

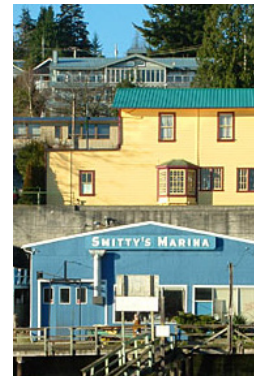


TOWN OF GIBSONS



Gibsons and Area

Economic Development Strategy and Action Framework



2013

To ensure sustainable economic growth and diversification while respecting the need to preserve the natural environment and quality of life.

*I need a fabulous quote
Put it here.*

Executive Overview

This framework, adopted November 5, 2013, provides a flexible structure for identifying what economic activities might be of benefit to Gibsons, reporting achievements, and evaluating the effectiveness of particular strategies.

It provides a bridge from the past to the present and future, building on the Town's vision statement as well as the mission, values, and strategies identified in previous economic development consultations.

It states five main economic development objectives linked to five main target markets. To achieve those objectives, it provides five overarching strategies – facilitating, coordinating, communicating, advocating, and monitoring/ evaluating – as the context within which specific strategies are proposed and tracked. Supporting analyses and a list of decision criteria for evaluating specific economic development projects are provided in Annexes.

The key to success will be forming and maintaining strong partnerships between the Town, business owners, investors, and the many organizations and institutions that underpin our community. The Town cannot create economic development; it can only build partnerships and resources to support success.

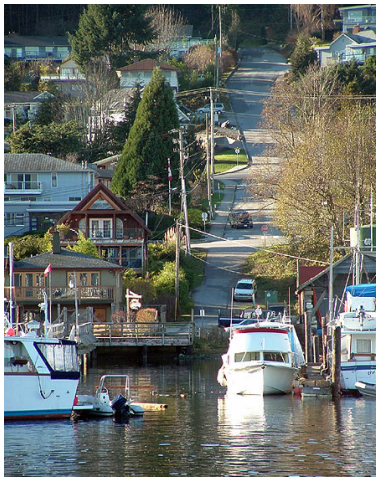
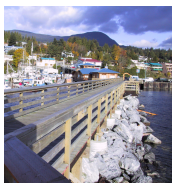
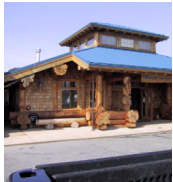
VISION

We will be recognized as a vibrant, welcoming community with an outstanding quality of life and plentiful cultural and economic opportunities.



MISSION

To strengthen the Town's economic future through balanced growth that benefits our existing businesses while attracting new opportunities and increasing local employment and career path options.



OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES



OBJECTIVES

1. **SUPPORT** the development of new local businesses to diversify the local economy.
2. **RETAIN** key local businesses to support a healthy local economy.
3. **ATTRACT** new businesses from up-Coast or off-Coast.
4. **SUPPORT** “portfolio entrepreneurs” - those who provide contract work for multiple clients.

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

FACILITATE

Facilitate the development, updating, and distribution of informational resources to support economic development and inform decision-making.

CO-ORDINATE

Co-ordinate, sponsor, and support events to initiate and strengthen economic initiatives.

COMMUNICATE

Communicate the strengths, successes, and opportunities in the Gibsons economy.

ADVOCATE

Advocate to address weaknesses in the Gibsons economy through policy initiatives and with responsible third parties.

MONITOR

Monitor economic development and evaluate initiatives undertaken.

The following pages will provide sample strategies for each of the objectives and are intended to illustrate what is being, or could be, undertaken rather than being a comprehensive list of what must, or could, be done.

Table 1 provides an overview of those strategies in relation to the five primary economic development objectives or target markets – new businesses started by Gibsons residents, retention of current Gibsons businesses, expansion of current Gibsons businesses, attraction of new businesses from off-Coast, and support to Gibsons portfolio entrepreneurs (i.e., small businesses contracting multiple types of services).

