

## 2019 DIALOGUE #2 - COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

The Strategic Plan is being developed collaboratively by Council with staff and the community to ensure its decisions, activities and allocation of resources are aligned with the overall vision for Gibsons. The purpose of this dialogue was to provide the opportunity for residents to engage with Council and to have input into the Strategic Plan before it is finalized. The dialogue was held at High Beam Dreams and attended by 40 people, including four members of Gibsons' Council (Mayor Beamish, Councillors De Andrade, Croal and Ladwig). The dialogue commenced shortly after 7:00 pm and ended at 9:30 pm.

Two handouts were provided:

- An overview of the previous Community Dialogue, held July 30, 2019; and
- A draft version of the Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022. (Also available for review and comment at [gibsons.ca](http://gibsons.ca)).

Mayor Beamish opened the session by welcoming attendees, introducing the topic for discussion (Council's Strategic Plan for 2019 - 2022) and reminding the audience that a community dialogue is meant to be a safe place where everyone is given the opportunity to both listen and be listened to.

After reviewing the 5 core objectives, as outlined in the draft Strategic Plan, Mayor Beamish opened the floor to comments from the audience.

### Key Areas of Consensus

While a wide variety of ideas were shared at the dialogue, several larger themes emerged as the evening went on. These included:

- A desire for Council to put their focus on climate change and take tangible action that would help Gibsons respond effectively to the climate crisis in the near and long-term;
- Apply a climate lens to planning and implementation of policies, projects, infrastructure and operations;
- The need for an overarching "Vision Statement", which would anchor the plan's core objectives and all related action items, as well as the Town's brand character (what we stand for in our own minds as well as in the minds of the rest of the world.) It was also suggested that it would be natural for the Vision Statement/brand character to reflect the group's collective desire for Gibsons to be widely recognized a "green leader";
- The need for affordable housing of all kinds i.e. workforce, below market, social, and supportive;
- A desire to update the Official Community Plan. In the meantime, the Strategic Plan should reflect the existing OCP;
- The need to better engage with - and reflect the needs of - all community members, including youth, people in their 20s and 30s, and renters; and
- A desire for more community input in general, and especially when it comes to development.

It was also suggested that the current draft of the Strategic Plan contains more initiatives than could be completed in 25 years and that there was a need by Council to focus on a few main objectives that would deliver the most benefit to the community as a whole.



## Ideas and Action Items

Some of the specific thoughts and ideas that were shared (organized by topic) included:

### ***Respond to Climate Change***

- Recognize and accept that some of the changes we need to make will be uncomfortable but are required to avert the serious consequences associated with global warming
- Encourage/require developers to integrate green features into their buildings. This could include; rain barrels; pre-wired for solar energy; pre-wired for charging EVs; heat pumps (the most efficient form of clean heating for our region)
- Focus on specific items from the BC Energy Step Code that could be easily implemented; provide incentive programs to encourage builders to adopt them
- Continue to integrate green spaces/trail network that enable people to safely move through the community
- Protect trees and forested areas
- Advance Gibsons' already established position as a leader in climate change response (via natural asset management strategy)
- Implement and promote "Meatless Mondays"
- Ban plastic bags (and other plastics)
- Review efficacy of Gibsons District Energy Utility in Parkland neighbourhood
- Develop a "Wildfire Protection Plan"
- Prepare for severe/extreme weather events
- Develop a true Zero Waste Community Action Plan (*comment received online*)

### ***Address Affordable Housing Crisis***

- Recognize the need for the "workforce" housing that will be required for the many construction workers and tradespeople that will be required to build the large developments that are currently at an early stage
- Recognize the need for a tier of affordable housing beyond "below market" housing e.g. for single parents
- Consider establishing seniors housing at Harmony Hall
- Establish "Principle of Perpetuity" - that affordable housing remains affordable in perpetuity
- Consider "shared ownership" - local government as a co-owner in affordable housing
- Adopt some of the more innovative zoning tools being used in other communities to support affordable housing models (but be wary of creating "rental zones" that segregate renters)
- Strengthen affordable housing requirements by developers
- Seek ways to make entry into home ownership more attainable

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

- Utilize traditional and modern (i.e. digital) communication channels to reach citizens of every age
- Actively support UBCM initiative to lower voting age to 16 years
- Establish non-discriminatory engagement process so citizens don't feel "criminalized" for providing critical feedback.



## Ideas and Action Items

### ***Increase Community Engagement cont'd***

- Form/support committees that seek to leverage citizen talents/energy (recognize the Town can't do everything) community events/celebrations in a cross-section of neighbourhoods/business areas
- Work to make Town more citizen-friendly and interactive
- Improve process of engagement around new development proposals - provide guidance to developers through citizen engagement at beginning of process
- Give Gibsonites a stronger voice/more influence than non-residents
- Ensure emails from residents are responded to in a timely manner

### ***Develop Long-Term Vision for Town***

- Think about what we want Gibsons to look like in 10, 20, 100 years
- Develop strong Town character to unite community/guide future decision-making
- Leverage existing position as green leader on the Coast (e.g. implementation of organics program) and internationally (via natural asset management strategy)
- Contemplate which types of businesses we want to attract and support
- Improve accessibility
- Investigate UNESCO designation
- Celebrate Beachcombers 30/50 anniversaries
- Move beyond Beachcombers as key Town identifier
- Advance inter-community transportation plan
- Update Official Community Plan
- Add language addressing ongoing protection of the Gibsons Aquifer to the Strategic Plan
- Refer to already existing Vision Statement in OCP
- Return shops to Lower Gibsons: SuperValu, IGA & London Drugs could share their profit with lower Gibsons & build a small grocery or pharmacy and general store. Another addition to Lower Gibsons should be a modern Youth Hostel for visitors, families & school children visiting the Sunshine Coast. (*comment received online*)

### ***Collaborate on Regional Issues***

- Maximize collaborative approach of current regional board
- Advance intra-community transportation plan
- Consider how Gibsons land-use fits into plan for entire Coast
- Advance regional water governance model

## Next Steps

Moving forward, Council and staff will review the input received and prepare a final version of the Strategic Plan within the next few weeks, so that it is ready to guide our planning and budget discussion for 2020.

