

Attracting, Retaining and Engaging Young Adults

A Collaborative Community Mobilization and Planning Process for the Sunshine Coast, BC

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598 Management Report
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Executive Summary

This report examines and analyzes a community planning process initiated by the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, and supplements and completes this process to produce a collaborative, inter-organizational strategic plan for the community to address the dilemma of attracting, retaining and engaging the younger generation on the Sunshine Coast, BC. The client, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, identified in late 2009 that while the Sunshine Coast has earned a reputation as a popular retirement location, diminishing numbers and quality of life of younger adults is a growing problem. In 2010, The Community Foundation engaged the collaborative leadership and resources of organizations such as Sunshine Coast Community Futures, School District No. 46, the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the District of Sechelt, the Town of Gibsons, Capilano University, Sunshine Coast Community Services, the Coast-Community Builders Alliance, Sunshine Coast Credit Union and the Lighthouse Learning Network to formulate a community strategy to attract, retain and engage the younger generation. This engagement process that the Community Foundation pursued prior to the commitment of this report was primarily “inside-out,” meaning that local human and organizational resources and leadership, or “community assets,” were identified and engaged to work together and discuss solutions, rather than seeking solutions and models from “outside” and bringing them “in” (Smith and Frank, 1999; van Willigen, 2005). After a major community Youth Employment Workshop on May 14, 2010, a Task Force of the partner groups was launched to forge partnerships and to produce a collaborative strategic plan to detail objectives, partners and success indicators within three strategic areas: a Coast-wide branding strategy; empowerment of the younger generation; and diversified employment opportunities.

This format was particularly successful in engaging key community leaders who helped to identify the issues, and promote awareness of the situation and project. However, expecting these busy volunteers to find the time to conduct research related to the problem, and to interpret the community input collected by the Community Foundation, proved unworkable. On September 24, 2010, the Task Force agreed to make the responsibility for collecting this information into a collaborative strategic plan the key deliverable of this report for the University of Victoria’s School of Public Administration. The client had previously requested that the work involved in completing a strategic plan would involve “collaboration between stakeholders / sustained leadership / networks,” “a multimedia communications plan and presentation that was exciting, engaging, inspiring” and would be “built and owned by younger generation – and supported by entire community spectrum.”

This report addresses the Community Foundation’s *Vital Signs* data; produces a literature review covering community planning and development, collaborative strategic planning, youth engagement and employment, and 21st Century communications tools; collects and analyzes the stakeholder input and process initiated by the client; gathers supporting data from BC Stats; critically examines an inventory of pre-existing Sunshine Coast community plans and reports to identify both collaborative opportunities and gaps; discusses the issues raised by input and research; and presents a collaborative strategic plan for the community with suggestions of short- and long-term success indicators. Furthermore, the community plan was presented on January 24, 2011 with Prezi (an alternative to PowerPoint) to over 120 people, and more following in real-time on Facebook.

The promotion of the plan has proven to be very successful in having an impact on local public policy dialogue and decision-making. Jobs, affordable housing, entertainment options and educational opportunities were all identified as conditions that support the presence of younger adults; and there is a growing awareness on the Sunshine Coast that these conditions are sorely lacking. As the client for this project, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation's advancement of these issues has led to unprecedented intergenerational dialogue and interaction in the community, planting the seeds for desperately needed succession planning and sustainability in community leadership. Through VOICE, the younger-generation group formed to carry forward the community's collaborative plan, advocacy for the younger generation has been embraced and welcomed as a legitimate and significant community "interest" (Bryant, 1995) by local governments and other organizations.

The apparent neglect of young adults in community planning and decision-making, shown most clearly in this report's analyses of previously written community plans, is being addressed by the inclusion of local government officials in this initiative, and subsequently by invitations from local governments and other organizations for more direct and exclusive presentations of the collaborative plan. Other success indicators have included the execution of the objective to launch an advocacy group for young adults (VOICE: see Appendix G); progress toward the social website to engage and attract young adults (funding has been secured for a business plan); and the inclusion of VOICE and the collaborative plan's rationale in the lobbying effort for Coast-wide economic development, another objective in the plan. Widely and increasingly considered to be a retirement destination, the Sunshine Coast is experiencing a considerable shift in mindset from passively and unconditionally offering itself up to "retirement living," to recognizing the need for demographic diversity for a younger, more vibrant and forward-looking community.

Introduction

In the spring of 2009, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation launched a community development process to explore the region's challenges pertaining to youth employment. Through community feedback, this mandate quickly broadened to include the attraction, retention and engagement of young adults (see page 30), and was delegated to a task force of community leaders who considered stakeholder input, and ultimately accepted a proposal for this report to be written to:

- provide a brief historical documentation of the problem and the Community Foundation's process;
- gather a literature review and conceptual framework to provide academic support for the community process that led to the final plan and recommendations;
- compile and analyze the stakeholder and task force input that was solicited by the Community Foundation;
- identify opportunities and gaps in advocacy for young adults in relevant pre-existing community plans and reports of the past decade;
- discuss the key issues associated with attracting, retaining and engaging young adults in the context of the Sunshine Coast, the activities of the organizational collaborators and the local political situation;
- as the key deliverable, present a collaborative strategic plan to the Sunshine Coast community for attracting, retaining and engaging young adults.

The broad mobilization of community organizations around the youth employment issue, over the year 2010 alone, has represented both a significant and unprecedented shift in Sunshine Coast mindset. Moreover, the Community Foundation immediately produced a rare intergenerational dialogue on the Sunshine Coast. Long-time community leaders in government and business were exposed to a new perspective, while many young people were presented with perhaps their first opportunity to speak up in their local community as a genuine and vital community "interest."

When the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation released its first *Vital Signs* report to the community in October 2009, analysis of the data highlighted a growing problem in the region: the quality of life and proportion of young, employed residents has been dropping steadily. The Community Foundation identified no shame or harm in the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a popular location for retirement, or for part-time (summer) residency, but *Vital Signs* raised the double-edged concern for young adults who could not find adequate employment on the Coast, and for employers who conversely have to contract off-Coast labour due to the lack of local workers (D. Eichar, speech at Youth Employment Workshop, May 14, 2010). Other issues identified by *Vital Signs* as impacting this situation include affordable housing; overall health of the population; declining student populations and school closures; post-secondary educational opportunities; availability of child care; the widening gap between

high and low incomes; a growing population with a shrinking working tax base; a range of cultural, recreational and entertainment options; and the impending demand for seniors' care workers and other services.

Changing demographics throughout the province (see Figure 1, page 5), chiefly the aging out of the workforce by the Baby Boomer generation, make all these problems common to many BC communities. But the situation is particularly acute on the Sunshine Coast, with BC Stats reporting the median age, 48.5, as being 7.7 years older than the provincial median in the 2006 Census (BC Stats CP SCRD, 2006, p. 2). Furthermore, BC Stats predicts that the proximity of the Lower Mainland and "the promise of improvements to the [Sunshine Coast] transportation network" will result in even more population growth of retiring Baby Boomers. BC Stats projects that at the current rate, the Sunshine Coast will have almost 9.5 dependents, mostly seniors, for every ten people of working age (BC Stats, QRS, 2010, p. 6). The identification of the problem, and development of a strategy to deal with it, is also potentially instructive to others in similar situations. For example, the Parksville and District Chamber of Commerce has recently become involved in its area's school closure discussions by correctly pointing out the need "to attract the sort of young, working and entrepreneurial families that will not only boost student numbers, but provide an economic boost" and calling on "local governments to work with the business community on initiatives to try to turn the demographic trends around and diversify the area's economy" (CKAY, 2010). From the Sunshine Coast's perspective, the concerns of other BC communities facing the same challenge may present opportunities to share resources and ideas, but also competition in attracting the same targeted age cohort.

The Background section of this paper will outline the location, history and demographics of the Sunshine Coast, including its main communities and industries, by presenting key data and analysis from BC Stats and *Vital Signs*. In support of the development of the community plan, the Literature Review will discuss contemporary thinking, strategies and other work in the areas of community development and collaborative strategic planning; community economic development; engagement strategies including e-democracy; citizen-centred service delivery through information technology; the growing influence of (online) social networks; trends in home-based employment, labour mobility and telecommuting; and brief case studies of comparable communities that have tackled attraction and retention issues. The Conceptual Framework will link the theory and best practices from the literature review with the planning work undertaken by the Community Foundation and Task Force. A Methodology and Process Analysis section will summarize and further examine the approach that was taken by the Community Foundation and Task Force, including what questions, requests and other engagement tools were brought forward to the stakeholders.

The Assessing the Environment section will present demographic data relevant to the literature review, and policy analyses of other pertinent community plans and strategies. The analyses of previous community plans provide an environmental scan fulfilling the "partnerships" mandate of the process and Task Force: where are there opportunities and challenges for our plan to have an impact in its implementation? The Discussion section will address the task of turning the stakeholder input and Community Foundation's process, as well as the additional data collected in this report, into an appropriate and workable collaborative strategic plan for the community. Furthermore, this section explores some specific policy recommendations one by one to connect the real Sunshine Coast policy community, particularly

in the context of the conceptual framework and literature review, to policy issues and tools addressed in the plan. A Reflection and Reception section critically analyzes the report and shares its short-term community reception. The community plan itself, the key deliverable for the Community Foundation and its Task Force, is presented as Appendix A.

Background

The Sunshine Coast is a coastal region of British Columbia across Howe Sound (a forty-minute ferry ride) from West Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, and across Georgia Strait from Vancouver Island. From Port Mellon north to Earl’s Cove, the Sunshine Coast has approximately 28,000 residents living over 86 kilometres in communities such as Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Sechelt, Halfmoon Bay and Pender Harbour. In addition to the median age (48.5) being 7.7 years over the provincial average, BC Stats reports the young adult age cohorts (20–29 and 30–44) as each being 5–6% below the provincial average, at 6.6% and 16.4% of the general population respectively (BC Stats, CP SCRD, 2006, p. 2). It is interesting to note that, unlike the general population, among the Sechelt Nation population of 830 the age cohort of 20–44 outnumbers its 45–64 cohort (BC Stats, CP SIGD, 2006, p. 3). The Powell River area, sometimes referred to as the “Upper Sunshine Coast,” is separated by another ferry ride and has a separate regional district, school district and Community Foundation; it is not covered by this report and planning process.

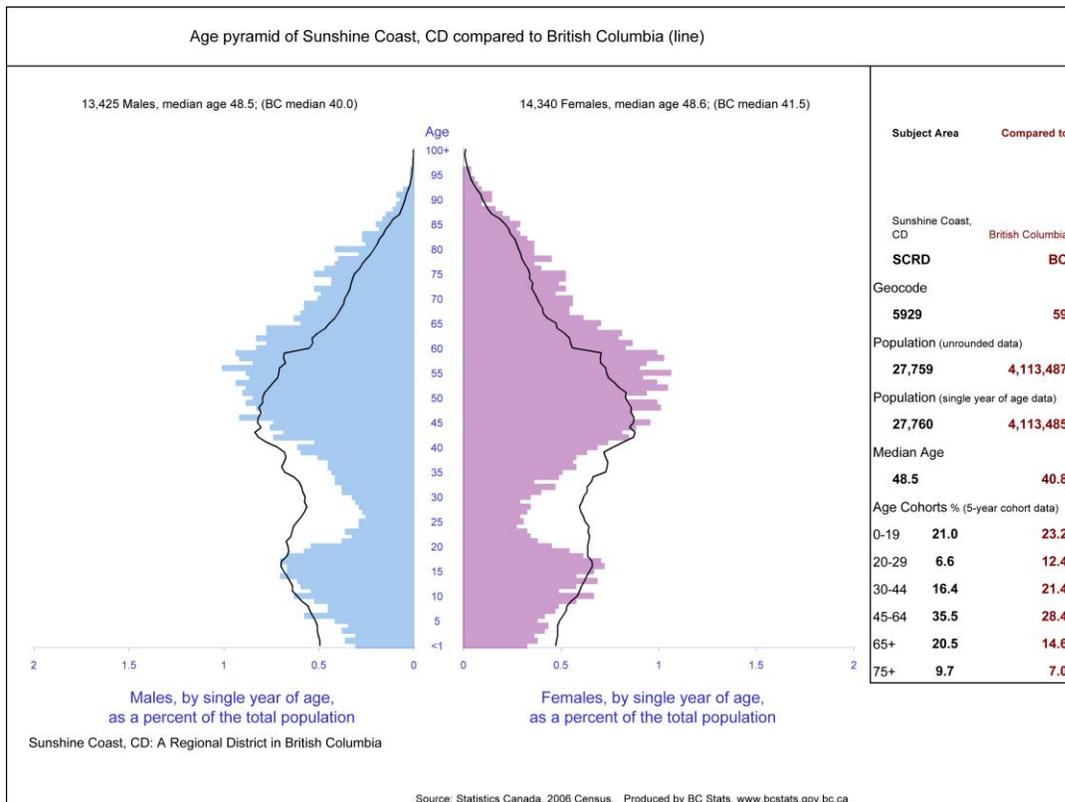


Figure 1: Sunshine Coast Age Cohort Distribution.

Source: 2006 Census Profile (Summary Version): Sunshine Coast Regional District, BC Stats.

The Sunshine Coast has experienced a period of rapid growth that, until recently, was tracked by relatively few indicators of community health other than measures of population and residential development. Indeed, the area has become a “hotspot” destination particularly for retirees from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia who can afford waterfront or larger rural properties after selling their homes in a “seller’s” real estate market (BC Stats, QRS, 2010). Particularly to balance off the economic ramifications of a declining logging-and-fishing resource economy (due to both regulation and availability), local governments and business organizations have strategically attracted tourism and retirement arrivals. The Sunshine Coast Community Foundation’s *Vital Signs* Report in October 2009 has served as somewhat of a community milestone in self-analyzing this recent collective approach to community growth and development. *Vital Signs* collected and published data on and evaluations of the interest areas of Learning; Getting Started; Environment; Health & Wellness; Housing; Arts & Culture; Gap Between Rich & Poor; Safety; Economic Health; Belonging & Leadership; and Getting Around.

An urgent and alarming signal emerging from the report was identified by the Community Foundation as the need to create opportunities for youth on the Coast. Statistics in *Vital Signs* show that there is high unemployment among young adults on the Sunshine Coast, and local employers report that they are often forced to contract out work to off-Coast firms due to the limited local labour pool (D. Eichar, speech at Youth Employment Workshop, May 14, 2010). *Vital Signs* also reported that lack of child care space is “an ongoing concern,” and School District statistics show that school enrolment, an indication of the amount of young families on the Sunshine Coast, has dropped by approximately 28% and 1,300 students over the past twelve years (which results in both school closures and further job losses in the educational sector, one of the Coast’s largest employers). Housing costs, in terms of both house prices and rents, have also grown significantly over the past decade, driving away more young people and families who would like to remain or settle on the Sunshine Coast (Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, 2009).

Major concerns arising from these trends are the lack of a local working tax base to support services, including services demanded by a growing retiree population; the growing reputation of the Sunshine Coast as a “retirement community,” as a deterrent to attracting younger people; the obstacle to local-government long-term planning by seniors’ shorter-term lifestyle priorities; and the lack of a local workforce to take on employment (including to service seniors) even if it were to become available. Based on data collected in 2008, the Sunshine Coast Regional District reports that approximately 40% of “after-tax” income on the Sunshine Coast comes from “non-employment” sources such as pensions, investments and income assistance. It is also important to note in this report that community opinion on the state of young adults also took a significant turn when the local newspaper published a column entitled “Where Are the Visionaries?” by journalist Jenny Wagler. Wagler promoted economic development as a means of attracting and retaining “the young and ambitious” and escaping the Sunshine Coast’s “retirement community” label,” and sparked significant community discussion and support on her views as related in the letters to the editor the following week (see Appendix C, pages 79–81).

In response to *Vital Signs* and ongoing community concerns, the Community Foundation struck a Youth Employment Committee that recruited significant and unprecedented buy-in by stakeholders to embrace youth employment as a community priority. Stakeholders involved in

the project include the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the District of Sechelt, Town of Gibsons, School District #46, Capilano University, Community Futures, Best Coast Initiatives (a local economic development non-profit), Sunshine Coast Credit Union, the Lighthouse Learning Network/Sechelt Community School, local Chambers of Commerce and trades associations, Community Services, and various individual leaders from the younger demographic. A major local Youth Employment Workshop to approach the problem was held on May 14, 2010, with over fifty active participants representing numerous organizations and groups on the Coast (see pages 27–29 for summary). The workshop envisioned a community plan featuring collaboration between stakeholders that would successfully attract, retain and engage the younger generation, and measure this success with financial support, clear goals and quantitative numbers. The four-part mission coming out of the meeting was to:

- examine the information and suggestions received from the participants of the May 14 meeting;
- identify additional data to be collected and analyzed;
- produce short- and long-term plans to make the Lower Sunshine Coast more attractive to youth; and
- report back to the community with its recommendations for plans of action and recommendations for the individuals and other entities who should carry those plans forward.

The values, or guiding principles, of the project were expressed as follows:

- empower and engage young adults throughout this work;
- build on the Coast’s current assets and the work that is being done;
- operate in a collaborative manner with all jurisdictions so the results are positive and impact the entire Coast;
- and be creative and future-oriented.

It is unusual for a Community Foundation to take on a project of this scope. The following introduction from the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation’s website describes its important role in the community:

The Foundation provides stable and sustainable support to charitable organizations on the Sunshine Coast. We create a way for individuals, families, corporations, businesses and groups to pool charitable giving into a single Community Capital Fund that will respond to the needs and concerns of the area’s residents from Port Mellon to Egmont (Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, 2011).

The mission of the Foundation is to “contribute to the quality of life on the Sunshine Coast by building endowments, making strategic grants and inspiring community leadership” (Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, 2011). Across the country, there are 178 member-foundations of

Community Foundations of Canada. The umbrella organization affirms the Sunshine Coast branch's mission by emphasizing the creation of endowment funds in addition to the rationale that "Vitality needs leadership, so we bring people together from all parts of our communities to stimulate new ideas, build participation and strengthen community philanthropy" (Community Foundations of Canada, 2011).

So, rather than pursuing its primary function of building and distributing endowments, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation took on this project to clearly "inspire community leadership" and to "stimulate new ideas." Importantly, the verbs "inspire" and "stimulate" were followed closely, as although the Foundation was the integral catalyst in the attracting, retaining and engaging initiative, its transparent intention from the beginning was to bring other people and organizations together to follow through with the planning and to take responsibility for future action. The full process undertaken by the Community Foundation and its identified stakeholders is represented by Figure 5 on page 33.

Literature Review

While minimal literature exists on the problem of youth employment and settlement on the Sunshine Coast or comparable communities, significant work has been done in the areas of community and economic development more generally. Because the clear mission of the client's initiative has been to produce "short- and long-term plans," or "plans of action" (see project mission on page 7) with strategic directions emerging from May 14 Workshop's stakeholder input, an examination of literature on strategic planning shall be included among the work in community development. It is necessary to the conceptual framework and development of this project to review this relevant work, as well as to identify comparable communities that have been more successful at attracting and retaining young people. Literature on policy tools and challenges around youth and young adults, e-democracy, and distributed online employment will also be presented.

Community Development and Strategic Planning

Particularly in the past decade, the BC government has promoted the need to "revitalize" communities. *A Guide to Community Revitalization*, published in 2003 by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAW), recognized that "communities are moving from an economy based on natural resources to tourism, film or information industries"; "British Columbia's population is aging. As a result, there is more attention to accessibility, safety and other quality of life issues"; and finally, "People and businesses have more options on where to locate. Quality of life is more important as communities compete for business, industry and population" (MCAW, 2003, p. 4). The *Guide* goes on to recommend essential "ingredients" for successful community projects, and presents somewhat of a grassroots, community-based version of a "policy cycle" with an outline that includes the following categories: Establish a vision; Concept planning; Planning for implementation; Implementation; and Maintaining momentum (Bridgman & Davis, 1998; MCAW, 2003, pp. 7-15).

Bryant (1995) more broadly associates “revitalization” with Community Economic Development, but is also chiefly concerned with “mobilizing people to participate in the decision-making process and, of equal importance, how to encourage people to take responsibility for initiating action” (v). “Sustainable community development also means cooperation, collaboration and building partnerships. In many, if not most, community environments, there are many different interests as well as organizations, groups and agencies all working towards the improvement of some aspect of the community environment” (Bryant, 1994, p. 1).

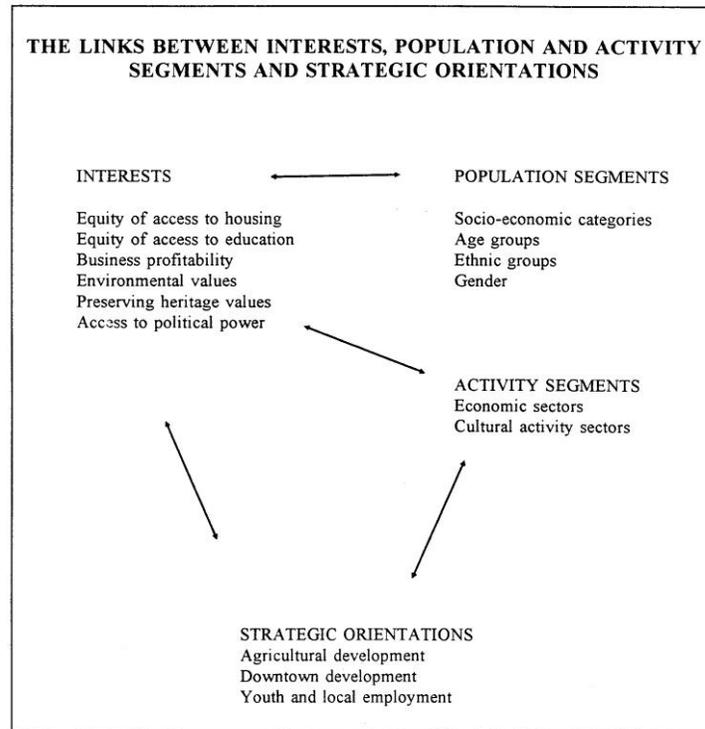


Figure 2: The Links Between Interests, Population and Activity Segments and Strategic Orientations. Source: Bryant, C. R. (1995). *Mobilizing and Planning the Community’s Strategic Orientations: Basic tips*. P. 4. St. Eugène, ON: Econotrends Ltd.

In Figure 2, Bryant (1995) maps out the community relationships between “activity segments” and “population segments,” their interests, and the development of strategic orientations. Returning to his “mobilizing” focus, Bryant states that “Participation of different individuals and groups in the community can provide a major means of generating ... new ideas. ... Ideas can be generated during general visioning sessions, community round tables or working groups set up for particular strategic orientations” (p. 9); “... organizing community participation can provide the opportunity to encourage and stimulate different people and groups to take initiatives and manage them”; “Participation can provide for an expanded leadership base in the community as well as for renewal of the leadership base” (p. 12); “Participation can provide the opportunity to transfer responsibility to others in the community for different aspects of the sustainable community development effort” (p. 13). Bryant’s *Basic tips* cover such theories about community development and working in groups, and also offer more concrete advice about communication, process, planning and management.

From another perspective, on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, Clague (1993) has identified seven “Community Social Planning Roles”:

1. Advocacy: acting on own or others’ behalf to change a public policy and/or to get support for action on a specific social issue;
2. Social policy analysis, criticism and recommendations regarding government programs or their absence;
3. Informing and educating the public on issues affecting community well-being;
4. Conducting applied research that generates information to help the community document its needs and strengths;
5. Community organizing to help those affected by a community issue develop plans and strategies for action;
6. Community problem-solving that helps to build bridges and consensus among differing viewpoints for the benefit of the community as a whole;
7. Demonstrating innovative approaches to community development.

Community social planning... is as concerned with the connections between issues as it is with issues in their own right, for no problem and no solution to problems exist in isolation from other factors in the community. It stresses the importance of integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in community problem-solving. ... Community social planning is a local, democratic system for setting priorities, arriving at equitable compromises and taking action. ... The community social planning process consists of a set of identifiable stages: regular scanning of the external environment for trends and issues; identification of community needs, strengths and priorities; determination of short and long range priorities; developing strategies and taking action; monitoring and evaluating (Clague, 1993, pp. 3–4, 6).

Clague (1993) also expresses a “word of caution” that good planning involves “those most affected by the issue so they have ownership of the task,” “targets the people and groups whose support is critical to success,” “informs and educates the public to build support,” “sets short term achievable objectives which help build credibility and support for the larger goal” and ensures “that good group development work among those involved in the issue is part of good strategic planning” (p. 7). Clague takes the position that the role of effective community social planning is to: “1) provide information that contributes to informed debate and decision-making (healthy controversy); 2) to make its own recommendations and take policy positions on issues that are based on credible research and on the values espoused by community social planning” (pp. 35–36). “In some communities even conducting fact-finding research on an issue may be controversial though if no position is taken on the findings. ... Poverty, unemployment and underemployment are all too prevalent issues in most communities. Yet raising them can be controversial” (p. 36).

While Clague’s work in 1993 preferred the phrase “social planning” to “strategic planning,” and around the same time Bryant (1994) fortuitously adopted the phrases “sustainable

community development” and “strategic planning for organizations and the community,” strategic planning has traditionally been associated with private corporations. Stewart (2004) states that “strategic planning remains under-theorised in the public sector” (p. 1). Although strategic plans were first required of governmental departments in places such as Australia as early as the 1980s (Stewart, 2004, p. 1), they have particularly grown in popularity as an imperative tool for governmental organizations, non-profits and communities since around the turn of the century (Allison and Kaye, 2005, pp. xvii, 7–12). Allison and Kaye credit this development to the maturation of the non-profit sector and increasing public demands for accountability in the non-profit sector and government, as well as “increased responsiveness of the government to the public” (xvii, 11).

Stewart (2004) explains the private-public divide in approaches toward strategic planning as business unequivocally embracing the philosophy that “Strategy underpins organisational survival by anticipating and dealing with, challenges from competitors,” while public sector outlooks on strategy are more “low-key” and varied (p. 1). Bryson, an advocate in the public sector, argues that “Strategy is essentially self-identification, a way of harnessing organisational potential to the policy (and sometimes political) tasks at hand. Strategy-making rests on the identification of strategic ‘issues’ (challenges of requirements to change), that can be used to re-orient the organisation in more productive ways” (Bryson, 1995; Stewart, 2004, p. 1). Furthermore, in 2004 Bryson argues that for public and non-profit organizations, strategic planning “is more important than ever” because increased uncertainty and interconnectedness in the 21st Century demands strategic thinking, effective strategies to cope with change, rationales for implementation and coalition-building (Bryson, 2004, p. 1). Stewart points out that an integral element of “self-identification” for public and non-profit organizations, as opposed to businesses, is the public nature of it:

In contrast to the private sector, where true business strategies are not put out for public consumption, public agencies wear their strategic badges proudly, as a way of publicly authenticating their sense of purpose and direction. These publicly-enunciated strategies perform two main roles: 1. they give the agency an identity based on its functions; and 2. they signal managerial priorities to clients and other stakeholders” (2004, p. 17).

