

# Strategic Plan

## 2021–2025

North Coast Co-op is a member-owned organization guided by the cooperative principles. As a leader in our community we emphasize a diverse selection of products, while engaging members through consumer education, community building and environmental responsibility.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to provide guidance for maintaining North Coast Co-op's success for the next five years as we move toward our 50th anniversary. The strategic plan outlines six long-range goals that provide broad direction for management, enabling flexibility and creativity in implementation.



## Our 5-Year Goals

### 1 Community Hub

Strengthen our position as the most welcoming, accessible and affordable place to buy healthy, quality, organic and local food.

### 2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Confront areas of inequity and oppression including racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia/heterosexism and white supremacy in our business operations to build a workplace and shopping environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

### 3 Environmental Responsibility

Reduce environmental impact through efficient operations and purchasing practices while engaging consumers in low-impact shopping.

### 4 Cooperative Economy

Actively support the cooperative movement through purchasing and promotional programs, education and advocacy, and dynamic partnerships with other Co-ops.

### 5 Local Food Economy

Actively support the local food economy through purchasing and promotional programs, education and partnerships with local producers.

### 6 Financial Viability

Invest in staff, operations and infrastructure that increase profitability and allow us to fulfill our vision, mission, values and strategic plan.

Your organic, member-owned grocery store since 1973 • [www.northcoast.coop](http://www.northcoast.coop)

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## Cooperative Values

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

## Cooperative Principles

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

# Community Hub

Strengthen our position as the most welcoming, accessible and affordable place to buy healthy, quality, organic and local food.

## Goal

## Opportunity

North Coast Co-op has been serving Humboldt County since 1973 and has long stood as a pillar of good food in the community. We are committed to providing not only great products, but a great experience for our shoppers, and to placing the needs of our community at the heart of our business.

### Over the next five years, we will...

- Determine what creates an exceptional customer experience and develop systems and training programs to that end.
- Design and build seating areas that are conducive to social connectivity and encourage on-site dining.
- Determine ways to support meaningful member engagement and provide excellent membership benefits.
- Develop and implement strategies for pricing, merchandising and category management which keep prices competitive and promote an intuitive shopping experience.
- Maintain policies and systems to ensure safe working and shopping conditions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

## Goal

Confront areas of inequity and oppression including racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia/heterosexism and white supremacy in our business operations to build a workplace and shopping environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

As a business leader in the community, the Co-op has the opportunity and responsibility to facilitate social justice. We seek to analyze and understand institutional barriers to equity in our business practices and work to remove them. By prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels of our organization, we seek to support the social and cultural empowerment of our community and serve as a model for other businesses.

### Over the next five years, we will...

- Work with a third-party equity consultant to assess diversity, equity and inclusion within our current business practices and create goals and action plans based on findings.
- Assess our marketing and recruitment materials and alter to be reflective of our community and welcoming to all. Incorporate the most dominant non-English language of our area (Spanish) into marketing, recruitment and in-store signage.
- Explore implementing a discount program for low-income qualified shoppers.
- Assess our product mix to ensure that it properly reflects the makeup of our community.
- Actively support BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) - owned businesses through purchasing, merchandising and promotional efforts.

## Opportunity



# Environmental Responsibility

Reduce environmental impact through efficient operations and purchasing practices while engaging consumers in low-impact shopping.

## Goal

## Opportunity

Environmental responsibility has been a long-standing commitment for the Co-op. By optimizing internal operations and leveraging our position within the food system, we seek not only to reduce our own environmental impact, but to actively promote sustainable food systems and business practices.

**Over the next five years, we will...**

- Explore opportunities to invest in renewable energy infrastructure for our stores.
- Actively engage local officials in making a post-consumer food waste composting facility available for residents and businesses.
- Look for areas to eliminate or reduce waste from our internal operations.
- Explore ways to engage consumers in low-waste shopping and prioritize plastic-free packaging whenever possible.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive purchasing policy, with a focus on reducing environmental impact through purchasing practices.
- Encourage environmentally responsible transportation to and from stores.



# Cooperative Economy

## Goal

Actively support the cooperative movement through purchasing and promotional programs, education and advocacy, and dynamic partnerships with other Co-ops.

Cooperative Principle number six, Cooperation among Cooperatives, emphasizes the idea that the success of cooperative businesses is greater when working collaboratively. By supporting cooperatives through purchasing, education, resource and idea sharing, and collaborations, we can further strengthen and develop the cooperative movement.

## Opportunity

Over the next five years, we will...

- Support cooperative producers through purchasing, merchandising and promotional efforts.
- Advocate for cooperative business needs in local, state and national legislation.
- Educate community about the cooperative movement.
- Further engage with National Co-op Grocers' (NCG) programs and educational resources.
- Explore collaborative business opportunities with other Co-ops.



# Local Food Economy

Actively support the local food economy through purchasing and promotional programs, education and partnerships with local producers.

## Goal

## Opportunity

The Co-op has long served as a valuable resource and incubator for local producers and vendors. As a community-owned grocery store, we are committed to continuing to develop systems and practices that support producers within our community and bolster local food economy.

### Over the next five years, we will...

- Support local producers and vendors through purchasing, merchandising and promotional efforts.
- Streamline new vendor application process to minimize barriers to entry for local producers and vendors.
- Provide informational resources for local producers and vendors to assist in the start-up process.
- Develop benchmark targets and tracking systems to monitor the percentage of our sales attributed to local products.



# Financial Viability

## Goal

Invest in staff, operations and infrastructure that increase profitability and allow us to fulfill our vision, mission, values and strategic plan.

Grocery stores, in general, operate with relatively thin margins and minimal profits. As a triple bottom line business (people, profit and planet) the Co-op is often stretched even thinner than traditional grocers. To be financially viable, while also meeting the needs of our members and upholding our values, our operations must be optimized for efficiency and effectiveness. Through operational excellence and continuous organizational improvement, we can ensure financial viability so that we can better serve our members, our community, and our planet.

## Over the next five years, we will...

- Develop standardized procedures and training programs for staff that ensure efficient operations and lead to achieving financial targets.
- Expand upon and develop additional tools for accurate and timely financial reporting.
- Improve financial literacy and awareness among key stakeholders within the organization.
- Invest in equipment and infrastructure upgrades to maximize sales opportunities in key areas.
- Build and sustain cash reserves to protect against financial instability.

## Opportunity

