

HONEST WEIGHT FOOD COOP STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT

HWFC Mission Statement

Honest Weight Food Co-op is a member owned-and-operated general cooperative that is committed to providing the community with affordable, high quality natural foods and products for healthy living. Our mission is to promote more equitable, participatory and ecologically sustainable ways of living.

We welcome all who choose to participate in a community which embraces co-operative principles, shares resources, and creates economic fairness in an atmosphere of co-operation and respect for humanity and the Earth.

HWFC Vision Statement

Honest Weight will seek to grow in alignment with our values and mission in order to better serve those who share our commitment to equitable, participatory, and ecologically sustainable ways of living. We will focus our efforts on operating one store in the Central Albany area maintaining its accessibility to major highways, sources of public transportation, and residential communities. We will explore the possibility of growth to accommodate the values inherent within our mission and statements of conscience. This may include expanding within our present location or relocating to a larger facility that will accommodate both a retail natural food store and provide a space for education and community outreach.

As we work to implement our strategic plan, Honest Weight will involve stakeholders in pursuing the process of coming to consensus. We will seek to establish policies and guidelines that will facilitate decision-making and implementation. We will strive to allocate sufficient resources to support the implementation of our vision.

Honest Weight Food Co-op Statements of Conscience

1. We are committed to our food policy, which reflects buying practices for food and body aids with consideration toward moral and ethical production, environmental stewardship, healthy living, and safety.
2. We are committed to helping our community learn more about growing, choosing, preparing, and using natural foods.
3. We are committed to learning and teaching about alternative ways of living that are healthy for ourselves, our community, and our planet.
4. We are committed to encouraging an environment where ideas and philosophies can be generated, shared, and expressed freely.
5. We support, embrace and celebrate the diversity of our community.
6. We are committed to providing our customers with knowledgeable staff and a positive shopping environment.
7. We are committed to donating five percent (5%) of our net profits per year to local non-profit organizations.

Co-operative Principles

Definition: A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values: Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

Principles: The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

First Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

Second Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

Third Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible, benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative, and supporting other activities as approved by the membership.

Fourth Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

Fifth Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public-particularly young people and opinion leaders-about the nature of benefits of co-operation.

Sixth Principle: Co-operation Among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Seventh Principle: Concern for the Community

While focusing on member needs, co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND EDUCATION

Goal 1: Establish outreach programs target audiences to increase diversity in the co-op community

Audiences include: children, neighborhood residents, low income people, assessing our eligibility for food stamp / WIC users, those who want high quality natural foods, & core customers who support values of HWFC.

- School programs regarding nutrition or grains
- Establish contacts with community organizations who represent these targeted groups
- Determine percentage of marketing budget for each target group
- Develop strategies to best reach underserved communities/ constituents

Goal 2: Provide ongoing in-house consumer education

- Provide recipes and cooking instructions for bulk products so people know how to use ingredients.
- Sustainable practices –provide organic sources where possible and information about organic or sustainable agriculture
- Manufacturing – make consumers aware of companies who make their food – of the economic and political implications of the production practices
- Develop an ongoing education program to further the coop community's understanding of Cooperative Values and Practices.
- Create linkages with other cooperative based businesses, for example, credit unions
- Local Business – foster CSAs and local buying clubs, promote purchasing of locally grown and produced products
- Healthy Eating/Ingredients – provide information about ingredients and make accessible to shoppers.
- Explore the greeter concept to help people find what they are looking for.
- Assist shoppers in taking charge of their health through education and customer service.

Goal 3: Develop physical setting for in house programs

- Establish adequate space for meetings separate from office space
- Provide info space
- Explore feasibility of partnering with other organizations to hold cooking classes.

Goal 4: Ensure that Member Labor remains a vital part of our operations

- Recruit new members and shareholders
- Develop strategies to enhance linkages between orientation and new member workers.
- Increase training of member workers
- Institute department trainers to help and train member labor
- Ensure that someone serves as membership coordinator whenever store is open

PRODUCT LINE

Goal 1: Determine how mission affects product line

- Establish growth plan
- Complete product manual

Goal 2: Establish parameters for department growth

- Determine how the decision about department growth is made
- Study mark-ups across the board.

