



# The PROGRESS Plan

**Executive Summary**  
2015



COMMUNITY  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE

**A Community Plan for  
Women's Economic  
Well-being Along the  
Sunshine Coast of B.C.**

View or download the full plan at  
[www.communityresources.ca/progressplan](http://www.communityresources.ca/progressplan)  
or contact the Community Resource Centre at 604-885-4088

The Progress Plan for women’s economic well-being along the Sunshine Coast was a three-year planning process, managed in partnership by the Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre and Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, with funding from the Status of Women Canada.

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**Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre board and staff**  
(left to right): Michelle Morton, Christine Younghusband, Sandy McBride, Christabelle Kux-Kardos, Hilary Estergaard, Sue Elliott, Pat Hunt, Anne Titcomb, Marj McDougall and Betty Baxter.



**Introduction**

Women and men experience life differently. By looking at the Sunshine Coast through a “gender lens,” this Plan provides valuable insight into the concerns and economic development priorities of local women. Improving the economic well-being of women benefits families and our overall population. The Progress Plan was created to inform, refer, educate, and empower our community.

**Methodology**

This planning project was guided by a community development approach and rooted in the understanding that women are the experts on their own lives. Survey feedback from local women was collected over a two-year period, using the same questions in 2012 and again in 2014. There was a total of 533 unique respondents. Surveys were offered online and on paper. Extensive outreach was undertaken to reach women of all ages, living in all electoral areas of the Sunshine Coast. Outreach was made to specific demographics such as businesswomen, parents, university students, newcomers, First Nations women, food bank users, and others.

Women were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their own economic well-being. Women’s satisfaction ratings and advice from key informants identified the key issues.

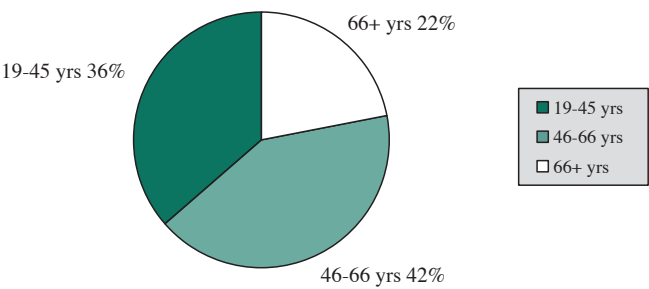
Women’s qualitative survey comments, community conversations, numerous key informant interviews, advisory group consultations, action group evaluations, and two Make Progress community workshops (in 2013 and in 2014) informed the recommendations contained in this summary.



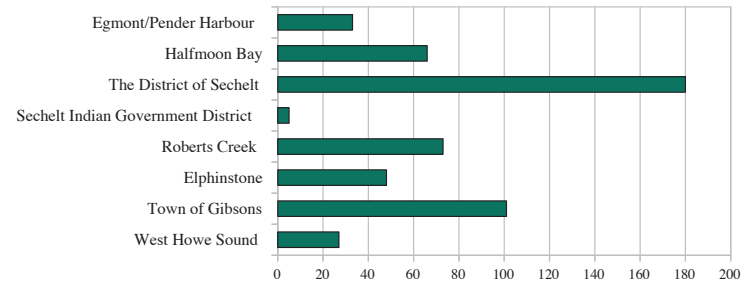
Methodology (continued)

The survey sample group is described below. Please note that the ages of survey respondents and the electoral areas in which they reside closely mirror the actual age and area demographics of women living on the Sunshine Coast. For a more detailed comparison see the full Community Plan.

