

Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

Strategic Plan 2023-2025



A Message



On behalf of the Board and staff of the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP), we are excited to present the HCP's strategic plan for the next three years, 2023-2025.

This strategic plan was developed through an intensive process with input from staff, volunteers, members, donors, partners, and the Board. We are grateful for the time and care that everyone took in contributing to this strategic plan.

The strategic plan will help chart the HCP's direction for the next three years and beyond and enable us to focus on what is important to our many stakeholders. As you read through it, we hope you will see your own views represented.

We are looking forward to enriching people's lives through plants, nature, and knowledge while contributing to healthier, happier, and stronger communities. We hope you will join us as we move forward together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Donahue'.

Deborah Donahue
General Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Chwyl'.

Ed Chwyl
Board Chair

Who we are today

The original founders of the HCP were a group of volunteers who, in 1979, envisioned an international centre of horticulture education. Today, the HCP is that, and so much more.

Situated on the Saanich peninsula of southern Vancouver Island, in the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ and Lekwungen peoples, the HCP brings people of all cultures, backgrounds, and ages together to enjoy, learn, and participate in the rewards of gardening and horticulture. The HCP leases its 41 hectares (103 acres) of gardens, woodlands, wetlands, and old fields from the District of Saanich, and is a not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia.

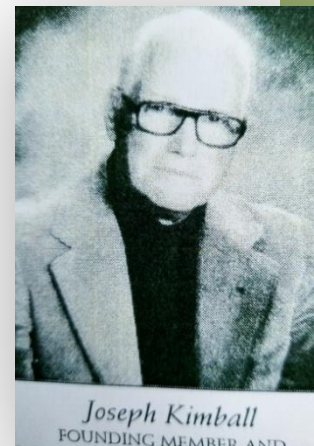
We currently welcome more than 16 staff, 170 volunteers, 230 horticulture students, 1,600 program participants, more than 3,000 members and 15,000 visitors each year. We are particularly fortunate to have a cadre of volunteers who lovingly care for the gardens and conservation park, and participate on the board of directors, with dedication and expertise.

We are dedicated to sharing knowledge and providing high-quality horticulture education for the benefit of the environment and future generations. The HCP's Pacific Horticulture College provides a certified horticulture education program that enables professional careers in landscape and horticulture-related industries and encourages sustainable, environmentally responsible stewardship of gardens and green spaces.

Through our Community Education and Children and Youth programs, the HCP offers a wide range of horticulture-related activities that connect people to plants and nature. We share knowledge about sustainable gardening practices and other emerging interests, such as how to adapt gardens to climate change.

"The HCP is a welcoming and inclusive community space that is the hub of horticulture education in our region. We provide an inspiring, beautiful, and natural environment for everyone to experience, enjoy, and learn. We display and demonstrate the great variety of plants that can be grown in our climate, even as it changes. By demonstrating environmental stewardship practices through our garden management practices, we offer a place that helps protect biodiversity."

Deborah Donahue, HCP General Manager



Adapting...

Our world is changing, and all organizations, especially not-for-profits, must adapt to ensure we are relevant to the communities we serve.

In developing this strategic plan—and in revising our vision, mission, and values—we identified four key themes that shaped our thinking and that provide context for how we plan to remain relevant, resilient, and thriving in our changing world. These themes also reflect what we heard from stakeholders when we sought their input.

People are seeking a connection with nature

The world has become more isolating and divisive, especially during these last two years of a global pandemic. People are searching for meaning, purpose, and connection. Experiencing the wonders of nature and exploring beautiful gardens consoles us, brings us together, and provides shared meaning and purpose. Learning about horticulture and environmental stewardship in a beautiful garden setting transcends differences and inspires people to grow together.

The HCP has served the community for over 40 years, providing beauty, knowledge, joy, and peace to many. Our gardens, conservation park, and education programs must continue to help mitigate the many social, economic, and environmental challenges we face.

Visitor expectations are high

When it comes to service delivery, today's visitor expectations are high, and marketplaces are very competitive. The HCP enjoys a loyal clientele, but we recognize we must continue to improve, refresh, and invigorate our offerings to ensure a continued inflow of visitors, students, members, volunteers, and supporters. The HCP must be prepared to continually make investments to retain and grow our client base, and to remain competitive and relevant.



