

TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Strengthening, Honouring and Celebrating



SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 – 2021

Presented July 27, 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the Sunshine Coast Community Services Strategic Plan! This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of our organization and the process followed to develop this plan. Key elements of the plan are then introduced.

Our Organization

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society (SCCSS) is a community-based organization that has been providing community services for people on the Sunshine Coast since 1974. Our history is one of caring, commitment and flexibility. In 2016, we served 5,600 Sunshine Coast residents through over 35 programs grouped in the following teams:

- Child Development and Youth Services
- Community Action and Engagement
- Child and Family Counselling
- Together Against Violence

In 2016, the Board of Directors initiated significant organizational change to build capacity for sustainability, resilience and innovation. This planning process is one of many collaborative and engaging dialogue processes that the Board, management and staff are moving forward with. Like the other dialogue processes, this planning process followed the principles of appreciative inquiry and asset-based community development where the starting point of our planning and action is the strengths and assets of the organization and community.

Our Planning Process

This strategic plan is a cornerstone of a robust planning and monitoring framework that illustrates a clear and meaningful theory of change for the organization. A theory of change articulates the relationship between the needs and assets of a community, best practices in our work, resources we seek, activities we undertake and the social change created as a result of our work. The theory of change is woven through all planning and monitoring levels.

Using the skills and knowledge learned in an initial learning phase, we held appreciative circle dialogues with the Board, senior management team, staff teams and participants. Community members and organizational partners participated in a three hour World Cafe dialogue. The information gathered in these dialogue sessions was recorded and used in subsequent planning with the Board and senior management. Staff continue to use dialogue circles in their staff teams and in seeking input from program participants. We also intend to use this capacity to strengthen our commitment to and involvement in community dialogue.

Community Strengths and Challenges

Approximately 30,000 people live in communities along Coast, including 8,710 families, 2,125 of whom have children living at home. Characteristics of these communities are that:

- 46 percent of the population is 55 years of age or older
- there are proportionately fewer people in the 20-40 age range than Canada as a whole
- Aboriginal people comprise 5 percent of the population and 12.8 percent of the youth aged 15-19
- residents tend to be healthy and active
- there are increasing numbers of newcomers to Canada, and
- there is a higher proportion of single parent families than in Canada as a whole.

Residents are active as volunteers and have a strong history of community engagement. There is a strong commitment to social equity and environmental sustainability. However, there are also important challenges that need to be addressed. There is a growing social inequality and many young people struggle to find homes and secure employment. The projected dependency rates are significantly higher than that for the province overall. Our dialogues revealed that community members are committed to working together and with SCCSS to address these issues.

Our Vision

Our work is based on a vision of:

An engaged, healthy and thriving Coast.

Our Mission

We contribute to the achievement of this vision by:

Fostering social equity on the Sunshine Coast by creating opportunities for people to achieve their full potential.

Our Values

Our work, and this plan, are most importantly values-based. While our Board and staff work from a broad foundation of personal and professional values, the following values highlight our organizational focus:

- Interdependence
- Diversity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Social justice

Our Strategic Directions

SCCSS intends to forge an innovative and creative path that honours its strong history and commitment to this community. Keeping our focus clearly on a healthy, engaged and thriving Sunshine Coast, the following strategic directions detail how we intend to build on our strengths, create capacity for innovation and foster financial resilience.

Strategic Direction 1: NURTURE Our People

Clearly, our people are our strength. We have built strong relationships in the community and are recognized for the strength of professional skills offered through our services. We intend to honour and build on this strength.

Strategic Goal 1.1: Develop a culture of learning and collaboration.

Strategic Goal 1.2: Review and revise current compensation structure to ensure equity, clarity and competitiveness with like organizations.

Strategic Goal 1.3: Build capacity for innovation in volunteerism.

Strategic Direction 2: BUILD Financial Sustainability

Supporting our people means that our staff and volunteers need reliable resources to do their work and feel supported in innovative programming. When an organization is financially sustainable, stress associated with balancing budgets is freed up for creativity and community building. By 2020, we intend to be financially resilient and better able to focus on changing community needs and goals.

