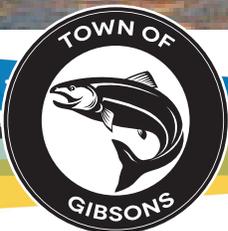


# Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022



[visit.gibsons.ca](http://visit.gibsons.ca)

A scenic view of a coastal town, likely Gibsons, with a large ferry in the distance and mountains in the background. The town is built on a hillside overlooking a large body of water, with many houses and a marina filled with boats. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is clear.

# OUR VISION

Gibsons will continue to be a welcoming, sustainable community that offers residents and visitors an outstanding quality of life in a natural environment.

We will ensure this beautiful town retains its seaside village character for the enjoyment of all and we will nurture our unique cultural heritage and natural assets while supporting opportunities for the local economy.

## OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

The Town of Gibsons, gateway to the Sunshine Coast, is a beautiful coastal community of more than 4800 residents. It was built on a rugged, post-settlement history of logging and fishing, and remains interconnected with the Skwxwu7mesh (Squamish) people, who have inhabited the Sunshine Coast since time immemorial. Preserving the town's traditional heritage and embracing the Skwxwu7mesh culture will help ensure Gibsons retains its unique character into the future.

More recently, Gibsons has become a bedroom community of Vancouver, with residents taking advantage of comparatively lower 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, which resulted in 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.

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

As Gibsons' population and demand for development increases, careful planning for the future is critical. Soon (when our population reaches 5000 by census) we will be legally required to increase funding for our policing services. Additionally, our population growth is limited by the availability of water and land, requiring increased density, more walkable and connected neighborhoods, protection of the urban forest and resiliency to, and mitigation of, the impacts of climate change.

This Strategic Plan lays out our planned response to those future needs and will help guide our decision-making as Gibsons continues to grow and evolve.

## PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Town of Gibsons' 2019-2022 Strategic Plan was developed collaboratively by Council with staff and the community to ensure that our decisions, activities and allocation of resources reflect a shared commitment to the community.

The plan considers the most important opportunities and challenges facing the Town of Gibsons today, and into the future, and identifies six core objectives and related priorities for each, which will help to 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 of communication for all those who engage with our community.

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.



## 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 ideas.

As stewards of the community and its assets, we want our efforts to leave a lasting legacy.

Accordingly, our overarching responsibility is to make sound decisions that reflect a deep consideration for the long-term social, environmental, financial, economic and cultural impacts of our choices.



## OUR COMMITMENT

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

- **Be open and transparent** and explain the rationale for our decisions
- **Engage with residents of all ages** on issues and decisions that are important to them
- **Ensure that disadvantaged groups are fairly considered** in decisions that affect them
- **Consider the environmental impact of all decisions** and seek opportunities for mitigation and adaption to climate change
- **Proactively collaborate with neighbouring jurisdictions** on issues that jointly affect our communities





### **Increase Community Engagement**

- We will inspire and encourage citizens of all ages to engage in the decision-making process
- We will actively listen to the ideas of all our stakeholders
- We will help our citizens understand the challenges and competing demands facing the community

### **Manage Our Assets**

- We will focus on fiscal sustainability and support our staff in the prudent management of our natural and engineered assets, to ensure the Town can continue to deliver critical infrastructure services in perpetuity

### **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 a sense of community and are accessible to all
- We will preserve our green spaces
- We will support local business and foster a diverse economy

### **Advocate for and Facilitate A Range of Housing Types**

- We will actively work toward increasing the supply and range of safe, secure and attainable affordable housing options

### **Respond to the Changing Climate**

- We will apply a climate lens to the planning and development of actions, plans, policies and infrastructure projects
- We will adapt Town infrastructure to increase its resiliency to the local impacts and risks from climate change
- We will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the community and through the provision of municipal services to meet regional targets

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

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

## 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.

### PRIORITIES

- Live-stream Council meetings
- Continue to develop and expand opportunities for youth involvement with Council
- Create more opportunities for public dialogue with Council
- Create more opportunities for early public input on key decisions
- Continue to plan for an age-friendly and inclusive community



## MANAGE OUR ASSETS

### Goal

To effectively manage and protect the Town of Gibsons' assets - human, natural and engineered - so they may continue to provide our citizens with safe, reliable services and infrastructure in the near and long-term.