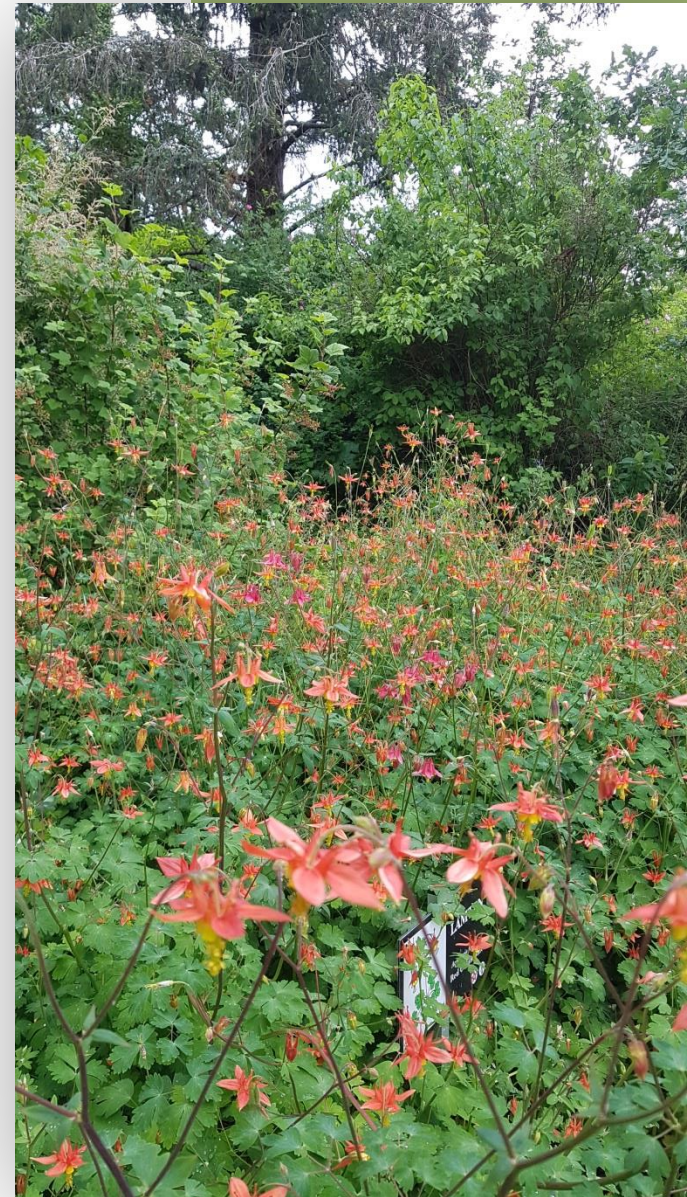
...to our changing world

🌱 Securing funding for not-for-profits is an ongoing challenge

Securing consistent funding and establishing financial security are ongoing challenges for not-for-profit organizations. The HCP must ensure we have diverse revenue streams and funding sources to operate effectively, establish healthy reserves, and fund capital projects that meet visitor and client expectations.

🌱 Communities are diverse

Our communities are becoming more diverse, and we recognize that we must be inclusive and serve people of all cultures, backgrounds, circumstances, and ages. The District of Saanich has a strategic goal to “strengthen the physical, social, and cultural participation of citizens” in the community. The HCP embraces this goal, and we must ensure our gardens, conservation park, programs, and College are for anyone and everyone.





Our vision

The HCP is recognized in our community as a welcoming place that inspires a love of gardens and nature, shares horticultural knowledge and experiences with everyone, produces certified horticultural professionals, and demonstrates environmental stewardship for future generations.

Our mission

To bring a diversity of people together to learn, enjoy, and participate in the rewards of horticulture and environmental stewardship. We will do this by connecting people with plants, nature, and sustainable gardening practices, and by demonstrating responsible stewardship through our garden management practices and habitat restoration activities.

Our values...

The HCP's values guide how we operate and how we interact with our members, volunteers, staff, students, clientele, and partners. Our values provide the foundation for our strategic goals and strongly reflect our mission and vision.

Volunteers

HCP values its cadre of dedicated volunteers who lend their time and expertise to tend the gardens, become Board members, and help deliver and support our vital programs and services to the community.

Stewardship

The HCP has stewardship responsibility for the 41 hectares of land under its management. In managing these lands, we respect the intrinsic value of the plants and animals that occur there, aiming for ecological integrity, and ensuring future generations will benefit from this natural biodiversity.

Education and leadership

The HCP provides horticultural education programs that continue to be relevant to students, the horticulture industry, and our community. We provide leadership by practicing, inspiring, and demonstrating horticultural best practices and environmental stewardship. We innovate when it makes sense to do so.

Collaboration and partnerships

The HCP is committed to developing strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with our community; collaboration is fundamental to how we conduct our business.



Our values

Respect, honesty, and integrity

The HCP treats its clientele, staff, students, volunteers, and members with respect and sensitivity. We apply high ethical standards, practicing honesty, transparency, accountability, and fairness in everything we do. Integral to this value is our commitment to reconciliation.

Teamwork

While the HCP values the individual, we recognize that anyone and everyone can make a difference, and that success is the result of working together as a team.

Diversity and inclusion

The HCP is committed to inclusivity, diversity, equality, and accessibility for everyone within the community it serves.

Financial prudence

The HCP practices financial prudence and balances this with making necessary investments for the future.

Good governance

As a not-for-profit, the HCP appreciates and values the governance role of its Board of Directors. The Board establishes and monitors the long-term direction for the HCP, develops policies and procedures, and provides oversight to its operations and management.



Our goals...

To fulfil our vision and mission, and with the foundation of our values, the HCP has identified six goals to focus on for the next three years and beyond. During the three-year period of this strategic plan, not all the goals identified will be achieved: some will be delivered, some will be planned for, and some are already underway. Goals that are not achieved during this strategic planning period may be carried forward to the next one, if it makes sense to do so. In this way, we can remain flexible in the face of change.

