

# Five-Year Strategy for the South Island Prosperity Project

***Embargoed until September 21, 2016***

South Island Prosperity Project  
Strategic Plan August 2016

# Together, better jobs, better communities.

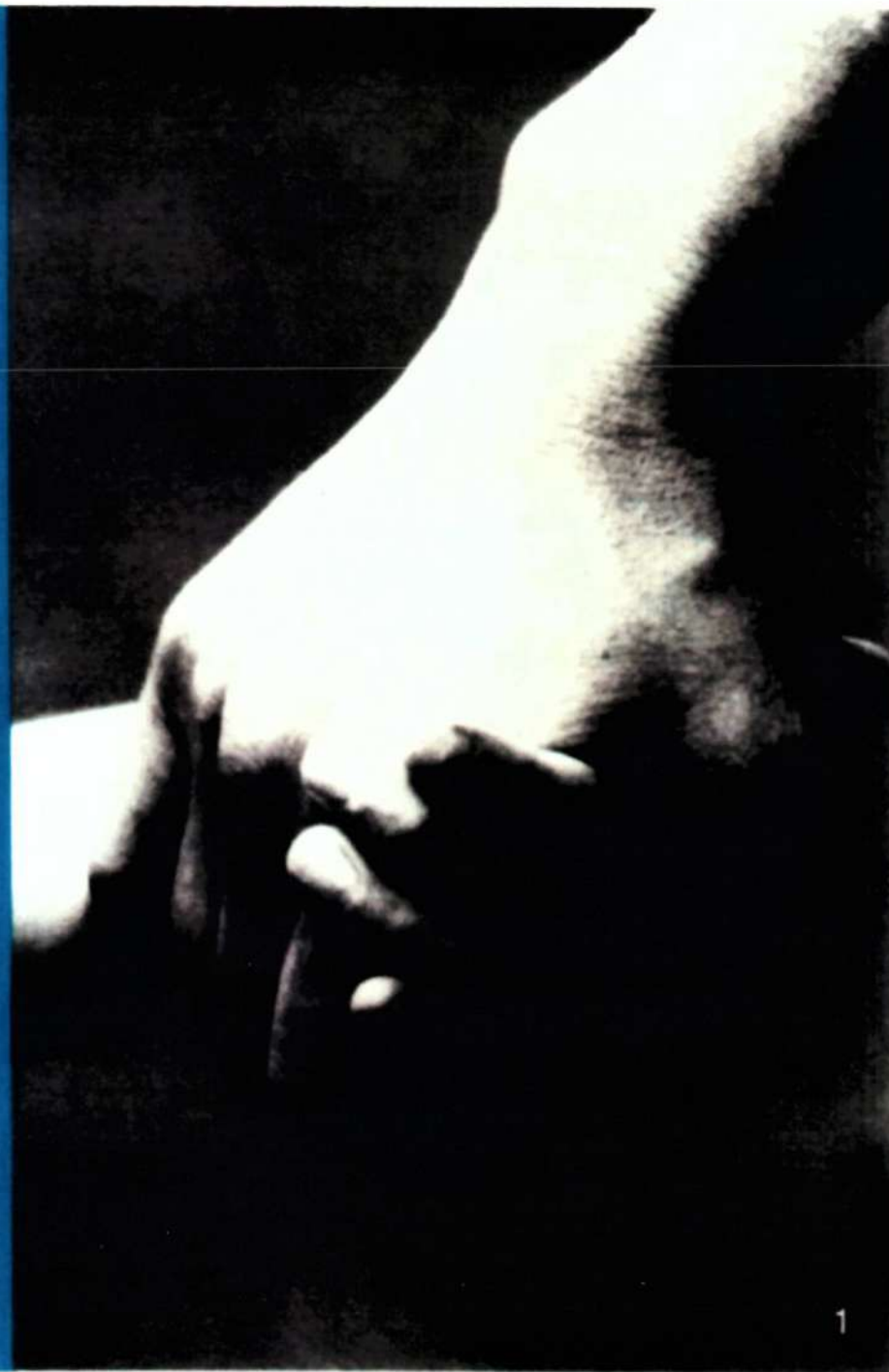
The South Island Prosperity Project is the brainchild of many brains, and many more believers. We would like to begin by acknowledging all of you.

We'd like to thank our members for trusting us to help create the future they envisioned; the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce for incubating us; our Board for guiding us; and the countless experts who brainstormed with us without asking anything in return.

We must celebrate the unprecedented cooperation and seamless teamwork between our local governments and the private sector - an effort that enabled this project to have the scope and mandate needed to effect real, impactful economic change.

