs, 2018).

The preparation of the Coastal Addendum (the Addendum) to the Alberni Agriculture Plan highlights the unique coastal food and agriculture context. The Addendum recognizes the challenges to expanding agricultural food production in the coastal regions and the significant role of marine and forest harvesting on the diets of coastal people. The marine sector, in particular, is impacted by overlapping federal and provincial policy and regulatory jurisdictions affecting harvest, processing and local access. With limited local seafood processing, and regulatory barriers that restrict the sale of fresh fish it is challenging for local people to access seafood. Forest harvesting, which is a vital, and culturally significant practice for Nuu-Chah-Nulth peoples, is recognized in the Addendum as an important consideration in the development of coastal food systems. Generally, food policy in BC, guided by agricultural interests does not adequately consider how to thoughtfully, and respectfully integrate these practices into food system development.



Coastal Communities Virtual Food Policy Forum

Forum Purpose

The purpose of the Coastal Communities Food Policy Forum (the Forum) was to engage stakeholders from coastal communities in food policy discussions to gather regionally-focused input around key food policy objectives. These discussions focused around three key food system development areas: 1) food production, processing and wild harvest, 2) emergency food response and 3) environmental conservation. These priorities emerged from consultation work to develop the Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan, and the ongoing work of the Coastal Agriculture Round Table.

Forum Process

The forum was originally planned as a day long, in-person gathering, but due to unforeseen circumstances that precluded this, was adapted to take place virtually over the course of three afternoon sessions. During the first session participants were introduced to food policy, and local policy making contexts within the coastal region. This included a presentation from Bruce Greig (District of Ucluelet) on municipal policy impacting food systems. Bruce outlined the two primary ways that municipalities impact food systems, through 1) municipal budgets and 2) regulations. Municipalities can identify food system priorities in planning and policy efforts and allocate funding and resources through annual budgets. These priorities also shape the kind of regulations a municipality advances with regard to land use and activities, waste management, animal control, noise etc.

This presentation was followed by Vanessa Isnardy and Bob Hansen (WildSafe BC) who shared information about local wildlife conservation programming related to local food production. Through local examples Bob identified the ongoing reality of wildlife in coastal communities. Vanessa described a variety of WildSafe BC programs that aim to address this challenge when implementing food production projects, such as the electric fencing program. They also emphasized the need to consider conservation implications during initial policy and project development phases.

Finally, Emily Hansen (Institute for Sustainable Food Systems) shared information about food policy development and shared some food policy and planning examples from other jurisdictions. Examples from other jurisdictions showed how different communities have articulated their priorities through comprehensive plans, zoning and regulatory policy.

Session 2 focused on taking participants through the “6 Thinking Hats” method (6 Hats Method). The method and key discussion themes are described in more detail in the next section. The 6 Hats Method was chosen for the Forum to encourage creative thinking and dialogue about food policy options for the coastal region, as well as potential barriers and necessary supports to advance local food systems through policy. The third session engaged participants in a discussion about potential food directions policy for the coastal region. These conversations, in addition to previous work done at the local level have informed the development of this report.

6 Thinking Hats Method

The 6 Hats Method is a collaborative decision support tool. Developed by Edward DeBono, the method metaphorically guides participants through different ways of thinking about a problem, each represented by a different coloured hat (Mind Tools, n.d.). The 6 Hats Method allows participants to adopt different perspectives, or ways of thinking that may not be intuitive or natural, at the same time participants are encouraged to adopt these perspectives together to avoid potential conflicts between opposing perspectives, such as optimistic and critical, or emotional and logical. For this activity, the group was divided into five small discussion groups, each with 3-4 members. Each group had an ISFS staff member to act as facilitator and note taker. A sixth ISFS staff member floated between the groups and kept time.

To guide the discussion, participants were presented with a guiding scenario question. “Imagine you are an elected official, or community decision maker for a day, what policies, programs or initiatives would you support? Think specifically about how you might advance food production, processing and wild harvest, and emergency food response, while also addressing challenges related to conservation?” The question was chosen to give participants the freedom to make bold policy proposals that are not constrained by their current position or area of influence. Some key themes emerged that may support further food policy development in coastal communities. [Table 1](#) outlines the key considerations and guiding questions for each “hat” and the following section provides a summary of themes emerging through small group discussions.

Six Thinking Hats



Figure 1: 6 Thinking Hats Method Overview. Source Lucidchart

Table 1: “6 Hat” Methods Description and Discussion Themes Summary

Hat Colour	Perspective	Thinking Framework	Key Questions
Blue	Process/ Analysis	The blue hat is worn by those who develop and guide the process. Blue hat thinkers are primarily concerned with ensuring that all hats are used correctly and addresses any process related challenges or questions.	N/A
White	Data/ Information	The white hat allows participants to examine their logical perspectives. White hat thinkers are primarily concerned with the existing data, information and knowledge that can be gathered and evaluated to support decision making.	What information do we have? What information don't we have? What resources/skills are available?
Red	Emotional/ Feelings	The red hat allows participants to explore intuitive solutions, as well as the feelings and emotions that are connected to various decisions. Red Hat thinkers follow their intuition when making decisions rather than focusing on facts and data.	What is your gut reaction or initial feeling? What values, philosophies and ideals underpin these ideas? Are there any negative feelings emerging?
Yellow	Optimistic	The yellow hat allows participants to explore positive outcomes of their decisions. Yellow hat thinkers imagine the best case scenarios and think specifically about the benefits that might be associated with various initiatives.	What is the best-case scenario and positive outcomes of your decisions? What are the values and benefits that the community will experience as a result?
Black	Cautions/ Barriers	The black hat allows participants to consider the potential challenges and barriers that might emerge when implementing or advancing new policies and initiatives. Black hat thinkers examine the possible challenges in order to better address them through policy making.	What barriers may impact you from achieving your goals? Are there any key resources, or skills that are still missing? How might decisions made create further vulnerabilities and unintended consequences?
Green	Creativity	The green hat allows participants to think outside the box and explore new alternatives that may be outside the realm of possibility. Green hat thinkers may draw on examples from other places to create new, innovative solutions for their community.	What alternatives exist that we might not have thought of yet? Are there solutions from other places that could be implemented here?

Scenario Question

“Imagine you are an elected official, or community decision maker for a day, what policies, programs or initiatives would you support? Think specifically about how you might advance food production, processing and wild harvest, and emergency food response, while also addressing challenges related to environmental conservation?”

6 Hats Method Key Discussion Themes

Key **White Hat** Themes:

- Local data is valuable in lobbying for change and generating community buy-in
- Existing data (provincial and federal) do not reflect coastal context
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust is a source for local food systems/food security data (eg. VitalSigns Reports)
- 2010 Local Food Action Plan has good local indicators that can be revisited
- Lack of data/information about local food production, and wild harvest
- Data Need: Inventories of both physical resources and human resources
- Other data gaps include consumer demand, commercial food production, and crop suitability/yields specific to the coastal region

Key **Red Hat** Themes:

- Frustration with policies that fail to recognize coastal food systems context, and limited local influence of local food system development
- Colonial food systems do not value culture and technology of coastal food system
- Negative feelings around societal challenges like climate change, and food waste
- Excitement about increased profile of food systems within local governments
- Food system development can have broad community benefit and success
- Co-developing food systems with First Nations and settlers that respect traditional knowledge and recognize colonial history and trauma
- COVID-19 elevated conversations about food security, and food self-reliance
- Adopting trauma-informed approaches to gardening and food production is necessary

Key **Yellow Hat** Themes:

- Positive outcomes, such as: food and nutrition security for coastal communities, food self-reliance
- Benefits extend beyond the food system, such as: increasing collaboration and mutual respect, reducing inequity, and improving ecological health
- Policy and local government support of food systems, such as: food security initiatives into OCPs, and allocating funding through municipal budgets
- Participants recognized that by treating food as a community good rather than a commodity, local governments would have more responsibility and power
- Increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues amongst elected officials and municipal staff is recognized as a strategy to help realize these goals

Key Black Hat Themes:

- Barriers from higher levels of governments (i.e. provincial and federal) and the limited influence of local governments in food policy
- Communities have limited control of resources (land, forests, water etc.)
- Local level bylaws and regulations often restrict local food production
- Regulatory requirements for producers are restrictive- limit business growth
- Loss of the permissive zoning for local processing infrastructure
- Challenges exist around establishing a unified voice for coastal communities
- Lack of leadership and community champions to support food policy work
- Time and care must be dedicated to respectful and appropriate communications with First Nations communities
- Necessary to avoid “asking too much” and extracting knowledge and resources from First Nation communities
- Resource limitations, both human and physical
- Funding, in particular long term and sustained funding to support this work is recognized as a barrier

Key Green Hat Themes:

- Policy alternatives needed to support local food producers, such as: long term land leases, business licensing, and tax incentives
- Policy can protect land for critical infrastructure for production and processing
- Address wildlife conflict mitigation up front in food production initiatives
- Connect food system development to both public, and youth focused education
- Opportunities for place based tourism to support food system development
- Policies and projects both locally, and from other jurisdictions were also recognized as having relevance to local food systems
- Leveraging technology to develop coastal specific production systems
- Creating centralized resource/ coordinator to support food policy development
- Formalizing food systems policy within local governments identifying sustained funding and clearly outlining responsibilities

Ways Forward

Challenges to Advancing Local Food Policy in Coastal Region

The coastal communities in the ACRD face a number of challenges to advancing local food policy that are both specific to the coastal context and common to many communities in BC. In moving forward it will be important to not only develop food policies that address key food system challenges, but also to develop supportive frameworks for ongoing policy development and implementation. Forum participants recognized and discussed the implications of many of these challenges, including:

Policy and regulatory barriers

Local food system development in the coastal region is impacted by overlapping local, provincial, and federal policy and regulatory regimes. For example, federal fisheries regulations limit access to fresh fish and other marine products for local residents, while local zoning changes have removed opportunities for development of local processing. The potential introduction of provincial legislation regulating wild harvest could have disproportionate negative impacts in the coastal region, and on First Nations communities in particular. Locally, overlapping regulations may limit opportunities for the growth and development of food production, and processing. Participants recognized the need for policy reform and deregulation to remove these local barriers as a key action.



