

# CORTES ISLAND



## Local Economic Action Plan

2018

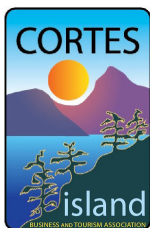
## Acknowledgements

Cortes is the island of the T'oq qaymex<sup>W</sup> / People of T'oq. It is within the traditional territory of the ʔohos (Klahoose), Tla'Amin, and Xwemalhkwa (Homalco) First Nations.

*All truly visionary economic planning must be developed within a framework of reconciliation. Economic Reconciliation nurtures relationship building and shared prosperity, ensuring opportunities for all peoples to achieve their full potential. It is our hope that this LEAP report will be an important step in furthering Economic Reconciliation on Cortes Island.*

We sincerely thank our dedicated and talented Local Economic Action Plan (LEAP) steering committee who committed over a year to this process: Adam Schick (Chair), members Noba Anderson, Bill Dougan, Colin Funk, Eric Hargrave, Dan Hilton, Mary Lavelle, Mark Lombard, Heather McKenzie, Dave Nikleva, Fred Savage, Georgina Silby, Terri Storey, Romina Wendell, and Coordinator, Helen Hall. Much appreciation goes out to our report consultants for guiding us through key parts of this process: Daniel Arbour Consulting from Hornby Island, Dan Wilson and Cheeving Ho of the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, Phil Cox of PlanNet Limited, and Brittany Baxter (design and layout). To the citizens of Cortes Island: thank you for all the time and interest you shared to actively engage in this important and timely island initiative.

*We also extend sincere gratitude to our funders, Island Community Economic Trust and the Strathcona Regional District, as well as to CIBATA members for their continued support and vision.*



## LEAP Report / *Overview*

As the elected representative from Cortes Island to local government, I sit in the only formalized position that has in its mandate an island-wide and cross-sectoral perspective. To truly flourish as a community, I believe that we need to foster many more ways in which we collectively hold this high-level and interconnected perspective. It is time for us to increasingly think strategically and reach across sectors to set in place organizational systems that will support resilience, especially in these globally chaotic times.

This Local Economic Action Planning process is one such way that many facets of the community have come together to reach beyond the scope of what any one individual, business or organization could accomplish alone. The result is a truly Cortes-wide plan that takes our thinking beyond our traditional boundaries to make a real attempt to represent a whole island perspective. This bold Action Plan is a nod to the possibilities of our collective impact that both stretches everybody and needs everybody. I submit that this is our community's first effort at building an integrated island-wide strategic plan. To implement this plan, many pieces will need to come together, including community leaders and funders.

While this LEAP process was underway, and involving a few of the same community activators, a bold and big-picture organization was formed in deep alignment with this work. The Cortes Island Foundation's vision is that this island becomes a thriving community that fosters a culture of giving, now and for all time, in respectful relationship with our natural home. Their mission is to facilitate strategic gifting in support of community needs and priority projects. The Foundation will be a repository for our collective financial generosity intended to support the implementation of exactly the kinds of community priorities identified in this LEAP report.

The Foundation's swift and farsighted action resulted in the purchase of over 50 acres of prime land in the heart of Mansons Landing, now dedicated for community housing. Knowing that the lack of stable Cortes housing is both a social crisis as well as the biggest impediment to economic prosperity, the Foundation offered its fundraising engine to the Cortes Island Senior's Society to make that land purchase real. Also during the LEAP process, CIBATA was fortunate to acquire 2.6 acres of commercially zoned property in Mansons Landing next to the Community Hall. This property is currently being held in trust for future community economic development. The property is extremely well positioned to support many of the innovative ideas for new business start-ups, shared commercial space and other community services outlined in this action plan.

It is this is the kind of visionary leadership that this Economic Action Planning intends to feed, focalize, and support. There is a new momentum forming in our island home that is using our collective impact to seed system-wide change. This trend is very exciting and needs all our support. One of the highest priority recommendations in this report is to form and fund an economic development office to better coordinate and support this ongoing work. The success of this effort is very important. I give its ongoing success my wholehearted blessing!

**Noba Anderson**

Regional Director / Representing Cortes Island  
to the Strathcona Regional District

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## A Bold LEAP Forward

Twenty-five kilometers long and thirteen kilometers wide, Cortes Island is located in the traditional territory of the Klahoose, Tla'Amin, and Homalco First Nations. We are located 100 miles (150 kilometers) north of Vancouver BC, as part of the Discovery Island archipelago between Vancouver Island and the mainland, and two ferry crossings east from Campbell River and Quadra Island. Cortes Island is part of the larger Strathcona Regional District, which captures communities on and surrounding the north end of Vancouver Island.

Our population fluctuates considerably on a seasonal basis. Cortes has been a highly desirable vacation destination for boaters and cottage owners for many years, and tourism has become a major economic contributor during the summer months.

Major economic opportunities on the island include Klahoose First Nation's economic development corporation, Qathen Xwegus Management Corporation (QXMC), a year-round shellfish industry, and, after a generation of effort, a community forest tenure on the island's crown land base, managed by a partnership between Klahoose Forest No.2 and the Cortes Community Forest Co-op.

Over the years, the island has developed a unique industry in adult education. It has become home to renowned retreat centers, and a multitude of unique workshops and experiential programs facilitated by talented local facilitators and teachers throughout the year. Cortes is endowed with many talented artisans, artists, and healing arts practitioners, nurturing our reputation as a place for transformation.

On Cortes, there is fresh interest in working together to address the challenges and opportunities before us. The recommended strategic actions included in our first Cortes Local Economic Action Plan (LEAP), have been winnowed from our island's collective intelligence. The report outlines the ways Cortes residents think we can bring about greater economic well-being while staying in alignment with our values.

The rising cost of living, an aging population, the effects of larger economic forces on our resource industries, the seasonal fluctuation of the tourism and conferencing sector, and the continuing challenges to protect the island's ecosystems all combine to make development on Cortes complex. Multiple perspectives are required to co-create the community we want for ourselves and our children. As the sponsors of the LEAP work, the Cortes Island Business & Tourism Association (CIBATA) is honoured to have led this process and are so very proud of the outcome. The completed plan is, in many respects, a "call to action".

It is our sincere hope that this plan is received by the community as a dynamic, responsive culture change document. May it be used as an informative, stimulating and inspirational tool for Cortes residents, businesses, and organizations, helping to ensure a promising future for our island.

**Colin Funk**

**Director / Cortes Island Business & Tourism Association**

# The Opportunity Before Us

## Project Background



## LEAP ORIGINS & RESPONSE

*This LEAP report and its preceding process intends to focus our community's economic efforts and prioritize our associated actions.*

The plan and process do not act in isolation of other planning work. In fact, the 2012 Cortes Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out the economic development aspirations for the community, with the overall goal of **"...developing a diverse and efficient local economy that provides stability and sustainable value to the community."** The OCP recognizes the need for a strategic approach to community economic development. Specifically, it encourages both **"the creation of an Cortes Economic Development initiative in order to consolidate and focus tourism, assist in start-ups, and develop value added opportunities"**

and **"a local economic development officer to further value-added initiatives and sustainable economic development opportunities."**

In 2012, the Cortes Island Business and Tourism Association (CIBATA) was formed as a not-for-profit organization to, in part, support holistic economic opportunities. In 2015, CIBATA co-hosted a forum to explore economic development models, which generated both ideas and a commitment to initiate an economic action planning process. CIBATA continued to lead this work and, with funding from the **Strathcona Regional District** and the **Island Coastal Economic Trust**, initiated the **Cortes Local Economic Action Planning (LEAP)** process.



## LEAP STEERING COMMITTEE

To support the work of LEAP, CIBATA created a Steering Committee responsible for guiding the LEAP process and the development of an action plan. The committee was composed of representatives from various island

economic sectors including: retail, health, building & trades, tourism, aquaculture, learning/professional development, and non-profit, together with the Strathcona Regional Director, Noba Anderson, and CIBATA's President, Colin Funk.



**The LEAP steering committee members.** *Front row: Romina Wendell, Helen Hall (Coordinator), Colin Funk, Eric Hargrave, Adam Schick (Chair), Noba Anderson, Georgina Silby. Back row: Daniel Arbour (Consultant), Bill Dougan, Dan Hilton, Fred Savage, Terri Story.*  
**Not shown: Mark Lombard, Dave Nikleva**

# Public Engagement Timeline

## JANUARY 2017

### LEAP Coordinator

The first stage of the LEAP process was to hire a part-time Coordinator to help with project administration, communications, meeting/event planning, as well as updating and monitoring the LEAP website. The LEAP Coordinator was also key in serving as liaison between the public, steering committee, consultant and CIBATA.

## FEBRUARY 2017

### Steering Committee

The second step in the process was the formation of the LEAP Steering Committee: ten Cortes residents, all from diverse backgrounds and with sector specific expertise. The steering committee met once every month during the process, and encouraged the public to attend processes throughout. The committee operated as a sub-committee of CIBATA, using terms of reference developed by them.

## MARCH 2017

### Project Consultant

A Request for Proposals for the hiring of a project consultant was created as the steering committee's first order of business. Daniel Arbour Consulting from Hornby Island was chosen out of three submissions to guide the committee in the first phase of the process: developing a process model, critical path plan, preparing for the Community Launch, and designing, implementing and analyzing the online survey.

## APRIL/MAY 2017

### Website

A LEAP specific website was developed to ensure a rich and open process for communicating the activities of the steering committee and the status of the process. The site contained a history and overview of the LEAP process, meeting schedules, meeting minutes, public events, blog posts and opportunities for public feedback. The website also served as the main online portal for the summer survey.

## AUGUST-OCTOBER 2017

### Focus Groups

Over the course of the late summer and fall, members of the steering committee and coordinator hosted eleven 90-minute focus groups with a full range of community stakeholders on the island: **Retirees, Administrators, Professional Workers, Farmers & Agriculture, Forestry, Long-Term Residents, Tourism Services, Trades, Aquaculture, Young Families, and Summer Residents.**

The intention of the focus groups was to get sector specific information on current economic development challenges and opportunities.

## NOVEMBER 2017

### Project Consultants

Dan Wilson & CheeYing Ho, consultants from the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, were hired to assist with the final phase of the LEAP process: design of the Community Forum, analysis of public input collected to date, research of external trends, and technical support in completing the LEAP report.



## APRIL 2017

### Community Launch

The opening launch took place at the Linnaea Farm Education Centre. Approximately 35 people attended the event, representing a wide age range. After an overview of the LEAP process and timeline, participants broke into small conversation groups hosted by steering committee members. Each table group explored a different topic. Topics of conversation included: ***What does a viable/sustainable Cortes economy look like? What elements/issues might be holding the community back? What initiatives could move the community forward? How do we get where we need to go?*** Feedback from this session was very valuable in helping to identify key questions to explore further and to include in the resident survey.

## JUNE / JULY 2017

### LEAP Survey

A 28 question survey was developed as one of the key information collection and feedback elements of the LEAP process. It was available in both digital and paper form. The questions focused on exploring some of the underlining factors and influencers of the Cortes economy: residential housing, living conditions, quality of life, job market conditions, and perceptions of the local economy. The survey was open for 2 months with 220 residents taking part. A small information card promoting the survey was distributed by BC Ferry workers at the Campbell River and Quadra ferry terminals, and delivered to all resident post boxes on island.

[Read Survey Results / Page 63-82](#)

## FEBRUARY 2018

### LEAP Community Forum

The final phase of public engagement took place at the Klahoose Multi-Purpose Building in February. Approximately 40 residents took part in the workshop. The session started with a review of the progress to date, confirmation and validation of existing goals, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, descriptions of success, focus areas and strategic directions. Midway through the day, participants were treated to a unique showcase of short video documentaries highlighting some inspiring community economic development stories.

## DECEMBER 2018

### Public reveal of the LEAP Report

Formation of working/stakeholder groups to assist CIBATA, and formation of the Community Economic Development Action committee to champion action items, monitor and evaluate success.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

The public engagement for the LEAP process took an iterative approach, exploring the following questions first with a small group and then in larger forums, through a survey, and multiple focus groups.

- What does a viable/sustainable Cortes economy look like?*
- What elements/issues might be holding the community back?*
- What initiatives could move the community forward?*
- How do we get where we need to go?*

In February 2018, after having collated the input received through this process, along with existing planning documents and background research on the Cortes economy, the work of the steering committee culminated at a final public forum.

The LEAP report was finalized during the fall of 2018.

DEVELOPMENT OF LEAP

The Cortes LEAP will guide economic development initiatives, actions and future decision-making on Cortes over the next 3 years. It provides a detailed action plan, an implementation plan, and indicators of success for community economic development work to be completed between 2018 and 2021.

Creating a “Made in Cortes” process and report was paramount in the early design and implementation of the LEAP initiative. As a result, consistent, thoughtful, and respectful citizen engagement was embraced during all phases of the process.

All in all, over **300 residents** took part in the LEAP process, participating in the online surveys & questionnaires, and attending public meetings, focus groups or community forums.

PLANNING PROCESS

The LEAP community consultation process was developed and facilitated between January 2017 and June 2018, and was structured around 3 main phases:

PHASE 1

*Findings*

Understanding current context, challenges, constraints, and identifying best practices.

PHASE 2

*Futuring*

Imagining the “ideal” state. Descriptions of success. Identifying what is truly important.

PHASE 3

*Focusing*

Setting criteria, identifying key issues, developing objectives, action steps, implementation strategies, as well as a monitoring and evaluation processes.

35 residents attended the LEAP Launch

220+ residents took part in our online survey

30 residents participated in 11 focus groups

40 residents attended the Community Forum

# Success Story: Cortes Natural Food Co-op

## HISTORY

In 2003, a local buying club became the Co-op, working out of the back room of a restaurant. Now the Co-op occupies the whole upper floor of the building and runs both a grocery store and cafe. The Co-op also bought the entire property in 2015.

## CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC VITALITY

Local products contribute 10 percent of our annual \$1.8M sales, including 15% of the produce we sell

We pay over \$400,000 in wages to local people

We host three local businesses and one non-profit organization on our land

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Relying on volunteer efforts to start new endeavours

Connecting with other co-ops and social enterprises for guidance and support

Believing that we can perform just as well as (and better than!) any large corporation



## WHO WE SPOKE TO

**Eric Hargrave** / *The General Manager of the Cortes Natural Food Co-op, hired about nine years after the Co-op started.*

## WHAT'S WORKING

It took five years to establish the cafe in a way that fits our community - and now the cafe is strong!

Every community needs a bakery and we're continuously expanding to the point that we're nearly ready to supply other local businesses.

Our partnerships with local farms and gardens continue to strengthen.

## WHAT ELSE WOULD SUPPORT YOU

We need more money to start new projects.

We need more partners for mutual support.

We need more people to contribute their time and energy.

## WHAT COULD BE

We could turn the excess local harvest into new products.

We could sell our baked goods across the region.

We could build a new store and cafe that showcases our local artisans.



# Community Economic Development

The Cortes Official Community Plan sets a goal of “***developing a diverse and efficient local economy that provides stability and sustainable value to the community.***” With this in mind, we set our eyes on an “old but new again” approach, called community economic development (CED).

## COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### What is it?

Community economic development is about creating vibrant, resilient sustainable local economies. It includes: local actions to create economic opportunities that improve social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged

An approach that recognizes that economic, environmental and social challenges are interdependent, complex and ever-changing, and that

To be effective, solutions must be rooted in local knowledge and led by community members.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Community Economic Development Network  
[https://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/what\\_is\\_ced](https://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/what_is_ced)

Since community economic development is rooted in local knowledge and community, approaches can look quite different. However, there are some **basic principles** on which community economic development is based.

### THESE ARE:

**Sustainability:** Creating solutions that last

**Community-based:** Taking the broader community interests into account

**Asset-based:** Building on the foundation (resources, talents, abilities) of the community

**Participatory:** Giving everyone an option to have a voice

**Self-reliant:** Increase economic independence, keeping wealth flowing in and around the community.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>SFU Community Economic Development  
[https://www.sfu.ca/ced/news\\_events/5\\_principles](https://www.sfu.ca/ced/news_events/5_principles)



## Sometimes community economic development is best described by what it is and isn't.<sup>3</sup>

### COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develops underutilized assets already present in the community
- Promotes local ownership
- Creates strategies to keep wealth flowing around the community
- Built on collaboration of many community actors and organizations
- Aims to create jobs and good wages
- Creates new institutions and methods of economic activity
- Training is linked to employment

### TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Aims to attract firms from outside the community by giving incentives
- Is indifferent to ownership, often supporting absentee ownership
- No priority placed on keeping money from leaking out of the community
- Decision making is centrally controlled by government/private sector, excluding local residents
- Focuses on jobs
- Uses existing business and corporate structures hoping that benefits trickle out to all
- Training is generalized and not focused on the local jobs

<sup>3</sup>Community Wealth <https://community-wealth.org/content/what-s-difference-between-community-economic-development-and-traditional-economic>

### EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Small rural communities are often faced with low population growth as well as aging populations, as jobs and people move to market and urban centres. While flourishing raw resource economies subside in many of these small places, residents and businesses can work to create premium products or value-added goods that can provide a higher return.

Communities fortunate enough to be blessed with unique natural and cultural assets are at a slight advantage to those without. Urban dwellers, and those seeking to escape the drudgery of Monday to Friday work, travel

to these havens for weekends, weeks at a time, retirement, or to work remotely. While Cortes is certainly not the most accessible of the islands dotting the coast of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, it has a unique culture and environment that attracts visitors, seasonal residents and retirees.

Finding markets for local resources, attracting full-time residents, catering to visitors and keeping money in the local economy doesn't happen by accident. It takes the careful coordination of community organizations, programs, projects, and champions to help move initiatives forward. The following sections describe some examples of CED initiatives in other communities.