Strategic Goal 2.1: Diversify revenue base.

Strategic Goal 2.2: Manage assets to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic Goal 2.3: Build organizational capacity to support financial sustainability.

Strategic Direction 3: CELEBRATE our strength: Share our Story

We learned through this process that our people have been quietly and effectively doing their work. However, there are many people and organizations that do not know the breadth and complexity of our services. Staff are often highly program focused and have not always had the capacity to fully engage with other complementary programs managed by their colleagues. Innovation requires that we look at internal connectivity of ideas and resources. Sustainability requires that the community know about us and invest in us.

Strategic Goal 3.1: Strengthen internal organizational communication.

Strategic Goal 3.2: Share our story with the community on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Direction 4: INNOVATE to promote community resilience

Despite our large geographical area, we have a relatively small population. However, we are giants in our commitment to being a caring community, concerned for others and for the environment. We aim to use that commitment as our fulcrum to engage people along the Coast in finding innovative solutions to community issues. We also intend to work with our partners to reduce social inequity and explore innovative responses to emerging needs such as housing and senior's supports.

Strategic Goal 4.1: Deepen capacity to serve our geographic region.

Strategic Goal 4.2: Develop and implement a food security strategy.

Strategic Goal 4.3: Identify and respond to emerging and unmet needs such as housing and seniors supports.

Strategic 5: INSPIRE Social Change

We live here because of the quality of the community. How do we collectively ensure that access to this quality of life is shared by all our friends and neighbours? We intend to build our capacity internally to be 'agents' of change and to foster dialogue about social equity.

Strategic Goal 5.1: Build our capacity to effect social change.

Strategic Goal 5.2: Promote community engagement toward a shared vision of social equity.

INTRODUCING OUR PROCESS

Welcome to the Sunshine Coast Community Services Strategic Plan! This document introduces our organization and the planning process that we facilitated to set our organizational direction for 2017 – 2021. The Plan is intended to support us in serving communities along the Coast from Port Mellon to Egmont, in collaboration with other organizations. Thus, we will begin by describing the Sunshine Coast Community Services Society (SCCSS) and the process we are undertaking to revitalize our organization. We will then share what we learned in dialogue with so many people who are involved with and committed to our organization. This background will set the stage for our Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2021 which will detail our renewed vision, mission, and strategies.

A Strong Community Asset

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society (SCCSS) is a community-based organization that has been providing community services for people on the Sunshine Coast since 1974. Our history is one of caring, commitment and flexibility. In 2016, we served 5,600 Sunshine Coast residents through over 35 programs. The largest community service agency and the seventh largest employer on the Coast, we employ over 90 professional staff, and work with hundreds of volunteers to provide a caring place of support for residents on the Sunshine Coast. We offer our services through four teams:



Child Development and Youth Services

Family-centred, inclusive programs promote active participation and provide pregnant women, parents, caregivers, children and youth with support to ensure all children have a good start in life. Prevention, intervention and support are provided for children and youth with a developmental delay or diagnosed disability. Emotional, social and developmental supports are available to assist youth as they navigate adolescence to become successful independent adults. Our Welcoming Communities program offers settlement support to newcomers to

Canada. Cultural “building blocks” for First Nations families incorporating Indigenous crafts, arts, and creativity are offered through our Aboriginal Families Pulling Together program.

Community Action and Engagement

The Food Bank, Volunteer Program, Better at Home seniors program, Arrowhead Clubhouse, Legacy Housing, Thrift Store and Visitors Centre all work with people to help people – nurturing connections, linking to resources, and building the support that enables our community to thrive.

Child and Family Counselling

Our programs provide individual and group counselling and in-home and group support for families. We use a strengths-based and collaborative approach to build on the client’s strengths and develop positive relationships to ensure the client remains at the centre of the work we do together.

