



Kaslo and Area Food Security Community/Commercial Kitchen Feasibility Study

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1. Introduction

The Kaslo and Area Food Initiative (KAFI) began in 2006. Through North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society (NKLCCS), KAFI received funding from ActNow BC to conduct a food assessment of the North Kootenay Lake Region. The purpose of the assessment was to identify what our current food system looks like, where the gaps were, who is food insecure, and what we can do to create a more food secure NKL region. Gillian Sanders and I, Aimee Watson, were hired to conduct the assessment. Once we evaluated all sectors and collaborated our data, we presented our findings at a one day food forum held at the Legion in Kaslo.

The forum was an interactive day full of presentations as well as mini-workshops so that the community could tell us what they would like to do with our findings. Overall, we found that Kaslo is vulnerable to food insecurity as we are remote and depend mostly on shipping our food, as well that there are several demographics that are lacking access to healthy, affordable food. We presented a variety of reports indicating these issues and the community responded with a suggestion of creating a community kitchen that also acts as a business incubator for food processors to create goods. A business incubator simply means a business enterprise that rents the facility creating revenue for a non-profit enterprise which then creates a more sustainable model for non-profit programs by reducing the need to depend on grants and variable funding sources.

After several months of applying for grants to further evaluate the ideas presented at the food forum, NKLCCS received funding from KAIROS, an anti-poverty fund. We are using those funds to conduct a feasibility study on what the community really needs in a kitchen, who may use it, where it can be located and what current facilities exist.

2. Methodology

We began the study by reaching out to the community through a contact list from the original food forum, ads in the Pennywise and flyers. We also put up posters around town inviting people to contact us for input. Once we interviewed all respondents and got a clear picture of what the community really needs, we then moved on to evaluating what spaces are available and how they may meet our needs. Ideally, we would have had a public forum to educate on what is a community kitchen and what is a commercial kitchen. There was also obvious lack of understanding when residents were asked about social enterprise concepts. We believe, through the next steps, we can use the cultivating of a food network to create the awareness, education and hopefully build some strong social enterprises.

3. Responses

The questionnaire had seven questions to establish which type of kitchen was most required (community or commercial or both) and then also questions to determine other amenity needs to increase food security.

The first questions were about a community kitchen, 70% of respondents would use such a facility. The purpose of using a community kitchen varied.

36% responded that they would most like programming that created workshops and courses on food and food security related issues.

27% responded that they would use a kitchen for community meals.

16% would like the ability to build a food pantry, a space for storage of excess food for the community in the event of a natural disaster or global issues impeding our community's access to food.

12% would like the space for various preserving hobbies, most noted was fruit through our local fruit tree program and medicinal herbs.

9% indicated they would like a kitchen to help develop a better local food shed, increasing our access and viability of our regional food system.

When asked about a commercial kitchen, response was not as active as the community kitchen. Only 35% indicated they would use a commercial kitchen facility for entrepreneurial purposes. 43% indicated they would not personally use one, however, several did indicate that they would support and would like to see our community have a social enterprise involving our regional foods. This support came mostly from those who would like to see the regional food system enhanced as well as our local economy.

In recognizing time limits and communication limits through flyers, I believe if we actually had an information session that educated our community on the purpose and use of social enterprises, there would be more who may indicate a use for it.

The second half of the questionnaire focused on food security and how we may increase it for our community. The responses were:

46% indicated a need for proper storage, which would be a 3 tier root cellar, freezer space, seed bank, as well as some farmers needed proper storage for hay. This would not

necessarily be a part of a facility, but a service of connecting those who may have barns not in use.

25% were interested in enhancing regional food system through farmer/garden support, local directory, and good food box program ect..

21% responded wanting more education, including Selkirk College who indicated they would be very interested in enhancing their own programming to compliment such a facility.

8% indicated they would like to see social enterprises that encourage a stronger food system with the Kootenays.