Erasure of Indigenous perspectives by colonial, agriculture centred food systems

Participants recognized that the dominant food system has developed to reflect settler colonial diets and does not centre Indigenous knowledge, culture, and traditional diets. It is recognized that First Nations communities are the knowledge keepers of traditional coastal foodways. This knowledge should be a central part of coastal food system development.

Capacity limitations to develop and work on food system projects

Participants recognized that there are limited government and community resources to engage in food system initiatives. Challenges in securing volunteers for community garden harvest was cited as an example. Lack of a coordinated leadership around food system projects was also cited as a barrier affecting advancement of food policy initiatives.

Land availability, access and suitability to support food production

Within the coastal region land availability, access and suitability are all significant challenges to advancing a local food system, particularly when it comes to food production. Land suitable for growing food is limited, prices are high, and there is significant competition from other sectors, such as residential and tourism.

Funding

Funding, particularly long-term, sustaining funding is a barrier for local food system development. This constraint is experienced across government, and civil society organizations. It is recognized that access to funding has a significant impact on the longevity of initiatives and the type of projects that can be advanced.

Opportunities for Advancing Local Food Policy in Coastal Region

There is significant interest among governmental, and non-governmental stakeholders to support advancement of local food systems policy within the coastal region. Development of the Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan, completed in 2018, and the subsequent establishment of the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable (CAR) have been significant in recognizing and advancing unique coastal food systems. Within municipal governments, First Nations governments and councils, and community organizations, there are existing resources, capacity and support to advance food policy work.

Provincial and Regional Support

On Vancouver Island local food systems efforts are, in part, coordinated through Island Food Hubs, a collective of organizations including Eat West Coast (an initiative of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust). Working with Island Health, the Islands Food Hub aims to promote healthy food systems and address food insecurity. Island Food Hubs has also created a Food Charter addressing key issues of health, equity, and environmental sustainability as they relate to food systems (Island Food Hubs, 2014).

The ACRD is supportive of food systems initiatives, and has recognized the unique context of coastal food systems within the region (Shobe & Roessler, 2018). The ACRD is actively working towards the implementation of the Alberni Agriculture Plan, and the Coastal Addendum, by supporting Agricultural Support Workers, and convening of the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable (CAR). The CAR represents a group of municipal and First Nation government, business, and community representatives committed to food system development in the coastal region.

Municipal and First Nation Government Policy

There is increasing local interest in developing coastal food systems that reflect the unique context, culture and needs of coastal communities. Both municipalities and First Nation governments are engaged in local food system initiatives. From a policy perspective, there are some examples of coastal stakeholders addressing food and food systems in existing policy.

Much of the existing food system policy supports goals for increased community sustainability, health and wellbeing. For example the District of Tofino's Sustainability Action Plan includes policy language *"to create a thriving community with healthy, active citizens of all ages, a vibrant cultural scene, and access to a variety of recreation, leisure and lifelong learning opportunities"* supporting a desired outcome that *"residents have access to healthy food and opportunities to grow, harvest and buy local food"* (District of Tofino, 2014). The District of Tofino's OCP includes a food system policy that addresses sustainability through the objective to

“minimize reliance on imported food by supporting local food production and consumption” (District of Tofino, 2013). The OCP also addresses local economic development with the objective *“to promote a local food economy”* (District of Tofino, 2013). The District of Tofino is currently engaged in an OCP review process.

The Toquaht First Nation Community Plan also addresses food systems through a community sustainability lens. This plan includes a broad objective to *“encourage greater levels of self-sufficiency and security in food production through growing crops that fit with the terrain and climate”* (Toquaht Nation Government, 2016). Other First Nation policies address food systems as they relate to conservation of traditional foodlands and food sources, specifically marine resources, and food access/affordability.

The District of Ucluelet addresses food and organic waste from a sustainability lens through the draft 100% Renewable Energy Plan, including actions to support local food production, and engage with individuals and businesses to reduce food waste (District of Ucluelet, 2019). The District’s draft OCP for consultation introduces a food security section supporting a community health objective where *“residents have access to healthy food and opportunities to grow, harvest and buy local food”* (District of Ucluelet, 2018). Supportive policies relate to increasing access to seafood and wild harvested foods, as well as development of appropriate composting and food processing/storage infrastructure. Additionally local economic development objectives are supported by a policy to *“support the commercial fishing, aquaculture, and processing sectors in the development of new and higher-value seafood products”* (District of Ucluelet, 2018). The final draft of the District’s OCP is currently being finalized.

Community and Civil Society Support

There are a number of community and civil society organizations working locally that could support advancement of food policy within the coastal region.

For example, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT), and the Eat West Coast has supported community-led food projects in the region. Through Eat West Coast, CBT has allocated over \$115,000 to community food system projects in the coastal region including support for food production, wild harvest, and education initiatives in First Nations communities (CBT, n.d.). CBT also collects coastal specific food security data through their Vital Signs reporting, conducted every two years. Other local organizations

include Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG), Tofino Community Food Initiative (TCFI), Food Bank on the Edge, Westcoast Community Resources Society and Ucluelet Local Food Society (ULFS). Private businesses such as grocery stores/markets, industry associations (shellfish growers and Farmers’ Institutes), and restaurants/chefs could be key stakeholders in local food policy development and implementation.



Putting the Pieces Together: Towards a Food Policy Framework for the ACRD Coastal Region

The Coastal Addendum represents a significant public engagement effort for the development of food systems and agricultural development for the ACRD coastal region. The Food Policy Forum (the Forum), held in June 2020, aimed to engage local stakeholders in food policy discussion, and develop regionally-specific policy ideas to advance key local priorities. This section summarizes the discussions from the Forum, and frames them in terms of local a food policy framework that can support policy development and implementation moving forward. Such a framework will guide decision-making, public engagement and policy implementation in the coastal region and advance a supportive policy and regulatory environment to allow local food systems to emerge and flourish in the coastal region. Concretizing a food policy framework will support policy development while also helping to identify and secure resources, align policy goals, and make strategic investment in local food systems. The policy framework described here outlines five key elements:

- Food System Vision(s)
- Stakeholder Roles and Engagement Processes
- Policy Objectives
- Policy and Regulatory Tools
- Implementation Strategies



Figure 2: Participants during session 3 of the Coastal Communities Food Policy Forum

