

# Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce 2011-2012 Strategic Plan

Tofino-Long Beach Chamber Executive

1/10/2011

Figure i. Aerial view of Tofino-Long Beach. Reproduced from Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce website ([http://tofinochamber.org/the\\_chamber](http://tofinochamber.org/the_chamber)).



## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: 2011-2012 PLAN

### A. Introduction

The Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer business organization, representing over 200 members. Having begun as the Tofino Board of Trade in April 15, 1929, it has been successfully operating for more than eighty years. The Chamber of Commerce is a catalyst for business and community—an organization allowing business and professionals to work for the common good of the community. Since a better community means better business conditions, the Chamber works for a better community for everyone.

In its role, the Chamber lobbies on behalf of its membership, educates the community about business issues, and exposes the public to opportunities and events in our thriving business environment. The growing membership attests to the fact that there are many great reasons to join.

#### **Chamber Membership Benefits:**

**Promotional Opportunities**

**Business Contacts & Referrals**

**Business Seminars & Workshops**

**Committees**

**Strong Voice of Business**

**Insurance & Merchant Benefits & more**

Figure ii. Photo: Chris Pouget. "Surfers at Cox Bay" (<http://www.coast-image.com>).



### Divisions of the Chamber:

Tourism Tofino, a division of the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, has been created to achieve the following goals:

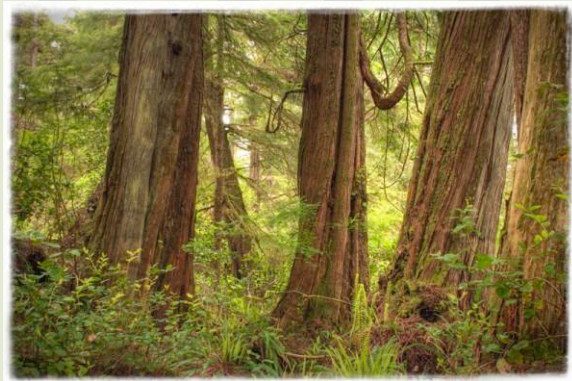
- *Market & promote tourism in Tofino with the goal of increasing tourism-related visitation and revenues on an annual basis;*
- *Manage visitor information under the auspices of Tourism BC;*
- *Support and promote events and festivals; and*
- *Coordinate regional tourism initiatives in cooperation with other stake-holder partners.*

## Tofino-Long Beach Chamber

### Our Mission:

To promote the health of the business community, the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce actively supports a broad spectrum of businesses by: offering programs, partnerships, services; creating educational and networking opportunities; advocating for sustainability; attracting diversified economic opportunities and green initiatives; and advancing the stewardship of the natural environment of the Clayoquot Sound biosphere.

Figure iii. Photo: Chris Pouget. "Big Trees" (<http://www.coast-image.com>).



### Our Vision

We encourage the business community to **collaborate** with progressive, sustainable values that protect and promote the environment while maintaining strong business ethics.

Through **communication** between members of the business community, we promote and develop diverse, sustainable businesses operating in a healthy, natural environment.

We increase and **engage membership** through communication, networking, and collaboration, as well as being accessible and approachable.

### *OUR VALUES:*

COMMUNITY  
SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMUNICATION  
EDUCATION  
COLLABORATION  
DIVERSIFICATION  
RECOGNITION

In addition to core values, the Chamber aspires to be a respected leader of socially responsible business development. It acts with integrity and remains politically neutral; it represents its members without bias. It promotes a cooperative style of commerce, to values relationships with indigenous communities, and incorporates a "green" vision into its decisions whenever possible.

### Key Accomplishments:

Recently, the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber has grown in terms of membership and profile, and formally recognized key contributions to the community. For instance, it nominated Rainforest Education Society for a provincial award which it received. It increased its membership by 23% over a four-month period. Additionally, it significantly increased its profile through extensive media exposure, community appearances, a newsletter, plus a new column.

Figure iv. Photo: Chris Pouget. "Pacific Storm" (<http://www.coast-image.com>).



### Critical Issues:

The most critical issues facing the Chamber stem from the economic recession and environment threats to the region.

In addition to the general instability caused by the economic recession, unsettled First Nations Land claims in the region, and the unpredictable timelines around these factors create a certain level of uncertainty regarding future planning. Also the high infrastructure needs that impact

cost of doing business need to be negotiated at the municipal government level; these needs are equally a concern.

