



Southern Gulf Islands
Community Economic Sustainability
Commission
Capital Regional District



SGL CESC - History

- Established by CRD bylaw in 2012 (amended 2016)
- “The Commission will work toward achieving a resilient and sustainable local economy that improves and maintains the Southern Gulf Islands’ economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental quality”
- One Commission member from each of Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna Islands (total population approx. 5000)
- Commission meets approximately quarterly



SGI CESC - Initiatives

- Broadband – advocate for and facilitate infrastructure improvements to attract creative people working in the digital economy
- Education – facilitate development of education programs to bring visitors to the islands
- “Experience the Gulf Islands” – facilitate development of shoulder season “geotourism” activities and outdoor recreation programs
- Resource inventory – develop an on-line registry of SGI individuals and organizations with expertise to share



SIG CESC – Initiatives (cont’)

- Social finance – identify models for financing sustainable economic development to attract community investment and reduce dependency on government funding
- Transportation – pilot community buses on the islands, and inter-island foot passenger service; support CRD work on a SIG regional trails plan
- Food and Agriculture – develop a vision and strategy for a sustainable and vibrant local agriculture and food economy



Broadband Initiative

- Providers of “wired” Internet (on some islands) are Telus and Shaw Cable, Beacon Wireless provides wireless service; Saturnanet coop
- Internet service falls far short of CRTC’s 50/10 mbps standard
- Insufficient ROI for ISPs to invest in improved infrastructure without significant subsidy, and government funding typically requires 50% matching funds
- To date SGI communities unable to tap important sources of government funding due to exclusion from “rural” definition



Transportation – on-islands

- 2014 - BC Transit feasibility study for the SGIs concluded marginal viability but would likely grow
- Community organizations on each island piloting various models of volunteer-based community bus systems tied to ferry arrival times
- 2016 - consultant's report concluded that “even with strong community support, the only way to ensure sustainability is a dedicated source of funding such as a property tax”



Transportation – inter-island

- SGI residents traveling on foot to other islands and to Sidney dependent on ferry schedules designed to move vehicles to Victoria
- 2014 - combined SGI-SSI survey showed considerable interest by residents in inter-island, passenger-only service
- 2016 - stakeholder workshop identified needs, possible routes, and challenges for a passenger-only ferry system
- Hundreds of people take part in the annual Tour des Isles 3 day festival featuring travel among the islands by water taxi



Transportation – next steps

- Expand Tour des Isles from a 3 day demonstration event to a once a week inter-island transportation service in the summer?
- Form a separate Transportation Commission to oversee both on-island and inter-island transportation initiatives, and link to the CRD's regional trails plans
- Continue CRD discussions with BC Transit about options for public transportation in the SGIs, both on-island and inter-island



‘Experience the Gulf Islands’

- Inter-island (SGIs and SSI) community tourism initiative to develop and promote authentic experiences for residents and visitors to the area (“geotourism”) and to coordinate tourism planning across the region
- 2014 - ETGI Proposal collaboratively developed with team members on each island under the leadership of volunteer project manager Ed Andrusiak of Galiano
- 2016 - ETGI Concept Plan outlines strategies to advance community tourism and establishes an on-going inter-island management team



‘Experience the Gulf Islands’

- Based on the ETGI plan a consortium of SGI and SSI Chambers of Commerce received Destination BC funding for 2017-18 to promote the islands
- Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) to fully implement ETGI, with funding from a 2-3% room tax) matched by Destination BC, would provide an annual budget of \$250,000
- ETGI Proposal calls for an integrated system of trails across the islands that would form the “Salish Sea Destination Loop” of the Great (Trans Canada) Trail; components of the trail system would include the recently adopted CRD Regional Trail Plan for the SGI and SSI and community trails managed by local trails groups