Consequently, Bryant (1994), Bryson (2004), Lewis and Green (1992) and Allison and Kaye (2005) strongly emphasize the development of a vision, mission and values as foundations for public sector strategic planning throughout their work. These foundational statements are key to branding for both public and private sector strategic planning.

However, Bryson’s focus on “self-identification” and planning for a single organization, which accurately reflects most strategic planning, particularly back to its corporate roots, is not easily instructive or transferrable to the broader inter-organizational community planning discussed by Clague and Bryant. Similarly, Stewart’s interest in public sector strategic planning is around political-bureaucratic/Minister-agency relationships and roles within a single government department, including “promoting dialogue between management and staff,” and “generating clear performance indicators” via “customer/client service” (Stewart, 2004, pp. 18–21; p. 18). These public sector, single-agency characteristics emphasized by Stewart provide a strong contrast to collaborative community planning processes that are unlikely to be founded on

targeted “client service” (as opposed to engagement of the broader community), nor have the identified, and presumably paid “management” and “staff” roles that exist in businesses or governmental departments. In fact, definitions of strategic planning are often limited to a single organization, such as Allison and Kaye’s (2005) “making decisions that position an organization to successfully respond to changes in the environment, including by competitors and collaborators,” which regards collaborators as an external object rather an active, participating subject in the plan (p. 7).

But Bryson, Crosby and Ackermann (2004) acknowledge that strategic planning also “increasingly” occurs collaboratively in “multiorganizational or community-based efforts” (p. 377). They opine that planning becomes more difficult as it becomes more voluntary, and necessary for multiple or many individuals and organizations to agree. Moreover, the fact that no individual leader is typically “in charge” of overseeing the process can also pose a challenge (p. 378). Hamlin, Geigis and Silka (2007) take a different view, reasoning that “In a world where power is widely distributed and groups of engaged members of the public are many and fluctuating, the only way to implement change successfully is through engaging many actors in the process” (p. 3); and “When a coalition of diverse interests develops an initiative collaboratively and achieves consensus, all members of that coalition feel that they are an integral part of the initiative’s successful adoption and implementation and there is a much greater likelihood of success” (p. 20).

Similarly, Bryant (1995) suggests that a strategic planning process is necessary for every “strategic orientation” identified by a community (i.e. “Youth and local employment” in Figure 2), proposing a four-step process that entails “visioning/setting objectives; analysis/diagnosis; action; and information/monitoring” (p. 37). Bryant (1994) clearly differentiates his advocacy of strategic planning as a means for community mobilization from traditional planning that is usually limited to a single organization:

It is essential to distinguish between strategic management and planning for an organization or group, strategic management and planning for a segment and planning for a community as a whole. ... the community’s overall development comes from the plans and actions of a whole series of organizations and groups, some formal and others not so formal, which work within the different segments in the community. ... these various groups and organizations will continue to operate and develop their own plans and projects. Usually, no single organization will have direct control in the sense of exercising authority over the other organizations and groups in the community. The challenge is therefore to recognize this and search for coordination and coherency between the different planning and implementation processes of the different groups and organizations and of the various segments. That is why we have to talk cooperation, collaboration and partnerships in sustainable community development. (pp. 6–7).

Bryant (1994) defines collaboration as a “special type of cooperation” that “involves cooperation between a number of players who have some power and influence in the community. They cooperate and may even develop a formal partnership by agreeing to coordinate their

decision-making to achieve the objectives they have in common more effectively” (p. 7). He further recommends the encouragement of broader community participation and collaboration as an antidote to “volunteer burnout”: “while the contribution of volunteers to community life and its vitality is generally recognized, a common phenomenon is that a small group of people becomes involved in many activities and areas. ... Potentially it can help communication between different organizations and domains. ... [but] volunteer burnout can be a major problem” (p. 10). Similar to Clague’s advice about good social planning, Bryant argues that actively involving people and groups allows for individuals to “participate in projects in the segment or segments of the community with which they identify most closely” (p. 12).

A notable difference between traditional and multiorganizational strategic planning is the nature of the standard “assessing the environment” stage: “To respond effectively to the changes in their environments, public and non-profit organizations (and communities) must understand the external and internal contexts within which they find themselves so that they can develop effective strategies to link these two contexts in such a way that public value is created” (Bryson, 2002, p. 123). In a collaborative process, the partnering participants often *are* the environment, or at least are relatively capable of reflecting it on demand. Rather than a corporate-rooted assessment of competing firms or organizations in traditional strategic planning, an environmental assessment in collaborative strategic planning could be executed as a critical scan of *other plans*.

Huxham and Vangen (2000) neatly summarize many of Bryant’s points, or where “something is achieved that could not have been achieved without the collaboration” as “collaborative advantage” (p. 1160). Although Bryson (2004), Stewart (2004) and Allison and Kaye (2007) concentrate on planning for the single organization, Huxham and Vangen cite many instances of collaborative governance, public service provision, economic development and approaches to social problems (p. 1159). Among their examples, they include the United Kingdom’s Modernising Government Initiative, which “promotes the coordination of the public, private and voluntary sectors so that citizens’ needs are addressed in a way that will appear seamless... a deliberate policy of collaboration between central and local governments” (1159). In Canada, the inter-agency concept of horizontal management, by collaboration, as opposed to hierarchal vertical management, is a very similar concept (Fitizpatrick, 2000).

Huxham (1993) has also constructed a model for developing a “collaboration strategy,” similar to Bryant and Clague, where stakeholders define “an agreed statement of mission” and “identify and appreciate a common purpose” (607). To do so, Huxham (1996) suggests “interactive workshops in which the participants interact with one another and with us, in order to build up the ‘story’” (p. 6). Unlike Clague and Bryant’s fully optimistic outlooks, Huxham (1996) recognizes that collaboration is complex and “many difficulties also arise because collaborations tend to involve people with many different professional expertise working together” (p. 10). He elaborates that communication is a major challenge, because of the need for three different channels: “(1) communication between the people in the core group; (2) communication between the core group and the organizations concerned; and (3) communication between the collaboration and the wider community” (p. 11). ... “for collaborations set up to tackle societal problems at community level, participants have argued that communication between the collaboration and the community as a whole is vital in keeping the group up to date and in maintaining good relations with the community” (p. 12). Huxham also realistically

observes that stakeholder identification in these situations is often not scientific and surgical, but rather carries out according to who knows whom and further suggestions as the process and needs evolve (p. 12).

The Community Development Facilitator's Guide (Smith & Frank, 1999) offers similar advice to Huxham, Bryant and Clague in a more concise and accessible, less theoretical format that includes exercises and examples. *Strategic Planning for the Community Economic Development Practitioner* is a helpful, straightforward step-by-step guide to community strategic planning, targeted to Aboriginal communities, but does not address the broader view of community mobilization and involvement in the process (Lewis & Green, 1992). In *Getting People Ready, Willing, & Able to Revitalize Their Community*, Frank and Smith (1994) offer another resource that uses the popular word “revitalize” in its title, aptly explaining the recent history of community development in Canada:

Over the past two decades, communities have begun to recognize that their future need not rest in the hands of national, provincial, or corporate decision-makers. It lies in the hands of their own residents. Communities are taking charge of their own futures by determining what *they* want in terms of quality of life, economic development, and social conditions—and then by taking action to achieve these wishes. They are beginning to create solutions to issues of local development from the ‘inside out’ instead of importing solutions from the ‘outside in.’ ... The role of the community is to foster and assist the development of enterprise in order to create jobs which improve the residents’ way of life and the overall strength of the local economy (1).

Frank and Smith (1994) emphasize the concept of “human resource planning” as a new alternative to traditional natural resources: “Human resource planning is a way to match individuals to activities which benefit both them and the community” (p. 8). One example in the book describes a Community Futures committee in Palliser, Saskatchewan, that responds to the problem of young people leaving the region by developing a Regional Economic Development Strategy (pp. 16–17).

Community Economic Development

What many people outside of the public policy and community development realm may not be aware of is that Community Economic Development (CED) is not a purely capitalistic, free enterprise endeavour. In fact, very much in the way Frank and Smith (1994) differentiate between “outside-in” and “inside-out” community planning, in the twenty-first century Community Economic Development is likely the strongest tool to prevent laissez-faire globalized economics from fuelling “growth” in a way that is neglectful of community quality-of-life factors. Hyland and Bennett (2005) claim that communities respond through “adaptation, social networking, organizing and coalition building” (p. 7). Roseland (2005) defines Community Economic Development as “a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to their common economic problems and thereby build long-term

community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives” (p. 168); “Development of local, small businesses has been a common goal of many Community Economic Development initiatives, along with job training and affordable housing” (p. 169). The Sunshine Coast Community Economic Development Partnership (2002) states that “CED is a grassroots approach to economic development and embodies the principles of equity/fairness, environmental compatibility, and quality of life” (p. 5).

With limited literature available on the topic of youth and community/economic development, especially from a British Columbian perspective, a research report prepared in British Columbia for the federal Social Trends Analysis Directorate in 1986 remains pertinent. Wachtel and Chabassol survey international trends in youth and community economic development, reasoning that interest in “grass-roots responses – community economic development (CED) enterprises and other ‘local employment initiatives’” and “a societal concern about difficulties that young people face in making a successful transition to economic independence” emerged out of a period of high unemployment” (p. iii). “CED initiatives include promoting locally oriented job creation schemes, fostering small enterprises, organizing to save and restructure plants threatened with closure, restoring decaying or unused buildings, and pooling savings to make loan funds available” (p. 1). In particular, they reference Jacobs’ (1984) observation that there is a “natural interest in CED initiatives for youth in rural localities because, in the absence of opportunity, young people migrate and are lost to the community” (Wachtel & Chabassol, 1986, p. 2). However, Wachtel and Chabassol also report that the few CED efforts specifically targeted to youth did not have a good success rate as of 1986; furthermore, much of these appear to be make-work projects funded directly by government, policy tools that are very difficult to imagine in the public policy environment of the twenty-first century.

A recent dialogue about the governance of community and rural economic development has been ongoing in New Brunswick. In September 2007, Premier Shawn Graham appointed Jean-Guy Finn as Commissioner of Local Governance, to examine “the structure and organization of local governance in the province, regional co-operation, property taxation, and local government funding arrangements, as well as the legislative framework required to implement an action plan” (Province of New Brunswick, 2007). New Brunswick’s basic structure of local government is close to fifty years old, with frequently cited complaints from government committees, academic sources, and other commentators about the high number of unincorporated rural areas and their awkward relationships with genuine municipal (incorporated) governments due to different standards in local taxation and services (Thompson, Warmald & White, 2007). However, when Finn submitted his report in December 2008, his top reason for amalgamating local government bodies, responsibilities and services from 101 municipalities and 267 local service districts into 53 municipalities was collaboration in economic development. “The proliferation of small municipalities and numerous unincorporated areas is not sustainable, Finn concluded, because of the population and economic shifts since the last municipal overhaul in the 1960s. The current system is adding duplication and leading to fragmentation of services” (CBC News, 2008).

One of the great advantages to consolidating municipalities in New Brunswick, Finn says, would be the development of a more unified approach to economic development. He says it is ridiculous to have

two or three economic development agencies working side by side in neighbouring communities. ... Finn says economic development will remain stagnant in New Brunswick as long as there is such a fragmented municipal environment (Morris, 2010).

Community Assets

Another influential idea in the field of community engagement and planning is the “community assets” approach. Van Willigen (2005) defines community assets through the categories of individuals, associations and institutions: “Individual assets include capacities, skills, gifts, and assets of lower-income people and their neighbourhoods. ... Institutional assets include businesses, schools, libraries, community colleges, hospitals and parks” (p. 35). Associations include non-profits that may have funding and mandates to advance public interests, and are always a collection of individuals as “social capital” (see next section). Gathered from all three sources, local knowledge (another by-product of social capital) is a community asset on which van Willigen places a strong emphasis (pp. 37–42). Van Willigen argues that “community assets are crucial to community building and have been recognized as such since the 1950s” (p. 25). “Using community assets as the starting point, problem solving can occur in spite of limited availability of assets. Also, the community becomes more effective in problem solving and self-direction” (p. 35). Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) declare that “the obvious necessity in this decade is for citizens to use every resource at their local command to create the future” (p. 36). “By solving its own problems, the community demonstrates to itself, and thereby strengthens, its own capacity for development. In addition, internal resources can be mobilized more quickly. External resources can overwhelm local communities, leading to disorganization and increased dependency (structural paralysis)” (van Willigen, 2005, p. 43).

Civic Disengagement

The “social capital” concept promoted by Hyland and Bennett (2005), Roseland (2005), Clague (1993) and other commentators is perhaps most famously researched and addressed by Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000). Hyland and Bennett summarize Putnam’s concept of social capital as “the idea that resources such as skills, knowledge, reciprocity, norms, and values facilitate community members’ working together to make substantial improvements in the entire community’s living conditions” (p. 7). *Bowling Alone* (2000) documents how increasingly disconnected individuals in North America are from each other and from social structures/ civil society. Political participation, especially, has dropped dramatically, stressing the difficulty of engaging young people in political and civic involvement: “...since the mid-1960s, ... Americans have become perhaps 10–15 percent less likely to voice our views publicly by running for office or writing Congress or the local newspaper, 15–20 percent less interested in politics and public affairs, roughly 25 percent less likely to vote, roughly 35 percent less likely to attend public meetings, both partisan and nonpartisan, and roughly 40 percent less engaged in party politics and indeed in political or civic organizations of all sorts” (p. 46). Putnam also proposes that “ideologies of rugged individualism and capitalism are associated with a widening gap between the rich and poor, as well as decreasing participation in political and social associations” (Hyland & Bennett, 2005, p. 7). Loader (2007) observes that “it is to the media that

Putnam points the finger of accusation as the most significant cause for disaffection and breakdown of civic engagement. Instead of engaging in the public domain Americans have become spectators of the public sphere through the television of their private realm” (p. 9).

On October 31, 2010, former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations Robert Fowler proclaimed in a speech at the University of Ottawa that, “The civic and political literacy of young Canadians is appallingly low. Your age group’s involvement in the political process, at all levels of government, stretches any reasonable definition of apathy.” He cited figures that only 54 percent of adult Canadians voted in the 2008 federal election, ranking Canada sixteenth out of seventeen “peer countries” in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and that in 2000 barely one in five of Canadians eligible to vote for the first time did so. Fowler’s observations are undeniably related to a growing lack of trust in public institutions in Canada that has been observed in the literature by Nevitte (2002), Crête, Pelletier and Couture (2007) and Zussman (1997), often with reference to Putnam’s seminal work on social capital.

Generation Y/ Millennial Values

Another popular topic in both academic and popular literature in the study of younger generations is their attitudes toward work and lifestyle, especially in comparison to previous generations. Defining Generation Y (also known as the Millennials) as being individuals born between roughly 1977 and 2000, Spiro (2006) emphasizes that Generation Y workers value work-life balance ahead of money and career ambitions (pp. 16–17): “Generation Y’ers want jobs with flexibility and telecommuting options that allow them to work, yet at the same time give them the opportunity to leave the workplace temporarily to care for children” (p. 17). Higgins and Duxbury (2005) report that although the telecommuting dream of technology enabling everyone to work from home or satellite offices has existed since the mid-1980s, and that it is possible and more prevalent now, workers still don’t tend to have time for family and personal pursuits, and “stress levels are at an all-time high” (p. 1). At the same time, employees with high levels of commitment to their organization dropped from 66 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2000 (p. 2). In their article, “Making a Life or Making a Living?” Zhang, Straub and Kusyk (2007) conclude that “the implementation of work–life balance practices becomes a crucial, challenging, and rewarding proposition for business” (p. 189).

e-Democracy and Citizen-centred Delivery

A modern policy tool to address the problems identified by Putnam (2000) and Fowler (University of Ottawa speech, October 31, 2010) is e-democracy, the utilization of communications and information technologies in governance and political processes. “Survey and polling results indicate that young people are disaffected with traditional democratic institutions and practices in many countries” (Loader, 2007, p. xii).

Parliamentary and congressional forums, voting booths and the restrictions of social-class-based party allegiances contrast strongly with the self-expression induced communication spaces of MySpace, MSN, Flickr and mobile texting as potential means to enable young

people's political efficacy. ... Born wired into the digital world, inhabiting the virtual spaces of online chat rooms, nurtured by the blogosphere and nourished by the flows of digital sounds and sights, these young people are seen to be significant actors shaping the parameters of democratic governance in late modern society (Loader, p. 2).

Atkinson (2003) writes that "In the New Economy, access to information is becoming ubiquitous, giving individuals greater power to make informed choices" (p. 43). He elaborates by explaining the power of information technology (IT) to empower individuals, improve service delivery by professionals such as doctors, customize the learning process for both students, and "foster robust, broad-scale campaigns around key problems" (p. 45). Atkinson advocates for "network government" based on IT to replace "stove-piped, hierarchical bureaucracies" (p. 3):

A key to this new form of governance is the support of civic entrepreneurship, which has become a thriving movement in the last five years. Civic entrepreneurs are like business entrepreneurs in the methods they use, but are motivated by social goals rather than material profits. ... In case after case, social entrepreneurs have created innovative programs addressing issues like welfare, health care, education, family support, and housing which are both cheaper and more effective than the traditional services provided by government (pp. 33–34).

Kernaghan and Beradi (2001) report on the key trend of network government of the "citizen centred" delivery of "government services by bringing them together in 'clusters' and delivering them through more than one service channel. ... Walk-in centres, the Internet, and telephone call centres are the primary means by which governments currently provide one-stop access to government services. ... Considerable excitement surrounds the expansion of electronic government in general and service delivery via the Internet in particular" (pp. 417–440). "Clustering initiatives are citizen-centred in that services are grouped according to the needs of citizens, not the needs of departments and agencies" (p. 423). An integral component to effective cluster service is that multiple government and/or civil society agencies support the "one-stop format" from behind the scenes in order to make it as seamless and straightforward as possible to citizens (p. 426).

Thomas (2000) takes an even stronger position on the prevalence of technology in democratic society: "People who have grown up in the information society will no longer accept the ossified procedures of representative democracy, the reliance upon hierarchies and authoritative decision-making structures. Instead they will insist on networks, interactivity, responsiveness and open discussion" (p. 28). He compiles a list of attributes information and communications technologies have in regards to democracy:

- they promote political equality by equalizing access to political information
- they promote open government; facilitating greater input into the political decision-making process and thereby engendering a strong sense of engagement

- they present opportunities to rebuild old and to build new communities of shared interest
- they have educational potential, promoting better informed dialogue on public problems and the development of people as citizens capable of taking responsibility for their own lives
- they facilitate what is called, in the UK, ‘joined up’ government in which policy is joined to operations, programs are integrated horizontally and departments connect vertically to customers through one-stop service provision
- they lead to the development of new organizational designs, to the flattening of hierarchies, and to increased autonomy for front-line staff, allowing them to be more responsive to their clients
- they promote greater accountability by both politicians and public servants by making information on performance more readily available to a wider audience than in the past

In summary, the new technologies represent an opportunity to create a new democratic order in which the traditional constraints of time, size, access and knowledge are overcome or at least seriously reduced.

Cecez-Kecmanovic, Kennan, Hull and Nagm (2009) expand on these theories with more specific, up-to-date examples of “e-participation” in the forms of “software tools, products, and tools including discussion forums and e-lists, e-petitioning tools, negotiation, voting and referenda software etc.” enabled by the Internet and World Wide Web (p. 735; Tambouris, 2007). A flaw to early e-participation efforts have been that they reflect traditional policy frameworks with “centralised hierarchical structures, one-too-many communications and ‘push models of interaction’” (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., p. 735). Instead, the capabilities of 21st-century social media and information and communications technologies allow users to “become authors, dispatchers, receivers, and controllers of communication,” especially with “chat, electronic discussion forums, group decision support systems, blogs, wikis and other Web 2.0 developments” (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., p. 735; Tomkova, 2009, p. 49; Sanford & Rose, 2007). The basic concept of Web 2.0 is that users can create content, sometimes in collaboration. Cecez-Kecmanovic et al. demonstrate a successful experiment of engaging youth in a local government spending decision through an online social media game. Similarly, Macintosh, Robson, Smith and Whyte (2003) found that soliciting input into the design of an e-participation tool/site will enhance usability and ownership (p. 52).

21st Century Labour Mobility

Technology has a multifaceted role and presence in this community project because it is not only a method of engaging young people, it is also a major factor in modern employment patterns, including on the Sunshine Coast. Baba (2005) notes that work “across the globe is being reorganized to enable collaboration among individuals in different geographical locations” (p. 133). “The rapid advance of computing and telecommunications technologies has produced a suite of new work tools that support distributed communication and collaboration ... and “eventually will permit people to accomplish everything they need to do together without ever

being co-present in the same location” (pp. 133–134). Baba references Van Maanen and Barley (1984) to define the characteristics of “work communities”: “1) Boundaries of the community are set by the members themselves, rather than on the basis of ascribed characteristics. 2) Identities and self-images of members derive from work roles. 3) Members define other members as their primary reference group, leading to the sharing of values, beliefs, and norms. 4) Distinctions between work and leisure activities are blurred” (pp. 135–136). Furthermore, work communities “share practices that embed highly specialized bodies of knowledge” (p. 137). Particularly interesting to this project, Baba approaches modern work communities, when more and more work is distributed, in the context of community development: “we find that humans are building new forms of community in the twenty-first century and utilizing new kinds of resources to build them” (p. 163).

Florida (2002) also studies work patterns and communities, identifying a “super-creative core” in society of “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects; the “thought leadership” group of “nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion-makers”; and “creative professionals” as those who “work in a wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and healthcare professions, and business management” (sec. 2). Florida posits that these people contribute “creative value” at a time when it is in high demand; “As creativity becomes more valued, the creative class grows” (sec. 2). Critically, Florida argues that this class is looking for “plug-and-play communities” where one can fit in quickly, and “thick labour markets” where one can find multiple employment opportunities to fill up a work schedule rather than a “job” (sec. 4). “Creative-minded people enjoy a mix of influences. They want to hear different kinds of music and try different kinds of food. They want to meet and socialize with people unlike themselves, trade views and spar over issues” (sec. 4). Florida interviewed a sample of the “creative class” who valued “interesting music venues, neighbourhood art galleries, performance spaces,” theatres and “a vibrant, varied nightlife” (“even by those who infrequently partake in nightlife”) (sec. 4). Florida recommends government/community investment in “lifestyle” amenities like parks, bike lanes, and trails (2001). He also advocates for the attraction and retention of young people, because they are able to significantly contribute to the economy and community by working “longer and harder,” they often have the “most up-to-date skills” and “a climate oriented to young people is also attractive to the creative class more broadly” (sec. 6).

Connecting to community economic development, and assets-based community development, Hawkins (2009) writes about how the Greater Moncton Economic Commission has supported a literary festival in the City of Moncton, New Brunswick, that has helped to promote culture to a “creative class” within and outside the region. Hawkins shares his interpretation of Florida’s work as “Make your community or region a fulfilling and safe place in which to live, work, play, learn and raise a family ... and the resulting concentration of talented people who choose to live there will generate economic opportunities, attract investment and create jobs” (para. 12). Markusen (2004) advises that modern community economic development functions would be wise to target individual occupations in attraction initiatives, rather than the traditional approach of trying to lure broader “industries.” Markusen’s work meshes well with the work of Florida, and in fact generally shares his regard for sets of workers who are “(1) ... highly skilled, (2) show growth potential, (3) cluster spatially, (4) cross-fertilize with other

sectors, (5) encourage entrepreneurship, and (6) match the potential of the area workforce” (p. 266).

In relation to this rapidly changing environment, the list of the top twenty-five fastest-growing industries projected from 2008 to 2018 according to the U.S. Department of Labor, referenced by one of the panelists at the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation’s Youth Employment Workshop, follows:

#	Industry	Employment		Percent Change
		2008	2018	
1	Management, scientific, and technical consulting services	1,008,900	1,844,100	83%
2	Services for the elderly and persons with disabilities	584,700	1,016,100	74%
3	Offices of physical, occupational and speech therapists, and audiologists	251,300	392,100	56%
4	Data processing, hosting, and related services	261,600	399,400	53%
5	Home health care services	958,000	1,399,400	46%
6	Specialized design services	143,100	208,700	46%
7	Computer systems design and related services	1,450,300	2,106,700	45%
8	Offices of mental health practitioners (except physicians)	59,100	84,400	43%
9	Other general merchandise stores	1,490,100	2,096,800	41%
10	Medical and diagnostic laboratories	218,500	305,500	40%
11	Offices of all other health practitioners	94,300	129,100	37%
12	Veterinary services	296,500	399,300	35%
13	Lessors of nonfinancial intangible assets (except copyrighted works)	28,200	37,900	34%
14	Waste treatment and disposal	100,900	135,400	34%
15	Offices of physicians	2,265,700	3,037,900	34%
16	Personal care services	621,600	819,100	32%
17	Facilities support services	132,700	173,600	31%
18	Other information services	133,600	174,700	31%
19	Offices of chiropractors	117,900	153,900	31%
20	Software publishers	263,700	342,800	30%
21	Support activities for road transportation	85,600	110,900	30%
22	Support activities for air transportation	167,200	216,600	30%
23	Plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning contractors	982,900	1,267,100	29%
24	Independent artists, writers, and performers	50,400	64,800	29%
25	Offices of dentists	818,800	1,052,200	29%

Table 1: Top Twenty-five Fastest-growing Industries, 2008–2018.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, 2011

Other Communities

Economist Tom Power identified in 1996 that quality of life is becoming the key to building healthy economies, because so many people now have the mobility to work, live and retire wherever they want. For example, Redmond, Washington's "beautiful setting as a desirable place in which to live, work and play" is cited by Copeland (1999) as a factor in its growth as a high-technology centre (p. 52). Redmond is a unique case because it has been the home base of Microsoft corporation since 1979; regardless of this anomaly, it still serves as an example of how a city of under 50,000 people (11,000 in 1969) in a beautiful natural setting can hold significant appeal to modern employers and employees who value quality of life. In addition to Microsoft, the city focused on encouraging "small-scale community based businesses" (Copeland, 1999, p. 53). The Microsoft site itself is "more like a park than a place of business," reflecting an overall community plan that calls for "community identity, economic balance, social variations within the community, adequate parks and open spaces, conservation of natural resources, and public and private partnerships" (p. 54).