Lastly, it must be noted that currently, Tourism Tofino is funded through AHRT (Additional Hotel Room Tax)—a tax dependent on the existing provincial government tax model, which may change in the near future.

The fact that the Chamber currently employs only one full-time person is also a potential risk. Better planning for future staff requirements should occur.

Environmentally, global warming is a constant threat to our coastal region. Locally, the open pit copper mine at Catface Mountain, proposed by the multi-national Imperial Metals Copper Mine company, is a serious concern. Potentially, it may could result large-scale devastation to the region's environment, natural beauty, and tourist economy. Sustainability issues like these continue to occupy the Chamber, as they directly affect business opportunity and development.

## B. One-Year Plan

### Top Priorities:

<p><b>Ambassador Spirit Program</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enriches tourist experience</li> <li>•Invests in assets &amp; community</li> <li>•Promotes business &amp; culture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Increase Membership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Potential for broader representation</li> <li>•Fosters business relationships</li> <li>•Opportunities for collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Settle Land Transfer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Agreement needs to be finalised and signed</li> <li>•Resolution for this issue</li> <li>•Clarity of relationship &amp; occupancy</li> </ul>

## Rationale:

### 1. Ambassador Spirit Program:

Front-end service staff in the Tofino-Long Beach region possess the amazing potential to promote and educate tourists, who number more than a million a year, about the cultures, services, and businesses in the region. Currently, front-end industry staff are an underused, and possibly, unvalued asset who would benefit from the training and services that would come with being an ambassador. Employees would benefit from training and a certificate program; Chamber members would invest in their assets and would benefit from the increased value that this referral service would provide.

Potential funding partners for this program could include: Chamber members, PRNPr, EcoTrust, Indigenous groups, DOT, Non-Profits, Province of BC, TLBC, RES, Raincoast Host, Federal Government, HRDC. Camosun College developed a similar Ambassador program for Victoria; they could provide the curriculum, training (possibly 4 hours per employee) and resources for initiating the program. This program is a great opportunity to promote and capitalize on the "FORCE OF NATURE" branding/logo. Training would be from May-August.

**Issues:** *The name, funding, needs to be promoted as an economic development driver.*



Figure v. Chocolate Santa: Chocolate Tofino.



### 2. Increase & Engage Membership:

We need to maximize participation of business, members, non-profits, directors and other chambers in the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce. Although membership has been growing, it can extend further than it currently does. Benefits to this increase include better development and continuation of year-long committees, opportunities to network throughout the year, high standards, a more robust awards ceremony, a newsletter which is more informative and far-reaching, expanded communication, increased relationships among members and greater opportunities for networking, regionally and locally (e.g., luncheons and workshops). Furthermore, a greater variety of topics and speakers could be culled from the pool. Greater growth means greater excitement for the Chamber, as well as enhanced communication, interaction, and collaboration among subgroups. Such growth will also necessitate a more comprehensive and interesting web presence.

**Issues:** *Apathy, scheduling, Communication, time, funding, impartiality (e.g. with Awards).*

3. **Settle Land Transfer:** A legal agreement needs to be secured between the District of Tofino and the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce for the Cox Bay Visitor Centre. The first draft has been drawn up, and the changes with Tofino Tourism are being negotiated. This agreement should be done by the end of March 2011. Issues: Minimal.

Figure vi, ii. Photos: Personal Collection, Maureen Niwa.

