



# STAFF REPORT TO THE BOARD

**DATE OF REPORT** November 6, 2020  
**MEETING TYPE & DATE** Board Meeting of November 12, 2020  
**FROM:** Economic Development Division  
Land Use Services Department  
**SUBJECT:** Cowichan Food Innovation and Processing Hub Funding Opportunity  
**FILE:**

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## **PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is for the Board to consider an opportunity for the CVRD, in partnership with Cowichan Green Community, to submit a funding proposal to the Ministry of Agriculture for the creation of a Cowichan Food Innovation and Processing Hub.

## **RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION**

That an application to the BC Food Hub Program, in partnership with the Cowichan Green Community, for funding to support the development of a Cowichan Food Innovation and Processing Hub, be approved; and

That subject to receipt of the grant, the CVRD enter into an agreement with Cowichan Green Community regarding the funding.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Ministry of Agriculture BC Food Hub Program aims to foster growth and innovation in the processing sector through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, technical services and business supports. The program is delivered in collaboration with industry, communities and post-secondary institutions.

Through the BC Food Hub Program, the Province provides a one-time funding commitment to support the start-up of a regionally owned and operated food hub, in collaboration with local government and partners interested in developing and operating a food hub.

The Cowichan Food Processing Feasibility Study, Increasing Local Food Inputs & Food Processing in Cowichan, was completed in 2020. The recommendations stemming from this report included, among others: Recommendation 3.1: Support the Cowichan Green Community Food Hub Initiative project.

On September 17, 2020, Premier Horgan announced the Stronger BC Economic Recovery Plan, which included a commitment to fund additional regional food hubs during this fiscal year.

Cowichan Green Community (CGC) Society and Economic Development Cowichan have been working towards the creation of Cowichan Food hub for several years and CGC has expressed an interest in seeking funding through the BC Food Hub Program.

At the October 28, 2020, Regional Services Committee meeting, CGC provided an overview of the proposed Garden Education Centre Commercial Kitchen, to which this Food Hub application closely aligns.

Ministry of Agriculture staff recently reached out to gather further information about the status of this project and advised of this opportunity for a local government partner to submit a food hub proposal together in partnership with CGC. The application is due no later than November 18, 2020.

#### **ANALYSIS**

Support for this project aligns Goal 2 of the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2018-2022): Sector Development, Agriculture and Food Processing; with Recommendation 3.1 of the Cowichan Food Processing Feasibility Study; and with the Feed BC Food Hub objectives.

CGC has a proven capacity to manage projects of this type, such as Cow-op, the online farmer's market, the Cowichan Seed Incubator Farm, the KinPark Youth Urban Farm and the Agriculture Equipment Library.

In this application, the CVRD has the potential to positively support the agricultural and food processing sector in the region, in line with strategic priorities, and without a financial impact on taxpayers.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The funding program requires grant funds to be provided through a local government. The CVRD will have no direct funding contribution other than through this grant.

#### **COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS**

N/A

#### **STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS**

Alignment with the CVRD Board Strategic Plan (2020-2022) strategic objective: To increase the levels of economic resiliency, security, and prosperity for residents of the Cowichan Region.

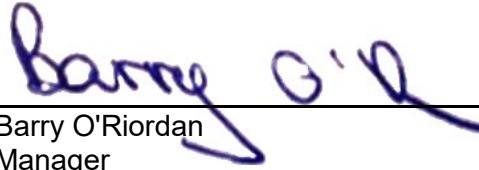
Alignment with Goal 2 of the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2018-2022): Sector Development, Agriculture and Food Processing.

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Referred to (upon completion):

- ☐ Communications & Engagement
- ☐ Community Services (*Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Arts & Culture, Emergency Management, Facilities & Transit*)
- ☒ Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services, Procurement*)
- ☐ Engineering Services (*Environmental Services, Water Management, Recycling & Waste Management*)
- ☒ Land Use Services (*Community Planning, Development Services, Inspection & Enforcement, Economic Development, Parks & Trails*)

Prepared by:



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Barry O'Riordan  
Manager

Reviewed by:

Not Applicable  
Not Applicable



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Ann Kjerulf, RPP, MCIP  
General Manager

Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

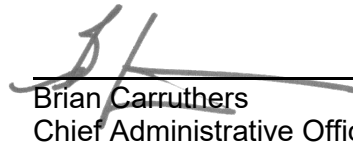
☒ Manager, Legislative Services

Financial Considerations:

☒ Manager, Finance

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Chief Administrative Officer's Comments / Concurrence



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Brian Carruthers  
Chief Administrative Officer

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A - BC Food Hub Program – Overview  
Attachment B - AGRI Food Hub Letter, 2020-11-04