

Central Kootenay Food Policy Council
Terms of Reference: Version 3
February 2017

This was a founding document for the Food Policy Council and formed the basis for the development of the Policy Manual drafted in early 2018. The Policy Manual is a living document that will continue to evolve as needed.

Preamble

Numerous reports over the past decade from various sources in the region have identified a Regional Food Policy Council as an important means to provide a coherent, strategic and pro-active vehicle for improving capacity for farmers and food producers as well as the resiliency of the region's food systems and residents. Two strategic meetings held in 2015 with key actors in the region, including funders and policy makers, launched a funding initiative for a regional food policy council as a means to reduce ad hoc and redundant investments of financial and social capital in food systems initiatives across the Central Kootenays.

Purpose

Through formal ties with local government, the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council will provide strategic direction to planning activities of local government, at the level of the RDCK and sub-governmental (electoral areas and municipalities). Because the Council will be representative of implicated sectors and stakeholders in the Central Kootenays, it will enable the co-ordination of initiatives across the region, reducing redundancy and enhancing the impact of human and financial resources invested in food systems and communities in the RDCK.

The primary functions of the Food Policy Council are:

1. To serve as a forum for discussing food issues and opportunities;
2. To foster co-ordination between sectors implicated in food systems;
3. To evaluate and influence policy,
4. To discern food systems priorities and;
5. To launch or support programs and services that address local needs and that are not in competition with existing or pending food sector or civil society initiatives.

Vision

- The Council provides a formal bridge between civil society, industry organizations and local government
- The agricultural capability of the area is realized and, along with our watersheds, is protected as part of a secure food supply for the region.

- All residents of the Central Kootenay are well nourished through access to culturally appropriate food of sufficient quantity and quality, acquired in a dignified manner.

Scope of Activities

The Central Kootenay Food Policy Council is an independent, community-based non-profit organization, formally linked to local government but at arms length.

The Council geographical scope includes both municipal and rural areas within the Regional District of Central Kootenay. The regional scope is especially important in food-systems related research and decision- making, as there are a number of stakeholders that are working at a local, corridor, or sub-regional level.

The Council is a vehicle to unite the many and disparate actors in sustainable food systems in our region, from those engaged in hunger and access issues, to those working on conservation of water, and others seeking to enhance regional food production. It will support the growth of the food and agriculture sector and the work to ensure that all Central Kootenay residents are well-nourished.

A food system is the place, relationships and activities that connect people to their food. The activities of a food system include production (fishing, farming, gardening and hunting), processing (personal or commercial), distribution, access (generally through grocers, markets, direct from the producer, emergency food providers), consumption and food waste. The full spectrum of food systems activities and needs are within the scope of the Central Kootenay Food Policy Council.

Membership

Council members must endorse the Purpose, Vision and Values of the Council and have skills or expertise in at least one area of food systems issues. The Council will reflect the diverse regions and population of the Central Kootenay

The Central Kootenay Food Policy Council is made up of up to 26 individuals who must reside within the boundaries of the RDCK. The Council must include residents from throughout the region. This geographic requirement will be factored into the selection of representatives from these key sectors:

Governmental

- Local Government – elected (2)**
- Civil Servant (2)
- Min of Ag (1)*
- Health (1)
- Education (2)

Food Sector

- Commercial Farming (2)
- Homesteading (1)
- Processing (1)

- Retailer (1)
- Restaurant (1)
- Distributors (1)
- Waste management (1)

Stakeholders / Community

- Social Services (1)**
- Community Food Initiative(2)
- Youth (1)
- Indigenous (1)
- Environment (1)
- Community Foundation (1)
- Economic Development (1)
- Real Estate (1)

* The Ministry of Agriculture staff who serves the Kootenays.

** Representative member (see following section)

Representation

Where a sector or stakeholder category has some form of umbrella agency, the agency will be responsible for proposing representative(s) on the Council according to their standard practice. It will be expected of that representative that s/he will function as a communication bridge between the Council and the respective sector.

Application

Where no umbrella organization exists, individuals will apply to fill specific positions on the Council and will be eligible depending on their qualifications and ability to represent that sector's perspective and needs.

Alternate

Each Councillor may have an alternate who will be determined through the same process as the lead Councillor (by appointment from the sector or through application).