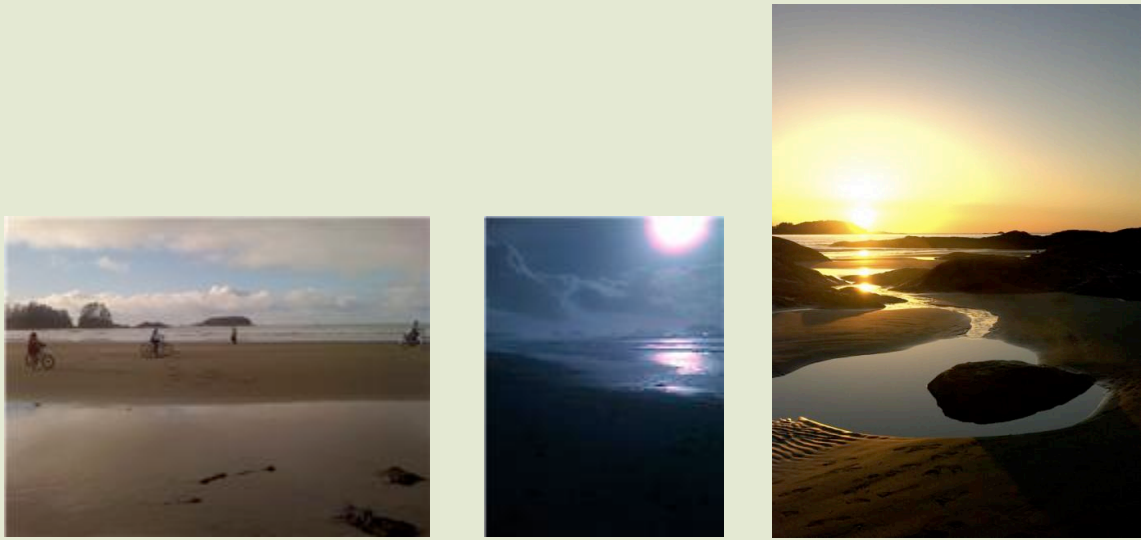


Figure vii. Photo: Chris Pouget. "North Chesterman Beach" (<http://www.coast-image.com>).

## High Priorities



**Expand Communication:** One of our main goals is to expand communication among the members, community, district, and other Chambers. We have not kept up with technological advances in communication, and need to create a visual presence. Until recently, we have not had a cell phone, newsletter or website presence, due to the fact that the Executive Director's position was previously part-time. With increased capacity, we will improve redirect service and Website presence, including the development of a "green" website page, column in the local newspaper, newsletter, and create banners and brochures. We will offer membership surveys, videos, photos, as well as investigate other forms of social media networking /advertising opportunities, such as *FaceBook*. Also produce a Chamber Calendar and Community calendar, as well as increased accountability and reporting. Business cards for the executive can also be developed.

**Engage Membership:** A top priority is to raise the profile of the Chamber of Commerce and to both strengthen the organization and its value to the membership. Goals of increasing networking opportunities, offering support training, and venues for professional development are key ways to engage membership. Developing better member-to-member service and holding a monthly social engagement or activity to network and socialize can also be considered.

Other strategies here include: increased offerings of relevant, high-quality workshops; social events, such

as mixers; short-term training opportunities; frequent, sponsored luncheons with high quality speakers; invitations to influential keynote presenters and sponsors. Research into opportunities that meet the needs of our members and the best quality value for our budget to deliver the workshops is a top priority. Plus, we will continue to find funding to deliver the workshops. With recent success, we want extend these more frequently and broadly.

Increasing the number of general membership meetings will further engage the membership. Green Breakfast Meetings and monthly Chamber Breakfast Meetings will bring issues to the forefront and create better communication with the District. Maintaining a visual presence at community events (anniversaries, grand openings, community celebrations)is also desired.

**Develop Creative Strategies:**

The Chamber of Commerce's approval of a Strategic Plan on an annual basis will ensure that new and emerging directions and strategies for business development, collaboration and partnerships will endure. Challenges to build entrepreneurial opportunities and activities that serve business and communities can be addressed through effective planning. Such planning will set specific goals, targets and identify key initiatives, as well as find financial alternatives to grow revenue (such as renewal dates, redirect fees for non-members, newsletter advertising). Other strategies, including decals and improvement of signage, are also underway.

**Develop Post-Secondary Partners:** To date, we have not yet taken full advantage of post-secondary educational regional partners—of which there are many, with many different strengths, opportunities, and expertise for this area. Tofino-Long Beach is abundant in opportunities for undergraduate to post-graduate students in the areas of indigenous culture, marine biology, geography, tourism, business, marketing, trades, technologies, and the arts. This goal is crucial in terms of the Chamber’s need for significant cost savings, contemporary expertise and knowledge, and students to fill co-op jobs.

