



Community Context

Squamish sits in a spectacular setting at the head of Howe Sound, within the traditional unceded territory of the Squamish Nation. Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) is adapted from Sko-mish, with the general Coast Salish meaning “strong wind” or “birthplace of the winds”. As descendants of the Coast Salish Aboriginal people living in this area since before recorded time, the cultural values, arts and traditions of the Squamish Nation are deeply embedded in the lands and waters.

Squamish is the largest municipality in the heart of the Sea to Sky Corridor, home to approximately 19,000 people and growing fast. We are a highly active, multicultural, and family-oriented community in the Squamish-Lillooet District.

Squamish has proud roots in farming and forestry and while these sectors continue to play a role in the local economy, our economy has shifted considerably towards outdoor recreational and tourism. Squamish has become one of BC’s most talked about tourist destinations with more than 60 events year-round.

Opportunities are also emerging in knowledge-based industries, green-energy, education, manufacturing, forestry and wood products, as well as growth in small business start-ups and entrepreneurs in the creative arts and recreation-technology industries.

- **Squamish is one of the fastest growing communities in BC.** Our population increased by almost 15% between 2006 and 2011, double the average growth rate for BC.
- **Our population is quite young** compared to the rest of BC (our median age is about 37, and 60% of the population is under the age of 40).
- **We have a fast-growing youth population.** From 2006 to 2011, the proportion of youth (under the age of 14) grew by 8% and the number of children (aged 0-5) increased by 32%. This translates into 1,600 kids!
- **Many people still commute to work outside of Squamish.** In 2011, 24% of the working population commuted outside the community but there are a growing number of people working from home.
- **Construction is the largest employer by industry,** accounting for 14% of the labour force in 2011.
- **Development is accelerating rapidly** since 2012 with over \$60 million in building permits in 2014.
- **A number of major projects are on the horizon** including development of the oceanfront, development and mitigation strategies for the Cheekye Fan, and other proposed projects.

Looking Ahead: Updating Our Plan

Since the 2009 Official Community Plan (OCP), Squamish has seen significant change and our community and economy continue to shift and grow.

By setting out a clear community vision today, we can shape our future growth in a way that is sustainable and provides a high quality of life for current and future residents. The OCP will guide future planning decisions like:

- Where should new development go and what form will it take?
- How can we create more local jobs?
- How can we conserve natural areas as growth and development occur?
- What does sustainability mean for Squamish, and how can we encourage high quality urban design?
- What types of housing do existing and future residents need, and how we can encourage more affordable housing?
- How can we support recreation access and nature-based tourism while protecting the environment?
- How can we create a healthy and active community that is safe, convenient, and accessible for people of all ages and abilities?

The OCP also represents a key opportunity to work with the Squamish Nation on areas of mutual interest, such as land and marine planning and resource management, economic development, tourism promotion, municipal services and hazard planning.

What's the Process?

The OCP will be developed over four phases in the next year for Council's consideration. There will be many opportunities for you to learn more, attend an event and provide feedback throughout the process:

- In **Phase 1**, our process begins with a fun and interactive Visioning Event and questionnaire. Join us as we explore early ideas for Squamish's future.
- In **Phase 2**, we will dive deeper into specific topics and discuss key options and trade-offs. Take part in citizen-led "OCPizza Night" discussions or attend the Open House.
- In **Phase 3**, we will use the feedback received to date to develop a full draft of the updated OCP and ask for your comments to make sure we are on the right track.
- Finally, in **Phase 4**, we will finalize the plan and present it to Council for approval.

Building on Past Work

The updated OCP will integrate the work of recent plans and strategies such as Squamish's branding program, downtown neighbourhood planning, estuary management, employment lands planning, and multi-modal transportation planning.

Major Proposed Projects

There are currently a number of major proposed projects on the horizon including development of the Squamish Oceanfront lands as well as revitalization of the lands along the southern stretch of the Mamquam Blind Channel. There is also ongoing consideration of the future development and hazards on the Cheekye Fan, in Brackendale; and there may be other significant projects in the future that will require future community engagement.

For More Information

- Visit the project webpage and sign up for email updates at www.squamish.ca/OCP
- [Squamish Community Profile](#) (2015)
- Current [Official Community Plan](#) (2009)