Finally, we want to celebrate a mutual pride of place that fuels all of us. Thank you for believing in our Region, and devoting your tireless efforts to making it shine.

As we succeed, it is because of you.





# INTRODUCTION

The South Island Prosperity Project was created to reach multiple complementary goals:

- To **support the growth of local entrepreneurial businesses** that bring greater employment and prosperity to our region.
- To **attract businesses** from outside the region within carefully defined sectors.
- To **enable South Island entrepreneurs** to network and work with other businesses in their region.
- To **work with First Nations and champion** economic development initiatives to create greater prosperity for their communities.
- To **grow the \$45,000-\$100,000/year job market** and enable more talent to stay in, or move to, the region.
- To do all of the above with a focus on not only growing the economy, but **enhancing our unique culture**, and safeguarding our **commitment to environmental and social responsibility**

The South Island Prosperity Project shares many attributes with entrepreneurial businesses. We will stay true to our mission by keeping a narrow focus at the start, and showing results there first before expanding or adding new services. Just like a lean start up company, we have started testing our business services by working with a few companies that can help us validate and co-design our Business Connector Program. Finally, we are determined to grow as our capacity builds and we will obsessively measure our impact as we progress, proving our value and being accountable at every step.

This report reprises our fundamentals (consultation process, strategic framework, key issues, etc.) and adds new information that reflects our pivots and evolution (business goals and targets, the co-design "pilot" model, etc.).

Most importantly, this report reflects the rapid evolution toward piloting our Business Connector Program, and beyond. Reading this will provide a snapshot not only of where we're headed, but where we are in the current rollout and the specific steps we're taking to reach our goals and targets.

# THE WORK BEFORE THE WORK

For our project to effect real change, we first had to ensure it filled a real need, and was driven by real insights. These are some of the market validation measures we undertook:

- We met with every participating municipality and private sector member to determine their vision of the project.
- Additional consultations were then undertaken with sector experts, industry organizations, government agencies, First Nations leaders, academic institutions, business development consultants, and municipal and economic development staff.
- We conducted research around potential gaps and market opportunities.
- We met with businesses that might potentially become Prosperity Project clients, to understand their needs, validate assumptions, and determine what services they found the most value in.
- We did a service analysis to ensure we weren't duplicating services already being provided.
- We set a preliminary budget.





# KEY ISSUES

There are a number of key issues that we have identified that will materially influence our strategy.

It's true that we boast an incredible lifestyle and have a strong, burgeoning technology sector, a highly educated population, as well as world-class academic institutions... all essential ingredients to stay competitive in our global information age.

But the South Island region is too dependent on a few sectors. As a result, our economy is not diverse enough to attract and retain a workforce that can afford to live and thrive here. That means companies will have to leave the region or languish since they won't be able to attract, or keep, the talent they need to feed their growth.

Companies already cite that workforce issues are their top concern. This situation will only get worse if we don't actively try to influence it, as our population gets older and the workforce shrinks.

The South Island economy will keep growing with or without a strategy, but it is imperative that we plan our development to reflect our values and preserve our quality of life.

The South Island region has never significantly invested in its regional economic development. It was spending \$0.43/per capita. This project represents an increase to \$2/per capita.

This is a perfect start, but we still have a ways to go. As context, Nanaimo spends close to \$17/per capita and Halifax spends approximately \$10/per capita. A median spend for Canadian cities is approximately \$5/per capita.

Economic development doesn't work when it is driven by individuals. To succeed, we need a cohesive team.

First, we need the continued collaboration and vision of our regional municipalities.

Second, we need the continued support of the business community and general public.

Third, we need to enlist more conscripts to our cause - mentors and volunteers with a wide array of skills and experience they can leverage to grow regional businesses.

Fourth, we need to work hand-in-hand and seamlessly with our many industry partners and collaborators in the economic development field.

And, finally, we need to attract financial support and leverage the expertise of Provincial and Federal Governments.

**We are many, but we have one cause: the prosperity of the people of the South Island region.**

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**Our Purpose Statement** is *"Together, Better Jobs, Better Communities"*. This means we must create prosperity that can benefit all of us. Facilitating the growth of businesses that create high-quality, household-sustaining jobs that reflect our values, we help build a brighter economic future, so more of us can stay, shop, invest, live and work here.

**Our Constitutional Mandate** is *to promote and facilitate regional sustainable economic development in South Vancouver Island, British Columbia, including:*

- Diversifying and strengthening the regional economy,
- Promoting better employment opportunities and increased quality of life for the citizens of the region,
- Providing support for entrepreneurs and business to increase their ability to prosper and create jobs,
- Maximizing Federal and Provincial funding for regional economic development,
- Collaborating with the initiatives and activities of regional trade associations and municipal economic development officers, and
- Raising the profile of Southern Vancouver Island as a location of choice for new business endeavours.

