

AN ANDERSON ISLAND FOOD CO-OP UPDATE

August 25, 2026

Dear Anderson Island Neighbors and Friends,

Thank you for your patience, questions, ideas, and continued support as we work toward creating a sustainable, community-owned store with everyday essentials, fresh food, and a place to connect.

We are excited to share what we have accomplished so far—and what comes next.

OUR EMERGING VALUES AND VISION

Our Steering Committee began its work by defining values to guide the development of a community-owned store. These values—**Respectful, Supportive and Inclusive**—have helped shape our working vision:

We seek to be a flourishing marketplace, welcoming all with everyday essentials, fresh food, and community for generations to come.

This vision is still developing, and community input will help us strengthen it.

LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITY

We have begun a series of small-group conversations with islanders representing a range of experiences and perspectives. These conversations are just the beginning. A community survey will follow, helping us better understand local needs and priorities before a larger community meeting later this fall.

We intend to provide opportunities for everyone who cares about the future of our island to participate.

We know islanders have important questions: What will the store offer? How will it operate and be funded? How will membership work? When might the store—and fuel—be available? Our job now is to do the work necessary to answer these questions thoughtfully and responsibly, and to keep the community informed as we learn more and decisions are made.

BUILDING THE ORGANIZATION

Our Steering Committee volunteers bring deep experience and knowledge in key areas needed to establish our new community-owned store:

- **Outreach and Membership**
- **Finance**
- **Facilities**
- **Operations**
- **Procurement**
- **Information Technology**

Over the coming months, we are working to develop a sustainable business plan, evaluate and improve store facilities, source fuel, groceries, and fresh and prepared foods, and prepare for a community-wide membership drive. We will also be inviting you to help decide something especially exciting: ***the store's name and digital identity.***

As you can see, there is much work to be done!

STEERING COMMITTEE, *in alphabetical order*

Tom Barker • Kolbi Christianson • Lisa Knowles
Rachel Kurtz-McAlaine • Patty Lampman • Thompson Morrison
Liat Parker • Ann Prater • Craig Richards
Sofia Sabeti • Val Teters • Joe Winkler

INTERIM BOARD

Thompson Morrison, President
Kolbi Christianson, Vice President
Tom Barker, Treasurer
Rachel Kurtz-McAlaine, Secretary

This leadership structure is temporary. Once the store is established, the Steering Committee and Interim Board will dissolve, and Co-op members will have the opportunity to elect the store's first official Board of Directors.

MEMBER OWNED, OPEN TO ALL

Our goal remains to create a welcoming and sustainable community store—one that restores access to everyday essentials and fresh food, reduces trips off-island, provides a place to connect, and belongs to the community it serves.

We are especially grateful to the Gillettes, the current property owners and former store owner-operators from 1979 to 2009, for their support and for sharing their knowledge of the store's history. We are also grateful to the generous islanders whose support helped make this effort possible.

There is still a great deal to learn and accomplish, and there will be many opportunities for the community to participate along the way.

Together, we will build a community marketplace that serves Anderson Island for generations to come.

Thank you for your encouragement, ideas, patience, and continued participation.

Warmly,

Steering Committee and Interim Board
The Anderson Island Food Co-op

Anderson Island Food Cooperative is organized as a cooperative association under Washington State law (Chapter 23.86 RCW). As a cooperative, earnings are used for the benefit of the cooperative and its members. We are governed under Subchapter T of the federal tax code.

ANDERSON ISLAND FOOD CO-OP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
August 24, 2026

What is a food co-op and why are we creating one?

Our food coop will look like a typical grocery store where anyone can shop. The difference is that, in a co-op, the members own the store and every member has an equal vote. Your voice matters so decisions stay close to home.

Here on our island we are already all members of a co-op, Tanner Electric, which provides our electricity. In a co-op, decisions stay close to home and shared ownership spreads responsibility. A member-owned store can remain a community resource beyond any one person. We are building for long-term stability for future generations.

Why do we believe that a food co-op will be successful?