Together Against Violence

This team provides safety and support for those impacted by all forms of violence and trauma. We help our clients rebuild their lives and establish positive connections in the community by offering shelter, counselling, advocacy, assistance with the justice system and non-judgmental emotional and practical support. At the prevention and social change level, the Mentors in Violence Prevention program offers a unique and innovative approach to help secondary school students examine their attitudes, language and behaviours and provides them with tools to respond to and prevent gender violence.

Through these teams, our organization reveals our many strengths. In particular, our community dialogues told us that we are experienced as:

- having committed and compassionate staff
- offering a diversity of programs
- having longevity as a hub

From the Community

"My children were born outside Canada. Moving back with children, I thought we would be on our own to figure out options and support for my son, who did not walk. We were connected to community services where we were guided through a maze of services and processes inside and outside the organization. My son has received all kinds of support from consistent people and has made great progress and the support treatments and equipment has not cost the small fortune we expected. Consequently he leads a pretty [full] and active life."

- built on strong relationships
- offering unique and responsive set of services
- built on community engagement; and
- a place where staff, board and volunteers are highly skilled.

A recent staff survey revealed that 91 percent of staff agree or strongly agree that they are proud to tell people where they work and 95 percent that their work is well suited to their personal and professional interests and provides them an opportunity to use their skills and abilities.

However, in recent years, we have also experienced significant challenges. Like most non-profits, we are heavily reliant on government funding. There are constant changes to government funding, creating program instability. There is limited funding for administrative support and minimal resources for travel costs associated with serving a large geographic region. We are challenged each year to balance our budget and therefore need to diversify our funding base.



Our staff have been shouldering extra work to respond to the lack of funding but have reached the limits of their capacity to do so. Some programs need revitalization. New staff resources such as training, equipment, space and technology are needed to support them in their demanding and rapidly changing roles. We have had very low turn-over in our staff, with many people having worked here for many years. But many are also preparing to retire and planning for succession is clearly needed.

Through this challenging time, our staff and management teams have maintained a strong and professional commitment to our clients. However, there has not been time to strengthen internal and external communication. Internally, the different programs are not always aware of opportunities to collaborate and expand capacity. Externally, the community does not know the breadth and depth of what we offer and often do not know how to access our services.

In 2016, the Board of Directors initiated significant organizational change to build capacity for sustainability, resilience and innovation. They hired a new Executive Director and, under her

leadership, are engaging in creative change processes. This planning process is one of many collaborative and engaging dialogue processes that the Board, management and staff are moving forward with. Like the other dialogue processes, this planning process is based on the principles of appreciative inquiry and asset-based community development where the starting point of our planning and action is the strengths and assets of the organization and community. In taking this approach, SCCSS is forward looking, community oriented and energetic in responding to what we have heard from communities along the Coast.

Planning As Revitalization

This strategic plan is a cornerstone of a robust planning and monitoring framework that illustrates a clear and meaningful theory of change for the organization. A theory of change articulates the relationship between the needs and assets of a community, best practices in our work, resources we seek, activities we undertake and the social change created as a result of our work. The theory of change is woven through all planning and monitoring levels. Once the framework is complete, SCCSS will have:

- a strategic plan
- an organizational theory of change and logic model
- program logic models
- an outcome monitoring plan for all programs, and
- a plan to monitor the fulfilment of strategic plan.

As we move forward, SCCSS will have a greater capacity to monitor the change that is occurring because of their work. We will have information readily available to communicate with our partners and greater capacity to collaborate with other organizations to ensure that all people in need are supported appropriately.

Dialogue in Action

As noted above, our planning framework is based on fulsome dialogue internally and externally using an asset-based, appreciative approach. While dialogue and community development is not new to SCCSS, we wanted to develop a community language to guide us in dialogue and planning. We started by learning about circle dialogue, outcome based planning and asset-based community development. By approaching the process in this way, we were able to create a plan that builds on SCCSS's strong history of serving communities along the Coast extremely well and creates opportunities for innovation at the same time.

