SQUAMISH

HARDWIRED *for* ADVENTURE

Council Strategic Plan

2015-2018

squamish.ca

Summary

Our Council began their 2014 – 2018 term with a strategic planning exercise. The exercise identified a number of areas of focus for Council and directed the development of a 2015 – 2018 strategic priorities and action plan. This plan will guide the District's strategic initiatives and direct the work to achieve Council's objectives for the next four years.

This document includes an overview of seven Strategic Priority Focus Areas that include the four pillars of Squamish (Community, Environment, Economy and Corporation) and three new additional areas of focus – Public Engagement, Governance and Accountability. Council identified short- and long-term objectives for these focus areas – defined by those that are achievable within the first year of Council, and those that will be completed in the balance of the term. Each strategic priority area also defines outcomes, actions, considerations and resources to support the objectives.

The document also shares Council's Guiding Principles that will act as the filter for decision-making during this term. Council will be guided by the following principles:

- A forward thinking and responsive corporation;
- A balanced and resilient economy;
- Maximize the built environment;
- A connected community, and;
- Future-focused environmental stewardship.

Staff will work to implement the strategic action items outlined in this document within the timelines indicated, subject to any required budget approvals, and will provide regular progress reports to Council.

Patricia Heintzman
Mayor, District of Squamish

2015 - 2018 Strategic Priority Focus Areas

Strategic Priority Areas

Public Engagement

Governance

Corporation
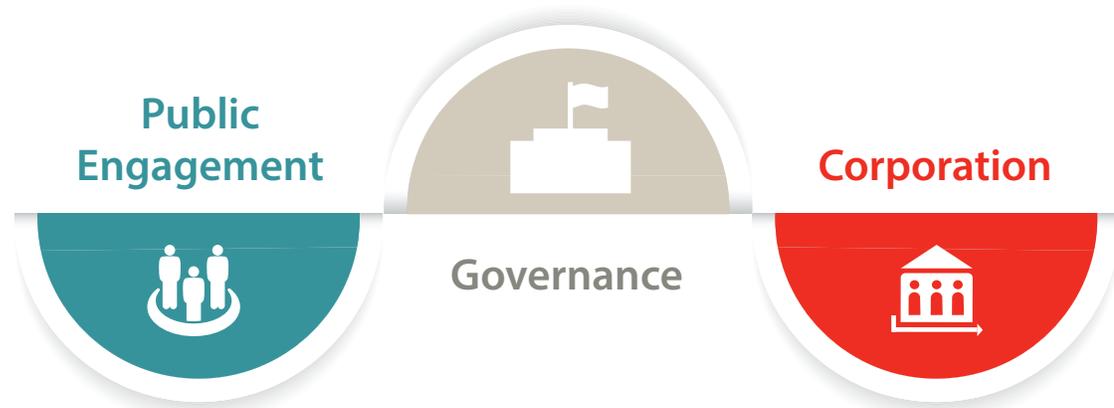
Long Term Objectives

Squamish is an actively engaged community.

The District of Squamish is an open and transparent government.

Squamish citizens, businesses and visitors have access to services that are seamless and positive, both in person through engaged employees and remotely through technology.

The District of Squamish is fiscally responsible and accountable in the provision of municipal services, striving for financial sustainability