**Our Guiding Principles** are:

- Collaborate,
- Maintain an industry-led Board of Directors,
- Remain a not-for-profit,
- Be inclusive, sustainable, affordable,
- Operate an equitable funding model,
- Align with municipal economic development strategies, and
- Be accountable to our funders

**Our Governance Model.**

- We have a nine member Board of Directors that is non-elected and industry-driven. This governance model gives us a direct linkage to our business clients. It is also a good check-and-balance as it clearly separates the roles and responsibilities of the Board from the funders.



# GOALS AND TARGETS

With a forecasted annual operating budget of approximately \$800,000, the Prosperity Project will work over the next five years on the following goals and targets. Here are some highlights:

## GOALS

More second-stage entrepreneurial businesses in our program.

More private sector investment in our operations.

More jobs in targeted sectors.

Higher median household income.

More Provincial, Federal and Private Sector investments in our region.

Greater participation of First Nations communities in collaborative economic development initiatives and targeted support for First Nation-owned companies.

## TARGETS

At least 10 new second-stage businesses (regional or 'outside') entered into our Business Connector Program Pilot in the next 6 months.

30% increase in investment by corporate stakeholders by April 2017.

500 new direct jobs created over 5 year period.

100 jobs created with salaries equivalent to \$80,000/year and above; 200 jobs created with salaries of \$60-80,000/year; and 200 jobs created with salaries of \$45-60,000 (i.e. over the "living wage").

At least \$6m from Private Sector, Provincial and Federal sources invested in South Island economy and its businesses.

Engage First Nation communities in dialogue around economic development initiatives and support self-directed economic development projects and initiatives.

# EFFECTIVE POSITIONING: THE 'FACE' CONCEPT

Key to our success is positioning ourselves in a way that ensures we add value, and our services are easily understood. Once successfully positioned, we can also begin to market the Prosperity Project more effectively, using metaphors and easy-to-grasp concepts.

One such concept is FACE. It stands for:

**Facilitator**

**Accelerator**

**Connector**

**Enabler**

**Facilitator** - If an entrepreneur is frustrated by roadblocks, missing information or lack of professional advice, we facilitate and expedite a solution.

**Accelerator** - We help entrepreneurs grow at an ambitious pace. Because the entrepreneurs have little tolerance for wasting time.

**Connector** - Oftentimes, the biggest barrier between entrepreneurs and rapid growth is relationships with trusted advisors and peer networks. We facilitate both.

**Enabler** - We eliminate the distractions entrepreneurs hate, so they can focus on what they love - running their businesses.

With a single-minded focus on FACE, we will help the businesses that grow our economy.



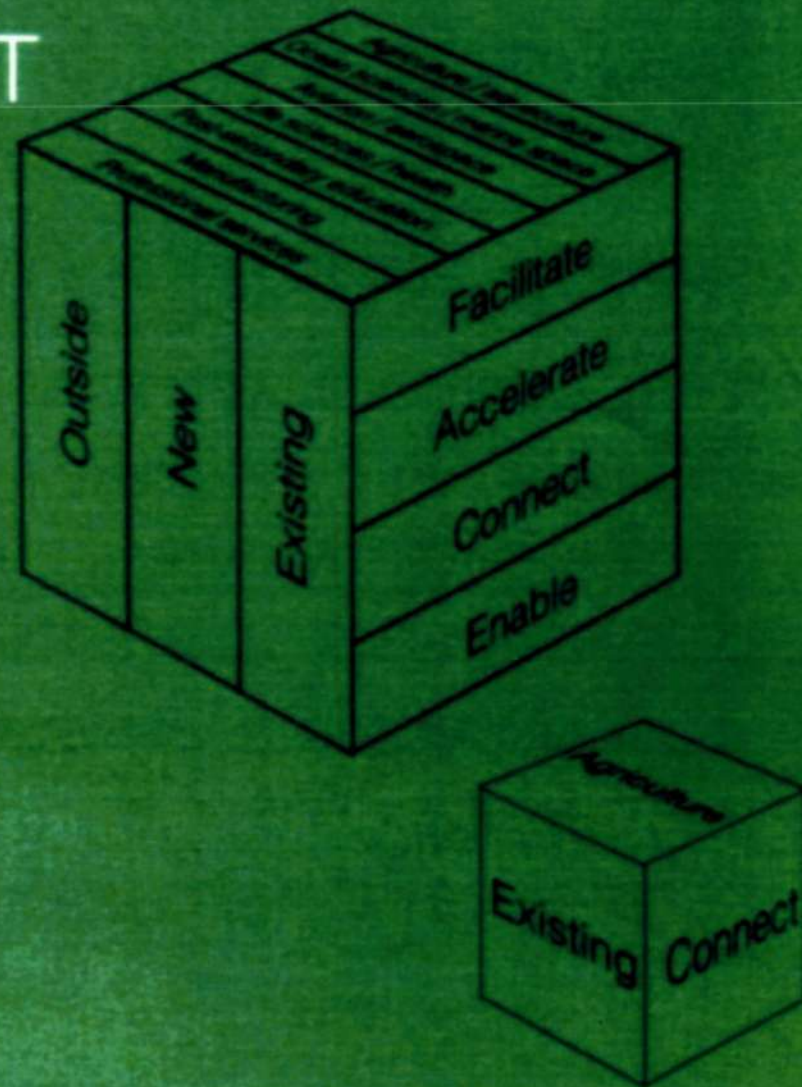
# ACCELERATED UNDERSTANDING: THE CUBE CONCEPT

