



Welcome to the Heartbeat of Cowichan 2018

A Message from our Chair

Social Planning Cowichan is pleased to provide the community with the Heartbeat of Cowichan. It is our hope that the information found here will provide you with a "snapshot" in time on issues that matter most to our community. When we acknowledge and value our region's well being, we can identify and prioritize actions that support and strengthen us as individuals and as a community.

Thank you to the researchers and authors whose wonderful ideas and hard work have inspired an educational and appealing site. Thank you to the Indigenous peoples and organizations who have worked with us to ensure respectful content that honours each of us. And thank you to our numerous community partners who have provided local data and stories; and who have tirelessly reviewed our presentation of the information gathered. Because of you, we hope to have tapped into what matters most in the hearts of our people.

History: How did we get here?

In 1992 a group of Cowichan residents came together to talk about what they valued about living in the Cowichan Region and what they would like to see preserved for future generations. This conversation, led by FutureCorp Cowichan, resulted in the new endeavor Visions 2020. This process facilitated extensive consultation with community members that led to the creation of a global vision statement and six sector-specific statements which were ratified by residents at a public forum held on March 16, 2006. The other purpose of the forum was to formally hand over the reigns of Visions 2020 to Social Planning Cowichan, concluding that "under the expert guidance of Social Planning Cowichan, community residents will continue to implement the vision of the community we would like to be living in, in the year 2020."



Carla Bortoletto
Chair at Social
Planning Cowichan





Your Community Partners: Working Together

Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) was established in 2004 and shortly after became a member of the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC).

SPC is an independent non-partisan organization dedicated to building community well-being. The goals of SPC are to:

- promote broader and deeper understanding of social issues that affect the quality of community life
- educate and inform the Cowichan Region about social planning issues
- facilitate partnerships and community consensus on issues and action plans
- research, advise, and bring partners together to design strategies and action plans on the social impacts related to current trends and needs in the community
- recommend action plans including both short and long term strategies to improve the quality of life in the Cowichan Region.

In 2008 SPC was gifted the work of Cultural Connections, a legacy from the North American Indigenous Games. This work includes co-hosting the annual Walk of Nations and generating opportunities for cross-cultural bridge building between First Nations and non-First Nations community members.

Actualizing one of the key goals of Visions 2020, SPC published a Status of the Community Report in 2006 and again in 2010. These reports built on the six sector-specific statements of Visions 2020 by adding four additional sectors and integrating sixty five indicators of social health. The reports were aimed to give Cowichan citizens a better understanding of current social issues by measuring how the Region was performing and meeting its goals.



Our Cowichan Community Health Network (CCHN) has been a key partner in advancing this vision. CCHN was established in 2013 and has a mandate to create change by identifying local health issues through bringing together the people and resources best able to develop community-based solutions. Guided by twelve key determinants of health, CCHN aims to create and sustain the most effective health system possible for our Cowichan communities. In 2014 CCHN published a Community Health Report which provided a complete Health Profile for the Cowichan region, an area coinciding with the Cowichan Valley Regional District boundaries.

Community Snapshots

Social Planning Cowichan recognized the importance of the Community Health Report because it is closely aligned with the goals, process and data provided by the Status of the Community reports. As a result, the two organizations developed a collaborative approach in 2015 to ensure that reports were provided in a way that adds the most benefit to our community. Currently CCHN will continue to produce a Community Health Report every four years. This provides a new opportunity for SPC to engage a well defined focus by developing a series of Community Snapshots. Community Snapshots are living, dynamic publications which track and report ongoing trends, provide timely comparative data reports as new reports emerge from our region as well as provincial and federal sectors. In addition, SPC has begun to prepare an audit of Visions 2020 and is developing a multi-sector collaborative for the development of Visions 2050. The principles that guide this work are defined in the Earth Charter and social determinants of health.

The Region: The Cowichan Valley Regional District within the territory of Coast Salish People



The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) on Vancouver Island is part of the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people. This region stretches from the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island to the Salish Sea (Strait of Georgia) and southern Gulf Islands to the east. It reaches north of Ladysmith and south to the Malahat/Mill Bay area. The Cowichan Valley Regional District is one of 27 regional districts in British Columbia. It is comprised of nine electoral areas and four municipalities in the southern part of Vancouver Island. It covers a land area of 3,473.12 km² and over 80,000 people live in the region with the majority of the population along the eastern side of the island. There are four municipalities – City of Duncan, Town of Lake Cowichan, District of North Cowichan and the Town of Ladysmith, as well as numerous unincorporated communities, a number of Gulf Islands and many First Nations reserves. The seven local First Nations are: Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Malahat First Nation, Penelakut Tribe and Stz'uminus First Nation. Each nation is responsible for administering its own affairs under the overall federal administration of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).