Women Responding to Progress Plan Survey  
By Age Groups – Final 2015 Results



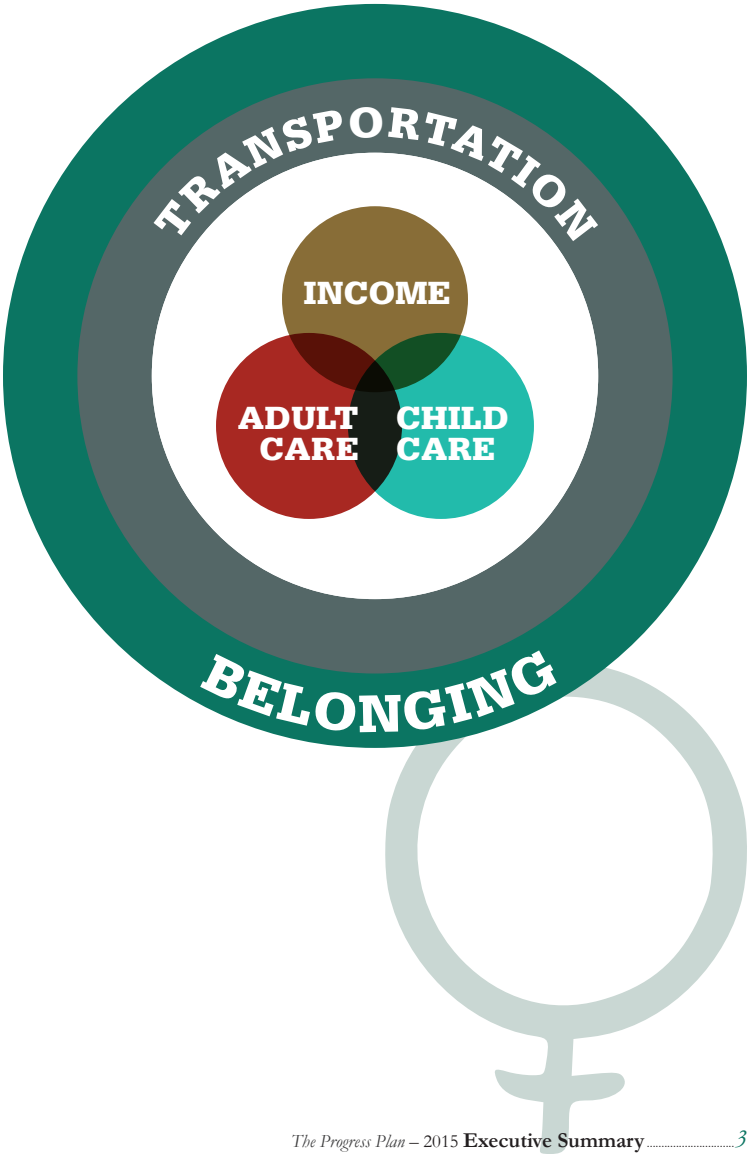
Progress Plan Survey Respondents by  
SCRD Electoral Area – Final 2015 Results



Priority Issues

Progress Report Card						
Women’s Satisfaction Ratings – Final 2015 Results						
Number of Responses per Topic	533 Women Responded	19-45 yrs	46-65 yrs	66+ yrs	% Grade	Letter Grade
80 - Most were ages 46-65 yrs	Adult Care	55%	49%	51%	51%	D
502	Transportation	49%	54%	60%	53%	D
511	Income	52%	57%	69%	58%	D
153 - Most were ages 19-45 yrs	Child Care	57%	69%	60%	59%	D
505	Learning	65%	59%	78%	65%	C
417	Care for Self	65%	65%	70%	66%	C
498	*Belonging	63%	67%	72%	67%	C
519	Food	68%	72%	75%	71%	B
519	Shelter	71%	75%	86%	76%	B

\*Belonging is a theme impacting other areas.



# The PROGRESS Plan

## Timeline

Pender Harbour

Sunshine Coast, B.C.

Halfmoon Bay

Sechelt

Wilson Creek

Roberts Creek

Gibsons

“Fellow Sunshine Coast residents:  
We need to step off the mill of busy, and  
take a take a closer look at our community and  
neighbours. Someone needs your help—a favour,  
a ride and a break.”

— Candace Campo, shíshálb Nation

WOMEN AND COMMUNITY LEADERS  
PROVIDED FEEDBACK AND PARTICIPATED  
IN ACTIVITIES MORE THAN

# 4,505

TIMES THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT



2012

2013

## #1 Initial Research Phase

JUNE 1, 2012 – DECEMBER 30, 2012

- Key Informant Interviews (40+)
- Community Conversations with a diversity of Women in all areas of the Coast (14)
- Survey #1: 177 Women
- Make Progress Public Forum #1
- Launch the Draft *Community Plan...in Progress*

Project Starts  
March 2012

JULY 2012 – NOVEMBER 2014

Advisory Group Consultations (10)





## #2 Implementation Phase – Actions

JUNE 1, 2013 – FEBRUARY 28, 2015

TRANSPORTATION	INCOME	ADULT CARE	CHILD CARE	BELONGING
 <p><b>Planning involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Transit Future Plan</i></li> <li>• Bus Stop Accessibility Review</li> <li>• Wood Duck Bus of Ruby Lake Lagoon Society</li> <li>• Bike route and cycling tourism</li> <li>• SCRD's Transportation Advisory Committee</li> </ul> <p><b>Free SCRD Community Travel Training</b></p> <p><b>Transportation Initiators Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving the Coast events in Sechelt and Gibsons</li> <li>• Interviews with providers (18)</li> <li>• <i>Transportation Resource Guide</i></li> </ul>	 <p><b>Interviews &amp; Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring Leadership for a Strong Local Economy with Community Futures</li> <li>• Support for Ignite</li> </ul> <p><b>Self-Employed Women's Network (SEWN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Together! kick-off event</li> <li>• Leadership Think Tank</li> <li>• SEWN mixer event</li> <li>• Social media launch</li> <li>• Website development</li> <li>• Next-steps planning</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Better at Home Advisory</b></p> <p><b>Caregivers' Lunch</b></p> <p><b>Seniors' Planning Table</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices research</li> <li>• Roundtable public forum</li> <li>• Strategic sessions with leadership team</li> <li>• Seniors' Planning Table ongoing meetings</li> <li>• New Horizons dialogues</li> <li>• B.C. Seniors' Advocate visit</li> <li>• First-year funding from Sunshine Coast Community Foundation (SCCF)</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Child Care Action Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews &amp; Partnerships</li> <li>• Support for ECCE at Capilano University</li> <li>• Support for SD No. 46 RFP Gibsons and Sechelt</li> <li>• Survey of child care providers re: hours and issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Outreach and Public Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven news articles</li> <li>• Grant-Writing Workshop event</li> <li>• Presentations to District of Sechelt and Town of Gibsons and 2 Chambers of Commerce</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Information &amp; Referral</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration, promotion and launch of bc211 locally</li> <li>• Roundtables with local service providers</li> <li>• SCRD pilot projects</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteer Capacity Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices research i.e. knowledge philanthropy</li> <li>• Let's Talk—the Volunteer Reality, partnership event with St. Mary's Hospital Auxiliary and Sunshine Coast Community Services</li> <li>• Follow-up events by others</li> </ul>

