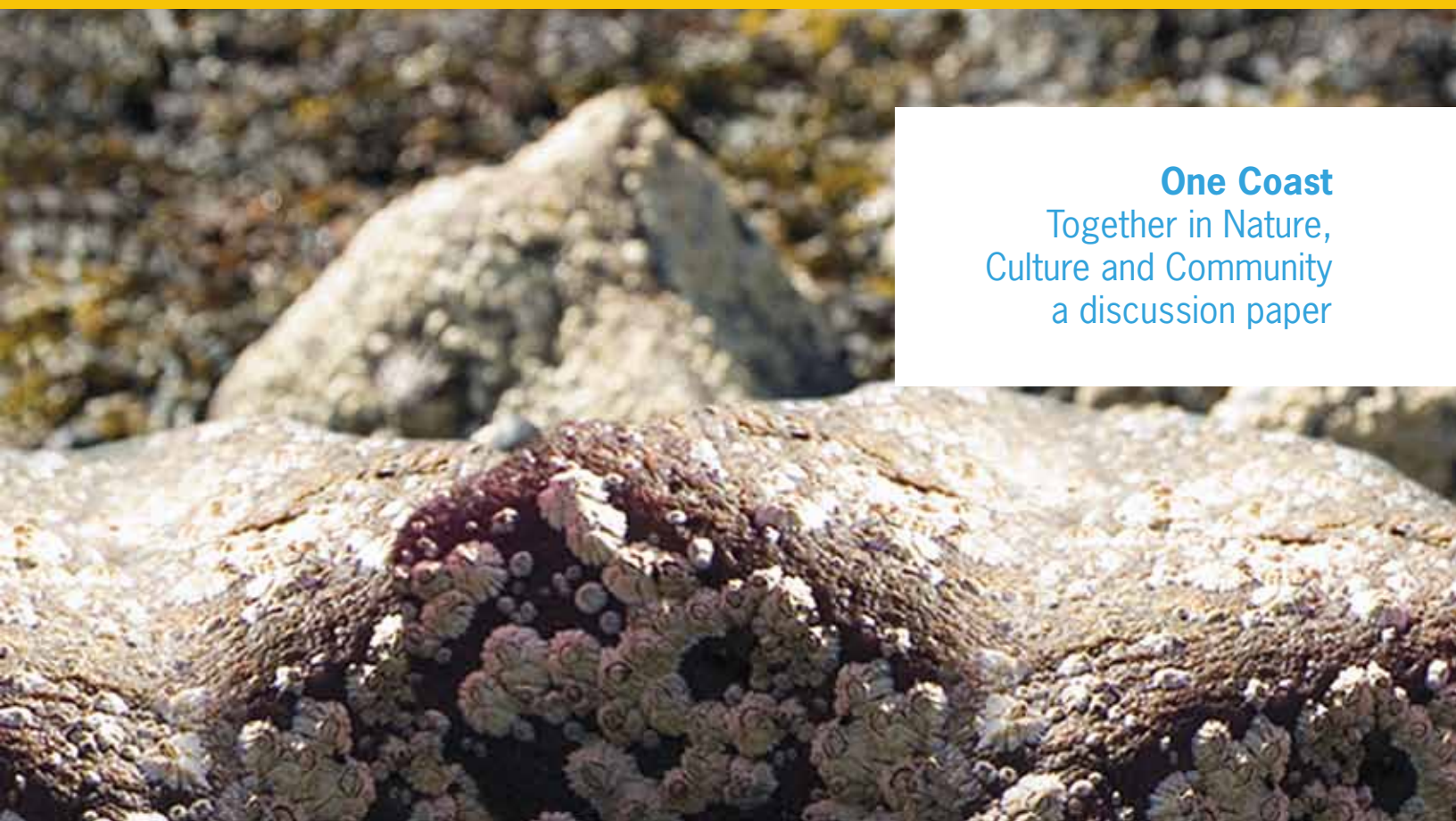




# We Envision

**One Coast**  
Together in Nature,  
Culture and Community  
a discussion paper



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*Appendix a: List of Initiatives*

*Appendix b: Sustainability Framework*

## The Team

A team of individuals from organizations on the Sunshine Coast dedicated time, energy, and skill to the task of drafting this visionary call to action. They each bring a depth of experience, and a wealth of ideas and research from their fields to the challenge of creating something together which is about the best possible future for their homeplace: the Sunshine Coast.

Together, we have walked-the-talk of being a learning community over the last year, learning from and with each other, with a solid commitment to having fun while working hard. When you see these individuals, take a minute to thank them for their hard work.

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## Early Reviewers

The team is thankful for the many early reviewers of the draft in part or whole – your suggestions have resulted in some important improvements.

## Sunshine Coast

The community of communities on the Sunshine Coast has much to be proud of. The team celebrates the fine work that has been to date in planning and acting for a more sustainable sunshine coast – this work is indeed the foundation for what comes next. For this reason, this draft and the work to come will be recognized by the title: One Coast. Together in nature, culture and community.

- ▶ In a sustainable community, people flourish and have fulfilling lives for the long term, while living in harmony with a healthy, natural environment. A sustainable community recognizes the interconnectedness of all things, while, at the same time, supporting a desirable human existence that coexists with the natural systems that support it. Sustainability recognizes that our economy needs to support a high quality of life, social and cultural development, and personal fulfillment, while, at the same time, recognizing that nature is not infinite in its resources.



## INTRODUCTION

**Sustainability:** *What is it?*

*What does it do for us?*

*What do we do to maintain it?*

For centuries, the *Skwxwu7mesh Uxwunixw* (Squamish) and *shíshálh* (Sechelt) people have lived on the shores of the Salish Sea, among the mountains and forests of British Columbia's Sunshine Coast. As historic stewards of the land, they have enjoyed clean air and abundant fish and wildlife. Their traditional interaction with, and respect for, the natural life that surrounds and sustains them is evident in their remarkable culture of marine harvesting, art, crafts, and oral history. This heritage inspires us now to protect the beauty and bounty of this area, ensuring that future generations will continue to marvel at the salmon, the bear, and the bald eagle, while finding quiet retreat on remote paths and free-flowing waterways.

The Sunshine Coast is one of the most bountiful and beautiful places in the world. We live in a place with vast expanses of nature,



clean water, forests, mountains, and biodiversity. There is a rich cultural and economic history and diversity. With this bounty and history comes responsibility and opportunity—the responsibility to respect our elders and the traditional land use of the Coast Salish communities, and the opportunity to learn from the practices that once made life on the coast sustainable.

Recent human activity has changed our planet and our region. The earth's atmosphere has warmed faster in the past decade than ever before. Forests and species are disappearing at unprecedented rates, and those that remain are facing challenges due to loss of habitat and food. As human populations continue to grow, landfills continue to fill up, the withdrawal of water from streams and aquifers continues to increase, and our consumption of energy and production of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants continues to increase. Consequently, the growth and consumption by some members of the human population has, in part, led to the poverty, illness and famine of other members of the population.



In a sustainable community, people flourish and have fulfilling lives for the long term, while living in harmony with a healthy natural environment. A sustainable community recognizes the interconnectedness of all things, while, at the same time, supporting a desirable human existence that coexists with the natural systems that support it. Sustainability recognizes that our economy needs to support a high quality of life, social and cultural development, and personal fulfillment, while, at the same time, recognizing that nature is not infinite in its resources.

Practical changes in our consumer practices, and the way we accommodate for growth, are called for. Enthusiasm, wisdom, and innovative ideas to help build on our current successes are called for. We propose using this discussion paper as a forward-thinking framework for action. From growing local food to conserving our precious water, we aim to keep the Sunshine Coast our treasured haven.



## A CALL TO ACTION:

Discussion, Suggestion, Contribution

**This discussion paper is a call to action at every level of our community, an invitation to every citizen to discuss what a sustainable future means and to participate in its realization. It also contains the elements of a regional sustainability plan for the Sunshine Coast.**

While the paper provides a suggested set of values, targets and actions across a broad spectrum of issues, it also represents a starting point for refinement and further discussion. It is a platform to support ongoing dialogue, engagement and community relationships, not a document with all of the answers to the many challenges this community will face as it moves towards a more sustainable future.

The Sunshine Coast is rich in human resources and populated by creative innovative



## “IMAGINE A WORLD

in which people from all backgrounds and levels of expertise are engaged in a process of learning, for providing the quality of life for all within their community as well as beyond . . .

a world in which people recognize what is of value to sustain and maintain and what needs to change through reflecting, understanding, asking, making choices and participating in change for a better world... a world in which people share in the stories of inspiration and lessons learned for all to benefit from... imagine a world in which such stories of journeys towards more sustainable futures become commonplace.”

ICUN – World Conservation Union

people; many are committed to sustainable living, community health, and economic self-reliance. Conserving biodiversity and renewable resources requires sustainable dialogue and planning.

Through the dialogue and engagement that will arise from this paper, we will develop a regional sustainability plan that provides a clear framework with tangible goals, targets and actions that address the challenges of the future and help to shape a community that our children will cherish.

This discussion paper celebrates the efforts of people on the Sunshine Coast, who are already working to facilitate the changes necessary, to move towards more sustainable practices. Their stories are a testament to the ever-increasing numbers

of individuals and organizations who are inspiring all of us to strive for a better future. With further input, this process will naturally lead us to decisions and actions that will make **our sustainable vision** realizable.

**WE ENVISION** complete, compact, low-environmental-impact communities based on energy-efficient transportation and settlement patterns.

**WE ENVISION** all people on the Sunshine Coast having access to high-quality drinking water, locally grown and produced food, and a wide selection of affordable housing options to meet present and future demands.

**WE ENVISION** a diverse and thriving economy stimulated by green jobs and regional economic development, in which all residents can participate, that add value to existing community assets and eliminate poverty on the Sunshine Coast.

**WE ENVISION** a community that promotes the health and well-being of its entire population, where health disparities among vulnerable population are minimized and where people have access to the services they need to thrive at all stages of life.

**WE ENVISION** a community that protects and celebrates its natural, indigenous and cultural heritage, that creates and participates in a diverse range of arts, heritage and cultural experiences, both traditional and contemporary.

**WE ENVISION** a community of inspired, knowledgeable, confident and contributing citizens of all ages working together in pursuit of the learning and leadership skills necessary to nimbly respond to change.

**WE ENVISION** a continued vitality in the urban-wild dynamic, unique to our region, through the conservation and enhancement of natural spaces, parks and recreational opportunities for all residents.

**WE ENVISION** every person on the Coast reducing the amount of waste they send to landfills by 90%, by the year 2060, reducing emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to 2007 levels, and building resilience against the impacts of climate change.



## WE ENVISION: *The big picture*



In the following discussion paper, we begin with a portrait—an overall view of the Sunshine Coast seen from the perspective of sustainability. Then, by examining existing and past community planning papers and reports, we reflect what's important to you, the residents of the Coast. This is followed by a description of specific elements of sustainability in their current situations, from water to waste, and parks to employment. We also describe what is working particularly well in each of these categories.

The second half is focused on putting the information into action: first, with a vision for navigating a sustainable course, including setting out clear core commitments, then describing specific objectives on which the community will move forward.

In the last part, we chart concrete implementation steps toward fulfilling the Sunshine Coast's sustainability vision.

## ▶ 1. A Portrait of the Sunshine Coast

### The Basics: Water, Food, Work, Housing

Residents of the Sunshine Coast, from Langdale to Egmont, draw their water from wells, streams, springs, and lakes. The majority of households receive water from Chapman Creek via the regional water system. Built in 2004, the Chapman Creek Drinking Water Treatment Plant's multi-stage treatment process has created significant improvements to the quality of water. The Sunshine Coast Regional District and Sechelt Indian Band signed a Joint Watershed Management Agreement in 2004 to seek local control over the Chapman Creek watershed to further preserve this essential resource.

With the average person using approximately 570 L of treated drinking water per day, the total amount of water consumed on the Coast is increasing annually.<sup>1</sup>

Before modern agriculture, our indigenous and settler ancestors thrived on harvested fish and seafood, and non-timber forest products. While the food capacity of our oceans, rivers and forests and the potential for sustainable harvesting and aquaculture are key, local food production on the Coast is held to approximately 1% of our consumption.<sup>2</sup>

The actual land used for commercial food production may be as low as 12 hectares total. With recognized environmental stresses worldwide and the rising cost of fuel for transporting food, food security is a growing concern.

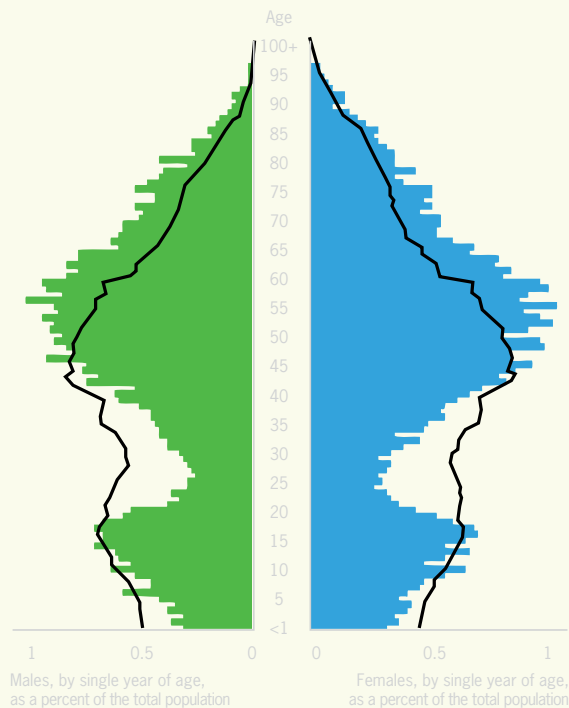


Figure 1: Age pyramid of Sunshine Coast, compared to British Columbia (line).