A British Columbian community that has also succeeded in attracting and promoting "economic and social diversity" is Smithers (Copeland, 1999, p. 56). Despite its relatively remote location in northern BC, 371 kilometres northwest of Prince George, Smithers has become a "popular tourist destination with a ski hill, world-class sports fishing, great hiking opportunities, and other forms of back-country recreation" (p. 56). Moreover, the area's "broad range of incomes, ethnic heritage, religions, and strong individual beliefs" united to construct recreational facilities including "two golf courses, a large fairground complex, numerous well-maintained hiking trails, ball fields, tennis courts, a hockey arena, a downhill skiing facility," a performing arts theatre within a school, an indoor swimming pool, and "even a world-class archery range" (p. 57). "Because of the outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities in the area, the exceptionally beautiful rural landscape, frontage on the Bulkley River, the diverse array of community facilities, and the town's alpine architectural motif, many residents and visitors regard Smithers as one of the most desirable places to live in BC, or perhaps in North America. The quality of life is of the utmost importance to the residents of Smithers. ... The unusual commitment and involvement in community affairs reflects this concern" (p. 57). Importantly, Smithers adopted a single, cohesive Economic Development Policy that stresses a diversification of resources, government, recreation, tourism, service, secondary manufacturing and First Nations employment (p. 58).

Largely as a result of the decline of the forest industry, Nelson, BC, lost more than 1500 jobs between 1982 and 1992 (Copeland, 1999, p. 61). Perhaps Nelson's most well-known and noticeable initiative was its \$1.2 million (mostly provincial funding) heritage revitalization project of the town's main street. This investment led to jobs, a \$2.9 million increase in property values, and indirectly to the selection of Nelson as the location for two major films, which led to immeasurably more jobs, economic investment and further promotion of the city as a destination for tourism and investment. A college campus, which hosted Canadian International College with 75 jobs and 275 Japanese students until 1997, has certainly helped to diversify employment and the population, and continues to be used by educational institutions. Small home-based businesses also grew, perhaps mostly out of necessity because of layoffs; however, by 1992, four hundred home businesses were identified within a ten-minute drive of the town centre. Guided eco-tourism and bed and breakfasts (which grew 70 percent between 1989 and 1994) also

flourished (p. 64). “A significant number of people who have sold their homes in inflated metropolitan real estate markets have moved to Nelson where housing costs have been considerably less and the quality of life remains relatively high. The new Nelson is not only more diversified, it is more flexible and far more resilient to boom and bust cycles. ... Nelson is known as a friendly community and a relatively safe and desirable place to raise a family or retire” (p. 64). Nelson has an Official Community Plan that emphasizes “small town character,” home-based businesses, and the promotion of the cultural and arts community (p. 64).

Young People & Families: Policy Tools and Challenges

In the literature assessing programs aimed at support and engagement of youth, Keck and Fulks (1997) examine the watershed job-creation programs initiated by the Canadian government in the early 1970s: Opportunities for Youth (OFY) and the Local Initiatives program. The budget, scope and currency of these programs are difficult to transpose onto the challenges facing a small BC community in 2010, but Keck and Fulks do helpfully convey the environment that led to these programs, and comment on their degree of success. “Social tensions related to youth alienation, unemployment, and unrest,” spurred the federal Liberal government to respond in some way. “Young people wanted to work, but they were interested in meaningful work, not just any employment” (Keck and Fulks, 1997, p. 114). When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced Opportunities for Youth in the House of Commons on March 16, 1971, he stated that “we have confidence in their values system ... we are saying that we intend to challenge them and see if they have the stamina and self-discipline to follow through on their criticism and advice” (p. 115). Cabinet also insisted that “young people would have to be involved in the planning, management and evaluation of projects” (p. 116).

Of course the early 1970s was a very different time socially, demographically and economically. Just as youth initiative grants were made available to a glut of unemployed baby boomers, now that same demographic is hitting retirement age and driving up health-care demands and costs (there is economic safety in numbers). In a chapter entitled “Families Rigged to Fail” in her final book, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), Jane Jacobs discusses challenges facing young families today: “For almost forty years, starting in the mid- to late 1930s, the median income of an American or Canadian family was sufficient to cover the mortgage costs of a median-priced house or the rent of a median-priced apartment. ... At about [1981] U.S. economic statistics showed that the purchase of a “median” house required an income that only 10 percent of families could claim. Ninety percent could no longer afford to buy a ‘median’ house” (pp. 29–30).

Conceptual Framework

The literature review's focus on multiple approaches of "inside-out" (Frank and Smith, 1994) community development builds the conceptual framework (see Figure 3, page 25) with different segments of various sources. The identification and mobilization of "community assets" echoed in van Willigen (2005), Bryant (1995) (with "interests" and "activity segments"), Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), and to a lesser extent Clague (1993), saturates the process initiated by the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation from beginning to end. Clague, in addition, emphasizes the social policy analysis and informing the public of *Vital Signs*, the applied research of feedback from the May 14 workshop, the concept of helping those affected by an issue (the young adults themselves, also espoused by Trudeau's Opportunities for Youth program: Keck & Fulks, 1997) to develop plans and strategies, and the bridge-building and consensus among different viewpoints that occurred throughout the process, particularly in connecting demographic cohorts that had never worked together before.

Bryant's Figure 2 (see page 9) does not fully capture the Community Foundation's conceptual framework (see Figure 3, page 25), but it does provide somewhat of a microcosm of how Sunshine Coast population and activity segments interacted with interests to produce strategic orientations. Stewart (2004) and Bryson (2004) emphasize the importance of "self-identification" (branding) to this strategic planning exercise, which was successfully championed throughout the process. Community economic development as defined by Hyland and Bennett (2005), Roseland (2005), and Wachtel and Chabassol (1986) became a natural fit with the process by the stage of the Task Force, both as a tool and an objective that was eventually central to the plan. Specifically as a goal, the work of Finn and the Province of New Brunswick (2007) strongly connect the unity of (regional) community economic development to local governance.

At the Task Force stage of drafting the plan, the Community Foundation's prior applied research was combined with the community assets represented by the Task Force membership, and further research on social capital, civic engagement, Generation Y/Millennial values, e-democracy and citizen-centred delivery, 21st Century labour mobility, telecommuting, "the creative class" and the successes of other communities in BC and the Pacific Northwest. The actions proposed by the plan were particularly informed by this further research. All connections of the collaborative planning process to the literature review form a web in the conceptual framework, reflecting the interconnectivity to different applicable theories, as well as the sophistication and complexity of the planning and engagement process.

In summary of the methodology (next section) of the planning process in the framework, *Vital Signs* acted as the trigger for the first round of stakeholder identification by the Community Foundation. All primary "community assets" listed in the framework were identified at this point and invited with others to the Youth Employment Workshop. The main components of this full-day event were keynote speakers including the young people affected by the problem, more community asset identification by participants, and small-group brainstorming sessions for "innovative approaches" (Clague, 1993). The Task Force split into Planning and Partnerships groups, to again most efficiently utilize community assets. All community assets/groups continued to be engaged through the Task Force and plan presentation, leaving a group of local young adults, VOICE, to both be created by, and to carry on, the actions of the plan.

Community Assets

Process

Theory

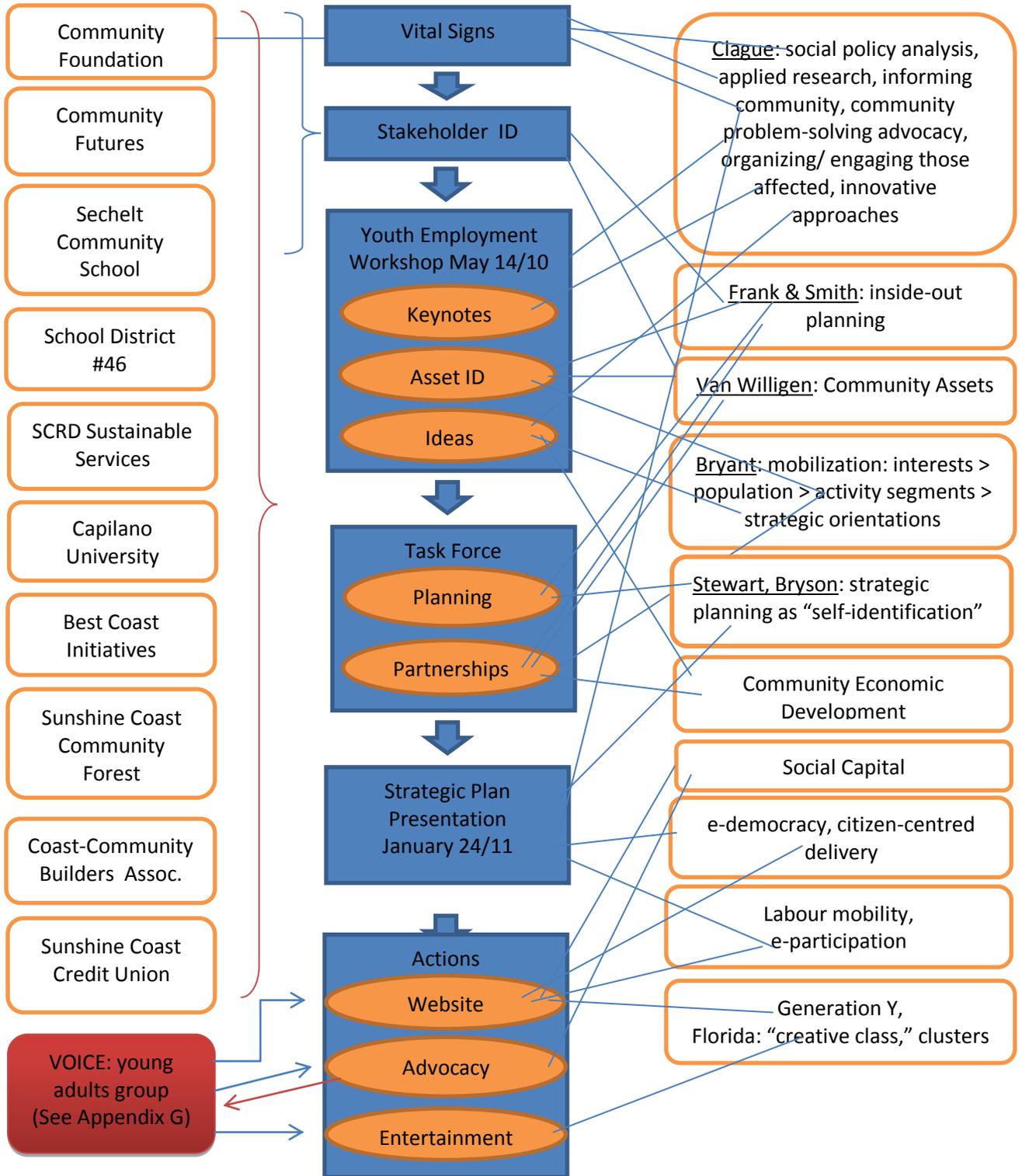


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework.

Methodology & Process Analysis

No firsthand data collection, including participant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, participant observations or participant recordings, was conducted for the purpose of this report. However, several months prior to the engagement of this report, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation designed a workshop and questionnaires in order to gather stakeholder input for the strategic directions and partnerships of the collaborative community plan. This minimal risk data was anonymized and summarized by the Community Foundation (see Appendix E, page 87), and was later analyzed as secondary data for the purposes of this report. Other secondary data influencing this report and plan was collected and analyzed at Attracting, Retaining and Engaging Task Force meetings occurring in 2010 on June 7, August 24 and September 24; again, this minimal risk input from Task Force members is anonymized and summarized as collective Task Force direction presented in the Findings & Analysis section of this report. Subcommittee meetings of the Community Foundation, too, that all occurred prior to the engagement of this report, were recorded as summaries and related in public speeches that again did not refer to individual participant input or opinions, but rather only collective group decision-making and action. Therefore, many of the methodology decisions, as well as the “human research,” for the attracting, retaining and engaging initiative were made before this report was engaged; a summary and analysis of the methods, however, has proven to be valuable to the client as a key deliverable.

Community Foundation Stakeholder Input Process

February–May, 2010: Workshop Preparations

The Community Foundation’s first step in response to the *Vital Signs* report was to strike a Youth Employment Committee “to facilitate a meeting of stakeholders with the objective to obtain agreement or buy-in that Youth Employment is a priority on the Sunshine Coast” (D. Eichar, speech at Youth Employment Workshop, May 14, 2010). This process developed into planning meetings of key stakeholders on February 12 and May 4, 2010, followed by a broader day-long Youth Employment Workshop of over fifty participants on May 14, 2010. Although the definition of “youth” has proved to be elusive in a community where the median age is 48.5, the Committee initially addresses a key methodology question by selecting to focus on young adults under 35. This decision was likely arbitrary, in order to set guidelines, but it did not last long. Subsequent discussions during the process, especially at the Task Force stage, identified that the experiences of residents aged 36–45 who may or may not have been able to attain residency and employment on the Sunshine Coast during their “youth,” are also essential to the dialogue and data collection. Furthermore, Figure 1 (see page 5) indicates that in 2006, the Sunshine Coast “bite” out of the BC average age pyramid reached up to about age 44.

Composed of four Community Foundation members (Dale Eichar, Peter Bogardus, Gerry Tretick and Don Basham), and Heather Gordon from the Lighthouse Learning Network (a non-

profit network dedicated to lifelong learning), the Youth Employment Committee's first task was to compile a list of youth employment "stakeholders" on the Sunshine Coast. A methodology adopted at this early stage of the initiative and sustained thereafter was the community assets approach described in the literature review by van Willigen (2005), and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). Bryant's (1994; 1995) focus on "mobilizing" and "organizing community participation," as well as Frank and Smith's (1994) "human resource planning ... to match individuals to activities which benefit both them and the community" (p. 8) are also strongly supportive of the methodology followed by the Community Foundation. Most of the documentation of the Community Foundation's initial Youth Employment Committee process, in preparation for the Youth Employment Workshop, consists of meticulous lists of organizations and individuals in the community who could potentially aid the process or the problem, including a list of approximately seventy individuals invited to the Workshop, and its eventual attendance. To determine balance, one file even colour-categorizes every invitee in the shades of "young," "business," "education," "business development and promotion," and "political." To some extent Huxham's (1996) finding that stakeholder selection is usually based on personal connections is always true, but the Committee applied considerable thought and effort into achieving some community balance on the Workshop invite list. Another key methodology decision by the client, addressing Huxham's other pitfall (1996) regarding the lack of leadership in a collaborative process, was to contract a local and experienced community planner, John Talbot, to help facilitate the key meetings and advice on the process. The Workshop's turnout rate of 90 percent indicated strong success for the route of identifying and calling upon "community assets."

Although the members of the Community Foundation's Youth Employment Committee were at or approaching retirement age, a guiding principle from the very beginning of the project was to empower and engage young adults throughout the work, very much in line with Prime Minister Trudeau and the federal government's confidence expressed in the Baby Boomer generation in the early 1970s, as well as with Clague's advice (1993) for "those most affected by the issue [to have] ownership of the task." This methodology qualifies as moderately successful, as two out of six of the keynote presenters at the Youth Employment Workshop were young adults, and about 20 percent of the attendees of the workshop were under the age of forty. Overall representation to the Youth Employment Workshop broadly covered local organizations, businesses and interests, but needed to be "invitation-only" to meet space constraints and also allow for interaction and breakout groups. The Sunshine Coast Regional District, District of Sechelt, and Town of Gibsons all agreed to help the Community Foundation fund the event, School District #46 provided food through its culinary arts apprenticeship program, and the Best Coast Initiatives economic development agency provided employment data and recommendations for the dialogue. Capilano University and the Lighthouse Learning Network were also involved in the volunteer planning and promotion of the project.

May 14, 2010: Youth Employment Workshop

The multi-faceted mission of the Workshop was presented to participants as follows:

- to understand the major trends impacting young adults living and/or wanting to live and work on the Coast;

- to examine the major challenges and opportunities in attracting, retaining and employing young adults on the Coast;
- to explore short and longer term strategies for addressing these three critical areas;
- and to establish a Task Force to follow up with the recommendations and prepare a draft plan for presentation and discussion at a second community workshop in the fall, 2010.

The ultimate goal and outcome of the May 14 Youth Employment Workshop was to establish the Task Force (see membership on the front page of Appendix A, page 68) to prepare a draft plan for presentation and discussion at a second community forum in the fall of 2010 (adjusted at the Workshop to November, and eventually by the Task Force to January of 2011). The Task Force was expected to examine the information and suggestions that emerged from the Youth Employment Workshop and identify what additional data needed to be collected and analyzed in order to produce a plan to attract, retain and employ young adults on the Sunshine Coast.

Frank and Smith's "human resource planning," (1994) or earmarking individuals with significant personal investment in the project was exemplified at the workshop by the construction of the event around six keynote opening speakers: two employers of young adults; one young entrepreneur who had recently moved to the Coast; one young adult who had returned to the Sunshine Coast but was struggling to find adequate employment or social activities; one real estate developer who had also grown up on the Coast and is actively seeking to attract groups to invest and settle; and one local human resources professional who had also been raised on the Sunshine Coast. This methodology was also very successful in allaying any tensions among collaborators from different backgrounds (again listed as a collaboration concern by Huxham, 1996, p. 14), "building up the 'story'" (p. 6), and building trust (p. 15) and an "agreed set of aims" (p. 8), through placing the concerns of the younger generation right out front. A handout requesting participants to comment (positively) on six panellists was effective in getting people writing and thinking about the issues surrounding young adults on the Sunshine Coast.

Flowing from the panel presentations, the Workshop was very task-oriented, with roundtable discussions on the presentations; community asset identification ("Who is doing fine work in attracting/ retaining / employing young people?"); proposals of names to serve on the Task Force; and a proposed Terms of Reference for the Task Force for all participants to approve. Roundtable discussions identified and indexed community assets that were represented at the workshop, in addition to others that individuals suggested. Areas of concern ranged from retail product selection for young adults, to multiple levels of government seeking common approaches; and ideas ranged from distributing information through pre-existing volunteer ferry "ambassadors," to creating affordable housing, to making the community a "university town." Some of these ideas are explored in more depth in the Discussion section of this report (page 46), and the framework and suggestions coming out of the workshop can be found in Appendix E, pages 87–93. The directions resulting from the Workshop, very much in line with the purpose recorded above, can be found on page 7 of this report.

Resources and Assets on and off the Sunshine Coast

Resources on the Sunshine Coast:

Individuals: Please name them, along with contact information if available

Who is doing fine work in?

Attracting young people

.....
.....
.....

Retaining young people

.....
.....
.....

Employing young people

.....
.....
.....

Figure 4: Sample Questionnaire Question from Youth Employment Workshop (May 14, 2010).
Source: Sunshine Coast Community Foundation.

The entire Workshop exercise undoubtedly fit Clague’s (1993) criteria for “community social planning” (see page 10): advocacy for the younger generation was in full swing, including by seniors speaking out that the Sunshine Coast desperately needs a “nightlife” to attract and retain its young; public education was serving not only the workshop participants but also being conveyed through the local media (see Appendix C, page 79); Clague’s “social policy analysis” and “innovative” recommendations would be considered and integrated into the community plan; and the commencement of intergenerational and inter-organizational bridge-building, and community problem-solving may arguably end up being the project’s most powerful legacy. The Workshop also produced a set of values for the collaborative community plan, (see “Guiding Principles,” Appendix E, page 87) as well as a list of “key areas” that essentially supported a vision for the project (see Appendix E, pages 87–89).

Attracting, Retaining and Engaging Task Force

June 7, 2010: Task Force Meeting

At its first meeting on June 7, the Task Force narrowed down the “key areas” reported out from the Workshop to four strategic directions:

- Empowerment and engagement of the younger generation
- Coordinated Coast-wide branding and welcoming strategy

- Diversified employment opportunities and job development (including succession planning)
- Affordable housing/ cost of living

The Task Force further agreed the community plan would require the following factors:

- Collaboration, networks among stakeholders / sustained leadership for long term
- Three short-term and long-term action-oriented goals, with focus and timeliness
- Identification of financial support – short-term and partnerships
- Clear goals with measurable results: i.e. numbers of employed and returnees
- Presentation of plan to be exciting, engaging, inspiring: multimedia communications plan
- Built and owned by the younger generation – and supported by full community spectrum

Another direction-setting decision made by the Task Force was to add “engaging” to the “attracting, retaining and employing” mandate. Eventually, collaborators replaced “employing” with “engaging” in recognition of the fact that employment is necessary to retention. The Task Force resolved to accomplish the work delegated to it by the stakeholder Workshop by splitting into two working groups: a Strategic Planning Team and a Partnership/Organizational Team. Team members agreed to gather and analyze data independently and report back to the next meeting with proposed actions.

August 24, 2010: Task Force Meeting

Over the summer, the fourth strategic direction, “affordable housing/ cost of living,” was dropped by the group after it was identified that the affordable housing issue was already being raised in the community, and that three other directions were ranked as higher priority by the Task Force. In preparation for the August 24 meeting, it was also realized by organizers that the method of splitting the Task Force into separate Strategic Planning and Partnerships/Organizational working teams did not succeed. Most likely because of the time of year (summer), the teams did not manage to meet at all past June 7 to accomplish their plans or mandates. Also, the commitment to pursue individual research, for the most part, was also either not followed up or not well organized/delegated. Clearly the challenges identified in the literature of “maintaining momentum” (Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services, 2003) and “volunteer burnout” (Bryant, 1994, p. 10) were rearing their ugly heads in this process.

Part of the challenge of “maintaining momentum” was likely seasonal: the Workshop was scheduled in mid-May, and the first follow-up meeting where the two working groups were established, to take on data-gathering, analysis and other “homework,” was on June 7, followed by an eleven-week lag until the next meeting, August 24, due to people’s conflicting summer activities. The hired consultant and two team chairs realized prior to August 24 that summer directions had not been clear and info gathering could not be expected from the task force

members. They opted not to try to engage Task Force members in this work over the summer by email. In hindsight, it is highly inadvisable to launch volunteer working committees at the beginning of summer and expect them to report back at the end of summer, especially when all the individuals involved are very active community members living on the edge of being victimized by “volunteer burnout” (Bryant, 2004, p. 10). The Task Force overestimated the amount of work and communications it would be able to accomplish over the summer months, and this miscalculation resulted in a stifling loss of momentum for the Task Force, and a delay in the completion of the draft community plan of approximately two months. Considering the volunteer nature of the endeavour, perhaps organizers should not have been so ambitious with timelines and simply accounted for a two-month lag over the summer; however, “maintaining momentum” was precisely what the organizers were trying to accomplish by not putting the project off over the summer.

Fortunately, an unexpected path developed outside of the committee structure, along the line of ensuring the eventual plan would be “built and owned by the younger generation.” Seven out of eighteen of the Task Force members were under the age of 45, but informal discussions by the younger members of the Strategic Planning team in particular led to the engagement of approximately fifty young adults over the summer through informal focus group sessions, and a Facebook group. This effort was pursued under the self-declared banner of “VOICE.” Rather than follow the Task Force’s working team structures, VOICE turned its attention to what was essentially the beginnings of a business plan for a user-generated social website for the Sunshine Coast that would help to address young adult engagement; branding; employment, housing and other opportunities (through a consolidation of classified advertisements/ job postings, etc.); promotion of social events and entertainment; and other functions (see Appendix B, pages 73–78).

This “plan of action,” crafted with focus group feedback, gave the Task Force something substantial to consider and discuss at the August 24 meeting, replacing the data-gathering that the members of the two teams had hoped to achieve on June 7. The response by the Task Force to the presentation of this concept was mixed but relatively positive, including to the estimated website start-up cost of approximately \$27,000. A direction was set to intend to partner with other Sunshine Coast-related sites rather than directly compete with them. A second crack at a strategic planning committee was made on August 24, but it also did not get off the ground, most likely due to individual schedules.

Frank and Smith’s (1994) human resource planning, of matching “individuals to activities which benefit both them and the community” (p. 8), or Bryant’s (2004) similar recommendation that volunteers “participate in projects in the segment or segments of the community with which they identify most closely” (p. 12) may have been instructive: although there was tremendous community support for the attracting, retaining and engaging concept by community leaders, it turned out no one really had the time or resources to make it their focus, and especially to take the lead on it. The few overlaps with personal interests, including the individual work dedicated to the user-generated social website, and secondly the later opportunity to complete the collaborative community plan, and this report, as part of an academic program, ended up being necessary sources of volunteer labour.

September 24, 2010: Task Force Meeting

In order to refocus on its original mission, the Task Force met on September 24 to identify short-term goals, long-term goals, key activities, key partners, resources and measurable outcomes for the three strategic directions selected on June 7. The Task Force and Community Foundation enthusiastically embraced a proposal to revive the process by engaging this report, which largely took on the mission that had been originally assigned to the Task Force (see page 7). The Task Force immediately assumed a more comfortable direction-setting and advisory position, and offered its final input into the development of the collaborative strategic plan for the community:

In the strategic area of “Empowerment” (summarizing “Empowerment and engagement of the younger generation”) three short-term goals were suggested for a maximum of two years: for key organizations to be engaging the “younger demographic” in decision-making, and the acceptance of and respect for this input; enhanced opportunities for “civics” education and educational partnerships in the K–12 public education system; and leadership development and mentorship for young people including a youth advisory committee to numerous local governments and organizations. During this discussion, it was pointed out that scheduling of meetings and low compensation are serious barriers to young, working people seeking elected office. A vital element identified to youth engagement was inclusion of the Sechelt Nation in this process. The user-generated social website was suggested as a key tool in engaging the opinions and dialogue of the younger demographic. The longer-term goal was simply that in five years from now, a lack of youth engagement and input will no longer be an issue on the Sunshine Coast: there will be diverse input into critical community decisions.

In the strategic area of “Branding” (“Coordinated Coast-wide branding and welcoming strategy”), the group set short-term goals of identifying who should be responsible for branding the Sunshine Coast in a way that recognizes age, cultural and ethnic diversity; finding other successful examples of community branding strategies that attract families; and making branding a primary consideration for a user-generated social website for the Sunshine Coast. Long-term goals were to have the Sunshine Coast regarded as “a dynamic place of opportunity” as opposed to primarily a retirement community; for the Coast-wide branding message to be used by all; for the online identity of the Coast (i.e. first hits that come up in a Google search) to broaden from the brand of a retirement/tourism destination; and for more affordable alternative housing, and economic/entertainment opportunities such as a “nightlife” to emerge. There were comments that there are many current assets of the Sunshine Coast that could be promoted to attract young people, including a feeling that there is a groundswell of key “early adopters” (or trendsetters) who are moving, visiting or starting businesses in the region; the notion that the Sunshine Coast is a safe and serene setting in which to raise children; a strong sense of community; a broad cultural and arts life; and outdoor recreation.