### SIGNIFICANT "WINS" FOR WOMEN THAT WILL CONTINUE...

Transit Future Plan & Bus Stop Accessibility improvements. New options i.e. Coast Car Co-op, Wood Duck Bus, and Better at Home drivers.

Self-Employed Women's Network (SEWN)

Seniors' Planning Table

New YMCA child care in SD No. 46 schools

bc211 Help line

2014

2015

## #3 Final Research Phase

AUGUST 2014 – DECEMBER 2014

- Survey #2: 356 women
- Community Conversation re: violence against women
- Key Informant Interviews (5+)
- Make Progress Public Forum #2

Project ends and launch of the final Progress Plan March 2015

# What are the issues? What would make a difference?

Local women and other community members identified the following issues and recommendations. **Note: Recommendations that local governments and groups lobby for change are advocacy activities which were not undertaken during this planning project.**

## Transportation Key Issues



Sunshine Coast women report that transportation challenges contribute to isolation and create barriers to income-earning and access to support from family, friends, and services.

### Cars

- Dependency
- Expense
- Future

Women on the Coast tend to depend highly on private vehicles. Owning and maintaining a car is costly and is not possible for many lower-income women. Older women are increasingly concerned about what will happen when they are unable to drive. *Note: See the Adult Care section of this report for more information.*

### Ferries

- High Cost
- Reliability
- Isolation

Ferry travel is expensive, schedules are restrictive and travel times are unreliable. These issues limit options for business women and off-Coast employment and add to isolation.

### Public Transit

- Availability
- Frequency
- Accessibility
- Reliability

Several areas have no public transit while others have only limited service. The bus does not run frequently enough and bus stops can be difficult to access by walking. Mothers with young children and women with mobility challenges find using the bus especially difficult. Changing schedules and inconsistent timing make transit unreliable to get to work or other destinations.

### New Options

- Multi-modal
- Car sharing
- Ride sharing
- Community buses

Women want more transportation options at a lower cost. New modes of travel should be integrated with transit, ferries, and other options. Car sharing, newly available in Gibsons and Roberts Creek, and expansion to other areas may help meet needs. Other emerging options, such as local ride sharing and a community bus in Pender Harbour, are examples of new options that might help.

### Cycling & Walking

- Safety
- Low Cost

Cycling would be a viable alternative if safer bike lanes and more connector trails were created. Cycling and walking, if safe, provide health benefits and low-cost travel options for families.

“The biggest barrier to economic well-being of myself, my community, and the Coast overall is transportation access to and from Vancouver/Sunshine Coast! With reliable access to transportation, work, contracts, shopping, family, and medical care, the Sunshine Coast would be much more liveable.”

— Female Resident of Roberts Creek

“Bus service is slowly increasing, but there are areas that are under-served. It is good to see more frequent bus service on the main routes. Better public transit is CRUCIAL to help families living on the Sunshine Coast.”

— Female Resident of the District of Sechelt



Coast Car Co-op Launch,  
March 2014 – Ian Jacques

# Recommendations

## Goals

- Transportation becomes a top priority for economic development in our rural, Coastal economy.
- Existing services are improved and new options are created that work together in a coordinated multi-modal system.

## 1. Ferries

### Ferry Lobby Group

- 1a) Create a solutions-focused group to research, educate, and advocate. This is a critical necessary next step beyond the B.C. Ferries Advisory Committee (BCFAC).

### Needs Assessment

- 1b) Conduct a full needs assessment/review of how ferry service reductions, delays, and increasing fares impact our Sunshine Coast economy.

## 2. Public Transit

### Transit Future Plan

- 2a) Provide more frequent transit and additional routes.
- 2b) Dedicate funding to implement the Transit Future Plan (2014) in a timely manner.

### Bus Stop Access

- 2c) Implement the Bus Stop Accessibility Report (2014) recommendations in a timely manner.

### handyDART

- 2d) Through the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) and B.C. Transit, continue to provide and enhance handyDART services to meet the changing needs of our aging population.
- 2e) Recommend a review of handyDART services to ensure better utilization and public understanding.
- 2f) Through the SCRD, actively promote handyDART to local people with mobility challenges.

