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## July/August 2007 Newsletter

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### Message from the Chair

Summer has been busy for Social Planning Cowichan. It has provided time to research and plan around two key issues the Social Planning Cowichan Board determined as needing immediate attention in the Cowichan Valley: affordable housing and quality child care.

The Inadequate Housing in the Cowichan Valley report which was published in January 2007 recommended establishing a working committee to develop a Cowichan Valley strategy to address the crisis in affordable housing. A 'Directorate' is currently being formed of representatives of key stakeholder groups.

A draft Terms of Reference has been created for the Directorate and an initial meeting has been scheduled in October. The report identified nearby jurisdictions that can assist us and the Directorate will be actively involving them to give us a 'jump start' in creating a regional affordable housing strategy.

The child care crisis reached a peak throughout BC in 2007, with Cowichan Valley being no exception. Thanks to our new executive director Diane Kennedy and her research assistant Kylynn Peerens, our summer placement student, a draft child care report has been prepared. Recommendations for action will be developed at a community forum with the final report to be published in October. The early learning preparation of our young affects the quality of life of everyone in the community over the long term. In the short term, our social and economic viability depends on it!

Social Planning Cowichan begins the development of a 2008 strategic plan at our board meeting on September 18. Please do not hesitate to contact our executive director or a board member if you have any comments you would like to have considered. After all, we are here to respond to residents' input on ensuring the quality of life in the Cowichan Region.

*Candace Spilsbury*

Candace Spilsbury, Chair  
Social Planning Cowichan

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## Status of the Community Report Feedback

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Thank you to the following people who met with us to provide feedback on the report:

Sheryl Baugh-Allen, Cowichan United Way  
Carol Blantchard, Cowichan Lake Community Services  
Martin Breuhan, Cowichan Intercultural Society  
Terri Dame, Safer Futures  
Maureen Gallinger, Cowichan Family Life  
Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence  
Jim Harnden, Cowichan Independent Living  
Dianne Hinton, Cowichan Valley Assoc. for Community Living  
Dennis Lait, Ladysmith Resource Center  
Delta McDonnell, Child Care Resource and Referral  
Anita McLeod, Town of Ladysmith  
Georg Stratemeyer, Volunteer Cowichan  
Mark Timmermans, Providence Farm  
Debbie Williams, House of Friendship

Over the summer, research Assistant Kylynn Peerens met with representatives of agencies to gather feedback for a future Status of the Community report and commitment to work on the recommendations. The interviews were structured around three questions and the following is a very brief summary of the information collected.

- 1. Is there information you would suggest being included in the next report?**
  - More breakdown of information.
  - More in-depth information.
  - More information on specific people/ groups who will be following through with the recommendations.
  - More breakdown of information by communities and specific areas, i.e. Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, Crofton, Chemainus, South Cowichan, etc.
  - Several agencies had facts/stats to add that they felt were missed in regards to specific issues that each are involved with or concerned about, i.e. childcare, disability issues (accessibility, etc.), food security (specifically in Ladysmith), immigration, etc.
- 2. What is your reaction to the recommendations in the report?**
  - The recommendations are very broad and too generalized. Need to be more practical and easier to apply.
  - Priorities need to be set. One agency suggested holding a forum to look at what the community perceives to be priority issues.
  - Need to address immediate need, not just long-term solutions.
  - The recommendations need to be community specific, i.e. Ladysmith, Duncan, etc.
  - The recommendations should name bodies that will be taking on the task. *Who* will be following through?
- 3. In what ways could your organization help accomplish the recommendations?**
  - Every person interviewed suggested different ways that they are helping/could contribute including hosting meetings, advocacy, contributing statistics, helping make connections, etc.
  - Some offered to work/partner with Social Planning Cowichan on some of the different issues such as housing, transportation, and community safety.

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### Child Care Report Community Forum October 2

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The draft report on Child Care in the Cowichan Valley will be presented at a community forum at the Silver Bridge Inn at 6:30pm on Tuesday, October 2, 2007.

The purpose of this forum will be to introduce the report and discuss the recommendations. Everyone is welcome.

To obtain a copy of the draft report prior to the community forum, please call the office at 746-1004 or email [info@socialplanningcowichan.ca](mailto:info@socialplanningcowichan.ca)