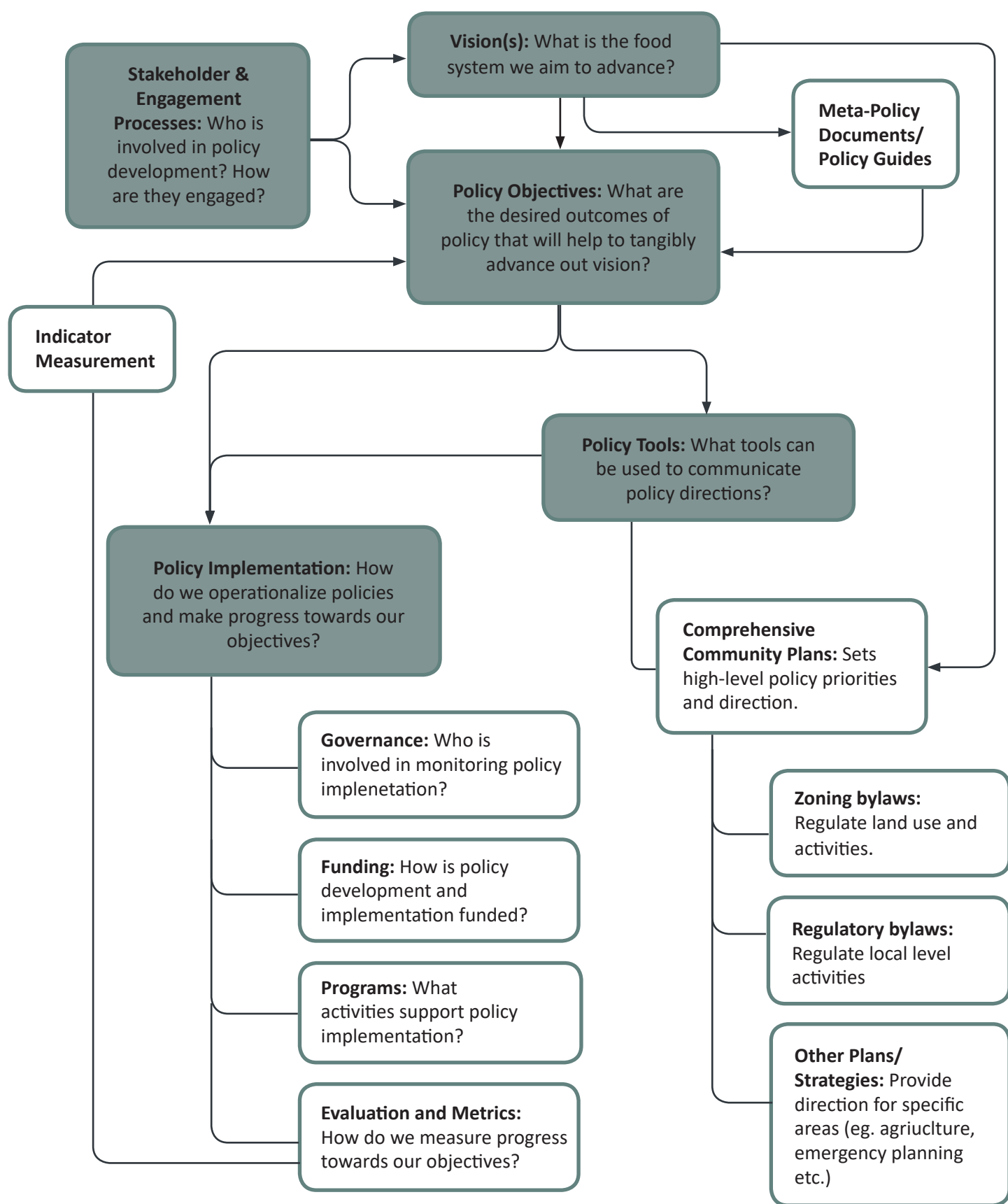


Figure 3: Food Policy Framework

Food System Vision(s)

Visioning is an important part of policy development. Only by developing and articulating where you want to go can effective policy be developed to help you get there. Within the coastal region there are diverse communities with unique needs and challenges. Clear visions for coastal food system development can help to align policy goals across communities, and support strategic investment in projects and initiatives that will help to advance these visions. The Coastal Addendum communicates one vision for coastal agricultural and food system development across the coastal region:

“Our food is celebrated and recognized for its role in nourishing individuals, livelihoods, and relationships. A strong and localized food system provides dignified access to food for our people, a sense of place for our communities and the seeds of resilience for future generations. We respectfully use the resources we have on hand, preserving our ecosystem through responsible stewardship” (Shobe & Roessler, 2018, p. 5).

During the Forum, participants discussed their visions for local food systems in the coastal region. For example, they discussed the potential for local food systems to broadly support improved community, individual and ecological health. The theme of community “success” was also discussed as realizing opportunities for community members to thrive and share “true wealth” through local food system development. Local food systems in the coastal region also have the potential to highlight the unique culture and ecological context of the region, and respect the sovereignty of local First Nations. Participants also recognized the potential for local food system development to build and strengthen relationships.

Visions can be communicated through high level policy documents (comprehensive community plans, OCPs etc.), meta-policy documents or policy guides (food charters etc.). These documents can be useful tools in supporting communication about local needs, priorities, and commitments to higher levels of government. They can also help facilitate dialogue and collaboration between local communities.

Food Charters to Guide Collaborative Food Policy Development

A food charter is a locally developed statement that can guide policy development related to food systems and food security in a community (Interior Health, n.d.). A food charter can be a useful tool to help secure commitments from local governments, businesses and other stakeholders to move forward on development of local food systems. A food charter can be co-developed and act as a touch point for stakeholders engaged in different policy development processes.

The [North Shore Community Food Charter](#) is endorsed by 5 municipal governments, 2 school districts, 2 First Nations and the local Health Authority. This food charter outlines 5 key principles to guide action and food system development, including: 1) health access and equity, 2) environmental responsibility, 3) government leadership and collaboration, 4) economic vitality and 5) community culture and education. The Village of Kaslo has also developed a food charter to guide policy development and community programming related to food security. The [Kaslo Food Charter](#) directly addresses issues of sustainability, poverty and food insecurity in the community.

Stakeholders and Engagement Processes

It is recognized that local governments (municipalities and the ACRD), First Nations governments and councils, and community organizations in the coastal region, are engaged in and supportive of food system initiatives. Individuals, businesses and higher levels of government (provincial and federal) also have a significant role to play in supporting, and advancing local food systems. A food policy framework must consider the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders engaged in the policy development and implementation, as well as the processes they are engaged in to create and implement policy.

Stakeholders Roles & Responsibilities

The development of the Coastal Addendum and Coastal Agriculture Round Table demonstrate how stakeholders have collaborated to determine and advance food and agriculture policy priorities in the coastal region. The following section explores the roles and responsibilities these stakeholders could have in future food policy development and implementation at the local level, based on participant discussion during the Forum.

Municipalities

Forum participants recognized the potential for municipalities to use existing planning tools (eg. OCPs and bylaws) to advance local food systems. Participants highlighted not only the importance of developing food system policies in municipal plans, but also the need to allocate funds to advancing these initiatives through municipal budgets. Prioritizing food systems in policy development, as well as allocating funds and staff resources to these initiatives was recognized as a strategy for addressing some of the resource challenges that limit local food system development.

First Nation Government and Councils

Nuu-Chah-Nulth Governments and Councils in the coastal region have a role to play in food policy development to support health and wellbeing within their communities. Nuu-Chah-Nulth food traditions, culture and perspectives will be important guides in the development of a resilient coastal food system. Participants recognized the need to engage with First Nation stakeholders through processes grounded in care and respect. Respectful engagement must avoid “asking too much”, be trauma informed and support the cultural expression and self-determination of First Nations.

Community Organizations

There are a number of community organizations active across the coastal region focused on food system projects and initiatives. These organizations are working to advance their own organizational mandates, and also play important roles in food system policy development and implementation. In turn, collaborative food policy development can help organizations align their objectives and make efficient use of resources and funding.

The first key role for community organizations is related to education. Community organizations can support outreach efforts, and information dissemination necessary to support the implementation of new policies. They may also be key resources in identifying and contextualizing food policy challenges and gaps based on their work in communities. The second key role is related to information and data gathering. For example, organizations like CBT and Food Bank on the Edge play a role in collecting and communicating food security data. Organizations working on the ground can help support data to inform the policy development process, as well as information about policy and program success. The third key role is related to program development

and implementation. When developing local food policy community organizations may be identified who can support specific initiatives through projects and programming. Community organizations can also be key partners in identifying and accessing funding for projects.

Businesses

Businesses play a critical role in food policy development. For example, it was specifically mentioned that little information is known about local food production businesses in the region. Engaging these stakeholders to better understand the nature of their businesses, and how they can be supported is necessary for effective policy development. They can also be key implementation partners. Forum participants recognized the potential to engage with local chefs and restaurants as well as the tourism industry to support food system development. The strong entrepreneurial spirit in west coast communities was also identified as a strength, and an opportunity to support food system development. Communities in the coastal region have a strong entrepreneurial which is recognized to be supportive of local food system development.

Schools & Institutions

Elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions can be important partners in food system policy development. Unfortunately, no representatives were present during the forum but their potential role to engage and educate youth was recognized. For example, North Island College was recognized as a potential partner to support development of coastal food production technology, and training programs in traditional foods and wild harvest. Ongoing food gardening projects at local schools were also recognized as initiatives that could be expanded to support local food system development.

Food Policy Councils and Food Policy Development

Effective food policy development requires consistent engagement with stakeholders, and work to develop and sustain connections between advocates and governments. Food policy councils (FPCs) have proven effective in performing the function of convening stakeholders, and advancing local level food policy agendas (Gupta et al., 2018; Scherb et al., 2012). FPCs usually emerge from local level food system advocacy within a community, or from municipally-led initiatives.

FPCs can be structured in a variety of ways to best serve the needs of a community. For example the Vancouver FPC and Squamish FPC are embedded in local government acting as an advisory committee on food systems issues within the city (cite). The Squamish FPC has played a significant role in the development of food focused policies in the District of Squamish and the surrounding region, including the OCP and the recent development of the Squamish Valley Agricultural plan. The Central Kootenay FPC does not have direct connections to local government, and emerged from strong local level advocacy around food issues. The Central Kootenay FPC reviews and responds to significant food policy issues in the region engaging members from a variety of sectors to facilitate dialogue and information exchange between sectors (CKFPC, n.d.).

Engagement Processes

The Coastal Agriculture Roundtable (CAR) was convened as a key activity to support implementation of the Alberni Agriculture Plan. The process of engaging these stakeholders around the common goal of agriculture and food system development in the coastal region may also have potential to support food policy development. As part of the implementation of the Coastal Addendum the Coastal Community Coordinators and the CAR are mandated to collect, record, and share evaluation data to help guide decision making and priorities.

