

Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

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OPERATIONAL PLAN 2016

Key areas for economic development in 2016 include community events, the built environment and commercial activities.

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Introduction

In 2013, the District of Sooke ('the District') and the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce ('the Chamber') entered into a *Community Services Agreement* for the purpose of providing the community with specific economic development services including:

1. Identifying, attracting and pursuing new economic ventures and business investment opportunities in the Sooke area in order to broaden the commercial and industrial tax base of the District;
2. Actively promoting the economic opportunity of the Sooke area in other regions in order to attract new investment;
3. Providing business information for the District to attract new economic development opportunities;
4. Consistent with the main principles above, the Chamber will execute those activities, as budget permits, which include but are not limited to the following:
 - Provide information to potential investors and help match investors with local investment opportunities.
 - Participate in external and regional marketing initiatives to attract new business ventures and capital to the Sooke area, after receiving approval of the District.
 - Provide a referral service to federal, provincial, and municipal officials and community organizations.

This Fee for Service agreement remains in effect until the end of 2017.

This operational plan outlines the economic development initiatives that will be implemented by the Chamber in 2016 under our existing portfolio model, details our operational goals and includes our 2016 operating budget.

Year in Review

Throughout 2015, the Chamber worked extremely hard to support our community through seven portfolios established in 2014. Each of these portfolios was designed to bring significant economic and social benefits to the Sooke region in both the short and long terms. To review, the portfolios are:

- Economic Development
- Conference and Convention Management
- Resident Relocation
- Newcomers' Club
- Shop Local Campaign
- Workforce Development
- Website, Social Media and Internet Marketing Campaign

These portfolios were created after intensive consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders including the District of Sooke, the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Economic Development, the Mayor's Promote Sooke Task Force, the CRD, the Sooke Region Tourism Association, the Sooke Rotary Club, Sooke Community Association, Sooke Family Resource Centre, T'Sou-ke First Nation, Sooke Transition Town Society, Sooke CHI, several Vancouver Island Chambers of Commerce and many local business owners and residents of Sooke.

In addition to the business-centric events hosted by the Chamber such as the long standing Business Excellence Awards and the new Women in Business Tea as well as the community focused events such as the Santa Parade and the All Candidates Meeting, the Chamber delivered several successes within these seven portfolios including:

- Learning on the Edge – Sooke Region Learning Collaborative, an initiative spearheaded by the Chamber, which touches upon both economic, and workforce development.
- Economic Development Symposium
- Resident Relocation Package
- Growth of the Newcomer's Club to 70 members
- Shop Local Code of Ethics
- A four page feature on Sooke in the Island Visitor Magazine

The Chamber worked diligently with its limited resources to build upon the previous years' advancements and positioned itself well to continue the momentum into 2016.

2016 OPERATIONAL PLAN

Operational Plan

The Chamber's focus throughout 2015 was on the development and implementation of initiatives which would bring significant economic and social benefits to the Sooke region in both the short and long terms.

Above and beyond the day-to-day operations of the Chamber, such as

- responding to phone and email enquiries from those interested in relocating their families and/or businesses to the Sooke region,
- continuing to host monthly meetings for newcomers to Sooke in order to introduce them to the many local opportunities and services to meet their needs,
- growing the Chamber's free online business directory of Sooke businesses
- continuing to populate the Chamber's website with topical information on the Sooke region, and
- responding to phone and email enquiries from those interested in relocating or starting up new businesses in the Sooke region

Below is a list of action items identified by the Board and supported by the findings of the Economic Development Symposium believed to be worthy of executing:

Economic Development

- focus on promoting Sooke as a destination for tourists, particularly the "day-trippers"
- develop and implement economic development initiatives in three key areas: events, the built environment and commercial/industrial activities. Ideas include:
 - Events
 - Collaborative Strategy Meeting inviting all other community and business organizations in Sooke
 - Love Sooke, two week promotion intended to draw visitors from other areas and increase local spending in a two week period
 - Sooke Sunday Car Lot
 - A Sooke specific festival
 - Built Environment
 - Collaborate and support council in its initiatives to beautify the downtown core
 - Commission asset analysis on best uses for existing commercial properties in the town core with recommendations on façade improvements
 - Research and propose structural solutions to accessing the harbor that uphold and further the Sooke brand
 - Commercial/Industrial activities
 - Coordinate with the Regional Economic Development Initiative

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Conference & Convention Management