Like clean water and nutritious food, adequate and affordable housing is essential to a healthy community. Affordable housing is generally defined as housing that requires less than 30% of household income. But the median sales price for a house on the Sunshine Coast is significantly higher than what a median income can provide for. The rise in core housing needs over the last twenty years, and a lack of affordable housing options, affects citizens of all ages and income brackets.

In addition to increased housing pressure, homelessness is a growing, but largely invisible, problem on the Sunshine Coast.<sup>3</sup>

Affordable housing and employment opportunities go hand in hand. A significant 40% of "after-tax" income on the Sunshine Coast comes from non-employment income, such as investment gains and corporate pensions, and from transfer payments, such as income assistance and old age security. Resource-based industry has steadily declined,

though construction experienced significant growth between 2001 and 2006. A large number of people on the Coast are employed by public services.<sup>4</sup>

The combination of high reliance on non-employment income, and a significant proportion of the labour force that has to travel out of the region by boat or plane, reflects a lack of local employment and income opportunities on the Sunshine Coast.

A lack of local employment and affordable housing are now recognized as barriers to young adults (between the ages of 20 and 44) calling the Sunshine Coast home.<sup>5</sup>

As illustrated in figure 1, when it comes to the number of Sunshine Coast residents in this age group there is a serious demographic deficit, compared with the provincial average.<sup>6</sup> This is an urgent concern for our community as we increasingly see the need for the involvement of young adults in local government, the local workforce and volunteer organizations. The formerly successful tourist attraction and local celebration—the Fibre Arts Festival—is perhaps the best-known example of a local initiative that has had to shut down due to lack of volunteer succession.

A number of organizations are mobilizing to understand how to attract, retain, engage and employ young adults on the coast, including an advocacy organization called VOICE. Attracting young adults to the leadership work in all sections of this plan is vital to our region's sustainability.

Opportunities exist to attract young adults and strengthen local employment opportunities



through job creation in the arts, education, green building, technology and renewable energy sectors, among others.

### **The Community: Caring, Learning, Playing**

Organizations on the Sunshine Coast provide a broad spectrum of programs and services to promote and respond to residents' physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being. As residents, we enjoy a rich array of recreational opportunities both organized and self-directed, giving us access to regional and provincial parks, beaches, freshwater lakes, hiking trails, fields, a cross country ski area, bicycle and walking paths.

A high reliance on non-employment income on the Coast also means that we have a higher rate of people living in poverty. Lone parents and their children, First Nations people,



persons with work-limiting disabilities, recent immigrants, and single 45- to 64-year-olds are three to five times more likely than other Canadians to live in poverty.<sup>7</sup> They represent a significant proportion of our population. Access to food for low-income people has increased on the Sunshine Coast: four food banks and a number of community meal programs now operate between Port Mellon and Egmont. In recent years, School District 46 and families on the coast have had to adapt to declining enrollment.<sup>8</sup> Our coast is home to twelve public schools, one French immersion school, five community schools, one university and a host of community learning opportunities. Technology continues to evolve, and our community is served by communications systems that allow us to access a world of ever-expanding information.

The Sunshine Coast has a diversity of people with local, regional and global skills, knowledge

and experiences. There is a broad range of federal, provincial and local government departments, agencies, programs and services on the Coast, as well as nongovernmental organizations, private-sector industries and businesses, educational institutions, not-for-profit societies, volunteer organizations, and special-interest groups. Succession planning in local public, private and volunteer organizations is essential if we are to maintain the vibrancy and diversity of these social systems.

### **On the Ground: Land use, Waste**

Settlement on the traditional territories of both the shíshálh (Sechelt) and Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish) Nations is comprised primarily of a collection of communities and neighbourhoods of various sizes, stretching along the coastline, with the Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt the two major population centres.

The population on the Sunshine Coast has tripled since the Regional District was first established in 1967. Town centres are growing, new neighbourhoods are emerging and others are converting from weekend cottage areas into full-time residential use. While the Agricultural Land Reserve base remains under-utilized, stream sides and ocean shorelines are increasingly being preserved and protected.

Existing Official Community Plans (OCPs) on the Sunshine Coast project enough development to support an estimated population of more than 70,000 people—well beyond projected population growth.<sup>9</sup>

Landfills present a double-jeopardy in terms of sustainable land use: loss of generative agricultural use or preservation of wild culture, on the one hand, and pollution on the other. Though an impressive 50% of waste generated on the Coast in 2009 was diverted through reuse and recycling activities, the average person on the Coast still disposes approximately 440 kg of waste per year into local landfills—over 40% of which is likely to be made up of compostable organic material and recyclable paper, cardboard, metal, plastic and glass.<sup>10</sup>

### **Our Global Impact: *Transportation, Climate Change and Energy use***

Greenhouse gas emissions are the most vivid and present example of the local-global interface. How we get to work impacts the entire biosphere. According to the Province of British Columbia's 2007 Community Energy and Emissions Inventory<sup>11</sup>, transportation accounts for approximately 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions on the Coast. Though BC Transit



reports that transit ridership on the Coast is above average and accounts for approximately 5.7% of all personal transportation, there are an estimated 28,000 road vehicles on the Sunshine Coast of which approximately 60% are classified as large vehicles, including light trucks and vans, SUV's, and commercial vehicles.<sup>12</sup>

We enjoy hundreds of kilometres of walking and cycling paths on the Sunshine Coast, and more are being built every year in an effort to link communities by foot and by bicycle. Steep, upland terrain and coastal geography have imposed natural constraints on road networks and resulted in more compact development than many other rural communities in BC. Ride Share and van-pool programs are available for commuters to Metro Vancouver.

In 2007, the Sunshine Coast used 5.9 million gigajoules (GJ) of energy, emitted 355,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, and spent over \$100 million on fuel and energy.<sup>13</sup>



wealth of public input received through over 20 planning processes spanning all communities and more than a decade. Recent community planning initiatives have also been reviewed to provide input on current realities, goals and priorities to support sustainable community development. A list of initiatives reviewed is provided in Appendix A.

As we gleaned the public input material, the following concerns and aspirations began to emerge, displaying a high level of awareness of the interconnections between economy and ecology, social and environmental concerns, sustainable land use and traditional culture.

Our emissions continue to rise, as does the cost of the traditional sources of energy that we consume.

## ► 2. *What's important to you: realities, goals, priorities*

Before embarking on a course of action, we wanted to know what the sustainability values of the community were, and we wanted an inventory of the current situation, and what was working well, from a sustainability perspective. To this end, the Sunshine Coast Regional District undertook a review of existing and past community planning documents in order to identify common themes, goals and values expressed by the community.

The resulting document, **Literature Review on Regional Sustainability Visions and Goals**<sup>14</sup>, provides a useful synthesis of the

## BROADLY SPEAKING,

here is what you told us:

*Preparing for climate change and developing mitigation strategies are important to you. Your expressed need for conservation is a factor in that concern, in particular:*

- maintaining high-quality drinking water and securing local control of drinking water and other natural resources
- protecting water courses and ocean fronts and preserving natural ecological systems and biodiversity.

*Regarding infrastructure and the built environment, you would like to:*

- limit sprawl and minimize the environmental footprint in land-use practices
- develop green buildings and infrastructure standards
- implement a sustainable transportation infrastructure; protect greenways, trails and open spaces; and become a Zero Waste community.

*The natural co-existence of the social and ecological strata of a sustainable community is clearly evident in the following wishes expressed by the community:*

- develop suitable and affordable housing and maintain a small-town and neighbourhood atmosphere, while
- developing programs to attract and retain youth, and preparing for an aging demographic.



*Those human values underpin the community values evident in the following aspirations:*

- promote awareness and action on sustainability, and enhance regional coordination and collaboration
- improve and maintain plans for sustainability/growth management and develop sustainable infrastructure, while increasing density and services in towns.

*The manner in which the community's economic aspirations easily migrate into other areas of concern demonstrates deeply held sustainable values. Work, play, environmental and social well-being are all touched by the following values:*

- developing a sustainable energy infrastructure and creating stable, diverse, and prosperous economic opportunities locally.



- making primary industries more sustainable and developing and supporting value-added products/services.

*On a smaller scale, recognizing the need for a financially secure population:*

- creating more living-wage jobs, improving training opportunities, and promoting and maintaining sustainable, eco-friendly tourism.

*And crossing over into food security and sustainable land use:*

- preserving the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and farmland, and maintaining just and sustainable local food systems.

*Agriculture, bio-culture, social culture and native culture are all intertwined in the following community aspirations:*

- build on what already exists: acknowledge rights and title of shishálh (Sechelt) and Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish) Nations, and preserve and celebrate Sechelt and Squamish Nation traditions and culture.
- develop and maintain a learning culture and an intergenerational community.
- build healthy communities; develop rural solutions for rural places; and foster a culture of conservation in the community.

These broad concerns and projections of what a sustainable community might look like can be further organized into sustainability values which in turn can lead us to core commitments and strategic directions.

But first, before defining specific goals and committing to focused actions, let's look closely at the ground on which we will base our strategies, the way things are as you have described them.

### ▶ 3. *The current situation and what is working well*

In Part II, Navigating a Sustainable Course, we will distill the information gathered into several core sustainability values; from these, will arise clear strategic directions and opportunities for community groups, organizations, governments, neighbourhoods, families and individuals to pursue their sustainability commitments and goals.

But first, we present a comprehensive examination of what you, the community, see as the current state of affairs, and what you see as working well.

#### **The current situation: Water**

Chapman Creek is the main source of drinking water on the Sunshine Coast, supplying residents from Upper West Howe Sound all the way to Secret Cove. The Town of Gibsons also provides groundwater to many of its residents. Those not on one of these water systems draw their water from wells, streams and springs.

There is concern over the quality of both private and community drinking water supplies in parts of the Sunshine Coast (e.g. high arsenic in well water in some areas, and lack of treatment of water supplied to residents in the Madeira Park and Egmont areas). Corrective action, such as the construction of new treatment facilities to improve water quality to residents of Madeira Park and Egmont, is currently underway.

The total amount of water consumed on the Coast is increasing annually, as a result of population growth.

Conservation efforts by residents, businesses and government have reduced water consumption somewhat in recent years; however, the average person still uses approximately 570 L of treated drinking water every day.<sup>15</sup> Much of this goes towards feeding lawns and gardens, rather than to supporting basic drinking water needs, resulting in a peak in water use during dry summer months when water supplies are scarce.

#### **The current situation: Food Security**

The traditional food systems of our native and settler ancestors, before modern agriculture, encompassed the harvest of fish, seafood and non-timber forest products. Modern agriculture has not been a predominant sector on the Sunshine Coast. We are thus led to ask: What is the food capacity of the oceans, rivers and forests and is there potential to make harvesting and aquaculture a sustainable part of the local food system?

Figure 2, summarizes Stats Canada Data over the past three agriculture censuses. The trend illustrates that the total amount of land used for growing food crops has more than doubled over the 10 years spanning 1996 to 2006. According to the 2011 BC assessment data, 122 properties on the Sunshine Coast are currently classified as farms. From the 2006 Stats Canada data, the total land used in commercial food-crop production, and pasture supporting livestock (cattle and pigs), is reported at 125 hectares. However, through

discussions with members of the **Sunshine Coast Community Food Action Initiative**, it was estimated that the actual total land in commercial food production was closer to 12 hectares. (A current agriculture land-use inventory may be required to resolve this discrepancy.)

The Sunshine Coast needs more farms. Active promotion and capacity-building of the local food system could help us achieve more food security. Work by such community groups, such as the **One Straw Society**, has, in part, led to a resurgence of home gardening and small farms and an emergent “buy local” awareness amongst many residents. While home gardening is an essential part of a sustainable food system and it is well appreciated that there are some productive farms on the Sunshine Coast, the **Sunshine Coast Community Food Action Initiative** estimates that current local food production may only constitute 1% of our consumption.

There are notable barriers to sustainable local food production. The Sunshine Coast lacks many of the valleys or cleared lands (pastures) traditionally used for agriculture. However, it does contain 4,100 hectares of ALR, a provincial zone of land, in each geographical region, reserved for agriculture, based on its scientifically determined suitability for agricultural production. Our ALR has been almost completely preserved since its designation in 1976, but our actual food production has been relatively low compared to the amount of Agricultural Land Reserve available. While interest in food security and the amount of land used for production are both increasing, members of the public have been able to identify some constraints to the growth

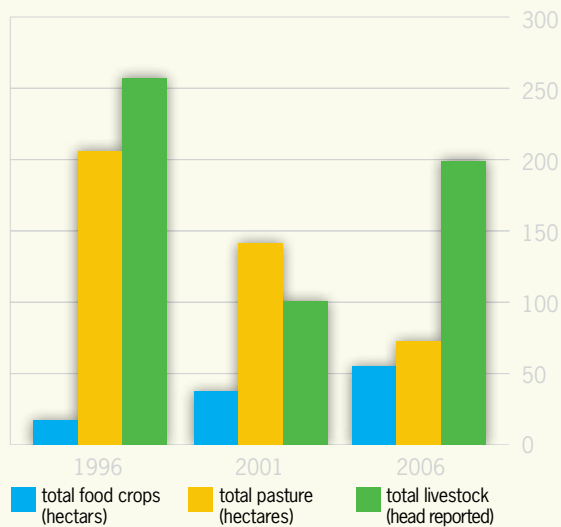


Figure 2: Total Production on Sunshine Coast According to Stats Canada Census Data

of agriculture, including cost of land, lack of skilled and experienced producers and farm business infrastructure, and lack of business case or incentives for producers.

### Water and Food Security: What’s working well

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) and Sechelt Indian Band signed a **Joint Watershed Management Agreement** in 2004 to seek local control over the Chapman Creek watershed. The multi-stage treatment process of the Chapman Creek Drinking Water Treatment Plant has created significant improvements to the quality of water supplied from Chapman Creek, and forms part of the SCRD’s multi-barrier approach to protecting drinking water.