Goal 3: Identify potential suppliers

- Identify new regional and local suppliers
- Give seed money to fledgling businesses locally
- Sponsor organic certification for local farmers
- Advocate for/ensure that all distribution agreements are in keeping with our mission
- Consider establishing a fund to provide seed money to start ups.

Goal 4: Complete Merchandising/Marketing Plan

- Communicate plan to board and membership

SITE ISSUES

Goal 1: Proactively explore options for a new building (preferably) in the Central Avenue corridor

- Prioritize needs
- Work with a realtor to identify potential sites that meet those needs
- Re-evaluate site selection criteria at intervals during process
- Establish time frame for site selection

Goal 2: Use Green building practices as possible

PHYSICAL SPACE/ PLANT

At issue are the short-term goals of maximizing the use of the current space with minimal changes and the longer-term goals of moving or undertaking a major renovation within the existing space.

The Co-op has been experiencing steady growth and is rapidly outgrowing its current location in terms of sales per square foot. Decisions regarding how the store prioritizes what it chooses to sell are necessary.

Goal 1: Maximize best use of current location.

- Reconfigure floor space to better reflect mission
- Examine feasibility of moving produce and bulk to lead position
- Arrange for a community room
 - identify a separate space for meetings for committees and board
- Maximize/Increase/Improve office space
- Warehouse
 - totally inefficient
 - clean out completely
 - organize (hire out if necessary) utilizing all the space
 - make necessary repairs
 - purchase rolling stairs
 - enforce organization store-wide
- Retail
 - what do managers want?
 - what's possible
 - determine plan for replacing aging refrigerators and freezers
 - plan for replacing computers/POS
 - explore purchase of van for outreach
- Staff communication area
- Continue to pursue new parking opportunities
- Explore ways of integrating HWFC into the neighborhood better

New Location

Goal 1: Get input of needs of each department

Goal 2: Identify an ideal ration of space requirements (6,000 square feet for retail; **up** to 6,000 square feet for community space and office space, ? warehouse space).

General Goals

- Member Information Area
- Customer Education Area
- Improve layout and “flowing” retail space.
- Demo kitchen
- Increase educational materials
- Increase freezer space to decrease workload
- Get cooler/freezer for meat department, advertise same, and in particular raising practices
- Make decisions about the issue of commingled meat items.
- Meeting room for 30
- Accessible space for co-op archives
- Increase food prep area for deli if decide to grow
- Improve deli coolers
- Consider food to order
- Explore feasibility of deli register
- Space for 13 work stations with computers and phones
- Increased space for member outreach and administration
- Explore work room for copying, etc.
- Separate finance office
- Separate HR office
- Receiving Bay and loading dock
- Larger walk-in freezer
- Forklift
- Space for recycling
- 5 Aisles plus and Express lane
- Staff break and storage area
- Green space
- Establish registers for deli and HABA departments.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 1: Develop strategies to ensure full and diverse representation on the Board of Directors

- ◆ Determine what skills are needed annually and recommend selection based on these criteria.
- ◆ Develop System to foster new leadership
- ◆ Ensure that nominating and election process provides members with adequate information about needs of the board as well as skills candidates bring to the board.
- ◆ Establish a Board Nominating Committee to identify, recruit, orient and ensure ongoing training to board members.
- ◆ Consider offering stipends for board members (look in to liability issues)
- ◆ Set performance standards for board members.

GOAL 2: Clarify roles of staff/CMT in board committees

- Determine whether CMT representatives serving on board committees serve as the liaison/representative of staff or as individual members serving on a committee.
- Determine whether board representatives serving on board committees serve as the liaison/representative of the board or as individual members serving on a committee.

GOAL 3: Develop and maintain Job Descriptions and analyze annually to ensure that all major responsibilities are covered.

- Ensure redundancy so that all responsibilities can be carried out by at least two people.
- Ensure that all staff are adequately trained in Customer Service
- Reconfigure office space to ensure that staff have adequate space for performing job responsibilities. Establish this as a priority for new space.
- Establish guidelines for when to outsource labor.

GOAL 4: Develop overall communication strategy and improve accountability between and within board, CMT, staff, membership, and customers.

GOAL 6: Develop marketing plan in alignment with Coop priorities and strategies for building/maintaining market segments.

- Ensure adequate and appropriate funding

GOAL 7: Increase staff capacity to forecast potential sales and monitor actual sales within and across departments.

- Determine information that would be most useful