This initiative identifies institutions and classrooms willing to take on local projects, with free or low cost resources. For example, the UBC Sauder School of Business is already working on developing a social media plan for the Chamber. Continuing education opportunities also fall under this goal. These include: a no -fee co-op job board, assistance with short-term projects, staff relief, the creation of the Ambassador Spirit Program, and the opportunity to fill seasonal positions with skilled students. Connections with Camosun College to provide some of these projects have already been made. A long term plan will be to showcase our region to post-secondary institutions as place to deliver educational programming, and the benefits of setting up a satellite campus in the region, based on opportunities for environmental study, business, tourism, and culture.



Figure viii. Vancouver Island University, Camosun College, Sauder School of Business, North Island College.

#### D. OTHER 1-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS:

- Add value to Chamber membership (e.g. increase/improve benefits);
- Raise awareness for local, provincial and federal governments on issues that affect the membership, and develop strong relationships with government when possible;
- Create and support Chamber Committees;
- Recognize businesses and individuals in the community whenever possible, as well as the extraordinary successes of local champions (e.g., host an Annual Awards Gala);
- Support community events and festivals;
- Maintain active representation on Tourism Tofino Board, BCEE, BC Chamber AGM and related conferences;
- Support Green Fixed Roof initiative led by the RES.



Figure ix. Tofino-Long Beach Chamber members working on strategic plan, Remote Passages Boathouse, Tofino, Nov. 2010.

## E. 3-5 YEAR PLAN:

### TOP:

- Establish an office building and space for the Chamber in Tofino;
- Create an annual fundraiser event for the Chamber;
- Consider financial alternatives to grow revenue;
- Annually review, assess and amend to board's objectives;
- Attract diversified economic development opportunities in healthy, year-round sustainable manner.



#### NEW Economic Development:

New Lighthouse Trail and new trail linkages

Shellfish Processing Plant

Preservation of Heritage sites

Attract Film Crews, Conferences & Conventions

Host an Economic Development Forum

### HIGH:

- ⊕ Advance business policy and advocacy on issues related to maintaining a healthy ecosystem that will serve, strengthen and preserve the core value's of the community;

- Research the business needs of membership, improve data collection and increase studies to help support new businesses;
- Build the chamber as a “brand” that is recognized for representing the business community;
- Explore partnering organisations for financial leverage, greater access to business opportunities and to improve the health of the community;
- Create and implement an Arts and Culture Plan.



Figure x. Roy Henry Vickers' "Wooden Boat" (Source: <http://www.woodenboat.com>).



### BOARD-RELATED STRATEGIC GOALS:

- ❖ To create and support Chamber committees.
- ❖ To appoint and nominate board members to decision making organizations in the community.
- ❖ To be more active in the BC Chamber.
- ❖ To continue to be active with the executive director representing the Chamber on the Tourism Tofino Board as a non-voting member.
- ❖ To create better Board Training and a Board Manual.
- ❖ To continue to attract a diverse board and have a strong succession plan.

**Networking Organisations to build & develop:** Ecotrust Canada, TFN/VIU Canada-Africa Project, West Coast Aquatic Management, CBT, RES, Dogwood Initiative, Coal Watch Comox Valley, District of Tofino, PRAS, Local MLA/MP office, BC Chamber, CFDC, and PRNPR.

## F. CHAMBER: CAPITAL NEEDS

- *I-phone for Executive Director;*
- *New camera;*
- *Office, either a small building or getting a lease;*
- *Basic office furniture (such as computers, filing cabinets and printer);*
- *Appropriate signage.*

## G. OTHER GOALS OR CONCERNS TO CONSIDER:

- ✓ Foster a greater sense of diversity and community within membership, e.g., attract new directors from new business, attract young members as well as more established
- ✓ Create a strong succession plan;
- ✓ Appoint and nominate board members to decision-making organizations within the community;
- ✓ Lobby and advocate where and when necessary;
- ✓ Secure financial partnerships to deliver Chamber objectives;
- ✓ Deliver services from other potential partnering organizations to meet community objectives.

## H. Contact Information:

Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, Box 249, Tofino British Columbia V0R 2Z0  
250.725.3153 E-mail: [executivedirector@tofinochamber.org](mailto:executivedirector@tofinochamber.org) Web: [www.tofinochamber.org](http://www.tofinochamber.org)



Figure xi. Chamber Members (left to right): Warren Rudd, Morgan Callison, Jesse Blake, Roland Arnet, Jay Bowers, Don Travers, Naomi Bruce, Gord Johns. Missing from this photo: Douglas Wright, Cleo Roy.