The SCRD’s **Bathroom Fixture Replacement Program** is the largest program of its kind in Canada. Together with the **Toilet Rebate Program**, it has resulted in the replacement of over 16,000 inefficient fixtures including

8,900 toilets since 2001. This represents an estimated annual water savings of over 156 million litres of water every year.

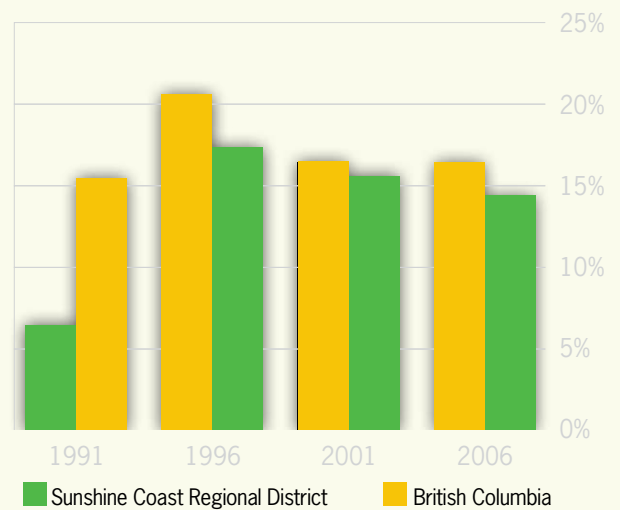
**The World's Best Water:** The Town of Gibsons achieved this honour over 60 municipalities at a 2005 international water-tasting contest in Berkeley Springs, Virginia.

Local governments have protected **rural lands and ALR** through bylaws and planning policies. **The Local Food Directory** provides an inventory of local food producers on the coast. Food security and farming enthusiasts are supported and provided with learning opportunities by such organizations as The Lund to Langdale Food Network, the One Straw Society, Sustainable Living Arts School, and the Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) models such as **Backyard Bounty** are utilizing residents' backyards to produce fruit and vegetables for purchase.

**Food Bank** and related food programs (Sunshine Coast Food Bank, Salvation Army, Community Halls, Community Schools, Church Groups) have recently expanded to keep up with need.

## The current situation: **Affordable Housing**

A rise in core-housing needs over the last twenty years has made affordable housing an increasingly pressing issue on the Sunshine Coast.<sup>16</sup> Affordable housing is generally defined as housing that requires a household to spend less than 30% of income on suitable accommodation.<sup>17</sup> A lack of affordable housing options on the Sunshine Coast affects a spectrum of residents, including young families, seniors with support needs, people with special needs, low-income renters and homeless persons.<sup>18</sup>



Source: CMHC, 2011<sup>19</sup>

Figure 3: Core Housing Need: Sunshine Coast and BC

Housing needs can be linked to other regional trends, including changes in available housing stock and population demographics. Between 2001 and 2006, home ownership grew from 78% of the housing stock to 80.6%. Consequently, there was a decline in rental housing stock from 22% to 19% in this same time period.<sup>20</sup> Generally, a significant rise in average incomes between 2001 and 2006 also indicates an overall wealthier population on the Sunshine Coast. This rise in income levels is linked to greater housing costs for both rental housing and home purchases.<sup>21</sup> However, “Despite the rise in incomes on the coast in recent years, median sales prices for a house in all communities (where data is available) are significantly higher than what median incomes can provide” (see reference 3). In addition to increased housing pressure, homelessness is a growing, but largely invisible, problem on the Sunshine Coast.

### **Affordable Housing: What's working well**

The need for funds and the attention of senior levels of government to enable more supportive and affordable housing is being substantiated by primary research from the **Affordable Housing Study**<sup>22</sup> and its update in 2009<sup>23</sup>, as well as a recent **Homelessness Needs and Strengths Assessment**.<sup>24</sup> **The Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Committee** is a joint, local-government-community-action-and-advocacy group dedicated to increasing the affordable and supportive housing stock on the coast through policy development and collaborative planning.

Secondary suites, which provide the bulk of rental housing (an important form of affordable

housing in smaller communities), have been legalized in the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt. This provides a legal basis for future growth of rental stocks in new and existing neighbourhoods.

**The Homelessness Outreach Project** has brought together committed local partners to identify the scope and characteristics of homelessness, to pilot creative responses to alleviate homelessness, to raise community awareness, and to establish a regional strategic plan to address this issue. The homelessness Needs and Strengths Assessment (2010) (see reference 3) provides valuable information from which to plan transit services, housing, and community social services that are accessible to people who live in poverty.

Supportive housing options increased in 2010, with **Sechelt Legacy Housing** providing 8 residences for people with mental health issues, and an expansion of the **Greencourt Seniors Residence** in Sechelt providing more options for vulnerable populations.

### **The current situation: Employment**

In 2006, the average family income on the Sunshine Coast was \$57,052, approximately 12% less than the 2006 provincial average of \$64,821.<sup>25</sup> Though unemployment rates on the Sunshine Coast declined between 1991 and 2006, the largest decline occurred between 2001 and 2006. Recent economic-downturn unemployment rates have risen significantly. The unemployment rate for the first half of 2010 was 9.4% for the region, more than double the 4.4% rate of 2006.<sup>26</sup>

According to the 2006 Census, approximately 84% of the basic “after-tax” income on the Sunshine Coast came from five sources:<sup>27</sup>

- non-employment income (22%), including investment income and corporate pension plans
- public sector (20%), including education, health services, social services, justice services and local government
- transfer payments (18%) from government to individuals, including employment insurance, income assistance, old age security and Canada Pension Plan
- forestry (14%), including logging, pulp and paper mills, sawmills and other forestry-related jobs
- construction (10%).

The remaining sources of income include mining & mineral procurement (2%); fishing (1%); agriculture and food (1%); tourism (3%); high-tech (2%); film production (1%); and other forms of employment (4%).

Among a number of industries experiencing growth between 2001 and 2006, construction had the most significant growth, adding 840 jobs, for a total of 1,830 individuals working in the industry.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, retail added 295 jobs, while professional, scientific and technical services grew by 255 jobs. However, logging and forestry products declined, with a loss of 215 jobs, as did fishing and fish processing, which lost 180 jobs.

Between 2006 and 2010, new business incorporations (start-ups) on the Sunshine Coast declined from 121 in 2006 to 74 in 2010.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that many businesses started on the Sunshine Coast are not incorporated, and therefore not captured



in these statistics. Commuting to jobs in the Lower Mainland or elsewhere off the Sunshine Coast also accounted for 9.5%, or 1,295 of the labour force in 2006.

### **Employment: What's working well**

Affordable housing and homelessness are directly tied to the overall employment picture. Public services on the Sunshine Coast account for a large number of jobs. In 2006, 24.3% of the employment on the Sunshine Coast came from occupations in health services, education, public administration and other government and community services.<sup>30</sup> The expansion of Saint Mary's Hospital will, in its 2009-2010 fiscal year, create additional jobs for local residents.

**VOICE on the Coast** is collaborating with a number of organizations to attract, retain and employ young adults on the Sunshine Coast.



**The Aspire Self Employment** program has helped over 140 new entrepreneurs launch businesses on the Sunshine Coast between 2005 and 2010, while **Community Futures** disbursed 128 loans, totalling \$4,824,000, with 200 jobs created and maintained in the same 5 year period.

### **The current situation: Poverty, Health and Social Services**

It is difficult to quantify the scope of poverty on the Sunshine Coast. Some indicators show that poverty is a major community issue.<sup>31</sup> As many as 1 in 9 children on the coast live in families with incomes inadequate for full participatory citizenship.<sup>32</sup> Lone parents (and their children), Aboriginal persons, people with work-limiting disabilities, recent immigrants, and single 45- to 64-year-olds are three to five times more likely than other Canadians to live in poverty.<sup>33</sup> On the Sunshine Coast, these groups represent

a significant proportion of our population.

Between September 2008 and September 2010, dependence on income assistance increased from 1.3% to 2.0%.<sup>34</sup> Young adults are particularly dependent on income assistance, with 3.7% of those 19-24 dependent on basic income assistance, well above the provincial average of 2.1% for this age group. In 2005, 28.9% of unattached individuals were low income. The use of food banks, another strong indicator of poverty, has risen in recent years. In 2009, Food Bank volunteers gave 2,678 hours and distributed 5,617 bags of food, an average of 468 per month. This is over a 30% increase from 2008. In March 2010 during the annual Hunger Count, conducted for Food Banks Canada, 353 adults and 164 children attended the Food Bank.<sup>35</sup>

The impacts of poverty are wide ranging. A lack of income security has been linked to poor education outcomes for children, including low literacy, comprehension, school readiness and school completion. There are also significant links between poverty and both physical and mental health; evidence indicates that poverty can contribute to greater health problems. Additionally, individuals experiencing poverty are less likely to spend quality time with their children or participate fully in their communities. Poverty also contributes to increased pressure on the health and justice system, increasing cost burdens on all levels of government and taxpayers.<sup>36</sup>

Poverty underlies many of the social issues we face locally and the community is generally unaware of the scope of need for support services.<sup>37</sup> Most of our local community service organizations are underfunded.<sup>38</sup> These

services include retraining for employment; support in parenting; specialized supports for vulnerable children and disabled adults; assistance in finding housing and food; counselling for abuse or families in crisis; acute health care; and care for seniors to stay in their own homes.

Preventative, resource, and information services are the most underfunded, while legal aid is very limited and there are critical delays in the justice system. Access to services in Pender Harbour and Egmont is limited, creating geographical imbalances in service delivery and community well-being.

Although service integration remains an issue, there is a high degree of willingness among non-profit agencies, the school district, the faith community, the health authority, and provincial and local government agencies to work collaboratively to improve services and to make the best use of limited resources.

### **Poverty, Health and Social Services: What's working well**

**Sunshine Coast Community Services Society** has secured provincial and federal operating grants for a wide range of services for children, youth and families, as well as earned the funding support of local service clubs and groups and individual donors. The society received commendation from an international accrediting body for responsiveness to community needs through collaboration, and creative and client-centred programming.

**Community Foundations Vital Signs Report** provides an important evidence base of social,

economic and environmental well-being, through a comprehensive set of community indicators.

With the opening of the **Sechelt Legacy Housing**, supportive housing options were increased in 2010, providing 8 residences for people with mental health issues. An expansion of the **Greencourt Seniors Residence** in Sechelt provided more options for vulnerable populations.

Access to food has increased on the Sunshine Coast for low-income people: four food banks are now operating between Port Mellon and Egmont, along with a number of community meal programs (see Food Security section).

The **Youth Outreach Program** is a unique, regional partnership between four community schools and the Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, funded by local government. It raises awareness of issues that affect our youth and provides them with outreach workers who, when necessary, connect them to supporting services.

The **Violence Against Women in Relationships Coordinating Committee**, the **Youth Awareness and Action Committee**, and the **Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table** are three community examples of integrated service delivery through collaborative planning between organizations. The Early Childhood Development Planning Table is a multi-sector group that does active advocacy and service delivery. Their successes at integrated service delivery are due, in large part, to their collaborative, strategic-planning approach. They have learned how to leverage the

resources of multiple community and provincial organizations to benefit the Sunshine Coast.

### **The current situation: Arts and Culture**

The Sunshine Coast has a high proportion of residents with a background in arts and culture, compared to other provincial averages.<sup>39</sup> The arts, culture, heritage and identity activities on the coast are among the strongest threads in our local social fabric.

In spite of massive cuts to arts funding from provincial gaming revenues (99%), which reduced funding from a high of over \$70,000 in 2008 to just over \$600 in 2010,<sup>40</sup> Coast cultural workers manage to provide a wealth of activities: numerous public and private art galleries; three live-theatre venues; museums; libraries; an arts/learning centre; dozens of amateur and professional musical groups (orchestras, bands, choirs, and dance companies); First Nations cultural groups; a francophone school (L'Ecole du Pacifique); francophone events and activities; new Canadian and ESL groups; a multitude of festivals and celebrations; and a wide variety of not-for-profit societies, clubs, courses and activities.

### **Arts and Culture: What's working well**

**The Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy**, created in 2007, has guided the arts, culture and heritage community of the Coast towards more regional focus, integration and collaboration in the delivery of experiences for both residents and visitors.

A **Community Accord** has been created and signed, proclaiming the Sunshine Coast as an inclusive community, welcoming and nurturing to all people of any cultural heritage.

Despite a lack of adequate storage space, many local individuals, groups and formal organizations work to maintain **archival records/collections** and to sustain knowledge of events, places, ecosystems, people and objects of historical and cultural significance.

**The Coast Cultural Alliance** (CCA)'s weekly e-bulletin (since 2005) is distributed to over 1,000 people, and is an effective tool for sharing news and events to residents of the Sunshine Coast, including Powell River.

### **▶ ACCORDING TO A 2006**

*Cultural Scan, there were 38 major organizations "supporting, encouraging and developing arts and cultural heritage activities and services on the Sunshine Coast." <sup>41</sup> Seventy-five festivals and events were also identified in the 2006 Cultural Scan; the events that tracked participation had between 400 and 10,000 individuals attending. Approximately 1,300 people worked over 90,000 hours for cultural events and organizations, donating an estimated value of \$1,357,635 to arts and culture activities on the Sunshine Coast.*

## **The current situation: Learning and Leading**

The Sunshine Coast is home to over 300 not-for-profit, special-interest and volunteer agencies that provide services to residents.<sup>42</sup> Numerous private-sector industries and businesses create or sell products and services in the Sunshine Coast. The region is also home to four local governments and a school district that provide governance for 12 neighbourhood schools. Several federal and provincial programs operate in this region as well. The large number of residents involved in various services provides a high capacity for doing great work for the present-day and future community.

Learning of all shapes and sizes occurs constantly on the Sunshine Coast, yet knowledge is not always effectively transferred between our organizations. In many cases we lack working linkages and structures that would better allow organizations on the Coast to communicate and work together towards common goals.

Without these common structures, processes and commitment to learning together, the result can be working at cross purposes, leading to a duplication of efforts and activities and increased demand for funding, skilled staff, volunteers or other resources. Without the structures in place to work effectively across organizations, we may also miss some of the bigger patterns that influence, and opportunities to support, the resilience of our community.

