



PROJECT PROFILE

HORNBY ISLAND ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN



Ford Cove, Hornby Island



WHEN PEOPLE ON HORNBY ISLAND

realized that the economic development plan completed in 2002 wasn't going to get them to their 2020 goals, they set to work renewing the vision with a call to action.

"We needed to prioritize activities so that we could achieve the goals set out in the Island's original 2020 Community Vision," said Darren Bond, Chair of the planning committee for Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC). "Our group took the lead in re-engaging the community in the action planning process."

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With funding support from ICET, HICEEC set out on a process to design an Economic Action Plan (EAP) based on identified trends, research, and community feedback. Beginning in spring 2015, the group gathered input from the Island's residents through Town Hall sessions, side meetings, and surveys.

"From a population of roughly 1,000, we received more than 350 responses and 1,400 comments and insights," Bond explained. "That information was fed back to the community for confirmation, and ultimately became the basis for our Action Plan."

Of all the ideas and input received, one stood out as unexpected, and perhaps even counter-intuitive for the quiet island: Residents felt that the population was 50% lower than it should be.

"People here are concerned about letting the next generation take root on the island, and they want population growth," he said. "There are caveats of course: conservation-oriented, respectful of the environment, and preservation of the creative, artistic, entrepreneurial culture. But overall, Islanders believe that if we get to 1,500 residents, we are more likely to have a well-functioning, vibrant year-round economy, which is less dependent on summer tourism."

Already, HICEEC and partner organizations are at work implementing the plan, and new initiatives and investments are underway.

The largest initiative underway is the Ford Cove Harbour expansion project, also receiving ICET funding, which will support increased marine visitor tourism on the Island. Led by the Ford Cove Harbour Authority, HICEEC is involved with marketing and enhancing linkages between the marine visitors and the Hornby business and hospitality sector.

A new 30 unit affordable housing development, which will include mixed ownership and rental opportunities, is also being supported by HICEEC. Aware of potential obstacles to development, such as infrastructure needs and the scarcity of water on the Island, the organization is taking a proactive approach. Working with the Water Stewardship Committee, HICEEC is creating a plan to raise awareness and develop water infrastructure on the island, in order to meet the population target of 1,500 residents.

Another key area of focus is the preservation of Hornby's unique character as a creative and affordable place to live – a major draw for new residents. Initiatives to support business training and promotional support for artist and artisan ventures, as well as incentives for artist-led projects, are being launched. HICEEC is also addressing the need for more physical spaces for arts and culture with plans for a new arts centre.

Support for small business and innovators is also high on the list of priorities. To address the gap in trade and commercial infrastructure on the island, the community is exploring the feasibility of a "hackerspace" – now known as "The Spark" – to repurpose the old fire hall into a space that will support entrepreneurs and new product development.

Small, but spirited and powerful, the HICEEC has engaged community expertise and partner organizations to guarantee timely implementation, action and results, ensuring the community is where it needs to be by 2020.