

Summary of Proposed Actions

2023 Local Leadership Forum

November 21, 2023

Produced by





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Purpose

Hosted by South Island Prosperity Partnership, Local Leadership Forum is one of the primary forums for municipal and community leaders to examine collaborative solutions to municipally prioritized issue areas.



Who Attended?

92 municipal and community leaders from across Southern Vancouver Island jurisdictions and sectors, including representation from 11 municipalities.



Format

Moderated panels followed by facilitated roundtable discussions + detailed note-taking.

What We Talked About



Vibrant Places: Local Economic Opportunities Within a Regional Context

WHY?

Metro regions globally are **adapting to post-pandemic shifts** like wealth inequality, climate concerns, tech disruptions and the need for economic diversification.



Climate & Emergency Resilience: Proactive Regional Collaboration

WHY?

The new Emergency and Disaster Management Act (Bill 31) requires B.C. municipalities to act in accordance with **four phases of emergency management**: mitigation, preparation, response & recovery.



Attracting & Retaining Essential Healthcare Workers in the Region

WHY?

With a **shortage of family doctors in B.C.**, an aging population and affordability issues, healthcare challenges are worsening in our region.

What We Heard



We need strong regional collaboration

Strong desire from elected leaders to explore **collaborative solutions** to boost efficiency and effectiveness.

Leaders shared ideas for **working in sub-regions** where appropriate.

Private and third-sector attendees also urged collaboration.



Our region faces economic constraints

Affordability pressures impact region's ability to attract and retain talent including essential workers.

Demographics and healthy aging are shared issues. We need to **attract a young population** and create a vibrant economic environment for them.

We need to **invest collaboratively** in region-level transportation and mobility infrastructure.

Municipalities face **resource restraints** (e.g. delegated with problem-solving outside their mandates).

Climate change brings new health challenges and the need for a proactive collaborative region.



Some issues require coordination for advocacy

Increase region's power and influence by **prioritizing key issues and opportunities** to collectively address with other orders of government.

Organizations such as the CRD and SIPP could **leverage each other's strengths** to improve advocacy effectiveness for the region.

Next Steps



- SIPP Municipal Partners Committee to build out actions that will feed into next Local Leadership Forum (Fall 2024)
- SIPP will continue to invite municipalities and their partners to discuss recommendations and next steps for action.

Introduction to Summary Report

On November 21, 2023, The Local Leadership Forum brought together municipal and community leaders across the southern region of Vancouver Island for a one-day forum. Its purpose was to address regional economic priorities through collaboration across jurisdictions, sectors, and the public-private realms.

The event provided an opportunity to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration across the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) where 13 municipal and nine First Nation jurisdictions contain over 400,000 residents who live their lives rather fluidly across jurisdictional boundaries.

This report summarizes the ideas these leaders generated for collective action. The full report with detailed content from the table discussions with emerging themes and comments from each of the three sessions can be viewed [here](#).

In sharing this summary report, the SIPP Municipal Partners Committee invites further dialogue and engagement to determine collaborative actions with key partner organizations, recommendations to local governments, and outlining key priorities for advocacy to other orders of government.



Building a Culture of Regional, Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Collaborative Governance is an important part of the local leaders' toolbox. This approach enables local governments to pool and leverage skills and resources, encourage diverse viewpoints, strengthen decision-making, and scale and magnify the impact of solutions. It means assessing the role of public sector policies and programs within the context of the role that other parties—academic institutions, charitable organizations or the private sector—must undertake to address the many factors and levers required to improve a societal or economic issue.

The Local Leadership Forum is one of the primary venues at which regional leaders across jurisdictions, sectors, and the public-private realm discuss and identify areas for collective action. Invitees include all municipal mayors and councillors within the Greater Victoria metropolitan area along with representatives of key stakeholder organizations such as academic institutions, charitable and philanthropic organizations, non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, industry and sector associations and a small group of private-sector representatives.

While each municipality operates with autonomy in addressing its local issues, exploring some issues through the lens of regionalism is essential when multi-jurisdictional and public/private/third-sector collaborative actions are needed to address the complexity of shared challenges.