Community Vision

We are a spectacular seaside mountain community where people come to live, learn, work and play in harmony. We are multicultural, compassionate, vibrant and diverse. We are leaders in fostering social integrity, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Official Community Plan
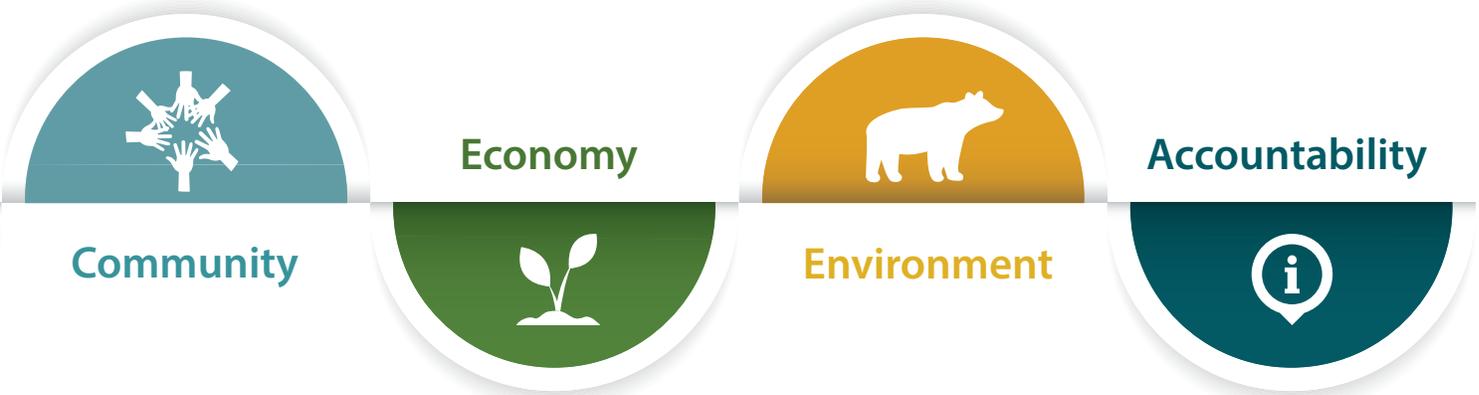
Community

Economy

Environment

Accountability

Squamish is a self-sufficient community (food, agriculture, water, transportation, employment, energy).

Squamish Arts, Recreation, and Cultural Services are extensive and provide access and enjoyment for all citizens and visitors to Squamish.

Squamish has a variety of well-paid jobs reducing the need to commute, and the non-residential tax base continues to grow. Squamish is recognized as a hub for entrepreneurs, change-makers and innovators.

Squamish residents and visitors have access to our natural places with minimal impact on the environment. The Squamish Estuary and sensitive habitat areas are preserved and protected in perpetuity.

The District accounts for and discloses information on its activities and use of resources in a transparent manner.

Guiding principles

Council developed the following principles to guide decision making and prioritization of action to help achieve the community's vision.

Forward-Thinking and Responsive Corporation

- Our citizens' goals and aspirations lead us. Each interaction reflects our understanding of their needs.

- Policies and processes reflect current community needs and anticipate our future needs.

- Council and staff work collaboratively and respectfully to achieve success.

- Community collaboration is supported and fostered.

- Our Corporate Culture fosters innovation, progressive planning, and organizational targets and measures.

- Our customer's experience is enhanced.

- Council and staff create a culture that fosters innovation and collaboration.

Balanced and Resilient Economy

- The community is supported to enable a strong hub of entrepreneurial activity.

- Job creation and the long-term health of our economy are considered in land use decisions.

- A diversity of businesses that create long-term sustainable jobs for our citizens are attracted to and remain in Squamish.

- The tax structure is diverse and supports our community.

- Success is measured by the triple bottom line: economic, environmental, and social measures.

Maximize Built Environment

- SMART growth principles are prioritized in land use decisions.
- The use of existing infrastructure is maximized.
- A diversity of housing, for all stages of life and income levels, is encouraged and planned for.
- The community events we currently enjoy are expanded.
- Arts, culture, recreation, and sport are celebrated and equally valued.
- The built environment, including public and gathering spaces, contributes to the health and well-being of our citizens.
- Urban design fosters a higher level of livability.

Connected Community

- Citizens and visitors have a choice of affordable transportation options.
- Tourism assets, commercial districts, and neighbourhoods are connected by transit and trails.
- Active transportation is foundational in all infrastructure decisions.
- Social inclusion and connectivity is promoted.

Future-Focused Environmental Stewardship

- Air quality, water quality, the environment and land are valued and protected.
- Policies and infrastructure will support the community's reduction of GHG emissions and transition towards the use of renewable energies.
- Community-wide energy reduction, waste reduction, and water conservation will be a major focus.
- Wildlife and sensitive habitat are integral parts of what makes Squamish unique.
- Minimizing our collective impact on climate change is considered through adaptation and mitigation policies, strategies, and projects.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Objective: Squamish is an actively engaged community.