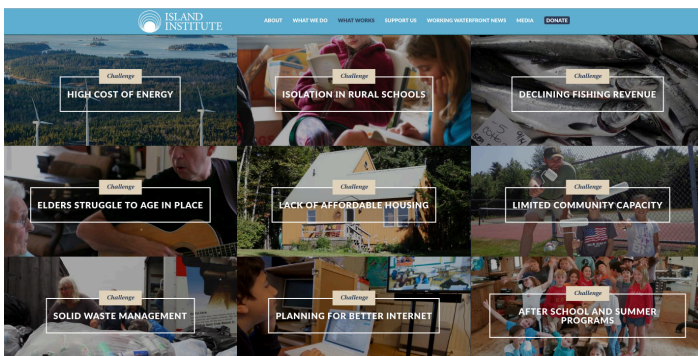
# Maine / Island Institute

## PURPOSE

The Island Institute works to sustain Maine's island and coastal communities, and exchanges ideas and experiences to further the sustainability of communities here and elsewhere.

## VISION

We envision that Maine's year-round island communities will thrive and lead as examples of sustainability.



**ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION /** Founded in 1983 with a budget of \$20,000 to provide forestry and conservation services to landowners on Maine Islands. Due to the geographic scope of their work, they now have a significant budget (mostly grant funded, but earned sources as well) to deliver programing to support communities.

**WEBSITE FOR ISLAND INSTITUTE**  
[islandinstitute.org](http://islandinstitute.org)

## ISLAND INNOVATIONS & BEST PRACTICES – EXAMPLE CED PROGRAMS

**Aquaculture Business Development Program** / Business planning, one on one support services and networking to get new businesses launched.

**Marketing and Branding** / Work with marine harvesters to market and brand their catch built around a sense of place and sustainability in order to fetch a higher price.

**Marine Tourism** / Provide business support to existing and start-up tourism businesses and help marine-based harvesters to explore opportunities related to tourism such as tours and working travel experiences.

**Island and Coastal Business Launchpad Program** / For marine harvesters, artists, makers, and other entrepreneurs; the Institute helps them navigate the complexities of starting and growing a business.

**Broadband Access** / Recognizing the need for fast internet service for attracting and maintaining year round populations and business, the Institute created a program that simplifies the process for assessing, attracting and funding broadband projects.

# *Salt Spring Island / Community Economic Development Commission*

## **PURPOSE**

Develop and promote a sustainable economic strategy for Salt Spring Island

Preserve and strengthen existing businesses and attract new business

Advance and implement economic development initiatives, in collaboration with other public, private and not-for-profit organizations

## **ORGANIZATION**

Founded in 2011 by the Capital Regional District (CRD)

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Eight commissioners

## **OTHER**

CRD Director, Islands Trust Local Trust Committee (LTC) member

## **BUDGET**

35k per year, 10k for CRD overhead

## **PROJECTS**

Supported by other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce

WEBSITE FOR SALT SPRING ISLAND CEDC  
[opportunitiesaltspring.ca](http://opportunitiesaltspring.ca)



## **APPROACH**

The most recent plan of the Salt Spring Island Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) focuses on the following:

### **Create A Rural Business Accelerator**

**Communication Initiative** / Proactive website that advances the Salt Spring Island brand and lifestyle to promote business attraction, provide business support - Expand our reach via social media initiatives; broadcast and print media outlets.

**Community Engagement** / Conduct market research; organize economic sector programs; convene public economic education events; engage in programs that Connect Southern Gulf Island Communities.

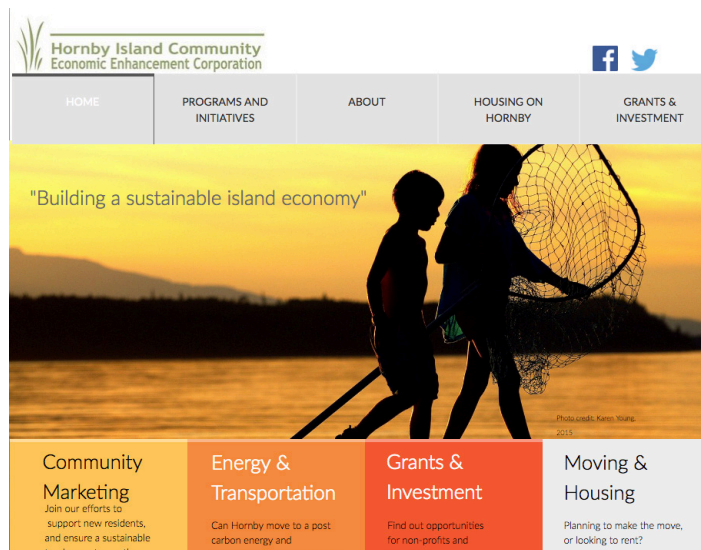
**Destination Development** / Enhance the economic sustainability by helping tourism operators develop sophisticated tourism experiences/packages.

# Hornby Island / Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC)

## PURPOSE

To help foster an economy that reflects Hornby Island values.

HICEEC disburses \$10,000 a year to non-profit and business groups in support of economic activities and manages funds for a group of local investors who want to support small business establishment on the island.



## ORGANIZATION

Founded in 2014  
7 Board members  
2 staff

## ADMINISTRATION REVENUE IN 2018

\$22,000, with in-kind: \$27,000

## ADMINISTRATION FUNDING SOURCES

Hornby Island taxpayers, through the CVRD.

**TOTAL REVENUE IN 2018: \$146,950**

## SOURCES

CVRD funds for projects and partners (Hornby Island Rate Payers Association, Hornby Island Businesses, Destination BC, Hornby Micro Lending Fund, tourism website revenue)

**WEBSITE FOR HICEEC**  
[hiceec.org](http://hiceec.org)

## CORE THEMES

**Expand the economy** / Year-round rental availability, visitor off season development, support for business and the arts.

**Improve affordability** / Transportation, general community grants.

**Enhance self-sufficiency** / Promote and invest in green energy, promote and invest in water conservation.

**Provide excellent public administration** / Collect Hornby statistics, administration of planning.





**CED TAKE AWAYS** / All of these approaches make it abundantly clear that tasking a **specific** organization with responsibility for advancing an economic strategy and associated projects is of primary importance. Organizational structures and resources may vary widely, but in all cases an individual or group is tasked with helping to deliver economic goals within the community.

This champion organization will help ensure that the plan and initiatives do not sit on the shelf collecting dust. This approach is also critical to the success of the LEAP and is further addressed in the section on implementation.

# Success Story: Cortes Forestry General Partnership

## HISTORY

In September 2013 the BC Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations issued a Community Forest Agreement (CFA) for approximately 3,869 hectares of crown land on Cortes Island to the Cortes Forestry General Partnership (CFGP). The partners are the Cortes Community Forest Co-op (CCFC) and Klahoose Forestry No. 2 Limited Partnership (KF2LP). The process was initiated 20 years previous in an effort to secure the crown lands on Cortes Island and manage them with care and respect for economic and environmental long term sustainability.

## CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC VITALITY

- Forest resources now and in the future have shown themselves to be a prime source of economic value in this bioregion.
- Sustainable supply of increasingly valuable wood products will provide economic benefit now and in the long term, from forest job opportunities, to processing, and value added products.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Integrating the diverse values of the non-indigenous community and working in a consensus process with the Klahoose First Nation has led to a stable beginning and successful first 3 years of operations.

## WHO WE SPOKE TO

**Mark Braaten** / *Secretary of the Cortes Community Forest Cooperative (CCFC) for three terms.*



**CORTES FORESTRY**  
GENERAL PARTNERSHIP



## WHAT'S WORKING

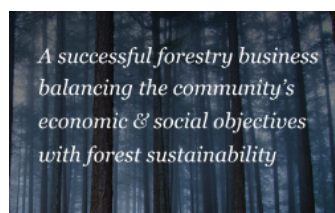
- Long term dedication and commitment to the strong ecological values of the island communities.
- Clear communications.
- Patience with differing views.


## WHAT ELSE WOULD SUPPORT YOU

- More involvement from the community in "ground truthing" and enhanced silviculture (nurturing and protecting the growing trees) would ensure success.
- A development of deeper understanding of the long term benefits would encourage wider support.
- Local entrepreneurs who take initiative to create businesses using the uniquely valuable wood products and alternative forest uses.

## WHAT COULD BE

- Education and research opportunities as well as ecotourism will benefit from the unique management practices being employed in our community forest.





## *Our Current Reality*

**‘Our current reality’ describes some aspects of the regional and local economy, trends and opportunities, and the assets we can leverage in community economic development.**

Developing ‘our current reality’ began with the LEAP Community Launch in April 2017, where participants explored possible futures for Cortes economic development, but were also asked,

*“What elements/issues might be holding the community back?”*

Feedback from this session was very valuable in helping to identify key questions to further explore and to include in a resident survey.

The resident survey questions focused on some of the underlining factors and influencers of the Cortes economy: *residential housing, living conditions, quality of life, job market conditions, and perceptions of the local economy.*

The Steering Committee then hosted 11 focus groups from a full range of community stakeholders on the island:

- Retirees*
- Administrators*
- Professional Workers*
- Farmers & Agriculture*
- Forestry*
- Long-Term Residents*
- Tourism Services*
- Trades*
- Aquaculture*
- Young Families*
- Summer Residents*

The intention and focus of the interviews was to get economic sector specific information on current economic development challenges and opportunities.

**While Cortes is an island, it doesn't act in isolation from the greater region's societal and economic trends. Therefore, these trends were explored to identify strategies and actions, and to help ensure that those strategies and actions would be resilient in a changing world.**

**The following section summarizes what was heard and what we understand about where we are now.**

## **REGIONAL ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT**

Studying the regional economy on Vancouver Island provides insights into the current operating environment for the Cortes Island economy. A recent "State of the Island Economic Report" for 2017, produced by the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance, outlines the following trends and insights:

### ***Macro-Economic Factors and Outlook***

Despite the Alliance's forecast of decreasing GDP, BC's GDP rose 3.9% in 2017 due to service-producing industries such as real estate and rental/leasing industries, and transportation. Real estate was also reflected in construction contributing the most to goods producing sectors (Statistics Canada).

Canada's exchange rate and dollar trading between \$.70 and \$.79 USD continues to provide good value to US customers.

Construction, consumer spending, forestry and aquaculture will continue to show strong demand through 2018 and tourism growth may moderate somewhat.

Unemployment continues to remain low for the Vancouver Island and Coast area.

### ***Major Projects***

Infrastructure investments on Vancouver Island are being made in power generation, hospitals, transportation infrastructure, education, and affordable housing. The value of investment in these areas is over \$2 billion with most of that on projects in the North Island (John Hart Generating Station and North Island Hospital Project).

### ***Business Insights***

Most industries have stable employment or growing employment numbers as of 2016.

Growing employment is reflected in construction; manufacturing; mining/oil & gas; accommodation and food; professional, scientific and technical services; transportation and warehousing.

The only drop in employment is in the management of companies and enterprises.

The Strathcona Regional District experienced an uptick in the number of business formations/incorporations in 2016.

### ***Employment and Industry Trends***

The population of Vancouver Island continues to age although the working age population has stabilized and is now beginning to grow, and is expected to continue growing due to the tight labour market that may draw people from other parts of BC/ Canada to the Island.

The Strathcona Regional District is experiencing population growth.

### ***Other (Housing, wages)***

Housing prices on Vancouver Island rose significantly from 2016 to 2017 after also growing from 2015 to 2016.

Increases in housing prices on the Island is in part related to spill-over from the Lower Mainland housing market with 19% of home buyers coming from Vancouver in 2016.

Tight labour markets should lead to wage increases, but on the other hand, higher business costs.



## INDUSTRY TREND FORECASTS AS OF 2017

| INDUSTRY                       | TREND            | NOTES  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Tourism</b>                 | <i>Growing</i>   | One of the strongest areas of the Island economy and it continues to grow, but the growth will be moderated somewhat.  |
| <b>Aquaculture</b>             | <i>Declining</i> | Aquaculture production in 2017 is expected to decline somewhat due to falling demand in salmon and the closure of some shellfish farms due to the recent norovirus outbreak.   |
| <b>Agriculture</b>             | <i>Declining</i> | Between 2011 and 2016 the number of farms on Vancouver Island declined by 193 (6.7%). Declines were in animal farms and greenhouse/nurseries/flowers, while vegetable farm numbers increased.  |
| <b>Forestry</b>                | <i>Declining</i> | Declining timber supply and new softwood lumber tariffs were reflected in production declines of approximately 14%, year over year, on the BC Coast between January and May 2017. Continued declines in production on Vancouver Island are expected through 2017; however, they are not expected to significantly affect employment levels in the near-term. |
| <b>International Education</b> | <i>Uncertain</i> | The outlook for continued growth in international students on Vancouver Island in the short-term is uncertain. According to the 2016 BC International Education Intelligence Report, BC's value proposition for international education has declined due to the increasing cost of housing and other living costs.   |



## SUMMARY OF BROADER TRENDS IMPACTING THE CORTES ECONOMY

**This broader regional economic context, as well as trends in the macro-economic, political, technological and social environment, have a positive or negative impact on the Cortes economy. A summary of these trends was prioritized into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ trends during the LEAP Forum.**

### PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY TRENDS

#### *Economic funding opportunities*

Funding/grants are more available in trades apprenticeships, mental health, arts, and business

Core funding available for new initiatives within the economic plan

NPO funding opportunities

#### *Tourism levels in BC*

Visitation is growing in BC, making it easier to attract visitors

Growing trend in outdoor travel and education

#### *Provincial emphasis on and funding for affordable housing*

Extra tax for unoccupied housing

BC Housing support to build, own and manage rental stock

Land-coop/land trust to secure land for public, shared use

Broadband connectivity that supports remote working for full-time and part-time residents and access to outside markets

There is a general trend toward greater connectivity and Cortes Island is a proposed recipient of the coastal project to improve the capacity and reliability of internet on the BC coast.

#### *Population age*

Canada and BC's population is aging and Cortes could be an attractive location for retirement living by current part-time residents or new residents

### PRIMARY THREAT TRENDS

#### *Ferry traffic and schedules*

Peak capacity at certain times of the year

Rising rates make it more expensive to travel on and off the island

#### *Labour availability and wages*

Fewer people of working age may make it hard to find staff on Cortes

Minimum wage will raise to \$15.20 with increases between now and 2021. As of June 1, 2018, the BC minimum wage will be increased to \$12.65 from \$11.35 per hour, possibly making it more difficult for businesses to cover costs

#### *Tourism levels in BC*

Visitation is growing to the point that some very popular tourism communities are talking about toxic-tourism and over-tourism

#### *Residents from high cost housing markets are fleeing or cashing in and looking for new communities to settle*

Potential upward pressure on housing prices on Cortes





## SECONDARY OPPORTUNITY TRENDS

### *Availability of distributed infrastructure solutions like small scale renewables, water treatment etc.*

Generally increasing and becoming more cost effective

### *Ferry traffic and schedules*

2% increase in vehicles on 2017 year end and 6% increase to January 2018 for both vehicles and passengers

### *Labour wages*

Minimum wage will raise to \$15.20 with increases between now and 2021. As of June 1, 2018, the BC minimum wage will be increased to \$12.65 from \$11.35 per hour, increasing economic capacity of minimum wage earners

### *Population growth in larger Vancouver Island communities e.g. Campbell River and Courtenay*

Potential increase in visitation to Cortes

### *Residents from high cost housing markets are fleeing or cashing in and looking for new communities to settle in*

Possibility of attracting them to Cortes

### *Part-time residents on Cortes*

Increasing demand and numbers of vacation homes

### *Manufacturing and transportation sectors healthy on Vancouver Island*

Stable and not declining like the resource extraction industries trend

### *Macro-economic environment*

US/Canadian exchange rates are generally favourable right now, but do go up and down over time

Generally low interest rates/inflation

Strong provincial economy supports domestic markets

### *Sharing economy*

Trend opens up accommodation and possible transportation options

Local income generation possibilities

### *Greenhouse gas levels and climate change*

Warmer dryer summers, increase in single large rain events, rising sea levels, and generally warmer - though moderated by the ocean

People are looking for places to visit and live that are considered 'green' communities

### *Seafood demand*

Generally increasing

## SECONDARY THREAT TRENDS

### *Macro-economic environment*

Employment market is tight for entry level jobs

### *Utility costs*

Increasing hydro cost rates

### *Shift toward large format low cost store & online*

Nearby communities' large stores may threaten local businesses

### *Marijuana laws*

Decriminalization of marijuana is coming and it may impact local industries as growing will be able to occur closer to markets

### *Population age*

Canada and BC's population is aging, as is the population on Cortes, which may lead to a reduction in popularity of living in a more remote location

### *Access to traditional materials and resources*

Generally harder to get and more expensive as world demand grows

### *Laws to manage waste*

Increased waste is leading to new laws and possibly expenses to capture and manage our waste streams to keep waste out of landfills



# Success Story: Gathering Place

## HISTORY

Founded in 2003 after a trip to South Africa, where we traded the camper van we were traveling in, for a ton of Rooibos tea. We called ourselves the Gathering Place Trading Company, because of that initial trade and previously had an organic farm by the name of Gathering Place. We started with 1 retail product and now 15 years later, have 72 retail products as well as many of those in bulk. We have been running our business since 2003, for the first ten years exclusively on Cortes and now for the last 5 years from our head office on Cortes and a packaging facility in Campbell River.

## CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC VITALITY

We created employment for many a Cortesian for 10 years and now create employment for ourselves and try to give back to the community in as many ways as we can.

We currently harvest rosemary and bay from Cortes Island and trade and pay local 'farmers' for these products.

By participating in the Farmers Market, we hope our presence draws more customers and by each of us using our purchase dollars on Cortes, we propagate a healthier economy.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Inspired by our children and knowing the importance of 'right livelihood', we actively vision how to make a better world.

Some practices are family discussions, collective art projects and gratitude sharing.

## WHO WE SPOKE TO

**Lovena Harvey** / *Member of the Discovery Islands Chamber of Commerce since CIBATA's inception. We have always been really interested in helping to create economic development on Cortes.*

## WHAT'S WORKING

Doing business with integrity, every step of the way.

Paying our staff living wages and providing them extended medical benefits.

Giving back 1% of our gross profit to projects we are directly involved with in the countries of origin.