For the “Employment” direction (“Diversified employment opportunities and job development”), the user-generated social media website concept was again identified as a key short-term-goal tool to consolidate employment opportunities and other useful community resources. Secondly, a goal was set to enhance and promote succession planning for businesses through the resource/partner Sunshine Coast Community Futures, who can help to train and broker potential partners. Capilano University indicated that research shows that employment

growth on the Sunshine Coast is in the service sector for affluent seniors; in the short term, more research could be conducted to pinpoint what businesses and workers are, or will be, in demand by the seniors population. The Community Foundation was mentioned as an important player in continuing to collect and publish employment and economic data in *Vital Signs*. Longer term goals included developing local infrastructure to support business relocation, including tech businesses, diversifying the economy through attracting different types of businesses, and attracting off-Coast investment for value-added wood production. Measurements suggested were school enrolments to indicate the growth in young families, and the count of new business start-ups.

Timeline



Figure 5: Timeline of the Collaborative Planning Process.

Assessing the Environment

The strategic planning convention of assessing the environment (Bryson, 2004, pp. 123–152) is an awkward fit for collaborative planning because in many ways assessing the environment is what needs to happen first in order to identify, invite and engage the stakeholders/collaborators. The Community Foundation made these considerations in its Workshop preparations (see pages 26–27). However, “assessing the environment” may also include collecting data; in addition, in an example such as the community planning process that is the subject of this report, the relevant environment or competition is in fact other community plans and reports that may or may not address the same problem, including ideas and initiatives that offer opportunities for further collaboration. Hence, this section of the report analyzes other relevant Sunshine Coast community plans, scans and studies, including the influential local government strategic plans that are intended to represent the visions and dreams of the local community.

Demographic Data

Demographic data on the Sunshine Coast that is relevant to the literature review include figures on employment and education from the 2006 Census. It is worth noting that the Sunshine Coast has a higher percentage of occupations in “Arts, culture, recreation & sport” than the provincial average, as well as a higher percentage of residents educated in “Visual/performing arts, communications” than the provincial average (BC Stats, CP SCRD, 2006, p. 5). Furthermore, and even more strikingly, the BC Stats “class of worker” in the category of “Self-employed (incorporated)” is 7.8% of the Sunshine Coast labour force compared to the provincial average of 4.9%, while the category of “Self-employed (unincorporated)” is 17.6% compared to a provincial average of 9.2% (p. 13). In the “high-skilled occupations” of “Finance and insurance admin” and “Techs in Natural & Applied Sciences; Health; and Art Culture & Rec” the Sunshine Coast has higher proportions of the labour force than the provincial average (BC Stats, SP SD#46, 2006, p. 4).

Labour force	Class of worker		
	Both sexes		BC
Total labour force 15 years & over	14,210	100.0%	100.0%
Class of worker - Not applicable	160	1.1%	1.5%
All classes of worker	14,050	98.9%	98.5%
Paid workers	11,485	80.8%	89.0%
Employees	10,375	73.0%	84.1%
Self-employed (Incorporated)	1,110	7.8%	4.9%
Without paid help	440	3.1%	1.8%
With paid help	670	4.7%	3.1%
Self-employed (unincorporated)	2,495	17.6%	9.2%
Without paid help	1,800	12.7%	6.5%
With paid help	700	4.9%	2.7%
Unpaid family workers	65	0.5%	0.3%

Table 2: “Class of worker” Census Statistics, Sunshine Coast Compared to BC average.
Source: BC Stats. Sunshine Coast, CD: 2006 Census Profile.

Meanwhile, although it is still higher than the provincial average of 4.3%, the Sunshine Coast has only 5.7% of its current labour force working in the resource industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, and oil and gas extraction (BC Stats, CP SCRD, 2006, p. 14). Of relevance to demands for post-secondary education, although the Sunshine Coast had 4.6% less university graduates than the provincial average, its percentage of the population with post-secondary qualifications in the category of “College, Apprenticeship or Trades CF or DP” is 37.5% vs. a provincial average of 31.5% (BC Stats, SP SD#46, 2006, p. 4).

Scan of Other Community Plans

Local governments and other organizations have commissioned and funded numerous plans and reports on aspects of the Sunshine Coast. Some identify or “scan” community assets relevant to attraction and retention, some convey vision and values relevant to branding and attraction, and some plan for the future in ways that may or may not engage, attract and even employ young adults. Many of these plans, especially in relation to economic development, largely reference and recast the issues and recommendations of prior plans that were not followed through. Local government strategic plans can provide an important gauge on how communities self-identify, market themselves, and share hopes for the future.

Sunshine Coast Regional District Strategic Plan (Draft, 2010)

The Sunshine Coast Regional District Strategic Plan is based on a complex two-sentence vision that mentions a “vibrant economy” within the phrase “an enhanced natural context, local control over local resources, a vibrant economy and an enriched cultural fabric.” Undoubtedly some of these assets attract and retain young adults, but it could be a worthwhile exercise for the SCRD to ask representatives of the younger generation what the phrase “enhanced natural context” means to them, what the adjective “vibrant” suggests about an economy, and where the cultural fabric’s “enriching” is coming from. Secondly, in the other sentence of the vision, “a community of communities creating a sustainable way of life” could be highly appealing to enterprising and resourceful young people seeking a different approach to life, but the following phrase of “through a collaborative decision-making process” could be interpreted by some as rather procedural and bureaucratic.

The conceptual framework of the plan prominently emphasizes the words “WATER WASTE PLANNING.” The expanded language for the “water” direction acknowledges multiple current generations on the Sunshine Coast, as well as future generations, as reasons to address the impacts of climate change. “Waste” refers to a goal of zero waste, an accomplishment that could potentially draw many advocates of innovative zero-waste lifestyle and principles. The “planning” goal, again, appears to be more about process for current residents than pursuing an outcome that might attract people to the Sunshine Coast. Unlike the Plan’s “water” strategic direction, the SCRD’s “Social and Environmental Sustainability” principle problematically defines sustainability as being the concern of a singular “present generation”—presumably the generation born in the 1940s and 1950s that dominates decision-making positions on the Sunshine Coast.

The “Financial Sustainability” principle admirably desires “a legacy for future generations,” yet arguably fails to recognize the urgency of constructing a “present” for young adults: “To *investigate* [italics added] future economic diversification opportunities,” by encouraging regional directors and their planning committees to bring economic ideas to the board table, places fifth on a five-point list of three-year objectives. Furthermore, put into the context of current demographic data, and the *Vital Signs* report card, any reference to “future generations” only begs the question of whether the phrase envisions successive generations of seniors that renew as people retire to the Sunshine Coast, or rather generations of people and families who in fact spend the majority of their lives living on the Sunshine Coast. Many residents from the Baby Boomer generation have enjoyed this latter opportunity; however the data shows that the same opportunity is being denied to their children, or perhaps their children are rejecting it. Either way, much of the language in the SCRD Strategic Plan poses more questions than clear directions; as long as this language is recognized as such, raising these questions is a necessary first step.

School District No. 46 (Sunshine Coast) Strategic Plan (2010)

The School District’s vision emphasizes community engagement in lifelong learning, which helpfully broadens community educational goals beyond the K–12 system to post-secondary, apprenticeships and other training that could help to retain and employ young adults. The District has also set an objective to “expand educational opportunities, in areas such as outdoor education, environmental sustainability, technology, and especially in the trades.” While an “Engaging Leadership” section of the plan promotes advocacy, communications and transparency, it is not very specific about connecting with any external organizations such as Capilano University to expand educational opportunities and lifelong learning. One objective does mention “advocating for community planning and policies that prominently include children, families and education,” closely aligning with the objectives of attracting, retaining and engaging.

Town of Gibsons Strategic Plan (2009; Update 2010)

The Town of Gibsons lists its support of community economic development within its first “Stewardship” value, and “Nurture economic vitality” as its first strategic objective. Its second, extensive “Communications” value (and fourth objective of “Enhance communications”) very much opens the door to pursuing more engagement and input from the younger generation than is usually solicited on the Sunshine Coast, perhaps through information technology techniques (the Town website is mentioned frequently). Overall, all of Gibsons’ strategic objectives project a community that is concerned with economic development, including commercial growth and attracting new businesses—rather than discouraging growth and preserving the status quo. The Town’s enterprising initiative to extract and provide geothermal energy is a unique and exciting characteristic that offers attractive branding potential. Although these qualities are encouraging to young people and employment opportunities, no concerns for community demographics and the state of young adults and families in the community are explicitly mentioned anywhere in the Plan, including in the twelve points of “other considerations” placed at the end. The mission of being “the best livable community in BC” does

not elaborate on whether young adults and families are subjects and/or objects of this livability, at a time when “livability” is popularly applied to gated communities and other retirement destinations.

District of Sechelt Strategic Plan (2009)

The vision of the District of Sechelt as a “vibrant community where people want to live, work and play,” importantly and clearly includes people of working age. Economic development is listed as the municipality’s second strategic priority, and includes objectives for an investment attraction strategy, expanded infrastructure, promoting the arts in public spaces, and downtown revitalization. In the area of Communications, the District plans for modern progress through attaining laptops for councillors, offering public wireless access at the municipal hall, transitioning to paperless meetings, redesigning its website, and implementing an “online suggestion/comment box.” While the District of Sechelt document likely offers the most concrete and detailed “projects” of any local government strategic plan, it is also absorbed with internal mechanisms rather than externally conveying a stimulating vision of a community where things are happening and “people want to live, work and play.” It does, rather, appear by its strategic plan to be a very well-run and efficient municipality for the people who currently live there. The strategic orientation of the District of Sechelt appears to strongly align with the statement in the Sunshine Coast Community Economic Development Partnership’s 2002 Strategic Plan that “Communities considered to have good business climates usually have civic government that offer a service-first policy” (p. 24).

Community Economic Development Strategic Plan: Lower Sunshine Coast (2002)

In 2002, the Sunshine Coast Community Economic Development Partnership (SCCEDP) released a five-year economic development strategy that has run its course, but is still very relevant. The SCCEDP lasted two years, from the summer of 2001 to September 2003, funded primarily by Industry Adjustment Services with assistance from Human Resources Development Canada, Community Futures and the local business community. It included representation from separate Economic Development Partnerships in Gibsons, Sechelt and Pender Harbour, the SCRD, Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, Community Futures, and other local industry partners. The Partnership funded the Plan, as well as three community projects: Dakota Ridge Economic Recreation, Wood Innovation Centre and Coast Cultural Alliance’s ARTesia. The Plan itself references half a dozen other economic strategies and plans prepared on the Sunshine Coast in the decade prior to its publication, including the Gibsons and District 2001/2002 “Repositioning for Sustainability” strategy that recommended a region-wide economic development function (SCCEDP, p. 7). The Economic Development Partnership’s Plan, too, made a plea on this issue:

The one issue that underlines all of the above planning efforts is the lack of a dedicated economic development office on the Sunshine Coast. With the increasing sophistication and complexity of economic development practice, it is no longer sufficient to prepare a strategy and expect it to be implemented by organizations which may

or may not be committed to the effort or through volunteer efforts. It is a chronic failure of economic development strategic planning that roles and responsibilities for key initiatives are assigned to organizations that have not taken ownership of the plan. ... Effective economic development planning can only evolve if leaders, strategy champions and problem solvers are properly resourced and supported (p. 8).

The more detailed action plan in the report for launching a Sunshine Coast economic development office is included as Appendix D, classified as an “immediate” priority in 2002. The vision for the SCCEDP Plan is also well worth quoting in this report because of its inclusion of younger generations:

The lower Sunshine Coast is a place where residents of all ages, genders and backgrounds have a role to play in the future development of their community. ... The lower Sunshine Coast of the future will encourage an entrepreneurial climate where there is more diversification, improved infrastructure and a better balance of jobs. Opportunities are available for all, including youth and young families. ... The full potential of residents is encouraged, from youth to seniors’ groups (p. 9).

A goal for “Regional Cooperation” states:

There is an apparent frustration [on the Sunshine Coast] with the lack of cooperation among government agencies and lack of sensitivity or understanding for community economic development needs. Without more cooperation and support, it is felt that achieving broader development goals will be difficult if not impossible to achieve (p. 10).

Strengths	Weaknesses
Quality of life	Employment
Distinct, unique communities	Availability of labour
History\culture	Small local markets
Population growth	Tourism product
Natural resources	Local infrastructure
Good access to major infrastructure	Economic development planning
Location	Serviced industrial space and land
Workforce	Transportation infrastructure
Entrepreneurs	Local government
Community spirit	Post-secondary opportunities
Arts and culture	Youth/family activities
Partnership development	Health services
Concerns	
Diversification	Tourism development
Demographic changes	Community development
Business climate	Leadership
Treaty Process	Transportation
Forestry	Sustainability
Community marketing	Living standards
	Health Care

Table 3: Focus Group Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses and Concerns.

Source: Sunshine Coast Community Economic Development Strategic Plan, September 2002 (SCCEDP, p. 11). Note: 77 participants in focus group from “cross-section of community” (SCCEDP, Appendix 2).

The Strengths, Weaknesses and Concerns summary (Table 2) collected by the Partnership through a focus group are strikingly similar to the input shared at the 2010 Youth Employment Workshop and Attracting, Retaining and Engaging Task Force meetings. Of note, the listed weakness of “availability of labour” has probably overcome the perceived strength of “workforce” in the eight years since this summary was published, at least based on the 2010 discussion initiated by the Community Foundation. In addition, although “community marketing” has been a very significant concern, “tourism development” has not appeared very noticeably in the 2010 discussions relating to young adults. “Forestry” as a concern in 2010 might be expressed more specifically as a hope to enhance the value-added sector, as well as a hope that employment at the Howe Sound Pulp and Paper Mill, a major employer, will remain sustainable; in general, however, Sunshine Coast residents seem resigned to the fact that both forestry and fishing do not and will not employ the same proportion of the population that it once did. The Sechelt Nation “treaty process” is an issue/concern that has faded since 2002, but relationships with and engagement of the Sechelt Nation are consistently raised by all local governments, as well as by participants in the Attracting, Retaining and Engaging process.

Sectors with above-average growth potential	Most important strategies
1. Tourism	1. Attract businesses
2. Residential/population growth	2. Help existing businesses expand
3. Forestry value added	3. Build retirement community
4. High technology	4. Attract young families
5. Agriculture	5. Work with other community organizations
6. Fisheries/Aquaculture	

Table 4: Survey Results of Key Sectors and Strategies.

Source: Sunshine Coast Community Economic Development Strategic Plan, September 2002 (SCCEDP, p. 12). Note: Unweighted blanket (not random) survey of 901 completed questionnaires (SCCEDP, Appendix 3).

Table 3 lists survey results that rank “attract young families” as the fourth most important growth strategy for the Sunshine Coast, just under “build retirement community.” It is possible that this mindset may be shifting in 2010 with increasing awareness of the *Vital Signs* data and the high participation and interest in the Attracting, Retaining and Engaging project, but it is still vital to recognize that a very large contingent on the Sunshine Coast (likely even growing, with the number of incoming retirees, and outgoing young adults, in recent years) prioritize building a retirement community over attracting young families. Advocates for attracting and retaining young adults may regard this perception as “part of the problem” that needs to be addressed or argued; or, may strategically reason that working-age adults are required for construction, health services and other service industries in any growing retirement community.

Other interesting details of the 2002 report include the recommendation for “a coast-wide marketing plan” (p. 27), and a web portal as “a resource to residents” and “a business attraction tool” (p. 20). The report also strongly associates ferry service with positive economic development, suggesting support for the Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee’s ongoing lobbying efforts to BC Ferries, and support efforts for a foot-passenger/”commuter” ferry; the report assumes that an economic development function would conduct this support and advocacy. Related to the demographic data on the Sunshine Coast’s high proportion of residents educated with “College, Apprenticeship or Trades CF or DP” (37.5%) from the 2006 Census (BC Stats, SP SD#46, 2006, p. 4), the report notes the growth of this group from 20% in 1986 to 34% in 1996. It also notes a 12% drop in the proportion of residents without a grade 12 diploma, to 31%; in 2006, according to *Vital Signs*, this number was only 18.2%, better than the provincial and national averages. From an employment perspective, these numbers indicate that younger generations are more highly educated and trained than previous generations, even with limited work opportunities. One more “good read” from the strategy report is the over 350 comments that are published from the survey of resident: the responses include thoughtful, creative, passionate and terse statements and ideas, and also candidly reveal some notable polarizations on the Sunshine Coast for and against growth, and even in opposition to government economic development for different reasons (opposition to development, or promotion of free-market-only economic development) (CEDSP, Appendix 2).

Gibsons, Areas E and F Community Economic Development Strategic Plan (2004)

Less than two years after the release of the Sunshine Coast Economic Development Partnership’s five-year plan, its Gibsons Economic Development partner group, along with the

Town of Gibsons and its two surrounding rural areas (E and F), published the Gibsons, Areas E and F Community Economic Development Strategic Plan. Many of the ideas are familiar, but are more specific to the Gibsons region. A short-term objective is to “initiate information and networking support activities that will contribute to the growth of knowledge-based businesses,” (p. iii) while a long-term objective is to “develop a significant cluster of knowledge-based businesses, building on existing successful operations” (p. iv). In addition to the knowledge-based sector, the strategy also identified tourism, arts and culture; retail and other services; and primary/secondary industries. The knowledge-based sector is broken down as computer software development/services; technical services (e.g. forestry and marine); new media; fine arts (e.g. film, recording); and other specialized consulting/technical services (p. v). A noted constraint to high-tech and knowledge-based industry is the bandwidth-limiting wireless connection of fibre optic cable laid on the Coast, and local high speed internet to the Lower Mainland (p. 22). Related recommendations are for Community Futures and local economic development organizations to identify needs in telecommunications service and analyze possible solutions, and working with service providers such as Coast Cable and Telus to achieve a fibre optic link to the Lower Mainland (p. 24; p. 38).

Of course, another “attracting” objective is to “undertake activities to support the lifestyle and retirement community development that is occurring in the area” (p. vii). It is possible that a self-reckoning on the Sunshine Coast is in order to determine if such an approach is in fact contradictory to the concern of attracting and retaining young adults, and whether it is worth it to continue waving the retirement community flag to the possible detriment of attracting and retaining young adults and families. The report also supports a new community centre/ recreation facility (which was achieved), and more accommodations including “appropriate meeting/conference facilities” (which has not been achieved) (p. iii). Another notable long-term objective was to “enhance local education and training opportunities by facilitating development of a satellite post-secondary educational campus and niche learning institutions in the region” (p. iv). Like the broader economic development plan, this Gibsons and Area plan expresses interest in the “feasibility of foot-passenger ferry service” and the facilitation of “implementation if viable” (p. 24). Other bigger-picture economic development ideas in the report include Gibsons harbor expansion, airport expansion in Sechelt, highway improvements, and work on a deepwater port/port authority concept in Howe Sound (pp. 39–40). Tourism prospects are listed as the Dakota Ridge winter recreation area and the Botanical Gardens (p. 43).

Sunshine Coast Regional District: Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Scan (2006)

The purpose of the Cultural Scan was to compile an inventory of the Coast’s cultural assets and resources, and identify strengths and weaknesses. A valuable comment in the introduction is that although 68% of the region’s population was under 54 years old at the time of the scan, survey responses indicated this age cohort accounted for only 41% of the cultural “audience” on the Coast. Furthermore, “we observed that the vast majority of volunteers operating the cultural organizations were older than this cohort, and that the level of volunteerism required may be putting some organizations at risk” (p. 3). Incredibly, in a study of festival and special event attendance, encompassing over 27,000 individual attendances, the local audience was 0% for the 24 and under cohort (compared to being 28% of the total population, by

the Cultural Scan’s numbers), and 15% for the 25–44 cohort (compared to 24% of the full population) (p. 22).

Strengths	Weaknesses
Recognition of need for economic development, “vibrant economy”	Lack of a detailed vision in most plans, with the main exception of green jobs etc. in Energy & Emissions Plan
Emphasis on strong sense of culture on Coast: “cultural fabric”	Neglect of planning to address lack of 18-44 age cohort participating in cultural events (identified in Cultural Scan)
Acknowledgement of “the future” for children/ young people	Lack of acknowledgment of “the present” for children/ young people
Existence of thorough, detailed and innovative local economic development research and planning	Lack of follow through on recommendations made in economic development planning
Current commitment to planning, including orgs that have not had plans in years (i.e. SD#46, SCRDP, District of Sechelt...)	Lack of intergovernmental/ inter-organizational connections among plans, including to Sechelt Indian Government
More planning in progress: Coast-wide, intergovernmental Sustainability Plan (“We Envision”, SCRDP Parks and Recreation Plan	Discontinuation of Sports Scan
Existence of a comprehensive Affordable Housing Study	Lack of intergovernmental cooperation to move ahead with Affordable Housing recommendations
Existence of Cultural Strategy	Continuing lack of a Coast-wide “Cultural Coordinator” officer (recommended in Cultural Strategy) to implement and monitor strategy

Table 5: Strengths and Weaknesses in Relation to Current Sunshine Coast Planning. Note: Format adapted from Bryson (2004) “Assessing the Environment to Identify Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges, pp. 123–152.

Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Study (2006)

The Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Study states its purpose as assessing “the extent and nature of the need for affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast” (p. i). It aptly notes that in addition to retirement arrivals, the Sunshine Coast population increase has largely included “people seeking an alternative lifestyle” (p. 13). The study includes “young families” among its “priority needs” groups, indicating that the two options of secondary suites/dwellings and affordable market housing could help them (p. ii). Another priority need is “low income renters (incomes under \$20,000),” which includes “single people, students, families and single parent led families” (p. ii). Non-market rental housing and secondary suites might meet the needs to this

group. Secondary suites are also considered to be “suitable for families” (p. 21), as well as good “mortgage helpers” for young families (p. v). The study notes that there has been “little new rental construction on the Coast,” and “for the most part, the private market cannot supply rental housing on the Sunshine Coast that is affordable to households with low incomes” (p. ii). The study’s affordability analysis showed household incomes of \$20,000 or under per year could not afford rental pricing on the Coast, and that households with incomes of under \$40,000 cannot afford to purchase a home (pp. iii–iv).

Addressing the housing needs of young families is particularly important because they tend to leave the Coast if they cannot find adequate employment and housing. Indeed, there are proportionately fewer people aged 25 to 44 years living on the Coast than in the rest of BC, suggesting that they have been leaving. This is a worrisome trend because people in this age group are the primary household forming, family raising, and working age population. ... A diverse housing supply including duplexes, townhouses, small lot housing, housing above shops or other alternatives can meet the housing needs of young families wishing to enter the ownership market. Affordability is achieved through smaller lots, increased density and construction of modest housing (p. iv).

One of the most significant findings from the data collected is that in 2001, 81.9% of dwellings on the Sunshine Coast were single-family dwellings, compared to only 55% in this category province-wide (p. 20). The split between owned homes and rented homes, too, was 78% owned to 22% rented in 2001, to 66%/ 33% provincially (p. 22). The study also reported a 2% vacancy rate for rentals, lower than the 3% “minimum” generally considered of a “healthy rental market” (p. 31). Cost of ownership, meanwhile, skyrocketed from 2001 to 2005 by 86% in Gibsons, 70% in Sechelt, 47% in Roberts Creek, 90% in Halfmoon Bay and 146% in Pender Harbour/Egmont (pp. 32–34). Rental rates in 2005 rivalled or even exceeded those in Greater Vancouver (p. 36). The study also suggests a number of examples including Cates Hill Development, Bowen Island (non-profit rental), Quayside Village (co-housing ownership) compared to Roberts Creek Co-housing development, and condominium ownership as housing models that could work on the Sunshine Coast.

Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy (April 2007)

Growing out of the Cultural Scan, the strategy aimed to identify and prioritize key strategies and objectives “integral to the region, the community, and the arts, culture and heritage sectors, and create an action plan for each objective” (p. 1). The Strategy interpreted the lack of “audience” involvement of residents under age 44 as “Programming for youth is insufficient” (p. 11). The consultation process for the Cultural Plan, however, as described in the report, did not explicitly try to engage young people. None of the twelve members of the Steering Committee for the Cultural Strategy were under the age of 40. Action #9 of the Plan is to “Seek opportunities to engage youth in discussion and cultural decision-making” (p. 27). The deliverable of “Dialogue opportunities in schools continued,” clearly defines the target age group as being under 18. Action #13 registers the concern that increasing housing costs may drive off

“the artist population,” but does not specify whether younger artists would be particularly vulnerable (p. 28). Objectives in a different section of the report are “to improve access to a diverse range of cultural experiences for all generations,” and “to publicize/increase awareness of how the Sunshine Coast benefits from the ongoing presence of an ‘Imagination Economy’” (p. 29). None of the actions connected to the “improving access... for all generations” objective mention young people. Another strategy is to promote learning opportunities to all, including “children 0 to 6, students in grades 1 thru 12, community/alternative school students; youth & college/university students, adults, seniors.” Even supplied with the alarming data in the Cultural Scan on the lack of young adult participation, the Sunshine Coast Regional Cultural Strategy serves as an excellent exemplification of the “gap” for young adults on the Sunshine Coast.

Sports Scan: Sunshine Coast (September 2007)

The Spirit of BC Community Committee and Sunshine Coast Regional District undertook a “snap shot of sports conditions on the Sunshine Coast,” including organizations, activities and facilities, in 2007. This work is very valuable to young adults on the Coast looking for activities and social opportunities. The breadth of the activities, and details on contacts and participation rates, are considerable. Problematically, this document was not well-distributed, and has not been kept up-to-date. With the work that has already been done, updating the document and circulating it more widely (at the very least online) would not be a time-consuming task, and would be greatly beneficial to young adults and others looking for athletic and recreational activities and interaction.