Application Process

The Council staff will put out a call for prospective Councillors by July 31st each year with applications due by September 15th. The call will include information on the positions available as well as the application and selection process. A paper and on-line application form will be available to applicants.

A five-member Selection Committee of the Council, supported by Council staff, will be responsible for reviewing applications, undertaking interviews and reference checks, and recommending candidates for Council approval. The selection criteria will be determined by the positions to be filled as well as the individual's relevant expertise and willingness to commit to the time commitment and work of the Council. Both the selection criteria and decision-making process will be publicly available.

Terms

All Councillors will serve 2-year terms. This will be waived for the inaugural Council, whose members will self-select for a 1, 2 or 3 year term, in order to have a mix of term endings to ensure that there will be sufficient continuity on the Council at all times. A Term will commence on November 1st and end October 31st. Should an opening occur between those dates, the remaining Councillors may choose to fill it, following the standard procedure to do so. Terms may be renewed once.

Absenteeism

While it is not expected that every member of the Council will attend each meeting, Councillors are encouraged to make every effort to do so. Missing three meetings over the course of a year without prior notification of the Council Co-ordinator or Chair will be deemed equivalent to a resignation.

Staff Support

A Council Co-ordinator is responsible for the administration of the Council and its functions as well as fulfilling the annual Work Plan determined by the Council. This position requires considerable community engagement, food systems, and policy expertise. The core functions of the Co-ordinator require 2 days / week; additional hours may be required based on workplan expansion, project funding or as otherwise determined by the Council.

The Co-ordinator will perform the administrative duties for the Council, including arranging Council meetings and note taking, creating funding proposals and implementing grants, and writing reports and public communications.

Council Procedures

Council Executive

The Council will have an Executive made up of a Council President, Vice President and Treasurer. These positions will be elected annually by the Council membership. The Executive guides the work of the Council Co-ordinator between meetings of the Council and is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council that do not involve public advocacy / positions or any significant shift in direction or new projects / programs.

The President will, with the Council Co-ordinator, act as spokesperson for the Council. The President will collaborate with the Co-ordinator to draft Council meeting agendas. The President will preside over the meetings, ensuring that the meetings run smoothly, that everyone is able to contribute, and that decision-making procedures are adhered to.

In the President's absence, the Vice- President will assume their duties.

The Treasurer will work with the Co-ordinator to monitor, manage and report on the Council's finances.

Meeting Frequency

The Council will meet up to 8 times per year. Special meetings may be called as necessary.

Quorum

A quorum of the Council is 50% plus 3. Quorum is necessary for public advocacy or new program decisions and can be met through electronic means as necessary.

Decision-Making

Consensus is the preferred decision-making process. If consensus cannot be attained, the matter will be put before the Council for a vote, where each Council member is entitled to one vote. A vote will be decided by a majority of those present and voting.

Compensation

Council participation is on a voluntary basis, with no remuneration for services rendered. However, where and as the Council budget allows, costs directly associated with the performance of Council duties and which are not otherwise covered shall be reimbursed upon submission of an expense claim to the Council Co-ordinator. Examples of covered costs include travel and accommodations.

Committees & Working Groups

The core activities of the Council will be attended to by Council staff and members. However, specific and special tasks may require and benefit from committees or working groups that may or may not include members of the broader community.

Examples include the Selection Committee that will function each year to fill any Council openings. A special Working Group may be struck to assist the Council Co-ordinator in developing or implementing a specific project identified by the Council as a priority action.

Public Access

Meetings of the Council are open to the public when they are held in person. It is expected, given the large geography of the Central Kootenays, that some meetings of the Council will be held by teleconference or virtual meeting platforms. A minimum of 2 meetings / year will be held in different parts of the Central Kootenays, and well-publicized, to allow the public to engage with the Council.

Outreach & Accountability



The Council Co-ordinator will create an annual report, including financial details, that will be reviewed and adopted by the Council. Once adopted, this report will be posted on the Council's website and disseminated widely through the Council membership and relevant organizations and media in the Central Kootenays, and beyond as relevant.

The timing of the Annual report will coincide with the term anniversary of members of the Council so that it is approved prior to the new Council in November of each year. The Annual Work Plan will also be presented to and approved by the Council before 1 November each year.