



vivid 2027 VISION



forward

I can hear the low hum of bike tires speeding along sun-faded-gray and cracked asphalt of a country road. The air is hot, humid and filled with the smell of fresh cut grass from the round bales of hay that dot the pasture speeding by. I know every bend and curve by heart on our weekly bike ride to Hoffer's Butcher & Grocery. I feel anticipation in my chest as the steeple of the village church grows closer, knowing we're nearly there. Rounding the curb and passing by the old post office turned antique store, we stop the next door down; a wooden sign hand carved with the single word Hoffer's hangs above us. We park our bikes by the Cold Drinks machine and, with no thought of bike locks, push through double doors and a jingle of bells hanging on the other side mark our entrance into the cool refresh of air conditioning. My sister and I b-line to the candy stand where we spend the next 15 minutes debating the merits of peppermint patties vs. three musketeers, while mom, on the other side of the store, selects the very best cuts of meat, and light heartedly haggles with Mr. Hoffer over the price. The same two older women, who seem to live there, stand behind register conveyor-belts, which stopped working years before, and in thick country accents tease my sister and me about

our candy selections, prompting further debate. We know them. We're safe with them. As mom rounds the corner walking the last aisle toward us, there's a brief check-in between mom and the cashiers to ensure kid behavior warrants candy and the two older women go to bat for us, as always. Between the 'Boops' of our order getting rung up, the weather is discussed with a forecast of rain to break the heat. With a cheerful g'bye we head back into the heat for the return trip home.

The following Vivid Vision was crafted cooperatively by the Co-op's Board of Directors and myself over the course of a nearly eight month program, guided and facilitated by the wonderful team at CultureStoke, Wes and Marty. There is a piece of each of us in this beautiful vision we've aligned behind for the Co-op's future, and we're so excited to share it with you! The reflection above of my first grocery store memories is something I shared during the Vivid Vision process, and I wanted to share it here as well. As the General Manager I have a more direct role in making this vision a reality than most, and I felt it was important for my core motivation to be known. In simplicity I want to create a space for anyone and everyone to feel the same welcoming safety I felt as a child on our weekly bike rides to the store.

-Zack Sheppard

General Manager, SLO Food Co-op

snapshot

It's December 31st, 2027, and SLO Food Co-op has revolutionized the grocery store experience. What began as a few community members who wanted to increase accessibility to local organic products has grown into a movement sweeping across North America and beyond.

Democratizing food and providing access to the highest quality and healthiest products is no longer the alternative but the gold standard. Here's how we're using business as **a force for good...**

core values



bring your best

We fuel every interaction with **positive charge**.



build a better way

We **innovate** to create a healthy, diverse, equitable, inclusive, & **sustainable community**.



embrace teamwork

We **join forces to achieve** more together than we could alone.



focus on growth

We **learn** from yesterday, **live** for today, and **plan** for tomorrow.



own your impact

We recognize our role in **helping people** and the **planet**.

our team



SLO Food Co-op is owned by our membership, who democratically elect from amongst themselves a Board of Directors to govern the organization. The relationship between our board and General Manager (GM) is one of trust and autonomy. On the front lines are our friendly neighborhood grocers, including our department managers, coordinators, team leaders, and front line team members. The GM steers the ship's helm, leading us to our north star. He plants the seeds of possibility and cultivates them into scenarios of team success. And, of course, we'd be remiss not to mention the incredible local farmers and suppliers that provide us with the highest quality products that line the shelves in our store.



Across the board and team, we practice active listening, seek to understand, share honest feedback, and express gratitude always. We work together to solve problems and we have fun together, too. It's not uncommon to find us celebrating our collective successes over drinks or a fun outing. **We care about each other personally and empower each other to succeed** in our individual roles while contributing to our larger organizational goals.





our culture

Whether stocking produce or crunching numbers, every member understands their role in nourishing families in the community. We gamify routine activities into exciting and ever-evolving quests. Store leader-boards track our progress toward our goals and spotlight records, like the fastest inventory completion time, promoting camaraderie and friendly competition. Want to learn a new skill that can serve you in your role or help the Co-op in a bigger way? Level up, and we'll happily provide the compensation to match. **A culture of appreciation** brews daily and bubbles to the surface through acts of praise tailored to team members' love languages for milestones like their first day of work or first anniversary. Want to recognize someone for going above

and beyond? Pick up their character sheet, and you'll know exactly how to surprise and delight them. The question, "How can we create a better experience?" is always at the forefront of our minds. We actively seek opportunities to grow together and nurture a safe space to share feedback while maintaining a solution-focused mentality.