We are building a new model, not just recreating the old store. We will be listening to the community needs before we stock the shelves and we will capitalize responsibly using a combination of membership dues, grants, contributions and loans, to ensure that we have the working capital necessary. We are developing robust governance and management models that will allow us to have sound planning and adequate financial reserves. Most importantly, our member-owners will more likely shop and promote a store they own, allowing the store to generate greater revenue.

Where are we in our timeline?

Over the last six weeks we have been moving quickly to establish our new food co-op. Here is a summary of accomplishments and the work that still lies ahead.

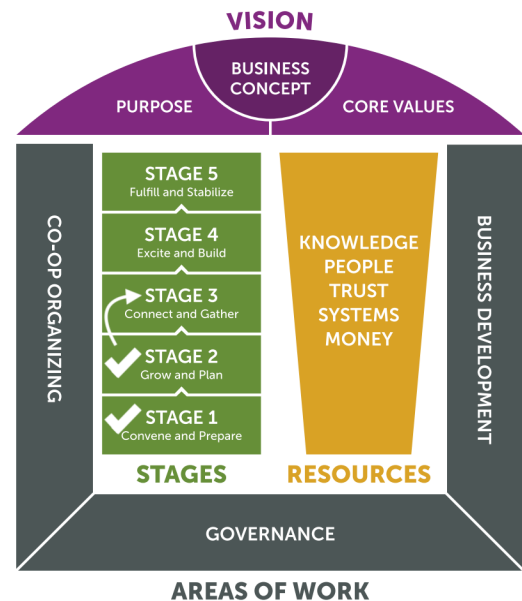
Major Milestones Completed

Stage 1: Convene and Prepare

- **Formed the Foundation:**
Incorporated the business, formalized the Interim Board of Directors, and adopted official Bylaws aligned with the Seven Cooperative Principles.
- **Financial & Expert Planning:**
Drafted the initial pro forma business plan and secured a startup funding strategy in direct consultation with the Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC).
- **Facility & Community Action:**
Formed initial volunteer subcommittees, began community outreach, and completed the first physical inspection of our future facility.

Stage 2: Grow and Plan

- **Solved Island Logistics:**
Identified specialized cooperative vendors to resolve the unique logistical challenges of reliable island food delivery.



- **Industry Research:**
Conducted site visits and interviews with half a dozen established food cooperatives to study their successful operational models.
- **Site Preparation:**
Completed the final facility inspection, began drafting the official store layout, and initiated the formal bidding process for building renovations.
- **Digital Infrastructure:**
Registered aifood.coop and established the secure business workspace and domains for the cooperative.

Our Current Focus

Stage 3: Connect and Gather

- **Building Local Partnerships:**
Preparing for a community Town Hall gathering with focus groups comprising a cross-section of our communities, Anderson Island business partners, and other local businesses to develop a collaborative market plan that supports the broader local economy and community vision.
- **Financial Security:**
Hiring a specialized, co-op experienced CPA to audit and finalize our financial infrastructure.
- **Expanding the Team:**
Our subcommittees are actively recruiting volunteers to help us manage the upcoming workload—more hands are needed right now.

Milestones Ahead

Stage 4: Excite and Build

- **Administrative Readiness:** Establish formal accounting systems, secure liability insurance, develop core branding, and launch public communication channels.
- **Legal & Financial Finalization:** Draft the legally required Membership Agreement and finalize the final pro forma financial plan.
- **Community Launch:** Host a community Town Hall to officially kick off our Membership and Contribution Drive to capitalize operations.
- **Construction & Outfitting:** Begin and complete facility renovations, procure store systems and operational equipment, and secure all vendor agreements, licenses, permits, and regulatory compliance.
- **Leadership:** Define the compensation and performance metrics for a General Manager, followed by executing the hiring process.

Stage 5: Fulfill and Stabilize

- **Inventory & Staffing:** Procure the initial startup merchandise and fresh ingredients, and hire and onboard local store staff.
- **Operations Testing:** Run pilot tests and training on all point-of-sale, operational, and delivery systems.
- **The Launch:** Finalize the Grand Opening plan, ensure all systems are a go, and officially open the doors to the community.

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