

# Executive Directors Report

June 5, 2019

**Social Development Council  
of Cornwall & area**

*“building stronger communities”*



**Conseil de développement social  
de Cornwall et de la région**

*“renforcer les communautés”*

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## ALL THINGS FOOD

For those unfamiliar with All Things Food, It is an initiative within the SDC that serves as an umbrella group to other projects. Its mission is to increase access to local, healthy and sustainable food for all residents of SDG, Cornwall and Akwesasne.

### Food and Agriculture Advisory Council (FAAC).

All Things Food's main focus for the last year has been the Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, and Akwesasne Food and Agriculture Advisory Council (FAAC).

The FAAC was established, thanks to funding from the Community Futures Development Corporation, the Eastern Ontario Training Board and the United Counties of SDG as a formal strategic planning effort to advance economic and community development across the region. Members of the FAAC spent the past 18 months investigating the challenges and opportunities specific to the region's food and agricultural sector.

The council's work has been pulled together into a report with four "priority areas", each with key action items, recommendations, estimated costs, and anticipated impact for Phase 2 which started in January. Since January presentation about the work of FAAC and the recommendations have been presented to many local councils. The next steps are to secure funding so the work can continue. With funding a full time staff can begin working with partners to implement these recommendations. The full 66 page report, along with a shorter at-a-glance version can be found on All Things Food's Website.

**[www.allthingsfoodbouffe360.ca](http://www.allthingsfoodbouffe360.ca)**

Thank you to the volunteer council members for their continued commitment and a special Thank you to Kat Rendek and Gina Dragone, former All Things Food Staff, who even without funding are still committed to the success of this project.

### Community Garden Network

The Community Garden Network began with a grant 2 years ago. The network's mandate was to establish, support, and increase community and home gardening across the region. In addition to supporting new and existing gardens in the region, the network helps facilitate educational events and workshops for residents wanting to learn how to garden. The grant has since run out however this group is still eager to continue their work. We have recently met discuss redefining our mandate to stay relevant and finding a sustainable model to continue this work. More to come after the busy gardening season.

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## Transition Cornwall +

For those unfamiliar The Transition Movement is comprised of vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that seek to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis. Locally that movement is called Transition Cornwall + and operates within the SDC as a working group. Transition does this great work through a variety of action groups.

### Active Transportation group

The Active Transportation group's focus is on building bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities that enable all people to walk and roll for fun, fitness or function. Last year their signature event grew from a week to a month long Walk and Roll challenge and campaign. Throughout the month of June several events were hosted by partner organizations with great community turn-out. You can visit their website for fun activities and tips on how you can get around with any human powered and sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, riding a bike, rollerblading, skateboarding, or using transit.

[www.walkandrollcornwallsdg.ca](http://www.walkandrollcornwallsdg.ca)

### The Food Action Group

The goal of the Food Action Group is to build food security by promoting the local food economy and home food growing. This group hosts several popular events. Such as **World Food Day** which took place in October. Bill and Karen Carriere, members of TC+ opened up their homestead in the counties to the public so people could come, learn about and appreciate the benefits of growing one's own food. There were self conducted tours, guided tours of the various gardens, orchards and food forests on the property. There were also different workshops as well as families taking part in various country crafts and activities. Over 120 people attended the event. We will be at the Carriere's again this year, but at an earlier August date so visitors can see the crops in the ground – on Backyard Food Day.

**The Fifth Annual Seedy Saturday** took place in March. The aim was to offer visitors a one-stop location where they can buy both local and organic seed vendors in time for planning season. As in the previous two years, it was held at the Benson Centre which accommodates the estimated 2,000 people who attended. The difference from other Seedy Saturday from elsewhere is that we have expanded the event from beyond just the selling of seeds to having workshops and booths where people can learn more about growing food from experts. We also ran a number of plant related crafts which help to make it a real family event. As well as many other supportive partners we were particularly grateful for the support this year from the City of Cornwall.

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## Transition Cornwall +

**Incredible Edible Plant Festival** was just a couple of weeks ago. This year our seventh festival was held at a new location around the Bandshell in Lamoureux Park. As in previous years the main aim was to give away vegetable plants to visitors so that they could learn the benefits and joy of growing one's own food. Our partners such as Seaway Valley Community Health Centre and Early ON also provided information, advice and food related activities for families. And as always we offered crafts for families. Over 400 people attended the event and we gave away over 380 plants.