Collective Learning

This stage of the process involved:

- circle training for all staff interested in using circle dialogues to participate in the strategic planning process and incorporate it in their team work
- an environmental scan of the potential strengths, challenges, opportunities and risks facing SCCSS internally and externally in the next 3-5 years drawn from demographic data, partner strategic plans, program data, and interviews with Board members, the Executive Director and senior management
- community input through in-depth telephone or personal interviews and an on-line surveys; and
- ongoing training about theory of change, logic model development and monitoring planning and implementation.



Appreciative Dialogue

Using the skills and knowledge learned in the first phase, we held appreciative circle dialogues with the Board, senior management team, staff teams and participants. Community members and organizational partners participated in a three hour World Cafe dialogue. Invitees included: community leaders, local businesses, funders and donors, shi'sha'lh Nation, staff, Board, and representatives of partner organizations. The information gathered in these dialogue sessions was recorded and used in subsequent planning with the Board and senior management.

However, dialogue is not stopping with the planning process. Staff continue to use dialogue circles in their staff teams and in seeking input from program participants. We also intend to use this capacity to strengthen our commitment to and involvement in community dialogue.

Appreciative Planning

Reflecting on what they learned through involvement in learning and dialogue, the Board and staff developed this plan, setting an energetic and creative direction for the next 3-5 years. This plan will form the foundation of a business plan and the development of organizational and program logic models. It will also guide us in continued dialogue and accountability to communities along the Coast.



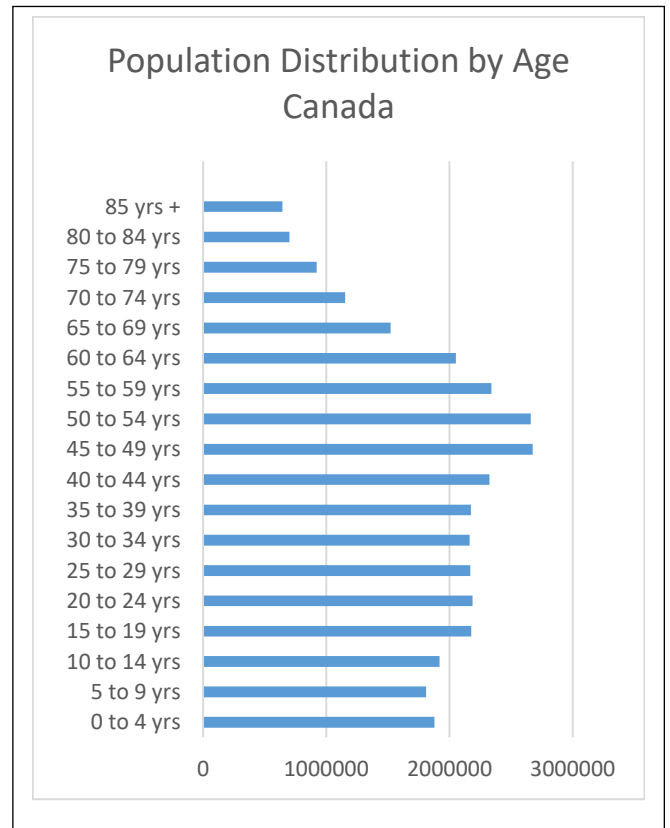
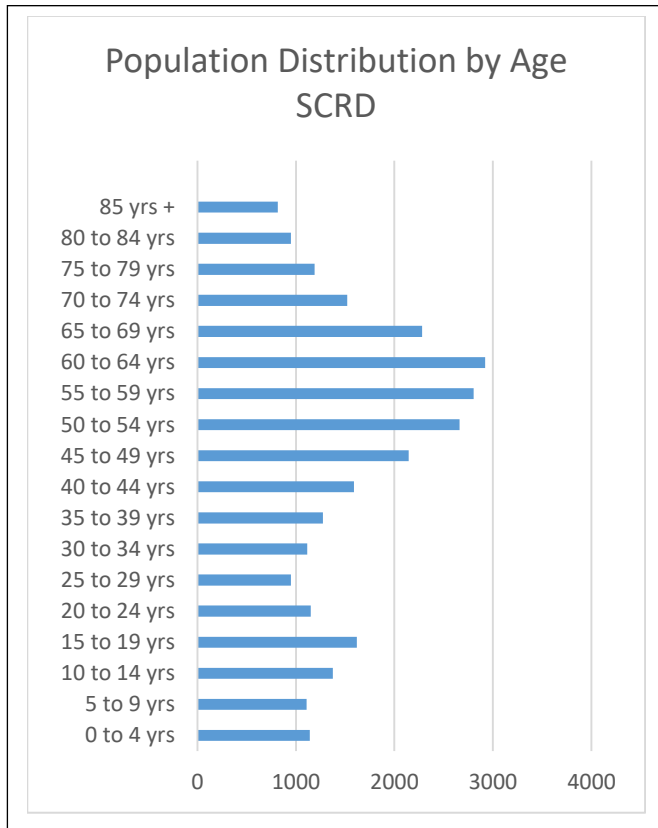
COMMUNITIES ALONG THE COAST

