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COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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OUR HISTORY

The Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) has been in existence since 1936 as a non-profit, non-partisan and charitable society. It was created as the “Council of Social Agencies” by residents of Greater Victoria concerned about the impact of the depression and the needs of the poor. The Council went on to incubate a number of organizations that have become key parts of the region’s social infrastructure, including the United Way of Greater Victoria, Volunteer Victoria and the Bridges for Women Society. In 1966 the name was changed to its current form, with the following charitable objectives set out in the constitution.

“to improve the quality of life for everyone in British Columbia’s Capital Region, particularly the people who are disadvantaged due to poverty and distress. The work includes the advancement of factors influencing quality of life, including social well-being, community health and education and the alleviation of poverty and its related elements.”

OUR VISION

Sustainable and inclusive communities creating their own social, economic, cultural and environmental futures.

OUR MISSION

The Community Social Planning Council leads social planning in BC’s Capital Region, and creates innovative programs, resources and opportunities that contribute to sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions for all residents, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. We lead collaborative action to create solutions to community needs based on engagement with those most affected.

OUR VALUES

The Community Social Planning Council is a values-driven organization. Underlying its work is a shared belief:

- ▶ in the attainability of a healthy, sustainable, just and vibrant community;
- ▶ that social sustainability can be enhanced through awareness, education and a shared understanding of social policy and quality of life issues;
- ▶ that accurate and accessible information is a tool for positive social change;
- ▶ that all people should be treated with respect, fairness and dignity;
- ▶ that meaningful community engagement and respect for diversity and inclusion are critical components of a socially sustainable region.

OUR PRACTICE

The Community Social Planning Council is the leading independent, non-partisan, and knowledgeable voice on social issues in BC's Capital region. We foster social innovation and integrated action on social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions to create sustainable communities. Our expertise and practice is mainly focused on the following competencies.

1. **Community Planning:** We design and manage community and regional planning processes to address social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions, on an inclusive and empowering basis.
2. **Community Development:** We design and implement asset – based community development processes to build sustainable and innovative opportunities for social innovation.
3. **Research:** We undertake qualitative and quantitative, participatory, and community led research to inform action on improving community conditions. We analyze socio-economic trends and indicators and inform residents and stakeholders of emerging issues.
4. **Evaluation:** We conduct participant and solutions-oriented evaluations of policies, programs, projects and agencies.
5. **Engagement:** We design and implement public and stakeholder engagement processes to inform project, program and policy development.
6. **Public Education:** We deliver learning and public education resources and opportunities to mobilize knowledge for community benefit.
7. **Policy Development:** We use our research, learning and engagement expertise to inform policy development and engage with government agencies at all levels to support best practice in public policy.
8. **Program and Asset Creation:** We create and incubate community programs, assets and infrastructure strategic to community needs and opportunities. We convene stakeholders to collaboratively develop new resources to respond to emerging issues.
9. **Visioning:** We provide spaces and opportunities for community members to analyze needs and opportunities, and create visions of the future for their communities.
10. **Social Entrepreneurship:** We promote social and community entrepreneurship that helps build a more sustainable, people and community – centred economy for the region.

OUR CURRENT ANALYSIS AND PLANNING PROCESS (2012)

This Strategic Plan has been produced on the basis of analysis of key trends and conditions facing the Capital Region, and the key challenges and opportunities for the Council as a non profit and charitable organization concerned with community development and planning for a sustainable social, economic and environmental future for the Capital Region.

In 2012 we produced two key reports on regional issues and trends. The Growing Prosperity Report involved a consortium of agencies analyzing socio-economic data and trends over the ten year period from 1996 to 2006. The Social Outlook report, commissioned by the United Way of Greater Victoria, went further and identified some key trends and challenges for the region into the future.

This work and other engagement with members and partners suggest a continued challenge for the Region from deep seated conditions of poverty and social exclusion for some residents. There is also a wider affordability challenge affecting most households, and a growing inequality of wealth and opportunity. Lack of affordable housing affects residents from every age group. Since the 2008 recession a larger proportion of working residents are on low income and unemployment has grown, particularly for younger residents. Climate change and green house gas emissions pose a significant threat to the sustainability of the region. Food insecurity has grown for many families, while viable economic production of local foods remains a challenge.

In response to these challenges, the Council's Board, staff and members identified four key priority areas for our work in the coming five years: Poverty reduction and prevention; community economic development; affordable housing, and; community sustainability. These priorities also build on the Council's research and engagement in previous years through the "Quality of Life Challenge". All of our pro-active program work is now focused on these priorities.

The Council also considered what it needed to do as an organization to be able to better serve the community in creating concrete outcomes in these priority areas of work. As a result we created three priorities for the development of the organization by its members, volunteers, partners, staff and board of directors. These involve: enhancing the sustainability of the organization's business model; enhancing communication and public education capacity to influence decision making, and; building the organization's own human resources to contribute to the mission and vision.

These seven strategic goals, and the actions we plan to achieve them, are laid out in the following Strategic Plan. The overarching questions we will use to assess progress and adjust action are: Are we having an impact on improving social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions? Are we enhancing the capacity and sustainability of our own organization to create those outcomes?

Each year an assessment will be made on progress through a joint board and staff retreat, through ongoing evaluation tools used by staff with partners and participants, and through member-public engagement events and social media opportunities.

An operational plan will then be produced that operationalizes the seven priorities, and responds to this assessment, by the Executive Director with staff, for Board approval.

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2012 - 2017

I Reduce and Prevent Poverty

1.1 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN ON POVERTY

Action 1: Lead the development and implementation of a Community Action Plan on Poverty that engages stakeholders from across the region and across sectors, in supporting and actively participating in reducing and preventing poverty.