Goal 1 Strengthen our relevance in the community

During the COVID pandemic, people sought out the HCP not only for horticulture learning, but also as a sanctuary and a source of solace. As we enter a post-pandemic period, the need to connect with nature and the outdoors has not diminished. There was and continues to be a significant increase in demand for horticultural education, both at the professional and community education levels. Climate change, food security, and safeguarding the environment and nature for the future are paramount in people's minds, especially for youth.

The HCP will continue to strengthen our relevance in the community by leveraging the tremendous potential of the gardens and conservation park, and through our horticultural education programs.

We plan to:

- 🌱 Increase our Community Education programs
- 🌱 Expand our Children and Youth programs
- 🌱 Incorporate major emerging interests, such as adapting to climate change, into our education program offerings
- 🌱 Expand on the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in our programs
- 🌱 Learn more about the history of the land that we occupy and share what we learn



Our goals...

Goal 2 Enhance clientele experience

As part of the strategic planning process, HCP members, volunteers, students, staff, and supporters provided many suggestions for improving visitor and clientele experiences. We plan to match the most frequent requests:

- 🌿 Improve accessibility for all
- 🌿 Improve facilities and the gardens for greater enjoyment
- 🌿 Improve classroom space and overall student experience

Goal 3 Enhance financial resilience

The HCP has made significant progress in establishing a sound financial footing, but we intend to increase our financial reserves, so we are better positioned to fund infrastructure improvements, build resource capacities, and establish long term financial security. We plan to:

- 🌿 Extend our donor community and recognition
- 🌿 Increase and broaden our membership
- 🌿 Establish multi-year capital planning and budgeting
- 🌿 Develop new annuity income sources
- 🌿 Grow our income sources and identify new fund-raising initiatives
- 🌿 Establish policies and guidelines for capital and operational reserves

Goal 4 Build our capacity and enhance organizational excellence

Committed and dedicated people are one of the main strengths of the HCP. Our staff and volunteers need to be well-supported through policies and programs that ensure they feel respected and have opportunities to grow. Our plan is to:

- 🌿 Develop an infrastructure improvement plan
- 🌿 Develop a human resource capacity plan
- 🌿 Enhance programs to attract and retain volunteers
- 🌿 Develop staff, volunteer, and Board succession plans
- 🌿 Ensure effective Board governance



Our goals

Goal 5 Be a leader in environmental stewardship

The lands we are responsible for managing are unique and invaluable, offering benefits to people and wildlife alike, and we aim to respect that responsibility by demonstrating leadership in environmental stewardship. We plan to:

- 🌱 Incorporate Indigenous knowledge and science into our practices
- 🌱 Develop a climate change adaptation plan for the gardens
- 🌱 Complete a management plan for the conservation park
- 🌱 Apply good conservation practices in the gardens and conservation park
- 🌱 Improve awareness and learning opportunities in the conservation park

Goal 6 Enable the physical, social, and cultural participation of all

The HCP has a goal to support diverse physical, social, and cultural participation. Our plan is to:

- 🌱 Leverage technology to expand access to our programs and services
- 🌱 Strengthen relationships with community groups and partners
- 🌱 Broaden our reach to an increasingly diverse community
- 🌱 Cultivate new partnerships and collaborations



Delivering on our plan

The HCP Strategic Plan for 2023–2025 was developed jointly by the Board and senior staff, taking into account extensive input from stakeholders and others. Responsibility for delivering it remains a joint responsibility that is shared by the Board and senior staff. The strategic plan will be reviewed bi-annually by the Board for course correction and to consider unforeseen circumstances.

The intent of the strategic plan is to help guide decision-making, serving as the blueprint that senior staff use to develop its annual budget and operations plan. Based on interviews with the Board and senior staff during the strategic planning process, we have identified the following list of initial priority actions:

1. Enhance accessibility by improving the parking lot and the entranceway to the gardens.
2. Strengthen our financial resilience by enhancing relationships with our donors, members, and our key strategic partners, such as the District of Saanich.
3. Build our organizational capacity and capabilities by developing succession plans, growing our volunteer base, and investing in people.
4. Plan for infrastructure improvements.

This list, which will be updated annually for subsequent iterations of the planning and budgeting processes, indicates that there is much to be done. While we know that our ability to deliver on these actions is constrained by a lack of resource capacity, we aim to mitigate this by employing two tactics:

- 🌿 Hire or contract additional resources to undertake priority actions or enable existing staff to do so; and
- 🌿 Utilize Board members and/or other volunteers to undertake priority actions on behalf of staff for a specified time period or until specific projects are completed.

We anticipate that, after completing the priority actions listed above, the HCP's revenue streams will have grown and we will be better positioned to either hire more staff or contract resources to undertake the next series of priority actions. Regardless, in delivering our priority actions, we will be guided by the following:

- 🌿 Not over-committing the HCP financially,
- 🌿 Focusing on a few actions and doing them well,
- 🌿 Continuing to meet our social relevance to the community, and
- 🌿 Be a model of environmental stewardship.



Let's move forward together