Our plan focuses on how SCCSS will contribute to the fulfilment of an overall community vision. To achieve this in a meaningful way, we keep the entire community clearly in our lens.

Demographic Profile

Overall, there were 28,619 people living on the Sunshine Coast at the time of the last census.¹ The population projection for 2017 is 29,903. Geographically, communities along the Coast are dispersed along 100 km of coastline with concentrations of residents living in four main communities: Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Sechelt and Pender Harbour. There are 16,498 private dwelling in communities along the Coast and 8,710 census families in private households, 2,125 of whom have children living at home.

The chart below shows that the comparative age distribution is clearly different from that for Canada as a whole.



¹ Statistics Canada. 2011.

The median age in 2011 was 51.6 years of age, almost 10 years older than the median age for the province.² In 2013, 46 percent of the population was 55 years of age or older. There are proportionally fewer people in the 20-40 age range than that of Canada as a whole. In 2011, Aboriginal people comprised 5 percent of the population and 12.8 percent of the people aged 15-19.



The vast majority of the residents have English as their mother tongue, with approximately 10 percent having a language other than an official language as their mother tongue. However, community representatives advise that the proportion of newcomers to Canada is changing, with more newcomers choosing the Sunshine Coast as their home than ever before.

Community Strengths and Opportunities

Our dialogues revealed that people experience the Sunshine Coast communities as supportive and responsive. People live here for the small town environment and closeness to the natural environment.

The 2013 health survey indicates that compared to the rest of British Columbia, residents of the Sunshine Coast are doing better than the province overall on all health and population health measures. We are an active healthy community with a strong involvement in community wellness. We value our neighbours and are committed to learning from and with the First Peoples of the Coast.



We express these values through a strong history of community engagement and volunteerism. Seniors in particular are very active as volunteers in all sectors of communities along the Coast: health and wellness, education, arts, and environmental protection. Volunteers are committed to making communities along the Coast better places for those who are vulnerable in any way.

² Statistics Canada. 2011

In particular, there is a strong interest in food security and justice as a way of responding to poverty and economic inequality. There is also a strong commitment to environmental sustainability as a way of ensuring that the rights of future generations are protected.

Partnerships and collaboration are also a strength of communities along the Coast. By working collaboratively and sharing resources, organizations are able to offer expanded, more meaningful programs in a cost effective way.

We learned that communities along the Coast seek greater engagement with us and with each other. People want a voice in matters that affect them and have the skills and knowledge to contribute to creating community. They also recognize that it is in dialogue that community and meaningful creativity emerges. These relationships form the foundation for social entrepreneurship, a way of linking economic development with social values. There are many outstanding examples of social entrepreneurship in communities along the Coast and we intend to work with our partners to increase community capacity for this model.

Identified Challenges

There are also clear needs and challenges in communities along the Coast. Trends in British Columbia and society as a whole give us a sense of what constraints and opportunities there may be in the next 3-5 years. As we explored these challenges and began to anticipate what we can expect in the next 3-5 years, key themes emerged.