Action 2: Create a learning community among practitioners/participants to learn from one another and inform practice to reduce poverty, through social media, in-person events and connections to other communities. Hold an annual Community Assembly to assess progress and plan for priorities.

Action 3: In partnership with relevant community organizations identify and implement up to four priority innovations per year that introduce or scale up initiatives to tackle poverty, build on best practices, and address gaps in community infrastructure.

Action 4: Develop and recommend policies by all sectors and levels of government to reduce and prevent poverty and engage the public in supporting poverty reduction and prevention as a public policy priority.

Action 5: Implement an annual Living Wage Report, and ongoing resource for the engagement and accreditation of Living Wage Employers.

ACCESS TO TRANSIT

Action 6: Expand and improve the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program with participating agencies to improve access to transit for people living with low incomes.

II Improve Housing Affordability and Reduce/Prevent Homelessness

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Action 1: Encourage municipal and regional governments to implement recommendations of the Council's 2012 report on enabling policies and fiscal measures for affordable rental housing development and retention, and the legalization of secondary suites. Contribute to the development and expansion of Regional housing strategies and financing mechanisms.

DEVELOPMENT

Action 2: Support planning by faith-based organizations to repurpose land for development of affordable housing.

Action 3: Contribute to the development of up to five affordable housing demonstration projects that build on best practices in different parts of the region, through the creation of a Community Investment Fund and other activities.

ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Action 4: Support the implementation of the Coalition to End Homelessness's Action Plan and specific action on youth homelessness.

III Strengthen Sustainable Community Economic Development (CED)

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

Action 1: Create a Community Investment Fund that directs savings and investments from residents of the region into local affordable housing and enterprises. Contribute to public policy development with the BC Government to enable such funds to receive provincial tax credits and RRSP eligibility.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Action 2: Implement a youth entrepreneurship program ("LAUNCH") in partnership with the Community Micro Lending Society, and develop new education and program offerings in CED and social entrepreneurship.

Action 3: Develop mapping, networking and marketing opportunities for young community entrepreneurs.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Action 4: Engage stakeholders in identifying infrastructure needed for CED and implement collaborative action.

Action 5: Identify opportunities for social enterprise development relevant to needs and organization's mission.

IV Enhance Community Sustainability

INFORMATION

Action 1: Monitor socio-economic, cultural, and economic condition, produce and mobilize knowledge on an annual report on sustainability in the region.

PLANNING

Action 2: Monitor progress of sustainability planning by local governments and provide input as appropriate, particularly with the Regional Sustainability Plan of the CRD.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Action 3: Implement a regional initiative to improve social planning for children, youth and family services based on recommendations from the 2012 Council's report, with the Council's Committee on Children and Families.

Action 4: Support the region's multi-cultural families project to address needs amongst the fastest growing cultural demographic in the region.

Action 5: Implement efforts to improve social planning in the region to increase social inclusion, particularly with visible minorities, immigrants, First Nations and Aboriginal communities, and those living in poverty.

Action 6: Promote reform of procurement/contracting practices by government agencies to improve community service planning and the co-production of public policy and programs with community organizations, using the results of the 2012 Council report.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Action 7: Implement training and program development in neighborhood and community resilience to support integrated local action on social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Action 8: Support households and individuals to develop informed plans to reduce their carbon and other environmental impacts through on-line (My Green Plan) and other tools.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Action 9: Implement regional food and agriculture initiatives to enhance the viability of a sustainable food and agriculture system with the food and agriculture initiative. Implement action to reduce food waste and increase food supply to community food provisioning agencies.

V Enhance the Sustainability of the Organization's Business Model

Action 1: Increase and diversify multi-year funding agreements and partnerships with Foundations, Research Councils, and other sources of investment.

Action 2: Identify social enterprise opportunities for the Council relevant to its Mission, obtain financing for business planning and implement with relevant partners.

Action 3: Broaden contracting opportunities by creating partnerships with consulting businesses to pursue joint work appropriate to Mission and competencies.

Action 4: Increase donor, planned giving and fundraising contributions with partners, Board, and members.

Action 5: Expand market opportunities for contract services through general and targeted promotion to key sectors.

Action 6: Develop real estate and equity assets strategic to community needs and opportunities that are owned by and/or provide a return on investment to the organization.

VI Enhance Communication and Public Education to Influence Decision Making

Action 1: Enhance social media and website functionality and reach. Create "go to" resources and functionality for residents of the region relevant to our Mission.

Action 2: Create and implement a Communications Plan for the organization to enhance media and public profile.

Action 3: Strengthen communications capacity internally and by partnerships with other communications resources.

Action 4: Produce a series of stories on best practices in community innovation from our and other communities relevant to our four program priorities.

Action 5: Expand board, staff and volunteer speaker and ambassador roles across the region. Increase networking and profile with key sectors.

Action 6: Develop and market publications, products, events and learning channels. Introduce subscription service for publications with libraries and other customers.

VII Build Human Resource Capacity to Contribute to Mission and Vision

Action 1: Support the Board in representing the mission and plan of the organization, inclusive of the development of a prioritized Board of Directors plan, and job description.

Action 2: Develop local, provincial and national opportunities to enhance organizational development, learning and partnerships relevant to program priorities. Expand the networking reach of the organization to support future development and partnerships.

Action 3: Strengthen resources to support steering groups of the Council that enhance community ownership and engagement of priority initiatives.

Action 4: Identify new opportunities for student and volunteer involvement that contribute to program priorities on a sustainable basis.

Action 5: Identify future competency needs relevant to emerging priorities and incorporate into staff, board, volunteer and contractor recruitment strategies.

Action 6: Develop a staff development program to build in-house skills.