

## **NEW CULTURAL CORRIDOR IN GIBSONS TO UNITE COMMERCIAL AREAS THROUGH ART**

*New path to connect Upper and Lower Gibsons with THRIVE funding support*

COURTENAY, 15 December 2021 – A new and dynamic accessible foot and cycling path in Gibsons will use public art to link the historic and modern sides of the town with funding support from the THRIVE Small Capital Program.

Led by the Town of Gibsons and designed by the town’s Public Art Advisory Committee, the public art path is strategically designed to take users on a route through some of the town’s most scenic natural assets including stops at existing public art displays at the Gibsons Public Art Gallery, the Town Hall, a public market and Arts Building. Additional commissioned art works will be added at strategic sites along the path as featured standalone and forest installations, as well as trailhead markers.

“The pandemic has forced many communities to rethink their downtown areas and access to public spaces. The new accessible foot and cycling path in Gibsons will quickly bring to life that essential community connectivity we are all seeking,” says Jody Young, Manager, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region at Destination BC. “We are thrilled to support this project, which will increase the vitality of not only Gibsons, but the entire Sunshine Coast.”

The planned pedestrian transit corridor will showcase the Town’s natural assets and cultural resources, while contextually uniting the history with a recognition, celebration and expression of support for contemporary Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) people. The path’s art pieces, will also feature additional digital elements that residents and visitors can access using the QR codes that bring up online content.

“The project epitomizes the goals of the THRIVE program to increase and drive vitality back into core areas in captivating and innovative ways,” says ICET Board Chair Aaron Stone. “The Town of Gibsons’ project will help increase visitation, while complementing a collective regional effort to promote the Sunshine Coast.”

The THRIVE Small Capital Program was launched in late May to help stimulate and promote vitality in downtowns, Main Streets and business districts across the region. One-stop funding support of up to 100% of eligible project costs (to a maximum of \$50,000) is available thanks to a joint collaboration with the Island Coastal Economic Trust and Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region (managed by Destination BC).

“Once completed, the Art Path will feature the works of many local and Indigenous artists,” said Town of Gibsons’ Mayor Bill Beamish, speaking on behalf of the Gibsons Public Art Committee. “It will link the adjacent Squamish Nation Chekwelp lands to our town and provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the richness of our arts community by expanding on the original works already featured in many areas, including Upper Gibsons. We are very grateful for this grant and look forward to commissioning new works which will spark creative interest and grow civic pride.”



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

The new art installations to be included on the path will be selected through a jury submission call created by the Gibsons Public Art Advisory Committee. Works will be based on artistic merit, longevity, maintenance and other practical considerations, as well as budget. Indigenous representation and interpretive context will be included as a featured part of the walk's design and creation.

The project is set to get underway shortly.

All applications to the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Stream will now be accepted on an ongoing basis until the program is fully subscribed.

For more information on the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Stream, please visit our website: [www.islandcoastaltrust.ca](http://www.islandcoastaltrust.ca)

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#### **About the Island Coastal Economic Trust**

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) mission is to create a more diverse and globally competitive Island and Coastal economy. In partnership with local and regional governments, non-profits and Indigenous communities, ICET serves over half a million residents. Funding and support for economic infrastructure and other economic diversification initiatives is delivered through a unique community centered decision-making process. Since inception, ICET has approved more than \$55 million in funding for over 280 initiatives. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2600 construction phase jobs and 2750 long-term permanent jobs.

#### **For further information:**

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