

# Developing a Community Sustainability Charter for the Powell River Region

## A Synthesis of Materials from the Community Forum held January 19, 2008 & Written Submissions Received to March 2008

### Cultural Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

#### **1. Culture**

- For the charter it is important to define culture, to understand it so that we can know how to sustain it. Federal Definition includes the arts, heritage and culture. Other examples include language
- Sustain a diversity of culture as there are so many cultures, it has a spiritual value, not just an economic investment
- For Canadians we have defined ourselves as a compassionate peace loving society but cultural definition as a pluralistic society is difficult
- Volunteerism is a very rich culture in Powell River; our isolation is to our advantage in this.
- Looking for cross cultural pollination.
- One of the unique things about Powell River is the tolerance and compassion that exists for example PRACL.
- We welcome the international community.
- Access for people with disabilities is a cultural strength
- Powell River has a very rich community in terms of arts and culture, much of which is under developed presently

#### **2. The Arts**

- Academy of music has had key impact locally and internationally, Kathaumixw
- Music is very important to our community
- Artists are very strong here, writing, poetry , theatre, as well
- People want an inclusive arts centre, that includes a gallery, arts and crafts, language
- First Nations culture to be included in an arts centre
- People want a library included in an Arts Centre
- Build beauty into buildings
- Encourage First Nations people to develop their arts and culture
- Festivals; music, literary, crafts
- Creativity that allows people to express themselves

#### **3. Sports**

- More exploration of sustainability issues related to sports is needed
- Powell River is very receptive to sports and opens their homes to sporting events

#### **4. The Culture of Powell River**

- People want more interconnectedness in the community, with green space that promotes health, accessible transportation network
- Interconnected transportation to access in town events
- Create spaces for outdoor activities such as parks, connected through trails that bring people together. Physically construct a sense of community, intentionally.
- The town site is a valuable historical area and it needs to retain its original footprint
- Powell River is diverse, with 20 different cultures in the community, but we don't celebrate that.

- Keep the natural environment beautiful and healthy
- Community design: wheel chair access, land use, increase bicycles, walking, fresh water. Redesign neighborhoods and community for inclusiveness, alternate transport.
- Quality of life, address poverty, affordability, and self reliance, be proactive as a community, invest more in leisure, eat local food. Help those who need help, support success
- First nations traditions – celebrate and integrate
- Examples and information from other communities on cultural sustainability exist
- Celebrate our isolation – the positives it brings
- There are two perceptions; one of long term residents, one of new residents. Need to overcome “isolation” attitude.
- Powell River is a community where the unemployment is as close to zero as possible due to an economy that is vibrant and growing with innovation. An economy that revolves around the most valuable natural resource in this community, its people. Powell River should be a place where the natural environment is healthy and accessible, where culture (the arts), the sciences, high technology and resource extraction (fishing, forestry, mining) flourish and support a social structure that is respectful, fair, compassionate and inclusive.

## **5. Youth**

- Social activities, youth centre, safe places for kids, protect kids and make a safe community.
- Youth are concerned about unrestricted development, ongoing consultation with youth is needed
- Ask youth for what they want for the future of Powell River, their vision, the infrastructure that supports youth
- More support for education in youth – financial support , more accessibility,
- More family time
- Promote arts and culture in schools
- Retain young people and target youth for local opportunities
- Identify and target youth at risk and target programs to support youth

## **6. Community Participation - Social**

- Volunteerism is a rich opportunity in Powell River
- Look at other communities for solutions/ ideas
- We are a culture of collaboration, compassionate and connected
- People want a rural culture, a rural setting
- Need further meetings like this forum on sustainability
- Participation of kids in community events is limited
- Public transportation, activity nodes, housing clusters, larger city hall, bicycling, public squares, pedestrian only days
- Street communities, neighborhoods are important. Develop the downtown area.
- Listening, communicating, better dissemination of information
- loving kindness to youth
- be informed of each others issues
- encourage community participation in decision making, inclusive local government
- Visionary leadership needed in order to retain youth and put us on the cutting edge of community development. Leadership that appeals to the broad community.
- partnerships
- affordable family events
- street parties, festivals
- bridge generation gaps