Forum participants recognized that there have been challenges related to stakeholder collaboration and relationship development in the past. Policy development processes must acknowledge these challenges and work to address them. The importance of these processes being community-led, and grounded in the unique context of coastal communities was a common theme addressed often throughout the Forum. It was also recognized that having locally-embedded coordinators and resource people knowledgeable about food policy could support these processes.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of the Forum was to generate concrete policy ideas to advance three key areas of food system development: 1) food production, processing and wild harvest, 2) emergency food response, and 3) conservation. This section presents a number of policy objectives that emerged from participant discussions. Policy objectives articulate the tangible impacts that policies aim to achieve and are helpful for both designing policies and evaluating their effectiveness.

Increase local food production, processing and wild harvest

Expanding agricultural production locally is limited by land availability, access and suitability. Additionally, traditional and wild foods have critical nutritional and cultural value for First Nations communities on the coast, but current availability and accessibility may be currently limited. Therefore, expanding local food production, and local access are critical policy objectives. Given the unique coastal context it is also recognized that this must consider both local processing, and wild harvest.

Proposed policy objectives:

Increase local access to seafood: A number of discussions during the forum reflected the limited availability and access of seafood for local people. This was attributed to policy barriers across levels of government, and a lack of locally available processing. Given the limited influence of local governments and communities it was recognized that lobbying, and communicating local needs to higher levels of government will be a key policy action. Additionally, some participants recognized the potential precedents in other communities that could inform local efforts. The fish market in Steveston (Richmond) was noted as a possible example. Other models, like community supported fisheries (eg. Skipper Otto), were highlighted as possible solutions to explore.

Increase small-scale commercial food production: During the forum participants recognized that there could be opportunities to better support local producers, and create supportive environments for small-scale commercial food production. It was noted that this may require de-regulation to remove layered regulations that over time create challenges, particularly for small-scale producers. Potential barriers highlighted could relate to land access, business licensing, and taxation. Gathering information from local producers could also help to understand what the policy and regulatory barriers actually are to better target new policy proposals and reform.

Secure sustainable access to wild food for local people: Participants recognized that potential provincial policy intervention regulating wild harvest would have a detrimental impact on coastal communities. Communicating local priorities to higher levels of government will be critical to ensure that policy change does not negatively impact coastal communities. Locally, it was noted that North Island College could be a partner for developing training programs about responsible and respectful wild harvest. The Barkley Community Forest was also mentioned as a possible partner to support and facilitate cultivation and harvest on non-timber forest products.

Increase local food processing infrastructure for local use: Local food processing was recognized as a significant limitation that must be addressed. Particularly in the context of seafood and marine harvest, the absence of local processing has limited local access and economic development opportunities for coastal communities. It was recognized that local processing capacity has been lost through rezoning and it is important to develop infrastructure, but it is also important to protect these lands and resources using planning and regulatory tools.

Emergency Food Response

The ACRD coastal region is remote, accessible only by a single mountain pass, by air or significant boat travel. Within the coastal region there are also a number of remote First Nations where food security, and access are ongoing challenges. In the region, food prices are high, and the food supply chain is vulnerable to shocks such as extreme weather events, and natural disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased local awareness of the need to consider how the coastal region can respond to shocks and build resilience when it comes to food systems.



Proposed Policy Objectives:

Integrate food systems considerations into local government emergency planning efforts: Emergency planning occurs in the coastal region at the community level, but few of these processes consider food systems. It was recognized that there is potential to integrate food systems considerations into this ongoing work. This may require local governments to consider how the local food system is impacted by different “emergencies” (eg. road closures, extreme weather events, natural disaster, power outage, pandemic) in order to plan accordingly.

Increase food self-reliance in coastal communities and across the region: Coastal communities rely on imported food, produced and delivered by the dominant, conventional food supply chain. Emergency food response can also be thought about from a resiliency perspective that could be advanced through local food system planning and development over time. It was also noted that local food self-reliance and resilience can be addressed on a community wide, and individual level. The Food Bank on the Edge is recognized as a key resource to support emergency food response, and build local food resilience. However, the building and existing infrastructure is in need of repair. Emergency food planning could involve considering the role of the food bank, and how strategic investments and upgrades could support local food system resilience.

Conservation

In the coastal region, ecological context is an important consideration in the advancement of local food systems. Local food production can create attractants for wildlife that can endanger humans and other species. Additionally, food production and wild harvest has the potential to negatively impact ecosystems.



Proposed Policy Objectives:

Increase local food production while mitigating wildlife conflict:

Participants discussed fruit tree gleaning as a possible strategy that could jointly address conservation and local food production goals. Similar programs in Port Alberni could be models for development of like initiatives in coastal regions. Initiating a program like this would require an inventory of local resources and harvest areas, and communication of this information to the public. Local processing infrastructure could be missing to support a gleaning program.

It was also recognized that it is necessary to consider wildlife conflict mitigation as new food production infrastructure is developed. Consideration about the location of food growing as well as proper compost/waste management and fencing are necessary to ensure that wildlife are not attracted.

Increase education about sustainable wild harvest: Recognizing the importance of wild foods for First Nations communities and coastal food systems there was some discussion about how this might relate to local conservation goals. It was recognized that there may be opportunities to educate people locally about the importance of wild foods, and support sustainable wild harvest. Local educational institutions (North Island College, local schools), First Nations, and businesses (chefs, restaurants, tourism sector) were all identified as partners to engage in such initiatives.

Broadly Supporting Policy Objectives

Formalize food system roles and responsibilities within governments: Participants discussed the opportunity to create more permanent roles and funding within local government (municipalities and First Nation) as a desired objective. This could help consolidate and coordinate food system policy and planning resources, and secure funding for food system initiatives through budgets. Within local governments, formalizing an approach to food systems planning and policy development can help to align policy objectives across domains of land use planning, economic development, health, waste management etc.

Increase coordination of food policy initiatives across the coastal region: Coordination and alignment of goals and priorities across communities in the coastal region was identified as a barrier to food system development. Participants recognized that increasing capacity to manage food systems development across the region could be a valuable strategy. The Coastal Agriculture Roundtable, and existing Agricultural Coordinators with the ACRD potentially have a role to play in coordinating policy development work. Increasing collaboration between communities is a desired outcome highlighted by participants.

Policy and Regulatory Tools

At the local level, there are a variety of policy tools that can be used to help advance local food systems. While jurisdictional limitations have the potential to impact how and to what degree local governments and stakeholders can influence food system development, there are increasing examples of successful food system policy actions at the local level. Here we explore the following tools, and provide examples from BC, and other jurisdictions:

- Comprehensive Plans (Municipal OCPs, First Nation Community Plans etc.)
- Zoning Bylaws
- Regulatory Bylaws
- Other local level plans (Food Strategies, Emergency plans, Sustainability plans etc.)

Comprehensive Plans

In BC, Official Community Plans (OCPs) describe long-term vision of communities including the high level objectives and policies that guide local level decision making (Government of BC, n.d.). While OCPs do not obligate or authorize local governments to advance particular initiatives, subsequently adopted bylaws must be consistent with the OCP (Government of BC, n.d.). As mentioned, both the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet are currently engaged in OCP review. Forum participants recognized that strategic policy development within

Table 2: Policy Precedents - Comprehensive Plans

Plan/Policy	Description
City of Victoria Official Community Plan (2012)	In 2012 City of Victoria became one of the first municipalities in Canada to have a stand-alone OCP chapter on food systems. The language used in the OCP recognizes the role of the City in the larger regional food system and aims to increase opportunities for urban food production, increase connections to regional agriculture, and realize benefits associated with health, recreation, and economic development. The City also hired a food policy coordinator to support plan implementation.
City of Nelson Official Community Plan (2013)	The City of Nelson OCP includes food systems language that identifies food security as an important community priority, supported by a number of community organizations and initiatives that support local food self-reliance. Policies were developed in the City's OCP that would <i>"explore ways to ensure availability and accessibility of nutritious whole foods"</i> (City of Nelson, 2013, p. 50). Specific policies were proposed that would permit community gardening throughout the City, and support food production, processing and storage, and work with the Regional District to increase land access for farmers
District of Squamish Official Community Plan (2018)	The District of Squamish OCP contains a stand-alone chapter on food systems that acknowledges the District's <i>"role in preserving the community's agricultural land base and creating a positive regulatory environment for food and farming"</i> (District of Squamish, 2018, p 140). The OCP chapter is very comprehensive and addresses the need for development of a specific food strategy to be developed in partnership with the Squamish Food Policy Council (FPC). The Squamish FPC was significantly involved in the development of policies in the OCP, which were drafted based on the Squamish Food Charter.

municipalities could substantially advance and provide sustaining funding for local food system development. Communicating food system priorities through municipal OCPs can support efforts to allocate staffing and financial resources towards key priority areas.

First Nations governments and councils also engage in developing comprehensive community plans to outline strategic priorities and community development goals for their Nations. It may also be possible to leverage these processes to identify food system priorities and communicate these priorities to non-Indigenous partners and communities within the region. [Table 2](#) includes examples of comprehensive plans that meaningfully integrate food system considerations.

Zoning Bylaws

Zoning is a tool available to local planning authorities to regulate land uses and the built environment. From a food policy perspective, zoning is often criticised for creating barriers to the advancement, or scaling up of community food production and other food system activities (Haines, 2018). While much of the focus in zoning codes revolves around permitting and regulating urban food production, it has been recognized that zoning can be an effective tool to create new opportunities for protection of farm and foodlands, local processing, aggregation and distribution, retail and waste management.