Providing consumers with the very best and freshest products available that are safe, healthy and delicious.

Having the honour of traveling to countries where our products come from, visiting the farms, visiting the projects we support and exposing our children to all of this.

## WHAT ELSE WOULD SUPPORT YOU

More interaction with other similar businesses to discuss the nitty-gritty and the day to day.

## WHAT COULD BE

We could move the parts of our business that do not require shipping and receiving back to Cortes, creating more economic activity on the island.

I could offer a small business workshop for anyone interested in starting their own small company.



## CORTES ISLAND ECONOMY / A SNAPSHOT

Understanding the current economy on Cortes is an exercise of gathering both hard data and the insights of local residents and businesses. The recent 2016 Census for the area (Strathcona B, Regional District Electoral Area) provides some core details, but the nuances are only captured through understanding local perspectives. Considering these two sources of data offers a snapshot of where we are today.

### WHO'S HERE

*At the time of the 2016 census, Cortes had approximately 1,035 full-time residents on the island, as well as about 500-600<sup>4</sup> seasonal summer residents visiting or using their vacation homes. Of the thousand or so residents, about 80 are of school age, which is about half of the school age population in 2006.*

The population has been stable from 2006 - 2016, but the number of dwellings has increased from 662 to 788, as has the proportion of dwellings occupied by non-permanent residents (from 27% to 32%), indicating a trend toward non-resident ownership.

The population is aging, with the median age for the island being 53.6 years old, up from 46.6 in 2006. For reference, the BC median age is 43. The proportion of those over 65 has increased from 10% to 28% since 2006.

There are fewer working age residents with the 15-65 cohort representing a smaller proportion of community members than in 2006.

### OUR WORKFORCE

Given the aging population, labour force participation is down to 58% of the 940 residents of workforce age (15+ years), compared to 66% of the 840 of workforce age in 2006.

More people who want/need to work are working, with the unemployment rate down to 6.5% from 12% in 2006.

A greater number and proportion of the workforce (150) works from home in 2016 compared to 2006 (85) with the labour force shifting to home based work from a usual place of work away from their residence.

A slightly greater proportion of residents (84%) working at a usual workplace do so on the island compared to 2006 (80%), and as in 2006, no residents have a usual workplace outside the province.

<sup>4</sup>Cortes OCP 2012



INCOME GENERATION

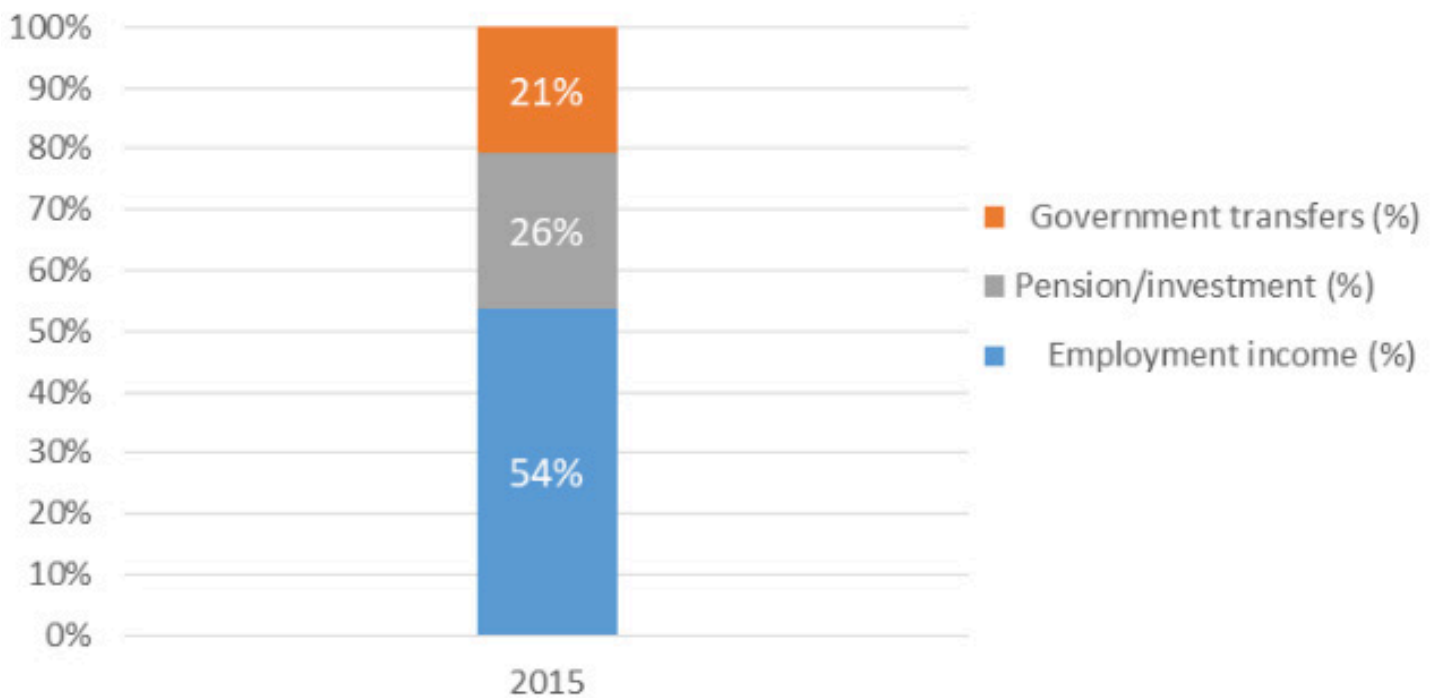
The median individual income in 2015 was \$21,525 which is significantly greater than the \$12,917 median income in 2005. The increase is likely due to higher wages, more hours worked, and other incomes sources.

The proportion of the workforce working full-time is very low compared to the provincial average, but it represents a higher proportion than in the past, and those working are making more income from that work. Of the 605 who worked in 2015, 125 did so full-time making a median income of \$20,325. Of the 620 who worked in 2005, 100 worked full time with a median income of \$14,597.

Income sources for residents include a high amount from government transfers, with 2015 median individual market incomes (employment and investment/pension) at \$15,904 and government transfers at \$7,216. Government transfers represent 21% of total community income which is much higher than the province as whole at 13% and the region at 16%.

Total income is more reliant on market investment/pension income in 2015 (26%) than in 2005 (23%).

Cortes Total Community Income by Source, 2015







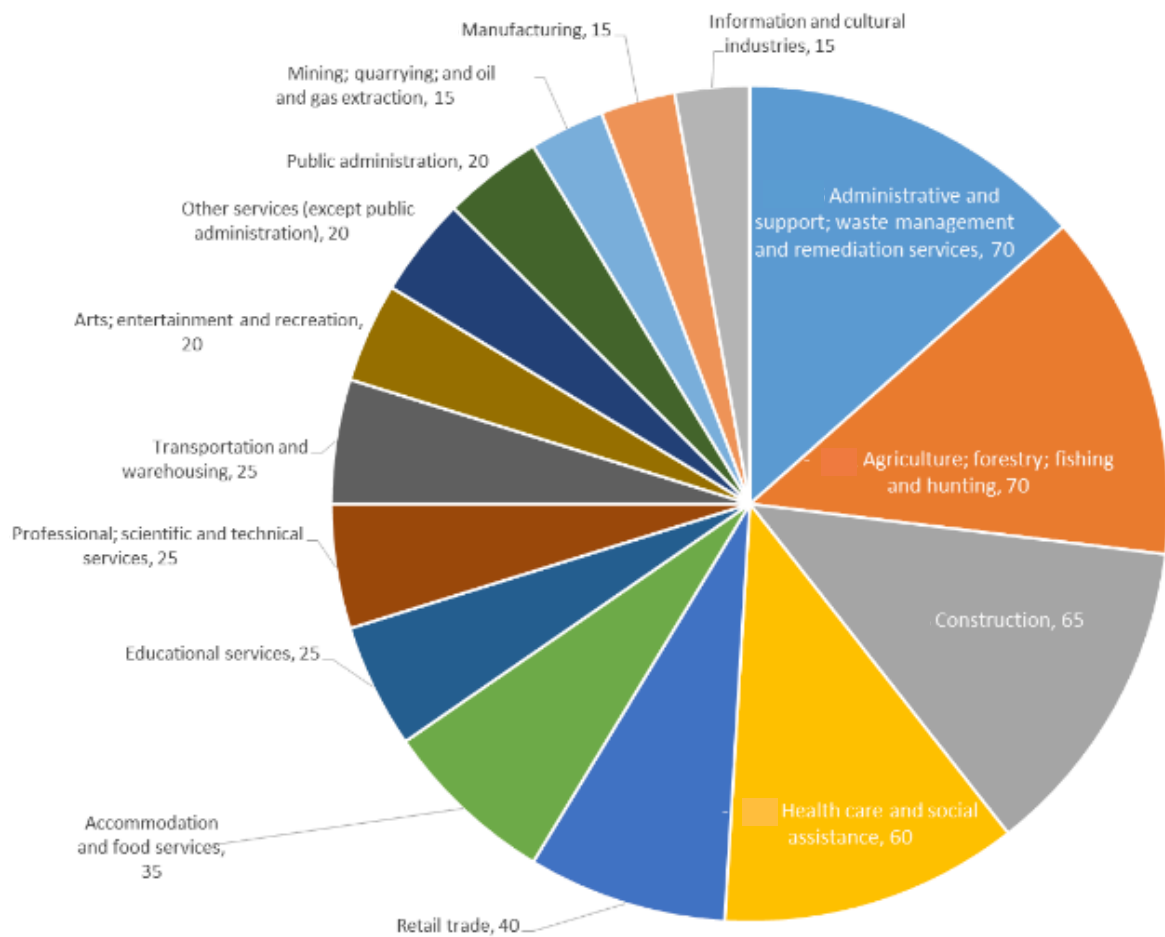
## INCOME GENERATION

Tourism, home construction and resource harvesting/extraction represent the major industries on Cortes.

Cortes residents make their income in a variety of ways with administrative support (including property management, employment services, etc.) and waste management roles representing 70 jobs; harvesting resources from the ocean, above land and below land makes up 85 jobs; construction leads to 65 jobs; and health and social services represents 60 jobs. The remaining industry types and job allocations are displayed in the chart below.

The industries and associated roles include: adult educators, facilitators, real-estate agents, artists, health/recreation practitioners, retail and food services, value added manufacturing and others.

Cortes Employment by Industry Category, 2016



## COMMENTS FROM SECTOR FOCUS GROUPS ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Comments from the focus groups about the current state of the economy reflect some of the quantitative findings from Census data, such as the emphasis of the tourism economy, construction/vacation home building, unsteady and seasonal work, low wages, and a focus on meeting local island demand, rather than off island customer demand. The comments are summarized by sector below.

### KLAHOOSE FIRST NATION

- “Proactive in pursuing economic development.”
- “QXMC economic development agency.”
- “Operating in green energy, tourism - tours, aquaculture - geo ducks and forestry.”
- “Partners in the Cortes Forestry General Partnership; have forestry sources on the mainland as well.”
- “Specialty value-added wood works.”

### LONG TERM RESIDENTS

- “Stable economy, but not easy to support oneself year round.”

### YOUNG FAMILIES

- “Tourism based economy that is seasonal and based on wealthy tourists.”
- “Aquaculture seems strong.”

### RETIREEES

- “Job market and work is inconsistent, so it is difficult to make a living and find workers.”

### SUMMER RESIDENTS

- “Less resource based economy and more service based work.”
- “Volatile and seasonal job market.”
- “Not much expansion of the economy or businesses.”

### ADMINISTRATORS

- “Lack of year round employment, but there is a shortage of staff in summer.”
- “Strong local on-island economy.”
- “Better paid work for men compared to women.”
- “Higher-end education jobs are moving off-island.”
- “Hourly pay is less than in other regions.”

### FARMERS

- “Small steady economy.”
- “Strong local on-island economy.”

### TRADES

- “Small and under-represented across all the trades.”
- “Mainly tourism based economy.”
- “Possible future cannabis economy.”
- “Summer residents represent a main source of revenue for trades.”

### AQUACULTURE

- “Industry is moderately healthy at the moment.”
- “Few tourism fishing jobs.”
- “Home building is up.”
- “Tourism is strong.”
- “Shellfish production is down from the past; no processing plant for oysters.”

### FORESTRY

- “Economy relies heavily on tourism and seasonal residents.”
- “On-island business mainly for sawmills.”
- “Community forest tenure supports the production of wood products & value-added.”

### TOURISM AND SERVICES

- “Diversity of experiences from low-end to high-end.”
- “Strong and growing tourism economy.”
- “Economy is diverse despite tourism, but too much reliance on tourism.”

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- “Positive with opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses.”



## GENERAL ECONOMIC STRENGTHS TO LEVERAGE

“There are three large industries on Cortes: tourism (recreational boating, vacation rentals, retreats, construction etc.), boating (recreational, kayaking, fishing, etc.), and shellfish aquaculture.”

“Klahoose First Nation’s Qathen Xwegus Management Corporation (QXMC).”

“More people who want/need to work are working.”

“Incomes for those working are increasing.”

“The barter/trade economy is doing well.”

“Cortes Forestry General Partnership.”

“Mussels (thriving); mussel farm (Island Sea Farms) employing 25 people, at \$30-40,000 per year, (20 new people).”

“Hollyhock Leadership Center provides jobs and offers a model for educational tourism.”

“Cortes Natural Food Coop is a model organization, moving us in the right direction towards responding actively to the evolving economic needs of our community.”

“Gorge Harbour Marina is a positive model, working hard to create space where locals and tourists feel good.”

“Strong summer visitation from part-time residents and visitors.”

## GENERAL ECONOMIC WEAKNESSES TO ADDRESS

“Lack of strong leadership/vision.”

“Small seasonal economy.”

“Need more money coming into local economy (external streams).”

“Shellfish and oyster industry is declining from what it was

“Lack of value-added opportunity for shellfish and wood.”

“Lack of affordability.”

“Hard to attract investment that is compatible with island plan.”

“Not enough outlets to sell our products off island.”

“Hollyhock moving intellectual staff to Vancouver, don’t use local instructors, so there is some resentment and tension in the economy.”

“Gap between rich and poor.”

“Taxes are too high.”

### *Employment / Training*

“Lack of year-round employment and well-paid jobs.”

“Lack of people with ‘thinking skills’.”

“Lack of training opportunities to help people develop or start their own businesses.”

“Pay and gender disparity; men are paid more than women.”

“Too many small jobs, not enough large jobs.”

“Hard to find reliable, hardworking people for construction work.”

“Poor work ethic by some local tradespeople (e.g. no shows, completion delays eg. 3-day job taking 6-weeks).”

### *Business Infrastructure*

“Lack of access to reliable, high speed internet.”

“Power outages.”

“Lack of cell-phone coverage.”

“Lack of commercial property.”

“Lack of business support services, like a marketing business coach or monthly business seminar.”



## CORTES' COMMUNITY CAPACITY SUPPORTING THE ECONOMY

While traditional economic analysis focuses on jobs, wages, business infrastructure and industry trends, community economic development recognizes the critical role that community resources and capacity plays in supporting the development of jobs, good wages, and industry. The following section provides an overview of the survey and focus group comments about areas of the community such as housing, infrastructure, training opportunities, transportation and access, community services, and more.

### *Community Strengths We Must Leverage*

#### PEOPLE / COMMUNITY

- Klahoose First Nation community
- Strong sense of community cohesion, people helping each other out
- Support for local businesses, “buy local”
- People are entrepreneurial, enterprising, self-reliant, innovative, bright, resourceful
- Creative, kind resourceful, eco-minded community
- Strong volunteer efforts
- Recycle/sustainability attitude
- Willingness to help each other
- Low key atmosphere, slower pace of life
- Wealthy homeowners
- Low crime rate

#### LOCATION/NATURE

- Natural capital: vistas, ocean, forests, streams, lakes, parks
- Excellent waterways for recreational and retreat opportunities
- Beautiful, healthy environment
- Mild climate
- % of park land is quite high and it is very attractive

#### HEALTHCARE / SENIORS

- Healthcare services are outstanding (including emergency health service, health care centre, community paramedic)
- Seniors' village is valuable, quality of life is good (we can live here because we can rent)
- Seniors are ‘working’ through volunteering
- Well-off retirees

#### GENERAL ASSETS

- New land for housing seniors and affordable housing for families
- New land assets for commercial venture space
- Free Store and Recycling Centre; strong recycling economy
- Radio station
- The Halls are great – toddlers group, choir, etc. are thriving for the community
- Community festivals
- Good communication, e.g., Tideline; feel connected to the rest of the island; we all know what is going on
- Roads are adequate
- Lack of bureaucracy
- Government transfers
- Rent/land is affordable compared to a lot of other islands, making it a place that's easier to raise a family

#### FOOD

- Cooperation in the farming community is good
- Plenty of outlets with fresh vegetables on the island
- Market garden

**HEALTH CARE:** 82% of respondents are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with health care services on Cortes. 41 comments were noted on the topic. Of these, over 35 comments related to the need to have either a full time doctor on-island, or at least regular doctors that visit.