The organizer of the annual Local Leadership Forum is the South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP), an alliance of over 70 public, private and third-sector partners in Greater Victoria, including municipal and First Nation governments, post-secondary institutions, industry associations, chambers of commerce and nonprofits, and more than 30 major employers. SIPP works to bolster our region's economic and social prosperity. This will happen by catalyzing the creation of clean, high-quality, household-sustaining jobs so that more families can afford to live, work and build a life here.

SIPP produced the forum through the Municipal Partners Committee, supported by a facilitation team and volunteers. After a consultative prioritization process, the Committee shortlisted three economic issues to be the focus of the forum:

- 1. Vibrant Places: Local Economic Opportunities within a Regional Context**
- 2. Climate and Emergency Resilience: Proactive Regional Collaboration**
- 3. Attracting and Retaining Essential Healthcare Workers in the Region**

With the overarching goal of finding collaborative solutions to local and regional issues, the 2023 Forum participants were provided with briefing materials on each topic before the event. Expert panels provided informed perspectives on each issue, followed by three table sessions to generate ideas and actions. Table facilitators and notetakers kept the discussions focused and collected input on the following questions:

- **What is the current state of the issue?**
- **What is the ideal future state concerning this issue? What constraints were addressed to arrive at that future vision?**
- **What specific actions or next steps can be taken to move forward? What is the role of regional collaboration in the next steps?**

“This was an amazing event and extremely well structured and laid out. Great networking and group of folks you brought together and the speakers were fantastic to ignite the table discussions.”

— Forum participant

“Today, more than ever, cities matter to the economic and social well-being of the vast majority of Canadians. Canada’s urban centers are simultaneously the engines of the national economy and the places where the risks of social exclusion are most concentrated, making innovative and inclusive urban governance an urgent national priority.”

- Governing Urban Economies: Innovation and Inclusion in Canada City-Regions (2014 book, University of Toronto Press)

General Takeaways from the 2023 Local Leadership Forum

From the analysis of the table discussion notes, several areas of consensus emerged.

“Great event today! Very informative, interesting and engaging. I left exhausted!”

— Forum participant

A. We need strong regional collaboration going forward.

- We hear a strong desire from elected leaders across the region to explore collaborative solutions that will create efficiencies and increase effectiveness.
- Leaders expressed many ideas to improve collaboration, including working as sub-regions where appropriate. Many examples were discussed around how collaboration has worked well, as well as what the barriers are.
- Private and third-sector attendees also urged these collaborative approaches.

B. The region faces economic constraints

- Leaders hear many perspectives as they manage change (rural vs. urban, demographics desiring change vs. those that don't, the pressure for growth and increased density vs. protecting the character of the region, etc.)
- Affordability pressures are high, especially as the region desires to attract young families, retain students and youth, and attract/retain essential workers.
- As a growing region, we need to invest collaboratively in region-level infrastructure for transportation and mobility.
- Demographics and healthy aging are shared issues. To address healthcare as the region ages, we will need to attract a younger population and create a vibrant economic environment for them.
- Resource constraints. Municipalities are constantly being delegated responsibilities for infrastructure and solving problems outside their mandates.
- Climate change brings with it the need for health solutions (e.g., dealing with heat waves), resilient infrastructure, emergency management and planning, and the need for a resilient, proactive and collaborative region.

General Takeaways from the 2023 Local Leadership Forum (Continued)

From the analysis of the table discussion notes, several areas of consensus emerged.

“One of the best organized events I have been to. Great combination of interactive sharing and information gathering”

— Forum participant

C. Some issues require coordination for advocacy.

- As a region of 400,000 people across many smaller jurisdictions, we can increase our power and influence by prioritizing the key issues and opportunities that we collectively want to address with other orders of government.
- Organizations such as the Capital Regional District (multi-jurisdictional) and the South Island Prosperity Partnership (public/private/third-sector alliance) could leverage each other’s strengths to improve advocacy effectiveness in the interest of the region.

Summary Table of Recommended Actions

This table lists recommendations by the participants for actions to be taken by South Island Prosperity Partnership, municipalities and partners. Details are provided within the full report, which can be [downloaded here](#).