We have a concerning demographic deficit in 20 to 44 year-old residents.<sup>43</sup> The shortage

of young adults on the Coast is mirrored in a declining school enrolment in many Sunshine Coast schools. It has also been recognized and well documented that 32.6 percent of students begin kindergarten without the necessary social, emotional and behaviour skills to be ready for learning at school. This is approximately 3 percent higher than the provincial average.<sup>44</sup> Many local programs provide learning opportunities for parents and children during the early years (0 to 5) as this “unique time in human growth and development... can set trajectories across a lifetime.”<sup>45</sup> Examples include SPARK! KinderSPARK! Strong Start, Childcare Resource and Referral, Bellies and Babies and initiatives provided through Vancouver Coastal Health and the public libraries.

Learning and leadership development is not only achieved through the formal education of young people. Succession planning and apprenticeship is a key consideration for many Sunshine Coast employers and volunteer groups that work to sustain themselves while faced with an aging workforce.

## **Learning and Leading: What's working well**

Interdisciplinary and inter-agency work is being done at the **Early Childhood Development Planning Table**, the **Sunshine Coast Literacy Council** and the **Social Planning Council**. These collaborations are active demonstrations of learning across organizations and pooling resources for the best possible community services.

The Sunshine Coast is home to some diverse and well-developed learning opportunities



that are attracting young adults and other newcomers to the Coast, as well as providing opportunities for existing residents. Examples include the **Inside Passage School of Fine Woodworking** in Roberts Creek and **Capilano University's** certificate programs in Business Administration, Mountain Bike Operations, Tourism, Early Childhood Care, Scuba Dive Instruction as well as a host of first year university courses and Elder College.

**Community Schools** offer targeted programming to vulnerable children and other community services such as the Youth Outreach Program and the Restorative Justice Program.

**Iris Griffith Centre and Sea to Sky Outdoor School** both attract students and teachers from on and off the Sunshine Coast to learn in nature about sustainability, leadership and our bioregion.

**School District 46** is well known for its successes in tailored learning approaches in Special Education, Sunshine Coast Alternative School (including Ace-It apprenticeships), Aboriginal Education, and Early Learning (including five Strong Start centres). **École du Pacifique** (Conseil scolaire francophone) provides French immersion learning for Francophone families.

#### **The current situation: Natural Spaces, Parks and Recreation**

We are fortunate to be surrounded by a diversity of natural spaces, including waterfront areas and an extensive backcountry environment. These areas support biodiversity on the Sunshine Coast, and offer virtually limitless recreational opportunities for all seasons. Biodiversity and opportunities to experience nature are part of our identity and values.

Public parks abound, with over 75 community parks maintained by local governments (including the Dakota Ridge Winter Recreation Area) and a number of premier provincial parks such as the Tetrahedron, Sargeant Bay and Skookumchuck Narrows Provincial Parks and Thormanby Marine Park, to name a few. Park amenities such as sports fields, courts and playgrounds provide access to a variety of activities including soccer, baseball, softball, tennis and playtime with the kids.

Our communities also enjoy indoor aquatic and exercise facilities located in Pender Harbor, Sechelt and Gibsons which provide opportunities for group fitness, health and wellness, and arts programs. Two ice arenas, located in Sechelt and Gibsons, are available to the public and user groups. Other recreation facilities include a curling rink, youth centre, squash and racquet ball courts, and indoor tennis courts. There are three golf courses on the Sunshine Coast.

### **Natural Spaces, Parks and Recreation: *What's working well***

Connecting trail networks, such as the creation of the **Sun Coaster Trail**, have increased accessibility to outdoor activities, while the creation of the **Dakota Ridge Recreation Area** has increased the opportunity for winter recreation, as well as for diversified tourism into the winter season. Sunshine Coast residents enjoy hundreds of kilometres of walking and cycling paths, and more are being built every year in an effort to link communities by foot and by bike.

Public recreation facilities on the Coast run under a single governing body, allowing

synergy for staffing and multiple options for membership holders.

The **Tetrahedron Outdoor Club** is a group of Sunshine Coast residents who love the outdoors. Throughout the year the club provides the community with group recreational opportunities.

**Iris Griffith Field Studies and Interpretive Centre** is a destination for locals and students from afar who want to take part in community or school nature programs. The field centre also leads a wetland restoration project.



**The current situation:  
Land Use and Transportation**

The communities of the Sunshine Coast exist on the Traditional Territories of both the Sechelt and Squamish Nations who have resided on these coastal areas for time beyond quantifiable recognition. First Nations remain the stewards of the land and their land use plans will be referred to, and integrated into, regional land use strategies.

Constraints imposed by our limited road network, steep upland terrain and coastal geography have resulted in more compact development than many other rural communities in BC. Settlement is comprised of primarily of a collection of communities and neighbourhoods of various sizes, stretching along the coastline with the Town of Gibsons and District of Sechelt being the two major population centres. The linear

(vs more compact) community settlement on the Sunshine Coast provides a number of challenges to sustainability, including: transportation, community connectivity and service distribution.

According to the Province of British Columbia's Community Energy & Emissions Inventory<sup>46</sup>, transportation accounts for approximately 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions on the Sunshine Coast. Public transit services on the Sunshine Coast are available but run on limited schedules. Using 2006 Census data from Statistics Canada, BC Transit estimates that transit ridership accounts for approximately 5.7% of all personal transportation on the Coast. To improve transit services, more riders are needed along transit corridors or new arrangements supporting short route loops and smaller transit vehicles. Improved ferry schedules and the ability to purchase Sunshine Coast and Translink passes on ferries have



**SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY**

**The Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Development**, according to planner Michael



*Epp, is a good example of New Urbanist land use planning, which uses cluster zoning and densifying areas in close proximity to the commercial core. "We created lots that were the size of four regular lots as one parcel, allowing up to four residences, but not necessarily single-family homes; it allowed for a range of designs to encourage environmental building, including solar orientation for passive design."*

*Utilizing residential cottage lots (RC zone) "was neat because it seems innovative, but in fact, it's what Gibsons is, especially anything pre-1970. That early, cottage, urban form was kind of regulated out of existence; this returns to a form of housing that fits with the character of the community and provides a more affordable form of housing."*

*Epp points out how these all tie into housing, transportation, and energy issues. "The actual original plan didn't envision the geo-exchange utility; there were other environmental aspects (solar orientation, on-site stormwater retention), but now it's got geothermal. This means the plan is going above and beyond expectations. . . . In terms of livability, it feels like a town. It's very much a European model."*

also been identified as potential improvements to promote ridership. Land use that supports higher densities along these corridors and in strategic growth areas will allow transit providers to increase service frequency.

Settlement plans have been located across the Coast, suggesting the necessity for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach amongst local governments with respect to land use planning. Most settlement should be focused in village hubs to maximize efficiency and to minimize expansion into agricultural, resource and environmentally sensitive areas.

### **Land Use and Transportation: What's working well**

The **Agricultural Land Reserve** base, while under-utilized for farming, remains largely in place since its inception in 1973. The Sunshine Coast Highway corridor has remained largely rural and forested, and commercial uses, particularly outside the municipalities, are limited. Stream sides and ocean shorelines are increasingly preserved and protected.

Although we might wish that the bus ran more often and that routes were more extensive, transit ridership on the Coast is, according to recent BC Transit data, above average compared to many communities in BC (28.5 rides/hr on Sunshine Coast vs. average of 21.5 rides/hr for similar communities in BC). **Ride share** and van-pool programs are available for commuters to Metro Vancouver.

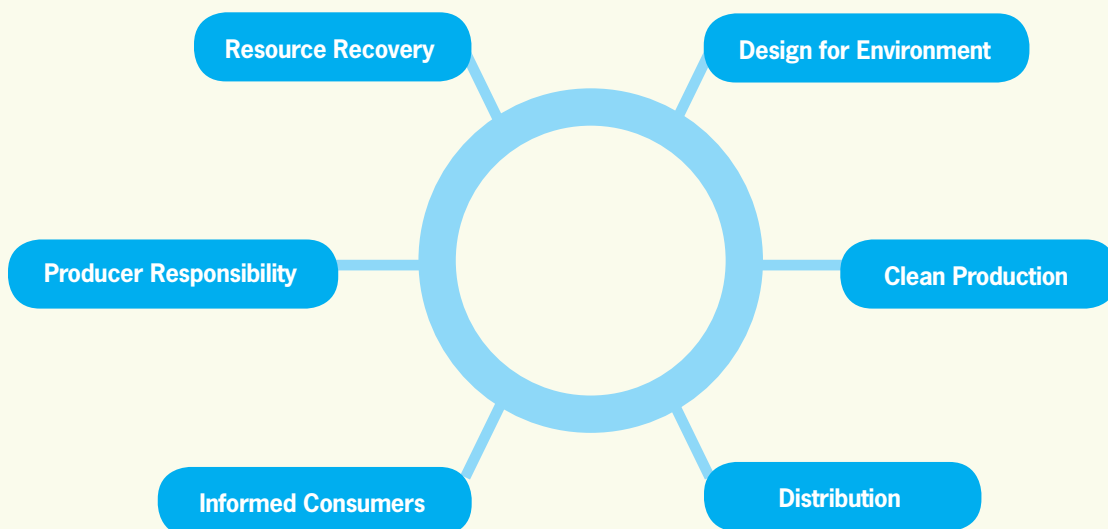
The **Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan** will result in new, mixed-use and walkable development near existing services, affordable housing units and a mixture of lot sizes and housing types. Density within the Neighbourhood Plan area has allowed for the development of a geothermal energy system to heat and cool homes.

### **The current situation: Zero Waste**

At current rates of population growth and waste disposal, local landfills are quickly reaching their maximum capacity.

The SCRCD's **Community Energy & Emissions Plan**<sup>47</sup> identified that approximately 7% of the region's total greenhouse gas emissions were generated as a result of solid-waste disposal in landfills. Methane, the greenhouse gas created in a landfill when organic materials breakdown anaerobically (in the absence of oxygen), is approximately 21 times more harmful than carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, the SCRCD plans to install a landfill gas management system at the Sechelt Landfill (the larger of the region's two disposal facilities) to reduce emissions by half and generate electricity.

Local governments (particularly Regional Districts in BC) have primary responsibility for managing the stuff we throw away or recycle; however, private businesses and not-for-profit groups are also involved on the Sunshine Coast. Increasingly, the responsibility for managing waste in Canada is being transferred away from local governments and taxpayers and onto the manufacturing industries producing the stuff that ends up as



waste. This concept is known as Extended Producer Responsibility. In BC, industry already manages used batteries, electronics, beverage containers, pharmaceuticals, tires, motor oil, fluorescent light bulbs, paint and household hazardous waste. Bottle depots are another common example of this practice.

### Zero Waste: What's working well

A number of businesses and websites on the Coast promote reuse through the sale and swapping of used products, and they help support the reuse of materials. Though a recent development, composting facilities now exist on the Coast that can handle a wide range of residential and commercial organic waste. These businesses represent an opportunity to turn this material into valuable soil-building material to support local food production. Composting organic waste represents perhaps the single-largest opportunity to reduce waste going to landfills on the Coast.

**The One Can Program**, implemented by local governments on the Coast, has helped improve the use of recycling facilities and backyard composting by imposing a volume limit of 77 L on weekly garbage collection. The program allows residents to purchase additional volume at an extra charge, thereby, supporting a “user-pay” philosophy.

The SCRCD is proceeding with a project at the Sechelt Landfill to **capture landfill gas** and convert it into electricity, using innovative, near-zero-emissions engines. The project has received over \$1 million in grant funding and is expected to be up and running by 2014.

## The current situation: **Climate and Energy**

Climate change and energy are tightly interwoven. Every time that we build a road or a dam or divert water, dump garbage into a landfill, drive a car, turn on a light switch or run the hot water, we release greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere. These gases build up over time and trap heat in our atmosphere, like an insulating blanket. Even though the earth goes through natural cycles of warming and cooling, the vast majority of scientists agree that human activities are the cause of the current warming of our global climate. We are pouring billions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (31 billion in 2006, which is double the amount since 1970). Scientists warn that if global greenhouse-gas emissions continue to rise, we will surpass a global tipping point, beyond which, the impacts of climate change will have serious and unavoidable implications for global ecosystems, economies, and human settlement.<sup>48</sup>

There are an estimated 12,200 housing units on the Coast, of which over 80% are single-family, detached homes. The average single-family home uses more than twice the energy per square foot than an average apartment. Space heating and domestic hot water make up about 60% of residential energy demands. Another 6,200 housing units are projected by the year 2031.<sup>49</sup>

## Climate and Energy: **What's working well**

As a first step to reducing emissions across the region, the Sunshine Coast local governments, in collaboration with over 300 local residents and stakeholders, have created a Community Energy & Emissions Plan with clear targets, policies and actions.

The Town of Gibsons is proceeding with a new **geothermal energy** system to provide renewable heat energy to multiple homes and businesses in the Upper Gibsons area.

The SCRCD is proceeding with a project at the Sechelt Landfill to capture landfill gas and convert it into electricity. The District of Sechelt Office and Public Library now gets its water heated by the sun, thanks to a new **solar hot water system**. Some residents have also taken advantage of incentive programs like Solar BC to install solar hot water systems on their homes.

Local governments are now in the process of updating all Official Community Plans to include **energy and greenhouse gas reduction targets** and policies to help guide future development patterns that create fewer emissions.

THIS PAPER IS AN INVITATION TO EVERY ORGANIZATION, HOUSEHOLD, AND INDIVIDUAL TO ENDORSE AND ADOPT A COURSE OF ACTION, TO EMBARK ON A JOURNEY, BASED ON A SET OF COMMON PRINCIPLES—A TALL ORDER, SOME WOULD SAY, BUT ONE WHICH MANY OF US ARE ALREADY COMMITTED TO TAKING. HOW CAN WE BE RELATIVELY SURE THAT WE WERE ALL ON THE SAME JOURNEY?