We welcome challenges and recognize mistakes as catalysts for growth. With a strong, shared organizational identity and a hybrid of department managers and open-book management, every employee is empowered with the knowledge, training, and skills to succeed and **move our mission forward.**

core activities

We're SLO's only community-owned marketplace where anyone can shop. Open seven days a week, between 8am-8pm, you can get the products and services you need daily while strengthening the community. **Local first, sustainable always.** We promote organic, non-GMO standards and environmentally sustainable packaging. As well as competitive prices on various carefully curated grocery store items, including meats, eggs, cheese, beer, wine, freshly baked bread, and dry pantry goods. We prioritize purchasing from cooperatively-owned and fair trade organizations, B Corps, minority and women-owned businesses and small family farms. We also have convenient, healthy, and delicious made-in-house grab 'n' go sandwiches, sides, and meals, accommodating a spectrum of dietary needs. Plus, we carry an extensive selection of low-to-no waste bulk foods, a wellness center with all your personal care and supplement needs, and **the best local farm-fresh produce** you can find. Our needs-based program assists low-income families with more affordable pricing and accepts SNAP and WIC. Want to shop from the comfort of your home? Now you can with our online shopping and pick up and delivery services!



I own a
grocery
store

financials

The Co-op is flourishing financially. This year, in 2027, **we tripled sales, with rolling volume growth of 15% and 2% retained earnings**, surpassing the industry average. And we celebrate healthy financials because they allow us to reinvest in our people and the greater community...

FRESH LOCAL

VIVID VISION

the store

Our new store is located in a beautiful, privately owned, 10,000 square foot building on Parker Street. **The space is a model of sustainable beauty.** Curved architecture contrasts with the lined solar panels that slide across the parking lot (complete with car charging stations and a bike parking lot), providing shade along an area of picnic tables. A family enjoys a delicious roast turkey sandwich and seasonal soup at our cafe-style outdoor seating. The faint, familiar smell of freshly roasted coffee and baked goods fills the air. You walk into the store, and the first thing you notice is the high ceilings and how well-lit and clean it is.

Full spectrum LED light mimics natural daylight, preserving the freshness of produce, making it more appealing for shoppers and reducing costs. The space is rustic with natural wood and white painted brick contrasted by industrial metal accents and bold colors. There's a living wall with natural moss and hanging perennials and a calming water feature. Grab a green basket if you'd like to shop on your own, or an orange basket if you'd like full service and browse our SLOcally famous produce department. Rows of fresh corn, eggplant, and green apples look plucked off a magazine cover, shiny, placed with perfection, and ready to devour. Technology allows a smooth check out experience, allowing the customer experience team to free-roam the store. **A team member greets you by name with a warm smile and asks how they can help.** The aisles have ample space; even when it's busy, it never feels packed. Plants atop the aisle sections give a cozy, living, organic feel. And we implement creative solutions to accommodate marginalized groups, like dedicated zen hours with

reduced stimulus for a less abrasive experience and wheelchair accessibility throughout the store. We also have a dedicated low-to-no waste department, and we've expanded our deli and Grab and Go food area with a fresh-to-order juice bar made with rescued produce and a coffee bar. You walk out with a smile and your reusable tote bag filled to the brim with fresh green lettuce and carrots plucked straight from the earth, excited to go home and make a healthy, delicious meal.