1.

Vibrant Places Local Economic Opportunities within a Regional Context

Metropolitan regions globally are adapting to post-pandemic shifts like remote work, wealth inequality, tourism vulnerability, and economic diversification. These changes intersect with climate concerns, aging populations, and tech advancements, emphasizing the need for resilient cities and economies.

In our area of 13 local jurisdictions, fostering vibrant, resilient communities is key to fostering innovation, sustainability, and equity. Local municipalities like Sooke, Sidney, and Victoria are spearheading economic strategies, aligning with the region's economic fabric.

Actions	How	Who
1. Regional advocacy and prioritization to bring shared priorities to other orders of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine a list of collective infrastructure needs and gaps • Set agreed-upon regional economic development goals and priorities 	SIPP can explore how to serve as an advocacy platform; engage the region's municipalities, First Nations and others such as CRD, federal governments and relevant agencies and HR recruitment users
2. Regional promotion to use community uniqueness as an economic advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion a regional brand; consider joint place-branding • Emphasize diversity and municipal uniqueness • Explore a referral system 	SIPP, with municipal communications staff, chambers of commerce, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), local business representatives
3. Support the regional economy to address workforce issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine collective action to: • Retain university graduates • Provide well-paid employment for younger generations/families • Support entrepreneurs & housing 	SIPP, COAST, municipal governments, First Nations, post-secondary institutions, businesses and major employers

Actions	How	Who
4. Thought leadership for economic development capacity and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information-sharing efforts are coordinated • Events, podcasts, webinars • Support First Nations economic development as a strategic priority 	SIPP can work with partners to prioritize tools and capacity gaps; bring together together the Indigenous Prosperity Centre, First Nations and other partners such as municipalities and CRD
5. Develop shared tools and efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and determine regional tool(s) to enhance regional economic development 	SIPP and municipal economic development personnel
6. Optimize the annual Local Leadership Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track/evaluate post-event actions • Build on previous year's actions to continue positive momentum 	SIPP Municipal Partners Committee
7. Promote community co-working spaces and maker spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize empty storefronts for community organizations, art installations and branding • Establish spaces outside urban core 	CRD Arts, municipalities, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, BIAs, private-sector co-working leaders
8. Offer circular economy workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a partnership or regional partnership model 	SIPP, Synergy Foundation, VICEDA, municipal governments, Chambers and BIAs

2.

Climate and Emergency Resilience: Proactive Regional Collaboration

The new Emergency and Disaster Management Act (Bill 31) will require municipalities in BC to act in accordance with four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparation, response and recovery. Each phase has related rules, obligations and authorities.

The updated legislation reflects the realities of the modern world including global pandemics, security threats and climate change, and shifts from focusing on emergency response to the four phases of emergency management.

Actions	How	Who
1. Support business continuity-readiness for emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take ideas in report forward for discussion with CRD• Share information about Emergency Management BC courses• 2024 event could examine how resilient our infrastructure is, then determine priority actions	SIPP, CRD, Emergency Management BC, and major infrastructure partners (BC Ferries, BC Hydro, Fortis) and supply partners such as Seaspan
2. Clarify roles for municipal governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SIPP to explore/help define roles for economic planning and recovery	SIPP, CRD, municipal and private-sector partners will inform planning efforts

3.

Attracting and Retaining Essential Healthcare Workers to the Region

A recent article in the *Victoria Times Colonist* highlights the impending closure of another local clinic due to a retiring doctor, leaving over 4,000 patients seeking alternatives. With a shortage of full-time family practitioners in B.C., compounded by issues like housing availability, job opportunities for spouses of doctors and an aging population in the Capital Region, healthcare access challenges are worsening.

While increased interest in B.C. due to revised compensation is noted, addressing healthcare access requires collaborative efforts encompassing housing, settlement, training capacity, and more for holistic solutions within the community. No single entity or policy can address the entire issue.