## ***Community Weaknesses We Must Address***

### **TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS**

- High costs of ferries
- Remoteness - need to take two ferries to get here
- Roads are in rough shape
- Lack of on-island transportation options: buses, taxis

### **HOUSING**

- Lack of affordable housing options for locals; local home ownership is difficult; locals are forced to rent out their homes in the summer
- Increasing property costs
- Lack of subdivisions
- Lack of access to affordable land for young people
- High property taxes relative to other areas
- Farming bylaws don't allow building of homes for young farmers

### **COMMUNITY COHESION**

- Divergent political views - need to do better at discussing big issues
- Small scale, local conflicts and a general lack of tolerance
- Politics and apathy on island are strong
- Lack of definition and consensus of how to develop the island economy
- Segregation between First Nation community and settler community

### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

- Fire risk is high
- Water quality is not good
- High traffic in harbours
- Pollution from boats
- Declining wildlife and marine and bird populations

### **TOURISM SERVICES**

- Lack of services / facilities for visitors - pub, restaurants etc.
- Tourism raises property prices for people who don't have finances and affects young families - hard for young families to move every year
- Tourism capacity in summer has been reached, too many people, too much pressure and too many cars; parks were overflowing. Mansons Provincial Park was trashed by too many visitors.
- Not many fishing guides

### **PEOPLE / COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND EDUCATION**

- Long term residents are marginal and depressed
- Too many residents with substance-abuse issues
- Rates of use and availability of hard drugs is increasing
- Petty theft rate is increasing
- Fewer volunteers as baby boomers age out and more organizations vying for them
- Lack of communication between groups
- Lack of educational facilities
- Lack of high school
- Lack of full-time pre-school
- Lack of affordable childcare options (that would enable women to work more)

### **SERVICES / INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Lack of year round services: grocery store, restaurant, bank
- Lack of trade services: plumber, electrician, mechanic
- Lack of trailer park, auto wrecker yard, free gravel pit and boat recycling yard
- Lack of social services, health services
- Lack of a full time doctor







## *Klahoose First Nation* Community Economic Development

### EVOLVING POSSIBILITIES

Occupying traditional territories that span from Cortes Island to Toba Inlet, the Klahoose Nation has existed since time before memory. Our primary village site, T'oq (Squirrel Cove), is home to approximately seventy-five full-time residents who live and work on Cortes Island and in the surrounding areas. The remaining three hundred and nine members reside off reserve in coastal communities in the lower mainland and in Washington State.

Our territories are rich in resources, both on land and in the waters that surround us. This abundance helped sustain our ancestors who carefully managed fish and wildlife to ensure future generations would have access to these vital resources. In the 1800's Indian Agents and government surveyors allocated our peoples to ten reserves, limiting our ability to survive and thrive as our communities had done since time immemorial.

As Canada opened its doors to early settlers and explores, First peoples across the country, including those at Klahoose, were marginalized. Restrictive legislation prohibiting cultural ceremonies like the Potlatch coupled with mandatory attendance at Residential Schools, alienated generations from one another. The legacy of this devastating period in our shared history continues to linger.

Today Klahoose is rediscovering the beauty of the traditions which have historically defined our peoples. Members who are eager to reconnect the threads of the past to the present, host culture nights and language programs in the Multipurpose Building. Ancient protocols are being practiced in anticipation of the annual Tribal Canoe Journey, a celebrated event for the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Business is once again thriving at Klahoose. Leadership has worked to find the balance between protecting our resources with managing community economic development opportunities. We have established vital partnerships to help encourage community economic activities and are open to explore evolving possibilities.



**KLAHOOSE**  
FIRST NATION

Klahoose Website / [klahoose.org](http://klahoose.org)  
Klahoose Language Learning Portal  
[firstvoices.com/sections/Klahoose](http://firstvoices.com/sections/Klahoose)



# Qathen Xwegus Management Corporation

## BACKGROUND

Operating at arm's length from the Klahoose Band Government, the QXMC Board pursues initiatives that benefit Klahoose today, and for the future. QXMC works with the Klahoose governance to reinvest in infrastructure, projects, and people at the community level. It is QXMC's main duty to create opportunities for Klahoose, seeking out and participating in sound business ventures and investment opportunities. It pursues self-reliance and economic independence for the Klahoose. QXMC currently focuses most of its energy on four areas of opportunity: green energy (run-of-the-river power generation), tourism and adventure, aquaculture and forestry.

## FORESTRY

In forestry, Klahoose has four businesses. Through a community forest license Klahoose are the owners of all the forestry resources in the Toba Valley. Managing a large and complex forest operation cannot be accomplished without challenges, but the QXMC Board plans for road building, harvesting, and tree planting to ensure the Toba Valley continues to provide benefits for Klahoose. On Cortes, Klahoose owns a woodlot tenure and is a 50% partner in the Cortes Forestry General Partnership. This Partnership between Klahoose and the Cortes Community Forest Co-op, committed to building a resilient and vibrant world-class community-based forestry operation, manages 4,000 hectares of Cortes' crown land. And to top it all off, Klahoose also operates T'oq Woodworks, which produces specialty custom lumber and wood products at their Squirrel Cove mill from their wood supply throughout their traditional territory.

## ARGOSY SEA FARMS / GEODUCKS

Through several projects, QXMC has proven to be a leader in the advancement of First Nations Aquaculture, especially in the cultivation of geoducks. They are now a 100% owner of Argosy Sea Farms, which cultivates geoducks in a 34-hectare sub-tidal lease outside of Squirrel Cove. Through a partnership with the University of BC, they grew and planted 1 million geoduck seeds and are now, 7 years later, harvesting product bound for China. They will be providing opportunities for their members to be trained in this growing geoduck industry.

## POWER GENERATION

Klahoose, through QXMC, has taken a bold role in the development of run-of-the-river power generation in the Toba River watershed, which lies at the very heart of their territory. This run-of-river project, which broke ground in 2014, diverts a portion of the flow from Jimmy Creek (a Toba River tributary) into a penstock which then transmits the water downhill to a generating station. Former Chief James Delorme said, "Own source revenue from Green Energy projects like this and our Toba Montrose Project brings Klahoose a new level of success for generations to come." This project has been a significant employer of the Klahoose people.

## WILDLIFE TOURS

In this same valley, through Klahoose Coastal Adventures, QXMC owns the Guide outfitting license and offer wildlife tours which are attracting outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world. Klahoose guides take a few small groups each year to view these rugged coastal vistas and its feature draw, grizzly bears that come down from the mountains to enjoy their fill of salmon swimming up river to spawn.



**QXMC online:**  
[klahoose.org/we-re-open-for-business](http://klahoose.org/we-re-open-for-business)

## ECONOMIC RECONCILIATION

Economic reconciliation<sup>5</sup> aims to create meaningful partnerships and mutually beneficial opportunities based on a holistic, values-driven approach to attaining community economic prosperity. This shared prosperity approach draws on the values of the community to inform the structures, processes, and environments to stimulate action towards community resilience. Traditional economic development tends to emphasize individual material wealth, often at the expense of community relationships or the health of the physical environment. This contradicts notions of oneness as expressed by Indigenous peoples through the concept of 'Namwayut - We Are All One'.

As a community-led and community defined process, economic reconciliation in any particular community will reflect the values of that community.

<sup>5</sup>From *Reconciliation Canada* - <http://reconciliationcanada.ca/programs-initiatives/economic-reconciliation/>

Possible next steps include:

- Working in partnership with Klahoose First Nation to create a robust framework for cultural and economic reconciliation, in alignment with Klahoose community planning and timelines
- Engaging a facilitation team to hold Reconciliation Dialogue and Economic Reconciliation discussions
- Funding a community liaison position to support communication between Klahoose and island organizations and businesses
- Integration of economic reconciliation goals into CED report cards and evaluation indicators
- Creating learning tools, hosting conferences and events relating to reconciliation projects
- Securing funding and facilitators on an ongoing basis, as needed.

## What is Economic Reconciliation?

**Economic reconciliation is for all peoples in Canada.** It seeks to engage an entire community in an inclusive process of developing shared understanding and agreed-upon values. All people have an opportunity to learn from each other.

**Economic reconciliation stimulates concrete action.** Although the specific goals and outcomes will be unique to each community, economic reconciliation aims for concrete actions such as creating businesses, modifying the built environment and strengthening institutional capacity to enhance shared prosperity. It is not merely a theoretical exercise.

**Economic reconciliation builds upon local heritage and positions communities within broader contexts.** The benefits of economic trade at regional and international levels are widely recognized. Economic reconciliation builds on local strengths to forge strong paths within a larger community.

**Economic reconciliation employs a holistic view of prosperity.** Material prosperity is an important dimension of prosperity. However, material wealth, including how it is generated and spent, is placed within the context of community wellbeing and values.

## ***Towards Reconcili-action: Building a base for meaningful cross-cultural community economic development***

Throughout the LEAP process (focus groups & forums) citizens frequently commented that economic development, engagement, and partnership with Klahoose First Nation will not be successful without first and foremost committing to an island-wide Reconciliation process, including economic reconciliation.

**Our future, and the well-being of all our children rests with the kind of relationships we build today. CHIEF DR. ROBERT JOSEPH**



## **ROLLING THE CONTEXT INTO A PLAN**

/ Creating a community economic development plan requires an in-depth understanding of the current economic and community context. However, this context shouldn't dictate or hamstring our desired vision and output for Cortes. Rather, this context should help highlight our community assets to direct us at the best opportunities and most effective actions to help us realize our economic vision.

Key strengths must be leveraged to take advantage of the trends that present opportunities for Cortes. Our strengths can also be utilized to address key weaknesses and ward off critical trends that may present threats for Cortes.

The next section of the report is about asserting a compelling vision for community economic development, identifying the strategic directions that can move us toward that vision, and ensuring commitment and accountability for implementing actions.



## Our Plan



The Local Economic Action Plan (LEAP) is our most realistic assessment of what actions could best support economic well-being that aligns with Cortes values. It includes everything from a broad inspiring vision to recommended specific activities that will help us to achieve our goals.

### WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE GOT HERE

Our plan, structure, and content are a result of thoughtful input, beginning with the economic vision outlined in the Cortes Official Community Plan (OCP), and continued through the numerous LEAP outreach activities that occurred between April 2017 and February 2018. Through the iterative engagement process, we explored the following questions related to our plan.

*What does a viable/sustainable Cortes economy look like?*

*What initiatives could move the community forward?*

*How do we get where we need to go?*

**Fig 1. The main sources of community input that informed the steering committee, who in turn wrote the plan.**





The following sections summarize the feedback we received during each stage of the process regarding what we want for our community and ideas for how we can get there.

CORTES OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Adopted in 2013 after significant community and stakeholder review, the Cortes Island Official Community Plan (OCP) establishes guidance for long-term development on Cortes Island. The OCP reflects the intentions of the community for the future, and was created with significant public input. We reviewed the OCP and drew inspiration from the following LEAP related Vision themes:



- Resilient, self-reliant, stable*
- Partnerships with Klahoose First Nation*
- Local self-sufficient, clean renewable energy*
- Local food and agriculture*
- Tourism (including aqua-tourism, eco-tourism, agri-tourism, cultural tourism, recreational tourism)*
- Sustainable aquaculture and forestry including value added*
- Small scale businesses, industrial*
- Arts and culture*
- Home-based Business friendly through streamlined approval processes*
- Marketing and external investments*

LEAP LAUNCH APRIL 29TH

On April 29th 2017, the Steering Committee hosted a launch for the LEAP process. This event attracted 35 people representing a wide age range. Feedback from the session guided the development of a survey to be put out to the broader community, explored what participants value about Cortes, and highlighted the following aspirations about the economy to incorporate into the plan:

.....  
We need to encourage collaboration; for example: joint marketing and exporting of goods. We are small enough that we need to support each other. / *LEAP Launch notes*  
.....



- Environmental Protection and Stewardship*
- Creating a Healthy and Compassionate Community*
- Supporting a Living Wage on Cortes*
- Job Creation/Apprenticeships*
- Developing the Local/Informal Economy*
- Increased Collaboration*
- Encourage more Land-based Jobs*
- Value-added Economic Development*
- Supporting an Elder-Care Economy*
- Creation of Land Trusts*
- Limited Growth*

## SURVEY

In total, 220 residents took the on-line survey from June - July in 2017. The questions explored some of the underlining factors and influencers of the Cortes economy - residential housing, living conditions, quality of life, job market conditions, and perceptions of the local economy. Looking at the broader island economy, survey respondents identified the following top three elements to improve employment and income on the island.

- 1) *Improving accommodation affordability*
- 2) *Improving job stability*
- 3) *Increasing the size of the economy*

### SURVEY

*Most critical to this planning effort were the **action ideas** shared through the open ended survey questions. These ideas were combined with those coming out of all the other input processes, and articulated what is actually needed on the ground in order to move the island economy forward. These suggestions are captured in the LEAP section on Action Ideas.*

[Read Survey Results / Page 63-82](#)

Encourage local residents to shop locally!! If we don't want to rely on tourism dollars then let's support our local businesses instead of spending our money in Campbell River.  
*Survey Response*

## LEAP COMMUNITY FORUM

The final phase of public engagement took place at the Klahoose First Nation Multi-Purpose Building in T'oq in February 2018. Approximately 40 residents took part in the workshop. The session started with a review of the progress to date, confirmation and validation of the goals, SWOT analysis, descriptions of success statements, focus areas and strategic directions. During the forum, action ideas were also confirmed and prioritized, forming the basis of the plan.

### COMMUNITY FORUM

*Three questions at the end of the forum help to keep us focused:*

*What is the 'one' thing we must do to ensure success?*

- Funding and resources
- Organization and staff
- Value added business support

*What may still be off our radar? What do we need to remember not to forget?*

- Our environment and its importance
- Involving and servicing all residents
- Supporting each other, local purchasing

*Questions Remaining?*

- Ongoing resources from where?
- Who are the leaders carrying this forward?
- How will we assess progress?
- Ensuring community buy in and engagement?

## FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

A substantial part of LEAP engagement involved focus group discussions. Over the course of the late summer and fall in 2017, members of the Steering Committee and the LEAP Coordinator hosted eleven 90-minute focus groups, with a full range of community stakeholders. Each group was asked to help identify opportunities for Cortes.



### FOCUS GROUPS

#### LONG TERM RESIDENTS

Local economy, less reliant on ferries

#### YOUNG FAMILIES

Living wage for all, equal pay  
Diversity of employment  
Value-added manufacturing  
Match services with population  
Housing for residents

#### RETIREEES

Housing  
Transportation access  
Entrepreneurial activity  
Value-added wood

#### SUMMER RESIDENTS

More industry/jobs, eco-forestry  
High speed internet access  
Housing  
Leadership

#### ADMINISTRATORS

Place-based tourism  
Eco-forestry and value-added forestry  
Creative economy

Common themes included:

*Diversifying the economy*  
*On island value-added*  
*Locally based services and buying local*  
*Reliable easy access and internet*  
*Housing/land supply/demand and health services*  
*Leadership, support and resources to make it happen*  
*The right level of tourism, feeling too busy right now in summer*  
*Learning opportunities for kids, existing businesses and budding entrepreneurs*

#### FARMERS

Housing and housing for young farmers to facilitate succession

#### TRADES

More locally based business to keep \$ on the island and provide services here  
Value-added  
Stronger base needed

#### AQUACULTURE

Sustainable jobs  
Capital for value added products  
Base level of economic activity needed

#### FORESTRY

Diversified economy  
Capital for value-added work, less use of land for trees  
Markets needed off-island, bring in money  
Living wage for all

#### TOURISM AND SERVICES

More locally based business to keep \$ on the island and provide services here  
Value added products  
Living wage jobs

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

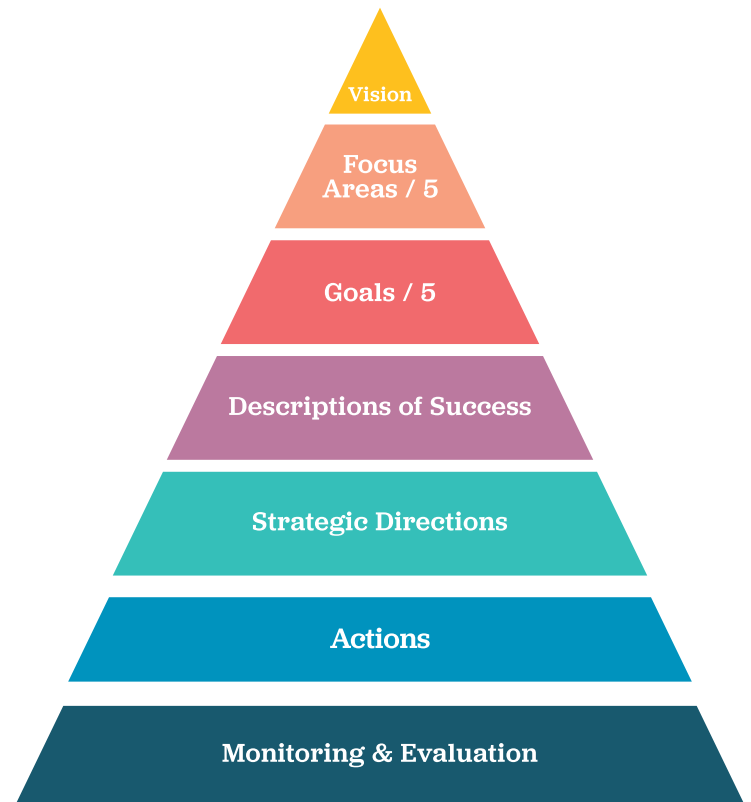
Support for existing businesses  
Make it easier to launch new businesses



## LEAP STRUCTURE

Economic Action Planning input from the community ranged from broad themes to very specific actions. We developed an Action Plan structure that begins with a compelling, overarching vision, five focus areas and goals, descriptions of success, and strategic directions to inspire specific action ideas.