Overall, respondents were clear they would use a community kitchen more than a commercial kitchen at this point. The most important needs expressed being programming, proper spaces and storage to encourage food preserving and a space to produce community meals.



4. Initiatives

The responses indicated that we have three types of initiatives we are focusing on.
(i) Healthy eating and creating a more food secure North Kootenay Lake region,
(ii) incubator/social enterprises support, and
(iii) enhancing the market for existing enterprises.

There is a clear need for working through both the social sector and for building the communities economic development. Through the social sector, we are seeing to it that our community members are healthy and have access to food despite growing changes in our global food system. Through local economic development, we are building a more resilient North Kootenay Lake region that can provide jobs, income and build our community for a more sustainable future. The intention of a social enterprise is to offset the costs of running the non-profit programming by the administration and rental fees of an enterprise.

5. Spaces

Where might we house such an initiative? The spaces we evaluated were

- (i) the Seniors Hall,
- (ii) J.V.Humphries- the school,
- (iii) the United Church,
- (iv) the Scouts Hall,
- (v) Kootenay Lodge and Farm,

Overall, our ideal facility does not currently exist. We have some established buildings with potential and others which would require quite a bit more capital investment.

The seniors' hall has the best immediate potential for beginning a community kitchen program. For long term plans, it does suit our needs for storage and for large workshops.

J.V. Humphries indicated they have sufficient programming and adding anything new would inhibit their ability to enhance their own programs, which they plan to do. They currently have a social enterprise that operates twice weekly, this works well for them and they would not want to add to the uses of the kitchen. However, the kitchen is certified for commercial purposes and with the adjacent home economics room, it is a fabulous space for booking large workshops. They are open to special events planning.

The United Church does not currently have a certified kitchen, so before any programming, we would need to do some renovating as well as appliance purchases. The space, location and relationship with the leaser is optimal. There is plenty of space for a food pantry as well as building a root cellar and having adequate freezer space. We would have to work out some clear contracts to ensure whatever work was done clearly reflected a long term lease and shared ownership. We will keep the United Church as a possible site for long term planning.

The Scouts Hall is not a certified kitchen, nor is it immediately available. The youth center is in discussion with the Village about leasing for their programming. Having discussed with their co-coordinator, there is possibility for collaboration between the groups. In fact, the youth are a demographic our programs have indicated they would like to be involved with as well as the youth have indicated they would like to be involved with food security initiatives. If the lease/ contract to operate is successful between the youth council and the Village, we would like to continue talks of collaboration with them. In terms of the building, it does need a proper assessment as there is speculation of its durability, until then, the actual costs outside of basic kitchen upgrades and renovating for storage requirements, the overall costs of using the Scouts Hall are unknown. We will keep them as part of the long term, possible vision.

Kootenay Lodge and Farm does not currently have a kitchen, it would need to be built. The established farm and current resident have ideals that suit what we have found the Kaslo residents are looking for in a long term facility that houses a community kitchen, social enterprises, and a mandate to create a food secure North Kootenay Lake region. Their location is the only inhibitor, being in Shatty Bench it would require a shuttle bus to get residents to the various programs.

6. Costs

a) Equipment for a kitchen

Item	Cost	Source	Total	
			Community Kitchen Average	Commercial Kitchen
food processor	\$120 \$300 \$200 \$200 \$350	Home Hardware Home Hardware Irly Irly Sears	\$234	
Commercial food processor	\$830 \$1,200	Anvil America Waring		\$1,015
MixMaster	\$150	Irly	\$150	\$150
Blender	\$270 \$123	KitchenAid Waring	\$196.50	
Commercial blender	\$900	Waring		\$900
Commercial mixer	\$3191- \$4,000	Hobart		\$3,595.50
Commercial dishwasher	\$3500- \$4,500	Jackson Insinger Champion		\$4,000
dishwasher	\$420	Irly	\$420	
Convection Oven	\$2000- \$3,000	Sears	\$2,500	\$2,500
Dehydrator	\$2,000		\$2,000	\$2,000
Juicer	80-\$150	Irly	\$230	\$230
Freezers	\$800- \$900	Sears Irly	\$850	\$850
Utensils/	\$500- \$800	Various	\$650	\$650
18 cu.ft fridge	\$790	Irly	\$790	
walk-in	est. \$5000			\$5,000
total=			\$8,020.50	\$20,890.50