## **7. Health**

- Support aging population
- Attract health care practitioners
- CAT scan
- Address drug issues
- Community health forum and education series

## **8. Employment**

- Value added, local industry, food growth, community forest, entrepreneurship, skilled workforce, opportunities for youth employment

## **9. Education**

- Human capital, keep university here, ESL, trades training, First Nations Speakers to schools. Local education to support ecological and economic development.
- Events to educate and engage people about reducing consumption of fossil fuels
- Post secondary – sustainable agriculture, international education, research, trades. Start apprenticeship in Grade 11 rather than Grade 12.
- Educate and encourage newcomers – stewardship
- Student assessment of eco footprint
- Environmental studies
- Research & Education Committee (REC), which will oversee the creation of plans for sustainable development; and the Political Action Committee (PAC), which will research the political opportunities and the electoral process, in an effort to find or support candidates for political office who will work with the community to develop and implement our sustainable development plans
- Examine existing and proposed Brooks/Malaspina initiatives.

## **11. Economic**

- Fund and develop the Arts. Establish a centre for the arts. Develop the cultural economy. Equestrian Centre, Japanese Garden – examples.
- Marketing plan through the Arts Council needed
- Link with First Nations ideas and experience
- Governments should budget for arts, perhaps a tax system (a line item)
- Access funding from non-governmental organizations, including private sector
- Examine the culture of greed
- Balance environmental and economic needs
- Set goals and targets that are measurable for business, individual, government, organizations
- Lobby needed to change provincial legislation, to represent our economic interests
- Community owned insurance corporation/cooperative. Local input/control – community as shareholders
- More public disclosure on the actions of the economic development committee.
- Conflict between green energy and tourism development
- Community input on forestry/fisheries issues and initiatives. Fisheries can be environmentally friendly and sustainable.
- Barter system, self sufficiency, keep skilled workers here, connect hi tech industry to university. Move from ‘free’ market to ‘social’ market. Return profits to community.
- Tax incentives for small industry and hi tech industry
- Infrastructure i.e. high speed internet, develop the economy of the net
- Shop locally

- Draw on people with disabilities to work in local economy
- Sustainable agriculture, organic agriculture, botanic gardens, landscape design, address meat production, need for local food. Support from City for local farming. Need abattoir. Preserve ALR. Exploit blackberries (antioxidants). Rules and regulations for large agriculture not needed for small local industry.
- Sustainable tourism, eco tourism, agri tourism. E.g. wilderness trails (SD47 – BOMB squad), worldwide marketing. ATV trail rides – economic opportunity. Don't be too reliant on tourism.
- Develop Malaspina as an economic driver – future “college” town.
- Business accountability for sustainability
- City supports business sustainability. Is tax burden on small business too heavy?
- Incentives for multi use of resources
- Pay as you go – don't leave debt. Develop scenarios in case the mill closes or fossil fuels get too expensive
- Incorporate family values into economic development
- Waterfront development, develop port.
- Develop Cranberry area, farmers market, encourage local business
- Small business is key, small individually owned shops
- Export – seed production, bees and honey, value added wood products, seafood, and clean biomass as fertilizer. Lessen raw log exports. Develop value added projects.
- Value the entire forest not just the trees, sustainable integrated forest practice, eco system based forestry. Community forest.
- Zoning – use land for best use, create inventory of lands. Develop policy for land use planning and regulations.
- Green industry. Green housing development/expertise is substantial. Green building code. Focus on alternative energy, lead the province.
- Let Powell River shrink to be sustainable
- Change from being a resource based economy
- What are our resources? Take advantage of existing assets. Identify new industry for our area that differentiates Powell River from other communities.
- Powell River has tremendous diversity of clean ecosystems, including green energy.
- Attract investment in new environmental technologies, pilot environmental projects. Access local, provincial and federal funding to seed innovation, research and entrepreneurship in the area. Link universities, schools and companies in development. Develop a community based research centre.
- Create a vibrant economy that excites and attracts skilled workers and immigrants
- Small energy projects rather than BIG projects
- Generate and keep wealth in the region
- Economic opportunities as retirement destination. Utilize the full potential of retirees, working together with youth.
- Don't encourage more retail, especially 'big box'. Develop bylaws to limit 'big box' and fast food.
- Work together rather than grinding axes
- Develop 'good' jobs – 40 hours per week, pension, and benefits.
- LNG's 80 jobs are not economically sustainable