*Fig 2. Our LEAP Action Plan structure imagined as a pyramid. Our vision is supported by the strength of our goals, strategies, and actions.*



## LEAP Vision

Our **vision**, at the top of the LEAP structure, guides everything that flows from it, including our focus areas, goals, descriptions of success, and actions. This vision statement reflects aspirations expressed by local residents and stakeholders through the earlier Cortes OCP, and the more contemporary LEAP engagement events occurring over the past year. ***This is what we would love our home to be:***

**“Cortes Island’s economy is deeply rooted in a sense of place, our care for this land and for each other. Our residents are stably housed, well fed and generally cared for. Our economy is diverse, stable, resilient, and growing in ways that are in alignment with our community values. Our long-term abundance is rooted in a commitment to ethical income and innovative solutions to global challenges.**

**Our community forest, born out of a commitment to land stewardship, abides by an ecosystem-based management approach. A steady, and increasingly diverse, flow of value-**

**added wood products, combined with other locally produced arts, food, and shellfish, are marketed in a strategic and collective manner, reaching consumers that value their Cortes-specific origins. Our place-based tourism supports our island way of life, and our small local businesses are stable and well resourced.**

**Cortes is a great place to raise families and to retire, and old and new residents participate in community life together. Our strong non-profit sector supports community well-being from cradle to grave, with an emphasis on high-quality elder care.”**

## FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

With information from the Cortes Official Community Plan (OCP) and early input from our residents, the following five focus areas emerged. They offer some structure to help focalize our attention and action. The goals below represent a desired outcome for each focus area.

| FOCUS AREA                              | GOAL  |
|---|---|
| <i>Our Local Island Economy</i>         | A diverse, economically stable, self-reliant and financially resilient island community.  |
| <i>Our Visitors</i>                     | A tourism industry that supports our local economy and our island way of life, and respects our natural environment.                |
| <i>Our Resource Industries</i>          | A strong and sustainable resource industry, including increasing value-added opportunities, capable of mentoring other communities. |
| <i>Our Social Sector</i>                | A strong social sector that supports community well-being and a strong economy.   |
| <i>Our Small &amp; Local Businesses</i> | Stable and supported small, home-based and local businesses.  |
| <i>Our Shared Prosperity</i>            | A community that actively creates opportunities for all peoples to achieve their full potential and shared prosperity.              |

## DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & ACTIONS

Each focus area and goal is followed by **descriptions of success** statements, which provides a more specific picture of the desired futures under each goal.

**Strategic directions** represent broad strategies for each Focus Area that guide specific actions over the next 3 years, from 2018-2021. Most importantly, the strategic directions consider our current context and start to answer the big questions of “what first?”, “how?”, “where?”.

**Actions** are specific activities that help us make progress towards the goals. Guided by the strategic directions, actions will need to be championed by at least one organization, and may be implemented by collaborations between multiple organizations or individuals. Activities were generated by the community, and later prioritized by the steering committee.

# Focus Area: Our Local Island Economy

**GOAL / A diverse, economically stable, self-reliant and financially resilient island community.**



## DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS

- Increased self-sufficiency in local, renewable energy needs and reduced GHG emissions
- Local food production supports food security and economic development needs
- ALR and viable agricultural land is preserved and protected
- Cortes Island's energy supply is diversified via renewable energy options such as solar, photovoltaic, solar hot water, bio-fuel, and heat pumps
- Healthy employment conditions enhance the social infrastructure of Cortes
- Local skills, resources and capacity are sufficient to provide goods and services that meet Islander needs
- Infrastructure (e.g. transportation and communications) supports a strong local economy
- Living on Cortes is affordable for all
- There is a growing circular economy

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Create a Cortes Economic Development Initiative with an Economic Development Officer to support economic development opportunities

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|---|--|
| Work with the SRD to obtain tax revenues for economic development         | Formation of new CED working group; task CED working group with tax revenue application process  |
| Seek funding from private investors, foundations and other sources        | Formation of new CED working group; task CED working group with an assessment of funding opportunities                                 |
| Draft mission and strategic plan for an economic development organization | Formation of new CED working group; task CED working group with development of mission and strategic plan, building off of LEAP Report |



## 2. Increase housing affordability and stability for year-round island community members

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---|---|
| Create a Community Housing Initiative to purchase 50 acres of land; apply to BC Housing for development capital | <b>Project Underway:</b> In 2018, the Cortes Island Community Foundation & Cortes Island Seniors Society (Housing Committee) worked together to complete the purchase of 50 acres of land in Mansons Landing. Community consultation is in process regarding the use and development of this property |

## 3. Develop branding and marketing of Cortes value-added products (food, wood, shellfish, arts, etc.)

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---|---|
| Develop Cortes brand that includes our ecological commitments   | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>Input from: Island Sea Farms, Cortes Community Forest, Tideline, Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives Society, Craft Co-op, Hollyhock, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Small Businesses</i> |
| Develop a website for all industries  | <b>Refresh current CIBATA / OUR CORTES website</b><br><i>CED Working Group</i>  |
| Seek funding to hire experts to begin branding and marketing our existing products, services and assets | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>Input from: Cortes Community Forest, Hollyhock, Friends of Cortes Island Society</i>  |

## 4. Investigate the feasibility of a local insurance initiative in partnership with financial institutions

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS   | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|--|--|
| Research and develop a model for a local insurance initiative; find underwriters | <b>Existing NPO with office and staff:</b> Southern Cortes Community Association (SCCA), Community Foundation, Hollyhock |

5. Facilitate the implementation of wireless internet and communications infrastructure services to the community

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS                                       |
|---|---|
| Lobby the Provincial government to implement wireless internet                                    | Regional Director, Economic Development Officer                 |
| Develop last mile technology to take full advantage of the SRD's publicly owned fibre optic cable | <b>Project Underway:</b> TwinComm, Strathcona Regional District |

Focus Area: Our Visitors

**GOAL / A tourism industry that supports our local economy and our island way of life, and respects our natural environment.**

- DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS**
- Visitation is spread more evenly throughout the year
  - Tourism development and revenues enhance our local industries and assets
  - There is minimal impact on our natural environment from tourism
  - Visitors learn from the Island's cultural and eco-tourism practices



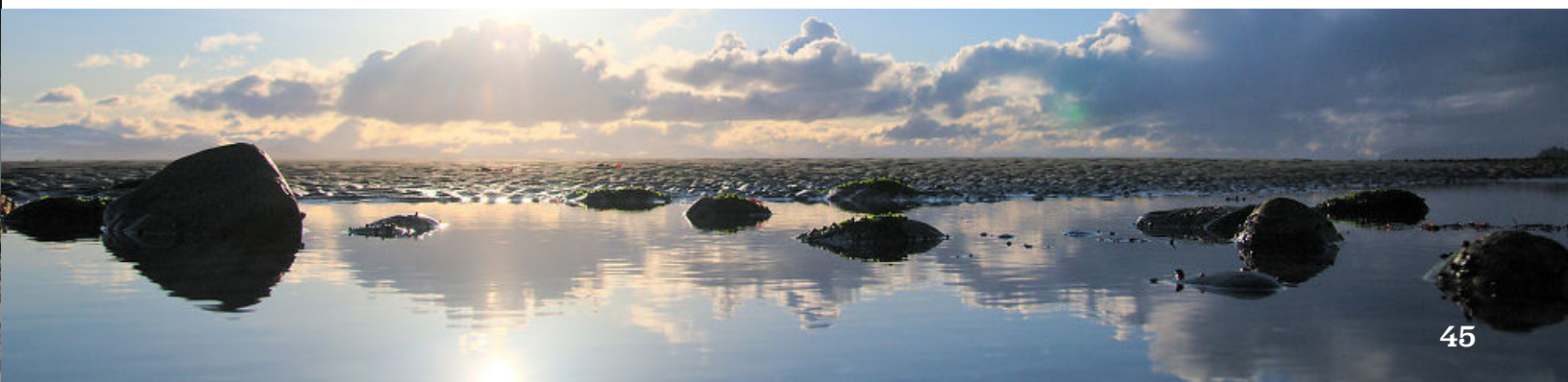
## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Foster a year round, inclusive, quality tourist-recreational sector that is complementary to the island's way of life and will not result in environmental degradation

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS   | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|--|---|
| Support existing and future facilities to expand into year round operations and programming with potential conference industry     | Klahoose First Nation, Hollyhock, Linnaea Farm, Cortes Island Museum & Archives Society, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Community Foundation, B&Bs, Cortes Literacy Now  |
| Develop a winter campaign, promoting the concept of visiting Cortes for a working winter holiday                                   | Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group; refresh CIBATA / OUR CORTES website, B&Bs, Hollyhock, Cortes Island Natural Food Co-op, Gorge Harbour Marina & Resort   |
| Partner with an educational institution to set up eco-cultural learning opportunities, e.g., forestry, ecology, arts, permaculture | Klahoose First Nation, Hollyhock, Linnaea Farm, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Wild Cortes, Children's Forest with University/College partners (University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, Vancouver Island University, etc.) |

### 2. Develop tourism infrastructure that supports the kind of tourism that is complementary to, and supportive of, our island way of life

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS              | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Hold a conference on eco-tourism      | Klahoose First Nation, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Tourism & Guiding outfits                                      |
| Build cycling / hiking infrastructure | Community Foundation, Housing Committee, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Transportation Survey team, Rideshare Cortes |





3. Support aqua-tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, edu-tourism, and geo-tourism

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS                           | NEXT STEPS / COLLABORATIONS  |
|--|--|
| Develop an eco-tourism strategy and marketing plan | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Klahoose, Linnaea Farm, B&amp;Bs, Hollyhock, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Children's Forest; refresh CIBATA / OUR CORTES website</i> |
| Develop marketing campaign to promote eco-tourism  | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Klahoose, Linnaea Farm, B&amp;Bs, Hollyhock, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Children's Forest</i>                                      |
| Create a brewery for cider, wine, vinegar          | <b>CED Working Group, Good Libations, Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Gorge Harbour Marina &amp; Resort, Squirrel Cove Store</b>  |

Focus Area: Our Resource Industries

**GOAL / A strong and sustainable resource industry, including increasing value-added opportunities, capable of mentoring other communities.**

- DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS**
- The forest ecosystem health, resilience and benefits are maintained while providing a viable community forest and forestry industry
  - Our local aquaculture industry is viable and uses best practices
  - Watersheds, aquatic and marine ecosystems are healthy and protected
  - Balance is maintained between our coastal economy, environment and lifestyles
  - Emerging industries, such as marijuana, that align with Island assets - land, water and people - are flourishing
  - Value-added processing and collective marketing for all industries is a growing economic sector



## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Promote growth and expansion of secondary, value-added agriculture, forestry, fishing and aquaculture

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|---|--|
| Investigate feasibility of a shared community workshop and/or makers' studio  | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Cortes Community Forest, Cortes Literacy Now, Southern Cortes Community Association, Whaletown Community Club</i> |
| Develop and implement an awareness campaign to get people to use existing community spaces, e.g., kitchen, halls, Linnaea Ed Centre | <b>Southern Cortes Community Association, Whaletown Community Club, Linnaea Farm, Cortes Literacy Now, Cortes Community Health Association</b>   |
| Create a Co-op to develop and market value-added food products  | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Gathering Place, Big Fir Farm, Hollyhock, Island Sea Farms, Linnaea Farm,</i>          |
| Create a shell-fish, poultry, livestock food processing facility, including drying racks, flash freezer, commercial dehydrator      | <b>Klahoose First Nation, Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Local Farms (Blue Jay, Linnaea), Island Sea Farms</b>   |
| Develop a food safe commercial kitchen available for community use  | <b>Project Completed: Southern Cortes Community Association/ Manson's Hall commercial kitchen (now open and in use), Linnaea Farm (Kitchen available fall-winter)</b>                            |
| Develop an initiative on cannabis, formalizing the sector*  | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group, Regional Director, Strathcona Regional District</b>   |

\*The production and sale of cannabis has been a significant, yet unofficial, sector of Cortes' economy for a long time; we are known far and wide for our boutique product. During the LEAP community consultation and report development process, cannabis was still considered an illegal substance. Understandably, stakeholders were reluctant to share their views about the important role it is bound to play in our island's future. With the advent of legalization, we are committed to engaging the community in a robust conversation specific to this sector.

### 2. Improve marketing for resource industry products

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---|---|
| Produce video profiles promoting local businesses, e.g., shellfish, artisans, mill operators, farmers | <b>Friends of Cortes Island Society, Island Sea Farms, Craft Co-op, Cortes Natural Food Co-op local producers, Cortes Museum, Cortes Literacy Now, Cortes Community Forest Co-op, Market Vendors, Cortes Island Seafood Association</b> |

3. Develop locally-based vocational training and mentorship programs for the resource sectors

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS   | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|--|---|
| Identify trades institutes / schools and discuss opportunities to run training on the island for residents | Klahoose First Nation, Cortes Forestry General Partnership, Harbour Authority of Cortes Island, Regional Director, Island Sea Farms |

Focus Area: Our Social Sector

GOAL / A strong social sector that supports community well-being and a strong economy.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS

- Supports exist on the Island, offering family services from cradle to grave
- Social service sector organizations have the facilities, capacity, and support to grow and be effective
- Innovative partnerships exist between the private, public and non-profit sector





## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Create a not-for-profit hub that facilitates board training, health and safety policy support, joint membership renewals, fundraising, etc., and provides professional space for rent

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|---|--|
| Undertake a needs assessment of all non-profits   | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Children's Forest, Hollyhock, Cortes Literacy Now, Community Foundation, Seniors Association, etc.</i> |
| Host workshop for Non-Profit Executive Directors and Boards, and more general development training for volunteers | <b>Economic Development Officer</b><br><i>With input from: Hollyhock, Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Children's Forest, Cortes Literacy Now, Community Foundation, Seniors Association, etc.</i>                     |
| Create a resource centre that offers employment and health services for women & LGBTQIA2+                         | <b>Project Underway: Cortes Women's Centre is being formed in Manson's Hall</b> with support from Southern Cortes Community Association & Campbell River and North Island Transition Society   |

### 2. Enliven elder care and end-of-life services including assisted living, palliative care and green burials

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---|---|
| Find a senior's resource person willing to move to the island     | <b>Economic Development Officer</b><br><i>Cortes Community Health Association, Seniors Society</i>  |
| Hire / train Cortes residents in coordinating care and funding    | <b>Economic Development Officer</b><br><i>Cortes Community Health Association, Seniors Society</i>  |
| Create a directory of resources which can be shared on the Island | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>Cortes Literacy Now, Cortes Island Museums &amp; Archives, Linnaea Farm</i> |



# Focus Area: Our Small & Local Businesses

**GOAL / A community of stable and supported small, home-based and local businesses.**

## DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS

- A collaborative, positive and thriving environment exists for arts and culture
- Opportunities and support exist for Islanders to make a living off home-based businesses
- Local businesses provide the majority of Islanders' needs, and also bring in export revenues
- There is sufficient infrastructure and appropriately zoned land, which is protected as such, to support new local businesses
- Local businesses respect the island ecology and natural environment
- The whole island community supports small business development

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Encourage local entrepreneurship and offer small business education

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|---|--|
| Advance planning on the commercial property   | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Community Foundation, Community consultation process</i>  |
| Develop a business incubator program to connect entrepreneurs with training, mentorship, and resources  | <b>Cortes Literacy Now, Hollyhock, Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives Society, Gathering Place, Marnie's Books, Hunt &amp; Gather, etc.</b>   |
| Develop and deliver an educational package that connects newcomers with information about existing economic enterprises/initiatives, as well as possible economic opportunities that could be developed | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>Cortes Literacy Now, Strathcona Regional District</i>  |
| Host a series of networking events to bring small business owners/entrepreneurs together to share knowledge, challenges, opportunities, collaborations  | <b>Cortes Literacy Now, Hollyhock, Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives Society, Gathering Place, Marnie's Books, Hunt &amp; Gather, etc.</b>   |
| Develop a robust workshop series to deliver training on business plans, sharing economy, visioning & future planning, remote working  | <b>Cortes Literacy Now, Hollyhock, Cortes Island Museum &amp; Archives Society, Linnaea Farm Society, North Island Employment Foundations Society, Cortes Island Women's Resource Centre</b> |

## 2. Work with the SRD to provide incentives to support small businesses

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS   | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|--|---|
| Develop a resource directory of all small businesses on the island                               | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Cortes Literacy Now, Cortes Community Health Association</i>                     |
| Develop a funding directory of all economic incentives available to assist small businesses      | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b>   |
| Network with other regional economic promotion initiatives to have Cortes businesses highlighted | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>With input from: Hollyhock, Cortes Island Info Book, Tideline</i>                                 |
| Develop a strategy to attract and train online/digital workers with a focus on youth (age 18-30) | <b>Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group</b><br><i>Cortes Literacy Now, Cortes Community Health Association, Homeschoolers, Cortes Island School</i> |

## 3. Encourage community support for shopping locally

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS  | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS   |
|---|---|
| Create an incentives program & marketing strategy to encourage local shopping eg. stores, markets | <b>Economic Development Officer, Cortes Natural Food Co-op, Cortes Market, Gorge Harbour Marina, Squirrel Cove Store, Market Vendors, Hollyhock, Cortes Museum, Klahoose First Nation, B&amp;B's, Craft Co-op</b><br><br><i>Possible Funding Streams through Investment Agriculture BC (IAFBC) Buy Local Program &amp; Export Program</i> |





# Focus Area: Our Shared Prosperity

**GOAL / A community that actively creates opportunities for all peoples to achieve their full potential and shared prosperity.**



## DESCRIPTIONS OF SUCCESS

- Cultural and economic reconciliation learning is embraced and prioritized by all island residents, organizations, and businesses
- Island residents, organizations, and businesses honour and respect the land & water rights, sovereignty, culture, history, and leadership of the Klahoose people, and operate within a model of shared prosperity and well-being
- Residents, tourists, and visitors are immersed in the language, culture, and history of the Klahoose people
- Economic opportunities are developed in partnership with Klahoose First Nation, with respect for cultural traditions and best practices

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Create a visionary framework for shared prosperity

| PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS   | NEXT STEPS/COLLABORATIONS  |
|--|--|
| Create & fund community liaison position   | Community Foundation with guidance from Klahoose First Nation, Strathcona Regional District, Cortes Island Museum & Archives Society |
| Hold Reconciliation dialogue workshops   | Led by Klahoose First Nation, Reconciliation Canada  |
| Develop an Economic Reconciliation framework and integrate into LEAP indicators  | Klahoose First Nation, Regional Director, Community Liaison, Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group                        |
| Develop an Economic Reconciliation resource package and toolkit to assist residents and businesses with transitioning into a shared prosperity model | Klahoose First Nation, Community Liaison, Economic Development Officer / CED Working Group, Cortes Literacy Now                      |

## PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS WITH OUTCOMES IN MIND

During the community consultation process (Focus Groups/Community Forum) three major themes routinely surfaced: Shelter/Housing, Economic Development, and Capacity Building.

In August 2018, in order to ensure maximum focus and accountability in attaining many of the desired action ideas outlined in the plan (in particular the three key concerns: shelter, economic development, capacity building), the LEAP working group engaged the services of Phil Cox, Executive Director of PlanNet Limited, a management planning and evaluation organization, to help in the development of a Logic Model for the successful implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Action Plan.