## 3. Accessible Driving Services

### Better at Home and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)

- 3a) Encourage more local people to volunteer to drive seniors and others.
- 3b) Encourage governments, funding agencies, and private donors to provide ongoing funding.

## 4. Integration

### Multi-modal Network

- 4a) Coordinate diverse transportation providers to share information and collaborate.
- 4b) Provide stipends to support participation in meetings.

### Transportation Hub

- 4c) Create and maintain a smart-phone-enabled, online hub of multi-modal transportation information and trip planning, including paid IT personnel.

## 5. New Options

### Car Sharing

- 5a) Continue to grow and expand the Coast Car Co-op with additional vehicles available throughout the region.

### Emerging Options

- 5b) Encourage transportation initiators to develop new options such as Ruby Lake Lagoon Society's Wood Duck Bus in Pender Harbour, Share There ride sharing, delivery services, coastal bike routes, water taxis, and more.

## 6. Community Investment

### Financial Support

- 6a) Connect existing and new transportation providers with start-up and/or operational funding.

## 7. Active Transportation

### Safe Routes for all Ages and Abilities

- 7a) Re-prioritize existing roadways to pedestrian, e-scooter, stroller, and bicycle-friendly routes by providing clear signage, right-of-ways, and connector trails.
- 7b) Give "active-transportation" lanes priority over car parking.

### Link Transportation and Tourism

- 7c) Seek economic development and other funding to create safe routes to attract tourists and to meet local transportation needs.

## 8. Research of Users and Transportation Services

### Municipal Collaboration

- 8a) In the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt, collaboratively research needs, services, and multi-modal integration. The unique relationship that municipalities have with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) might create opportunities for change.



## Income

## Key Issues



Sunshine Coast women report a need for more reliable and adequate income, especially local jobs with higher wages and government assistance rates that meet basic needs.

### High Cost of Living

- Low Wages
- Low Rates
- Fixed Income
- No Savings
- Unmet Needs

The income of local women is not keeping pace with the rising cost of living on the Sunshine Coast. Food, transportation, child care, housing, and others costs are continually rising while rates of pay, disability, income assistance, and senior support rates remain fixed. Low wages make it difficult to save money for the future. Low-income women are struggling to meet basic needs such as access to healthy food, medicine, eyeglasses, and dental care.

### Employment

- Underpaid
- Overqualified
- Multiple Jobs
- Commute or Move

Women report that local employers pay low wages. With a lack of paid hours and full-time jobs, many women work multiple part-time jobs. Women also struggle to find employment that fits their expertise and qualifications. As a result, they take jobs for which they are overqualified, accept lower wages, commute to the city or move.

### Self-employment

- Provides Options
- Flexible
- Isolation/Need to Belong
- Risky
- Support Required

Because it is so challenging to find adequate employment here, many women resort to self-employment. This provides opportunities and scheduling flexibility but can be isolating. The income is unpredictable with no benefits, disability insurance or pensions. Support from a spouse or other family members is often needed for stable income and/or care for dependents.

### Care

- Impacts Income

The lack of available and affordable care for children and adults impacts the ability of women to work, and earn income.

### Financial Skills

- Navigation
- Planning
- Investments

Some women, especially those who have a disability or are vulnerable, require support to understand and navigate government support programs, manage household finances, and plan for the future. Other women want impartial investment advice and are uncertain where to turn for trustworthy help.

### Instability

- Loss of Income
- Health Crisis
- Violence & Safety
- Support

Job loss, unexpected illness or injury, caregiving, divorce or the need to flee from violence can suddenly destabilize women. Those fleeing violence are especially vulnerable and at a much higher risk for financial abuse, poverty, and ill health. Services and support systems that provide safety and financial aid during a crisis are critical.

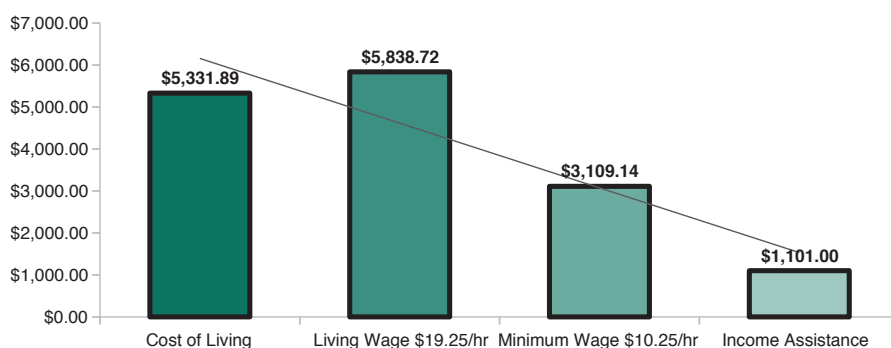
“I made more money on my own in Vancouver than my husband and I make combined living here.”



– Female Resident of Roberts Creek

### Monthly Cost of Living and Income Type Comparison

Sunshine Coast Family of Four



Monthly estimates are based on a family comprised of two adults working full-time for 35 hours a week, with two children; aged four and seven.