## ► Navigating a Sustainable Course

The landscape is wide, diverse, and complex. How do we make sure that we are all pulling in the same direction? How do we ensure that we stay on track? Perhaps we need a compass to keep us on a sustainable course. If we had to agree as a community on a set of guidelines that we could follow—like a compass—to move consistently towards a sustainable future for the Sunshine Coast, what would those guidelines look like?

Our compass has four directions, each quadrant holding a group of core values on which sustainable communities are built, and which we suggest can help keep us on course:

- Economic Vitality
- Health and Social Well-Being
- Cultural Vitality, and
- Environmental Responsibility

After examining these core values, we will look at the strategic directions in which they point us, then suggest initiatives for implementation and monitoring. We are suggesting them as important criteria for local governments, businesses, organizations and individuals **to reflect upon** in their day-to-day activities and behaviour, as they develop new policy, assess proposed initiatives, and establish financial priorities.

From the core values explored below, decision-makers and community members can begin building a set of integral commitments and achievable goals.

NOW THAT WE KNOW THE LAY OF THE LAND IN WHICH WE WILL BUILD A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR OUR REGION, LET US EXAMINE THE CORE VALUES ON WHICH WE WILL BASE OUR STRATEGIES.

## Core Values for a Sustainable Community

The following values make up the compass that will, in guiding us towards sustainability, point us in the necessary strategic directions:

### **Economic Vitality**

- We recognize that with a strong economy, people may overcome barriers to adopting sustainable behaviour
- We identify, and build upon, the skills and resources unique to the Coast as well as encourage collaborations that create value-added businesses, products and efficiencies
- We strive to make the Coast more self-sufficient and resilient to changing and uncertain economic conditions
- We understand and address the changing economy by supporting best practices, challenging our conventional approaches, and by fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, and learning.

### **Health and Social Well-Being**

- We recognize that without a feeling of connection to community, people are less likely to act with the community interest at heart
- We lead by example
- We nurture collective well-being, belonging and contribution
- We learn how to make decisions that consider our long-term future and that of our communities
- We promote that everyone on the coast get involved to live more sustainably
- We recognize and value the importance of local knowledge and tradition, as well as the contributions of new Coasters and visitors alike.

### Cultural Vitality

- We respect that spiritual fulfillment, in all its many forms, is an important part of reaching our full potential as individuals and as a community
- We celebrate the diversity of our community and engage people in issues that directly affect them
- We support the culture and traditions of the Skwxwúmesh Uxwumixw (Squamish) and shíshálh (Sechelt) Nations, including sháshíshálem (the shíshálh language), and continue to promote its use and cultural ways so that they continue as they have been for countless generations
- We support a vibrant culture where residents create, enjoy and make accessible to all a diverse range of arts, heritage and cultural experiences.

### Environmental Responsibility

- We recognize that a healthy local economy, society, and culture depend on the support of the surrounding environment
- We leave the natural environment on the Coast better than it is now for our children and grandchildren
- We protect our culture and the future of our environment by minimizing our consumption of resources and our contributions to the pollution of land, water and air
- We make decisions regarding our land and resources that reflect our understanding of the connection among all things.

For a discussion on how these core values can be applied, see Part III Implementation and Monitoring.



### SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



*The Art Farm began as an ad hoc group of artists and people passionate about nature*

*and the arts, and officially formed in March 2008. They began by doing special events and workshops, hosting artisans and doing installations on the land. "Summer of '08," says Chad Hershler, "that was our first one. People were quite moved. It was a hit." Examining that first success, the group came up with a simple mandate: Art+Nature=Change.*

*"Change means shifting perceptions and changing people's realities," explains Chad. "It means exploring ideas that may be a bit too alternative for society as a whole to explore. That's a*

*crucial role for the arts and nature: to explore.*

*"And a lot of what we're trying to do is about community, trying to create an organization that allows community to grow, flourish and change with it. We don't isolate professional artists from amateurs, lovers of art and nature. Mingling between professional, community-based and hobby artists is the most important element. That, in and of itself, creates positive change within a community."*

[www.deercrossingtheartfarm.org](http://www.deercrossingtheartfarm.org)

# Strategic Directions: From land use to zero waste

From knowing where we are, we move towards taking specific strategic directions. Each of the following strategies interacts with the rest, and is inextricably linked to several of the others.

Land use, for example, is obviously foundational but useless without clean water and food security, while zero waste presents us with the need to address what is perhaps the weakest link in our human presence on earth: garbage and pollution.

We begin with land use, which may appear here to be slightly more comprehensive than the other strategies, not because it is more important than the others, since all of them have an interconnected, dynamic relationship, but because it is so foundational. Consideration of a land-use strategy for the Sunshine Coast requires a connection with all other elements in this Sustainability Plan. Future land-use decisions on the Sunshine Coast should be considered not simply on a community by community basis, but as a region where other components of sustainability are measured.

For each strategic direction, we present you with a long term vision and set of specific targets and proposed actions to move us in the right direction. Icons are used to illustrate linkages with other strategic directions, reinforcing the principle that all things are connected.

-  **Land Use**
-  **Water Stewardship**
-  **Food Security**
-  **Affordable Housing**
-  **Employment**
-  **Addressing Poverty**
-  **Community Health and Social Services**
-  **Arts and Culture**
-  **Learning Leading**
-  **Natural Spaces, Parks, Recreation**
-  **Transportation**
-  **Climate and Energy**
-  **Zero Waste**



## Land Use

*The four primary components of sustainability—economic, social, cultural and environmental—are all factors of intelligent growth and healthy communities. Efficient land settlement minimizes the cost of servicing, provides opportunities for healthy communities with a strong social and cultural fabric, and maintains the unique environmental qualities that residents and visitors find attractive.*

**We envision** complete, compact, low-environmental-impact communities based on energy-efficient settlement patterns, in harmony with the natural environment in which they are set.

## Moving Forward

*The quality of life for current and future residents of the Sunshine Coast depends on a lighter human footprint, resulting from sound land-use principles that coordinate rural and urbanized settlement patterns.*

Land use is interwoven to varying extents with every other component of this paper. Transportation planning, whether public transit or a new highway, goes hand in hand with deciding where new housing or commercial development will be located. Energy and emissions directly link to transportation, which directly links to the travel to and from our homes, work, and other destinations. Emissions are reduced as the efficiency of home heating and the built environment are increased.



Closely related strategic directions



Other related Strategic Directions





Land Use

Closely related strategic directions



Housing



Water



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste

A comprehensive land-use plan requires a two-pronged approach: 1) Adopt a set of sustainable land-use principles to guide future development decisions, and 2) Create a Land-Use Classification System and Map for the entire region. Providing opportunities for residents to learn about sustainable land use principles is vital in moving forward with these actions.

### Action 1: Adopt a set of sustainable land-use principles to guide future development decisions.

The following principles, based on a review of existing Sunshine Coast Official Community Plans and best practices, identified in the literature, are suggested.

#### Land-Use Principles

**Focus growth** in existing neighbourhoods and communities, using infrastructure investments efficiently so that developments do not take up new land and extend the overall human settlement footprint.

- Encourage compact, efficient, walkable neighbourhoods in close proximity to services and employment, and recreational opportunities.

**Concentrate new development** within areas easily serviced by existing infrastructure, achieving increased density in settlement hubs.

- Minimize the development of small lots in more remote rural areas.
- Maintain buffers of open space and rural areas between settlement hubs.

**Provide a variety of transportation choices** and make neighbourhoods attractive and safe for walking and cycling.

- Enhance public transit and encourage transit use and car-sharing, and develop park-and-ride facilities.
- Develop walking and cycling trails that connect communities and services.

**Create diverse housing opportunities**, fostering unique neighbourhood identities as vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.

- Ensure that people of different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice.
- Require that a minimum percentage of all new residential units be affordable to families and individuals on the Sunshine Coast.

**Celebrate** the unique attributes of different communities.

- Support development that maintains the unique character of different communities and provides a range of housing types.
- Support development that allows for “aging in place” as baby boomers age, leave the workforce and experience greater mobility challenges.

**Preserve** open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas so that development respects natural landscape features and aesthetic values.

- Aim to provide a park or open space within a 400-metre walking distance of all residential areas.
- Ensure the preservation of unique aesthetic values (e.g. along Highway 101, coastline, etc.).

- Ensure that new developments do not utilize sensitive habitat and hazardous areas.

**Protect and enhance agricultural lands,** maintaining a secure and productive land base, which provides food security, employment, and conserves habitat.

- Preserve lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- Permit agricultural uses in all land designations.
- Limit development in sensitive habitat areas.

**Discourage** development and resource extraction within drinking-water watersheds, and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

- Seek protection and local control over land use in drinking watersheds.
- Limit development in areas identified as having cultural significance, sensitive habitat, or geotechnical risk.

**Enhance our aquatic resources,** ensuring access to, and protection of, clean drinking water, high-quality aquatic recreation, and access to the waterfront.

- Ensure development preserves aesthetic values along coastlines.
- Preserve public access to waterfront and associated facilities.

## Action 2: Create a Land-Use Classification System and Map

One tool that can support sustainable land use is a land-use classification system for the Sunshine Coast. It is recommended that such a system be developed and a Land-Use Classification Map be produced to help guide land-use decisions for all areas on the Sunshine Coast. Steps involved in this process could include the following:

- Conduct a Suitability Mapping exercise, using OCP and other data, to determine which areas on the Sunshine Coast are suitable for different types of development (and which are not);
- Determine preferred location criteria for new development (e.g. within 400 m of transit corridors; must be in an area currently serviceable by municipal water; create net-zero zones—sustainable neighbourhoods.)
- Produce a Land-Use Classification Map that illustrates locations suitable for development and the type of development, as well as areas to be protected.

**A land-use classification system is beneficial because its process provides a clear rationale for why certain lands are identified as suitable or unsuitable for development.**



Land Use

Closely related strategic directions



Housing



Water



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste



Water

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Climate & Energy



Community Health

Other related Strategic Directions



Employment



Housing



Poverty



Transportation



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste

# Water Stewardship

*Water is the central ingredient of life on Earth. As part of a thriving ecosystem, public health depends on healthy, ecologically diverse watersheds. We are a major influence on local ecosystems, and a protected, high-quality drinking water supply is important to us.*

**We envision** all people on the Sunshine Coast having access to sufficient high-quality drinking water to meet their present and future needs.

## Moving Forward

*Protection of community drinking watersheds, particularly the Chapman Creek Watershed, is a priority for the Coast community. Watershed protection involves limiting or managing activities within community drinking watersheds to protect the quality and quantity of water supplies, freshwater habitat, biodiversity and cultural values.*

## Targets and Actions

In order to **reduce water consumption** per person by 33% by 2020, **we need to**

- develop an updated water conservation action plan and begin implementation
- implement universal water metering and a user-pay rate structure in all water systems
- Engage local farmers in developing a water conservation strategy and a set of tools for the region that acknowledge the competing goals of increased food production and water conservation
- report leaks, follow local sprinkling restrictions, and encourage applications for water-efficiency incentives offered by water utilities

In order to **increase supply** for future population projections by 2020, **we need to**

- identify needs for additional drinking water storage
- develop capital plans to supply water to projected population as identified in the Official Community Plans
- complete construction of the South Pender Water Treatment Plant
- complete construction of the North Pender ultraviolet disinfection system
- complete construction of the Egmont water treatment and supply system.

In order to **protect** community drinking watersheds, aquifers and sensitive habitat by 2020, **we need to**

- complete and adopt a plan to mitigate risks to water quality in the Chapman Creek Drinking Watershed
- complete and adopt risk assessments and plans to mitigate risks to water quality in all other community drinking watersheds
- complete a land-use classification study to identify sensitive habitat areas and amend OCPs to protect these areas

# Community Food Security

We all need food to eat, just as we need clean air to breathe and water to drink. Food security is central to maintaining a human settlement. With climate change, world food shortages, and the increasing costs of transportation already affecting much of the world, our food security is in jeopardy. In order to increase our food security, we need to increase the amount, and accessibility, of local food supplies.

**We envision** increasing the amount of, and access to, locally grown and produced food.

Research shows strong links between poverty and food insecurity.<sup>50</sup> With food bank use on the rise on the Sunshine Coast,<sup>51</sup> there is a clear need for food policies that ensure that local food is affordable. There is growing recognition that integrating food planning into other policy areas, such as land use, housing and health, is an important step in reducing poverty.<sup>52</sup>

## Moving Forward

*“Food security can be described as when we all have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. Access is meant to include both physical access and economic access. To achieve ‘food security,’ four conditions have to be met: availability of food in quantity for a given population; stability and reliability of food supply over time; accessibility of food, or the ease with which a population may obtain available food; and how the food is used, including cultural and culinary acceptability, as well as people’s skills to properly use the food.”<sup>53</sup>*

Dr. Paul Martiquet, 2011

## Targets and Actions

In order to take **inventory** of the local food system by 2020, **we need to**

- perform agricultural land-use inventory and agriculture area planning
- survey traditional aboriginal land-use practices for fishing, hunting, harvesting seafood and gathering of non-timber forest products (e.g. berries and mushrooms)
- survey and quantify local fishing, aquaculture and seafood industry

In order to **connect** the community to the local food system by 2020, **we need to**

- increase the skills and knowledge of local residents to both produce for, and purchase from, the local food system
- encourage organizations in the business, food security, and education sectors to work together to leverage skills and jobs in the area of food production and preservation
- provide incentives for public-sector and community groups to promote food security and grow and preserve their own food, as well as make local foods accessible to, and affordable for all people
- encourage community gardens in neighbourhoods, schools, civic and business areas
- link farmers to social service, supportive housing, and care providers



Food

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Water



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste

Other related Strategic Directions



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Arts & Culture



Food

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Water



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste

In order to **increase capacity** of the local food system to feed 20% of our diet by 2020, **we need to**

- provide financial incentives, such as tax benefits, to attract both young and experienced producers to the Coast and promote access to Federal and Provincial funding
- create a “local food act” to direct government agencies (for example, hospital, schools, etc.) to purchase 20% local food

- incorporate effective irrigation practices that minimize potable water use to ensure water supply does not present a barrier to food production



### SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



*“Grow your garden at home. It doesn’t take a lot of land to feed you or your family.*

*Start small with a couple of 4x10 beds, some seeds. Throw the seeds in, nurture them and give it a try. If everyone had a 20x40 plot, that would increase our food security and self-sufficiency a lot.” —Dave Ryan of the **Gumboot Restaurant**. Their garden not only supplies the restaurant, it also inspires both customers and the locals. “Because of the high visibility, people inquire about gardening, how to grow food, how to build soil, what to grow.”*

*‘Farmer Dave’ explains: “We lessen our dependence on importation of food, and offer fresher, more nutrient-dense food. The compost is sourced from the restaurant, it’s a closed-loop system. We have more than enough to compost. The Gumboot garden advocates by example. It strengthens local, sustainable agriculture.”*

# Affordable Housing

*Along with clean water, food security and healthy employment opportunities, adequate affordable housing is a cornerstone of a sustainable community. Affordable housing encourages people to stay and get involved in the community. It attracts and retains a diverse range of residents, strengthening social inclusion, cultural and economic vitality. A community that has housing that is affordable invites young families wanting to raise children, is able to house its workers, and can take care of its most vulnerable. Linking planned growth nodes with sustainable transportation choices and model land-use planning in town centres also reduces emissions and conserves sensitive ecological areas.*

**We envision** a wide selection of housing options, including access to affordable housing, that meet the present and future needs of all Sunshine Coast residents, while demonstrating sustainable building practices.