Outcomes

1.1.1   More citizens are collaborating and are engaged in community decisions.

1.1.2   More youth are collaborating and are engaged in decisions that impact youth.

1.1.3   Key stakeholder groups and partners are collaborating with each other and with the District.

1.1.4   More successful joint initiatives between the District and partnering organizations are in place.

1.1.5   Municipal elections have greater voter turnout and more youth participation (up to 29 years of age).

Actions

2015

1.2.1   Implement the IAP2 Framework for public participation by September 30, 2015.

1.2.2   Adopt a Grant in Aid Policy that includes criteria for applicants to demonstrate collaboration with one another by October 30, 2015.

1.2.3   Scope a Youth Engagement Program project by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

1.2.4   Foster strategic and collaborative partnerships with the Squamish Nation, the Provincial Government, BC Transit, Health and Social Service agencies, and the Sea to Sky School District through regular meetings and proactive engagement, by October 31, 2018.

1.2.5   Expand use of IAP2 framework for public participation by Council and all departments.

1.2.6   Adopt a comprehensive Squamish youth engagement strategy by September 30, 2016.

1.2.7   Implement mail-in ballot option and lobby UBCM to allow electronic ballots for voters in the 2018 municipal election.

1.2.8   Develop strategy to increase voter turnout of greater than 50% in the 2018 municipal election.

1.2.9   Develop strategy to increase youth participation in the 2018 election.

Considerations

1.3.1   Engagement requires public participation at varying degrees in many decisions – at both operational and policy levels.

1.3.2   Engagement with community stakeholder groups and partners will need open dialogue to align the multiple agency interests.

1.3.3   A youth engagement program requires collaboration and partnership with youth agencies.

1.3.4   Collaborative partnerships must provide benefits for all partnering agencies.

1.3. 5   Provincial legislation changes would be required to support electronic ballots.

1.3. 6   Youth will need to be involved in developing voter turnout strategy.

1.3.7   Engagement requires that necessary lead time is built into projects.

Resources

1.4.1   Once basic IAP2 training is complete, implementation can be managed within existing resources; conducting more sophisticated engagement will require additional resources.

1.4.2   Additional funding is required for engagement processes – community meeting expenses, on-line tools, staffing.

GOVERNANCE

2. Objective: The District of Squamish is an open and transparent government.

Outcomes

2.1.1   Citizens have easier and faster access to the information they need.

2.1.2   Meetings better support First Nations and community organization involvement.

2.1.3   Increased trust in Squamish Local Government.

Actions

2015

2.2.1   Amend the Council Procedure Bylaw to:

- Include the acknowledgement that Council meetings occur on Squamish Nation traditional territory;

- Enable Council to address big decisions as early in agenda as possible.

2.2.2   Distribute each Council agenda in "plain language" summary to the public.

2.2.3   Implement a staff Council debrief following Council meetings for continuous process improvement.

2.2.4   Schedule Regular Council meetings in locations outside of Council Chambers each quarter.

2016 - 2018

2.2.5   Review the Procedure Bylaw annually to determine effectiveness and ensure ongoing transparency.

2.2.6   Scope technology to provide agenda item-specific reference on archived Council meeting videos by June 30, 2016.

Considerations

2.3.1   Amendments to the Procedure Bylaw must at a minimum conform with the *Community Charter*.

Resources

2.4.1   Additional financial, human, and technology resources are required to support off-site meetings and index meetings with archived meeting videos.

2.4.2   Procedure Bylaw amendments can occur with existing resources.

CORPORATION

3. Objective #1: Squamish citizens, businesses and visitors have access to services that are seamless and positive, both in person through engaged employees and remotely through technology.