SOURCES: Thompson, *Living Wage Calculation: Sunshine Coast*, 2015. B.C. Employment Standards, and B.C. Ministry of Social Development.



## Recommendations

**Goals** – Women living on the Sunshine Coast have the following:

- sufficient income to cover the rising cost of basic needs such as food, shelter, transportation, and care;
- the ability to save and plan for the future;
- and access to emergency funds, services, and supports to assist them when their income is destabilized by factors such as a health crisis, employment changes, marital status or domestic violence.

### 9. Employment

#### Leadership for Fair Wages

- 9a) Encourage local governments to create opportunities for dialogue with businesses that could pay higher wages.
- 9b) Educate businesses about the benefits of higher wages, using tools already available from the First Call Coalition such as Living Wages for Families.

#### Higher Wages

- 9c) Encourage local employers, with the capacity to do so, to pay all employees a wage of at least \$19.25 per hour (as per the Sunshine Coast Living Wage, 2015).

#### Raise the B.C. Minimum Wage

- 9d) Through local workers and community leaders, advocate an increase to the B.C. minimum wage.

#### Hours of Work

- 9e) Advocate that local employers arrange mutually beneficial schedules with female workers. Since some women want full-time jobs while others require flexibility to remain in the workforce, there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

### 10. Self-employment

#### Awareness

- 10a) Encourage self-employment as a local career option and better promote existing services and supports.

#### Entrepreneurship in Schools

- 10b) Encourage School District No. 46 to work in partnership with self-employed women and local organizations to introduce entrepreneurship in high-school curriculum and career planning.

#### Training

- 10c) Offer free or low-cost education for women to start up and/or expand small businesses.

#### Financial Support

- 10d) Provide assistance including interest-free or low-interest loans, peer financing, and grants for new start-ups and other small businesses.

#### Peer Support and Networking

- 10e) Continue to develop and expand the Self-Employed Women's Network (SEWN) to reduce isolation, foster referral teams, support marketing, enable resource sharing, and build income-earning capacity.

### 11. Raise the Rates

#### Income and Disability Assistance

- 11a) Increase support rates to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

#### Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement

- 11b) Provide regular cost-of-living increases for low-income seniors who rely on government support.

### 12. Financial Navigation and Literacy

#### Public Service Access

- 12a) Encourage government departments, such as Service Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, to provide more accessible, face-to-face service.

#### One-to-one Support

- 12b) Assist those who are low income, with disabilities, or otherwise vulnerable with forms, phone calls, and general advocacy.

#### Money Skills

- 12c) Continue to offer free financial literacy programs like Money Skills and expand to include follow-up support.

#### Retirement and Investments

- 12d) Provide free or low-cost retirement planning support. Money Skills could include investment advice with targeted outreach to older women who may want assurances that advice is impartial.

### 13. Support for Women When Destabilized

#### Community Crisis Fund

- 13a) Create a confidential emergency fund that local women can access quickly and easily.
- 13b) Ensure that those experienced in crisis support determine eligibility for funds.

#### Income and Disability Assistance

- 13c) Raise support rates, reduce eligibility barriers, and provide emergency funding for urgent expenses that help stabilize women and ensure safety.

#### Violence Against Women—Awareness

- 13d) Educate the public about how violence impacts women from any socio-economic background, age group, sexual orientation or culture.

#### Violence Against Women—Support

- 13e) Continue to fund Together Against Violence programs that help women with transition housing, legal information, victim services, and women's outreach.



## Care

## Common Issues

Sunshine Coast women report a need for quality care for the children and adults who rely on them. The lack of affordable, available care is a key barrier to income earning and economic security.

<b>Income</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid Work</li> </ul>	Unpaid caregiving for family members negatively impacts the earning capacity of women. They cannot work for pay if the children/adults who rely on them do not have adequate care.
<b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenient Locations</li> <li>• Car Dependency</li> </ul>	Care is best if located near home, transit, schools or workplaces. Women who provide care for others usually need to own and maintain a car.
<b>Care for Self</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor Shortage</li> <li>• Aging</li> <li>• Isolation</li> </ul>	There is a lack of family doctors and concern about the availability and affordability of care as women age. Women may lack informal care/support if they are new to the Coast or isolated in other ways.
<b>Belonging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family &amp; Friends</li> <li>• Getting Help</li> </ul>	All care is better if women are well connected. Women may be reluctant to ask for help; or with no one to ask, they go without the care/support they need. Caregiving duties can take a toll on women and other family members and friends.

## Care for Children and Adults

Dependency Rate (%)	2012	2022 (Estimate)
Child	26.3	26.3
Elderly	42.7	58.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>84.7</b>

SOURCE: B.C. Stats. Socio-Economic Profile - Sunshine Coast 2012

## Adult Care

## Key Issues



As our local population ages, the need for adult care grows. Female family members often provide unpaid care when there are gaps in the health care system. The lack of affordable adult care impacts the economic security and well-being of women.