Our Coast, Our Climate: Sunshine Coast Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Draft Report (February 2010)

The Sunshine Coast Regional District developed the Sunshine Coast Energy and Emissions Plan to “support sustainable community development on the Sunshine Coast through the reduction of community level energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions” (p. 9). Most targets set in the document are tied to provincial legislation and a Federation of Canadian Municipalities program, but community consultation was a large and influential component in the creation of the plan. The plan acknowledges the aging population as a pressure to create “compact and complete communities with a diversity of transportation and housing choices, services, and recreation areas,” though it is unclear why this basic scenario would not appeal just as much to a younger generation. In the context of energy consumption, the plan identifies low population densities and a lack of multi-family housing on the Coast (p. 24), with the dominant single-family housing trend predicted as very unlikely to slow down through 2031, especially in the SCRD’s rural areas. The SCRD expects that 5,030 out of 6,194 new dwellings between 2006 and 2031 will be single-family (p. 26). It is clear that high-density housing would not only offer a diversification of choices to a more diversified population, but would also result in significantly less energy expenditures.

“Significant alternative energy resource potential” is highlighted in the plan in the way of run of river hydro; biomass; and tidal and wind. Employment opportunities offered by such projects are not mentioned (p. 30). However, by expanding local renewable energy opportunities

as its fourth goal, the SCRCD reasons that “the Sunshine Coast is interested in diversifying our local economy and providing energy security to the Sunshine Coast as the price of fossil fuels rise. In the short term, over 100 million dollars are spent each year supplying energy to the Sunshine Coast. These dollars are leaving the local economy and could be spent at home, supporting local economic development. ... Supplying the Coast with clean, local energy creates green jobs that keep energy dollars at home, and pay local wages” (p. 59). The SCRCD declares that the “Sunshine Coast is interested in attracting and supporting green businesses and industries to ensure a strong economic base for the community, and retains local employment and tax revenues. ... Creating a green economy is a smart approach to economic diversification, ensuring local, clean jobs that can stand the test of market fluctuations” (p. 66).

The SCRCD proposes the development of another economic development strategy that focuses on local energy supply, creates educational opportunities for young people to develop skills in the local energy supply sector, and with Capilano University explores the possibility of training in green technologies and trades, and attracting potential new green businesses (p. 67). Overall, the forward-thinking vision put forth of the Sunshine Coast being a serious “energy leader” utilizing “new technology,” promoting cycling, improving transit and ride-sharing for workers, commuters and customers, “enhancing the green building sector” and “strengthening the local economy” has potential in coordination with the SCRCD’s zero-waste and sustainability visions to draw the attention of progressive-minded young adults to the Sunshine Coast (pp. 19, 43, 51).

Analysis of Plans/Scans/Strategy/Reports

The most striking revelation from surveying previously written plans and strategies for the Sunshine Coast is that there is lack of specificity and understanding around the state of young adults in the region, highlighted by the omission of young adults from the Cultural Strategy and the vagueness about “future generations” in the SCRCD Strategic Plan. Another observation is that with the exception of the two economic development plans (2002 & 2004), none of the plans have a shared vision, or even much overlap, even between the SCRCD and its member municipalities, the District of Sechelt and Town of Gibsons. Ironically, perhaps the most visionary, wide-reaching and all-encompassing plan is for a specific mandate, energy and emissions reduction, also touching on education, economic development, transportation, housing and public consultation. It also proposes a vision of green jobs, high-density housing, expanded training opportunities and new technology that has great relevance to attracting, retaining and engaging young people.

The economic development plans (2002 & 2004) provide the most ideas, objectives and discussion that connect to the development of the 2011 collaborative community plan to attract, retain and engage young people. Scanning this previous work reveals that in some cases it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel, but rather to support ideas that have already been articulated, such as a Coast-wide economic development office (SCCEDP, 2002; Appendix D) and the Sunshine Coast Community Energy and Emissions Plan (2010). Problematically, the local government strategic plans for Sechelt, Gibsons and the SCRCD have the most impact on local decision-making, yet none of them articulate a forward-thinking vision on the scope of the Energy and Emissions Plan, or explicitly mention the attraction, retention or engagement of

young adults and families as community priorities. A commonality, however, is the strong but unclear desire for improved community engagement and consultation, which may implicitly acknowledge that many young adults are not involved in the local political process, and present an opportunity to both welcome engagement of young adults, and ideas around technology and e-democracy, especially, to make government more accessible to the public.

Opportunities	Challenges
Make use of the extensive Economic Development work done in 2002-2004 before it's out of date	Longtime Coast culture/tradition of parochialism between communities
Renewed interest in economic development	Funding/fiscal sustainability: annual pressures to keep taxes down vs. rising costs = difficulty to fund new initiatives
Intergovernmental Meeting platform (meetings of all Sunshine Coast gov'ts that occur twice a year)	Coordinated communications: too many plans, organizations for public to keep up with it all?
Renewed interest in strategic planning	Vast majority of the Coast unaware of existence of this collective work
Recent developments in inter-organizational cooperation (Attracting/Retaining, "We Envision" etc.)	Need for dedicated staff/sustained leadership to carry out recommendations of plans

Table 6: Opportunities and Challenges in Relation to Current Sunshine Coast Planning. Note: Format adapted from Bryson (2004) "Assessing the Environment to Identify Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges, pp. 123–152.

Discussion: Writing the Plan

Producing a collaborative strategic plan for the Sunshine Coast community was selected as a policy tool by the Community Foundation, and endorsed by the stakeholders/collaborators, for two key reasons:

- As discussed by Bryant (1994, 1995), the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (2003), Hamlin, Geigis and Silka (2007) and Clague (1993), conceptualizing and implementing a collaborative plan can be a powerful and effective means of developing partnerships and mobilizing a range of community members and organizations on an issue.
- Bryson (2004) and Stewart (2004) argue that the most valuable utilization of strategic planning in the public sector is essentially for "self-identification," or branding. In the case of attracting, retaining and engaging young adults on the Sunshine Coast, the Community Foundation realized that the issue merited a much higher degree of awareness on the Sunshine Coast. Furthermore, by engaging a number of key community leaders and stakeholders, the "self-identification" spread to every collaborating organization also taking ownership of the problem and promoting awareness of it.

The notion of branding was a constant theme in the engagement and planning process, so therefore made it into the plan as the top priority. A slight flaw, or oversight, to the plan was the lack of recognition that in many ways the “branding” strategic direction was the plan itself. As it stands (see Appendix A, pages 69–70), the branding strategic direction developed into somewhat of a “plan within a plan,” with its own ambitious set of sub-actions to support initiatives that promote the sustainability/outdoor lifestyle, post-secondary expansion, alternative K–12 education, labour market development, home-based businesses in information technology and communications, nightlife entertainment options, etc. The thinking of the Task Force was, understandably, that when developing a brand as a primary strategic goal, the community must also ensure that it lives up to that brand; hence the relevance of the sub-actions, some of which overlap with other actions within the “Empowerment” and “Employment” strategic directions.

The Task Force recognized this awkwardness when it reviewed the plan, but the compromise solution was to maintain the “branding” action with sub-actions. Moreover, another late suggestion by the Task Force to add “inclusion/welcome of young adults and families in local strategic plans” was also included in this subsection, even though this is a branding action rather than part of the brand itself. Additionally, the “welcoming strategy” mentioned in the expressed “Branding” goal was a concern that collaborators felt would be addressed by the social media website, but it was also evident that there was no clear consensus on exactly what a “welcoming strategy” would look like, or for that matter its importance. In conclusion, this part of the plan (Strategic Direction #1, Appendix A, pages 69–70) is not as smoothly and concisely expressed as it could have been, but the nature of successful collaboration was that everyone’s points and concerns needed to be addressed. Huxham’s (1996, pp. 10–12) reflections on the complexity and communications challenges of collaboration are most evident in this component of the final product.

In hindsight, and upon reflection of building this report’s literature review (especially Bryson and Stewart), the branding direction and its subsections could have been adopted as the collaborative “vision,” a strategic planning foundation that was in fact not included in the final document (see Appendix A, page 68). Foundational values for the plan were expressed following the workshop (see Appendix E, pages 87–88) but were not explicitly presented in the final document, largely because the mandate of the Task Force was so action-based (see page 7). The plan’s mission was arguably its subtitle: “to address the lack of settlement, employment and participation of young adults (ages 18–44) on the Sunshine Coast. The key strategic directions, addressed earlier in this report, were narrowed down and selected by the Task Force (see page 29). The key partners involved in the collaboration, and identified as organizations that would have some part in implementing the plan under the facilitation of VOICE, were represented by the Task Force membership listed on the first page of the plan (see Appendix A, page 68). Additional potential community collaborators are suggested in the plan as “potential partners.”

The selection of the actions was one of the more complex tasks of this project, considering the wide breadth of factors involved in the area of employment, engagement and branding for the young adult demographic. A number of actions were suggested by the Task Force on September 24, 2010 (see pages 32–33), some resulted from the Workshop of May 14, 2010 (see Appendix E, pages 87–89) and others were selected from the environmental assessment of other community plans as well as from other initiatives that were already happening in the community. A key realization made during the development of the plan and this

report, in connection with the notion that a public sector plan is indeed an exercise of “self-identification” or branding (Bryson, 2004; Stewart, 2004), was that a number of the plan’s actions would not need to be new initiatives, but rather could more logically take the form of support of pre-existing efforts happening on the Sunshine Coast, though from a new lens that emphasized the need to attract and retain young adults and families. Examples of such efforts are regional economic development of “intelligence services cluster” promotion. A further, appropriate benefit of this approach was that it strengthened ties with the collaborators who had already been working on these projects.

In connection with regional economic development, the Task Force and collaborators unanimously expressed a strong stance in favour of the need for the Sunshine Coast to work as a whole, a unified region, for the benefit of all. Discussion throughout the process lamented redundancy and counter-productiveness as obstacles as progress for the region as a community, due to parochial and competitive attitudes displayed by individual communities. Consequently, one of the plan’s values is to “operate in a collaborative manner with all jurisdictions so the results are positive and impact the entire Coast” (see Appendix E, page 87). Therefore, the parochial question of whether individual communities on the Sunshine Coast will be treated differently by the plan, or one may stand to “benefit” at the expense of others, was not an issue in the stakeholder consultation and information collection processes. Individuals from all communities were engaged throughout the process and as the plan has been promoted, and follow-up meetings have taken place in various venues up and down the Coast. Media or political representatives from more isolated communities such as the Sechelt Indian Band and Pender Harbour have been approached to help promote the plan in their communities.

Representative of many of the Sunshine Coast’s political challenges as voiced by the collaborators, economic development is a prime example of how communities in a region can benefit from working together, but can actually cancel each other’s efforts out, or at least create winners and losers, by working individually (Province of New Brunswick, 2007). The actions of promoting Coast-wide economic development and Coast-wide branding are further explored in this Discussion section, among other issues that were considered for the plan:

Coast-wide Young Adult Branding Strategy (Appendix A, pages 69–70)

The “branding strategy” is the most ambitious strategic direction in the plan. The various facets of this direction could have been presented in numerous other ways, but the concept of “branding” arose so many times in stakeholder discussions, going back to the May 14, 2010 Youth Employment Workshop, that it was selected by the Task Force as the most appropriate “umbrella” to cover many different objectives and concepts. Branding in this context is complex for three reasons:

- Virtually all the community input, and literature (especially the likes of Florida, 2002; Baba, 2005; Hawkins, 2009; and Power, 1996) have emphasized that in the globalized and technology-driven economy, an increasingly mobile labour force will choose to live in areas that they find most appealing for lifestyle reasons. It also must be recognized that especially with the dominance of the Web and more so Web 2.0 and blogging, a “brand” is no longer a slogan or logo carefully crafted by experts and focus groups, but rather a

far more broadly represented perception that external and internal commentators collectively exhibit in a Google search. On the Sunshine Coast, the challenge is to not only build a “brand” that attracts the more selective and discerning labour force (especially Generation Y), but also to extinguish or at least broaden the dominant “brand” of the Sunshine Coast as retirement community only.

- Secondly, and even more complexly, in many respects the “brand” in the plan represents a goal that the Sunshine Coast needs to live up to by actually supporting and developing community conditions that will attract and retain young people: labour market, post-secondary opportunities, K–12 education options, an atmosphere supportive of home-based IT businesses, outdoor/environmentally aware lifestyle, and nightlife.
- Thirdly, the most substantial self-initiated project emerging from the community plan, the user-generated social media website, is intended to act as the driving force for both soliciting a new “brand” from Sunshine Coast residents and visitors, and presenting this brand for the world to see.

User-generated Social Media Website (Appendix A, page 70)

It is widely and increasingly recognized that social media is becoming ever more dominant in people’s lives and communications habits, especially for young people (Thomas, 2000; Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2009; Baba, 2005). People are becoming ever more dependent on the Web and social media for not only “social,” but also practical and professional, interactions. Appendix B summarizes an early presentation for the Sunshine Coast Community VOICE website that has been initiated by this Attract, Retain, Engage project. The plan for the website is to include community member profiles that will interact by generating content (Web 2.0), including newsfeeds/blogs, classified/advertisements, and user-generated dialogue, that is focused on the Sunshine Coast. This content will not only enhance communications and connectivity for people on the Sunshine Coast, especially the younger generation, but will also offer a venue for public dialogue to support decision-making, and “brand” the Sunshine Coast by showcasing the activities, businesses, events and people who are present there. The concept is to enhance and enliven “real” social, employment, professional and cultural opportunities, including nightlife, going on all over the Sunshine Coast, rather than replace them with internet simulacrum. Sunshine Coast Community Futures agreed to incubate this project until VOICE becomes a fully-fledged non-profit; the Sunshine Coast Credit Union, Capilano University, the Community Foundation and Community Futures have also funded a business plan for the website, which is under development.

“Sustainable Community” Branding (Appendix A, page 69)

The Sunshine Coast has long been identified with environmental sustainability, likely because its setting has attracted lovers of the outdoors and nature for many decades. There is a strong local effort, spearheaded by the Sunshine Coast Regional District, to strengthen leadership in environmental sustainability on the Sunshine Coast while interconnecting it to social and economic sustainability (Sunshine Coast Regional District, 2011). Meanwhile, as the primary

administrator of government recreation on the Sunshine Coast (including in the two municipalities of Gibsons and Sechelt), the Regional District also has an influential role in branding the outdoors and recreation on the Sunshine Coast through Dakota Ridge Recreational Area (a 1,532-acre plateau offering winter cross-country skiing and snowshoeing), numerous parks and trails, and recreational facilities. Further environmental branding is promoted in the SCR D's recently launched Community Energy and Emissions Plan ("One Coast, One Climate"), previously discussed in the Findings & Analysis section of this report.

The Task Force identified on June 7 that environmental sustainability is becoming a dominant local government priority on the Sunshine Coast, particularly from the SCR D. The SCR D sustainability planning process has been grassroots, dynamic and extensive; it has also explicitly linked its methods and objectives to community economic development. A choice by the broad community choice to support and embrace the SCR D's Master Parks Plan, Sustainability Charter, "Zero Waste" goal (see the SCR D's Strategic Plan, pp. 26–27) and Energy and Emissions Plan as they are all completed in 2011 will help to entrench and promote the Sunshine Coast's "sustainable" lifestyle to the outside world. This branding could attract innovative and forward-thinking individuals, people who are drawn by the outdoors and outdoor recreation, and those committed to reducing their carbon footprints.

Post-Secondary Opportunities/ Apprenticeships (Appendix A, pages 69, 72)

A hope that frequently arises in discussions about retaining young people on the Sunshine Coast is the provision of secondary school graduates with the option of staying to seek post-secondary opportunities. Unsurprisingly, this sentiment is most often expressed by parents of secondary students, but it was also been brought up in the VOICE youth dialogue groups. Both Capilano University and School District #46 attempt to survey senior secondary students and recent graduates about their post-secondary choices, but a coordinated effort would likely be more successful. Task Force discussions identified the Sunshine Coast as an ideal setting for a "university town," and furthermore that the economic benefits of the post-secondary sector are attractive to help sustain economic and social activity through the fall and winter. With major shifts in the fields of work young people are entering (see Table 1, page 21), and educations they are looking for, a dynamic and innovative Sunshine Coast "campus" of opportunities could be extremely appealing to young people. One successful example of a new program launched by Capilano University has been Mountain Bike Operations (including components of tourism, risk management, first aid, guiding...), which combines the Sunshine Coast's appeal and locale with a growth industry. Capilano also offers a "Wilderness Leadership" program at its Squamish campus, another field that could work well on the Sunshine Coast (perhaps with more of a marine orientation). A successful private institution has been the Inside Passage School of Fine Cabinetmaking in Roberts Creek, which has attracted people from all over the world in groups of approximately twenty per year to learn specialized woodworking skills since 2005.

Apprenticeship programs were a central and consistent topic to the May 14 Youth Employment Workshop. The potential for apprenticeships expansion on the Sunshine Coast is picking up steam with the recognition of an upcoming labour shortage (due to demographics) in a growing community, the rise in prominence of the Coast-Community Builders Alliance (CCBA) of construction-related businesses, the CCBA's collaboration with the Sechelt Nation,

School District No. 46's development of carpentry, auto tech and culinary arts apprenticeship programs with Vancouver Island University and the Industry Training Authority, and the potential for Capilano University to offer apprenticeship programming. In general, a reasonable short-term goal for the Sunshine Coast could be to focus on expanding the apprenticeship opportunities, while working towards overall post-secondary expansion (including full-degree opportunities, which are not offered through Capilano), especially to the extent of a "university town," would need to be a longer-term goal.

Choices in K-12 Education and Child-care Coverage (Appendix A, page 70)

Another perspective on education, connecting to the innovative/"off the grid" appeal addressed in the sustainability section, or the appeal of the "creative class" as promoted by Florida, is the notion that the Sunshine Coast has the potential to attract young families who are not only looking for a great place to raise children, but are also pursuing alternative, unconventional choices in education. Currently, the Sunshine Coast has a (private) Waldorf preschool–grade 5 program and a public Francophone preschool–grade 12 program that is available only to families with Francophone family or educational backgrounds. The public education School District No. 46 has struggled with declining enrolment, mainly due to birthrate, but also due to families choosing to enrol in the Waldorf, Francophone, home-schooling or other programs. In its December 2010 Facilities Plan, the School District estimates that there are approximately 1,000 K–12 students on the Coast who do not attend their system; clearly families on the Coast are already selecting other options. School District No. 46, with small enrolments and surplus space, has committed to exploring more public education programming options in its December 2010 School District Facilities Plan, and it could likely gauge the kinds of programs capable of attracting and retaining young families by studying the Sun Haven Waldorf School and consulting with home-schooling families. The timing of the Facilities Plan's release, and other school district consultations and elections, make the opening of new programs or schools in fall 2012 viable.

Another frequent complaint of young families is the lack of child-care options, especially for families with two working parents and in particular commuters. A high number of employed people on the Sunshine Coast commute daily, or at least part-time, to Vancouver, but with the forty-minute ferry ride departing West Vancouver every two hours on the odd hour, commuters require a child-care option that is open until at least 6:30 pm. It is highly doubtful that any family would need or want to have children in care so late on every day of the week, but there are enough commuting families or at least workers who do some business in Vancouver that at least having this option would make life on the Sunshine Coast more feasible. Affordability of child-care is another major problem for families, but this is a province-wide situation and in fact the costs are well known to be more prohibitive on the Lower Mainland. Especially through a provincial push for public schools to be community hubs, or "neighbourhood learning centres," but also considering the surplus space on the Sunshine Coast, it is possible and perhaps even preferable that expanded child care could take place in schools, in particular as after-school care for commuting families.

Creation of the “VOICE” Advocacy Group for the Younger Generation on the Sunshine Coast (Appendix A, page 71)

Probably the most important recommendation of the community plan is the mobilization of a young-adult advocacy group (see Appendixes G and H, pages 97–101). Undoubtedly, its strongest and issue-defining tool for recruitment, engagement and promotion will be the VOICE website, but even without the site there is no question that it is the young adults themselves, who live or want to live on the Sunshine Coast, whose voices need to be heard by the rest of the community. Furthermore, VOICE is the group that will take on the sustained leadership for the collaborative community plan, including the development of the website. VOICE will also act as a “youth advisory council” to develop leadership among young people, and also to contribute the young-adult perspective to the community on local-government issues and other decisions. It was decided and confirmed in multiple discussions by both the Task Force and VOICE that there would be no age limit for VOICE, but rather anyone would be welcome who is supportive of the mandate of attracting more young working adults to the Coast. The Town of Gibsons and Sunshine Coast Regional District have already committed to appointing liaisons to VOICE, and the SCR and District of Sechelt have also expressed interest in using VOICE as a referral agency (to request public input on rezoning applications, community plans, and other major local government decisions).

Prior to the launch of the website, a “VOICE on the Coast” Facebook page has been highly effective in identifying young people on the Coast, engaging them in discussion, and drawing them to VOICE and other community meetings and events. A federal election candidates’ forum has been organized by VOICE, and plans are being discussed for a vigorous strategy to engage young adults in the November 2011 local government elections, as well as the candidates in young adult issues covered in the community plan—both online and in candidates’ meetings. Local governments and the school district also have two to three “intergovernmental meetings” per year; after the November 2011 election, VOICE plans to present to an intergovernmental meeting in order to engage all local governments at once in the objectives of the community plan.

So far, VOICE has failed to attract any membership from the Sechelt Nation; the Sechelt Band has had self-government since 1987, and many community groups involved in the Task Force and elsewhere have cited the difficulty in building relevance to Band members for “external” issues and groups when so much responsibility is already taken on and delegated within the Sechelt Indian Government District.

Young Adults’ Survey and Other Data Collection (Appendix A, page 71)

In April 2010, the “Sechelt Residents 50+ Survey” was reported to the community. This successful project received 481 responses, for an overall return rate of 11.2%. The District of Sechelt was involved in helping to support this survey, with the results providing the District and other decision makers with data to help make decisions in planning, transportation, taxation and many other issues. A Coast-wide younger generation survey could be incredibly valuable: what attracted people to the Coast, and/or is retaining them?; what would attract more people to the Coast?; how are you employed?; what is your education or training? (to identify gaps in the

labour market), etc. This data could be incredibly useful to all local governments, Capilano University, School District No. 46, the Community Foundation (*Vital Signs*) and VOICE itself. Volunteers in the younger demographic may be needed to personally circulate the survey, but it is even more likely that the VOICE website could set up a system for producing verified and credible surveying that would easily garner a higher response rate than the execution of paper, in-person surveys. In addition, *Vital Signs* is planning for a “younger generation” section for its next publication, with assistance from the school district. Community Futures has also committed to more actively keep track of businesses and business start-ups by individuals under the age of 45.

Entertainment/Nightlife (Appendix A, page 71)

Easily the most positive page in *Vital Signs* is “Arts and Culture”; the Sunshine Coast has one of the most active and vibrant arts scenes in Canada. It is a major community asset, including to employment (cultural employment is notably higher than provincial and national averages). But just as our economy requires “diversification,” there are “gaps” in cultural and entertainment offerings to young people that will need to be addressed, particularly to retain people but also to attract. Input and discussion during the Attract, Retain, Engage process has frequently lamented the lack of “nightlife” on the Sunshine Coast. Drinking establishments do exist, but evidently see little demand for later hours. The Coast’s only nightclub had a reputation for violence and other disturbances of the peace, and was closed in the mid-1990s. The burgeoning arts scene may provide a better (and safer) economic window to build a nightlife through special events and more promotion of cultural activities that appeal to the younger generation. The community plan also proposes the promotion of social activities such as live storytelling and TedX Sechelt (being organized for 2012) in order to focus on the social interaction rather than the option of less actively, or socially, watching a performer.

VOICE has initiated more outreach and interconnectivity among existing arts organizations and businesses to promote targeted events to a network of young adults, especially online (via Facebook until the website is set up). Promoting a rotation of events among a network of cultural/nightlife venues may also prove to be a more workable model than single venues trying and failing to establish themselves as sites for regular live entertainment. Furthermore, a cultural shift needs to occur where local governments and residents recognize night-time activities as being for the greater good, especially economically, rather than as a nuisance. To add some balance to its “arts” page as well as chart progress, *Vital Signs* could add a measurement for “nightlife” in the arts.

Succession Planning (Appendix A, page 72)

Sunshine Coast Community Futures has offered training and promotion in succession planning as a major component of its current operations, largely due to demand and demographics. If younger adults were aware of more business opportunities through “succession” on the Sunshine Coast, perhaps more could be both retained and attracted. Community Futures has had little problem in finding business owners looking to retirement, but identifying the potential “successors” has proven to be a major challenge. The VOICE website,

along with labour market information collected from a young adult survey, could be instrumental in facilitating successful succession planning on the Sunshine Coast.

Coast-wide Economic Development (Appendix A, page 72)

The literature review documents how other communities that have successfully adapted to the 21st Century from having a resource-based economy did so through Community Economic Development. For the Sunshine Coast to make the same transition, governments, groups and individuals need to put aside personal differences, parochialism, and any lingering or current antagonism and support Regional Economic Development for the future well-being of the Sunshine Coast. The *Vital Signs* data and the input and dialogue of the Attract, Retain, Engage process provide all the evidence necessary to support the importance of this priority. Elected officials must take leadership in supporting Regional Economic Development for the future of the Sunshine Coast, and even for the present younger generation trying to make ends meet right now. One proposal has been tabled by an ad-hoc Coast-wide Economic Development Task Force largely made up of the business community, but is fraught with political divisions, distrust and disagreements between its membership and local governments. Local governments are currently working together on their own options. The message of the Attract, Retain, Engage project has definitely had an impact on all parties, with the employment benefits to the younger generation, and a recognition of widespread community support for community economic development, now being emphasized all around.

Support for Employment Clusters (Appendix A, page 72)

Best Coast Initiatives (BCI), an economic development agency for the southern Sunshine Coast, estimates that 1,000 individuals on the Sunshine Coast work in the knowledge-based business sector, most of which are home-based. BCI developed a plan to apply cluster development principles (Kernaghan and Beradi, 2001) to increase the competitiveness of the “intelligence services cluster” sector, and to recruit new businesses to the sector on the Sunshine Coast. Objectives of the ISC plan include to link ISC attraction to tourism marketing and other new resident initiatives, policy recommendations to local governments that encourage cluster development, and the construction of an online business-to-business networking portal. Community Futures has also become involved in the project, especially with an idea to build a “centre for innovation” for independent and home-based businesses to share resources and network. Such a proposal could also attract a private partner such as Telus (that recently invested in the Sunshine Coast by helping to support the Sechelt Day Float pier development) or a post-secondary partnership with Capilano University. This cluster-development concept is highly complementary to the community plan and potential website. The website, in fact, could very well provide a networking centre to establish and incubate other cluster developments.