Outcomes

3.1.1   Customer services at District facilities meet the needs of citizens.

3.1.2   District facilities have sufficient space to meet customer service requirements.

3.1.3   Technology is deployed to streamline the provision of services.

Actions

2015

3.2.1   Complete municipal hall space planning and construction to incorporate interim space requirements by October 31, 2015.

3.2.2   Enhance customer service program to further engage employees in delivering outstanding service.

3.2.3   Redesign development notices and sign requirements to provide plain language and visual descriptions by June 30, 2015.

3.2.4   Clearly defined service objectives for all services by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

3.2.5   Complete a real estate and municipal facilities strategy by December 31, 2016.

3.2.6   Complete a plan for a new Civic Services Building by June 30, 2018.

3.2.7   Implement technology upgrades and tools to support customer services by March 31, 2018.

Considerations

3.3.1   It will take a few years to implement all the technology changes, to train employees, and to educate the public on using the systems, as the District has many service areas.

3.3.2   With a new Civic Services Building being considered, changes to the customer service interface at the Municipal Hall should be at minimal cost.

Resources

3.4.1   Financial, human, and technology resources are required to support technology, and customer services.

CORPORATION

4. Objective #2: The District of Squamish is fiscally responsible and accountable in the provision of municipal services, striving for financial sustainability

Outcomes

4.1.1   Pertinent information on municipal operations is readily available for the public to review.

4.1.2   Pertinent information on the financial health of the District is readily available for the public to review.

4.1.3   Objectives and targets outlined in the Long Term Financial Guiding Principles and Financial Policy are achieved.

Actions

2015

4.2.1   Create a formal process to communicate Council successes both in council meetings and by leveraging District communication tools by September 30, 2015.

4.2.2   Identify alternate revenue generating opportunities by December 31, 2015 (for example, review District-owned parking facilities).

4.2.3   Initiate benchmarking program by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

4.2.4   Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy to consider with the OCP review.

4.2.5   Scope a benchmarking program based on community indicators by December 31, 2017.

4.2.6   Report available benchmarking data from operating activities.

4.2.7   All long term financial plan policies are incorporated into the financial plan by December 31, 2018.

4.2.8   Create benchmarking and financial data information page on the District's website by December 31, 2016.

Considerations

4.3.1   Developing a meaningful benchmarking program requires a coordinated approach with all departments.

4.3.2   Infrastructure renewal should be supported by reserves that are established and planned for infrastructure replacement.

4.3.3   Develop skills and abilities for staff to monitor and actively apply for grants.

Resources

4.4.1   The development of the benchmarking program will require training and technology.

4.4.2   Implementation of the benchmarking program will require technology and human resources to manage the program.

4.4.3   Communications processes to be supported through increased human resources.

4.4.4   Accumulation of reserves and increases in direct funding sources for capital program are needed to support the long-term financial plan policies.

COMMUNITY

5. Objective: Squamish is a self-sufficient community (food, agriculture, water, transportation, employment, energy).

Outcomes

5.1.1   District policies support and encourage community self-sufficiency.

5.1.2   The housing supply supports all citizens.

5.1.3   Transportation networks better connect neighbourhoods, tourism hubs and the region.

Actions

2015

5.2.1   Establish a Housing Task force including Terms of Reference and determine membership and hold the first meeting by June 30, 2015.

5.2.2   Engage a community committee to assist in the design of the OCP review public participation process by October 31, 2015.

5.2.3   Develop a Safe Routes to all Schools program by October 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

5.2.4   Adopt an action plan to address housing affordability by December 31, 2016.

5.2.5   Incorporate into the Official Community Plan update to be completed December 31, 2016:

- a Downtown Transformation vision, including incorporation of the Cleveland Ave. plan, parking solutions and active transportation;
- a Healthy Communities Index;
- Transit oriented development;
- an urban farming, agriculture and food security plan;
- a Healthy community focus;
- Smart Growth principles;
- Livable urban design principles; and
- a Climate Change adaptation and mitigation focus.