<b>Caregiving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Respite</li> <li>• Impacts Health</li> </ul>	Women are providing care for aging parents, spouses, adult children with disabilities, and friends. There is a shortage of respite care. Caring for another adult, especially if long-term and without much help, can negatively impact a woman's mental and physical health.
<b>Unpaid Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time Pressure</li> <li>• Insufficient Income</li> </ul>	Working women who provide unpaid adult care find it difficult to sustain full-time employment. Part-time employment provides flexibility and time to care for others but does not provide sufficient income.
<b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car Dependency</li> <li>• Future Concerns</li> <li>• Public Transit</li> <li>• HandyDART</li> <li>• Volunteer Drivers</li> <li>• Ferry Cost</li> </ul>	Women with mobility challenges often rely on friends and family to drive them. Night-driving difficulties hinder the participation of older adults in evening activities. Some women have never taken the bus and don't know how to access transit. There is some confusion about HandyDART eligibility and availability. Volunteer driving services are helpful but may be difficult to access when needed. The high cost of ferry travel discourages off-Coast family members from providing support for aging parents.
<b>Unmet Needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health-care Gaps</li> <li>• Private Cost</li> </ul>	The health care system does not fully meet adult care needs. Publicly funded home support is only available in some situations (i.e. palliative care) and is inadequate to provide care throughout the day and night. Some adults may not be getting the help they need. Private care is unaffordable for many women.
<b>Belonging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Pets</li> </ul>	Isolated women may not know where to turn for help. It can be difficult to find information about existing services and supports. Older adults are also concerned about who will provide care, medical treatment, and exercise for pets when they are unable to do so.

## Recommendations

### Goals

- Women who are the primary caregivers for adult family members have enough support to maintain their own income and overall well-being.
- Women who require care due to illness, disability or old age have affordable, adequate care.
- All women are able to maintain good health to prevent or delay the need for care.

## 14. Communication and Services

### Seniors Planning Table

- 14a) Fund Seniors' Planning to improve adult care and safety through better communication and collaboration between services and across sectors.

## 15. Transportation

### Accessible Options

- 15a) Continue to provide and expand accessible transportation, such as HandyDART, to meet the needs of our aging population.
- 15b) Raise public awareness about the availability and scope of HandyDART.

### Public Transit

- 15c) Provide more frequent, available, and accessible public transit.

### Volunteer Driving

- 15d) Continue to provide and expand Vancouver Coastal Health and Better at Home driving services.
- 15e) Encourage the public to donate and volunteer.

## 16. Graduated Levels of Care

### Needs Assessment

- 16a) Recommend that VCH conduct a full assessment of health services and non-medical support required by aging adults and those with disabilities.
- 16b) Assess the need for items not covered by healthcare (i.e. medicine, home care, dental, eye wear, etc.).

### Strategy and Resource Plan

- 16c) Develop a health-care strategy to meet the growing need for adult care.
- 16d) Reallocate funding to provide preventative services and home care to reduce the need for hospital care.

### Housing

- 16e) Create new, affordable housing with graduated levels of care, accessible by public transit.

### Non-medical Support

- 16f) Continue to fund and support Better at Home on the Sunshine Coast.

### Meal Delivery

- 16g) Ensure that social enterprises offer affordable, nutritious, and enjoyable meals, using successful models from other areas (such as Calgary's Dashing Dishes).

## 17. Belonging and Health

### Informal Networks

- 17a) Encourage friends and family to maintain connections and provide support.

### Ferries

- 17b) Reduce the cost of ferry travel to enable off-Coast family members to provide informal support to older adults and people with disabilities.

### Information and Referral

- 17c) Widely promote bc211 on the Coast and provide face-to-face outreach to isolated seniors and others.

### Community Meals

- 17d) Provide inclusive opportunities to enjoy free or low-cost meals together, with transportation support provided.

### Recreation

- 17e) Continue providing social activities and physical fitness programs with subsidies and affordable memberships available.
- 17f) Improve advertising and outreach to isolated adults.

### Parks and Trails

- 17g) Maintain and expand the network of parks and trails with improved signage.

### Pets

- 17h) Provide assistance in caring for beloved pets to older adults and those with disabilities.

“I want to remain healthy and able to live comfortably and safely in my current home with whatever outside assistance I might require, at an affordable cost. If physical/mobility issues should make staying in my current home an impossibility, I would like to know that there would be adequate seniors' housing/care facilities available at an affordable cost.”

— Female Resident of Halfmoon Bay

## Child Care

## Key Issues



The lack of affordable, available child care is a key issue for working women living on the Sunshine Coast, especially those aged 19–45 years.

### Affordability

- High Cost
- Low Wages

The high cost of child care takes a huge bite out of household earnings. Since women earn relatively low wages on the Coast, covering the rising cost of child care is even more difficult.

### Availability

- Lack of Spaces
- Location
- Timing

It is difficult to find registered and licensed child-care spaces, especially for infant and toddlers. When one is found it might be far away. Existing centres rarely provide child care at times that meet the needs of women who work in the early morning, evenings, on weekends, and in shifts.

### Belonging

- Family & Friends
- Informal Support

Because child care is so expensive and difficult to find, some women have no choice but to rely on family members or friends. Women who lack local family also might lack support.