## 12. Housing

- Safe affordable and accessible
- Use local natural materials for housing
- Coop and condo housing needed
- Carbon friendly building suppliers

- Infilling for urban development should be considered before new subdivisions are made
- Update older buildings

### 13. Food Supply

- Invest in farming
- Regional food supply – increase resilience, lessen dependence
- Eat locally and naturally
- Re-localization of food
- Powell River has the lead: 50 mile diet, GMO free zone, honey bee quarantine
- There is demand for local produce, food production an under developed industry
- low transportation requirements, high employment benefits
- supports health, education and community spirit
- sustainability – if organic
- the artisanal model
- agri tourism
- retain farm lands as green space, consider that farmlands in other regions are in short supply
- collect seaweed for gardens, municipal composting
- don't over fish – let herring stocks replenish, salmon, enhance creeks with roe for increased fish stock

### 14. Environment

- Protect Eagle River watershed
- GMO Free zone
- Full LRMP process
- Bio diversity mapping
- Create reserves, corridors, recreation and traditional use areas, green belts to protect urban areas
- Eco based management
- Inventory of toxicity
- Open public process, involve key governing bodies
- Resources are need to support sustainable environment
- Energy policy needed, use sustainable energy sources. National Research Council should set standards for all things that use energy, self sufficiency goal – energy independence. Tax incentives for insulating homes
- Biodiversity as a goal to ensure widest range of options for the future
- Establish a coordinator to act as a resource person for incentives and resources related to sustainability, and to educate people on alternative choices
- Establish a car pool registry, a designated hitch hiker system
- Learn from others, e.g. Sweden, earthcat.org
- Build local consensus and a vision for 200 years from now – vision statement
- Define the sustainability challenges we face clearly (environmental review), and communicate them. Who should be involved? Suggestion: Mike Wong, Ministry of Environment. Should be community driven, inclusive.
- Private land ownership may be a barrier to extended land use
- There is a sense of urgency about needing to get on with this process
- We need a more pedestrian/bicycle friendly choice of routes, and sidewalks
- Monitor business/development
- Land fill, sewage, water issues – not all the water in our area is drinkable, need buffers around the water shed with room for people and water

- Protect our views
- Adopt smart growth policy
- Stick to the OCP, Municipal plan for land use
- Set zero waste targets, no plastic or paper bags – bring your own. Provide recyclable batteries, local glass recycling for use, make composting mandatory, make recycling more accessible
- Zero pollution paper industry. Effluent from mill brought to surface rather than to ocean floor
- Georgia Strait – everyone in the basin is affected by water issues
- Water should remain in public ownership
- The value of our natural capital – how do we measure that, e.g. the air, water and standing trees
- No tree cutting bylaw in City, no pesticides, use natural grasses, reduce lawn mowing, soil removal bylaws
- Assure affordability in the future
- Provide tax incentives for environmentally appropriate transportation choices
- A proposal outlining goals for sustainable development and open government has been developed, presenting key ideas of the emerging global movement towards local economy, sustainable living, and sensible responses to global warming, peak oil, and the corporatization of the public sphere.

**15. Sustainability Charter – a suggested template** (links to Ontario process also provided)

- Adopt precautionary principle
- Commitments to;
  - Governance
  - Local management towards sustainability
  - Equitable access to natural common goods
  - Encourage sustainable consumption and production
  - Sustainable planning and design
  - Sustainable mobility choices
  - Promote health and well being
  - Vibrant economy, access to employment without damage to environment
  - Social equity and justice – secure, inclusive and supportive community
  - Local to global – assume global responsibility for sustainability, peace, equity, justice