The target markets each include within them all age groups - youth just out of high school, young adults (25-45), older adults (46 on).

STRATEGIES



FACILITATE

FACILITATE the development, updating, and distribution of informational resources to support economic development and inform decision-making..

- Develop an easily-maintained and service-indexed Gibsons business directory to stimulate local purchase & partnering.
- Create and maintain an easily-updated economic development website, linked to www.gibsons.ca and www.gibsonschamber.com, which has both business development and investment information and links (including to BCStats' latest Gibsons Community Profile), and includes:
 1. A "Why Gibsons?" webpage, including unique lifestyle, awards, schools, new hospital, housing options, transportation options, commuting to the lower mainland, etc.
 2. A "Doing Business in Gibsons" webpage with appropriate links and including community facts, business environment, telecom infrastructure, office space available, meeting/function space, commercial/industrial space available, largest employers, award-winning businesses, skills for hire, etc.
 3. A "Relocate to Gibsons" webpage with appropriate links.
- Seek opportunities to gather data to strengthen our understanding of local economic development resources and activities – e.g., number/type of "portfolio entrepreneurs," number/type of home-based businesses operating without a business license, areas of expertise, succession planning needed.

COORDINATE

COORDINATE and sponsor events to initiate and strengthen economic initiatives.

1. Hold networking events to build business coalitions around specific projects and to develop one-stop service packages.
2. Support shop local campaigns such as Small Town Love campaigns (with coupon books) to stimulate local purchase of business services.
3. Support Business Walks (talking to local business owners about their challenges).
4. Offer training workshops to:
 5. Increase local business competitiveness & stimulate off-Coast exports.
 6. Support portfolio entrepreneurship & teleworking.
 7. Provide business management skills to second career "retirees."
 8. Strengthen business resiliency.
 9. Engage local businesses in offering work-study opportunities for youth.
 10. Offer a Gibsons IGNITE program or other business incubator program.
 11. Engage retirees in mentoring new businesses.
 12. Facilitate opportunities to partner across age categories both for skill sharing and to assist with succession planning.
 13. Stimulate private-public partnerships.
 14. Investigate initiatives from other communities that are suitable in scale and structure for our needs.
 15. Establish a Coast Concierge for a 1-stop ticket sales centre and a master schedule of Coast events to avoid over-scheduling and diluting of attendance.

STRATEGIES



COMMUNICATE

COMMUNICATE the strengths, successes, and opportunities in the Gibsons economy.

1. Develop print brochures where cost effective, based on the material in 1b, and distribute them on the Coast and on the ferry.
2. Create a database of local business success stories that can rotate through the Town's website and be used in media releases and other communications.
3. Develop standard text for newsletter articles and engage on-Coast professionals to submit articles about "Why Gibsons?" to their professional association newsletters.
4. Negotiate for, or create, a Gibsons insert/section for the Local and the Coast Reporter to highlight economic activities and successes in the Lower Sunshine Coast.
5. Invite the press to write regular feature stories on town success stories to both congratulate and inspire (the column could be titled "The Town That Could!")
6. Showcase natural capital assets and potential spin-off ecosystem services, eliciting professional input on their valuation and risk management.

ADVOCATE

ADVOCATE to address weaknesses in the Gibsons economy through policy initiatives and with responsible third parties.

1. Encourage the School District to provide IT, trades, and business skills training for high school students.
2. Encourage local colleges/universities, like Capilano, to support Coast businesses by offering courses on-Coast in areas like hotel management, food services, and recreation management.
3. Work with on-Coast financial institutions to develop alternative funding mechanisms for business start-up and expansion.
4. Encourage the installation of a fibre optic network on the Coast.
5. Encourage the provision of multiple sea and air links with the lower mainland, such as:
 - o Passenger ferry service.
 - o Air service to downtown Vancouver.
6. Lobby BC Ferries to increase service levels and lower prices.
7. Ensure the ongoing provision of shuttle service between Upper & Lower Gibsons.
8. Liaise regularly with representatives of the Gibsons Harbour Authority; BC Ministry of Environment; BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations; BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training; BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; HRSDC; Industry Canada; Squamish Nation; ICET and WED.
9. Encourage Council's work on affordable housing and work with partners such as BC Housing on expanding the range of housing options in Gibsons.
10. Encourage partners to develop affordable child care options in Gibsons.

