

SHARING OUR STORY



SPC

Social Planning Cowichan

SINCE 2004

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WHAT IS SOCIAL PLANNING COWICHAN?

Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) is a registered charitable society founded in May 2004. Its goal is to provide leadership that brings the community together to create a sustainable quality of life for everyone in the Cowichan Region.

SPC is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors with a dedicated staff of community development professionals who work to engage the expertise that exists within the Cowichan Region. We provide the region with expert facilitators, researchers and community leaders who come together to collaborate and take action to meet the needs in our community.

SPC identifies community priorities for action, based on research and community consultation through community dialogues, and community based research projects.

We value the people and organizations who are deeply rooted and connected to their communities and believe in building capacity in the places we bring our work.

HOW WAS SPC FORMED?

Social Planning Cowichan was established by a lengthy community process, and was handed the reins through a community forum process to carry out the recommendations developed through the Visions 2020 community forums to address social planning concerns in the Cowichan Region.





WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Through our work, we promote social health by identifying gaps in services in our community. We then take the steps to establish ways of addressing these needs, often forming the beginnings of new organizations and committees that will continue the work as their own independent entities.

Read on to learn about some of the organizations Social Planning has birthed in our 15+ year history.



2008 NAIG AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

It's been more than 15 years since we began our journey to build relationships and bridges between the First Nations and non First Nations communities within the Cowichan valley. The North American Indigenous Games, hosted by Cowichan Tribes, were a turning point for the community, the first time that many non-First Nations people in the community became aware of the enormity of the

social, economic and cultural divide that exists in the region. From this point forward we began the journey of Nuts'amat Shqwaluwun – working together with one heart and one mind.

Since 2009, Cultural Connections Cowichan, a legacy of the 2008 NAIG has remained committed to supporting opportunities for “Nutsamaat Shqwaluwun – One Heart, One Mind” for people living in the Cowichan Region to understand the history and impacts of colonization, relationship building and develop new ways of working together to create a stronger and healthier community for everyone.

Today, we continue this work toward reconciliation – The Elders remind us that it is a process, a journey without one single road or a final destination. It is not always easy or comfortable and it is sometimes confusing and frustrating, yet worth every step.



[Click here to learn more about this important work.](#)





HOUSING

Between 2007–2009, under the leadership of Linden Collette, SPC created the Regional Affordable Housing Directorate (RAHD) to address a significant need in the community for affordable housing options, a need exemplified by increasing rates of poverty in our community, shifting demographic trends, and increasing costs of housing.

In January 2016, Joy Emmanuel took the lead and with RAHD facilitated the establishment of the Cowichan Housing Association, a new organization that will focus on homelessness prevention and affordable housing in the Cowichan region. As part of this transition, Social Planning has transferred responsibility for its affordable housing programs to the new organization.

Cowichan Housing Association was the outcome of eight years of successful work by SPC and the RAHD, and continues to strive toward affordable housing for all in our region today. [Click here](#) for more information on SPC's role in the creation of [CHA](#), or [here](#) to visit their website for more up-to-date information.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Cowichan Climate Change Collaborative was established in 2014, in response to a community need for a collective, organized approach to tackling the challenges our region will be faced with in coming years, due to a changing climate. It consisted of more than 20 environmental and social benefit

organizations, local government and First Nations, faith organizations, and provincial government agencies. The collaborative first came together in 2014 to work on a collective strategy that addresses climate change at a local level, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable populations in our community and how to build resiliency in our neighbourhoods. [Click here](#) to view our archived [Climate Change](#) work.



VISIONS 2020



In 2003 Visions 2020 was resurrected by Community Futures Cowichan, and over the following few years a lot of work was done to bring the vision statements up to date. In March of 2006, Community Futures handed the reins of Visions 2020 over to Social Planning Cowichan. Through this process, participants collaborated to identify a series of vision statements that would guide the priorities of development of our community as we progressed further into the 21st century. [Click here](#) for more background on this work.

COWICHAN CHILDCARE COUNCIL

The Cowichan Child Care Council promotes high quality, accessible, & affordable child care in the Cowichan Region. The Council actively works to develop a strategic plan for child care in collaboration with families and multiple partners within the region and across all levels of government. In 2015 the Childcare Council was moved from Social Planning Cowichan to become its own entity that is still carrying on this important work today. [Click here](#) to learn more about SPC's role in this organization's formation.



AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

In 2017, a Walkability and Accessibility Assessment highlighted some of the challenges faced by residents especially with the geographical challenges in Ladysmith. With a significant projected increase of seniors over the next 20 years, Ladysmith is working toward becoming an Age-Friendly Community. Social Planning Cowichan worked with several community partners to connect the community to evaluate existing services and take a deeper look at how the current infrastructure can evolve to meet the needs of an aging population. The most important part of this process was to engage with people in the community with a focus on seniors, elders, local businesses and service providers to identify what improvements could be made. [Click here](#) to read more about what we found could be done to improve Ladysmith to be more inclusive and accessible for our senior citizens.

POVERTY REDUCTION AND LIVING WAGE

Living in poverty is much more complex than simply not having enough money to make ends meet. To understand poverty in the context of the Cowichan Region, Social Planning Cowichan has calculated the living wage since 2014 with guidance from The Campaign for Living Wage. Calculating the living wage, which is the hourly pay an individual must receive in order to cover basic living expenses, is intended to compensate for Canada's stagnant wages, which have failed to rise to scale with the price of consumer products and the cost of living. Social Planning Cowichan will continue to determine this calculation annually as it provides insights into the cost of living across the Cowichan Region and calls on employers to meet a standard higher than the minimum wage. [Click here](#) to learn more about our work surrounding Living Wage in the Cowichan Region.

