

April 11, 2019

File: 6500-20

Name
Municipality
Address
Victoria, BC Postal Code

Dear Name:

RE: Assessment of Local Government Interest in a Regional Foodland Access Program

The Capital Regional District (CRD) recently completed a [Foodlands Access Program Feasibility Study \(the "Study"\)](#). Completion of the Study was recommended in the [Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy](#).

The purpose of the Study was to determine the best way to increase farmers' access to land. With input from new and established farmers, non-profits, existing incubator farm programs, local farmland trusts and local/provincial government representatives, the Study examined seven land access tools.

The Study recommends that the CRD partner with a non-profit organization to operate a foodlands trust to manage inactive local government-owned land formerly used for agriculture.

On April 10, 2019, the CRD Board:

- received the Foodlands Access Program Feasibility Study for information;
- directed canvassing of municipalities to assess whether there is a desire to have the CRD operate a foodlands trust in partnership with a non-profit organization and whether any municipal lands could be made available for inclusion in a trust; and
- directed that staff, upon receiving municipal feedback report back to the Planning and Protective Services Committee.

This letter is being sent further to the above-noted Board direction.

It would be appreciated if you could, by May 31, 2019, please advise of your municipality's:

- support for CRD operation of a foodlands trust in partnership with a non-profit organization;
- willingness to participate in funding CRD operation of a foodlands trust; and
- ability to add municipal lands to a CRD-operated foodlands trust.

For convenience, a feedback form is included. Also attached is information relating to anticipated implications and costs. Please contact Jeff Weightman (250-360-7668; jweightman@crd.bc.ca) if further information is required.

Staff will report municipal feedback to an upcoming meeting of the Planning and Protective Services Committee. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Colin Plant,
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

Attachments: Regional Foodland Access Program Questions/Answers
Feedback Form

Cc: Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer
Kevin Lorette, General Manager Planning and Protective Services
Signe Bagh, Senior Manager Regional and Strategic Planning

SB:sc



Regional Foodland Access Program Questions/Answers

- 1. Have any municipalities expressed interest in having the CRD operate a foodland trust?**
North Saanich, Central Saanich, Sidney and Saanich drafted letters in support of a CRD initiated foodlands trust between 2014 and 2017. Confirmation is being sought to ascertain whether there is still support.
- 2. What is the cost of participating in a CRD-operated foodland trust?**
It is anticipated that the costs to support a foodland trust will be between \$127,500 and \$143,000 per year. Costs per participating municipality would depend on the number of municipalities participating; the number and type of properties included in the trust; achieved lease revenues; and the availability of grants.

At an annual cost of \$130,000, per capita estimates if all municipalities participated would be \$0.70. If only the four municipalities (Central Saanich, North Saanich, Saanich and Sidney) that initially requested the CRD to provide the service were to participate, then the per capita cost in those municipalities would be \$1.91.
- 3. What happens if only some municipalities agree to participate in a CRD-operated foodland trust?**
Those municipalities that agree to participate can cost share the CRD-operated foodland trust. Agreements can be drafted to suit the terms of the interested municipalities.
- 4. Can the municipality retain ownership if the CRD operates a foodland trust on municipal land?**
Lands can be either donated to the trust or the use of the lands can be provided to the foodland trust for a minimum of 10 years. Local governments could remain involved as the owners of public land included in a regional trust and could retain control of infrastructure.
- 5. What would the CRD's role be versus the role of the partner non-profit?**
The CRD's role in the trust remains limited to policy development, property and lease management, and overall administration (e.g., overseeing the legal aspects of the land trust, coordinating land use agreements with municipalities for publically-owned parcels, and providing a meeting space for the oversight committee). The Non-Government Organization would take control of the operational needs (e.g., employing a full time Program Manager and a part time Farm Caretaker, and overseeing the committee). A regional approach will present significant cost efficiencies over and above the alternative option of several municipalities embarking on their own land trust initiatives.
- 6. If there is municipal support, how soon could a foodland trust be up and running?**
The setup time for a foodlands trust depends on the condition and infrastructure of the lands. The trust, legally could be setup within a year after direction and approval is given. However, if lands provided require remediation and infrastructure, additional time would be required.

7. Why focus on inactive local government-owned land formerly used for agriculture?

The study recommends that a farmland trust program initially target existing lands that are municipally-owned, thus reducing the need to acquire private lands. Throughout the development of the land access program study a number of parcels were discussed that are currently owned and being managed by local governments that could be repurposed for a foodlands trust.

8. What can the proposed foodlands trust realistically be expected to achieve?

Benefits will vary based on the amount of land and number of farmers that can operate on the parcels, however, the study anticipates the following: improved regional food security, partnerships with First Nations, preservation of natural asset services, job creation and spin-off enterprises, stimulation of support sector businesses, increased agri-tourism opportunities, new education and learning programs, protection of undeveloped green space, reduced need for ongoing maintenance (such as mowing, ditches, fence repairs).



Regional Foodland Access Program Feedback

Municipality providing feedback: _____

Date: _____

- ☐ support CRD operation of a foodlands trust
- ☐ willing to participate in funding CRD operation of a foodlands trust
- ☐ able to add municipal lands to a CRD-operated foodlands trust (please specify lands to be considered)

Please return this form to:
Signe Bagh, Senior Manager Regional and Strategic Planning sbagh@crd.bc.ca
or 625 Fisgard Street, P.O. Box 1000, Victoria, BC V8W 2S6 by **May 31, 2019**.