MONITOR

MONITOR economic development and evaluate initiatives undertaken.

1. Develop and distribute an annual survey of business offerings and needs.
2. Issue an annual report card on Gibsons' economic development initiatives, including their coordination with the OCP.

TABLE 1

SCHEMATIC OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The schematic below shows the linkages between the proposed economic development strategies and the target market segments that they would benefit. The numbers/letters refer to the strategies listed above, and those in bold italics are ones that have already been started.

Economic Development Strategy	Economic Development Objective/Target Market				
	New Business	Retain Business	Expand Business	Attract Business	Portfolio Entrepreneur
1. Facilitate informational resources	1a 1b 1c	1a 1c	1a 1c	1a 1b	1a 1c
2. Coordinate events	2a 2b 2c 2d 2e 2f 2g 2h 2i	2a 2b 2c 2h 2i 2j	2a 2b 2c 2g 2h 2i 2j 2k	2h 2i 2j 2k	2b 2c 2d 2e 2f 2j
3. Communicate strengths & opportunities	3a 3d 3e 3f	3a 3b 3c 3d 3e	3a 3b 3c 3d 3e	3a 3b 3c 3d 3e 3f	3a 3d 3e 3f
4. Advocate to address weaknesses	4a 4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h 4i 4j	4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h 4i 4j	4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h 4j	4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h 4i 4j	4a 4b 4c 4d 4e 4f 4g 4h 4i 4j
5. Monitor and evaluate	5a 5b	5a 5b	5a 5b	5a 5b	5a 5b

ANNEX A

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF GIBSONS

(based on data available from Statistics Canada and BC Stats as of September 2013)

Population data:

	2011	Change: 2001 to 2011
Population	4,450	+ 13.9%
Adults with no high school diploma	15.8%	- 22.5%
Adults with postsecondary degrees	62.1%	+ 10.5%
Residents over 65 years old	26.2%	+ 40.1%

Employment data:

	2011	Change: 2001 to 2011
Labour force	2,080	+ 16.9%
Unemployment rate	4.8%	- 46.1%
Self-employed	21.6%	+ 7.2%
Jobs in production	11.5%	- 36.0%
Jobs in tourism	6.5%	- 15.6%
Jobs in retail sales	10.8%	+ 15.4%
Jobs in construction	6.7%	+ 33.3%
Jobs in business/professional services	11.5%	+128.6%

Contribution of leading economic sectors (2011 estimates):

Sector	% of Economic Activity	% of Jobs
Business & professional services	20.0%	11.5%
Construction	11.7%	6.7%
Retail	9.8%	10.8%
Tourism	4.4%	6.5%
Arts and culture	3.2%	2.6%

ANNEX B

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS OF GIBSONS

Strengths:

- Spectacular natural setting
- Key natural capital assets
- Dynamic business-to-business sector
- Significant number of software development & multimedia companies
- Vibrant arts & culture sector
- Sunshine Coast Tourism Association
- Gibsons Landing Association
- Active Chamber of Commerce
- Strong community networks and involvement
- Educated population
- Second career "retirees"
- Range of wellness practitioners
- National and international awards received

AWARDS GIBSONS HAS WON:

- "Best in the world municipal water" award at the 2005 Berkeley Springs Winter Festival of the Waters
- National Research Council award for environmentally-sensitive development, 2006
- "Communities in Bloom" Provincial Champions award for "Best Floral Displays," 2006
- "Communities in Bloom" Provincial Champions award for "Environmental Awareness," 2007
- OCP award, SmartGrowth BC, 2007
- "Communities in Bloom" Provincial Champions overall winner, 2008
- "Energy & Climate Action Award in the Community Planning and Development" award by the Community Energy Association for development of the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan, 2009
- "World's Most Livable Community" (with a population of less than 20,000), by the United Nations-endorsed International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom), 2009
- First place award (among all finalist cities), for outstanding achievement related to "Planning for the Future," by the United Nations-endorsed International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom), 2009

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS (cont.)