## Moving Forward

*Living costs on the Sunshine Coast are high – especially when it comes to housing. We must ensure that families, young people and those on fixed incomes can afford to live here, today and into the future. This means balancing the availability of rental and market housing stock, providing supportive housing for our community's most vulnerable people, and ensuring new housing options are aligned with the goals of more complete, compact, energy efficient communities.*

## Targets and Actions

In order to **raise awareness** about the need for affordable housing and opportunities to innovate by 2020, **we need to**

- continue to develop the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Committee to advocate with senior levels of government for funding to build affordable and supportive housing
- create educational opportunities for local business, service organizations and builders regarding the need for supportive and affordable housing
- build strategic partnerships to leverage opportunities to fund and build affordable and supportive housing
- create a position or funding support for a Regional Affordable Housing Coordinator to help coordinate local governments and community stakeholders in developing and implementing affordable housing strategies

In order to **increase rental stock** that is affordable in growth nodes by 2020, **we need to**

- develop and implement new policies and regulations to facilitate non-market affordable housing (e.g. infill development, incentives to create secondary suites in new builds in growth nodes; inclusionary zoning; development of joint affordable-housing fund between local governments)
- provide new affordable housing options for diverse individuals and households through non-profit or co-op developments with local organizations; focus on growth nodes
- require new homes over a certain size (e.g. new builds over 2,500 sq. ft) in growth centres to be built “rental suite ready” (i.e. with rough-ins for future rental suites)



Housing

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Transportation



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Water



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste



Housing

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Transportation



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Water



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Arts & Culture



Zero Waste

In order to **increase the affordable market housing stock** in growth nodes by 2020, **we need to**

- explore mixed density zoning for growth node areas
- adopt new zoning/regulatory features to promote housing diversity (e.g. smaller lots, coach houses, infill housing, multifamily, mixed use development)
- use policies and incentives (e.g. fast-track approval of affordable housing projects) to encourage affordable market housing in new developments

In order to **increase supportive housing** options for vulnerable populations by 2020, **we need to**

- develop and implement a joint Regional Housing Strategy, through the Regional Affordable Housing Committee, that will address the needs of a spectrum of individuals (e.g. young families, seniors, low-income renters and homeless)

In order to **increase opportunities for affordable green housing by 2020, we need to**

- encourage and provide incentives for energy efficiency in all forms of affordable housing (non-market, secondary suites, etc.) through financial (e.g. development cost charges waived) or other (fast-track development or building permits) means
- sponsor local design/build competition with local builders/architects to increase awareness, and provide examples, of affordable green housing opportunities
- determine the feasibility of a local government- and community- sponsored land trust to facilitate affordable housing development

## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY

### **The Regional Affordable Housing Committee**, will be a collaborative of the



*three local governments, non profit housing providers, the Sunshine Coast Social Planning Council and the housing industry sector. The committee will advocate for provincial and federal funding for affordable housing, leveraging senior government dollars that may be available. They will also act in an advocacy role for affordable housing needs on the Sunshine Coast, looking for opportunities for regional projects and facilitating the development of regional projects.*

*"We're beginning to hear about interest of local developers to work with a Regional Committee" says Stacia Leech, "creating a link between business and governments. The same thing for the non-profit housing sector—it will give them a voice at the table. The most important thing for leadership around these social initiatives is to maintain an overall picture of this issue. Moving from a siloed position to a collaborative one, developing trust, takes time and focused attention."*

# Employment

In the last twenty years, the Sunshine Coast has shifted from forestry and fishing as major industries to a somewhat more diversified local economy. All major resource-based occupations (forestry, mining and fishing) declined during the decade between 1991 and 2000.<sup>54</sup> With approximately 40% of income on the Coast coming from non-employment forms of income, supporting existing employment opportunities and creating new ones is a high-priority component of the sustainability plan.

**We envision** a diverse and thriving regional economy, stimulated by living wage jobs in green building, arts, energy and resource recovery, local food production, tourism and knowledge network sectors.

## Moving Forward

*It is vital that diverse and reliable local industries be developed to provide employment for long-term residents. For example, with even a small portion of the \$100 million spent on fuel and energy<sup>55</sup> reinvested in local renewable energy projects, \$2-3 million could flow back into the community every year in the form of jobs and services—all the while, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.*

### Targets and Actions

In order to enhance and grow the **local green building** sector by 2020, **we need to**

- promote energy efficiency in existing residential buildings by implementing a regional local improvement charge program
- establish 2-3 demonstration sites to promote ultra energy-efficient new homes and buildings in the community

- develop a local education, awareness-raising and training program for the local building trades industry to improve local knowledge and skills related to Green Buildings
- Develop an apprenticeship program for green building skill development

In order to support the development, by 2020, of **local resource recovery and manufacturing industries** that use waste material as feedstock for new products, **we need to**

- develop enhanced recycling drop off facilities where materials can be collected and used in the manufacturing of new products
- make discarded resources available to local industries and businesses (e.g. fibres, textiles, compostable organics, glass, etc.)
- review land-use designations to ensure sufficient land is available to support resource recovery and manufacturing industries on the Sunshine Coast

In order to establish the Sunshine Coast as a **world-class, year-round destination** by 2020, **we need to**

- continue to develop and promote the arts and cultural services on the Coast in partnership with tourism marketing initiatives
- work with Sunshine Coast Tourism and local businesses to develop tools for a sustainable tourism industry for the Sunshine Coast
- promote Sunshine Coast to the Vancouver/Lower Mainland market



Employment

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Food



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Arts & Culture

Other related Strategic Directions



Water



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste



Employment

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Food



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Arts & Culture

Other related Strategic Directions



Water



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste

- work with local economic development organizations and the banking community to target funds and expertise to develop the sector
- develop non-traditional “products,” such as ecological and cultural tours and demonstration sites for leading-edge resource management practices
- establish a partnership between the public and private sector to secure funding for a new technology centre on the Sunshine Coast
- develop a social networking website to attract and retain young adults on the Sunshine Coast

In order to **increase local (vs. off-coast) spending** by 20% by 2020, **we need to**

- develop a “Shop Local” branding and outreach strategy to cultivate a culture of local spending including buying local food
- update existing economic leakage studies to develop baseline data for measuring progress
- promote value-added opportunities for local forest resources
- facilitate connections between the business, food security, and education sectors to strengthen the local food economy and provide skills and jobs

In order to create **a technology centre by 2020, we need to**

- complete an inventory and needs assessment of current members of the knowledge network or intelligence services industry on the Sunshine Coast

# Addressing Poverty

*A sustainable community can only be built through the creative participation of its members. Such participation can only be assured when the basics of daily living are taken care of and the anxiety of scarcity is alleviated. Enough healthy food, a dry and safe place to sleep, and warm clothing are the basis for making sustainable choices.*

**We envision** the development of a vibrant economy, in which all residents can participate, and the elimination of poverty on the Sunshine Coast through innovative community awareness-raising, a Housing First approach, and living wage employment.

## Moving Forward

*By taking steps to address poverty, by developing advocacy strategies, and working to provide affordable housing, proactive services and early interventions, we can empower full participation in sustainable community-building, and reduce the long-term costs of poverty on the community.*

### Targets and Actions

In order to **raise awareness about poverty** and homelessness on the Sunshine Coast by 2020, **we need to**

- create educational opportunities for citizens of the Sunshine Coast to understand the nature of poverty and homelessness and for employers to understand the benefits of the living wage
- advocate to the BC government for a **BC Poverty Reduction Plan** with targets and timelines **and** to the federal government to develop a National Housing Strategy

In order to expand units of **affordable and supportive housing** by 2020, **we need to**

- advocate to senior levels of government for increased funding to support housing initiatives on the coast
- grow strategic partnerships to increase the number of affordable housing units in growth nodes **and** grow strategic partnerships to increase the number of supportive housing units in growth nodes
- explore the possibility for dedicated paid position(s) for housing workers

In order to increase the number of **full-time, living-wage jobs** by 2020, **we need to**

- determine the living wage for the Sunshine Coast
- create inter-agency collaborations to gain commitment to living-wage jobs
- seek commitment from Sunshine Coast employers for living-wage terms of employment



Poverty

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Food



Employment



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Transportation



Arts & Culture

Other related Strategic Directions



Water



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste



## Community Health

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Employment



Poverty



Transportation



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Arts & Culture



Water

Other related Strategic Directions



Food



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste

# Community Health and Social Services

People who are well supported are more likely to be able to participate fully in the local economy and culture as active community members. Strong health and social support promotes neighbourhood cohesion, physical and social well-being. Centralized community health and social services can help reduce vehicle use and support the development of complete, compact and energy efficient communities. With a focus on prevention, early intervention, and support at the community level, accessible and well-resourced health and social services are a wise investment in the economy. They can significantly reduce future spending on more costly crisis services such as hospitalization and policing.

**We envision** a community that promotes the health and well-being of its entire population, where health disparities among vulnerable populations are minimized and where people have access to the services they need to thrive at all stages of life.

## Moving Forward

Decisions regarding land use and community development have long-lasting influences on the health of our citizens and our communities. Commitment to healthy built environments—particularly as it relates to active transportation, food security, diverse neighbourhoods, and clean natural resources, is critical to the health, sustainability and cohesion of the community.

## Targets and Actions

In order to raise awareness about **local proactive support services** by 2020, **we need to**

- support the Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre to maintain the Directory of Agencies and Organizations and make it accessible to service providers and the public
- create training opportunities for all stakeholders to understand the services provided by various Sunshine Coast agencies and organizations

In order to **provide services** by 2020 that meet the needs of all children, families, youth, adults, and seniors on the Sunshine Coast, **we need to**

- create community-service resource hub(s) in growth nodes that provide information on services available on the Sunshine Coast, such as literacy, health promotion, early childhood development and employment readiness
- improve access to affordable, quality child care through new policies and funding mechanisms (e.g. offer incentives to child-care amenities in new developments; provide child care in public buildings; provide operational funding to subsidize child care costs)

## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



### **The Sunshine Coast Community Services Society** provides high-quality services for a

wide variety of groups, which includes, among others: child development services; family and youth services; professional family counseling; Together Against Violence (Yew Transition house and Thyme); Community in Action; Community Food Bank; Volunteer Centre (co-located with Tourist Centre); Arrowhead Centre (w/Arrowhead Society, Sechelt, BC Housing); and social enterprise (Gibsons Gift Shop); and Homeless Outreach Project.

*“We come from a strength-based approach,” says executive director Vicki Dobbyn. “We help individuals build on the*

*resilience and strength they have in their lives so they can participate more fully. We also build on the strengths we see in the community. We’ve identified those larger issues, like affordable housing, and encouraged community partners to come together and build solutions.*

*“Working collaboratively and pooling resources, the organization is still able to recognize particular issues and utilize specialized knowledge to help the community. We also participate in other community planning processes (e.g. accessibility, organizing against racism and hate, early-childhood planning table).”*

[sccss.ca](http://sccss.ca)

In order to **ensure, by 2020, that support services are targeted** to meet the needs of identified vulnerable populations through collaborative planning, **we need to**

- integrate service delivery by providing funding and resource support to the Social Planning Council (e.g. provide staff support to help coordinate Council or funding support for meetings)
- support Social Planning Council in funding applications to senior levels of government and develop other sustainable funding sources
- advocate for community-care nursing and home-support services to enable seniors to live independently in their own homes
- situate community-service resources in Pender Harbour, Sechelt and Gibsons, close to transit stops
- monitor the linkages between transit, health, support, youth and seniors’ services, affordable and supportive housing



Community Health

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Employment



Poverty



Transportation



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Arts & Culture

Other related Strategic Directions



Food



Climate & Energy



Water



Zero Waste



Arts & Culture

Closely related strategic directions



Food



Employment



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Zero Waste

Other related Strategic Directions



Land Use



Housing



Water



Poverty



Transportation



Climate & Energy

## Arts and Culture

According to UNESCO: “Culture is the distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, and includes not only arts and letters, but also ways of life, world views, fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”<sup>56</sup>

Culture, in other words, is the heart and soul of any community. Without it, there is no reason to be sustainable. Without it, economic development becomes dry, brittle, and precarious. A community that embraces, protects and grows its sense of identity is able to respond to the evolving dynamics and needs of its citizens, both young and old.