### The Tree Action Group

The Tree Action group hosted a Library Movie Event, in March. The National Film Board Paul Mason classic, "Paddle to the Sea", with children's discussion afterwards led by City of Cornwall arborist and Parks Supervisor Scott Porter followed by a children's paper boat making activity.

The group also began developing an exciting new initiative called Tiny Forest@Library project, on the property along the east side of the Cornwall Public Library, along Sydney Street, by replacing the empty lawn area with a wide variety of plantings that mimic a natural forest arrangement and will include edible plants for both human and bird life. This project will also tie in with The Edible Cities initiative which you will hear more about shortly and will be a highly visible area in our urban centre for education and skill sharing opportunities for the general public.

The group held a meeting in December with MPP Jim McDonell to lobby for urgent action about the Climate Crisis as the new government was seeking input on a new climate change plan. They presented him with a written document outlining Transition Cornwall+'s mission and expressed a desire to work together with the Ontario government. They listed ten examples of how trees play a positive role in our region and the urgency of forest preservation and tree planting, at a time when our recommended minimum tree canopy coverage in the area is well below the minimum recommended and is continuing to fall.

### The Waste Reduction Group

The Waste Reduction Group is the newest group to Transition. Over the last year they have attended many events such as Seedy Saturday, Incredible Edible, World Food Day and Glengarry Earth day with their information booth speaking to attendees about the current waste crisis and simple habits we can change to make a positive impact on our climate.

The Waste group has also invested in a Event Hosting Kit that includes plates, cups, cutlery etc and is available to non-profits to use when hosting community events, Contact Carilyne Hébert at [chebert@sdccornwall.ca](mailto:chebert@sdccornwall.ca) if you are interested.

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## Transition Cornwall +

A great big thank you to all members of Transition Cornwall + for their contagious passion and energy. You are change makers and your community is better for the work that you do.

[www.transitioncornwall.com](http://www.transitioncornwall.com)



## Project Warmth

Project Warmth provides window insulation kits to low-income households in order to help them face our harsh winters. Thanks to 13 Community sponsors and partners we were able to provide 315 insulation kits in 2018. Kits are distributed by the Agape Center, Center 105 and the Salvation Army. We are currently looking for partners who will help us distribute these kits in Stormont and Glengarry next season.



## Edible Cities Cornwall

Edible landscape is the use of food-producing plants in the residential or public landscape. It combines fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers, along with ornamental plants into aesthetically pleasing designs.

In September we hosted a community meeting to determine community interest in an Edible Landscape project. Over 40 people attended the meeting. With the information gathered there our very dedicated Volunteer project coordinator, Alain D'Aoust presented to Cornwall City Council to propose a pilot project with the Flower beds around the bandshell along with 10 large planter boxes. This would turn these typical landscaped areas into unique edible landscape. With unanimous approval the project has moved forward and was planted at the Incredible Edible Plant Festival 2 weeks ago. A thank you to Alain and to our sponsors for making this project a reality.

[www.facebook.com/ediblecitiescornwall](https://www.facebook.com/ediblecitiescornwall)

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## The Employability Network

The Employability Network is active working group that focuses on bridging the gap to obtaining gainful and sustainable employment. The network consists of 24 agencies such as Job Zone, Akwesasne Area Management Board, ODSP, Glengarry Interagency Group and many others.

The network organizes the popular annual Jobs and Service Fair at the Civic Complex. Last year there was a significant increase in participating employers. 41 employers and 16 service providers brought in a crowd well over 1000 people.

The network adapts to the job market. For many years they planned training for front line staff to help them support their clients. The recent change in the job market see several hundred jobs available in the area at any given time. We saw the need to then shift our focus to the employer. This year we launched an employer breakfast series called the Untapped Workforce. This provides us the opportunity to showcase people who may be overlooked when recruiting. Our first breakfast held in Cornwall was centered around people with criminal records. And just last month we partnered with CLG and hosted a breakfast in Alexandria focused on hiring persons with disabilities. Our next breakfast will be in November and will cover Mental Health in the workplace. These breakfasts are made possible with a sponsorship from Eastern Ontario Training Board.