Costs cont'd

6b) Spaces

Given there are plenty of variables, there are no definitive costs to report on each space. Costs that are definitive are based on daily use. Through the program needs assessed, there is not currently an ideal space therefore a community kitchen would have either a long term lease, renovate or build to suit. These possibilities create too many variables to have definitive costs on spaces. Thus, at this point we will use the daily use charges for programming to begin and build towards our ideal facility.

Costs	Seniors Hall	Kootenay Lodge and Farm	United Church	JV Humphries School	Scouts Hall
Rent	\$50/day	\$50/day min. full oven use all day would require more	2 hrs/\$25, \$15 each additional hour or	n/a	\$75/day
Utilities	\$150-\$200 /winter months \$80/rest of year \$1200/winter \$640/summer \$1840/year	n/a as it is not yet built	negotiable with lease	n/a	\$2000/ yearly
Insurance	\$800/year				\$800/year
Renovations needed?	yes space for freezer cold storage space for appliances space for users items		yes, needs kitchen reno's for certifying, space reno's downstairs	n/a	yes possibly kitchen needs space for storage wheelchair accessibility

7. Ways to proceed

First step is to establish funding for a community kitchen co-coordinator. Interior Health is not currently funding such positions, but does note that a community kitchen will not be successful without proper, funded co-ordination. To be successful with this project, we must create a sustainable funding source. Initial funding options are local businesses that are part of a larger corporation, (ie: the Weston Foundation which houses IGA), Columbia Basin Trust, and other organizations that NKLCSS will monitor for

upcoming funding. The intention is not to rely on funding for ongoing programming. Once a good program is in place, we hope to bring in speakers to create the culture around food security, regional food system development and local economics that will generate social enterprises to support the work of a community kitchen co-coordinator and ongoing programming. As this process is down the road, we suggest beginning with a basic community meal plan to initiate the project.

We would suggest using the seniors' hall for the meals, and with the growing season fast approaching, there is plenty of opportunity for advocacy and fundraisers. We would like to collaborate with the Fruit Tree Project (FTP) this year to ensure all our excess fruit is being used. The food security co-coordinator, a funded position, will collaborate with the FTP as well as plan some fundraisers to support ongoing work of the community kitchen project.

8. Summary

Kaslo is a unique community with unique opportunities to create a healthy, regional, sustainable, and just food system that ensures we will all eat well. Food security is a new term and a big mouthful to understand. Most residents, as indicated by the food forum last year, are aware. However, not everyone is expected to know what and why we are working to create a food secure North Kootenay Lake region. There are many reasons we may be working to create such a space, the biggest are, as respondents indicated, for a healthier community that knows what is in our food and that no matter the income of our residents, we are able to have a healthy community. Any of the social reports done in the last 5 years indicate that poverty is only perpetuated by unhealthy population. In rural communities we have to look after ourselves more, empower our community services and village council to support our needs.

The residents of Kaslo have spoken. For a strong, healthy, resilient and sustainable community, we need to create a space where the nutrition we require daily is not a part of the struggle of day to day life. A community space that provides tools and empowers all of us to be healthy so that the struggle becomes easier and we can focus on goals and successes. When 9/11 occurred, the interesting and devastating fact that New York City only had three days of fresh food to feed their residents became known, many people began to realize how vulnerable our food system really is. This feasibility study is an opportunity to ensure that Kaslo residents never go hungry, are healthy, and will continue to be a sustainable community.