### Unregulated

- Choices

Sometimes women desperately need quality child care but can't afford or find it. Women may resort to using whatever care they can find in a pinch. Unregulated, informal child care may or may not be high quality.

“Reducing the cost of child care would be the single biggest impact on our family’s finances.”

– Female Resident of the Town of Gibsons

### Available Child Care Hours on the Sunshine Coast

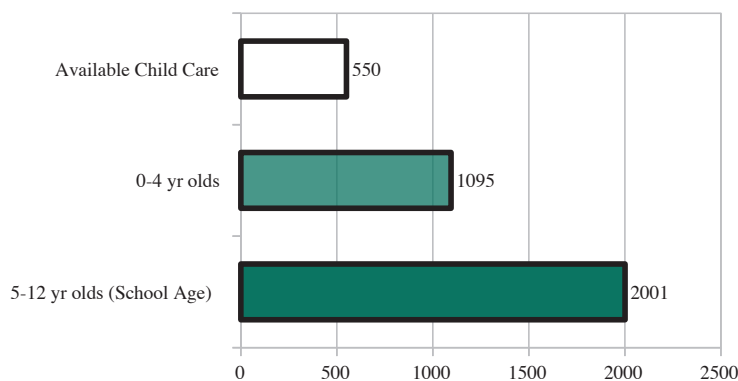
Area	General Hours of Operation <i>Note: Times vary slightly in each child care.</i>
Langdale to Roberts Creek	Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm One family provider offers overnight care.
Davis Bay to Madeira Park	Monday to Friday 7:00 am to 5:30 pm

### Cost of Child Care on the Sunshine Coast

#### Estimated Daily Cost of Licensed and Registered Child Care

Infant or Toddler 0-2 yrs	\$43.75
Child 3-5 yrs	\$39.50
After School Care for a Child 5-12 years	\$15.80

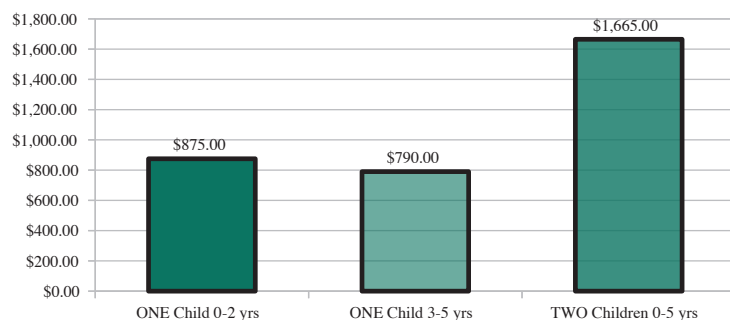
### Child Care Spaces and Population Comparison Sunshine Coast Estimates



NOTE: Child care spaces counted include after-school care for 5-12-yr-olds. A detailed breakdown of available care spaces by age is not available.

SOURCES: Vancouver Coastal Health Licensing Registry, 2014 and B.C. Stats Population Estimate for the SCRD Area, 2014.

### Child Care Monthly Cost Estimates for the Sunshine Coast 20 days per Month



SOURCE: Estimates calculated based on the Sunshine Coast Child Care Resource and Referral Fee Survey, November, 2014.



# Recommendations

## Goals

Women who are primary caregivers for children have enough support to maintain their own income and overall well-being and can readily access affordable, quality child care when needed.

## 18. Affordability

### Universal Child Care in B.C

18a) Create a high-quality, publicly funded, provincial child-care system.

### Local Leadership

18b) Through local governments and unions, endorse \$10/day child care, as per the *Community Plan* for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning.

## 19. Availability

### Public Investment to Increase Wages

19a) Recommend a B.C. universal child care system, which pays workers at least a living wage.

### Financial Support for Early Childhood Care and Education

19b) Provide student bursaries, especially to those who would be unable to enter this profession without financial aid.

### Evening, Weekend, and Shift Work

19c) Give operating grants and other financial incentives to providers to offer child care at non-traditional times.

### Flexible Work Hours and Scheduling

19d) Local employers to allow flexible or modified schedules for employees with children.

### Employer-supported Child Care

19e) Provide on-site child care or directly subsidize nearby centres to provide care at times that match working hours (i.e. early morning, evenings, weekends).

### Partnerships

19f) Through innovative partnerships, create new child-care spaces close to public amenities such as schools and bus stops.

### Residential Bylaws

19g) Enact local bylaw and zoning changes to allow and encourage group child-care centres in residential areas.

### New Developments

19h) Create a task force, comprised of child-care professionals and local governments, to explore the viability of including child care in new developments.

“As for child care, it is completely inadequate in B.C. – too few licensed spaces and it is not adequately funded to be a real system like education. A patchwork is useless and that’s what we have. The wages of caregivers are NOT living wages that reflect the education and skills required.”

– Female Resident, Halfmoon Bay



“I had to give up the job I had done prior to maternity leave because the work was evenings and weekends and there were NO child care options for those times.”