Imagine what we do in the context of the large cube to the right. On the top, you see the sectors we work in. On the left, the companies we help. And on the right, what we do: FACE.

This simple cube illustrates succinctly what we do, and for whom. The cube 'boxes' our services cleanly, ensuring we don't stray off mission into areas where we don't add the most value.

The mini-cube at lower right illustrates an example. We would partner perfectly with an agriculture-based company that already existed in the South Island region and needed to connect with exporting and marketing expertise.

If we do not offer services to help a specific type of business, we will make every effort to help you through our Connector Program or help an entrepreneur get you in touch with our many partners in our expanding network.





# PERSONALIZED SERVICE: THE BUSINESS CONNECTOR CONCEPT

Every business **we help** will have individual needs. But every business will **appreciate** **effortless**, fast, personalized service. That's why we **propose to provide** businesses with their own Prosperity Project Business Connector, **a concierge** who would offer services like these:

**Macro analysis** – We assess the **sorts of businesses** that would strengthen our economy **and provide the highest** benefit to all.

**Diagnostic** – We screen **individual businesses** to assure their 'fitness' for our **program**. We understand their bottlenecks and growth **opportunities**.

**Connect and facilitate** – We **assess** what that business **needs to succeed**. We **ensure** the business is connected with **trusted providers of solutions** and other resources.

**Measure** - We track key **metrics** as the business grows and succeeds to ensure **progress** is as **effortless** as possible. We also measure customer satisfaction.

**Market** - We help our **customers** promote their success stories, promoting **the South Island** region to other **entrepreneurs**.



# 5 YEARS, 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

# 1

**Business Growth and Expansion** – The Prosperity Project will stimulate and support the growth and retention of existing companies in our targeted sectors.

Our model for achieving this borrows from the concept of Economic Gardening. Economic Gardening is an entrepreneur-oriented approach to prosperity. The term describes economic revitalization through cultivation of local companies. Economic Gardening *targets second-stage companies* already operating in a community. It helps these existing businesses grow larger by assisting them with strategic issues and providing them with professional services and counsel.

*Over the next 12 months*

We will *complete Business Connector Program Pilot*, a program that helps existing companies grow and overcome barriers to growth.

# 5 YEARS, 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 2

**Sector Development** – We will work with companies in specific sector areas. As we help local second-stage companies grow and 'outside' second-stage companies set up shop, we will identify the sectors that best fit our competitive advantages.

Our projects will be executed in partnership with sector, industry and government partners.

Priority sectors:

- Value-added agriculture and aquaculture,
- Ocean technology and marine space,
- Aviation and aerospace,
- Life sciences and health,
- Post-secondary education,
- Manufacturing,
- Professional services,
- Green tech.

*Over the next 12 months,*

- *We will work directly with companies in targeted sectors in the Business Connector Program,*
- *We will also work with sector and industry partners on the following projects:*
  - *A website and marketing strategy to attract people to live and work in the region to fill recruitment gaps,*
  - *A study of the marine sector's supply chain and export readiness capacity,*
  - *A joint marketing and recruitment campaign called Education Victoria,*
  - *As external funding sources become available for particular sectors, we will engage in activities to strengthen those sectors.*



# 5 YEARS, 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 3

### Attracting Investment and

**Companies from outside the Region** – With our concierge service, we will work with companies in targeted sectors that are looking to relocate to the South Island region, and encourage greater investment in our regional economy by investors outside our region.

