

# **TOWN OF GIBSONS**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN – 2019 – 2022**

### **PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Town of Gibsons' 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan is being developed collaboratively by Council with staff and the community to ensure that our decisions, activities and allocation of resources are aligned with the vision for the community. The plan considers the most important opportunities and challenges facing the Town of Gibsons today and into the future and identifies achievable goals and strategies that will focus our efforts and inform our policy decisions.

The strategic plan will be executed through a number of means, including annual budget direction, departmental workplans and staff reports in support of Council decisions. It will also serve as an instrument for communication with our residents, developers and partners.

This plan is a living document and Council will update the plan as necessary to address emerging issues or changing priorities. Quarterly updates and the Town's Annual Report will provide an opportunity for Council and staff to regularly review and communicate progress in achieving Council's goals.

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## **OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE**

The Town of Gibsons, gateway to the Sunshine Coast, is a beautiful coastal community of more than 4800 residents that was built on a rugged history of logging and fishing. The region's traditional resource-based economy has evolved over time and Gibsons has increasingly become a destination for young families and retirees, seeking a more affordable, quiet coastal lifestyle. More recently, Gibsons has become a bedroom community of Vancouver with residents taking advantage of relatively affordable housing costs and the ability to commute or work remotely. The local market has responded to this influx of people, with a rapid increase in new businesses spurring an "Open for Business" award in 2019. Gibsons also enjoys a growing tourism industry driven by the town's spectacular natural setting and unique character and heritage.

Gibsons is a community in transition with varying expectations for the community's development and the services and amenities provided. In spite of differing expectations, Gibsons continues to be a proud, caring and compassionate community with a strong spirit of volunteerism, and a desire for a sustainable future. Residents value the community's natural assets, historic sea-side character, striking scenery and abundance of arts and culture.

As Gibsons' population and demand for development increases, careful planning for the future is critical. Soon, we will need to provide our own law enforcement services. Additionally, our population growth will be limited by the availability of water and land, requiring increased density, more walkable connected neighborhoods, protection of the urban forest and resiliency to the impacts of climate change. Preserving the town's heritage and embracing the culture of the Squamish people will help ensure Gibsons retains its unique character into the future.



## **OUR ROLE**

Gibsons' Council provides leadership by facilitating a long-term vision for the community and serving as a compass to guide how the Town develops and moves forward. As decision-makers, we bring a range of perspectives to the table and openly debate the merits of our decisions. As stewards of the community and its assets, we want our efforts to leave a lasting legacy.

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

As we fulfill our roles and responsibilities as a municipal government, we will:

**Make sound decisions** with a long-term view and with consideration for infrastructure, economic, social and cultural benefits and impacts

**Engage with residents of all ages** on issues and decisions that are important to them

**Be open and transparent** and explain the rationale for our decisions

**Prioritize the environment** at all times

**Proactively collaborate** with our neighboring jurisdictions on important issues that affect our communities

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## **OUR CORE OBJECTIVES**

### ***Plan for Sustainable Growth***

- We will plan for the future in a manner that reflects our finite resources
- We will value the unique character of our Town and its neighbourhoods
- We will create spaces that promote community engagement and are accessible to all
- We will preserve our green spaces
- We will support local business and foster a diverse economy

### ***Increase Community Engagement***

- We will inspire and encourage citizens of all ages to engage with Town Hall
- We will listen to the ideas of all our stakeholders
- We will help our citizens understand the challenges and competing demands facing the community

### ***Mandate and Facilitate Affordable Housing***

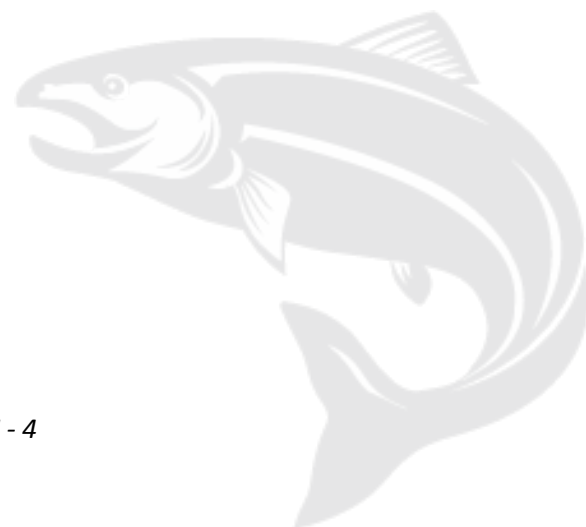
- We will ensure that the Town of Gibsons has an appropriate supply and range of affordable housing options and that all our community members have access to safe, secure housing

### ***Adapt to a Changing Climate***

- We will increase the resiliency of our community and its infrastructure to the local impacts and risks from climate change
- We will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the community and Town Hall

### ***Advocate and Collaborate on Regional Issues***

- We will collaborate and partner with our neighbouring jurisdictions to effectively address shared opportunities and challenges



## **Objective #1 – Plan for Sustainable Growth**

### **Goal**

That planning for the future reflects our carrying capacity and results in appropriate densities, maintains our unique character, preserves green space and provides for accessible, connected neighborhoods. To gain support for a strategic, long-term approach to addressing the impacts of growth and development.