Transportation: Ferries

Although the Task Force did not specifically target transportation to be part of the plan, ferries come up frequently in any discussion of the Sunshine Coast, including the attraction,

retention and engagement of the younger generation. No foot-passenger commuter ferry currently exists on the Sunshine Coast, but some residents believe that such a ferry service would make commuting more viable and therefore attract more working people who would prefer to live on the Sunshine Coast even if they work on the Lower Mainland. However there is some scepticism around whether the speed of typical foot-passenger-sized vessels would make the trip viable, as it is unlikely that spending up to four hours a day on a ferry would be appealing to potential users. Alternatively, commuting could possibly be made more attractive if ferry schedules were altered or fares were further discounted for people making trips three or more times per week; but these decisions are not under the purview of local government but rather the privatized administration of BC Ferries. Related to entertainment, again, some interest outside of the plan has been expressed by the Attract, Retain, Engage Task Force and VOICE in late-night ferry service on weekends, which would allow Sunshine Coast residents to take in entertainment or nightlife in Vancouver and return home in the same night. Again, a strong business argument would need to be made to BC Ferries for this idea to be seriously considered.

Affordable Housing

Also missing from the plan, affordable housing continued to be brought up at Attract, Retain, Engage and VOICE events as a significant deterrent to attraction and retention. The Sunshine Coast Regional District has been involved in striking a Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Committee, presumably in connection with Social Planning Council's Housing Committee that produced the report analyzed on pages 43–44 of this paper. Affordable housing remains controversial, however, as many of the strongest housing advocates are focused on social housing for those afflicted by homelessness or poverty rather than young adults and families finding it difficult to buy or even rent on low or average incomes. On the other side of the spectrum, some argue that housing costs are actually low on the Sunshine Coast compared to the Lower Mainland, meaning that housing costs on the Sunshine Coast could actually be an enticement for some. *Vital Signs*, however, maintains that the costs of accommodation on the Sunshine Coast are a major issue for young people, a contention that has been supported by input at every Attract, Retain, Engage and VOICE event.

Recommendations

Strategic Directions and Actions

This section summarizes the actions outlined in the community plan (see Appendix A, pages 68–72, for full plan) and then discusses them in greater depth. The first strategic direction, ***to promote community initiatives and infrastructure in support of a coordinated, Coast-wide branding and welcoming strategy that will attract young adults***, includes the following actions:

1. Develop a young adult branding strategy to be broadly accepted and integrated within an overall Coast-wide brand, including:
 - high community potential and interest for post-secondary expansion;

- sustainability/outdoor lifestyle;
 - alternative educational options for children, including early years;
 - home-based/ information technology/ telecommunications innovation;
 - labour market development for employment opportunities;
 - inclusion/welcome of young adults and families in local strategic plans;
 - and entertainment and activities for young adults/“nightlife.”
2. Establishment of a user-generated Sunshine Coast social media website.

The second strategic direction is ***to actively engage and empower the younger generation on the Sunshine Coast***, including these actions:

3. Develop VOICE (focus group of young people for this initiative) into an Advisory Council for sustained leadership, and “leadership pool” for further community input and engagement.
4. Listen and learn about the strengths and opportunities of young adults living on the Coast.
5. Promote and encourage a vibrant nightlife for the younger generation.

The third strategic direction, ***to diversify employment opportunities, encourage job development and develop effective succession planning***, includes actions to:

6. Promote and expand succession planning that is occurring on the coast
7. Endorse a regional (Coast-wide) economic development function.
8. Support employment clusters “of excellence” such as Intelligence Services.
9. Form an integrated-community Apprenticeships program.

Vision, Mission and Values

As mentioned in the Discussion section, the final presentation/document of the community plan did not include an explicit vision, mission and values. However, a set of guiding principles, or values, were indeed identified at the May Workshop that publicly launched the process:

- Empower and engage young adults throughout this work
- Build on the coast’s current assets and the work that is being done

- Operate in a collaborative manner with all jurisdictions so the results are positive and impact the entire coast
- Be creative and future oriented

These values were proposed to the Task Force with the invitation to add more (see Appendix E, page 87), but were endorsed as is at the Task Force’s initial June 7 meeting. The mission that was assigned to the Task Force by the Workshop was very action-oriented, so did not specifically mention the need for a new vision, mission and values *for the plan*:

- examine the information and suggestions received from the participants of the May 14 meeting;
- identify additional data to be collected and analyzed;
- produce short- and long-term plans to make the Lower Sunshine Coast more attractive to youth; and
- report back to the community with its recommendations for plans of action and recommendations for the individuals and other entities who should carry those plans forward.

Consequently, the community plan document emphasized a listing of the partners involved in the Task Force and a short preamble of how and why the attracting, retaining and engaging process started as the foundational elements leading directly towards the three strategic directions of:

- Coast-wide branding strategy;
- Empowerment of the younger generation;
- Diversified employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the subtitle of the plan fundamentally served as a mission: *to address the lack of settlement, employment and participation of young adults (18–44) on the Sunshine Coast*. As covered in the Discussion section, much of the exercise was to envision what kind of “branding” the community would need, and need to be able to live up to, in order to attract and retain young adults. Therefore, in many ways the seven characteristics identified in the “Coast-wide brand” action (Appendix A, page 69) could have served as a vision of what the Sunshine Coast needs to develop in order to be more appealing to young adults. However, after the plan was presented in January 2011 and VOICE was launched, VOICE interpreted its own vision from the plan:

We envision a future for the Sunshine Coast that includes a thriving, diverse population of young adults and families as part of the make-up of our community. We aim to adjust the predominant image of the Coast from being primarily a retirement community, to a place for all generations to enjoy. (See Appendix H, page 99.)

Once again, this foundational statement by VOICE does not neatly fit into the vision/ mission/ values box, mainly because no one required it to. It could, however, easily be broken up into the

first sentence acting as a vision and the second sentence acting as a mission. An earlier rudimentary draft of a mission for VOICE, which was presented to the community along with the plan on January 24, 2011, was “VOICE wants to change the present image of the Coast from primarily a retirement community of older adults to a place for all generations to enjoy” (see Appendix G, page 97). No matter the exact vision or mission that could be applied to the community plan retroactively, in order to clarify its strategic intent, the point is that much of the collaborative visioning and consideration of foundational statements was undertaken and expressed by the Workshop participants, the Task Force and by VOICE in both the creation and early execution of the plan. The presentation of the plan has frequently been surrounded by a context of speeches and other documents (including this report); when it is presented outside of this context it should include the standard vision, mission and values that are suggested in this section, in order to align it with recognizable strategic planning conventions.

Success Indicators

The community plan also includes a success indicator for every action, but some discussion of these indicators is necessary to clarify that immediate results cannot be expected in attraction and retention, and to map out the complexity of the plan’s various actions. The implementation and evaluation of the plan are not elaborated in further detail because due to the collaborative nature of the plan, the limited lifespan of the Task Force and the “catalyst”-only role of the Community Foundation, the sustained leadership for the plan was taken on by a group that had hardly existed and had in fact been born from the plan: VOICE. Some further success indicators are suggested here but ultimately it is the mandate of VOICE to implement and monitor the plan in the coming months and years.

VOICE has divvied its operations up in three functions that do not align with branding, empowerment and employment, but rather with the three main actions that relate to these strategic directions: website development, entertainment promotion and advocacy. The advocacy function is continuing to promote the community plan, build partnerships and identify opportunities to achieve the actions in the plan. Related to advocacy, a medium-term goal around engagement has been to increase voter turnout among young people in the local government elections in November, 2011. The VOICE on the Coast Facebook page is framing local issues to appeal to young people, and VOICE plans to hold all-candidates events that will focus on issues from the community plan, and cater to younger voters. The successful execution of at least one such event, and attendance by younger residents, will serve as indicators, as will the eventual voter turnout by residents under 45. Other local government indicators will be the inclusion of young adults and families in the Gibsons, Sechelt and SCR D strategic plans by fall 2012 (a year after the election), and the number of young adults appointed to local government advisory committees.

It was originally hoped that the website could be operational by June 2011, but instead the business plan for the website has been completed during this time, and an indicator for success will be to have the website up and running by October 2011. Educational discussions are well underway with Capilano University and School District #46, and the success indicator of “new programs by 2013–14 school year” appears attainable; for years thereafter, enrolment will need to be tracked to measure if the new programs have attracted new students, or other overall

initiatives have attracted more families. Moreover, obviously the population distribution on the Sunshine Coast will be a long-term measure but the first opportunity to determine whether attraction and retention is succeeding in this way will not be until the 2016 Census. Connecting long- and medium-term to short-term, the continuation of VOICE will also need to be ensured in future years and the number of participants in the group should be recorded over time to measure growth and influence.

Reflection and Reception: Short-term Impact of the Plan

The Sunshine Coast Community Foundation's initiative to attract, retain and engage young people on the Sunshine Coast qualifies as a great success in the short term, through its sustained and growing community awareness as a major community issue. Of course it will likely be at least five years before we can begin to measure whether attraction and retention is actually happening, but early reception is an important prerequisite to longer-term success. The process, of identifying and engaging community assets rather than looking elsewhere for solutions, worked extremely well. Clague's (1993) emphasis on engaging those most affected by a community problem was expressed in this process as the need for the collaborative plan to be "built and owned by younger generation – and supported by entire community spectrum" (Task Force, June 7). The success of the plan relied heavily on a handful of younger adults taking leadership, which arguably was the whole intent; however, if these individuals did not have skills or more importantly the time to step forward, particularly considering how the sub-committee Strategic Plan/ Partnerships division of the Task Force failed over the summer of 2010, it is difficult to imagine what might have become of the project.

Furthermore, it could be additionally argued that the younger generation *most* affected by the problem—the young adults struggling to pay rent with a service-industry income and likely starved for something to do on their Friday nights—really were never engaged in the planning stages of the project. During the Task Force meeting in August 2010 it was revealed through a show of hands that almost every young person in attendance was in the relatively privileged position of owning/managing a business or at least being self-employed. Consequently, it is possible that the failure of cost-of-living issues such as affordable housing, ferry fares and even the price of groceries to make it into the community plan was due to the fact that Task Force members of all generations had little (recent) personal experience with serious financial hardship on the Sunshine Coast. One method of finding these "most affected" voices may have been to hold more of the early "VOICE" sessions where young people were informally engaged as more of a focus group (by other young people) during the summer of 2010.

In general, though, the plan was drafted as envisioned, as a collaboration between stakeholders, and not only united these organizations but also others who have responded to the plan, such as local government leaders who are now working together for the first time in over a decade on regional Community Economic Development. Also in accordance with the Task Force's wishes, this presentation of the plan was indeed executed in an "exciting, engaging, inspiring" manner to over 120 participants, and through a multimedia communications plan that combined wireless access, Facebook and Prezi (a more visually engaging alternative to PowerPoint, that zooms in and out on data presented on a single screen) and even included lively Facebook dialogue by participants in the event who could not attend in person (see Appendix F,

page 94). Sustained leadership for the plan has also been a major success, with VOICE having met once as an open public event, three times as a steering committee and three times as a delegation to local governments/organizations since the plan's presentation in late January, 2011. Social media, partly in anticipation of the launch of the website, has been a powerful force in sustaining the plan and engaging more participants in VOICE. In early April 2011, VOICE counted 586 active monthly users, 16,599 post views per month and 242 "likes" (for regular following) for its Facebook page, www.facebook.com/voicesunshinecoast. An online poll on the page asking "What is it that you want/need more of on the Coast?" attracted over 2,400 votes in its first three days (see Appendix H, page 101).

The community plan is now being implemented by a VOICE steering committee that meets monthly, and organizes broader public meetings of young people and other interested citizens every two months. VOICE has secured membership and representation on various local government and community committees, including two alternative bodies for Coast-wide economic development, and has been instrumental in convincing local governments to work together to achieve a community economic development office, which is in process. VOICE has also partnered with other organizations, local governments and individuals to promote several entertainment events, the Sunshine Coast Regional District's launch of its Energy and Emissions Plan, new businesses offering entertainment and employment to young people, and a federal election all-candidates meeting that engaged the candidates in a circle discussion in a music studio. Partnerships are continuing to be built and pursued through presentations to the Capilano University Board of Governors, Town of Gibsons Mayor and Council and the Directors of the Sunshine Coast Regional District. Capilano University, the Sunshine Coast Credit Union, Community Futures and the Community Foundation have been working with members of VOICE to support the development of the social media website.

The most excitement around the community plan is not currently about employment or housing or even entertainment, but is rather about the promise of sustainable leadership, or community leadership succession planning on the Sunshine Coast, and intergenerational dialogue and decision-making. This atmosphere is undoubtedly only a first step toward a very ambitious set of goals, but it is also a condition that few in any generation could have imagined existing one year, five years or ten years ago. Most importantly, co-operative partnerships will be required to fulfill any of the objectives set out by the collaborative community plan. The emergence of a younger generation into a new framework for civic engagement, based on co-operation and collaboration rather than confrontation, is a legacy that the Community Foundation and all project stakeholders will see the benefits of for years to come.

Conclusion

The Task Force agreed that the plan would need to feature "collaboration between stakeholders / sustained leadership / networks," "a multimedia communications plan and presentation that was exciting, engaging, inspiring" and would be "built and owned by younger generation – and supported by entire community spectrum" (Task Force minutes, June 7). With the development of VOICE as the sustained-leadership and younger-generation group to draft, present and carry forward the collaborative strategic plan, and a Prezi presentation to present the plan to over 120 people and more following in real-time on Facebook, the initiative has thus far

succeeded beyond expectations and is continuing to quite rapidly build a dynamic and respected community profile. In the more substantial long term, measured by whether the younger generation really is attracted and retained in the coming years, and if the median age actually drops (even staying in the same place would be a major accomplishment over the next decade), it is too early to tell if this work will have any impact. As indicated by steady local media coverage (see Appendixes C & F for examples), the high attendance at the January 24 presentation, and the high interest from local elected officials (15 of 20 have attended events related to the plan/VOICE so far), the project has proven to be extremely successful in having an impact on local public policy dialogue and decision-making. Clearly jobs, affordable housing, entertainment options and educational opportunities are all conditions that support the presence of younger adults, and as a result of this project there is a growing awareness on the Sunshine Coast that these conditions are sorely lacking (for a sample of evidence, see Appendixes C & F). As the client for this project, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation's promotion of these issues has led to unprecedented intergenerational dialogue and interaction in the community, planting the seeds for desperately needed succession planning and sustainability in community leadership.

Advocacy for the younger generation has been embraced and welcomed as a legitimate and powerful "interest" (Bryant, 1995) by local governments and other community organizations. The apparent neglect of young adults in community planning and decision-making, shown most clearly in this report's analyses of previously written community plans, is being addressed by the inclusion of local government officials in this initiative, and subsequently by invitations from local governments and other organizations for more direct and exclusive presentations of the plan. Other success indicators have included the execution of the objective to launch an advocacy group for young adults (VOICE: see Appendix G); progress toward the social website to engage and attract young adults (funding secured for a business plan); and the inclusion of VOICE and the community plan's rationale in the lobbying effort for Coast-wide economic development, another objective in the plan. Widely and increasingly considered to be a retirement destination, the Sunshine Coast is experiencing a significant shift in mindset from passively and unconditionally offering itself up to "retirement living," to recognizing the need for demographic diversity for a younger, more vibrant and forward-looking community.

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APPENDIX A: Strategic Plan (April 25, 2011)

*Attracting, Retaining and Engaging
Young Adults on the Sunshine Coast*

***Attract, Retain, Engage
Task Force***

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School District #46

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Community Foundation

*A Community Plan to Address the Lack of Settlement,
Employment and Participation of Young Adults (ages
18–44) on the Sunshine Coast*

The Sunshine Coast Community Foundation’s release of its first *Vital Signs* data report and analysis to the community in October 2009 highlighted the assets of the community—but also some serious gaps for young people. Research and citizen grading indicated concerns in areas such as youth unemployment, affordable housing, recent job losses, and the widening gap between rich and poor.

The Foundation recognized that the state of the younger generation was a serious issue and decided to convene a meeting of key stakeholders to discuss the issue. On May 14, 2010, the Foundation organized a workshop with over 50 participants representing all segments of our community. The workshop expressed significant support for moving forward with a community plan and partnership model to address the problem. A task force was identified and appointed to work on the plan and partnerships, and to deliver this community plan, which was presented and approved by over 110 Sunshine Coast residents on January 24, 2011.

On June 7, the Task Force selected three key strategic directions:

- Coast-wide branding strategy;
- Empowerment of the younger generation;
- Diversified employment opportunities.

Strategic Direction #1: Branding

Goal:

To promote community initiatives and infrastructure in support of a coordinated, Coast-wide branding and welcoming strategy that will attract young adults.

Actions:

1. *Develop a young adult branding strategy to be broadly accepted and integrated within an overall Coast-wide brand, including:*
 - *High community potential and interest for post-secondary expansion;*
 - *Sustainability/outdoor lifestyle;*
 - *Alternative educational options for children, including early years;*
 - *Home-based/ Information Technology/ telecommunications innovation;*
 - *Labour market development for employment opportunities;*
 - *Inclusion/welcome of young adults and families in local strategic plans;*
 - *Entertainment and activities for young adults/"nightlife."*

2. *Establishment of a user-generated Sunshine Coast social media website.*

Actions	Potential Partners	Resources Required	Success Indicators
Coast-wide young adult branding strategy, incorporating the following components:	<u>Lead:</u> Attracting, Retaining & Engaging Task Force representatives <u>Partners:</u> business education & tourism programs, Tourism BC, Coast Cultural Alliance...	VOICE website project, branding/PR expertise	Strategy developed, implemented & integrated into overall Coast-wide branding.
Expanded post-secondary opportunities.	<u>Lead:</u> Capilano University <u>Partners:</u> VOICE, School District #46...	ID of unique programming; expanded image; full-degree opportunities.	Growth of post-secondary enrolment/ population.
Sustainability / outdoor lifestyle	<u>Lead:</u> Sunshine Coast Regional District (Recreation & Sustainability divisions)	Broad, encompassing engagement strategy.	Community support for Sustainability Charter, Parks & Recreation Plan; Eco/ adventure tourism a major, visible draw.

Strategic Direction #1: Branding

Actions	Potential Partners	Resources Required	Success Indicators
IT/ home-based/ communications cluster development and innovation centre More info at: http://coastisc.net	<u>Lead:</u> Local governments via economic development <u>Partners:</u> Best Coast Initiatives (economic development), Community Futures, <i>Just Business</i> magazine, Lighthouse Learning Network, School District #46 neighbourhood learning centres (NLCs)	Integration of VOICE website, Intelligent Services Cluster/ Lighthouse Learning (BEANSTALC) initiatives, NLCs	ID of 300 cluster members, visible: online, in branding & in local planning.
Alternative public education options for children, including preschool/ child-care	<u>Lead:</u> School District #46, Community Services, Early Childhood Development Planning Table <u>Partners:</u> Home-schoolers, independent schools, preschools, Child Care Resource & Referral...	Transformation of current facilities / programs. Reliable child-care for commuters.	New program(s)/ school(s) by 2013-14 school year.
Labour market development (See also Strategic Direction #3)	<u>Lead:</u> Local governments <u>Partners:</u> Community Futures, Community Forest, Coast-Community Builders Association, Sunshine Coast Employment Centre, BCI...	Regional economic development function.	Attraction of business & workers in value-added forestry sector, etc.
Young adults/ families in local government strategic & community plans	<u>Lead:</u> All local governments <u>Partners:</u> "VOICE" advocacy group for younger generation...	Local government outreach to young-adult input.	All local governments have language specific to include and attract young adults/ families.
Entertainment/ activities for young adults, i.e. nightlife (See also Strategic Direction #2)	<u>Lead:</u> VOICE <u>Partners:</u> Sunshine Coast Arts Council, Chambers of Commerce, cultural venues, Legions, Ferry Advisory Committee...	Venues; entertainment; engaging concepts such as TedXSechelt, "The Moth" storytelling; request for late-night ferry sailing...	One more <i>night-time</i> cultural event per week by Summer 2011. Re-opening of discussion/ request for late-night ferry.
User-generated social media website	<u>Lead:</u> VOICE <u>Partners:</u> Community Futures, Best Coast Initiatives (BCI), Capilano University, funders, private partners (for interface)...	Development costs: \$27,000	Website operational by September 2011

Strategic Direction #2: Empowerment

Goal: To actively engage and empower the younger generation on the Sunshine Coast.

Actions:

3. *Develop VOICE (focus group of young people for this initiative) into an Advisory Council for sustained leadership, and "leadership pool" for further community input and engagement.*
4. *Listen and learn about the strengths and opportunities of young adults living on the Coast.*
5. *Promote and encourage a vibrant nightlife for the younger generation.*

Actions	Potential Partners	Resources Required	Success Indicators
Develop VOICE into an Advisory Council for sustained leadership and "leadership pool."	<u>Lead:</u> Current VOICE members <u>Partners:</u> SIGD, School District #46 to engage youth, community schools, Community Foundation for mentoring?, local governments and organizations such as Ferry Advisory Committee and Affordable Housing including/recruiting young-adults...	Meeting venues; mandate-driven membership (no age parameters, but content focus on young adults).	A functioning council; engaging with the leaders on the Coast and making a difference.
Listen and learn about the strengths and opportunities of young adults living on the Coast, especially re: labour market.	<u>Lead:</u> Vital Signs <u>Partners:</u> Community Futures (info on younger-gen. businesses/start-ups), VOICE, School District #46, local government planning depts., Capilano University...	Volunteer surveying labour; Sechelt Seniors' survey advice; data collection.	Completion of a Young Adult Survey in Spring 2011; Young adult page in <i>Vital Signs</i> March 2011
Promote/ encourage nightlife on the Sunshine Coast.	<u>Lead:</u> VOICE <u>Partners:</u> Sunshine Coast Arts Council, Coast Cultural Alliance, Chambers of Commerce, cultural venues, Legions, Ferry Advisory Committee...	Venues; entertainment; engaging concepts such as TedXSechelt, "The Moth" storytelling; late-night ferry sailing...	One more <i>night-time</i> cultural event per week by Summer 2011. Re-opening of discussion/request for late-night ferry.

Strategic Direction #3: Employment

Goal: To diversify employment opportunities; encourage job development and develop effective succession planning.

Actions:

6. Promote and expand succession planning that is occurring on the coast
7. Endorse a regional (Coast-wide) economic development function.
8. Support employment clusters "of excellence" such as Intelligence Services.
9. Form an integrated-community Apprenticeships program.

Actions	Potential Partners	Resources Required	Success Indicators
Promote succession planning	<u>Lead:</u> Community Futures <u>Partners:</u> VOICE to help identify interested "successors"...	CF workshop Feb 2011. Mentorship mentoring for businesses.	A rise in successful succession brokerages in 2011.
Endorse Regional Economic Development, to support young adult employment	<u>Lead:</u> Attracting, Retaining, Engaging initiative & partners <u>Partners:</u> Coast-wide Economic Development Task Force, Best Coast Initiatives...	Expression of public support.	Regional strategy approved and implemented.
Support employment clusters for younger generation, including "intelligence services" (http://coastisc.net)	<u>Lead:</u> Local governments via economic development function. <u>Partners:</u> Community Futures, Lighthouse Learning Network, Best Coast Initiatives, Coast-Community Builders Association, VOICE, Community Forest...	Integration/link of ISC portal site into user-generated website. Regional Economic Development function.	Opening of a drop-in IT/ innovation centre by end of 2012. Attraction of at least 10 new ISC members who have moved to Coast in 2011.
Apprenticeships program	<u>Lead:</u> School District #46, Coast Community-Builders Association <u>Partners:</u> SIGD, Industry Training Authority Capilano University, Vancouver Island University, Lighthouse Learning Network, Community Forest, Habitat for Humanity, Employment Centre...	Funding assistance for programs?	An integrated, collaborative approach to offering apprenticeship for all ages is happening

APPENDIX B: Website Presentation (August 2010)

A USER GENERATED SOCIAL WEBSITE



A USER GENERATED SOCIAL WEBSITE

A social website as a platform that engages the younger generation and supports the strategic plan.

A place online, specific to the coast

A home base to:

- find out what the coast is about
- see whats going on
- see what job and business opportunities are available
- find a place to rent
- & help define the future of the coast

Visiting social media sites is now the 3rd most popular online activity - ahead of personal email and online shopping.