Weaknesses:

- High real estate prices relative to local earning opportunities
- High commercial rents relative to size of local market
- Lack of high speed broadband internet
- Lack of adequate transportation infrastructure
- Lack of alternate funding for business start-up and expansion
- Limited harbour capacity for visiting boaters
- Lower percentage of adults ages 25-34 years than BC as a whole
- Lack of IT, trades, and business training for youth
-
- Lack of municipal balance sheet accounting for natural capital assets
- Lack of directory/database of existing businesses
- Lack of one-stop publicity of office space
- Lack of clear messaging (branding) regarding strengths and opportunities
- Lack of one-stop, current information for:
 - Doing business in Gibsons
 - Investment/development in Gibsons
 - Relocation to Gibsons
- Lack of visibility for local business success stories
- Lack of business networking milieu for creating strategic alliances
- Lack of print promotional materials for distribution
- Lack of municipal resources for promotional activities
- Lack of municipal staff capacity to seek economic development funding

Opportunities:

- Arts & cultural services
- Ecosystem services
- Professional/technical services hub
- Specialized training workshops and courses
- Wellness tourism
- Unique shoulder & winter tourism offerings
- Marine services
- Shortfall of 160,000 IT jobs nationally
- Telework to generate on-Coast jobs with off-Coast projects
- Services for active seniors
- Elder care

Threats:

- Business migration
- Youth migration
- Irreversible damage to natural capital assets

ANNEX C

DECISION CRITERIA

QUICK EVALUATION CHECKLIST

1. Is it consistent with our vision and values? (If NO, do not proceed.)
2. Does it meet one or more of our economic development objectives? (how many?)
3. Does it fit with one or more of our economic development strategies? (how many?)
4. Are there strong partnership opportunities? (list partners)
5. What is the timeframe? Can it be substantially accomplished in less than 2 years?
6. Are there existing private or public sector financial, staff or volunteer resources to support this?

Attractive projects for Council support would be economically feasible and provide the following:

1. Strengthen the unique positioning of Gibsons, especially that created by awards
2. Create new jobs for local residents
3. Provide opportunities for apprenticeships, career path development, and retraining
4. Provide quality of life benefits (age-friendly, affordable living, accessibility)
5. Stimulate collaboration and partnerships among Gibsons businesses and with community organizations
6. Support, rather than directly compete with, existing Gibsons businesses
7. Fill existing gaps in available goods and services
8. Contain a high percent of local content and local purchase
9. Generate potential new business spin-offs and/or educational opportunities
10. Contribute to environmental sustainability; be eco-friendly
11. Have an organization in the community that can champion or take the project on, with skilled leadership and knowledge
Of business practices
12. No requirement of funding or subsidization by the Town
13. Cost-effective
14. Build on our existing strengths
15. Have a rapid time frame for start up
16. Pose no danger to the aquifer, the environment, or coastal marine life



COMING HOME

Just a scenic 40 minute ferry ride from Horseshoe Bay, Gibsons is uniquely positioned as much more than just a tourism 'getaway' destination. This community with a can-do, caring and inclusive culture is a mecca for artists, innovators and creators in all disciplines. Come for a visit; stay for the lifestyle.



GIBSONS AND AREA

The area we call 'Greater Gibsons' spreads beyond the official Town boundaries and embraces adjacent rural regional districts with a diverse and complimentary economic base - agriculture, light and heavy industry, and tourism.

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