### **Why?**

Our community will continue to experience high demand for development. However, the municipality has finite space and water capacity. We value our quality of life and liveability and want to ensure we maintain a complete and balanced community for all ages.

### **Potential Strategies**

- Review and update appropriate elements of the OCP (density, form and character, green space, connectivity of neighbourhoods, financial strategy)
- Update Harbour Development Strategy
- Update/develop age-friendly strategy
- Develop accessibility strategy
- Develop active transportation plan
- Develop “Placemaking” strategy to plan, design and manage public spaces
- Develop “green economy” action plan
- Develop a 25-year Vision for Gibsons
- Implement Cannabis Policy
- Update public art policy and re-establish public art initiative
- Establish transportation between Upper and Lower Gibsons
- Establish strategy to honour local history and traditions
- Plan for an autonomous police force



## **Objective #2 – Increase Community Engagement**

### **Goal**

To inspire and encourage citizens to become engaged with municipal government and have their voices heard, while ensuring our citizens understand the challenges and competing demands facing the community.

### **Why?**

Council decisions will benefit from community input, while increased awareness of our challenges helps to create broader support and understanding for the solutions adopted.

### **Potential Strategies**

- Televised Council meetings
- Create opportunities for public dialogue
- Develop and adopt public engagement policy
- Continue to develop and expand opportunities for youth involvement with Council

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### ***Objective #3 – Mandate and Facilitate Affordable Housing***

#### **Goal**

To ensure that the Town of Gibsons has a full range of housing available for our residents, with an appropriate supply of affordable housing options.

#### **Why?**

Increased housing demand is creating an affordability crisis, particularly for those with lower incomes. Housing affordability makes it difficult to attract and retain workers and young families, which negatively impacts the local economy.

#### **Potential Strategies**

- Complete a housing needs assessment
- Develop an affordable housing strategy
- Amend and create appropriate bylaws and policies
- Complete affordable housing projects on Franklin Road and Shaw Road in partnership with SC Affordable Housing Society
- Consider opportunities to expand the Good Samaritan Facility on Shaw Road
- Build supportive housing in Gibsons in partnership with BC Housing



## ***Objective #4 – Adapt to a Changing Climate***

### **Goal**

To ensure that our community is resilient to the local impacts and risks from climate change and that appropriate measures are in place to protect our infrastructure and avoid future costs.

### **Why?**

We acknowledge that climate change is a reality and that our community will be impacted by climate changes in a variety of ways, including sea level rise, overburdened drainage systems, prolonged periods of draught and, possibly, increased wildfires. It is important that the risks to our community are understood and that strategies are in place to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, while protecting our citizens and the infrastructure they rely on.

### **Potential Strategies**

- Declare a Climate Emergency
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive climate resiliency strategy
- Develop and implement a greenspace strategy
- Continue to address climate change risk in Asset Management plans
- Develop community wildfire protection plan
- Update community GHG inventory
- Develop action plan to reduce GHG emissions to 40% of 2007 levels by 2030
- Develop carbon-neutral operations plan
- Initiate home energy retrofit program
- Update trail and cycle network strategy
- Complete master plan for district energy utility in Parkland
- Support community and student led initiatives that focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation





## ***Objective #5 – Advocate and Collaborate on Regional Issues***

### **Goal**

To collaborate and partner with our neighboring jurisdictions to effectively address shared opportunities and challenges.

### **Why?**

The Town of Gibsons shares many common interests with its neighboring communities. Collaborating and partnering with the First Nations, the SCRD and other jurisdictions can promote more effective solutions to our shared challenges, facilitate cost-effective services and strengthen our voice on important matters that affect our communities.

### **Potential Strategies**

- Develop Water Governance Model
- Strengthen Indigenous relationships
- Improve highway infrastructure and ferry services
- Promote clean transportation
- Support regional childcare needs assessment
- Expand alignment with Howe Sound/Lower Mainland
- Develop Fringe Area Plan with SCRD (Areas E & F)
- Collaborate on regional climate resiliency strategy
- Collaborate on regional affordable housing strategy
- Secure legal protection of Gibsons Aquifer recharging areas
- Maintain a regional approach to economic development and tourism