Social Inequity in Communities along the Coast

Our experience is that there is an increase in poverty and trauma in communities along the Coast and as a result, increased pressure on our services. Use of the Food Bank has risen significantly in the past 10 years. Many young people want to live on the Coast but find it difficult to find employment and/or housing. Families struggle to make enough money to make ends meet with part-time or insecure employment.

From the Community

A woman who stood up at a Transition House meeting and asked if she could speak. "If it wasn't for this transition house I wouldn't be alive today."



Services for Children and Families

Services for children and families emerged as a significant community need, particularly the need for affordable child care. Although there are fewer young people than in other parts of Canada, the proportion of single parent families is higher on the Coast than Canada as a whole (40% compared to 33%). In 2010-2013, 38 percent of our kindergarteners were rated as vulnerable on at least one scale of the EDI instrument which assesses school readiness on 5 scales. While the SCRD rated 4th best out of 26 regional districts in British Columbia on the British Columbia Stats Composite index of Education, we also rate 11th best in the index for youth at risk and 14th best for the index for children at risk.³

Connecting with First Nations

Our dialogue revealed that community members want to learn from and with First Nations people whose ancestral territory we now live on. Although shi'sha'lh Nation is historically recognized as a leader in First Nation governance, it was also home to St Mary's Residential School and the legacy of abuse and cultural genocide that resulted from Canada's history of systemic discrimination. Our community dialogue revealed that communities along the Coast are committed to reconciliation and seeks engagement with First Nations to learn how to better foster greater social equity.

Changing Age Profile

A changing age profile is reflected in demographic data and in what we heard in dialogue with the community. While seniors on the Sunshine Coast tend to be very active, as this cohort ages, greater supports will be required. However, the proportion of working age population to seniors is low. The chart below shows that the Elderly Dependency Rate for the SCRD is already high and is expected to increase dramatically between 2012 and 2022. Coupled with the Child Dependency Ratio, the total Dependency ratio is expected to reach 84.7% by 2022.⁴

Dependency Rates – Sunshine Coast Regional District

	Elderly	Child	Total
2012	42.7	26.3	69.0
2022 (Projected)	58.4	26.3	84.7

Dependency Rates - British Columbia

	Elderly	Child	Total
2012	24.1	27.7	51.8
2022 (Projected)	31.1	28.1	59.2

³ Sunshine Coast Community Foundation. 2014

⁴ Sunshine Coast Community Foundation. 2014

Clearly, supports for seniors are required. However, as we move forward it is important that communities along the Coast are supported by a strong foundation of younger people.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing

The dramatic increase in property values in the Lower Mainland has dramatically impacted property values on the Sunshine Coast and the availability of rental housing.

The Homeless Shelter served over 80 people in 2015/2016. An Outreach Worker position was created in 2016 to connect with people who are homeless and, by August 2016, he had identified 40 people on the Coast who do not have a home, are living outside or in cars during the summer months when the shelter is not open.

Although there are a total of 16,498 private dwellings, only 78 percent are occupied year around, while in British Columbia the proportion of private dwellings occupied by usual residents is 91 percent. The recent surge in housing values has resulted in previous rental homes being sold to new owners and taken out of the rental market. There are now limited affordable housing options for seniors, youth and low income families.

Changing Funding Environment

A big challenge for SCCSS in responding to these issues is access to funding. The majority of our funders are located in the Lower Mainland or Victoria. It is difficult to form the relationships needed to foster investment. Government bidding processes are more competitive and Lower Mainland organizations seek to compete for contracts on the Coast. There is an increase in administrative costs without a corresponding increase in funding.

From the Community

Several years ago I was diagnosed with a mental illness. I was estranged from family and friends at the time and had no support system. When I found Arrowhead, I was at first nervous, then ever so grateful for the members and staff and their patience and understanding as I came to terms with my "new life".

