



## 2019 Oshkosh Food Cooperative Board of Directors Statement of Nomination

Name: Travis Driessen

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Biography (~150 words or less):

I am a regional regenerative food systems planner that is currently developing a series of grant proposals to support organic food production in the Lake Winnebago (and greater Great Lakes) Growing Region. These projects work to promote access to healthy and culturally relevant food while restoring natural ecologies, promoting economic development, and supporting new participatory democratic approaches and cooperation among the various actors of the food value chain within the Fox Cities-Oshkosh-Fon du Lac extended metropolitan region. I have experience as a professional researcher, author, and community organizer. Moreover, my family has owned the Short Branch Saloon for 40 years where I host music and community events year-round. I moved back to the Fox Cities after a 15-year hiatus and looking to grow and connect with community roots and participate in innovative and progressive projects taking place in the region among farm, aggregator, distributors, restaurant, grocery, and foodies.

### 1. What would you bring/offer to the Oshkosh Food Co-op Board?

I would bring an emerging expertise in various fields specifically, but not limited to, urban and regional planning, food hub and logistics, primary and secondary food markets, and community engagement strategies including regenerative finance and broad-scale hypermodern collaborative campaigns.

I would leverage this experience and dedication to connect the OFC to four specific projects that I am currently developing with other supporting important stakeholder organizations. These projects will be funded and can potentially allocate some funds for board members to co-design and co-manage:

*Create a regional aggregation & food hub facility to provide processing & e-distribution logistics*

The Fox Cities lags behind other regions of the state in terms of the number of processing facilities and distribution companies. This lack of critical infrastructure is a significant impedance on the creation of a self-sustaining regenerative food system in our region. The 6,000+ farms that stretch from Stevens Point to Fon du Lac could be better supported by cooperative aggregation facility that allows small and medium farmers to chop, package, label, market, and then distribute their produce to the markets of the Fox Cities. This type of facility would provide an incremental economic boost in revenues by providing ad-value products.

Moreover, the e-logistics system that will be designed to promote renewable energy, hip urban delivery systems, and provide additional employment and entrepreneurship opportunities while reducing transportation costs for food deliveries to the Oshkosh Cooperative. This logistic system could further serve to provide home deliveries of products from the Oshkosh Food Cooperative which could extend it's service area and be a potential windfall in revenues.

*Promote a capital currency program to improve Lake Winnebago water quality and fight climate change*

Another grant will work towards the creation of a new set of currencies that account for phosphorous, carbon and nitrogen flows throughout the growing region and metropolitan areas. These currencies will incentive farmers, the Oshkosh Food Cooperative and other primary and secondary market providers, as well as patrons of the Oshkosh Food Cooperatives who (pledge to) purchase specially labeled food from local farmers that conduct certain regenerative growing practices.

Moreover, would seek the support of local community credit unions to recognize this parallel currency as an innovative measure for combating climate change and ending the algae blooms in Lake Winnebago. This grant will seek the participation of public agencies and utilities to in part recognize the cost savings and transfer those to farmers and participating market actors such as OFC for their participation.

*Launch a gamified civic engagement campaign through the parallel capital currency program*

The "Grow Up" efforts of the Oshkosh Food Cooperative are innovative and commendable in stitching a tight-knit community of supporter members. With additional project partners, we are writing a grant to create a gamified version of the currency exchange. Specifically, allowing residents and local businesses to participate in determining the value of these currencies that are expressed in points that can be won and accounted for across the myriad of actors connected to the regenerative food value chain as actors make local food purchases.

Oshkosh Food Cooperative members could be some of the early adopter members that perhaps would appreciate additional daily opportunities to participate in supporting local food and the transition to an organic in the Fox Cities. Key to the success of these types of civic engagement process is having a support base of initial members. Through the dedicated cooperative members this expanded form of accessible participation would lead to second and third-degree connections of cooperative members and dramatically expand interest in the cooperative.

### *Marketing and Restaurant, Bakery, and Brewery Campaign*

In order to kick start the local-organic market we will be conducting a survey of the 5000+ restaurants, breweries, bakeries, and select grocery of the Fox Cities. Moreover, we will be hosting follow-up workshops with these actors to determine ordering patterns, price thresholds, and gather their participation in the e-logistics. This would be an opportunity for the Oshkosh Food Cooperative to lead in a broader community effort that would provide emergent benefits in the assistance of lowering transportation costs by creating economies of scale from which all participating market actors win.

Moreover, this detailed market research on nutritional preferences will create opportunities to improve public health and further move local regenerative food systems from an alternative to mainstream.

### *Fox Cities Music and Festival Events*

The Short Branch Saloon is expanding its festival grounds and is hosting a series of festivals this summer that will connect civic organizations, government agencies, and progressive businesses across this region and state to promote and support their efforts in a myriad of progressive environmental and arts activities. Would be most open for the Cooperative to host a music festival for some serious fundraising as well as a way to promote to concert goers. Anyone is welcome to co-organize any events.

#### 2. What is your dream for the Oshkosh Food Co-op?

To see the cooperative connecting with other business, civic, and government agencies of a growing regenerative food sector in the Lake Winnebago Growing Region to create a self-sufficient regional regenerative food system, promote economic prosperity, and support environmental sustainability resilience of the Fox Cities-Oshkosh community.

#### 3. Why do you think the Oshkosh Food Co-op is important to the greater Oshkosh community?

The Oshkosh Food Cooperative has a dedicated base of members that are committed to the vision of sustainable and healthy food. The City of Oshkosh has all the right ingredients for a progressive food community. In any growing food scene, key actors play important roles, the OFC will undoubtedly be a leader and set the tone and be a role model for other businesses to gear their food efforts. Moreover, it will provide an important additional healthy food option for residents of the city which is needed.

#### 4. Why cooperatives?

Cooperatives play a vital role of promoting deep democracy as well as innovative economic development models. In a world with growing corporate take-over of food, cooperatives provide essential community equity and ownership that promote a higher level of status and meaning for co-owners who work for the cooperative. Moreover, they create a sense of social continuity and

connectivity among community members with shared interests in community health, good food, and environmental sustainability. In providing opportunities for citizen participation on policy decisions and projects, the Oshkosh Food Cooperative enriches the community and depth of civic engagement.

5. Please offer any additional thoughts you would like Oshkosh Food Co-op member-owners to know about you

I am a driven and highly motivated person that is capable in working in many roles. My ambition and commitment are not a reflection of self-interest. It is important to me to support and build the people and community around me. I offer to work in collaboration and in any feasible way cooperatively on the projects described above and am more than willing tailor them to better meet the needs of the OFC.

While I have been away from the Fox Cities for quite some time, I am just beginning to embark upon this new career path and so will be creating many connections and linking up important actors to contribute to igniting the local food economic sector. As this is the type of work for which we are all motivated, I would hope my energy would be well received and contributed to OFCs already important efforts. Also having a background in urban and regional and urban governance I am confident in meeting with any community leaders from politicians and to engineers. I also speak fluent Spanish and actively seek out opportunities to promote diversity and cultural harmony in our community.

Please let me know if you have any questions for me and I am open for any further interview with the board or membership should there be questions or interest in moving this forward.

I look forward to potentially working with you all to move OFC objectives forward in the next 3 years.