**We envision** a community that protects and celebrates its natural, indigenous and cultural heritage, and that creates and participates in a diverse range of arts, heritage and cultural experiences, both traditional and contemporary.

### Moving Forward

Growth of a vibrant arts and culture community requires strategic partnerships with private and public investors, and alliances between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. The Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy provides an extensive set of recommendations to provide an integrated approach to arts, culture and heritage, and a Cultural Strategy implementation plan.<sup>57</sup>

### Targets and Actions

In order to promote our **cultural diversity by 2020, we need to**

- work with the shíshálh (Sechelt) and the Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish) Nations to acknowledge and develop planning processes to support their cultural places, languages, heritages and identities
- frequently celebrate the languages, places, heritages and cultural identities of residents
- develop innovative funding mechanisms to support cultural diversity programs such as Organizing Against Racism and Hate, and Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Communities
- promote cultural sensitivity and understanding among community members, organizations and institutions

In order to raise the profile of, and **protect**, our heritage by 2020, **we need to**

- work with local partners to **promote a cultural-mapping project** that identifies and recognizes the historical and cultural significance of areas, sites, landscapes, ecosystems, buildings and other objects and manifestations on the coast
- establish conservation goals relevant to cultural and spiritual values
- use the cultural-mapping project and other community tools (e.g. Vital Signs, Cultural Strategy) to promote awareness of historical and cultural heritage as an important asset that provides social and economic benefits to communities
- preserve the environmental integrity of historical rehabilitation projects

 **SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY**



**Talaysay Tours** offers First Nations cultural tours and outdoor adventures. Candace Campo describes their First Nations Interpretive paddle kayak tour as “a basic kayak lesson and a tour of Sechelt Inlet (Egmont Area) where we provide stories of the Sechelt people. It consists of storytelling, our people’s way of life and the transition of the Sechelt to where we are today. Talking Trees is the other tour; Fran Nahanee is the specialized guide. She’s very gifted in the traditional medicines of our people; she’s a Squamish Nation Band member who has been married to a Sechelt Nation Band member. All of our community members are married to other band members; we have a diverse Coast Salish community. When people come on our tours, they experience not only Sechelt story-telling, but also other nations’ stories. I am married to a Squamish member, and my great-great-grandfather was a Squamish member as well.”

Candace sees herself as an ambassador for her community. “Our culture is a secret in some ways. Mainstream culture doesn’t always get to experience what we have to offer. I hope that my business has helped shed some light and truth on the actual experience of our people.”

[talaysay.com](http://talaysay.com)

In order to continue **growing a vibrant arts and cultural community by 2020, we need to**

- create opportunities for youth and young adults to be active in the arts and in cultural opportunities
- develop the financial capacity to **hire a regional, full-time cultural coordinator**
- **integrate arts, culture and heritage into all-planning processes** (e.g. by creating goal statements, policies and action items in OCPs that support cultural centres, create new land-use designations for live/work studios, and designate possible funds for arts and culture initiatives)
- work with local economic development, tourism and community developers to demonstrate the economic and social benefits to the Coast of a strong arts, culture and heritage sector
- provide training for local event/festival planners regarding sustainable events; events and festivals are an opportunity to model our sustainability principles in action
- promote the Sunshine Coast to the film industry
- compete for the Cultural Capital Canada Award



Arts & Culture

Closely related strategic directions



Food



Employment



Community Health



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Zero Waste

Other related Strategic Directions



Land Use



Housing



Water



Poverty



Transportation



Climate & Energy



Learning

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



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Arts & Culture



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Other related Strategic Directions



Housing



Water



Transportation



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste

# Learning and Leading

*Dialogue, shared experiences, collaborative problem-solving: a Learning Community is based on the lifelong learning experiences of its diverse members. It enhances “social, economic and environmental conditions on a sustainable, inclusive basis.”<sup>58</sup> Adopting a Learning Community approach allows us to learn about our local social capital and engage the wealth of our local thinking and skills to address the complex challenges that we face.*

**We envision** a community of inspired, knowledgeable, confident, and contributing citizens of all ages, working together in pursuit of the learning and leadership skills necessary to nimbly respond to change.

## Moving Forward

*Learning is central in any action toward sustainability. Einstein said it best: “We cannot solve problems with the same level of thinking we used to create them.” Learning across all ages is vital to promote sustainable behaviour. That said, a community that discernibly embraces the well-being, inclusion and future of its children is well on its way toward a healthy, innovation-oriented and resilient future.*

## Targets and Actions

In order to **enable and inspire community-wide learning and leadership development opportunities** by 2020 **we need to**

- adapt the *Canadian Council on Learning Index* to create a learning strategy unique to the Sunshine Coast, involving civic, economic, public, education, and voluntary community organizations
- develop tools to support employers and volunteer organizations to plan for leadership development and succession
- create opportunities to learn from organizations or communities who are established learning communities
- develop a Learning Community Proclamation

In order to **enable and inspire our students** to realize their full potentials, as knowledgeable, confident and contributing citizens in a global community, by 2020 **we need to**

- advocate with School District 46 that the strategy areas of this plan be central to educational planning and programming
- develop a suite of curriculum-linked resources and support services for School District 46 teachers to use in teaching about sustainability and our bioregion
- create opportunities to link classroom curriculum with ‘hands on’ service or action learning in our communities
- continue to innovate and expand on the successes of “early years” programming
- create collaborative suite of programs to meet the “middle years” needs



## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



**Iris Griffith** is an educational and interpretive centre, working through the schools.

According to executive director Michael Jackson, “There are lots of spaces around the Centre, where the students take their notebooks and sit and write what they see. We also provide classes, hands-on experiences (pond-dipping, bird-watching, looking down microscopes). Then the children go back and continue on in the classroom.”

“The parents are really happy for their children to be involved in this kind of education. The kids go home and start bugging their parents about garbage created, how much water they’re using. It

helps reinforce some of the ideas that the kids already have.

“The feedback we get, the response we get from visitors, from events (bio-blitz events, where the community joins in finding as many plants and animals as they can in a 24-hour period): we couldn’t do this if it wasn’t for the full, 100% backing of the community. We’ve built trust in what the Centre’s doing. The community has really taken ownership.

Jackson points out that the Centre is most interested in collaborating with people. “We’re trying to reach out to as many potential partners as possible.”

[lagoonsociety.com/iris-griffith-centre](http://lagoonsociety.com/iris-griffith-centre)

In order to **inspire and engage young adults & families** on the coast by 2020 **we need to**

- further develop and promote apprenticeships programs in economic growth areas
- continue to expanded opportunities for higher education
- expand opportunities for young adults and families to participate in local decision-making

In order to **inspire residents and visitors** alike to learn about the Sunshine Coast **we need to**

- promote the placed-based learning (local natural and cultural history) opportunities that exist
- create and promote opportunities for action and service learning (learning a skill or practice while contributing to a larger community project)



Learning

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Arts & Culture



Nature & Recreation

Other related Strategic Directions



Housing



Water



Transportation



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste



Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Food



Employment



Poverty



Community Health



Learning



Arts & Culture

Other related Strategic Directions



Housing



Water



Transportation



Climate & Energy



Zero Waste

# Natural Spaces, Parks and Recreation

*On the Sunshine Coast, close proximity to backcountry and wild spaces provides us with a natural balance between urban and outdoor culture. We do not have parks as much as we live in and amongst them. Biodiversity and opportunities to experience nature are part of our identity.*

**We envision** a continued vitality in the urban-wild dynamic, unique to our region, through the conservation and enhancement of parks and recreation opportunities for all residents.

## Moving Forward

*Indoor and outdoor aquatic and exercise facilities, ice arenas, squash and racquetball courts, and all manner of recreational facilities keep our population fit; parks, trails, backcountry conservation and stewardship keep our communities healthy. Maintaining a balance between all forms of recreation, while protecting our natural spaces, is paramount.*

## Targets and Actions

In order to increase **active living programs** that are accessible for community health benefits by 2020, **we need to**

- complete a Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- complete a coast-wide Trail Strategy
- place beach accesses within walking distance of all neighbourhoods along the Sunshine Coast

In order to engage environmental programs for **conservation and biodiversity** benefits by 2020, along with creating citizen education and outreach opportunities, **we need to**

- create a coast-wide biodiversity assessment and protection strategy
- promote backcountry, greenway and blueway partnerships, which foster healthy living programs, conservation and stewardship of biodiversity
- have all jurisdictions implement protective shoreline measures within OCP areas
- have all recreation facilities model zero waste, water conservation, and emissions reduction practices
- encourage all jurisdictions to have nature interpretation signage/programs in appropriate parks within OCP areas
- utilize community centres for programming and outreach, along with outdoor resources

In order to stimulate, by 2020, community vitality with parks and facility programs, which **encourage diversity and inclusiveness, we need to**

- place more interesting and engaging youth opportunities within parks, ranging from formal playing fields to nature/culture-oriented adventure playgrounds
- continue partnerships with stewardship groups and volunteers in parks and facilities
- have coast-wide facilities adopt a “Social Inclusion” policy for operations
- conduct recreation programs in the community (outside of facilities)

# Transportation

*Increasing the density of neighbourhoods in growth areas and improving public transit and alternative transportation opportunities will reduce the need for personal vehicles and increase Coast quality of life.*

**We envision** reduced transportation emissions by increasing development density and promoting innovative alternative transit strategies, and by increasing infrastructure to support transportation diversity.

## Moving Forward

*Sound land-use planning and efficiently designed neighbourhoods, supported by a plan that stimulates transportation innovation and encourages safe ways to walk, cycle, and take public transportation will substantially reduce greenhouse emissions, increase public health and make the Sunshine Coast even more livable.*

### Targets and Actions

In order to **double transit ridership** over 2010 levels by 2020, **we need to**

- support expansion of transit services
- install shelters and lights at all transit stops in high-density areas and commercial centres
- build park-and-rides in key locations as identified in the Draft Integrated Transportation Study
- implement a community-based social marketing and branding program to increase transit ridership amongst youth and seniors by 100%

In order to use **active forms of transport** in at least 10% of all trips by 2020, **we need to**

- connect the communities of Langdale, Gibsons, Elphinstone, Roberts Creek, Sechelt, and Halfmoon Bay by continuous, safe walking and cycling paths, including a continuous bicycle lane along Highway 101
- double the current length of walking and cycling paths overall
- integrate bicycle lockers into new park-and-ride facilities
- encourage employers to provide bicycle racks, lockers and showers for employees

In order to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** per vehicle km travelled by 50%, by 2020, **we need to**

- install electric-vehicle-charging stations in 10% of all parking spaces
- develop local car and truck Co-ops with a goal of 100 Co-op vehicles
- install biodiesel-fuelling stations in Gibsons and Sechelt; support restaurants in making their waste veggie oil available for local bio-fuels producers
- practise “right choicing” by choosing to buy the right size, type, and fuel efficiency of vehicle to meet your needs



Transportation

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Housing



Poverty



Community Health



Nature & Recreation



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Food



Employment



Learning



Arts & Culture



Water



Zero Waste



Climate & Energy

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Employment



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Transportation



Zero Waste

Other related Strategic Directions



Food



Poverty



Community Health



Arts & Culture

# Climate and energy

*In addition to reducing emissions, coastal communities in particular need to become better prepared to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. That means preparing for wetter winters, drier summers, and bigger storms, among other things... in other words building a more resilient, more self sufficient community.*

**We envision** building resilience against the impacts of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80%, by 2050 compared to 2007 levels.

## Moving Forward

*It has been suggested that an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is required by the year 2050 in order to avoid exceeding a 2 degree Celcius increase in global atmospheric temperature. At or above this level of temperature increase, significant impacts to environmental, economic and social systems are predicted. This target for greenhouse gas reductions has been adopted by the Province of BC, which now requires all local governments to adopt GHG reduction targets in all Official Community Plans. Similar and higher targets have been set by regions and countries around the world.*

## Targets and Actions

In order to build **more energy efficient buildings** and increase the efficiency of existing buildings by 2020, **we need to**

- Reduce our buildings' energy consumption by using the programs offered by BC Hydro, the Province of BC and Government of Canada

- Adopt joint policies and standards throughout the Coast to allow zoning variance for new home developments that achieve aggressive energy savings (e.g. EnerGuide 85)
- Offer cash incentives in addition to existing programs (e.g. LiveSmart, EcoEnergy) and low interest loans (e.g. using Local Improvement Charges) to bring 60% of today's unrenovated homes up to EnerGuide 80 standards by 2020
- Develop innovative local demonstration projects that provide examples of what is possible in existing and new home developments

In order to **increase the supply of local renewable energy** on the Coast by 2020, **we need to**

- Require that all new buildings be built so as to accommodate renewable technologies in the future (e.g. through building orientation, rough-ins for solar hot water, etc.)
- Equip 60% of homes with a small scale renewable energy system by 2020 (e.g. wind, solar, geothermal, biomass)
- Establish local opportunities for professional skills development in the green building and renewable energy supply sector
- Establish 5-10 medium to large scale projects (i.e. > 10 MW) using biomass, geothermal, solar, wind, wave, small hydro or other renewable energy sources by 2020

## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



Where does one start with sustainable planning for a community? “You can build a community with lower impact, narrower roads, which have less impact on the site,” says Ray Dierolf from **Wakefield Homes**. “You can use new technologies like green roofs and geothermal. It doesn’t need to be about expense, it’s about values and taking many small steps such as recycling on site. Sometimes, it’s the small steps that are important.”

Wakefield Beach Development used permeable drive way surfaces (pavers), allowing rainwater water to enter the ground as quickly as possible; every unit was geothermal in both phases; and they used a system of framing called panelization. Dierolf explains: “That means that it’s all built in a factory out of cut pieces of wood, which reduces waste. For

this project we won both the Georgia Award for environmental consideration and the BC Woodworkers Award.