I now am a proud member of Arrowhead and promote mental health issues and awareness openly. I find the clubhouse an invaluable resource for support and assistance in leading a [full] life.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

It is our intention to realistically respond to the emerging challenges by building on our organizational strengths and connecting with our very strong communities. The innovation and creativity needed to respond to the directions suggested by communities along the Coast require dialogue and collaboration. How do we create the community we seek while responding the very significant issues facing us in the coming years?

This plan signals a clear direction for how the SCCSS Board will lead the organization in achieving its vision. Our vision outlines our intention of how our work will contribute to the community overall. The mission identifies the role we will play in fostering the vision for the community. Our values highlight how we will fulfil this role. The strategies demonstrate what we will concretely do in the next 3-5 years to fulfil our mission and contribute to this overall vision for the community.



Our Vision

Our work is based on a vision of:
An engaged, healthy and thriving Coast.

Our Mission

We contribute to the achievement of this vision by:
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Our Values

Our work and this plan are most importantly values-based. While our Board and staff work from a broad foundation of personal and professional values, the following values highlight our organizational focus.

Interdependence

We recognize that the wellbeing of each of us is connected with the wellbeing of others and with our natural environment.

Diversity

We acknowledge and honour the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals. We actively create and maintain an organizational environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences and we value our individual and collective growth that results from dialogue and shared experiences.

Compassion

We recognize that all people are nurtured when treated with compassion. We intentionally nurture individual and collective well-being, belonging and contribution.

Respect

We believe that respect is the foundation for our relationship with each other and with the land. Therefore, we pay close attention to how we treat all people and our natural world.

Social justice

We believe that everyone should have equitable access to community resources and opportunities. We actively strive to level the playing field for those who are at a disadvantage in achieving access to community resources and opportunities.

Our Strategic Directions

SCCSS intends to forge an innovative and creative path that honours its strong history and commitment to this community. Keeping our focus clearly on a healthy, engaged and thriving Sunshine Coast, these strategic directions detail how we intend to build on our strengths, create capacity for innovation and foster financial resilience.

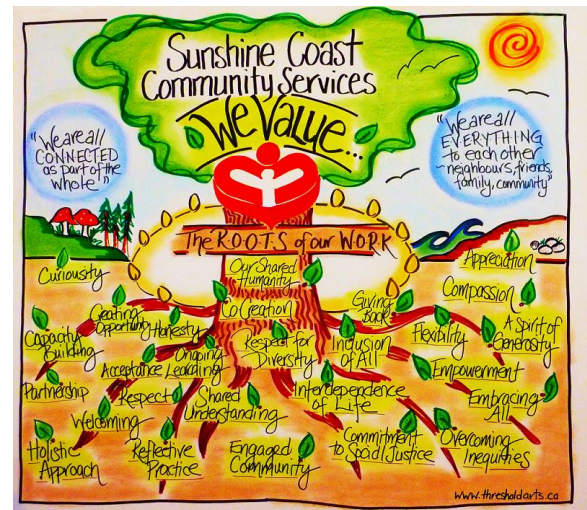
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Strategic Direction 3: CELEBRATE our strength: Share our Story

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Strategic Goal 3.2: Share our story with the community on an ongoing basis.

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Strategic Goal 4.2: Develop and implement a food security strategy.

Strategic Goal 4.3: Identify and respond to emerging and unmet needs such as housing and seniors supports.

Strategic 5: INSPIRE Social Change

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Strategic Goal 5.1: Build our capacity to effect social change.

Strategic Goal 5.2: Promote community engagement toward a shared vision of social equity.

From the Community

"In times of distress, it is women and children and others who are most at risk. The only way we can protect ourselves is in the strength of our community...in how we share expertise and communicate with everyone."

APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC PLAN CHART

VISION

An engaged, healthy and thriving Coast

MISSION

Fostering social equity on the Sunshine Coast by creating opportunities for people to achieve their full potential.

Strategic Direction 1: NURTURE Our People

- Strategic Goal 1.1: Develop a culture of learning and collaboration
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Strategic Direction 5: INSPIRE Social Change

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- Strategic Goal 5.2: Promote community engagement toward a shared vision of social equity

APPENDIX 2: GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION



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