The LEAP Logic model will be a valuable tool for assisting the Community Economic Development working group (CED) in guiding and advancing the LEAP initiative over the next year and into the future. It will also be valuable in helping community partners, investors and funding agencies in better understanding Cortes community economic development vision and goals. The Logic model is also a living and adaptive tool that should be reviewed annually and adjusted accordingly. A helpful guide in developing our Logic Model was the Performance Measurement Toolkit for Local Economic Development published by the Province of British Columbia. This free online resource has a comprehensive list of economic development indicators that can be adopted over time to further track success as the LEAP initiative expands.

*A Logic Model is an effective tool and road map for assisting those responsible for guiding complex and multi-faceted community change initiatives like the LEAP. The logic model consists of 6 key components:*

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>INPUTS</b>                | <i>Human and material resources that make the initiative possible</i> |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b>            | <i>The essential work of the initiative</i>                           |
| <b>OUTPUTS</b>               | <i>The most direct and immediate results</i>                          |
| <b>IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b>    | <i>Potential for intermediate and ultimate outcomes to occur</i>      |
| <b>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES</b> | <i>The key changes that are desired for the initiative</i>            |
| <b>ULTIMATE OUTCOMES</b>     | <i>The preferred future</i>   |

Outlined on the following pages is a graphical depiction of the logical relationship between resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of the LEAP initiative. The value of this framework is that it lays out a logical pathway that can assist in assessing the “if-then” (causal) relationships between the multiple elements of the action plan.



| ACTIVITIES   | OUTPUTS  |
|--|--|
| <p>Create a Community Housing Initiative to purchase 50 acres of land; apply to BC Housing for development capital</p>   |  |
| <p>Work with the SRD to obtain tax revenues for economic development</p> <p>Seek funding from private investors, foundations and other sources</p> <p>Draft mission and strategic plan for an economic development organization</p> <p>Develop Cortes brand that includes our ecological commitments</p> <p>Develop a website for all industries</p> <p>Seek funding to hire experts to begin branding and marketing our existing products, services and assets</p> <p>Research and develop a model for a local insurance initiative; find underwriters</p> <p>Lobby the Provincial government to implement wireless internet</p> <p>Develop last mile technology to take full advantage of the SRD's publicly owned fibre optic cable</p> <p>Support existing and future facilities to expand into year round operations and programming with potential conference industry</p> <p>Develop a warm-weather winter campaign, including the concept of working winter holidays</p> <p>Partner with an educational institution to set up eco-cultural learning opportunities</p> <p>Hold a conference on eco-tourism</p> <p>Build cycling / hiking infrastructure</p> <p>Develop an eco-tourism strategy and marketing plan</p> <p>Develop marketing campaign to promote eco-tourism</p> <p>Create a brewery for cider, wine, vinegar</p> <p>Investigate feasibility of a shared community workshop and/or makers' studio</p> | <p>Analysis done of existing regulatory constraints on housing</p> <p>Adjustments to existing regulations proposed</p> <p>Alternative organization/programming models assessed</p> <p>Program design and budget submitted for approval</p> <p>Land packages for housing identified and purchased</p> <p>Financing secured</p> <p>Land development/housing construction contracts managed</p> <p>Housing programming designed, budgeted and staffed</p>   |
| <p>Develop and implement an awareness campaign to get people to use existing community spaces</p>  |  |
| <p>Create a Co-op to develop and market value-added food products</p> <p>Create a shell-fish, poultry, livestock food processing facility, including drying racks, flash freezer, commercial dehydrator</p> <p>Develop a food safe commercial kitchen available for community use</p> <p>Develop an initiative on cannabis, formalizing the sector</p> <p>Produce video profiles promoting local businesses</p>  |  |
| <p>Identify trades institutes / schools and discuss opportunities to run training on the island for residents</p> <p>Undertake a needs assessment of all non-profits</p> <p>Host workshop for NPO ED's and boards, and more general development training for volunteers</p> <p>Create a resource centre that offers employment and health services for women &amp; LGBTQ2+</p> <p>Find a seniors' resource person willing to move to the island</p> <p>Hire / train Cortes residents in coordinating care and funding</p> <p>Create a directory of resources which can be shared on the Island</p>   | <p>Models of local economic development financing examined</p> <p>Investment "capture" plan produced</p> <p>Branding program designed</p> <p>Brand labeling/messaging approved</p> <p>Cortes "opportunities" website launched</p> <p>Last mile plan approved and communicated</p> <p>Installation contracts managed</p> <p>Site designs submitted and approvals made</p> <p>Financing secured</p> <p>Land development/site construction contracts managed</p> <p>Tourism enhancement plan produced</p> <p>Land identified for business and non-profit hub identified and purchased</p> |
| <p>Advance planning on the commercial property</p> <p>Develop a business incubator program to connect entrepreneurs with training mentorship and resources</p> <p>Host a series of networking events to bring small business owners/entrepreneurs together to share knowledge, challenges, opportunities, collaborations</p> <p>Develop a robust workshop series to deliver training on business plans, sharing economy, visioning &amp; future planning, remote working</p> <p>Develop a resource directory of all small businesses on the island</p> <p>Develop a funding directory of all economic incentives available to assist small businesses</p> <p>Network with other regional economic promotion initiatives to have Cortes businesses highlighted</p> <p>Develop a strategy to attract and train online/digital workers with a focus on youth (age 18-30)</p> <p>Create an incentives program &amp; marketing strategy to encourage local shopping eg. stores, markets</p>   | <p>Agreements made with identified post secondary/adult education institutions</p> <p>Partnerships made with island based organizations for program delivery</p> <p>Economic development program designed and budgeted</p> <p>Funds, space, staffing, and governance arrangements secured</p>  |
| <p>Create &amp; fund community liaison position</p> <p>Hold Reconciliation dialogue workshops</p> <p>Develop an Economic Reconciliation framework and integrate into LEAP indicators</p> <p>Develop an Economic Reconciliation resource package and toolkit to assist residents and businesses with transitioning into a shared prosperity model</p>   |  |



## IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Regulatory adjustments in place to support housing stability

A community housing development organization established

Land for community housing secured

Housing stock built and “in-home” programming established

Mechanisms in place to capture and channel philanthropy and business investment for island use

Program for branding and marketing in place for Cortes products and services

Last mile connectivity in place for all residents and businesses

Infrastructure in place to support value-added production

Coordinated activities focused on lengthening the tourist season and diversifying tourist activity

Land secured for business and not-for-profit hub

“On island”, Adult Education Courses available in business and not-for-profit management skills development

Additional “on island” school-aged education opportunities

Community economic development program established with office, staff and a program to support LEAP strategy

## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Increased proportion of Cortes residents (all age groups) living in affordable, adaptive and stable housing

Enhanced Island centred economic activity with distributed benefit and prosperity.

Enhanced island governance (expanded opportunities for involvement, more informed participation, better coordinated) for leveraging community benefit

## ULTIMATE OUTCOME

The Cortes economy is vibrant and resilient, our communities are cohesive and in right relationship with our surrounding environment

HOUSING

ECONOMIC DEV.

CAPACITY BUILDING

# Ongoing Implementation

## FORMING A NEW CED WORKING GROUP

The LEAP process (2017-2018) was initiated and coordinated by a 10 person steering committee and part-time coordinator. After the release of the LEAP report in 2018, the committee will shift its focus from community engagement and reporting, to an action-oriented approach. To this end, CIBATA will host this new Community Economic Development (CED) working group. Some members of the current LEAP steering committee will carry on through this transition and a call will be made for additional members to join the CED working group.

The new Cortes CED working group will be supported during its operations by the Directors of CIBATA and a part-time CED Coordinator. A new 'terms of reference' for the committee will be developed under the overarching mandate of continuing to generate local interest in community economic development, and initiating and monitoring specific actions identified in the LEAP report.

## RESOURCING THE WORKING GROUP

CIBATA has acquired seed funding to support a part-time Coordinator for 6 months, to initiate and coordinate the next phase of the LEAP process. During this time (January 2019 - June 2019) the Coordinator will work with the CIBATA board to solidify the new working group, and to advance priority grant applications to a number of regional and provincial funding agencies and well as other fund development strategies.

Midway through this phase, the CED working group will be tasked with developing a longer-term vision of community economic development on Cortes, and the creation of a 3-5 year strategic plan. Included in the plan will be a proposal for enlisting a full-time Economic Development Officer, in year 2 or 3.

## KEY GROUPS WORKING TO ADVANCE CORTES ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

· Klahoose First Nation  
· Cortes Island Community Foundation  
· Cortes Community Housing  
· Cortes Island Business & Tourism Association  
· Strathcona Regional District  
· Cortes Natural Food Co-op  
· Gorge Harbour Marina & Resort  
· Squirrel Cove Trading Co.  
· Cortes Island Farmer's Markets  
· Hollyhock Leadership Centre  
· Linnaea Farm Society  
· Cortes Island Museum & Archives Society  
· Cortes Island Literacy Now

· Friends of Cortes Island Society  
· Cortes Forestry General Partnership  
· Cortes Island Craft Co-op  
· Old Schoolhouse Art Gallery  
· Harbour Authority of Cortes Island  
· Cortes Community Health Association  
· Cortes Island Seniors Society  
· Ferry Advisory Committee  
· Cortes Island Tideline  
· TwinComm  
· Cortes Island Information Book  
· Rideshare Cortes Island

## FIRST YEAR STEPS & TIMELINE / 2019

### DECEMBER - JANUARY

#### Planning/Fund Development

Hiring Coordinator, setting up the CED committee, crafting a fund development plan, writing grant applications.

#### Liaison

Liaison with individuals and community stakeholders to create positive conditions and environment for success, building local networks.

### FEBRUARY - MARCH

#### Prospecting

Identifying & Supporting Local Pilot Projects. Launch of projects identified in LEAP.

### MARCH - MAY

#### Mentoring/Advocacy

Support to initiatives and actions through mentoring, skill development workshops and advocating for appropriate resourcing.

### MAY & ONWARDS

#### Promotion/Marketing

Promotion and marketing of identified projects to assist in project success, and in generating public awareness of economic development benefits to the community.

#### Business Assistance

Continued support in ensuring successful project development and implementation.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Research/Monitoring/Fund Development

Documenting lessons learned. Identifying best practices to assist with existing or new projects.







## Assessment & Evaluation

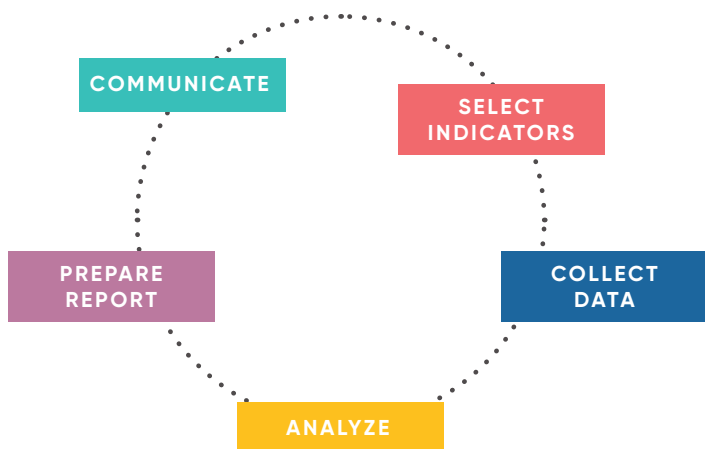
The Cortes Island *Local Economic Action Plan* sets out a prioritized list of activities for each LEAP strategy. The future CED working group will monitor and report against a set of progress indicators, in order to ensure accountability to the LEAP goals. Monitoring and evaluating progress towards (or away from) LEAP focus area goals is essential to provide transparency, to inform decision-making, and to enable continuous improvement.

**Monitoring** is the continuous process of gathering data linked to the LEAP goals and using it to make management decision and report to stakeholders

**Evaluation** is the periodic review of progress against goals. It draws on monitoring data and engages stakeholders in an inquiry to determine overall effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Findings help refocus the plan.

Ongoing, consistent, and reliable monitoring and evaluation provides the community with a number of essential functions and benefits, including:

- Informing decision-making
- Informing future action planning and prioritization
- Ensuring transparency and accountability to community stakeholders
- Engaging businesses, residents and visitors by providing meaningful and timely information in an interactive way.



**Fig 3. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting should be done at least on an annual basis (where possible) and comprise the steps in the diagram.**

## IDENTIFYING AND WORKING WITH INDICATORS

The CED Working Group will identify & develop indicators like those set out to the right. These will give focus to data collection tools that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress. The steps required to launch a Monitoring and Evaluation system are set out below:

Develop a logic model/theory of change that summarizes the action steps, strategies, goals and the vision in this plan

Attach indicators to each output (product/service) and outcome

Develop an Monitoring and Evaluation plan that spells out for each indicator: baseline conditions, the specific target sought in the life of the plan, the source of the data that is to be collected, the method of collecting it, and the assignment and scheduling of the task

Prepare the data collection tools and begin to use them

Establish routines of collating and analysing the data in the Working Group and developing stakeholder reports

Commission an external evaluation 75% of the way through the plan cycle to inform the design of a subsequent LEAP for Cortes.

## PROVISIONAL LIST OF INDICATORS

**Economic Diversification** / A sustainable community values economic diversity just as it values cultural and ecological diversity. A diverse economy that does not rely on a single resource, employer, or sector is better able to withstand economic downturns and fluctuating market prices, and can provide a stable environment for long-term community sustainability.

**Unemployment Rate** / The vitality and productivity of a society depends on the work of its citizens. Each individual has the potential to contribute to the betterment of society. Increasing levels of unemployment create the greatest challenges for those in lower economic groups.

**Number of Business Start-ups** / New businesses create renewed energy and spark innovation in a community, often inspiring others to embrace a spirit of entrepreneurship and creative problem solving, in response to community need and opportunity.

**Hours Required to Meet Basic Needs** / Equity is an important element of a sustainable community. Every member of the community should have the opportunity to have meaningful work for a reasonable wage. Adequately remunerated employment can increase self-sufficiency, decrease reliance on social programs, and, in the long term, reduce costs to society.

**Food Bank Usage** / Food bank usage indicates to what extent we are fulfilling our societal responsibility to more vulnerable citizens.

**Income Equity (Gap between Rich & Poor)**  
A community that is increasingly split by income inequity cannot sustain itself over time. Poverty breeds isolation and exclusion, with less opportunity for interaction between people of different income levels.

## ANNUAL ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY REPORT CARD

A citizen-based sustainability reporting process is one strategy that can help communities better adapt to change, build community resiliency, and to keep forward momentum towards a successful future state. As part of the LEAP evaluation process, and as a means for supporting the action plan, the committee has recommended the adoption of a *sustainable economic indicators process*, monitored on a regular basis by local citizens.



## Concluding Thoughts

### EMBRACING OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

In the LEAP process, we broke new ground in starting an island-wide conversation, bringing together people that are largely used to working independently. We kept to the view that economic priorities must be focused and action-oriented yet broad enough to capture the energy and diverse ideas expressed in the meetings. We hope that what we have here is a “springboard” for coordinated action that can guide the years to come.

An organized focus on community economic development is an entirely new approach for Cortes Island. Discussions to date have made it clear, we need a community economic development organization to help move our strategy and associated projects forward.

With CIBATA’s continued support, the LEAP steering committee is to become a Community Economic Development (CED) working group, mandated to spark further community engagement and investment in LEAP, and to implement and monitor actions identified in the plan. We intend to also engage a full-time Economic Development Officer to coordinate and support this work.

***As we embark on this next phase, there is a greater awareness of and appetite for Island wide community economic development. We hope you too will take the “LEAP” and join us on this important journey.***



# *Appendices*

LEAP Survey & Focus Group Results

[Read Survey Results / Page 63-82](#)

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network

[What is CED](#)

SFU Community Economic Development

[CED 5 Principles](#)

Community Wealth

[Difference Between CED and Traditional Development](#)

Website for Island Institute

[islandinstitute.org](http://islandinstitute.org)

Website for Salt Spring Island CEDC

[opportunitysaltspring.ca](http://opportunitysaltspring.ca)

Website for HICEEC

[hiceec.org](http://hiceec.org)

[Klahoose First Nation](#)

[Klahoose Language Learning App](#)

[Qathen Xwegus Management Corporation](#)

[State of the Island Economic Report 2016 / Vancouver Island  
Economic Alliance](#)

[2016 Census for the area / Strathcona B Regional District  
Electoral Area](#)

[Performance measurement toolkit for local economic  
development - Published by Province of BC](#)

[Cortes Island OCP](#)

[Cumberland Economic Development Strategy 2018- 2023](#)

## *Appendices Continued*

[Handbook - Community Economic Development for the Local Development Officer \(Manitoba Government\)](#)

[Rural Ontario Foresight Papers - 2017 The Impact of Megatrends on Rural Development in Ontario](#)

[Citizens and Sustainability: Something Real and Lasting - Sustainable Calgary Community Sustainability Indicator Project Outcomes - Noel Keough, Sustainable Calgary Society](#)

[A Tapestry of Place - A place-based cultural tourism strategy for the Columbia Valley - Columbia Cultural Tourism Association - Steven Thorne](#)

[The Case for Cultivating Community Resilience - Adapting to challenges, sustaining Hope - Sylvia Chey - Tamarack Institute](#)

[Building Knowledge and Capacity for Affordable Housing in Small Communities - December 8, 2017 workshop - BC Housing](#)

Reconciliation Canada  
[\*\*Economic Reconciliation\*\*](#)

Additional Resources From Island Coastal Trust

Project Summaries:  
[islandcoastaltrust.ca/projects](http://islandcoastaltrust.ca/projects)

Key CED Projects:  
[\*\*BC Artisans Work Project\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Cowichan Farm Incubator\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Gibsons Public Market\*\*](#)  
[\*\*This Fish Pacific Plate\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Texada Food Hub\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Educational tourism\*\*](#)

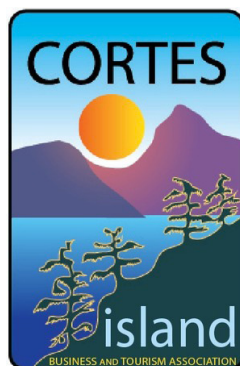
Information about Quick Start projects approved:  
[\*\*ICE-T Funds For New Strategies\*\*](#)  
[\*\*North Island Quick Start Projects\*\*](#)

Information about value-added forestry and opportunities:  
[\*\*Wood Value-Added Sector\*\*](#)

[Island Light Photography](#)

# CORTES ISLAND LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN FOCUS GROUPS AND SURVEY RESULTS

*October 2017*





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## BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The goal of the Cortes Island Local Economic Action Plan project (LEAP), led by the Cortes Island Business and Tourism Association (CIBATA) is to identify priorities Cortes Islanders would like to be pursued to ensure a healthy island economy into the future. The effort is in part funded by the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) and the Strathcona Regional District. Between April and October 2017, the team gather a tremendous amount of information and opinions about trends and opportunities in the island economy. This information is presented here, and will help inform the development of a five years action plan, to be completed by February 2018. The LEAP process is guided by an independent Steering Group responsible for all aspects of the project. The chart below highlights our process and where and status at the time of publishing this document:

### PROCESS TIMELINE



## FOCUS GROUPS AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A key deliverable of our process is to gather broad and in-depth information about the Cortes Island economy. Our goal was to generate information that would be useful to the community regardless of the specific outcomes of the LEAP process. This information would also help ground our analysis in support of our final recommendation and a five years plan for Cortes Island. To date we have been thrilled by the level of engagement from the community. The two main research strategies we deployed was the delivery of an Economic Survey, which was completed by 230 individuals, and the hosting of a launch event and 10 focus groups, which were attended by 120 people.