## Data Mapping and Analysis

Live on our website is our Data mapping and analysis project. This is a GIS Map which is a digital community asset and risk mapping tool. Thanks to 2 of 2018 our summer students on this map you will find social services, child care, transportation, food access, emergency services, community centers, and much more. These services are layered on with the deprivation index, marginalization index, population by age, density etc. This tool is available for our community to use to help fill in gaps in service in hopes to better serve our residents. Although the map is live and full of great information it might not be as user friendly as we would hope. Our summer student for 2019 will focus on finding a way to make this tool easier to use.



## The volunteerhub.ca

Thanks to a grant several years ago we had the resources to develop a volunteer posting website to help local nonprofits recruit new volunteers. As what happens with many project, the grant dollars run out and these deserving projects fall to the sidelines. Although this website is live it is not being used to its potential. We hope to relaunch this site this year and find a more sustainable model for it.

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## Vibrant Communities

Vibrant Communities(VC) will be a major focus for the SDC for the foreseeable future. VC is a collective impact initiating. In early 2018 the SDC began engaging 100 policy makers, healthcare workers, non-profit professionals, business owners, people with lived experience and many more from across SDG, Akwesasne and Cornwall. In a nutshell, the group is to assess the risks and find the biggest issues our communities are faced with. Then we will collectively tackle some of those largest societal issues with a strong focus on prevention.

At our last AGM we also hosted the 2nd VC meeting. This was an information gathering meeting on how to develop a common agenda.

Following that meeting we created a survey to help us determine the priorities of our community. We had excellent participation from across the region and all walks of life. 701 responded to help us define our common agenda. Mental health came out as the number 1 priority. Followed by access to health services and then poverty and financial stability. Along with the survey we also encouraged those interested to join Vibrant Communities which saw a jump in our membership.

On November 29 we hosted another meeting where we had engaging roundtable discussions about our 3 priorities. First we celebrated what we are doing well. Then we began scratching the surface of these issues in terms of their causes and what we as a collective can do to address them.

We did not host a meeting of Vibrant Communities until May 1 however we were busy working on an important partnership in the meantime. We were happy to announce this partnership at our last meeting. On January 1, 2019 The Government of Ontario mandated municipalities (single and upper tier) to prepare and adopt a Community Safety and Well-Being plan (CSWB) by December 31, 2020. As part of these legislative changes, municipalities are required to work in partnership with police services, health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services as they undertake the planning process. The goal of this plan is to achieve the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, access to services and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income and social and cultural expression.

Carmen Cousineau has been hired to be the coordinator of this plan and Staff Sargent David Michaud has been assigned to this special project. We saw an aligned vision between both our initiatives and believe that we can be stronger together. The United Counties of SDG, Akwesasne and the City of Cornwall have all agreed to work together to create 1 plan that will address the entire region.

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## Vibrant Communities

Our role with VC is very important to the success of this plan. Over the coming months will be engaging the community in consultation for our plan, reaching across the region and speaking to people with many different backgrounds with a special focus on people with lived experience.

I want to thank Karen Roundpoint from the EOHU for her continued support on this project and the now 200+ members of Vibrant Communities dedicated to not just the creation of this plan but the implementation as well. Often we see many resources and much effort put into creating plans like these but there is no follow through. VC team will lead the charge on implementing this plan for years to come. Our official pillars, Mental Health, Health Services and Poverty now also includes Community Safety. We hope that before our next AGM we will be able to present to you a complete community plan.

Please consider participating in our Focus Group day, Wednesday July 10th at the Cornwall Civic Complex. There will also be the option to participate remotely. Please save the date. More information will be coming shortly.



## Community Resource List

In partnership with the City of Cornwall we have created a complete list of all SDG, Cornwall and Akwesasne non-profits and community services. This list is now live and available for all to use. If you believe a service is missing or incorrect, please use the form at the top of the web page. The SDC is committed to updating this list once a year.

The list will also be available in french before the end of the summer.

Thank you to Emma Meldrum with the City of Cornwall for making this possible.

[www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/community-resources.aspx](http://www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/community-resources.aspx)