We tried to build a community feel—a walkway by the waterfront (rather than private) and a park by the water, so the community could enter, not just homeowners. Our design is unique with curves—looking from the road or beach, it has a fantastic aesthetic: lots of natural posts, fir beams. We hired locally, employed over 100 people. Everything we could get locally, we did, so we put money back into the community.”

In order to develop our community to be **adaptive and resilient** to a changing climate, **we need to**

- Maintain and restore public shoreline buffers, develop shoreline conservation bylaws for new waterfront development, and offer low interest loans (e.g. using Local Improvement Charges) to private property owners to fund the stabilization and reinforcement of potentially hazardous slopes by 2020
- Continue to fund and operate the Sunshine Coast Emergency Program and provide education and outreach support for emergency preparedness programs
- Research and incorporate climate-change projections into forest-stand management planning (for example adapt Annual Allowable Cut, selection of appropriate species for harvest and replanting, update pest management strategies and allowances for wind and stream buffers)
- Use efficient irrigation technologies and practice “conservation tillage” to reduce soil erosion



Climate & Energy

Closely related strategic directions



Land Use



Employment



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Housing



Water



Transportation



Zero Waste

Other related Strategic Directions



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# Zero Waste

*Purchasing over-packaged material goods leads to unnecessary waste production. In turn, the waste thus generated pollutes our soils, air and waters and increases our greenhouse gas emissions. To be a more sustainable community, we need to strive for zero waste.*

**We envision** every person on the Coast reducing the amount of waste they send to landfills by 90% by the year 2060.

## Moving Forward

*Of the per-person average of 440 kg of waste going into local landfills, over 50% is estimated to be made up of compostable organic material and recyclable paper, cardboard, metal, plastic and glass. Enhancing recycling programs and converting waste material into feedstock for new products are important steps towards diverting waste material away from landfills.*

### Targets and Actions

In order to **divert 80% of our waste** from disposal in landfills by 2020, **we need to**

- increase the amount of material diverted from disposal in landfills from 50% (current) to 69% by implementing programs and policies identified in the SCRD's Zero Waste Management Plan
- lobby the provincial government to adopt and implement the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment's (CCME) Canada-Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility
- Raise public awareness about reducing waste so residents will: buy recyclable products, and products made of recycled materials; become familiar with, and

use, take-back and recycling facilities in our area; set up and use a backyard composter

- lead by example, adopt a zero waste goal for businesses; encourage waste audits, separate out recyclables and compostables, and save money on disposal bills
- adopt standard procedures to minimize waste generated in new construction projects and maximize the salvage of reusable material from renovations and deconstruction projects

In order to develop **enhanced recycling and resource recovery services** by 2020, **we need to**

- develop full-service "Resource Recovery Facilities" in Pender Harbour, Sechelt and Gibsons and make resources available to local industries and businesses
- implement a community-based social marketing program to foster a shift in public values and behaviour towards viewing waste as a resource that has value; adopt a new language and brand around resources, not waste



## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS STORY



In February 2010, the **Festival of the Written Arts** declared zero waste a festival goal.

They decided to no longer sell bottled water at the event. The Sunshine Coast Credit Union came on board to sponsor the purchase of stainless steel water bottles; the SCRD provided support for compostable containers for food; Habitat for Humanity collected the empty bottles and cans, the SC Association for Community Living took green waste and Direct Disposal collected all paper, cardboard, food waste and compostable products.

“Once you make a commitment to walk that path things start to fall into place”, says Jane Davidson of the festival. “It was great seeing volunteers jump in and help people. They were really proud of the

stand that we took and proud to be active participants in it. We got a lot of kudos from audience and volunteers.”

“We all have to start thinking this way”, she says, “It’s doable. Other organizations should ask for help and guidance. The Vancouver Folk Music Festival and Vancouver Island Music Fest have been doing it for years. It was definitely the result of collaboration and supportive community partners; people really responded and loved the fact that we were doing it.”

[writersfestival.ca](http://writersfestival.ca)

- implement collection programs for common household recyclables and compostable food scraps
- buy products that won’t end up as garbage and are made of materials that can be resources for other products when we’re done with them; make our discarded resources available for someone else to use, where possible
- reduce the disposal of organic material in landfills by composting it in our backyards; never throw household hazardous waste into the garbage, but take it to the Paint and Product Care Depot for free
- report illegal dumping and volunteer for illegal dump-site cleanup events

In order to **minimize environmental impacts** of landfills and maximize their longevity by 2020, **we need to**

- implement improved cover systems at Sechelt Landfill to reduce leachate generation, and to build a landfill-gas-management facility to reduce emissions by 50%



Zero Waste

Closely related strategic directions



Employment



Learning



Nature & Recreation



Arts & Culture



Climate & Energy

Other related Strategic Directions



Land Use



Food



Poverty



Community Health



Housing



Water



Transportation

### ▶ 3. Plan Implementation & Monitoring

This planning discussion paper provides a starting point or “platform” for conversations about sustainability across our whole community. What does a sustainable Sunshine Coast look like? How is it different than it is today? How do we get there from here? How are all of the parts connected? This plan doesn’t claim to have all of the answers, and, indeed, there are many possible answers. We need to continue with these questions and come up with answers together and we need to act on them together.

The plan is not a rule, it is not mandatory, and it cannot be implemented except by widespread support from the whole Sunshine Coast community. It is a call to action for community support, and a proposed map for both doers and decision-makers to guide the Sunshine Coast community towards a sustainable future.

#### How will this plan be implemented?

First, the plan can be implemented directly by doers: individuals and groups able and willing to undertake one or more of the actions proposed in this plan.

Secondly, the plan can be implemented by using it as a guideline or framework for decision-makers: from individuals making day-to-day decisions about how to live and what to buy (or not buy), to organizations establishing practices, policies and plans that shape the way our community develops.

In addition to providing a common definition for sustainability, this document provides a framework for decision-makers to support coordinated and comprehensive progress towards a sustainable future for the Sunshine Coast. A sustainability framework can provide structure for action—which requires commitment. From the sustainability values that were gleaned from the various public inputs, described in Part I, decision-makers can formulate sustainability commitments that will help focus and drive their particular plans and actions.

#### **The sustainability framework can be applied in two ways:**

**One**, in the case of businesses and organizations, the framework can be adopted as the overarching policy framework with which all other policies, plans and practices must be aligned. (*Appendices B provide an At-a-glance schematic to guide users in the implementation of their commitments to Economic Vitality, Social Well-Being, Cultural Vitality, and Environmental Responsibility.*)

**Two**, the framework can also be employed by any individual or group as a powerful **sustainability test** at the point in a decision-making process when options are being developed or evaluated. This can be done by asking a series of simple questions and carefully considering the answers in advance of decision making.

### Example: The Sustainability Framework as a “Sustainability Test” in Decision-Making

- Does the option support the **Core Values** for a sustainable community? Which ones? How?
- Does the option support or run contrary to the **Strategic Directions** identified in this paper? Which one(s)? How?
- Does the option move us closer to, or away from, what **We Envision** for the future of the Sunshine Coast as identified in this paper? How so (be specific)?

### Who has responsibility to implement and monitor this plan?

Many organizations are especially well positioned to champion the implementation and monitoring process. These include public-sector organizations (government, educational institutions, health authorities and economic development agencies), not-for-profit organizations (community services organizations, environmental groups, social advocacy groups and cultural associations), and private businesses.

It is recommended that individuals and organizations adopt the core values, vision and goals put forward in this document by becoming signatories to this *We Envision* discussion paper.

In order to give signatories clout and ensure that a multi-stakeholder forum exists to move this plan forward, it is further recommended that an implementation and monitoring committee be established.

### Establishing an Implementation and Monitoring Committee (Round Table for Regional Sustainability)

Because sustainability cannot be achieved on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, it is recommended that a quasi-independent body, with broad representation from the public sector, as well as from the general public, be established to champion and coordinate the implementation and monitoring of this plan. The body could be established as a committee or non-profit organization that provides advice to local governments and other signatory organizations on the Sunshine Coast, with clear Terms of Reference to govern its purpose, role, responsibilities and procedures. In recognition of the collaborative nature of this body and the common interest for which it would stand, the name Round Table for Regional Sustainability is proposed.

The primary functions of the Round Table would be to

- develop and recommend more detailed implementation plans to achieve targets proposed for 2020, including budget estimates, timelines, roles and responsibilities
- develop key performance indicators to monitor plan implementation and liaise with organizations in order to secure necessary monitoring data

- report on plan implementation and make recommendations every second year regarding actions needed to improve implementation, or regarding minor plan amendments, and communicate findings to signatories and the general public
- increase the number of signatories to the Regional Sustainability Plan through promotional and awareness-raising activities, such as community events, outreach and information
- act as a resource to local governments and other signatories, as needed, by providing advice and feedback on matters related to sustainable community development in general
- participate in a comprehensive review of the Regional Sustainability Plan every 5 years.

***Who will pay for plan implementation and how much will it cost?***

This plan does not attempt to quantify costs associated with proposed actions, nor does it assign responsibility to individuals or organizations for the burden of those costs. It is suggested that these details require further examination and vigorous dialogue amongst stakeholders, and should be considered by the implementation and monitoring committee as part of the implementation process.

It is important to note that support for this plan (e.g. becoming a signatory) does not indicate a commitment of funds or resources. Support does, however, indicate a commitment to work towards the desired outcomes put forward in this plan to the extent that a person or organization is able. More importantly, it indicates a commitment to look for creative and cost-effective alternatives when practical constraints (such as cost) present barriers to implementation. This means that when challenges arise, there is a commitment to come together as a community to figure out how to move forward in the face of these challenges, rather than abandon the implementation process altogether.

## ▶ 4. Conclusion

*We have presented you with an historical and contemporary portrait of your bioregional home and introduced you to active community members committed to maintaining a sustainable Sunshine Coast. This is the never-ending story of an incredibly vibrant, unique and rich culture. So, what does the next chapter promise? Where do we go from here?*

*As in all great stories, the narrative is driven by the characters—we, the citizens—some minor, some major, but all indispensable and critically interwoven. The second half of our paper offers a rich tapestry of possibilities and strategies. In order to move this plan forward, a commitment is needed from individuals and organizations across the Sunshine Coast to revisit how we live and make decisions and take meaningful action.*

*Of course, while civic, non-profit, grassroots [grassroots] and business groups have an important role to play, it is the collective sum of our personal support and advocacy for the directions and outcomes proposed in this plan, as well as our day-to-day lifestyle choices, that are even now mobilizing a shift towards a more sustainable Sunshine Coast.*

*How we gather and interact to implement this plan, and hold each other accountable to its core commitments, visions and goals, will tell us a lot about the character—and the characters—of our little piece of paradise.*

## ▶ 5. The First Step: our 5 commitments

As our first step, recognizing the urgency of the matters discussed in this paper and the rich tapestry of exciting solutions available to us, the following commitments are presented as a first step for any organization or individual wanting to show their support for this Regional Sustainability Plan.

- **designing** low-environmental-impact communities based on energy-efficient transportation and settlement patterns;
- **ensuring** high-quality drinking water and the availability of locally grown and produced food;
- **providing** affordable-housing options, green jobs and regional economic development
- **developing** a comprehensive range of cultural, community and social services that protects our indigenous and cultural heritage and facilitates life-long learning; and
- **celebrating** the urban-wild dynamic, unique to our region, and showing respect for our natural environment by reducing waste and designing resilience against the impacts of climate change.

# Appendices

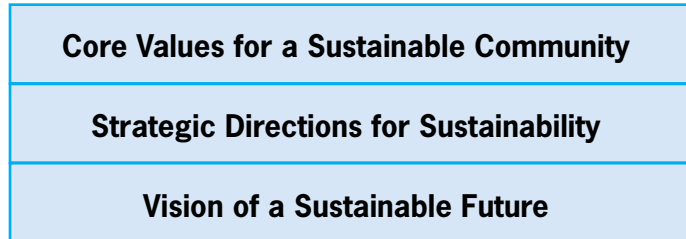
## Appendix A

This is a list of initiatives, reports and plans that were reviewed to articulate core values for this draft Sunshine Coast Sustainability Plan. The list of fine work below is the foundation of this document. *In alphabetical order:*

- District of Sechelt Draft OCP (2010)
- District of Sechelt Vision Plan (2007)
- Elphinstone (Area E) OCP (2007)
- Halfmoon Bay (Area B) OCP (1990)
- Hillside/Port Mellon Industrial Area OCP (1995)
- Homelessness and Risk on the Sunshine Coast: A Needs and Strengths Assessment (2010),
- Pender Harbour (Area A) OCP (1998)
- Regional Growth Strategy – Phase 1; scoping report and updated trends (2008)
- Roberts Creek (Area D) OCP (1994)
- School District 46 Strategic Plan (2010)
- SCR D Strategic Plan (2010)
- SCR D Sustainable Community Energy Policy (2010)
- Sechelt Indian Band Land Use Plan (2007)
- Sunshine Coast 2020: Planning our Future (1990)
- Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Study (2009 update)
- Sunshine Coast Community Energy & Emissions Plan (2010)
- Sunshine Coast Community Foundation Report Card (2009/10)
- Sunshine Coast Regional District Integrated Transportation Study (2010)
- Sunshine Coast Sustainability Strategy Builder (2009)
- Sunshine Coast Vital Signs (2010 update)
- Town of Gibsons Smart Plan (2005)
- Town of Gibsons Strategic Plan (2009/10)
- Twin Creeks OCP (2005)
- Vancouver Coastal Health Community Profile (2009)
- VOICE Community Plan (2010)
- West Howe Sound (Area F) OCP (1988)

## Appendix B

The Sustainability Framework as an Overarching Policy Framework for Local Government<sup>59</sup>



Core Values, Strategic Directions and Vision are the foundation for local government's three interconnected roles:



Adapted from the 2010 "Metro Vancouver Sustainability Framework: A Framework for Decision Making and Moving Ideas into Action. Available at <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/sri/Pages/default.aspx>

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