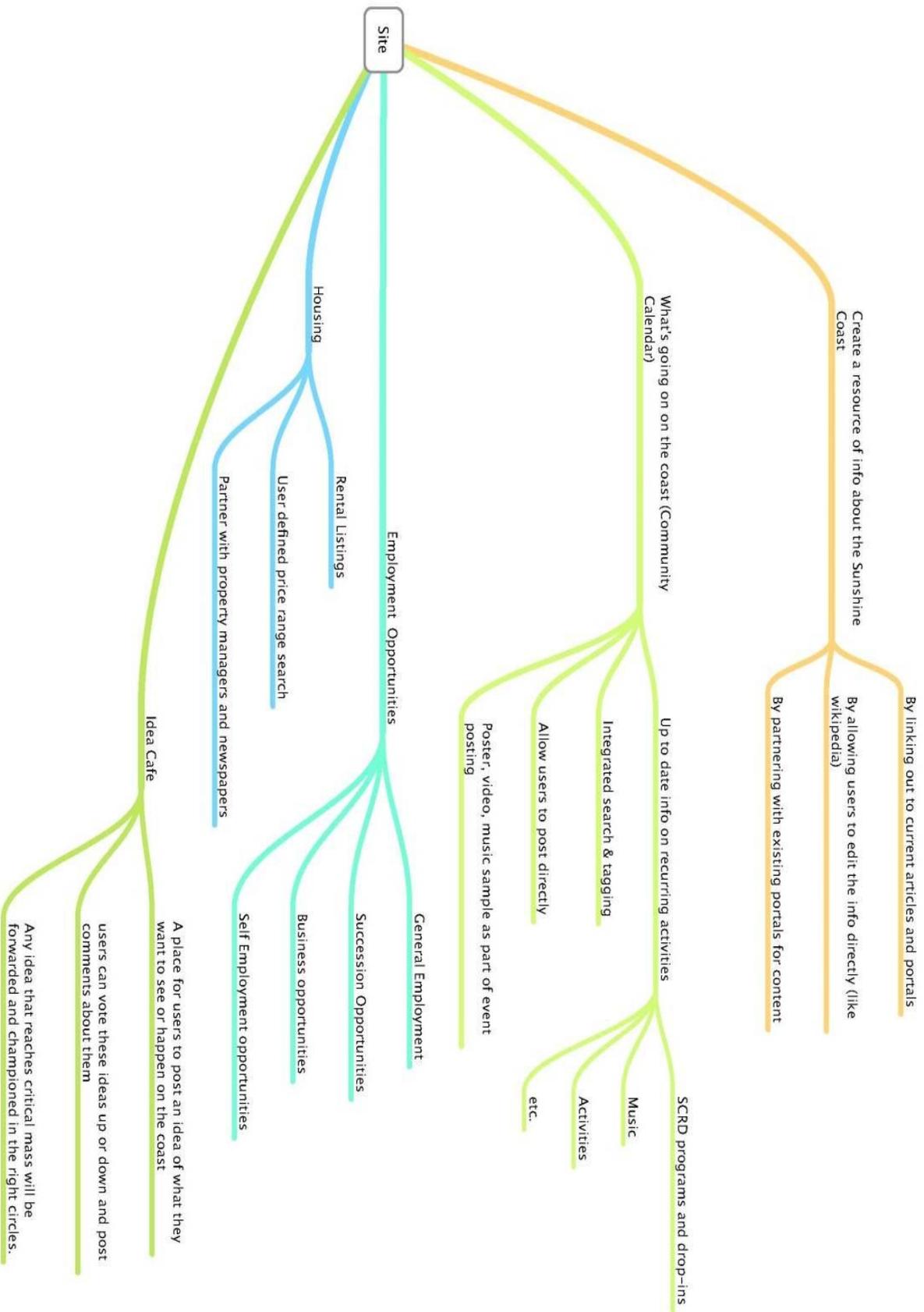


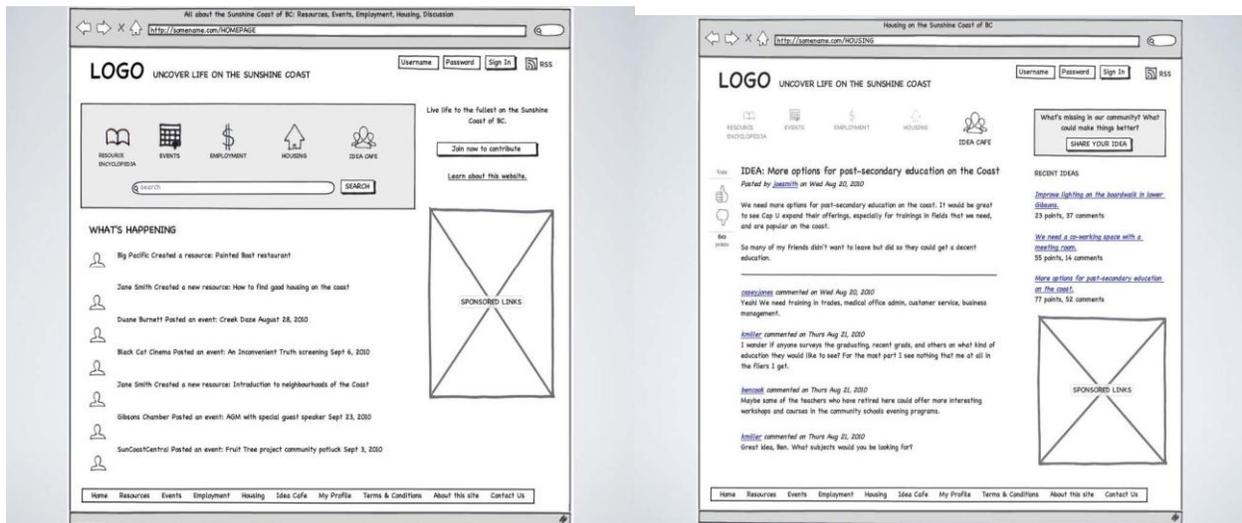
“The current generation is living through the largest increase in expressive capability in human history.”

-Clay Shirky, Professor new media NYU

EMPOWERMENT & ENGAGEMENT OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

- it's how this generation communicates
- it's central and specific to the coast
- it gives voice to the masses & on issues that matter to them
- it gives governments direct access to what constituents are thinking
- it starts a conversation and keeps it going





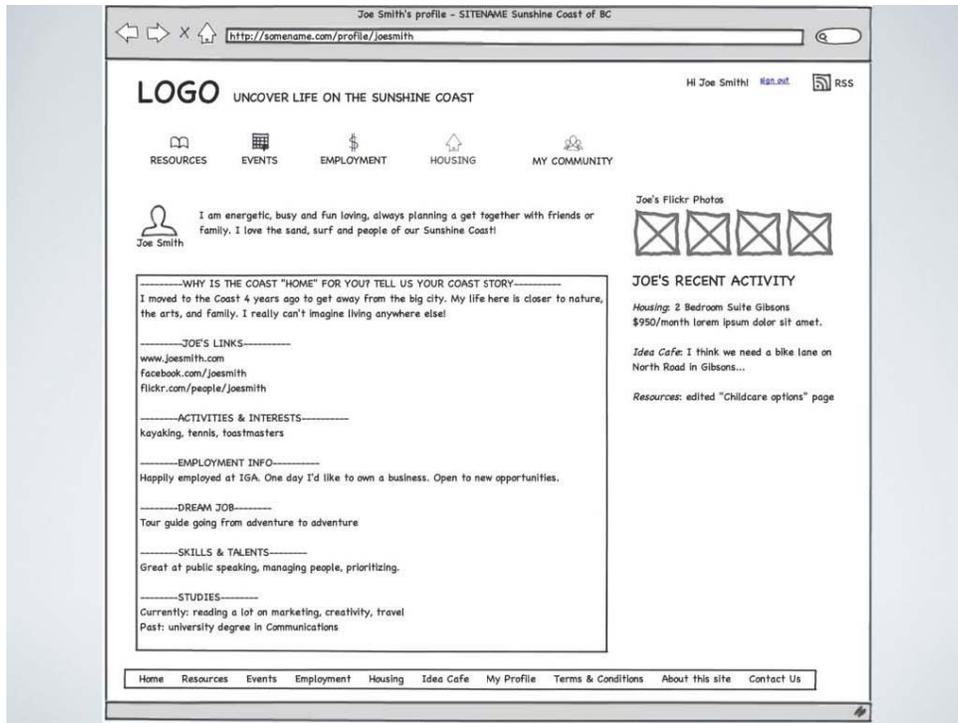
A COORDINATED COAST WIDE BRANDING EFFORT

Branding - a feeling and story associated to a topic or product.
It's the tagline that pops into your mind.

Currently, the the coast is widely viewed as a great place to retire.

The reason a unified brand was identified was a need to SELL
the opportunities for living on the coast to the younger
generation both on and off coast.

The content gives another, new public face to the coast. Targeting
the types of people & businesses we are trying to attract.



DIVERSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES & JOB DEVELOPMENT

Providing a single place to connect:

- people who want to be employed
- people with employment opportunities available
- people looking to create their own work
- people interested in creating a succession plan for their business
- and resources to make it happen.

HOW DO WE MAKE THIS POSSIBLE?

- Form a “build team” tasked to oversee design, development and ultimate self sustainability.
- Develop protocol to ensure build team & strategic plan steering committee work hand in hand
- A defined budget needs to be agreed on.
- Funding needs to be in place to start programming and design.

WHAT ARE THE KEY OPPORTUNITIES?

- Growth into a much larger platform that engages the entire community.
- Work into a self sustaining & eventual funding source for future initiatives.

WHAT ARE THE KEY RISKS?

- Nobody uses it.
- Content partnerships cannot be formed.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- Overall estimates to be used as an example
- Creative partnering strategies
- Not all funds need to be up front
- Self sustaining plan

INITIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT

Logo Design & Branding - \$400 to \$800

Interaction Design - \$4000 to \$6000

Web Design - \$2000 to \$3000

Technical Planning & Development - \$7000 to \$10000

Project Management & Community Engagement - \$10400

Average Total: \$27000

OPERATIONAL COSTS

- Administrator / Editor:
 - year one - included in development costs
 - annual thereafter - \$3000 to \$10000 (based on site traffic)
- Web Master:
 - year one - included in development costs
 - annual thereafter - \$800 (upgrades & maintenance)
- Hosting & Licensing:
 - year one - \$200 to \$350
 - annual thereafter - same

SELF SUSTAINING PLAN

Advertisement - each major section has space designated towards non-invasive text based advertisements based on the content on the page

Licensing - Once the site is developed it can be licensed to other committees at a set or yearly fee.

Pay for features - paid features to extend functionality of an individual or businesses profile, listing etc.

Merchandising - branded print on demand items such as t-shirts etc. (promotion material cost recovery)

VIEWS

Where are the Coast's visionaries?

Walking into the public meeting for Sechelt's new draft official community plan (OCP) Monday evening, I discovered, like the other attendees, that I'd have to pick a discussion table. I scanned the room, noting the four topic choices: business, industry and economic development; environment, shoreline, parks, trails; growth management, residential areas, downtown; or transportation and infrastructure.

It wasn't a hard decision.

I chose the economic development table, not because the other topics don't interest me or because I have any particular entrepreneurial dreams, but because commuting into Vancouver every weekend to find other twenty-somethings to hang out with gets a little old.

And here's the thing: since moving to the Coast a year back and realizing just how few under-40s can conceivably make a living out here, I've had this wild hope that the Coast would cease to be complacent about its "retirement community" label and start actively looking to create the kind of jobs that would attract — or simply keep — the young and ambitious.

And no, not just because I dislike that commute.

In my time here, I've fallen pretty hard for what this com-



Wagler's
WATCH

JENNY WAGLER

munity has to offer: its breathtaking coastline, its large swaths of untouched forest, its "homeness" and familiar faces, and its blessedly non-frenetic pace. But as the median age creeps ever up, and primary industries continue to decline, I have real questions about how the Coast will fare into the future.

Will it have kids to fill those schools the community recently fought so hard to keep open? Will it have a tax base that isn't just scraping by on pensions? Will it have more people living outside of retirement homes and hospitals than inside them?

Here's hoping.

But if the discussion at my "economic development" table Monday night is any indicator, this community has its work cut out for it.

It struck me as telling — and more than a little ominous — that a discussion about a community's 20-year economic vision for itself would be dominated by an interest group

whose *raison d'être* is keeping Target Marine Hatcheries Ltd. from developing a sturgeon processing plant.

Yes, you read that right. Our "economic development" discussion didn't focus on how to build a thriving economy, but how to entrench the status quo and hold one particular project at bay.

And yes, I've covered enough municipal meetings on the Coast to know that the only thing that gets a crowd out is some form of dissent. And I get that. Municipal meetings are a hard sell at the best of times. They can be long. They can be dull. And they often have the pompous trappings of Robert's Rules of Order. But they are also the places where voices get heard and community decisions get made. And when those meetings are dominated not by visionaries but by naysayers, what kind of policy will the Coast end up with?

For this community to function well, we desperately need the counterbalance: we need to hear from people who dream dreams, who embrace new ideas and who have the imagination to take the Coast forward. Only then will we see a context where "economic development" can mean something more than keeping one more project out of one more backyard.

WE ARE DOING SOMETHING

Editor:

Jenny Wagler's column, "Where are the Coast's visionaries?" (*Coast Reporter*, April 2) struck a chord. She is absolutely correct about what is happening here on the Coast. We're all getting greyer, and we're doing little to keep our young people from leaving; we're providing very few jobs or housing for this group.

However, the Pender Harbour and Egmont Chamber of Commerce is, in fact, doing something. On April 22, we will host the first "Live, Work, Stay" (as in "live here, work here, stay here") evening at the Madeira Park Legion, from 7 to 10 p.m. The event will provide a forum where people of all ages, with good ideas and decent business plans, can present their ideas to lenders and investors.

This program, geared to the Pender Harbour area, could be a model for other communities on the Coast. We know of many worthy projects in need of financing; at the same time, we believe many private individuals who have been successful in their lives would like to invest in our community's future.

Our economic future will not be in the hands of the retired — it will be up to the under-40s to do that. Thanks for the view. We wholeheartedly concur!

Rick Harmer
President, Pender
Harbour and Egmont
Chamber of Commerce

MORE NEEDED TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE

Editor:

I am writing to commend Jenny Wagler for her column (*Coast Reporter*, April 2).

We very much need to do more to keep our young people on the Sunshine Coast — in fact, we need to attract even more talented and motivated people.

Economic development initiatives are the key way to do this — local businesses doing well and new businesses being attracted to the Coast create additional career opportunities. This leads to a more healthy, prosperous and sustainable community, providing a solid base for our children who want to make the Sunshine Coast their home.

I am pleased to advise that the Sunshine Coast Community Forest is moving forward on this front, with the announcement of the community forest economic opportunities fund. The fund will be used to foster economic development opportunities on the Coast. The board of directors are of the opinion that using the results of our economic success in this way is the best legacy the community forest can provide to the community.

In the coming months, we will be consulting with interested members of our community for advice and suggestions about how best to use the economic opportunities fund.

John R. Henderson
Chair, Sunshine Coast
Community Forest

WE DO NEED VISIONARIES

Editor:

Thanks to Jenny Wagler for a great op-ed (*Coast Reporter*, April 2). The Sunshine Coast is a wonderful place to live at any age, but it can be lonely to be between, say, 20 and 40 here.

It's easy to see why — that group accounts for only 15 per cent of the population on the Sunshine Coast, compared to a much healthier 29 per cent in Vancouver. The tough thing about this demographic gap is that it's self-perpetuating.

For one thing, high school students take a cue from their elders and leave for Vancouver as soon as they can. And it's hard to convince them to move back, as not many want to abandon decent city jobs for a hard-scrabble life in a retirement community. I don't want to sound too self-congratulatory, being part of the demographic in question, but without a healthy cohort of young people, a community grows stagnant.

Wagler is right — we do need visionaries, ones who will help to build a sustainable and robust economy and encourage young people to put down roots on the Coast.

Matt Cavers, Gibsons

COLUMN WAS RIGHT ON THE MARK

Editor:

In response to Wagler's Watch, (*Coast Reporter*, April 2), a superb column. Right on the money. Let's all go there, yet how?

It's about the whole community coming together. Remember that day back in February when we turned out for the Olympic Flame? We can turn that savoir faire and enthusiasm towards development, particularly when it affects us all. We ~~choose to come here for~~ different reasons: family, remote beauty and sense of community. The Sunshine Coast rocks, and with support from all we can dream dreams and make amazing decisions towards making this area move forward to provide a viable place for our children, grandchildren and those who want to visit.

It's all right to attend public meetings without having a beef to make; just show your enthusiasm, and it will be contagious. Consider the Sechelt Aquatic Centre and Gibsons and Area Community Centre, which took eons to be accepted by taxpayers — and wow, look how well they are being used. We can do it. We need a huge boost on the Coast economically. Think smaller, one project at a time, and it will come around.

See you at the next public meeting with all those bells and whistles.

Julie Pin, Sechelt

OK, visionaries, what's next?

In the movies, reporters are always uncovering complex political scandals, hobnobbing with the powerful or, at the very least, frequenting interesting bars and drinking expensive scotch.

The reality is a little more mundane: meetings, long hours and learning strange technical information about things such as sewage treatment plants and independent power projects, which none of our friends and family want to hear about. Also, our budgets don't quite run to nice scotch.

But every once in awhile, there are privileged moments.

A few weeks back, I wrote a column about my fears that this community's decision-making tends to be dominated by naysayers looking to entrench the status quo rather than visionaries looking to take the Coast beyond its "retirement community" label and create new opportunities — particularly for the young.

In my two years working in this field, I've never seen anything to match the response I got from that column. So thank you, *Coast Reporter* readers, for your kind words.

But the privilege of my role comes not from getting credit for an idea that was already out there, but from having the opportunity, in *Coast Reporter's* pages, to throw down a gauntlet before a whole community and watch for takers.



Wagler's
WATCH

JENNY WAGLER

And here's the thing: there are takers. There is dynamism on the Coast, and there are visionaries. Probably not enough yet and certainly not cohered in any way. But you're out there. And I know this because of your emails and phone calls and letters to the editor.

But more than that, over the last few weeks, there have been indications that the visionaries are starting to mobilize — particularly on this topic of creating employment for the Coast's young people.

Last Thursday, I was in Pender Harbour to cover their first Live Here, Work Here, Stay Here event, which is looking to pair young entrepreneurs with both the cash and the savoir-faire of older cohorts — an idea which is poised to take off in other Coast communities.

Even as I write, the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation is working on putting together a workshop May 14 called Attracting, Retaining and Employing Young Adults on the Coast.

And beyond that, I can't count the conversations I've had

with community members who are keen to address the issue of the Coast's missing demographic. So as a community, the will is there to make this happen.

Which takes us to the hard part: How?

Cards on the table: I haven't a clue how to solve this one. By virtue of my job, however, I've heard some interesting ideas floating around. Here are a few:

What if we looked for ways to pair young people with business owners on the brink of retirement, so as to retain the young while protecting the Coast's access to businesses and services?

What if we looked at developing kids' entrepreneurial skills further in the school system, given the practicality — and high rates — of self-employment on the Coast?

What if we tried to develop a Coast-wide strategy to target and attract one or more specialized industries or service areas, so as to create more white-collar jobs?

So there's my two bits. But to solve this problem, we're going to need to pool our ideas as a community and decide which are ultimately the soundest. So for those of you with ideas, I encourage you to write us letters, come out to events where these topics are up for discussion and actively help build a community-wide solution.

Consider the gauntlet again thrown down.

Shedding light on needs of young adults

CATHIE ROY
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

The Sunshine Coast Community Foundation (SCCF) is taking a leadership role in bringing together stakeholders in young adult employment, a crucial area identified in last October's Vital Signs report. A workshop on Friday, May 14, kicked off this important initiative.

Faced with an aging population and a lack of resources for employing, housing and entertaining adults in the 19 to 35 year range, the workshop zeroed in on challenges and opportunities that exist in our area.

The Sunshine Coast now has the distinction of having the oldest average population in Canada and ranks a full 10 years above the provincial average age, resulting in alarm bells being sounded by several sectors of the Coast.

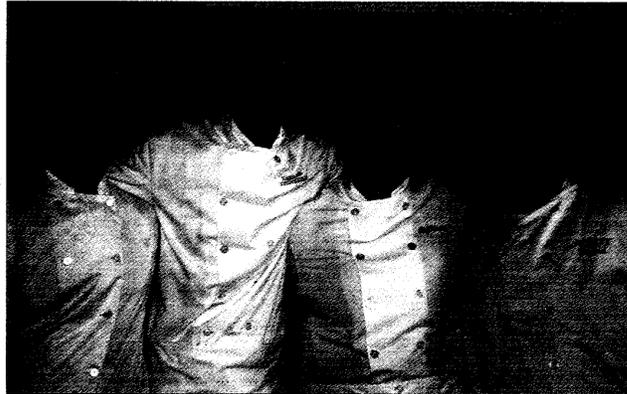
The Vital Signs project, produced by SCCF, pointed to a dearth of opportunities for young people, resulting in families having to leave our area to succeed. A committee of SCCF directors — Don Basham, Gerry Tretick and Barrie Wilbee headed by Dale Eichar, the recently retired CEO of the Sunshine Coast Credit Union — met with other community leaders and conceived the idea of the workshop to come up with recommendations to work on attracting, employing and retaining young adults on the Coast.

Facilitated by John Talbot, the jam-packed day began with presentations from six people with different perspectives on the issue.

JM Boyd, a young entrepreneur, led off the panel. A father with three children under the age of five, Boyd ranks quality of life as his number one priority.

"When I moved here I had one little girl and I really wanted to be near her. The friendliness [of Roberts Creek] attracted us. I could build a career or build a family," he said.

Previously he had commuted to Vancouver. Now Boyd, like many young adults, is under-employed. He works from home at a



CATHIE ROY PHOTO

These three young chefs and their teacher (from left): Mathieu Lacroix, Taylor Snitчук, instructor Korinne Braun and Derick Pye served a tasty lunch to the 50 people at the Young Adults Workshop on May 14 at the Seaside Centre. The Ace-It program the three are enrolled in readies students for the restaurant industry, run by School District No. 46. It's a great example of post secondary training attracting young adults to the Sunshine Coast. See more photos at www.coastreporter.net.

couple of different ventures and supplements that with part-time work at Smitty's Oyster House in Gibsons.

Boyd listed as a challenge the fact he didn't grow up here. He also said he was often questioned as to why he chose to move here. Friends told him "it was where you go after you're done, not when you're starting out."

Boyd suggested that branding the community under the "flag of the Sunshine Coast" rather than the individual communities that compose the Coast would go a long way to attracting new business. He said the Coast is the right fit for the technology industry.

The second speaker, September Dixon, grew up on the Sunshine Coast. She left after high school and came back. She's now the human resources manager for the credit union with its 100 employees.

Dixon considers herself fortunate to have had the opportunity to grow her career locally and raise her family here.

She sees housing prices as a major challenge for young adults.

"It's a tough market to break into," she said.

Another roadblock for many young families is the lack of secondary employ-

ment for spouses or partners. And, Dixon said, the recent economic downturn had an effect on employ-

ment opportunities for everyone.

Continued page A18

YOUTH FORUM

From page A17

She sees recreation, public transport, the hospital, quality schools and safety as potent draws for young families. It's necessary to make young people feel welcome and give them the chance to be part of a vibrant community, she said.

Local realtor Kenan MacKenzie was the third speaker.

MacKenzie grew up on the Coast, and in addition to a varied work background, he was a Gibsons' councillor for several years. He echoed Boyd's idea of a united Sunshine Coast community. He also expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing. He said, in 21 years, the price of one lot went from \$10,000 to \$140,000.

"This stops young people coming here. We're not competitive with other parts of B.C.," he explained.

A long-time volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, MacKenzie would like to see more housing initiatives for young families.

He also pointed out the lack of entertainment aimed at young people.

"Where do you go to meet the love of your life?" he asked.

MacKenzie suggested that bringing international students to the Coast would be one way to keep schools open as well as provide a secondary source of income via home stays. He also said B.C. Ferries should provide passenger-only ferries to shorten the commute of local residents.

Fourth speaker Arnold Skei, owner of Sechelt Plumbing, has 18 to 20 employees — all through an apprenticeship program. At first, he said, it was a challenge to get employees, but once the value of the apprenticeship program was realized, it became easier. He pointed to School District No. 46 programs such as Ace-It Carpentry and Culinary as ways to draw and retain young people.

Sarah Hook, a young professional, also grew up on the Coast. After eight years

in Toronto, she came back to the Coast. In an act of faith, she purchased a house before landing a job. For the past three years, she's worked for the Sunshine Coast Regional District finance department. At night and on weekends, she moonlights as a youth programmer. For Hook, the number one concern is not enough for young people to do.

"It's hard to stay here. I have no pets, no children. There are the newlyweds and the nearly-deads and then there's the rest of us," she said. She too sees quality of life as a primary draw.

Bob Hoy, the owner of Marketplace IGA in Gibsons, was the final panel speaker. He first came here at age 21 to help his father for three years launch the Gibsons' store. He met his wife when she installed tills in the store. After several years operating a store in Squamish, he came back to help up the store in Gibsons.

"I can not think of a better community to raise your family in," he said.

In an informal poll of the many young people he employs, disadvantages turned out to be a lack of retail shopping, the ferry schedule, no nightlife, not enough post-secondary education and the loss of the bowling alley.

He suggested that an app for the many means of modern technology young adults thrive on would be a way to attract them.

There are success stories in his own store of managers who started out at minimum wage and worked their way up, but more are needed, he said.

After the presentations, the rest of the day was spent in break-out groups. Each of the six groups brought back areas of concern and opportunity (most echoing the six panelists) to the assembly.

Next up is to convene a task force to tackle the concerns raised from the meeting, prepare a draft plan on ways to attract, retain and employ young adults and then hold a second community workshop this fall.

APPENDIX D: Sunshine Coast Economic Development Strategy 2002

5.2 Organizational Tasks

Background

There is no paid, locally-supported economic development function on the Sunshine Coast. The Regional District had an economic development officer on staff in the late 1980s but this position was eliminated because of a perceived lack of results. During that time, the economic development officer did not operate with the guidance of a strategic plan.

If properly structured and managed, there is no reason an economic development office cannot benefit the community and contribute to the

effectiveness of local government. Rather than judging the potential based on the past experience of the Regional District, the community should be viewing successful economic development offices around the province which themselves have overcome public and political skepticism to create a valued position in the order of community development organizations.

Recommendations

- Establish an economic development office.

5.2.1 Establish an economic development office.

Rationale

Once there has been support and financial commitment from local government, the process of building the organization responsible for implementation will commence. This will include conceiving what it is the organization does, its legal framework, and policies, procedures and job tasks of the EDO. These operating guidelines will give the organization a framework from which it can raise further funding support and build capacity to implement the plan.

Responsibility

SCCEDP, CFDCSC.

Actions

1. Review alternatives and select a preferred organizational option.
 - Assess other economic development models in BC. An options overview is provided in Appendix 10. Different approaches appeal to different communities, and there is no single best way to organize an office.
 - We have provided an overview of what we believe to be the viable options in Appendix 11. We do not believe committees of council or service contracts are suitable approaches for the Sunshine Coast. Both tend to be project-oriented and

neither is apt to provide the level of service delivery expected by the community. A regional district-led model is also not considered viable at this time because of expected difficulties gaining the necessary inter-community support.

- We recommend establishing either one of the following two options:
 - ▶ **Option A** - An Economic Development Commission owned by the three local governments, which contracts directly for economic development services.
 - ▶ **Option B** - An Economic Development Commission owned by the three local governments, which contracts to CFDCSC for economic development services.

The SCCEDP has recommended Option A with modifications to take advantage of synergies.

2. Prepare an organizational plan using the guidelines shown in appendixes 11 (organizational structure) and 14 (sample policies and procedures).

These are guidelines only as the proper legal advice should be obtained prior to any incorporation procedures or contract discussions. Any establishment of a new corporation or society will require the prior approval of the Inspector of Municipalities.