5.2.6   Develop a joint agriculture and food security plan with SLRD Area A.

5.2.7   Complete all works for Safe Routes to all Schools by October 31, 2018.

5.2.8   Engage with regional partners and governments to develop a regional transportation plan.

5.2.9   Develop a growth plan for District and Regional Transit services in collaboration with BC Transit and regional partners by October 31, 2018.

5.2.10   Expand partnerships with Health and Social Service Agencies.

Considerations

5.3.1   The Safe Routes to School program requires collaboration with the School District.

5.3.2   The OCP review will require extensive community consultation and collaboration with many community organizations.

5.3.3   A regional approach to agriculture and food security is needed due to reliance on food from outside of Squamish.

Resources

5.4.1   The OCP and Housing task force can be completed with minimal external resources.

5.4.2   The Safe Routes to School program will require financial resources to implement improvement.

COMMUNITY

6. Objective: Squamish Arts, Recreation, and Cultural Services are extensive and provide access and enjoyment for all citizens and visitors to Squamish.

Outcomes

6.1.1   Arts, Recreation, and Cultural programs and services keep pace with the growth and interests of the community and strengthen our brand.

Actions

2015

6.2.1   Design and complete construction of the Squamish Legacy Project (Canoe Shed) in the Xwu'nekw Park on the Mamquam Blind Channel by August 31, 2015.

6.2.2   Engage with the Arts community to determine needs and potential grant opportunities for hanging lights and speakers at the O'Siyam Pavilion and Brennan Park by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

6.2.3   Squamish Oceanfront Park is built by October 31, 2018.

6.2.4   Complete a Recreation facilities strategic plan by October 31, 2018, including feasibility of providing a second sheet of ice at Brennan Park Recreation Centre by October 31, 2018.

6.2.5   Sponsorship and community partnership policy for Arts, Recreation, and Cultural Services is in place by December 2016.

Considerations

6.3.1   Squamish enjoys significant recreation opportunities provided by many community organizations and expanding recreation opportunities will require significant collaboration.

6.3.2   There are significant opportunities to expand Squamish Nation art and culture in Squamish.

6.3.3   The District could encourage arts and culture programming through the Community Enhancement Grants or the Permissive Tax Exemption program.

6.3.4   The District's investment in arts, recreation, and cultural services are prioritized to maximize the District's investment through partnerships with other organizations.

Resources

6.4.1   Expanding the arts program will require additional financial resources.

ECONOMY

7. Objective: Squamish has a variety of well-paid jobs reducing the need to commute and the non-residential tax base continues to grow. Squamish is recognized as a hub for entrepreneurs, change makers and innovators

Outcomes

7.1.1   The number of local well-paid jobs increases relative to the number of residents.

7.1.2   Non-residential assessments and taxes continue to increase.

7.1.3   The number of entrepreneurial businesses in Squamish continues to grow.

7.1.4   The new brand is leveraged to attract more tourism and investment to Squamish.

Actions

2015

7.2.1   Complete a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy by December 31, 2015.

7.2.2   Determine the most effective Economic Development structure by December 31, 2015.

7.2.3   Complete a Squamish Digital Strategy in collaboration with a Digital Strategy Task force by December 31, 2015.

7.2.4   Complete the Squamish way finding plan that encompasses branding by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

7.2.5   Design and construct Squamish entrance sign on Highway 99 by March 31, 2016.

7.2.6   Scope a Squamish specific Census project by September 30, 2016.

7.2.7   Amend District Zoning bylaw to achieve the community vision while stream lining processes in order to facilitate economic development by October 31, 2018.

7.2.8   Branding Action Plan fully implemented by June 30, 2018.

7.2.9   Action all major elements of the way finding program by October 31, 2018.

7.2.10   Complete the second phase of the Marine Strategy by June 30, 2017.

Considerations

7.3.1   Strong economic development strategies include collaboration with community stakeholders.

7.3.2   The way finding plan is an integral part of the branding action plan.

7.3.3   Land use planning decisions need to be carefully considered, as they can positively or negatively impact business growth.