Forum participants recognized that local governments (municipalities and the ACRD) could easily create permissive zoning that would allow for different kinds of accessory buildings that support local food production (e.g. hoop houses and greenhouses). Additionally, there may also be potential to change lot coverage provisions for these accessory structures that create new opportunities for local food production on private land. Forum participants also identified that zoning amendments had resulted in a loss of critical food

Table 3: Policy Precedents - Zoning Bylaws

Plan/Policy	Description
City of Nelson Zoning Bylaw (2013)	The City of Nelson's Sustainability Strategy states goals to increase local food security and support local and regional food systems. To advance this goal the City made amendments to the zoning bylaw to allow for community gardens in all zones. The City also created permissive zoning for food storage (warehousing). With this change the City of Nelson aspires to play a more significant role as a distribution hub for the region's agricultural sector.
City of Victoria Zoning Bylaw (2018)	The City's OCP states priorities to support local food production. This led to zoning bylaw amendments that create permissive zoning for small-scale commercial urban agriculture operations. This included new permissive zoning for retail sales of food produced by these operations. The zoning bylaw permitted "farmstands", and regulated their size and location. Implementation of these new policies required the City to work with Island Health to support regulation of food sales.
District of Saanich Zoning Bylaw (2003)	Rural zones cover most of the parcels in rural Saanich and include agriculture use and produce sales as permitted uses. In some cases the zoning bylaw has been amended to increase farm viability permitting two dwellings on lots in A-3 Farm Market Zones and the A-2 Rural Zones. A number of commercial and industrial zones permit food processing and warehousing. The C-18 Rural Commercial Zone was created to recognize the activities required for the sale and distribution of local agricultural products.

processing infrastructure in coastal communities. Local level zoning, and land use planning could therefore be a strategy to protect land, and physical space for this critical food system infrastructure. As an example, participants identified the possibility of amending zoning bylaws to develop a food transfer station (or food hub) at the Junction. This solution would reduce truck traffic in communities, and provide infrastructure to support food storage and distribution and also provide emergency food storage. [Table 3](#) shows examples of zoning bylaws that create opportunities for local food production, processing and sales.

Regulatory Bylaws

Regulatory bylaws can also be effective tools to address local food system development. These policies are important to ensure that the high level food system vision and goals can be advanced in practice. For example a community may express a desire to support viability of the farming sector but the existing regulatory environment may be overly restrictive of agricultural diversification, and limit opportunities for development of infrastructure for processing. Forum participants highlighted restrictive regulatory environments as having potential impacts on local food production. The development of local food policies could include aligning regulatory policies with high levels goals, or removing regulatory barriers that currently limit local food system development. A number of regulatory policies could be used to advance food system goals, including those regulating: animal control, water use, business licensing, outdoor markets/events etc. [Table 4](#) shows regulatory policy examples that address wildlife conflict mitigation and water use for food production.

Table 4: Policy Precedents - Regulatory Bylaws

Plan/Policy	Description
District of Squamish Animal Control Bylaw (2014)	The District of Squamish Animal Control Bylaw contains provisions for the keeping of urban hens, and bees. The provisions regulate the number of hens or hives that can be kept on a property and their proximity to other lots/residences. Additionally, the bylaw includes provisions to address wildlife attractants including requiring chicken coops to be enclosed by electric fencing, storage or food etc. Squamish is also a certified Bear Smart community. This has guided the development of regulatory bylaws around keeping urban hens .
District of Squamish Outdoor Water Use Bylaw (2014)	This bylaw contains provisions for outdoor water use, including for watering of food gardens. Under the bylaw agricultural operations are exempt from watering restrictions under the provincial Right to Farm Act.
City of Revelstoke Garbage Collection and Wildlife Attractant Bylaw (n.d.)	This bylaw regulates the disposal of garbage and organic waste to reduce wildlife attractants within the city. Provisions relating specifically to food production include “any fruit and/or nuts that have fallen from a tree or bush is removed from the ground and properly disposed of within two days” (p.4). Provisions such as this have resulted in a development of a community glean program to reduce fallen fruit that has the risk to become a wildlife attractant. Fruit harvested is shared between property owners, volunteers and community organizations.

Other Municipal and First Nation Government Plans and Strategies

Local governments and First Nations engage in other planning and policy development processes aimed at different growth and development areas, such as: land use, agriculture, sustainability, emergency preparedness, waste management etc. Food systems are directly and indirectly related to many of these planning domains and they can therefore be used to advance food systems locally. Local government interest in food policy and planning has even led to the development of food focused plans and strategies at the local government level. [Table 5](#) shows examples of other policies that address food system considerations in the context of emergency planning, agriculture and comprehensive food planning.

Table 5: Policy Precedents - Other Municipal and First Nation Government Plans and Strategies

Plan/Policy	Description
City of Baltimore Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan (2018)	In 2013 the City of Baltimore's Office of Sustainability partnered with researchers at Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future to provide recommendations for emergency preparedness planning integrating food systems considerations. The Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report makes recommendations of ways to increase resilience of the City's food system to address disasters and incidents (short term), and climate change mitigation (long term). The process and resulting plan demonstrate how food resilience considerations can be meaningfully integrated into disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation planning.
Lil'wat First Nation Agriculture Plan (2014)	This plan was developed to advance the agricultural vision for the Lil'wat First Nation. The vision is supported by a number of objectives that address land protection and access, knowledge and education, and economic and business development. The plan also includes an implementation plan that is divided into immediate, short and medium term actions. Implementation is supported by various departments and agencies within the Nation as well as external partnerships.
Thunder Bay Food Strategy (2014)	The strategy is built around 7 community food system pillars, including Food Access, Forest and Freshwater Foods, Food Infrastructure, Food Procurement, Food Production, School Food Environments, Urban Agriculture. The forest and freshwater food pillar may have particular relevance for the ACRD coastal region. This pillar includes recommendations that aim to increase local access to forest and freshwater foods, balance conservation values, and increase local knowledge and education opportunities.

Implementation Strategies

Implementation strategies are a critical consideration in food policy and local food system development. This must consider the resources (physical, humans and financial), and operational capacity that exists or must be created to advance the policy.

Governance

Forum participants commonly identified the lack of coordination and sustained leadership as a barrier to advancing local food systems in the coastal region. It was recognized that there is supportive capacity within the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) and the Alberni- Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) for food system development, however this capacity is limited with two staff/resource people working less than full time (1-2 days per week). When it comes to implementation of food policies it is common for local government staff within existing departments (eg. planning, sustainability or social services) to take responsibility for food planning. In some cases, dedicated food systems planning staff are hired to oversee policy development and plan implementation (e.g. City of Victoria, District of Saanich).

The Thunder Bay Area Food Strategy: Model for Local Food Policy Implementation and Governance

The Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy was finalized and adopted in 2014 and has developed a comprehensive governance strategy to advance the plan. Since then the plan has been advanced by the Food Strategy Council and Executive Committee. The Executive committee meets monthly to advance the goals in the strategy and is made up of municipal representatives (from Thunder Bay and surrounding municipalities), researchers, community organizations as well as First Nation and youth representatives. The Food Strategy Council meets twice a year to share information across sectors, and to provide oversight and strategic advice regarding the implementation of the strategy. The Food Strategy Council includes all those on the Executive Committee and representatives from a number of food system sectors. The Food Strategy Council members and community partners also form several project-based working groups (Thunder Bay Food Strategy, n.d.).

Funding

Funding was identified as a significant barrier to implementation of local level food systems policy in the coastal region. The lack of long term and sustaining funding in particular is recognized as having an impact on the type of projects that can be advanced locally. Participants recognized that municipal budgets can be important tools for identifying priorities and directing funding to food system initiatives and coordination.

Community organizations can also play a critical role in securing funds to support local food system initiatives. The CBT, for example, has administered over \$100,000 in funding for food security initiatives through the Eat West Coast program. Community organizations and non-profits may also have access to funding opportunities that are not available to municipalities.

Programs

Programs can be an important part of a policy implementation strategy because they may help to tangibly advance policy objectives or help create awareness about new policy directions. It is recognized that there are a number of existing programs within the coastal region supporting and advancing local food systems. Community gardens, culinary programming and the food bank were identified as supporting local food systems programming. Existing organizations such as Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild, Tofino Community Food Initiative, and Ucluelet Local Food Society are engaged in local food programming on an ongoing basis. The efforts of these organizations could be leveraged to support key policy priorities within the coastal region.

By aligning programming efforts with identified policy priorities there is potential to increase awareness and education around policy issues in the short term, and support policy implementation over the long term. For example WildSafe BC provides local education and programming to improve awareness around wildlife attractants and food production, and also provides support for installation of electric fencing. Participants recognized a lack of information and knowledge about local food growing techniques and innovations. This is an example of something that could be effectively addressed through locally based program development that could advance the objective to increase local food production and access. Strategic policy development can in turn support program longevity and funding while also aligning the efforts of different organizations.

Evaluation & Metrics

Evaluation is a critical consideration in the development and implementation of new policy initiatives. Identification and measurement of key indicators can help stakeholders identify new policy directions, and determine if policy approaches are successful. When it comes to policy, specifically in local government contexts metrics are required to help justify allocation of energy and resources. Forum participants recognized the value of local data in supporting policy development, and in gaining buy-in from decision makers and the public. It is also recognized that existing data collected at the provincial and federal level may not reflect the context of local food systems.