sales & marketing

Whip out the red carpet and toss the confetti because we're celebrating! **This year our Owner-Member base DOUBLED**, thanks to word-of-mouth, print, and digital campaigns. Owner-Members continue to be our biggest allies in growing this movement. We've even seen many of their kids grow up and become loyal members! One fun way we promote business is by giving new members a yard sign that says, "I own a grocery store with my friends," which sparks intrigue and sign-ups. Owner Perks include special 10% off storewide sales, Patronage Dividend, and access to our Wholesale Buying Club, plus a member-only fun and tasty weekend event where suppliers set up tables to sample and share their products. Our digital campaigns are dialed in to educate our audience and spotlight member profiles to encourage membership. With us, shoppers learn about the benefits of pasture-raised eggs, pesticide-free, locally produced products, and regenerative farming practices. Their dollars go back into supporting the community, serving as a catalyst for positive change. And we always support others using business as a force for good, like local suppliers and farmers, while providing great jobs for locals. We host a farmer's market every year where members can bring friends and monthly workshops where we teach topics like how to build your own cosmetics. Through our Recycle & Reuse program, you can bring in your plastics, and we'll replace them with beeswax wraps. And our annual Owner-Member meeting is the looked-forward-to event of the season, where we pull out all the stops, including a band and special surprises, to celebrate and expand our impact in the community.



own
your
grocery
store
with
your
friends

SLO
FOOD
CO-OP
www.slofood.coop

media & awards



Word on the street (and headline features in SLO Life and Cooperative Grocer Magazine) is that **SLO Food Co-op** “has revolutionized the grocery shopping experience.” Owner-Members will drive farther to shop with us simply because the experience, coupled with the freshest local ingredients, is unmatched elsewhere. Media write-ups spotlight us, sharing the scoop on the Co-op, an “overnight success” that was decades in the making. Influential food and sustainability bloggers highlight us in articles that go viral about where to get the best turkey and recipes to make a special Thanksgiving meal for your loved ones. The movement continues to spread as more and more Co-ops pop up across the nation.

community involvement



We partner with organizations like Slow Money SLO to raise awareness about eating and shopping locally and promote the health and well-being of our community. Shoppers can place stones in giant mason jars to choose how to allocate their donations!! This year we're celebrating hitting our biggest total yet. **We partner with organizations to fuel the local food movement and nourish those in need.** Once a year, our chef volunteers, and we donate fresh ingredients at the vendor fair, where community members gather for free food and a movie. We host cooking, nu-

trition and wellness events. Our food banks consistently break records. During cooking nights, we put together ingredient kits for families to cook healthy food from home with fresh, local ingredients. Shoppers can also round up their purchases to the nearest dollar, allowing the community to support the recipient directly. Our partnership with a local industrial composter allows us to be a hub for plant-based plastic composting.





team success!

We've accomplished what traditional grocery stores never could. And created the gold standard for what's possible when ordinary community members gather around the table with shared purpose and values. It hasn't been easy, and we'll encounter more obstacles along the way. Getting here required energy and effort, but it flowed. We're proud to have our thumbprints all over this project – from the apples that stock our produce shelves to the gentle pat on

the shoulder of a lifelong customer. With hard work, determination, and fun, we'll bring this vision and much more to life. As we move toward **a brighter, more cooperative future,** where everyone has a place at the table, a delicious, healthy meal, and the company of community to enjoy it with.

strong roots



Isn't it inspiring!? Just think about the decades of hard work that has gone into taking our Co-op from our roots as the buying club it was back in the 70s, to our first tiny storefront on Francis Ave., to the iconic neighborhood market we've become today. Imagine what it might feel like to look back from another decade in the future at this pivotal moment for our special little store.

The Co-op is a reflection of who we are. Our owner-members, shoppers and team of hard working grocers; all of us make this store what it is. Something more than just your average grocery market; a community hub that provides access to local produce, real food and gives back to strengthen the community that we serve. Thank you to Zack and his team for working tirelessly to improve the store and for taking this momentum to bring this vision to fruition. Our SLO Food Co-op is a shining example of what a community can achieve when it comes together around a shared goal.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Co-op's members and shoppers for their loyalty and continuous support. Thank you all for participating in your Co-op; for showing up, for sharing your voice, for voting with your dollar so that the Co-op continues to thrive and fulfill its mission of promoting sustainable living as well as creating a more equitable food system. Thank you for your trust, and we hope to continue serving you for decades to come.

And of course thank you to our amazing board, for coming together to share ideas under the guidance of Wes and Marty from CultureStoke. This process has been so inspiring and I look forward to continuing to dream with you all about the positive impact we can have on our community and beyond.

-Natasha Prybyla
Board President
SLO Food Co-op