The major features of our suggested structure for an economic development office, assuming a development commission, are as follows:

- **Legal structure** – A non-profit corporation could be established owned and operated by the controlling shareholders to include the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt and the Sunshine Coast Regional District. The exact share distribution will be as agreed to by the controlling shareholders. If the economic development office were to be part of a local government office rather than a corporation, then this step would not be needed.
 - **Board structure and size** – A thirteen-member Board of Directors will be established to oversee the new commission, three of which will be permanent non-voting members selected from senior staff of the three local governments. Three members will be appointed by each of the two municipalities, and the final four by the Sunshine Coast Regional District Directors.
 - **Reporting relationships** – The new corporation, and its employees, will be accountable, through its Board of Directors, to the controlling shareholders. An Annual Plan and Annual Budget will be prepared and monitored via quarterly reports on plan implementation and budget compliance. An Annual Report of the “Year-in-Review” with audited financial statements will be required.
 - **Contractual obligations** – We recommend a three year contract for the delivery of economic development services be signed between the three governments and the new corporation. The contract will stipulate the nature of the services, the goals of economic development, reporting guidelines and financial obligations. Service contract guidelines are provided in Appendix 13.
3. Establish a Board.
 - Prepare evaluation criteria for selecting Board members, including steps for ensuring representation of a cross-section of community interests.
 - Recruit Board members.
 - Prepare a policy for appointing new board members, perhaps by directing that new members be drawn from other committees and task forces. Board members should not be dropped in from the top since there is the possibility they will not conform to the culture of the existing group. If the practice is to draw Board members up through the sub-committee ranks, then the Board as a whole is more likely to develop a cohesive understanding of the issues and the needs of the community. A suggested Board policy appears in Appendix 14.
 - It is important to note, and communicate to the community, that Board members, while appointed by local government, are representing the community and are not to be, or perceived to be, affiliated politically.
 4. Use the existing community partnerships as permanent standing committees for CED projects. The standing committees could be informally chaired by a selected Board member and maintain their current memberships.
 5. Determine the relationship between the Sunshine Coast Tourism Partnership and the Economic Development Office. In our suggested organizational structure presented in Appendix 11, we have proposed a single legal entity with an executive board that would be responsible for the entire economic development function and the DMO. We have provided an accompanying rationale for our recommendations.
 6. Prepare a brief job description for the EDO, describing purpose/objective, list of major responsibilities (ordered by importance and time commitment), and required knowledge, skills and abilities (a sample is provided in Appendix 14).
 7. Prepare a policy and procedures manual outlining basic management and operating tasks of the organization (a sample is provided in Appendix 14).
 8. Determine office location and prepare for opening.
 - CFDCSC is expanding its current office space and will have space available for both the SCTP and the EDO. There are obvious cost savings and logistical ease in going this route, which we would

- recommend as a preferred option irrespective of the organizational model.
9. Hire an EDO. The following tasks would apply to all organizational options outlined in Task 1 above.
 - Form a Hiring Task Force to hire an EDO. Members can be selected from the SCCEDP, but at least one Human Resource professional should be solicited to join. The duration of the hiring process will be approximately eight weeks, after which the Committee will be dissolved.
 - Identify candidates:
 - Prepare ad copy
 - Fax or email copy to industry associations including the Economic Development Association of BC, Community Futures and the Industrial Developers Association of Canada.
 - Advertise copy in Vancouver Sun, the Globe and Mail and local papers.
 - Review applications, conduct preliminary reference checks and prepare short-list of candidates.
 - Personally interview all short-listed candidates.
 - Prepare a brief report assessing all candidates, with a preliminary recommendation.
 - Conduct second interview with preferred candidate.
 - Conduct a detailed reference check on preferred candidate.
 - Prepare and submit employment offer.
 10. Conduct initial planning in cooperation with the EDO, or CFDCSC (Option B).
 - Conduct a press conference introducing the EDO to the community.
 - Establish an initial round of informal meetings with strategic partners including CFDCSC, chambers, community partnerships and Sechelt First Nations.
 - Provide orientation materials, including reports listed in the bibliography, and a copy of this Strategy. We also recommend distributing the International Economic Development Council’s Economic Development Reference Guide. [www.iedonline.org/hotlinks/ecorefcontents.html]
 - Prepare an EDO work plan for the next fiscal year based on this Strategy. The new

Board and the EDO should review time and resource commitments. This Strategy contains approximately 141 action steps, with the following time and resource requirements.

Strategy	No. of Initiatives	FTE (months)
Set-up and orientation	1	4
Networking and Partnerships	4	6
Communications	1	3
Business Climate	2	8
Marketing and Business Attraction	3	7
Infrastructure	4	4
Forestry	3	4
Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture	3	5
Manufacturing/Industry	3	4
Tourism	4	7
Commercial/ Retail	3	4
Education/Training/Health	2	5
Monitoring & Evaluation	1	1
Administrative*		12
Contingency Projects/Activities		6
Total in Months		80
Total in Years		7.7 years
*assuming 20% of total work time is committed to administrative duties.		

- Establishing priorities. As shown, there is a significant commitment of time and resources required to implement this Strategy. Without the requisite funding support and partnerships, it may not be possible for the economic development office to undertake some portions of the plan. Moreover, the Strategy is meant to be a document of change and will itself be subject to amendments as circumstances dictate. It is therefore important that the SCCEDP set priorities within the plan. We have prepared the following guidelines to help with this process:
 - The 29 initiatives of Chapter 3 are all considered important and there is no implied prioritization by the order in which they are presented. We have assigned a relative priority using a

- required/high/medium rating.
- ▶ Each section has some strategies that should be pursued immediately, while others should be deferred. For each strategy, we have suggested start dates for the first three years of operation, using an early/mid/late 200x scale.
- ▶ Generally, actions within each strategy are meant to be implemented in the order presented.

Priorities are affected by the commitment expressed by key partners. We have listed more strategies than can reasonably be accomplished in a five year period. How successful the organization is in attaining

its goals and objectives depends on how fruitful its partnerships are – the more partners involved in implementation, the more that can be accomplished. The EDO is expected to *lead* only some projects in the Strategy – if other organizations are unwilling to join in then the priority for that particular initiative will drop.

Priority and Timing

Required, immediate.

Resources

Minimal.

The Challenge of Community Development

Sechelt - This story begins, as so many do, with one woman who an idea.

Betty Keller was a retired school teacher from North Vancouver and a writer when she cast on to the shores of this community in 1980.

"I was running away from home," she said with a mysterious smile.

After arriving, she taught creative writing as the University of BC. Deciding the commute was too far, she switched to offering writing workshops to the locals.

She taught them everything she knew but it wasn't enough. They needed exposure to other engaged in the messy business of writing.

"We really should invite some writers for a weekend," she said to friends Rosella Leslie and Gwendolyn Southin. A group called the Writers Forge, which included just about everyone and anyone in town who wrote, decided to meet.

So the country's longest-running all-Canadian writers' festival was born. For 20 years, writers and readers have been flocking to this seashore village for the four-day wordfest. They come to a site on a rise above the village, to an acre riotous with rhododendrons, magnolias and evergreens.

The Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts begins this Thursday. Writers will read, readers will listen, wine will be drunk and all will be well.

It wasn't always so.

There were political fights, equipment failures and just about every other kind of setback.

At one point, "the mayor was in favour; a town councillor wanted to shut us down," said Keller.

Why was the councillor opposed?

"Because he didn't like the major," she replied.

There were complaints about noise. The fire marshal was constantly threatening to shut the place down. They picketed one year for serving farmed salmon instead of the wild variety.

The coolers would always break down right in the middle of the festival. You'd be amazed, said Southin, how much writers like to eat. She should know. She was in charge of feeding them.

At some point, too, the community began supporting the festival, recognizing it brought cash and panache.

The festival has a real community connection, not only through its board of directors but through people who introduce the writers. About 200 volunteers do everything from selling tickets to filling the beautiful speakers' pavilion with bouquets of flowers.

"It put Sechelt on the map," said Southin. The geographic location proved to be correct. "It had to be in a small community near a big city," said Keller. "we wanted a class act with a small-town feel."

"The festival was a learning ground," said Leslie, who was become a published author. "Through it, I found out about people. I found out about community, how people working together can create something wonderful."

Source: Excerpt of Yvonne Zacharias, "Sechelt builds writers festival legacy", The Vancouver Sun, August 6, 2002.

APPENDIX E: Summary of May 14, 2010 Workshop Feedback

Sunshine Coast
Attracting, Retaining and Employing Young Adults

This draft document summarizes four areas:

A proposed framework for the short/long term plan

1. Suggestions on the Task Force – their terms of reference and possible membership
2. Suggestions for the November event
3. Initial list of suggested resources – on and off the coast

1. Proposed Framework for the Plan

Introduction:

The introduction needs to cover the following points:

- Describe why this is important for the Sunshine Coast
- Provide some statistical/quantitative information
- Consider using some quotes from young adults on the coast

Guiding Principles:

The workshop identified a number of guiding principles that need to be reflected in the plan and its implementation.

Some of these were:

- Empower and engage young adults throughout this work
- Build on the coast's current assets and the work that is being done
- Operate in a collaborative manner with all jurisdictions so the results are positive and impact the entire coast
- Be creative and future oriented
- Others...

Strategic Directions:

The workshop identified a number of important areas. I would propose that the Plan focuses in on three to five key strategic directions and then develops specific goals and actions for those areas.

I assume that the task force will review the material and choose what it thinks are the key strategic areas.

Some of the key areas that emerged were:

- Empowerment and engagement of young adults
- Coordinated coast wide branding and welcoming strategy

- Upgrading knowledge and skills through training, apprenticeship and mentoring opportunities on the coast
- Diversified employment opportunities
- Affordable housing/cost of living
- Nightly entertainment/socialization
- Intergenerational activities – changing current attitudes
- Governance – multi levels of government/seeking common approaches
- Access to family supports (child care/transportation)
- Transportation
- Retail product selection for young adults
- Others...

The following ideas were expressed at the workshop:

- Identify specific strategies for each economic development sector on the coast – tourism, agriculture, technology...
- Pilot Lori Kozak’s program at Capilano on the coast
- Increase apprenticeship opportunities
- Create a centre for innovation
- Highlight the coastal assets/build on what’s successful
- Welcome new Canadians to the coast
- Use technology in all our planning and messaging
- Share information with the Ambassadors on the ferry
- Look at employment opportunities re: supporting/servicing our seniors
- Share local successes with succession planning as Arnold described
- Consider a service for buying/selling local businesses
- “Young people don’t go for a mentoring program” – they research on line
- Make this a university town
- Have a trades apprenticeship program locally
- List all the employment opportunities on line (e.g. create a online job fair)
- Link generations – young and older
- Change our current message for our school graduates – we value you and want you to stay and/or come back to the coast
- Create more affordable housing with Habitat for Humanity and others
- Encourage young people to create their own social media approaches
- Tell our success stories – young adults who have stayed and become successful
- Conduct a Young Adult Only Forum and see what emerges
- Attract foreign students
- Let’s create a vibrant university culture – (e.g. develop an effective summer program)
- Take advantage of funding that is available for the technology/intelligence sector
- Create business incubation services and supports – share resources/expertise
- Educate employers on the benefits of the younger population
- Consider offering unique or specialized training (e.g. Inside Passage)
- Need to market ourselves together

- Five of the ten growth industries in North America are technology based – technical consulting; hosting and data processing; specialized design services; computer programming and system design and software publishing
- Need for a single government on the coast (reduce the fragmentation/need for a single voice)
- Create a website geared for youth – explaining all the activities occurring on the coast. Describe on line how to create your own business and make it interactive, relevant and up-to-date
- Empower young adults to sell the coast to other young adults

Strategic Directions:

An example of using strategic directions is described below:

Strategic Direction: Empowerment/engagement of Young Adults

Current Situation:

- *Describe what is happening on the Coast*
- *Describe who and how they are involved*

Challenges and Trends:

- We are currently marketing for an older population (55 plus)
- We need to change our current attitude/perception – “you are loser if you stay on the coast”; we send “our best” off coast
- We lack incentives to keep young adults on the coast
- We under utilize the skills/abilities of our young adults
- We are using traditional ways to engage young adults and it is not working
- Others...

Proposed Goals and Actions:

Proposed Goal(s):

- *Young adults will be able to access what employment opportunities exist on the coast*

Proposed Actions:

Short term (under 12 months) Who’s responsible? Resources req.

• <i>A data base of employment opportunities will be accessible for all to find</i>	• <i>? organization will establish and keep the data base up-to-date</i>	•

Long term (beyond 12 months) Who’s responsible? Resources req.

2. Suggestions for Task Force

A. Terms of Reference:

- Strategic plan should have a clear timeline and a financial plan
- Strategic plan needs an implementation section
- Look at funding/sustainability opportunities
- Encourage diversity; seek aboriginal involvement
- Have young adults involved in all planning/implementation
- Host youth forums for their participation
- Consult with all levels of government
- Use affordable housing data, other secondary data
- Create a umbrella youth group
- Get Leslie Kozak's program (Cap university) on the coast
- Look at Hill strategy re: creativity/arts
- Encourage the involvement of more business people
- Have meeting times appropriate for all to attend
- Plan for post November event
- Needs coast wide participation
- If a large task force, break into smaller groups
- Include some Grade 12 representatives
- Potentially use young adults to collect information
- Size 12 – 15, not over 20 members
- Invite input from the general public
- Survey Grade 12 students
- Survey Seniors for their views
- Visit the BCI investor attraction website
- Involve Chambers of Commerce

B. Suggested Names:

Sharon Anderchek, Community Futures

Paul Bishop

Garry Nohr

John Henderson

Diane Hill, Community Futures

Include the Coast Builders Association

Include First Nations representatives (ask Sue Perry Huston for suggestions)

Include Health/Mental health sectors

Arnold Skei

Jan Poynter

Jan Smalley

JM Boyd

Nadia Fleschhut – agriculture

Dave Ryan

Charlene SanJenko
Sarah Hook
HR person – September Dixon?
Health Care/Social Services
Jodi Fichtner – branding/marketing person
Jordan Louie
Colleen Clark
Jason Scott
Donna Shugar
Chad Hershler – agriculture
Jamie Mani
Robert VanNorman – small business
Quinn Runkle
Chris Reid
Shelley McDade or delegate from BCI
School District representative

Suggested Criteria:

Here are some criteria you may want to consider in selecting the task force:

- Can contribute in developing the plan – ideas, resources, information, future orientation...
- Young adults who are knowledgeable and have connections to reach out to others
- Can fully participate over the next few months
- Various sizes of business – self employed; small business; medium size...
- Other community sectors – university, arts, health...
- Potential funders for implementation
- Coast wide representation
- Champions past November, 2010

3. Suggestions for November Event

- Involve more young people
- Encourage employers to pay fully or partially so those on limited income can attend
- Encourage aboriginal involvement (VCH or Ministry of Health has an initiative to employ more aboriginals)
- Invite developers
- Invite Howe Sound Pulp and Paper
- Invite Clark Hamilton
- Invite RCMP youth liason
- Invite Ministry of Children and Families
- Invite Health representatives
- Theresa Logan – communications
- Chambois?
- Consider Forum for Younger Adults
- Invite all those who are mentioned on the resource list below

4. Resources identified (on/off the coast)

On the Coast:

1. Individuals:

Kenan McKenzie: Asian students

Sarah Gilbert

Bob Hoy

Caroline DePatie – mountain biking

Arnold Skei

Stafford Lumley

Glenn Sernyk – LLN partnership

Andy Ross – contractor/has aboriginal connection

Massula Brothers, Oak Tree Market

Social Media – Bad Dog

Retirees who could mentor small business operators – create a local CESO (Canadian Executive Service Overseas)

Jen@shoppers

Fon – recent immigrant

2. Organizations:

Sea to Sky Outdoor School

CCBA

Aspire Program

Sea to Sky – Tim Turner

SCRD – Ted Chisholm/Mary Degan

Coast Cultural Alliance – assisting artists learn how to market and build on the calendar that already exists (Linda Williams)

Capilano University

Arts Building Society

Sunshine Coast Employment

Pender Harbour Community School

Community Futures

Rainbow Room

Lighthouse Pub

Banks on the coast

ACEIT Culinary Arts Program

Construction program through School District

YMCA Camp Elphinstone

Junior Achievement Program

Tourism – Judy Spears

Jessica Dill

3. Business/Industry:

Sechelt Plumbing

Northern Passage – woodworking program

Rockwater

The WILP

Julian Bortnick

Sunshine Coast Credit Union

BC Ferries
Smitty's Oyster Bar
Gilligan's Pub
Sunshine Coast Golf Course – greenskeeper
Painted Boat – Marlene Cymbalist
Alpha Adventures
Scott Fearnley – Technology
Starfire Technologies (scientific glass production) – Richard Morgan
Earl Antilla/Russell Cameron
IGA – Madeira Park
Backeddy Resort – Egmont
Fishers – prawns, salmon...
Wendy's/A&W
Sunshine Coast Regional District
St Mary's Hospital
Wakefield Homes
Claytons
John Henry's/Lucy
Coastal Crafts

Off the Coast:

1. Organizations:

Canada World Youth
City of Kelowna/Abbotsford
Nelson, Nanaimo
Cranbrook, Vernon

2. Business/Industry:

Model Seattle Fish Market
Whistler Blackholm – affordable housing for employees
Industry Training Authority – www.itabc.ca
Vancouver Folk Music Festivals/other music festivals
Youth Programs – Yes to IT – provides funding?
Vancouver Arts and Culture Alliance
St John's School
ENP Website – Enterprising Non Profits
Center for Social Innovation – Toronto
Pacific Resources – employment resource
Rodale Institute
Facebook, Twitter, Apple

APPENDIX F: Coast Reporter Article on Jan. 24 Plan Presentation

Task force aims to turn the tide for Coast's youth



Brent Richter Photo: Task force member and SD46 chair Silas White addresses a crowd of 100 on the issues that cause the Coast's youth to leave and what can be done to bring them back.

January 28, 2011

Brent Richter/Staff Writer

More than 100 Coast residents turned out Monday night, most over the age of 40, to listen and contribute ideas on what to do about one of the Coast's dwindling resources — young people.

After some damning conclusions about employment prospects and housing affordability for young people in the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation's 2009 Vital Signs report, the Foundation spearheaded a task force to see what could be done.

Monday's meeting was the first chance for the task force to present its draft community plan to attract, retain and engage young adults on the Coast and gather input.

Silas White, task force member and School District No. 46 (SD46) board chair, captured the spirit of the night in his opening speech.

"Have any of you seen the movie *Children of Men* — where the human race loses its ability to procreate, and all it has to look forward to is extinction? Sometimes I have nightmares like this about the Sunshine Coast," he said.

White said the Coast needs to ditch the label, whether earned or unearned, of 'retirement community' and get the entire community working to rebrand the Coast in the eyes of the world.

"If you're looking for a good place to raise kids, you're probably not going to select a place that has come to call itself a retirement community," he said. "Likewise, if you're looking for work,

looking to start up a business or relocate a business, or if you're looking for a good time, you're probably not going to choose a retirement community.”

To that end, White said local governments, along with other partners in the community including SD46, the business community, Capilano University, the Coast Community Builders Association, Community Futures and Best Coast Initiatives need to get the word out that the Coast is open for business, expansion of higher education, fun and — what's more — everyone must live up to the new brand.

Three times in his speech, White called for the formation of a Coast-wide economic development strategy.

“This is the year to make it happen, and I believe it will happen. It makes too much sense. Virtually all of the other communities I studied in B.C. and Canada that have succeeded in attracting young people and diversifying their economies have robust regional economic development offices supported by their local governments,” he said.

White added that it is incumbent on local government, many of whom were attending the meeting, to encourage more young people to take part in planning process and give more thought to the social and economic problems that come with a lack of young people and families working in the community.

White said co-ordination between all partners — and especially youth — is key, and plans are in place to develop a new social networking site for the Coast's youth to interact, share ideas, provide input for public processes, network professionally and find out what fun things are going down on a given night. The task force aims to have the site launched by June.

And perhaps most important is the involvement of the youth themselves. For this, the task force has struck a sub-committee called VOICE, made up of young people, to keep an eye on the development of the task force's plan and to serve as a pool that local governments can call on for youth involvement in community planning.

Following an introduction to the plan, attendees were asked to gather at separate tables and have targeted discussions on the plan and what it may be lacking. Areas up for discussion included employment, branding, entertainment, social networking and the VOICE group.

VOICE plans hold a follow-up chat to the meeting at Wheatberries, 818 Gibsons Way in Gibsons on Feb. 24.

The Sunshine Coast median age 48.5 — the second highest in the province next to Qualicum Beach.

APPENDIX G: “What is VOICE?” document for Jan 24, 2011 meeting

VOICE

What is VOICE?

VOICE is a group of young adults between the age of 20 and 40 who want the Sunshine Coast to be a place where the younger generation is excited to come here and to work and live.

VOICE wants to change the present image of the coast that it is primarily a retirement community of older adults. It's a place for all generations to enjoy.

VOICE speaks for the younger generation and is committed to:

- Attracting, retaining and engaging the younger generation on the Sunshine Coast
- Connecting young adults with other young adults
- Advocating for policies and approaches that support the young generation to come and stay on the coast
- Advising local organizations and government on this topic
- Making the Sunshine Coast a place where the younger generation can create plenty of opportunities for recreation and entertainment

The network of VOICE has just begun. The initial leaders of VOICE are:

- Silas White
- JM Boyd
- Sarah Hook
- Julie Clark
- Heather Miller
- David Hallstead
- Chad Hershler

PLEASE CONTACT VOICE AT
voicesunshinecoasr@gmail.com

or on facebook at: Voice on the Coast

WE WELCOME YOUR PARTICIPATION

Our next gathering will be on Thursday, February 24, 2011 at Wheatberries Bistro in Gibsons at 7 pm

The theme of the evening is “How did you end up on the Coast”

APPENDIX H: VOICE Introductory Document April, 2011



V
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[Cover]

Attracting, Retaining and Engaging the younger generation on the Sunshine Coast

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We are:

ATTRACT
RETAIN
ENGAGE

- Researchers : seeking knowledge and local data to understand the demographics of attraction and participation on the coast
- Advocates: for initiatives, participation opportunities and infrastructure to support a thriving young adult population on the coast.
- Consultants: for local organizations and governments on the issues concerning the younger generation of the Coast
- Promoters: of events and opportunities for young adults

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We envision a future for the Sunshine Coast that includes a thriving, diverse population of young adults and families as part of the make-up of our community. We aim to adjust the predominant image of the Coast from being primarily a retirement community, to a place for all generations to enjoy.

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Goals:

- To develop a coordinated, coast-wide branding strategy targeted to young adults.
- To support Local initiatives and infrastructure that will attract young adults
- To actively engage and empower the younger generation currently living on the Sunshine Coast
- To diversify employment opportunities; encourage job development and support effective succession planning

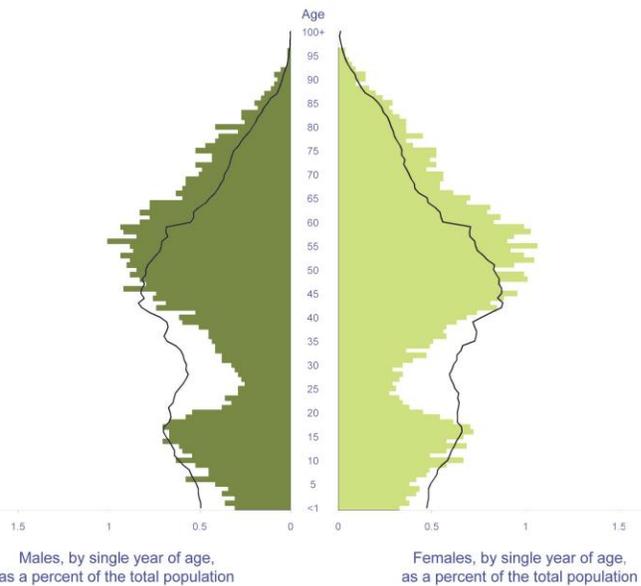
Why are we doing this?

We believe that a healthy future for the Coast is dependent on having a thriving, demographically diverse community. As the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation recently reported (Vital Signs), our Coast currently has a serious demographic deficit when it comes to a the 20 to 44 year old residents (right). Research and citizen input indicated concerns / causes may be linked to a lack of employment, widening gap between rich and poor, recent job losses and lack of affordable housing. Our recent research is leading us to believe that in addition to these concerns, the lack of an active and visible night life may also be responsible.

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How are we connecting with the younger generation on the Coast?

- Through the use of Social Media tools like facebook.
- Events promotions. Promoting and sponsoring specific events with the VOICE label. Example: "Fool Hardy Party" a recent 3 act concert at the Roberts Creek Hall was sponsored by VOICE. Information was available at the door and announced before the headlining act.
- Regular monthly gatherings to bring young people and ideas together. example: in Gibsons and Sechelt, working with café owners to stay open later and provide a casual setting for a free flowing discussion and information gathering.



facebook page statistics:

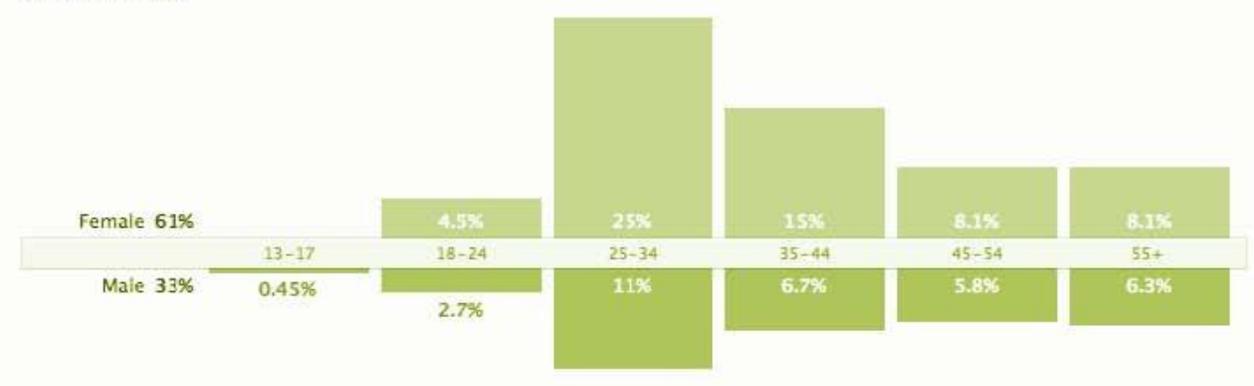
**586 active monthly users / 16,599 post views per month
an average of 600 impressions per post / 92% feedback on posts**

A recent poll of our facebook community asking:

“What is it that you want / need more of on the Coast”

We received **over 2,400 votes in the first 3 days.**

Gender and Age?



Connections in development:

communityvoice.ca

A singular place online to communicate everything going on on the Coast and allow individuals, government bodies, businesses, and other groups to submit, discuss, and vote on ideas and feedback for their community. In addition to gathering the data to support the ideas and discussions voted up.

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Questions / Concerns to discuss:

- What ways does the SCRD currently connect with young adults on the coast / what adaptations to existing processes have you made to do this?
- What would you like to know from young adults? How do you see VOICE assisting with this?
- In reference to the SCRD strategic plan:
 - In collaborative leadership, is there specific effort to engage young adults on the sunshine coast.
 - What are the barriers to creating a coast wide economic development entity.
- What is being done to engage younger adults in the issue of affordable housing.