There is existing data that is both specific to the coastal context (eg. Coastal Addendum, 2010 Food Action Plan, CBT Vital Signs Report), as well as federal and provincial data that could be relevant. Participants recognized that it may be necessary to update local level data to better reflect current needs, and ensure that provincially and federally available data can be translated to reflect the unique coastal context.

A number of data needs or gaps were also identified. Participants recognized the lack of information about the current local food production, and wild harvest across the coastal region. Conducting inventories of both physical resources, such as land and infrastructure and human resources was a commonly referenced strategy to help stakeholders better understand what is happening locally. Inventories can also support work to match available resources with local needs. Other data gaps exist around consumer demand information, commercial food production, and crop suitability and yields specific to the coastal region.

Participants also recognized available resources that could better support food system development. Local knowledge, specifically the place-based knowledge of First Nations communities in the coastal region was recognized by participants. Additionally, participants recognize information about what is happening in other communities as a potential resource to support food policy development locally.

Conclusion

At the regional level significant work was done to develop the Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan and convene the Coastal Agriculture Roundtable in order to advance coastal agriculture and food systems. These efforts are promising for local level food policy development. There is also keen interest from municipalities, First Nations, community groups, and the general public to address local food issues. At the same time, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change create strain on existing food systems, and highlight the need for change. Increasing food costs and food insecurity in the coastal region further highlights the need to address food systems issues locally.

The three-day Coastal Region Food Policy Forum engaged local stakeholders in conversations about regionally-specific food policy development. The aim of the Forum was to gather input around key food policy objectives, and support communities in the coastal region in moving forward on these objectives. Additionally, insights from participants during the Forum can be used to better understand not only stand-alone policies that address local challenges, but build frameworks for local level food policy development moving forward. Such frameworks not only support policy development, but also create opportunities for stakeholders to engage in productive policy discussions, and amend and track policy progress over time.

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Appendices

A. Session 1 Meeting Notes

Date: June 1st, 2020

Number of Participants: 27

2:30pm – 2:40pm Welcome and Orientation

- Land and Funding Acknowledgments
- Housekeeping and Zoom Orientation

2:40pm – 2:50pm Overview of Forum Process and Outcomes

Purpose: Gathering stakeholders from the ACRD coastal region to determine food policy and planning directions for their communities

Outcomes: Identifying key policy directives to address:

- Local food production, wild harvest and processing
- Emergency food response
- Conservation efforts

Process:

Session 1 – background information and context

Session 2 – small group discussion using the 6 hats method, generating possible solutions

Session 3 – crafting policy framework to support three priority areas listed above

2:50pm – 3:00pm Group Introduction

Name, Organizations or Affiliation:

Heather Shobe, ACRD Agricultural Coordinator

Aaron Rodgers, District of Tofino

Bob Hansen, Wildsafe BC coordinator for Pacific Rim Region

Bruce Greig, Manager of Community Planning, District of Ucluelet

Corey Rich, Economic development office with Yuułuᑭᑦᑎᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ Government

Daniel Law, Councilor, District of Tofino

Dianna Stubbs, Administrative and Operations manager of Alberni Port Authority

Jeanne Keith Ferries, Ucluelet local food society

Jenny Touchie, Executive member of Yuułuᑭᑦᑎᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ (Ucluelet) Government

Kate Turner, Communications analyst, BC Gov

Lara Kemps, ED Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce, Councilor for District of Ucluelet

Leah Austin, Coordinator of Tofino community food initiative

Lisa Morgan, Director of Community Services Toquat First Nation

Lorna Watson, Ucluelet Local Food

Louise Rodgers, Owner of Tofino urban Farm composting and urban food production business

Marcie Dewitt, Coordinator for Alberni -Clayoquot Health Network

Margaret Morrison, Executive Director West Coast Community Resources Society

Matilde Atleo, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council,

Meg Curtis, Food Hub coordinator for Alberni Valley Food Hub

Mike Badry, Wildlife conflict manager, Ministry of Environment Conservation Service

Nicky Ling, Representative for Area C Director

Rebecca Hurwitz, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Food Hub

Zoran Knezevic, Port Alberni Port Authority

Vanessa Isnardy, Director Wildsafe BC, Kamloops

ISFS Staff: Emily Hansen, Kent Mullinix, Kristi Tatebe, Grace Augustinowicz, Naomi Robert

3:00pm -3:40pm Local Planning and Policy Context

Presentation 1: Bruce Greig (District of Ucluelet) on local planning and policy context

- Description of overlap of food system responsibilities across federal, provincial, local jurisdictions
- Local governments
- power comes from province, limited ability to raise funds to property taxes
- Focus on delivery of services and infrastructure
- Policies = decisions and choices being made. Council is elected decision making body
- Two major policy areas for food systems 1) budgets 2) regulations
- 1) budgets: approve annual budget and 5 year financial plans where bulk goes toward infrastructure, facilities and people. E.g. water for irrigation and food processing, harbour facilities, community centres, parks, information and communications, solid waste management,
- 2) regulations: those that overlap with food system include OCP, zoning bylaw and accommodations for post production, bylaws (nuisance, animal control, solid waste management)

Presentation 2: Vanessa Isnardy, and Bob Hanson (Wildsafe BC) on conservation context

- Preventing conflict with wildlife
- 50% of calls to conservation office are related to black bears, mostly related to garbage and fruit trees.
- Primary concern: leads to human habituation and food conditioning and animals grow used to getting food from urban areas and loss of people awareness
- Food policy considerations: promote best practices at onset to avoid wildlife conflict eg. electric fences required in zoning with urban chickens
- 24 cougar and wolf reports in Tofino since the 20th, daily wolf reportings in community
- Examples of local solutions to prevent wildlife from accessing urban agriculture, composting sites

Presentation 3: Emily Hansen (ISFS) on food policy and planning context

- Food system policies are those that impact the development of a community's food system.
- These policies may influence how food is produced, processed, distributed, sold, accessed, consumed and disposed of in the community
- Historically, food policy has been developed and enforced by primarily federal and provincial agencies
- The opportunities for communities to shape their food systems have been limited

Examples:**District of Squamish Official Community Plan**

- High-level policy document which significantly addresses food systems
- Introduces the idea of food system sustainability and also includes policy directives for a number of food system areas
- Other policy focus areas address in this OCP
 - Agricultural land protection
 - Food Processing, Storage and distribution (including development of a community food hub)
 - Food Access
 - Regional food security (the importance of planning for food system sustainability within the region – and across SWBC)

Lillooet First Nation Agriculture Plan

- High level plan setting direction for agriculture development for Lil'wat Nation
- The plan includes a number of high level recommendations as well as actions to advance each one

Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan

- Recently completed
- Includes high level goals and actions
- High level goal to increase opportunities for food production
- As well as an actions for enhancing land access – including a feasibility study for a farmland trust
- This action relates directly to engagement with the Squamish first nation to identify opportunities for agricultural activities

City of Nelson Zoning Bylaw

- Based on the outcomes of the Nelson Sustainability plan food policies were integrated into the City's OCP and Zoning Bylaw
- Zoning by law which was updated to allow for community gardens in all zones within this city – as a way to increase opportunities for local food production
- City also made zoning bylaw changes to facilitate food warehousing and storage
- This would allow the city – which is the largest population hub in the region to- play a more significant role as a distribution hub for the region's agricultural sector.

Discussion:

Q: About policy barriers, and the “weight” of municipal OCPs and what happens when a council passes a bylaw that opposed the vision in an OCP. Why spend time on an OCP if it doesn't have power?

Bruce - Councils have a lot of leeway in interpreting and implementing their OCP's. Voters matter, public opinion matters in the case where a council is not believed to be upholding their OCP. OCP while a broad vision, IS a bylaw, with segments that are regulatory - eg. Development Permit Areas. No different than zoning or parking bylaw

Aaron - OCP's are not regulatory bylaws. Rather they provide the direction to amend zoning and subdivision bylaws that actually have the power to change land uses. The part to this is the municipal budget.

Rather than increasing regulation and rules, are there opportunities to relax these to leave room for more alternatives. Regulatory systems can be obstructive

Example - there was a community that prohibited electric fences that, when relaxed, could increase opportunities for some food system activities

Q: I'm interested in the argument that our systemic structural issues are essentially policy related? Is this to say that regulations are structurally prohibiting a different food system from arising? Can you give examples of what comes to your mind when you say this?

A: Food processing example. In higher level policy documents, there may be goals to support food processing. But without operational policies (zoning bylaw amendments to allow for the type/scale of processing that serves local farmers) then the high level goal cannot be advanced. Need both high level AND regulatory policies.