- continue to liaise with the District of Sooke, local accommodation providers, and the tourism industry to attract more conferences, conventions, AGM's, corporate retreats and festivals to the Sooke region
- research existing conferences that fit Sooke's brand and work towards bringing them to Sooke
- continue utilizing media sources and advertising opportunities (such as in Business Examiner Magazine) to promote Sooke as a destination for small and medium-sized events
- continue to advocate for the implementation of the MRDT (hotel tax) in the District of Sooke

Resident Relocation

- continue to evolve and distribute the Chamber's "Resident Relocation Package" regarding amenities, services and opportunities in the Sooke region
- create strategic partnerships with individuals and companies to distribute the Resident Relocation Package

Shop Local

- continue promotion of the "Better Buy Sooke" campaign
- increase the utilization of local media sources and advertising opportunities (such as through the Chamber's "Business Spotlight Series") to promote and bring awareness to Sooke businesses
- implement a loyalty program amongst Sooke businesses which offers rewards or cash back to consumers to stimulate local spending

Business Education

- support and expand the "Learning on the Edge – Sooke Region Learning Collaborative" education series
- provide monthly business education seminars in a new business lab format
- continue distributing topical business information, tips, strategies via the Chamber's website and e-newsletter
- expand the Chamber's in-house business resource library

Website, Social Media & Internet Marketing

- engage a professional social media marketing company to bolster our existing efforts with a focus on member exposure and engagement

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Operating Budget

Income

Advertising	\$ 2,500.00
Benefits Admin Fees	\$ 12,000.00
Awards Gala	\$ 8,000.00
Events	\$ 7,000.00
Fee for Service	\$ 28,150.00
Membership Dues	<u>\$ 22,500.00</u>
Total Income	<u>\$ 80,150.00</u>

Expenses

Advertising	\$ 6,250.00
Bank Charges	\$ 900.00
Bursaries	\$ 600.00
Catering	\$ 500.00
Director's Luncheons	\$ 350.00
Dues	\$ 2,250.00
Awards Gala	\$ 9,000.00
Events	\$ 1,500.00
Insurance	\$ 1,800.00
Office Rent	\$ 7,200.00
Equipment Lease	\$ 1,750.00
Supplies	\$ 3,000.00
Utilities	\$ 2,000.00
Website	\$ 1,250.00
Wages	\$ 37,000.00
Honorarium	<u>\$ 4,800.00</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 80,150.00</u>

2016 OPERATIONAL PLAN

Board of Directors

We are very pleased to announce the following Chamber members who have been nominated to join our 2016 Board of Directors:

- Allen Krutz, West Coast Outdoor Adventure
- Pooja Barooah, Tastes of India in Sooke
- Scott Votour, Salish Sea Technologies

We are also pleased to confirm the return of the following Chamber Directors in 2016:

- Kerry Cavers, Modern Mortgage Group (Incoming President)
- Sean Dyble, 120 West Consulting (Past President)
- Terry Cristall, Terry Cristall Inc.
- Travis Butler, Butler Brothers Supplies Ltd.
- Karen Mason, Mason Financial
- Frédérique Philip, Sooke Harbour House
- Bryan Mooney, E-Fish-Ent Fish Company
- Dana Lajeunesse, Camosun College
- Steve Grundy, Royal Roads University

Each of these local business leaders bring outstanding skills and dedication to the Chamber's Board.

Conclusion

The past year has been extremely busy for the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce. There have been many tangible successes, which have come largely from the dedicated efforts of our volunteer Board of Directors who have averaged over 150 hours per month towards furthering our community's economic and social interests. Important to note these accomplishments could not have been possible without the support of one full-time professional staff who handles all the day-to-day administrative and operational services in the Chamber office.

Going forward, to achieve our operational plan and the individual execution items the Board of Directors chooses to commit to for 2016, the Board will be mindful of vetting all its actions through the following four questions:

1. Are we creating tangible value for businesses in Sooke and the community as a whole?
2. Is there an opportunity to collaborate to increase our impact?
3. Have we engaged in meaningful dialogue with our members and strategic partners?
4. Will it be Wild by Nature?

With these four questions guiding our actions, we believe we will be able to focus our efforts to bring about the most value a localized economic development and member services plan could effect in the course of one year.

We are pleased that the portfolios identified in 2014 were successfully built upon and significantly advanced throughout 2015. We look forward to furthering our successes with the renewed support of the District of Sooke, business community, and community at large and fostering our partnerships with each.