7.3.4   The employment lands strategy needs to be factored into decisions.

Resources

7.4.1   The Economic Development strategy can be completed with existing resources.

7.4.2   Implementing a digital strategy may require additional resources that are not currently budgeted.

7.4.3   Current development activity may restrict the planning department's ability to realign zoning to support business growth

7.4.4   Additional resources may be required to complete the policy work, considering that development and growth are stretching existing resources.

ENVIRONMENT

8. Objective: Squamish residents and visitors have access to our natural places with minimal impact on the environment. The Squamish Estuary and sensitive habitat areas are preserved and protected in perpetuity.

Outcomes

8.1.1   Municipal bylaws and policies protect natural places, support environmentally friendly actions, and support responsible public access to wild natural places.

8.1.2   Municipal bylaws and policies include climate action policies that facilitate climate change adaptation and mitigation actions.

Actions

2015

8.2.1   Adopt Neighbourhood Energy Utility bylaw by December 31, 2015.

8.2.2   Complete sensitive habitat and riparian area mapping to inform the Official Community Plan review by December 31, 2015.

2016 - 2018

8.2.3   Incorporate into the Official Community Plan update to be completed December 31, 2016:

- an achievable Climate Action Plan;
- estuary protection, habitat mapping, wildlife corridors and District growth boundary;
- policies of the SEMP to provide protection and enforcement capabilities.

8.2.4   Develop policy that moves Squamish towards Carbon Neutrality by 2018.

8.2.5   Develop Green Building Policies to provide incentives to reduce environmental impacts by October 31, 2018.

8.2.6   The SEMP policies are incorporated into District policies, other than just the OCP.

8.2.7   Complete wildlife mapping by June 30, 2016.

8.2.8   District policies support the reduction of water and energy use.

8.2.9   District policies support zero waste.

Considerations

8.3.1   Increased access to sensitive natural places may compromise their sustainability.

8.3.2   Explore sustainable tourism and industrial growth that minimizes the impact on the natural environment.

Resources

8.4.1   The sensitive habitat and OCP updates can be completed with existing budgeted resources.

8.4.2   Wildlife mapping will require additional resources.

ACCOUNTABILITY

9. Objective: The District accounts for and discloses information on its activities and use of resources in a transparent manner.

Outcomes

9.1.1   Regular benchmarking reports are provided on District operations.

9.1.2   Regular report cards are provided for Council strategic actions.

9.1.3   Citizens believe they are better informed regarding District activities.

Actions

2015

9.2.1   A benchmarking framework is developed for operational actions that includes comparisons against internal historical data, and other organizations.

9.2.2   Each department has started developing a basic benchmarking program to measure service delivery.

9.2.3   An organization report card framework is developed to:

- Measure and report on Council strategic outcomes and actions;
- Measure and report on efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services.

9.2.4   A reporting framework for quarterly and annual reporting is aligned with the benchmarking and report card frameworks.

2016 - 2018

9.2.5   All departments have one to three relevant measures for each service.

9.2.6   A framework to measure the health of the community is developed for the OCP.

9.2.7   Benchmarking and report card scoring are integral to the District's annual and quarterly reports by December 2017.

9.2.8   An annual community survey is conducted to measure citizen satisfaction with the District's services and governance.

Considerations

9.3.1   Benchmarking information needs to be comparable to a baseline, whether internal or external, to be relevant for decision making, and informative to the public.

9.3.2   Measuring and reporting on strategic actions should be designed to minimize internal subjective biases.

Resources

9.4.1   Implementing more robust reporting systems will require investment in technology to support the reporting and information gathering, and an initial need for additional human resources to design and implement the information gathering processes. Additional resources needed will be scoped for future budget years.

Strategic and business cycle

Official Community Plan

Vision set by the Community

Council's Strategic Priorities

Focus of Council to reach the vision.

Corporate Plans

Corporate, annual and technical work plans to move the strategies forward.

Annual Financial Plan

Financial plan that allocates the resources to do the work.

Annual Report

Reporting on what was achieved in relation to stated objectives and strategies.

SQUAMISH

HARDWIRED *for* ADVENTURE