### SURVEY DESIGN

The survey was designed to both capture basic information about Cortes households that would help us validate the representation of our sample group with Stats Canada data, and most importantly to capture opinions and ideas in relation to trends, opportunities, and priorities to work in regards to the Cortes Island economy. The questions were selected based on those found in other rural economic development surveys; some specific questions that relate to Cortes; and a handful of questions that echoed those found in previous Cortes Island surveys (for example a housing-related question was formulated based on results of a prior Cortes Housing survey).

### METHODOLOGY

The survey was set up on the platform Survey Monkey, which would allow a high level of customization and ability to segregate, filter, and compare data across different groups. The survey was promoted via posters, survey cards distributed by BC Ferries and the Coop, on Tideline, and through word of mouth. Paper copies were also made available for those who want to fill it out by hand rather than online. The survey also allowed visitors to the island to participate, though they would actually complete a different set of questions when doing so (which are not covered in this report). This set of strategies and decisions allowed us to promote the survey to everyone, with the hope to reach the highest level of saturation.

### SURVEY ANALYSIS

The survey's statistical significance (based on an estimated resident and non-resident population) is a confidence level of 90% and confidence interval (variance in possible answer ranges) of 5%. The team reviewed the results and a bare minimum of analysis is provided in this report, so as to let community members review the results in a generally unfiltered way. Some observations are provided to highlight any noticeable trends in results. Questions 25-28 used "grounded theory" to identify concepts and number of occurrences. A synthesizing Word Cloud was created for each question based on the number of times a concept was mentioned, with bigger letters indicating more occurrences.

### FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARIES

The focus groups were similarly designed to have in-depth small group conversations about certain economic aspects and groups in the community. The goal for the session was to identify trends and opportunities for each of those segments, and complement survey results. The summary to each question is presented as Word Clouds.



## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The LEAP team is aware of research limitations, which we can sum up as follow:

- ✓ Question design limitations. As with any qualitative survey and focus groups the very questions asked can funnel assumptions about what is important. To mitigate - especially in the long-form answers and focus groups - we asked very broad questions about the Cortes Island economy, including quality of life as a whole.
- ✓ Sample size limitations. While we did our best to give everyone a chance to participate, we realize that not everyone did. In order to mitigate we asked questions that would allow us to see if any groups are over or under-represented (based on Stats Can data). We were pleased to find out that is not the case.
- ✓ Qualitative analysis skewing. Analyzing data to make it more accessible can skew results based on the bias of the researcher. Our mitigating strategy was to use grounded theory - which simply counts the number of mentions or occurrences of general categories, and represent the result in weighted word clouds.

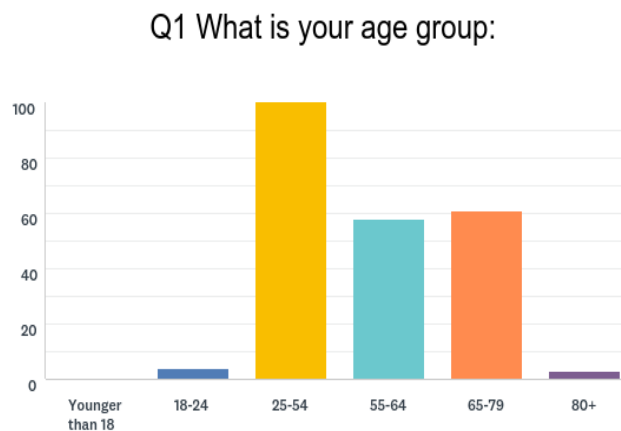
The LEAP team is committed to be transparent in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of our results, and are happy to answer questions about our methodology.

# 1. RESPONDENT AND HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

## Overview

The survey was partially or fully completed anonymously by 230 individuals, 209 of whom completed it online via Survey Monkey and 21 via a paper version. 10 individuals were classified as “visitors”, leaving 220 respondents in the part-time or full-time resident categories. For the purpose of this report, we are presenting the results from part-time and full-time resident categories only, as they were the primary target for the survey, while those who self-categorized as “visitors” or “other” were directed to a different set of questions. The sample size for visitors was deemed too small to prove useful.

### 1.1 Respondents age

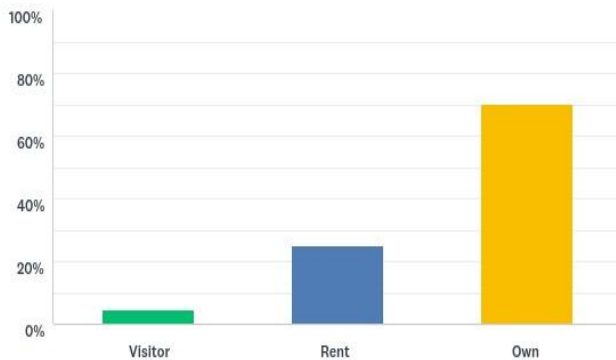


The age of respondents is reasonably representative of the Cortes Island adult resident population, with the exception of an almost absent representation of the younger-than-18 years old category (just 1 respondent). With the majority of questions requiring good knowledge of the management of financial affairs of households and the general island economic and tax structure, this limitation is noted but not seen as a critical concern. As seen in the table below, the number of respondents who are 80+ years old is also half of the perfect theoretical sample, with 3 respondents instead of a 8 ideal sample, and similarly for the 18-24 years old group. The 25-79 years old groups are generally well-represented and distributed, with the 25-54 age group (core working age) being represented slightly more than their perfect theoretical sample size.

| Age group       | 2016 Census | LEAP Survey | Perfect theoretical sample |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Younger than 18 | 135         | 1           | 30                         |
| 18-24           | 65          | 4           | 14                         |
| 25-54           | 345         | 100         | 77                         |
| 55-64           | 200         | 58          | 44                         |
| 65-79           | 250         | 61          | 55                         |
| 80+             | 40          | 3           | 8                          |
| Total:          | 1035        | 226         | 226                        |

## 1.2 Housing ownership and Household Profiles

Q2 Do you rent or own a home on Cortes or are you a visitor?

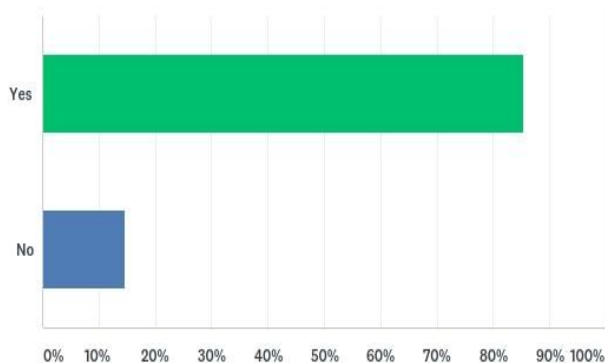


155 of respondents classified as owners, and 55 as renters. It is important to note that these responses apply to individuals and not to dwellings. In other words, 3 people from the same household could have completed the survey and listed as renters, thus skewing household type representation.

Accounting for this limitation, the results do suggest general representativeness from past results: A 2009 Cortes Island housing survey assessed a general ratio of 70% ownership.

**\*Further In-Depth:** It is worth noting that a higher proportion of renters tend to be between the ages of 25-54 (70%); have been here for a shorter period of time (60% under 10 years), and are slightly more likely to be part of a household with children under the age of 18 (36%).

Q3 Are you satisfied with your current housing situation?

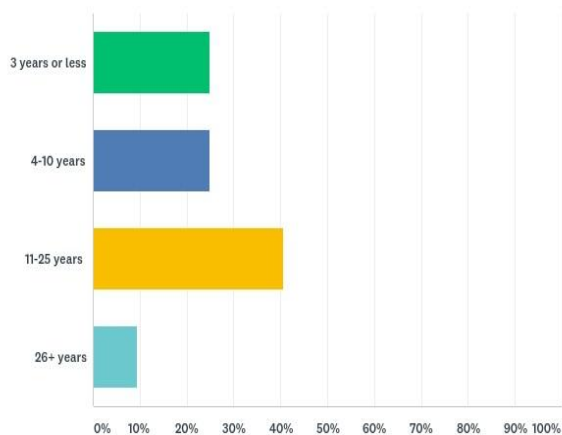


85% of respondents are satisfied with their current housing situation. 27 comments were provided by those who are not satisfied, who are in majority renters (65% not satisfied are renters). Those not satisfied provided 27 comments generally related to three key concerns:

1. Cost and availability of rental options is low
2. Affordability of ownership is decreasing
3. Renters would like to become owners
3. Concern about losing existing rentals

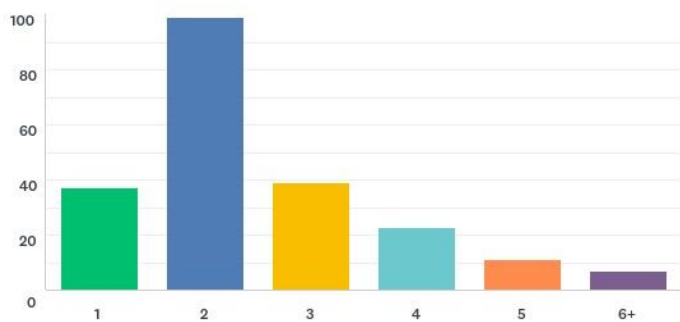


Q4 How long ago did you first become a resident or ratepayer on Cortes Island?



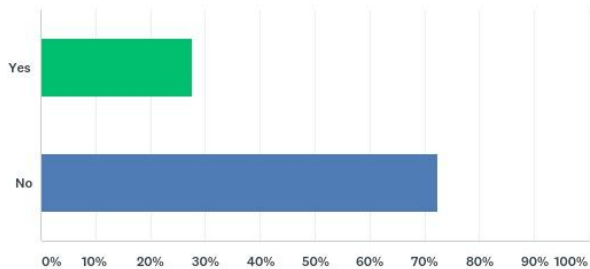
In terms of length of residency, close to a majority of Cortes Islanders have been residents for 11 to 25 years. Of those that moved 3 years ago or less, there is a proportion of 50/50 homeowners and renters and 30% have children under the age of 18. Generally speaking migration is well-represented across all age groups except 80 yrs +.

Q5 How many people live in your household?



Number of people per household is generally representative of Stats Can data, except for one person households who are slightly under-represented. Otherwise compared to national statistics Cortes Island has an average profile in terms of people-per-household proportions.

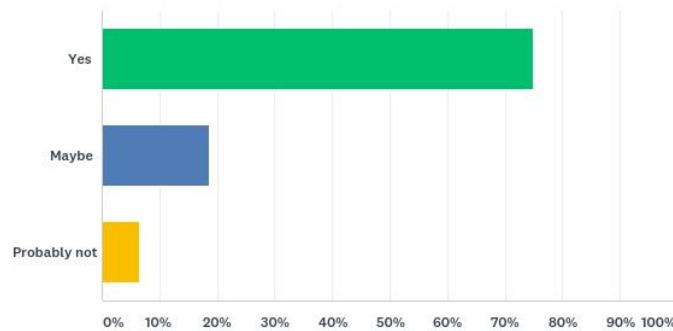
Q6 Do any children under the age of 18 live in your household?



28% of respondents report having children under the age of 18 living at home. The sample size of our survey would indicate that this would translate to 290 people living in a family with children situation. Incredibly, the 2016 Stats Canada survey indicates that precisely 290 live in this situation, indicating strong correlation between the two surveys.

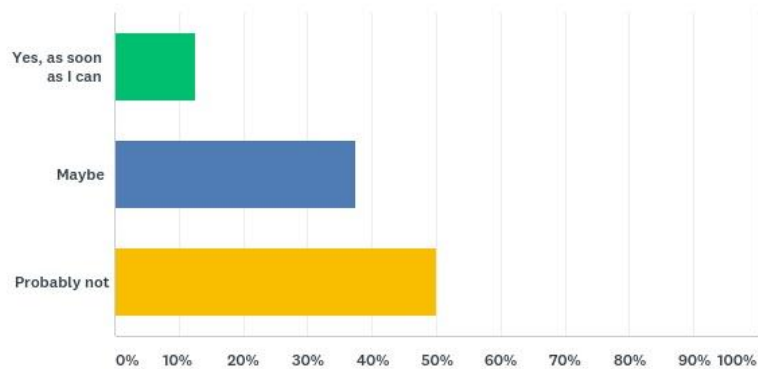
## 1.3 Residency and intent to stay on/move to Cortes Island

Q8 Do you plan to stay on Cortes Island full-time for at least the next 5 years?



In terms of intent of residency in the future, 75% of permanent residents intend to stay for at least the next 5 years, 19% maybe, and 6% probably not. For those potentially leaving, 18 comments were included. Two almost exclusive reasons for leaving were cited in 16 of those comments: 1) lack of affordable and secure housing, and 2) lack of income opportunities.

Q9 Do you plan to move to Cortes Island full-time in the foreseeable future ?



In terms of those who have a secondary or part-time home on Cortes, 50% probably will not move to the island in the next 5 years, 37% are considering it (maybe), and 13% "as soon as they can." 12 comments were included. 4 mentioned the cold and rainy winter as a reason not to move; 6 mentioned work concerns; and 2 mentioned lack of access, including internet.

## 2. INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND AFFORDABILITY

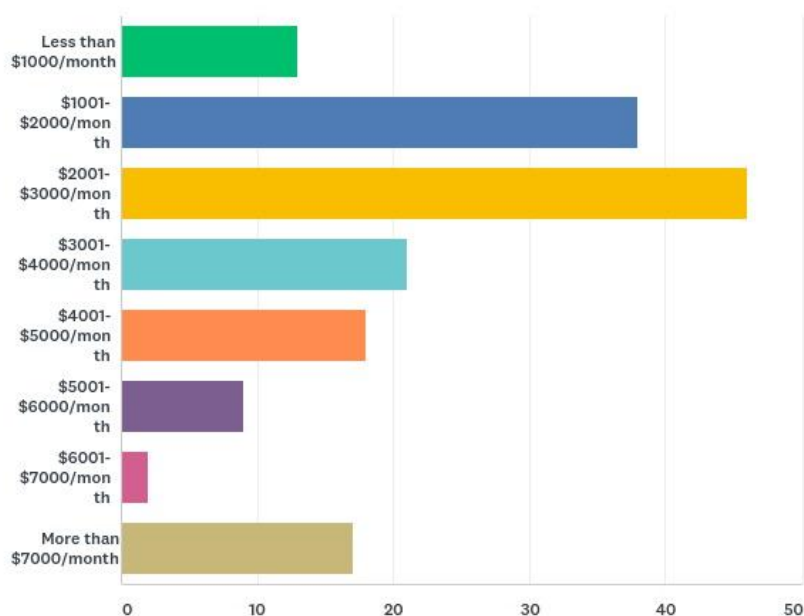
### Overview

The steering group considered a number of options to assess income, employment, and, most importantly, affordability and livability. On the one hand, it was felt that Census data was too generalized, and that there may be better opportunity to capture useful information through a mix of quantitative (i.e., gross income) and qualitative (i.e., perceptions of affordability and ability to make ends meet) questions. One key consideration was whether to ask for gross vs. net household income. The decision was made to use Gross income because other questions would shed light on overall affordability and ability to make ends meet, while there was a concern that some respondents may have a hard time estimating or qualifying their net income.

It is also important to note that over 60 respondents decided not to answer some of the income questions, potentially due to privacy concerns, which was expected. The decision was made not to require answers to these questions, even though it would lead to variance in statistical significance between questions. While the sample size remains meaningful, the degree of significance is therefore lower than the questions above and below for this question. However, the data that was gathered is possibly more accurate and useful in assessing affordability and livability concerns, and being able to do a triage of affordability and livability concerns by population segments (renters vs. owners, young vs. old, permanent vs. part-time resident, high vs. low income, etc.).

### 2.1 Household income, sources, and employment categories

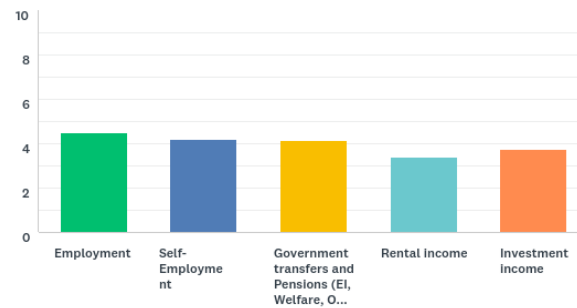
Q.30 What is your household's Gross Income (before taxes). \*\*\*This question was asked last but is presented in this section\*\*\*\*



Survey responses indicate a broad diversity of gross household income levels on Cortes Island. Our survey estimates that the median gross household income for permanent residents is \$3,000/month, or \$36,000/year, while Statistics Canada indicates \$36,160/year - so again a high degree of correlation between the two surveys. This compares to \$75,412/year for the rest of Canada - so less than half.