District of Squamish is also a Bear Smart Community and have language in their OCP to reduce impacts on wildlife

Wrap up & Key Takeaways

- “We aren’t building the roof of the structure, we are just laying the foundation” - policy forms the basis of where you go moving forward.
- Importance of OCP is also establishing direction for municipal budget and fund allocations
- Emerging space for food systems in local government, where previously ignored.
- Municipalities can play an advocacy role for higher levels of government for developing creative solutions for local needs/concerns
- Policies as choices that help articulate the kind of food systems we want
- Our conversations over the next couple of days will focus on generating solutions with a focus on the coastal community context

B. Session 3 Meeting Notes

Date: June 5th, 2020

Attendees:

Meg Curtis, Lorna watson, Margaret, Mike Badry, Marcie DeWitt, Louise, Vanessa Isnardy, Lisa Morgan, Erika Goldt, Nicky Ling, Aaron Rodgers, Daniel Bruce Law, Melinda Swan, Jeanne-Keith Ferris, Bruce Greig, Heather Shobe

ISFS Staff: Emily Hansen, Kristi Tatebe, Grace Augustinowitz

Review of “6 Hats Discussions:

White Hat:

- Data from fisheries, different jurisdictional level
- Data needs/gaps:
- inventories of community food assets- physical (land, infrastructure); human resources
- Coastal-specific data- eg. agriculture and crop suitability
- Different resources/knowledge sources available:

- First Nations place-based
- Food produced not accessible to locals

Red Hat:

- Negative feelings: unique coastal context not adequately reflected in policy; lack of power/control in making decisions & managing own resources
- Positive feelings: potential for communities to be successful and prosper through devt. of food systems; increased interest in food systems
- Opportunities: potential to link to tourism; need to co-develop with FN/settler collaboration; sense of urgency; covid & climate change; addressing conservation up front vs. as a reaction

Yellow Hat:

- Positive outcomes: potential to realize other outcomes eg. societal & community well-being, reducing inequality, community health, cohesion & collaboration, ecological health
- Specific policy & LG outcomes: Integrating food security into OCP & strat. Plg. work to result in funding; development of supportive systems & infrastructure; food systems as explicit line in municipal budgets; bylaw changes to address issues like wildlife conservation
- Key solutions: fish market development; creation of positions to support; farmers market; mitigation of wildlife conflicts
- Characteristics: multi-intergenerational, flexible, past/future, community led etc.

Black Hat:

- Jurisdictional / regulatory issues/barriers
- Lack of knowledge/information
- Lack of funding
- Relationships & collaboration
- Other resource limitations (eg. volunteers, physical space etc.)

Green Hat:

- Precedents: funding opportunities- federal as well as local
- Solutions that connect to tourism sector, as well as to public and youth education
- Specific policy alternatives- eg. supportive food production policies, business licensing, land access, physical protection of land, infrastructure (eg. greenhouses, berry fields, food hub, community smokehouses, food waste/ag waste composting etc.)

Erika & Heather re:their roles & ability to support:

- ACRD has this role in Heather's position & Anna Lewis- to bring together stakeholders re: food & collate this. Coastal Addendum & now Coastal ag. Roundtable. These roles support the community groups on the ground to build the system they desire. Facilitation, collaboration, info sharing, grant applications, carrying ideas upwards- eg. provincial lobbying re: unique coastal context for agriculture.
- Funding quite limited, not necessarily guaranteed. But, unique that ACRD has the ag support funding - indicative of will for this to carry on. Would like to see the same thing on the Coast with the same mandate.
- Erika: Similar, but coastal focus, but broader- eg. food, health, culture, sustainable development.
- Clayoquot biosphere trust- Eat Well Live Well, founded by Island Health, idea to be a hub of knowledge, resources, connections, collaboration opportunities. To bring people together to facilitate work.

- Sometimes funding not hard to find, but sustainability is hard (people, resources, backbone).
- Would like to see food in each community & where it sits
- Island Health & ARD investment a great opportunity for the region & food policy.
- Rebecca- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust- Erika only works 1.5 days/week & Heather also not full-time, which is a significant limitation. Scaling up due to covid- hope this will help. Also illustrates it doesn't have to be a full position to have an impact.

Discussion re: implementation and Policy Alternatives for Coastal Communities

When considering policy:

- Who will be developing & enacting the policy and support the implementation?
- What does it look like?
- When can we implement these policies? 6 months? What resources do we have to implement right now? COVID led to high interest in food systems- can this be leveraged at the present time 1-5 years- policies for this timescale?
- How do they get funded, from where? How do we track and measure success/ Key metrics etc.

Priority areas:

Food Production, Processing and Wild Harvest

- Protecting land and physical space in communities for infrastructure development
- Fish market (looking to other maritime communities as examples i.e. Richmond)
- Barriers are significant, but think about what the starting points could be locally? Lobby can still come into play
- Q: Richmond- discussion of this as a precedent. Ucluelet has a supportive policy environment.
- <https://stevestonharbour.com/fishermans-wharf/sales-float-purchasing-tips/>
- What are the regulatory barrier there is for a 'fish market' its my understanding this is not an insignificant problem?
- Heather- paper re: marine processing, new models like CSA's bear exploration (eg. Skipper Ottos), Alberni fish processing hub- not local, but better than Vancouver.
- Supportive policy for small scale food producers/processors
- Licensing/regulation of wild harvest
- MoA licensing regulation of wild harvesting potentially coming really soon. IMportant to keep on top of this due to relevance for the area. Any consultation on this? Not yet.
- North Island College developing a program, some interest in Barkley Community forest in expanding in NTFP's etc.
- Think today about where we have the ability to influence in this region?
- Dan- concerned with regulating wild harvest of mushrooms locally- does it then become a barrier to people that have been doing it for a long time, logging companies come and destroy those places overnight. Can regulating also protect the areas?
- Q: re: regulating wild harvesting given history of BC- MoA sees it as a conservation piece, eg. mushrooms - trespassing on private property, knowing who is picking what where. Europe does this.
- Concern re: over-regulation
- Talk about local level policy/deregulation/supportive policy
- Eg. lack of supportive policy around land access for food producers

- Ensuring infrastructure and spaces- eg. fish harvesting plant on waterfront changed zoning to commercial has changed zoning to commercial and likely not to process again. Eg. policy to support local food access for local people.
- Land access policy ideas:
- Q: if someone wanted a permanent greenhouse structure on property, are limited to under 100 sqft.? A: no- need a building permit if larger.
- ACRD working on removing requirement for building permit if property has farm tax status
- Could develop policies easily re: different types of accessory buildings & changing lot coverage provisions something to think about.
- Coastal scale likely more flexible and smaller scale.
- Local governments on the Coast v. supportive. Not fighting an uphill battle on the local level.

Emergency Food Response

- Development of stable food bank/ community hub during times of emergency
- What is meant by “emergency” - changes conversation.
- Containers of canned food? Local greenhouses? Agreements with fish farms (SERMAC?) to obtain protein?
- Can this be addressed through emergency planning processes?
- Where should we go first? Emergency response plan? Resiliency side as well.
- Conversations with grocery store highlights no one quite saw this coming in this form, but need to have these discussions with the stakeholders
- Food bank in an old building, would love a walk-in cooler and teaching kitchen, - So, is it a food bank, or a food hub? That also serves as emergency food facility. Then, when food bank isn’t needed, it is still a community asset.
- Currently, is a need for more space, but a good step to have food connection point identified in each community emergency planning.
- Income and emergency food- those affected more greatly are lower-income- more at risk.
- Commercial land use analysis for West Coast. Zoning land to develop a food transfer station at Junction - keeps trucks out of both communities and creates storage there likely viable business, allows, middle of night deliveries, fewer kms for delivery drivers etc.
- Power outages- people lose food. Cooking also an issue in this context. Can community gardens include an outdoor kitchen/woodstove to use in an outage?
- I also think there is need for emergency planning summer vs. winter when availability locally looks very different. one idea is more support to the CBT preservation education program for communities as an emergency preparedness tool
- Power outages all the restaurants and small grocers put all their food in the tucg warehouse fridge together under a generator

Conservation:

- Fruit gleanings- how does this work in Port Alberni? A: It does capture a huge amount of fruit and reduces wildlife conflicts. Many are elderly & can’t pick, or fruit goes to curb with garbage etc.
- Biggest challenge in funding for coordinator- makes it hard to develop sustainable program.
- Distributed- 1/3 to food banks, but still need processing infrastructure for lower-grade fruit.
- Idea re: making fruit alcohol- find a friendly distiller locally to produce & sell, give \$ back into coordinator

idea. Tofino distiller can't because of organic certification. Happening in Cowichan and Courtney- sold to fund program.

- Conversation has gone on in Alberni Valley as well.
- Locally, don't know where to find the fruit to be gleaned. Connect existing folks wanting to glean with the sources.- Connects to inventory. Match need to what people want- don't end up with excess supply is important.
- Fruit tree mapping would be of benefit

Other areas of discussion:

- Indigenous governance & decision-making
- Improving lines of communication between jurisdictional levels is important- important not to "pass the buck" when not directly related to one's jurisdictional authority
- Re: food security- people dissociated with food, so are conceptually separated. So maybe food security has to change the culture of food so we understand more and people aren't as anxious. Maybe we have lots of food, we just need to understand it better. Elementary and highschool to be part of the food system early on so that as adults we are more connected and less anxious.
- Ties to education & youth. Understanding sometimes a barrier so this is relevant and could be an opportunity to move things forward.
- Example of how organizations can form their own policies. Eg. Tofino initiative- do a lot of work with youth & children. Policy making is for higher up regulatory organizations but also internal policies can support system as well.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

- ISFS will gather information & prepare report to be shared back so that all information will be available.
- Huge topic & really challenging to discuss broadly- these meetings just a beginning, encouragement for folks to reach out individually & to each other to keep moving this forward.
- Another meeting in November (Coastal Community RoundTable)
- Opportunities with more funding coming- ask Heather for more details.