### Why?

Managing aging assets and resources effectively, while maintaining acceptable levels of service, is a key challenge for local governments across Canada. Additionally, while funding is in place to sustain operational and maintenance needs at existing levels of service, we must also establish appropriate and reliable funding for asset renewal and replacement, as well as sufficient operational and capital reserves for unplanned expenditures.

### PRIORITIES

- Continue to support, advance, and promote our natural asset management strategy
- Continue to seek operational efficiencies in order to maximize Town resources
- Complete Whitetower Pond upgrades
- Extend Aquifer service area to Zone 3 residents
- Complete optimization and upgrade of Wastewater Treatment Plan
- Complete optimization and upgrade of Prowse Road Lift Station
- Support advancement and implementation of formal asset management plans
- Set tax rates and user fees that move Gibsons closer to true financial sustainability
- Partner with Nicholas Sonntag Marine Education Centre to advance the environmental stewardship of Gibsons Harbour



## PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### Goal

That planning for the future results in appropriate densities, maintains our unique character, preserves green space, provides for accessible, connected neighborhoods and reflects our carrying capacity; 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 supply and infrastructure capacity. We value our quality of life and livability and want to ensure we continue working toward the creation of a complete and balanced community for all ages.

### PRIORITIES

- Review and update sections of the Official Community Plan relating to: density clarification; form and character DPA guidelines; greenspace protection; connectivity; financial sustainability; natural asset management; Harbour Development strategy; age-friendly/accessibility strategy; active transportation; placemaking; and public art.
- Implement a Cannabis Policy
- Lobby for improvements to transportation between Upper and Lower Gibsons
- Plan for funding our police force
- Develop policies that support local, sustainable businesses
- Ensure developers fairly contribute to increasing the livability of our community
- Seek opportunities to honour local/Indigenous history and traditions



## ADVOCATE FOR AND FACILITATE A RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES

### Goal

To advance the development of a full range of housing types, with an appropriate supply of affordable housing options which address the full spectrum of housing needs.

### Why?

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

### PRIORITIES

- Complete a housing needs assessment
- Develop an affordable housing strategy to address the full spectrum of housing needs for the community
- Facilitate the development of a range of affordable housing projects
- Implement a short-term rentals strategy
- Consider opportunities to expand the community services on Christenson Lands



## RESPOND TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE

### Goal

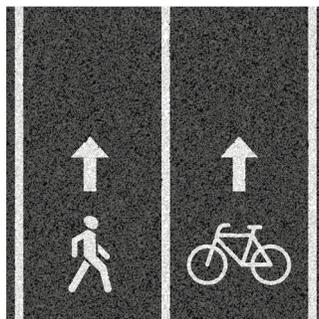
To increase our community's resilience to the local impacts and risks from climate change by seeking out opportunities for mitigation and adaptation measures.

### 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 drought and, possibly, increased wildfires. It is important that the risks and costs 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.

### PRIORITIES

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Climate Action & Resiliency Plan that is bold, inclusive and focused on a low-carbon economy and Zero Waste
- Prioritize retention and expansion of green space to secure adequate levels of tree canopy, protect habitat, decelerate the rapid rate of biodiversity loss, and foster community health, connectivity and well-being
- Continue to address climate change risk in our Asset Management plans
- Update community greenhouse gas inventory and develop carbon-neutral operations plan
- Update trail and cycle network strategy
- Update business plan for district energy utility in Upper Gibsons
- Support community and student-led initiatives that focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Support strategies to reduce impact of climate change on local wildlife



## COLLABORATE ON REGIONAL ISSUES

### Goal

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

### Why?

The Town of Gibsons shares many common interests with its neighbouring communities. Collaborating and partnering with local Indigenous groups, 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.

### PRIORITIES

- Develop regional Water Governance Model
- Advocate for improvements to highway infrastructure and ferry services
- Support clean regional transportation strategies
- Support regional childcare needs assessment
- Develop Fringe Area Plan with SCRD (Areas E & F)
- Collaborate on regional climate resiliency strategy
- Collaborate on regional affordable housing strategy
- Collaborate on regional wildfire and emergency plan
- Collaborate to improve condition of local sports fields
- Pursue legal protection of Gibsons Aquifer recharging areas and promote consistency with bylaws relating to Aquifer protection
- Maintain a regional approach to economic development and tourism



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