Social Planning Cowichan is also engaged in two ongoing poverty reduction projects to explore what poverty looks like in the Cowichan Lake, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Ditidaht, Ladysmith, and Stz'uminus regions and to identify actions that can be taken to meet the needs of community members. In partnership with several local organizations, strategy reports for both The COMMUNITY Together to End poverty -Hw-nuts'ulwum and the Movin' On Up Cowichan Lake Poverty Reduction projects were completed in July 2021.





COVID-19 WORK & COMMUNITY SURVEYS

The COVID-19 virus and resulting global pandemic has altered our day to day lives in unprecedented ways.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY SURVEY

As we leave our homes and some get back to work, reflecting on how these times affected you is important for shaping how we recover to ensure everyone has what they need.

Social Planning Cowichan has been gathering information and collecting experiences on the COVID-19 crisis in the Cowichan Region through a series of COVID-19 Community Surveys. Results of these surveys were shared with the community and our partners, with the goal of helping to look ahead and shape what our community might be like as we look forward to a sense of normalcy after we emerge on the other side of the pandemic.

[Click here](#) to view results from our latest round of surveys, conducted over the course of Winter 2021; as well as our previous round from [Spring 2020](#).

WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN SURVEY FINDINGS

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO ALTER OUR DAY TO DAY LIVES IN UNPRECEDENTED WAYS.

Daily Cases on Vancouver Island

We conducted 4 surveys from September 2020 - March 2021:

- Food Security and Household Activities
- Work and Household Income
- Personal and Family Wellbeing
- Family Dynamics and Challenges

With the increase in cases and restrictions throughout the winter, we asked community members how their lives have been affected.

Stay tuned for upcoming results!

WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN KEY FINDING #4

Family Dynamics and Challenges

57% ... of survey respondents are concerned about aging family members health

How do you stay connected with family?

- talk over the phone
- social distanced visits
- connect through the help of caregivers

WINTER COVID-19 CHECK-IN KEY FINDING #3

Personal and Family Well-being

How do you care for your health?

66% ... of survey respondents say that their physical well-being is **worse** since prior to the COVID-19 crisis

- 59.29% hike
- 51.43% garden
- 56.43% eat well

UP from 45% in previous survey



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS AND STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY

In 2006 Social Planning Cowichan published the first Status of the Community report. This report built on the six sector specific statements of the Visions 2020 process by adding four additional sectors and 65 indicators of social health. The report was aimed at

giving Cowichan citizens a better understanding of the current social issues by measuring how the Region was performing in terms of meeting its goals.

In 2017 we evolved our reports into an online (downloadable) format that provides us the ability to keep the information current, connect to links to projects and reports as they are published, update information in "live time" while making data more easily available and usable for the community. By providing data on key issues and trends, we can help other community organizations and governments establish their priorities. [Click here](#) to have a look at these living reports that are continually updated with the latest Stats Canada data and ongoing federal, provincial and local publications.

More information on this work is [available here](#).





HOUSING

[Inadequate Shelter in the Cowichan Valley - 2007](#)

[Affordable Housing Strategy Report - 2010](#)

[Cowichan Regional Affordable Housing Association - 2012](#)

[Aboriginal Off-Reserve Housing Report -2014](#)

[Cowichan Region Homelessness Report -2014](#)

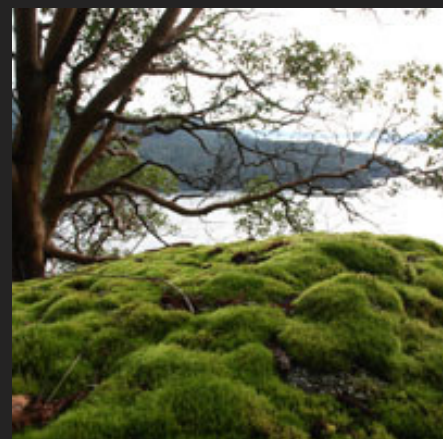


POVERTY REDUCTION

[Living Wage Calculations in the Cowichan Region](#)

[The CommUNITY Together to end Poverty - Hw-nuts'ulqum website](#)

[The Movin' On Up Cowichan Lake Poverty Reduction website](#)



CLIMATE CHANGE

[Climate Change Report - 2016](#)

[Climate Change Toolkit -2016](#)



AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Ladysmith

Accessibility Map - 2019

Ladysmith

Walkability/Accessibility Study - Highlights

Ladysmith

Walkability/Accessibility Assessment Report Survey Results Fall 2017

Ladysmith Age Friendly Final Report



STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY

Status of the Community - 2006

Status of the Community - 2010



COWICHAN CHILDCARE COUNCIL

Childcare in the Cowichan Valley - 2008

Early Childhood Education and Care in the Cowichan Region - 2011



SAFETY

[Youth Dialogues Final Report 2014](#)

[Safe Youth Cowichan Community Impact Report 2015](#)

[Inviting Voice Creating Space Report 2015](#)

[Youth Stand Up Project Report 2016](#)

[Safe Cowichan Annual Report 2016](#)

[Community Safety Advisory Commission 2017](#)

[Keeping Our Community Safe Report 2019](#)

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