C. Session 1 Feedback

Survey Question 1: What idea, policy or initiative do you think will advance local level food systems policy in coastal communities?

- Coordination and support of First Nations fisheries. Providing public facing infrastructure such as a Saturday fish market (processing and stalls) at the First Street dock.
- Re-imagine a replacement / expanded food bank as a west coast food security hub: food bank + community teaching / processing kitchen + emergency response kitchen.
- Divert organic waste from the landfill to create high quality compost & make it available in volume for local food production.
- Working across communities to align policies that support safe human-wildlife interactions
- Inclusion of a comprehensive food systems policy in Tofino's new OCP- policy that includes fisheries, community harvesting options (forests, shellfish), local agriculture (backyard growing)
- Problem is implementation of policy- thinking through it practically and mobilizing
- Local municipalities welcoming (via bylaws) leasing of some municipal park lands to small food producers -- i.e. green house food operators. As an example, the City of Victoria allows empty lots to be utilized by

market gardener operators.

- Increasing support for communities to create and implement food systems policy
- Comprehensive and ongoing education and outreach- connection to local expertise as well as other information sources
- Seeing that there is buy in from local government for policy and advocacy. I think the identification and development of shelf ready food systems projects to respond to future opportunities is important to increase vibrancy and presence of the sector in west coast communities.
- Continuing to engage formally, broadly, and collaboratively to decide on and move forward with desirable local policy objectives and associated local actions.
- - Include food security within the updated OCPs for all coastal communities.
- - Acknowledge that local food systems will be impacted by the climate emergency and plan for how to mitigate its effects.
- - Promote rain water harvesting and inter-seasonal storage to mitigate against water restrictions.
- - Capitalise on the huge growth of interest in home growing over the past few months to bring more education opportunities to the west coast- including business and market gardening courses so participants can develop a local food growing co-operative under a Grown West Coast (or similar!) brand. This could help with diversifying the economy so people are less reliant on tourism. A course is available in Port Alberni but the climate and growing season is different here.
- Deregulation is a critical topic of discussion. How we build policy in terms of our priorities, inevitably leads to outcomes around local level foods systems. Without consideration for the entrepreneur (farmer) in this case, policy may actually stack against the original intent of creating local and sustainable food systems. We must first put on this hat, or walk in their shoes, as every other concern, interest and safety measure may undermine the ability of local growers to continue their craft. In my opinion, it has been an overly regulative system that has created the large scale efficient industrialization of farming activities we now desire to dismantle. Large scale farming operations exist, because small scale local ones simply could not keep up with reporting, zoning restrictions, taxation, safety measures and rising land costs.

Survey Question 2: What is the most significant challenge or issues to address in order to move forward with this idea, policy or initiative?

- Project champion. Then funding. Then overlapping government jurisdictions and regulatory frameworks.
- Capacity (design, business case, grant writing, bidding, project management) + Funding (very grant-able project, but only if / when you've completed a business case and have a shovel-ready design), and funding.
- Technical: collection. Bear-proof green bins for every household? For businesses?
- Capacity: expanded regional service on the west coast.
- the time and capacity to work at a regional scale
- I think substantial change requires a substantial paradigm shift- a complete rethinking of our industrial food culture, as well as our cultural relationship to place.
- We need to break down policy ideas into actions- small actions that accumulate into larger effects. Its easier to talk about things theoretically than it is to act often. The other issue (I believe) is that those who have the means to act on food systems issues (the practical means e.g. equipment, infrastructure etc) are left out of these discussions. There is a tendency for these discussions to be too academic and basically disconnected from realities on the ground. We need to integrate those who have the means/experience/

know-how with those who have ideas. They provide checks and balances for each other. Talking about others and what we think they should do isn't effective nor probably respectful.

- Local government leadership should take an inventory of all bylaws related to land use and tailor them to be local food production friendly. Therefore, to answer the question-- Local government needs to be educated and have the will to desire local food security be a top priority-- which it currently is not **resources to support staff time**
- Sharing the landscape, including within our communities, with an abundance of wildlife will always present challenges. Determine right from the outset the needed investment of time and resources and the actions required to co-exist with wildlife while producing food. Prevent conflict, food loss, loss of time, structural damage, financial loss and loss of wildlife. Think of sustainable food production and co-existence with wildlife as inextricably linked.
- Aligning resources and stakeholders. Ensuring good collaboration, opportunities and representation across the sector (terrestrial to aquaculture)
- The diversity of needs and depths of changes required. How can we agree on priority actions for a limited collective budget, OR where do we get required funding if we decide to implement changes as independent organizations/governments?
- Decisions about ACRD (Area C) are predominantly made by a remote board of directors unconnected to the area. The area has a mix of rural and semi-rural properties with acerages suitable for small scale food production. Many residents feel more closely aligned to the local municipalities than to the ACRD board with its voting heavily biased towards Port Alberni.
- I think discussions need to start around business viability. If a small farming business is viable than more people will be interested in investing their time and resources to become local farmers. Land is the most costly factor in this, so we would need to depend on innovative policies (municipal) to create land options for leasing that are (zero cost). This could perhaps happen when new development proposals like OceanWest or Wyndandsea occur. Perhaps these developers could set aside sufficient parcels of community land, which would be leased (zero cost) by community farmers. A set of user guidelines for these agricultural zero cost land leases could be created to ensure productive maintenance, wildlife management and aesthetics are kept.

D. Session 2 Feedback

While Hat

- Need a clearer understanding/inventory of food production on outer west coast- don't have actual farms but a great deal of food being informally produced- produce, chickens, fruit
- the need for an inventory of those who wish to grow and those with land
- we don't have data on who is doing what on a small-scale nor on crop yields and crop suitability
- need more data
- We need a new survey of resources
- Hard data is helpful when lobbying
- There isn't much data available and the sample size is often too small for data to be statistically significant. For local data, I use the CBT Vital Signs report as the best source for local data on food poverty, food security, population, living wage etc.
- A priority is to do an inventory of what is currently available (land, talent, labour, current production) and match that with need (what food is under-represented, food insecurity, economic opportunities)

- Need to hire a coordinator and take inventory of existing food sources
- Gathering data regarding local foraging activities-- like wild mushrooms-- so exploring finding out how much is harvested

Red Hat

- Interest and involvement in food production is on an upward trend for many good reasons. Need to get it right so that it doesn't occur at the cost of wildlife.
- cultural awareness for local food sources
- we need to facilitate people to empower themselves. we need to start talking to people about what they need and follow their wishes
- Healing aspect of gardening needs to be promoted especially in First Nation Communities.
- Strong desire to instill Indigenous perspectives
- The community wants change and is ready to try things that they wouldn't have thought of doing BC (before COVID!). Food security has become something that people talk about now.
- lack of access to locally harvested foods is a frustration (a harbour full of fishing boats yet no local fish for purchase)
- sense of urgency (climate change, emergency preparedness)
- Embrace learning about local knowledge held by others, especially First Nations

Yellow Hat

- Many opportunities to increase knowledge, awareness and skills for producing food while co-existing with wildlife- in the classroom, in the community gardens, in family backyards and even through experiential tourism.
- so much interest in gardening, fowl, foraging!
- food security is basically, across the board, a supported topic by members of the community.
- seems like there are enough overlapping interests and benefits for all communities to consider the idea of a fish market
- More people have taken to gardening this season.
- Technology and education are supporting more food production
- The community wants to be part of the solution.
- Growing interest in local food production and many acting on this by investing in home gardens
- chance to work together and make a better place for our children, grand children...etc
- Better food security, and access to nutritional food, especially for low income families

Black Hat

- Funding, human resources
- higher level gov't regulations and controls ie fishing licenses, processing
- multi-jurisdictional issues- local government needs to feel empowered to do whats best for their community regardless of contradictory forces outside of that community
- Is this an issue that is already solved?
- Communication with government officials.
- Hard to get people on same page
- Policy can strangle creativity and innovation but community champions can find a way through. Policy

can take a very long time to get through the bureaucratic process of government, especially if elected officials have different priorities.

- Cost of investing in human-wildlife conflict reduction materials
- what if resources are depleted by others not from the coast
- Funding for actions

Green Hat

- A full-time regional coordinator that can work hand and in hand with the local WSBC coordinators to support residents-businesses-government in creating food production capacity that is environmentally sustainable.
- local fish market!
- we have the required food knowledge in our communities especially amongst elders- its about respecting that its there on the ground and facilitating its realization in practice.
- Education and sharing of information.
- With a budget line, anything is possible
- Innovation can be risky but it is also exciting and it would be good to lead the way with some pilot projects or new policy developement just to see if it works- even if it fails, there are still plenty of learning opportunities for next time.
- Many different initiatives and groups are receiving small pots of money. Having sustainable funding to support a paid position to help coordinate all of these programs in a central hub that includes the food bank, wellness centre, commerical kitchen etc that can put on courses, process harvest and be hub for all.
- Need a place to trade/purchase i.e. fish market...
- Look to other northern communities for ideas of sustainable food practices wrought though policies