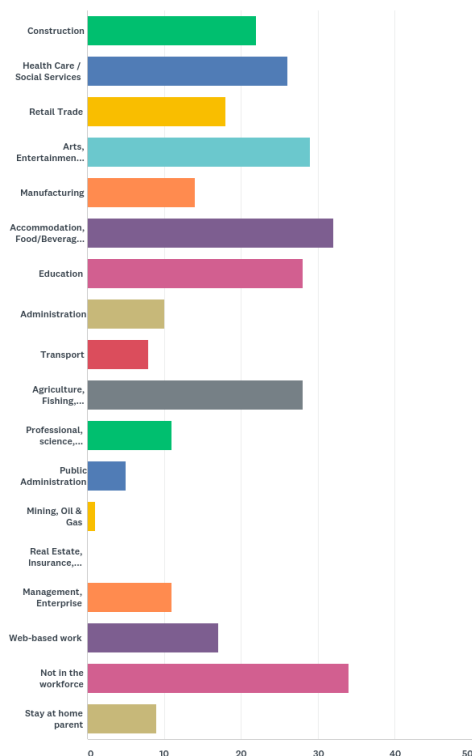
The survey also confirms that part-time residents earn substantially more than permanent residents, with a median household income estimated at \$6,200/month, and generally in line with the national average.

Q10 Please categorize your source/s of employment, from (1) providing the highest income to (4) the lowest (click N/A beside those that are not applicable)



The chart above may take you a moment to consider. It represents the weighted average, or importance of different streams of income across all households. While employment and self-employment are still the most important in the Cortes economy, this chart shows that the three other streams of income (government transfers, rental, and investment income) are very close in terms of importance to the local economy.

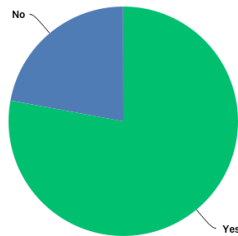
Q11 Which sector(s) do you work in (you may choose more than one answer):



In terms of type of work for self-employment and employment, 34% of respondents are out of the work force, representing the highest segment of the population. The five top active sectors are Accommodation-Food, Arts, Education, Agriculture/Fishing/Forestry, and Health Care in that particular order.



Q12 Are you satisfied with your current employment and income situation?



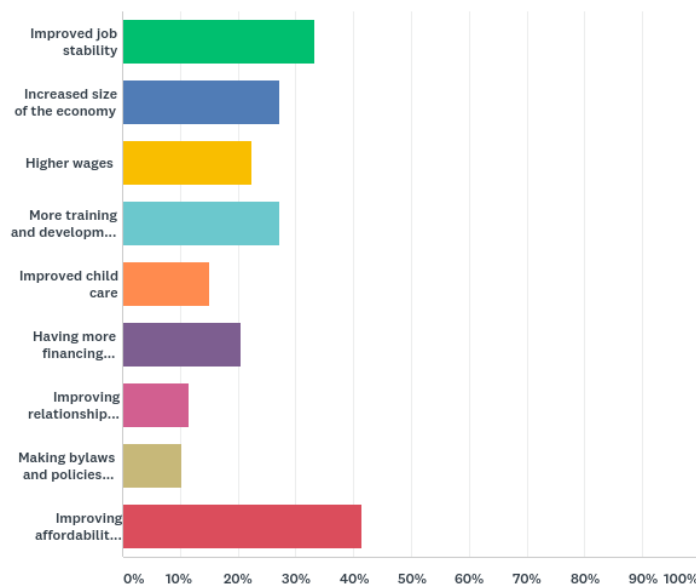
A strong majority (78%) of total respondents are satisfied with their employment and income situation.

**\*Further in-depth:** The group with the highest satisfaction includes those who have a household income of \$7,000+/month (94% satisfied), and part-time residents (90% satisfied). The group with the lowest satisfaction includes respondents 25 years old and younger (60% satisfied), renters (58% satisfied), and those with children 18 or younger in their household (66% satisfied).

55 provided comments to qualify their choice. The following observations were noted:

- 21 comment related to the difficulty to make an income year-round (particularly in winter)
- 16 comments related to importance of off-island income
- 10 comments related to need for more social supports in order to work(child care was cited)
- 8 comments related to small size of economy.

Q13 What would improve income and employment on Cortes Island - please select the top TWO elements that you believe would have the most impact:

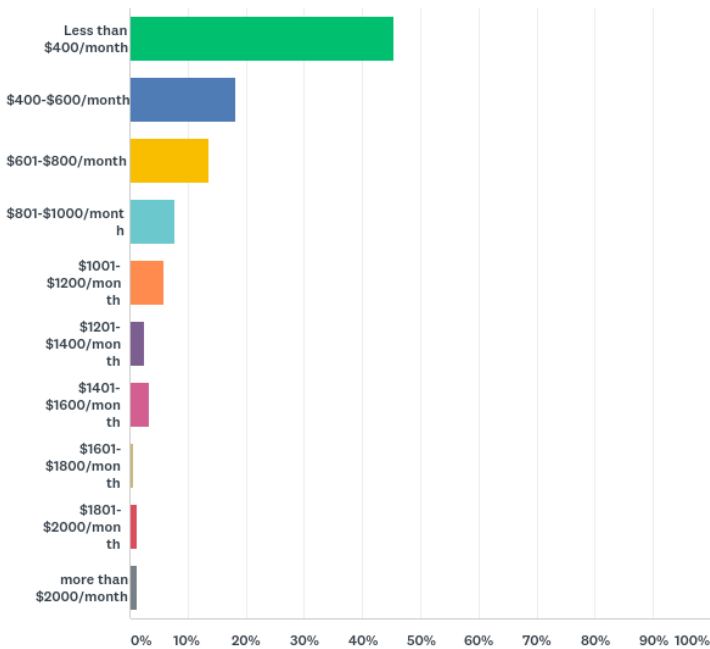


Looking at the broader island economy, survey respondents identified the following top three elements to improve employment and income on the island:

- 1) Improving affordability
- 2) Improving job stability
- 3) Increasing the size of the economy

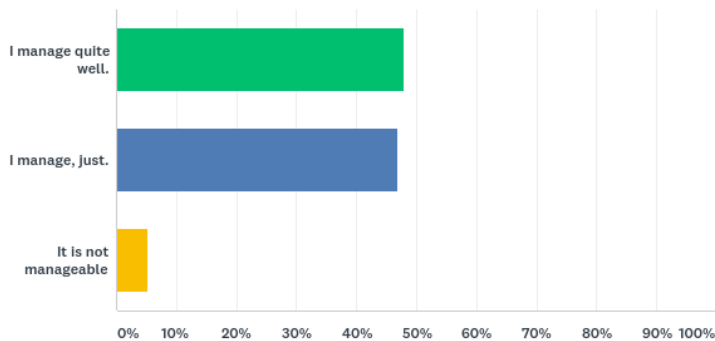
## 2.2 Housing costs and self- reported affordability

Q14 What is your monthly rent / mortgage on Cortes?



In order to keep the survey simple to complete, the steering group opted to ask for just rent or mortgage costs, rather than variable items such as utilities, maintenance, property taxes, etc. While this approach can be reconciled with affordability/homelessness formulas, a limitation is that it leaves potential high variations in total housing costs between households hidden. According to our survey, Cortes has a pyramid-like distribution in terms of cost of housing. In analyzing the numbers we estimate that 40% live rent/mortgage free. Of those who pay rent or a mortgage, 60% pay less than \$800/month. In terms of feeling comfortable with payments, 5% find it unmanageable (which translates to potentially 50 individuals, or 25 households).

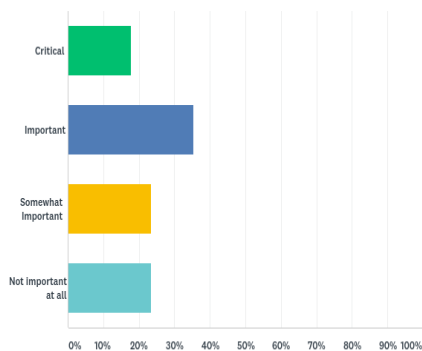
Q15 Do you feel that meeting basic housing costs including property taxes, insurance and standard maintenance is manageable on Cortes?



### 3. QUALITY OF LIFE AND SECTORAL SATISFACTION

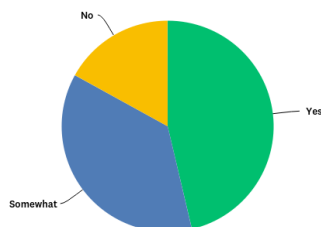
The Steering Group heard that the economy of Cortes Island is nestled in a broader social and ecological set of values. In other words, Cortes for many is more about lifestyle than money. At the LEAP Launch Event in April we were asked to approach this project holistically. As a result, this section aims to assess basic perception on the overall "quality of life" on Cortes.

Q16 How important is the informal economy to your ability to stay on Cortes? (by informal economy, we mean things like barter, favor exchanges, volunteer contributions, casual work...things that have a real monetary value but may not be captured by your income tax filings)?



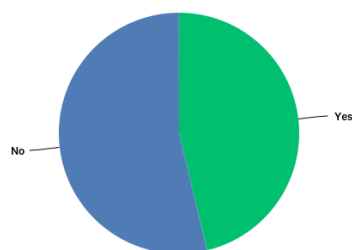
**Informal Economy:** Over 50% of Cortes Islanders view the informal economy as critical or important to sustain their life on the island. 15 comments were received which highlighted different aspects of the informal economy. On the negative some believe there are lost taxes or that it can create a false sense of security until real payments have to be made. On the positive volunteerism and barter were mentioned as key elements of resilience.

Q17 Are you satisfied with the level of on-island healthcare services?



**Health Care:** 82% of respondents are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with health care services on Cortes. 41 comments were noted on the topic. Of these, over 35 comments related to the need to have either a full-time doctor on-island, or at least regular doctors that visit.

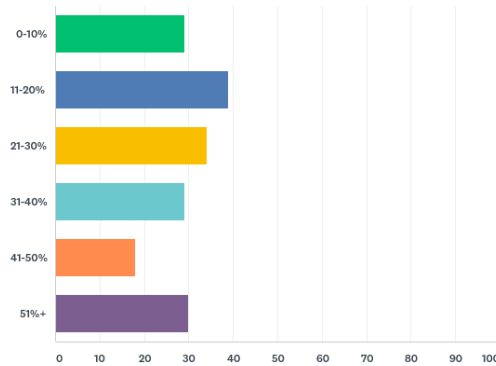
Q18 Are you satisfied with the island's current modes of transportation (private and public)?



**Transportation:** 46% of respondents are satisfied with the island's modes of transportation. 73 comments were made. The top categories of comments related to:

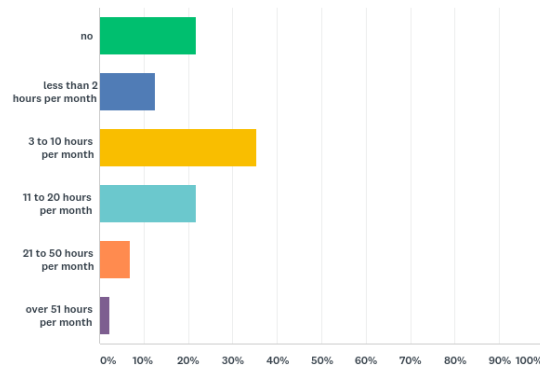
- 1) Need for improved ferry service (fare/schedule)
- 2) Need to add to Cortes Connection service for public connectivity, with most reference for on-island service
- 3) Need for better bike/walk trails

Q19 Estimate the percentage of your food that you produce or source from Cortes producers as part of your diet?



**Food Security:** 63% of respondents estimate that they produce or source 21% or more of their food from Cortes Island products. Those most likely to produce or source more food from on-island are low income households (the average goes to 74% of this group producing 21% or more).

Q20 Do you volunteer your time?



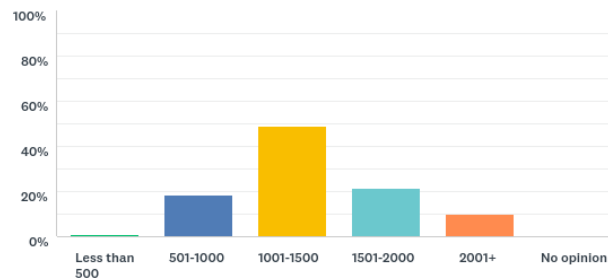
**Volunteerism:** 66% of respondents volunteer 3 hours or more per month. Those in the 25-54 working group were less likely to volunteer compared to their normal sample group. Other than this variable, the data did not indicate strong correlation in the answer for other groups (i.e., owners' vs. renters, permanent vs. part-time residents, etc.).

**Further In-Depth:** Based on results from this survey, and assuming a \$24 average value per volunteer hour, we estimate the minimum annual value of volunteerism on Cortes Island to be \$1,5 million/year to the local economy.



#### 4. ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF THE CORTES ISLAND ECONOMY AND PUBLIC SERVICES

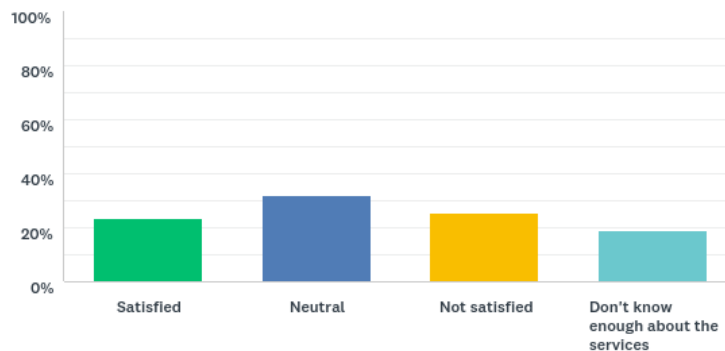
Q21 There are currently about 1000 full-time residents on Cortes Island. In the long-run, what would be the ideal year-round population for Cortes?



79% of respondents would like to see an increase in the population of Cortes Island. 31% would like to see the population at more than 1,500, against 21% who would like to maintain it at less than 1000.

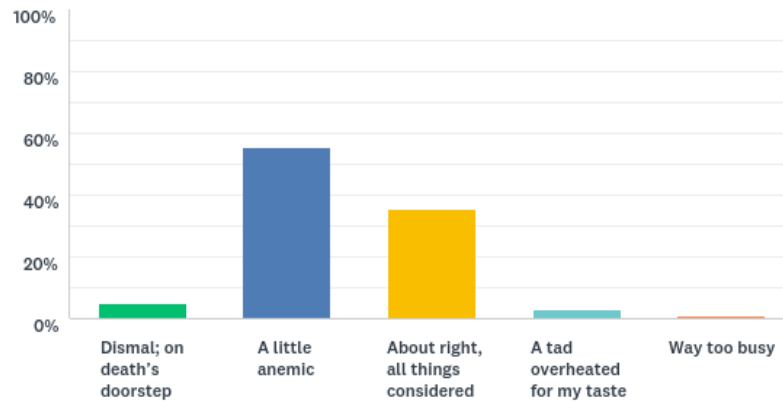
No specific correlation could be found between specific groups and choices of answer.

Q22 Are you satisfied with the property tax rate and delivery of local public services on Cortes Island (for regional district services)?



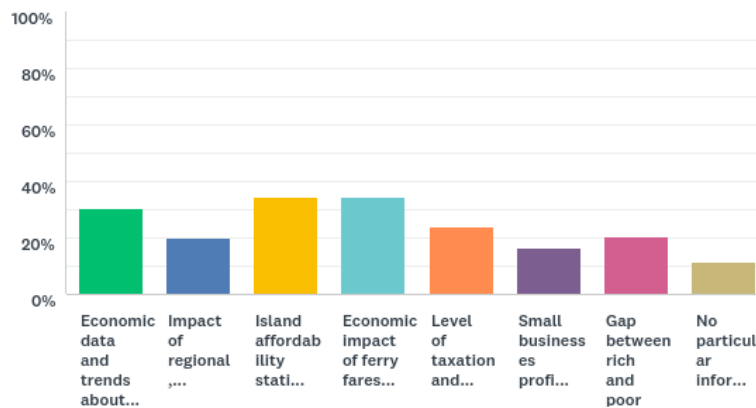
The survey indicates that most respondents are neutral in terms of satisfaction with local public services and the property tax rate, with slightly more people being not satisfied than satisfied. 19% feel like they don't know enough about the services to be able to judge their satisfaction. 44 comments to the questions were provided. Most comments (22) highlighted the need for road improvements. The next most cited item was to secure funding for the community halls (13). Other comments provided suggestions to new services consideration; satisfaction with keeping taxes low, and dissatisfaction with certain services. Households with higher incomes were more likely to be dissatisfied with services and the tax rate (34% not satisfied).

### Q23 Do you think the economy of Cortes Island is:



60%, of respondents believe that the Cortes Island is a little anemic. In terms of information that would enable people to make informed decisions about Cortes Island's future, the top three were the economic impact of ferries on the local economy, island affordability statistics, and economic data and trends about the Cortes economy..

### Q24 What are the top two pieces of information that would enable you to make informed decisions about Cortes' future?



## 5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCERNS FOR CORTES ISLAND

**Q25 Thinking in broad terms, what are the two best things Cortes Island has going for it?**



**Q26 Thinking in broad terms, what is lacking on Cortes Island, or is holding the island back from reaching its full potential?**



**Q27 Moving forward, what kinds of things, broad or narrow, could be done to ensure you and others can live on Cortes?**



**Q28 Is there one trend you're seeing which concerns you about Cortes Island's future?**