Actions	How	Who
1. Bring potential project partners together to explore goals and actions (i.e. target doctors vs. target other personnel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene taskforce to explore collective goals/ projects to fill regional gaps 	SIPP, South Island & Victoria Divisions of Family Practice, UVic, Island Health, BC Ministry of Health, Greater Victoria Intercultural Association, WorkBC
2. Support partners to market healthcare worker opportunities outside the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the “Victoria Rising” recruitment platform, develop a healthcare section • Determine how to fundraise for recruitment campaigns 	SIPP to explore: how to best work and enhance activities being led by local healthcare employers and HR leads, and Divisions of Family Practice
3. Support healthcare students’ local employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support UVic’s expansion of its medical education/ community health clinics for training 	SIPP to explore appropriate role to coordinate stakeholder support

Next Steps

SIPP provided the discussion report for review by the SIPP Municipal Partners Committee to explore and confirm actions and next steps, including any recommendations to municipalities and partners that can be asked to contribute to collective action.

1. SIPP will initiate their next steps over the course of 2024, including a mid-journey report-out at the SIPP Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June.
2. SIPP's Municipal Partners Committee will determine appropriate communications to municipalities to invite their participation in recommended actions. From there, the organizing subcommittee will build out how actions will feed into the next Local Leadership Forum in the fall of 2024.

This report does not conclude our efforts but is a milestone along the journey toward collaborative solutions that will benefit Greater Victoria and its residents. SIPP will continue to invite municipalities and other partners together to discuss these recommendations and determine our next steps for collective action.



Appreciation

Local Leadership Forum is a one-day component within SIPP's annual Rising Economy series of events. These include an annual conference with a focus on business and economic trends; a podcast series examining key regional issues; and Local Leadership Day (now Local Leadership Forum), with an agenda designed by local municipal officials and their prioritized economic issue areas.

An event to build collective action naturally requires a great deal of collaboration in its content and delivery. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the many sponsors and volunteers who contributed their resources, time and expertise to this event.

Rising Economy could not realize its impact without generous contributors. Local Leadership Day 2023 received support from our presenting sponsor, RBC; catalyst sponsor, Vancity; major sponsor, the Victoria Foundation; and community sponsors, Camosun College, University of Victoria, City of Victoria, DXC Technology, and FortisBC, with stage furniture provided by Max Furniture.

The expertise of our guest panels informed and engaged participants to discuss and generate potential collaborative actions. SIPP expresses our thanks and appreciation to:

Vibrant Places: Local Economic Opportunities within a Regional Context

- Moderator: Dallas Gislason, Executive Director - Community Economies, SIPP
- Quinn Anglin, Manager of Economic Development, City of Victoria
- Gail Scott, Community Economic Development Coordinator, District of Sooke
- Corey Newcomb, Director of Community Planning, Town of Sidney

Climate and Emergency Resilience: Proactive Regional Collaboration

- Moderator: Maja Tait, Mayor, District of Sooke
- Leon Gaber, National Lead, Public Sector Advisory on Emergency Management and Climate, KPMG
- Shawn Carby, Senior Manager - Protective Services, Capital Regional District (CRD)
- Kevin Rokosh, General Manager, Seaspan Ferries Corp.

Attracting and Retaining Essential Healthcare Workers in the Region

- Moderator: Jennifer Vornbrock, Executive Director, UVic Community & Government Relations
- Dr. Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Deputy Provost, University of Victoria
- Dwayne Pettyjohn, Associate Dean, School of Health and Human Services, Camosun College
- Helen Welch, Director, PMH Development, Victoria Division of Family Practice

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SIPP would like to thank the elected officials who served on the Leadership Forum planning subcommittee for their leadership and commitment to a highly collaborative planning process. The subcommittee of the South Island Prosperity Partnership’s Municipal Partners Committee engaged stakeholders to identify issues of interest and prioritized three issues for deeper exploration within the one-day event format:

- Dana Lejeunesse, Councillor, District of Sooke
- Lesley Watson, Councillor, District of Oak Bay
- Marg Gardiner, Councillor, City of Victoria
- Steve Duck, Councillor, Town of Sidney
- Sanjiv Shrivastava, Councillor, District of North Saanich