We will develop a pool of regional ambassadors - a network of industry peers and business support professionals (e.g. municipal, provincial, private, and non-profit partners) drawn on as needed to facilitate the growth or attraction of 'outside' companies or investment.

We will track and measure attraction to the region and investigate what draws people, companies and investors to the South Island, what keeps them here, and what might cause them to leave.

### Over the next 12 months,

- *We will work directly with companies and investors from outside the region, helping them integrate into the community, navigate the business landscape, and leverage local assets.*
- *To address the need for greater investment in local companies by foreign and local investors alike, we will explore (with partners) hosting a Venture Capital (VC) Conference in the next 12 months to attract investors and raise the profile for local entrepreneurs.*
- *We need more to circulate more little-told stories about the many 'faces' of the entrepreneurs in the region. The South Island is an innovative hub, full of creative and enterprising people in many sectors. We need to nurture this so more people follow suit. The Prosperity Project will start to profile the amazing stories of our entrepreneurs to promote Pride of Place, and showcase the region as an incredible place to live, work and do business to the rest of the world.*

# 5 YEARS, 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 4

**First Nations Economic Development** – We will engage First Nations communities in dialogue around economic development, encouraging greater participation of First Nations communities in regional economic development initiatives, and the development of First Nations-led economic development plans for communities.

*Over the next twelve months,*

- *We will explore funding for First Nations economic development, and use our FACE expertise to assist First Nations entrepreneurs,*
- *We will partner with a community partner to deliver a dialogue series with First Nation communities around entrepreneurship and employment, culminating with a Roundtable dialogue that brings communities together,*
- *We will also engage in meaningful dialogue with First Nations leaders to ensure the path forward is defined by their communities to be consistent with their needs and values.*



# 5 YEARS, 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 5

### **Collaboration, Communication and Research –**

We will work with partners to support collaboration, communication and research around entrepreneurship.

By working with incubators and angel investors, we will be able to help meet business needs and promote a regional economic development agenda. As opportunities and needs arise, we will work with strategic partners to promote common priorities.

### *Over the next 12 months,*

- *We will work with the University of Victoria and other strategic partners to develop a single mentor network to service the needs of entrepreneurs in the region,*
- *As the single mentor network will support incubator, accelerator and enterprise clients, we will also work with strategic partners to identify current gaps in the eco-system, seek funding, and raise awareness for needs of start-up ventures and entrepreneurs*

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In the future that we envision, a young graduate will see a world of career possibilities in the South Island region. Whether that means taking advantage of the entrepreneur-friendly culture and programs to start a business of their own, or joining one of many growing companies for a promising career.

In the future, the South Island will boast an incredible diversity of businesses, and a robust eco-system that includes businesses, social enterprises, not-for-profits and charities. Our children and their children will have lots of reasons to stay, live, and grow their families and careers here.

In the future, people who want to start families and settle down will feel there is no better place than the South Island region. Jobs are plentiful and careers allow for lifelong advancement.

In the future, our region will grow - but in a way that remains consistent with our environmental, cultural and social values. First Nations communities fully participate and are equal partners in our robust regional economy.

This is the future we are working toward.





# OUR MEMBERS, OUR ACCOUNTABILITY

We acknowledge our accountability to our members by setting clear goals and targets, then measuring progress and communicating the results back to our membership. Every year, we will create an Annual Report, including organizational and financial metrics. We will be accountable for our performance at our Annual General Meeting and will provide members an additional opportunity every year to meet with the Board and Staff. In the first year, we will regularly communicate on our activities through newsletters to our stakeholders.

## **Municipal and First Nations Partners**

Songhees Nation  
Town of View Royal  
City of Victoria  
District of Oak Bay  
Town of Sidney  
City of Colwood  
District of Central Saanich  
District of Saanich  
Township of Esquimalt  
District of Highlands  
District of North Saanich

## **Private Sector, Institutional and Not for Profit Partners**

Butler Brothers  
Greater Victoria Harbour Authority  
Camosun College  
Coast Capital Savings  
Coastal Community Credit Union  
Cube Global Storage  
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce  
Knappett Projects  
VIATEC  
Wilson Transportation  
Ralmax  
Royal McPherson Theatres Society  
Royal Roads University  
Tourism Victoria  
University of Victoria  
Victoria Foundation  
Victoria Real Estate Board

# CONTACT



If you have any questions, we'd be happy to chat.  
Call Emilie de Rosenroll at 778-265-8128.

Or, if you'd like to pass along the good news,  
you'll find more of our story at [http://  
www.southislandprosperity.ca/](http://www.southislandprosperity.ca/)

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