– Female Resident of the District of Sechelt

Photo Credit: Sylvia Kind

## Belonging

## Key Issues



Sunshine Coast women report that a sense of belonging, within both formal and informal community networks, is key to economic well-being. As an overarching theme, belonging affects many areas of life and helps women meet basic needs.

### Income

- Isolation
- Opportunities
- Self-employment
- Support
- Financial Security

Isolation is an economic risk factor for women. Well-connected women are more likely to find out about new job openings or business opportunities. Socially isolated self-employed women might also struggle financially. Women with a strong sense of belonging are more likely to have financial and other supports when in crisis. Spouses, family, and friends help women meet basic needs.

### Transportation

- Isolation
- Off-Coast Family
- Ferry Cost

The spread-out rural geography of our coastal communities creates a sense of isolation. The lack of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation options contributes to isolation. Many Sunshine Coast women do not have family members living locally. It is increasingly expensive to travel to and from the Coast via the ferry. The high cost contributes to the isolation and lack of informal support some women experience.

### Other Isolation Factors

- Care, Work, Time
- Newcomers/Others

Women's isolation is increased by factors such as caregiving duties, working long hours, and a lack of time to connect with others. Newcomers, women with disabilities, and others have difficulty tapping into established networks.

### Formal Support

- Free Drop-ins
- Locations
- Services
- Information

Women value free drop-in programs, located throughout the region, and see them as important; examples include Strong Start, Parent and Tot, and Bellies and Babies. Social services such as women's outreach, counselling, and transition houses are also important, especially when women have been destabilized or are in crisis. It is sometimes difficult to find information on where to go for help.

### Social Activities

- Timing
- Transit

Available social and recreation activities are often geared toward those who are available in the daytime. Younger women would like more affordable, timely, and inclusive social activities that are accessible by public transit.

### Volunteering

- Creates connections

Local women who have a strong sense of belonging are often volunteers in community organizations. Volunteering is especially helpful for newcomers who are seeking local employment, business connections, and support networks.

bc211 Launch on the Sunshine Coast



“We moved here full-time two years ago and have worked hard at making connections. You have to go out – no one is going to knock on your door. It must be difficult for those that are shy or disabled.”

– Female Resident of the Sechelt Indian Government District



# Recommendations

## Goals

Women have a strong sense of belonging, which includes having access to an informal support network of trusted family and friends and easy-to-find formal services available when needed.

## 20. Transportation

### Transportation

- 20a) Lower ferry fares.
- 20b) Improve transit frequency/availability.
- 20c) Offer new options to provide access to informal and formal support.

### Inclusive Gatherings

- 20d) Organize social gatherings that welcome children and/or provide child care.
- 20e) Reach out to isolated women and ensure that events are bus accessible or offer transportation support.

### Recreation

- 20f) Ensure that subsidies are well promoted and continue to be available.
- 20g) Schedule social activities for younger adults in the evenings and on weekends.
- 20h) Provide child-minding and activities at times and locations accessible by bus.

### Formal Support

- 20i) Continue to provide free drop-in programs throughout the region that are accessible by public transit or at locations “close to home” (ie: community halls).
- 20j) Ensure ongoing funding for support programs such as Welcoming Communities, Women’s Outreach, Better at Home, Arrowhead, etc.

## 21. Information and Referral

### Outreach

- 21a) Reach out to women who are isolated and provide economic development outreach funding in all SCRD areas.

### Regional Network

- 21b) Fund the Community Resource Centre to coordinate training, communication, navigation services, and collaboration between diverse service providers that offer information and referrals.

### Promote bc211

- 21c) Raise awareness among local service providers and the public about this multilingual help line (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and its online directory.

### Small Business

- 21d) Strengthen local business networks and coordinate marketing strategies. Continue to develop the Self-Employed Women’s Network (SEWN).

## 22. Community Planning

### bc211 Data

- 22a) Make regular use of new local statistics from bc211 to identify and address community needs.

## 23. Volunteerism

### Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre

- 23a) Increase understanding about the role of the Volunteer Centre and provide funding to expand services.

### Training

- 23b) Provide technology/social media, volunteer engagement, and other training to organizations.

“I feel like I’m too busy working and just trying to make it here to really form close relationships. The Coast also seems very cliquey to me. You need to fall into a certain group and act a certain way to belong.”

— Female Resident from the District of Sechelt

Make Progress Public Forum #1 2013





## Conclusion

By exploring economic development from a gender perspective, it was possible to identify barriers to women's prosperity and specific changes that would benefit local women, families, and our community. We have gained greater awareness and understanding of women's lives and the kind of changes that need to occur. Some of these changes, which have already happened and are significant "wins" for women, will continue. Increased involvement and greater commitment from local, provincial, and federal governments and organizations are needed to make changes. Women and community leaders can now use this information to continue taking action to improve economic well-being on the Sunshine Coast.

**It takes a whole community to create long-lasting change.**

## Acknowledgements

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This Community Plan was prepared for the Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre by Project Manager Michelle Morton, and edited by Heather Conn. March 2015.

