

Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities (VICC) 2024 Virtual Climate Summit

Summary Report from May 6, 2024, and May 13, 2024 Climate Summit where VICC Elected Officials and Local Government Staff convened to share progress updates and learnings



We respectfully acknowledge that the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Region is located upon the traditional unceded territories of many different Indigenous peoples, and we are grateful for their stewardship of these lands since time immemorial.

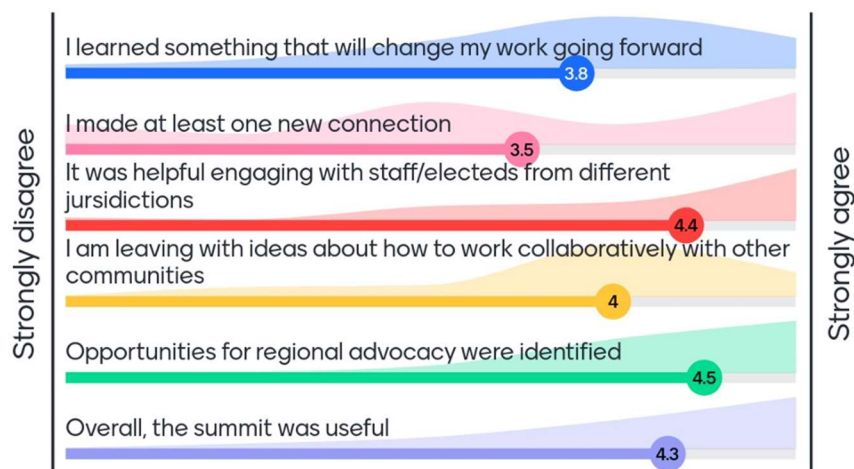
The Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership (VICC-CL) Steering Committee has been facilitated by the Community Energy Association (CEA) since 2022 as the Secretariat. This Summit Report has been created by CEA staff with direction from the VICC-CL Steering Committee.

Summary Report September 2024

Executive Summary

The 2024 VICC Virtual Climate Summit brought together local government staff and elected officials from the Vancouver Island & Coastal Community (VICC) region to support accelerating climate action by showcasing local and regional initiatives, building capacity and relationships, and identifying collaboration opportunities and advocacy priorities.

The event was well attended, and feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive:



A key focus of the event was to share information and identify collaboration and advocacy opportunities on the themes of **Land & Water Resiliency**, **Food Security**, **Sustainable Transportation**, and **Buildings**. The opportunities identified through discussions will be used to prioritize actions for the remainder of 2024 and beyond.



Introduction

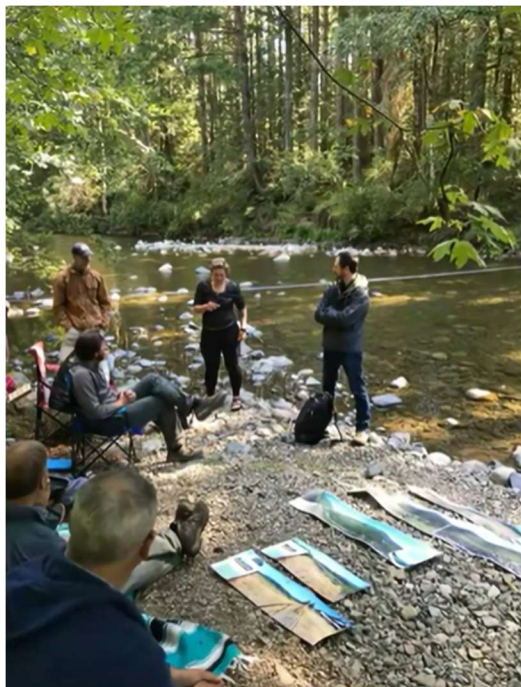
Local government staff and elected officials from the Vancouver Island & Coastal Community (VICC) region were invited to participate in an online Climate Summit, hosted virtually on Zoom over the mornings of May 6th and May 13th, 2024. The goal of the 2024 VICC Virtual Climate Summit was to support accelerating climate action in the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities region by showcasing local and regional initiatives, building capacity and relationships, and identifying collaboration opportunities and advocacy priorities.

The **objectives of the Summit** included:

- Sharing information across jurisdictions about what different municipalities and regional districts in the VICC region can do, and are doing, to effectively address climate change
- Building local government capacity through sharing of knowledge and best practices
- Providing a venue for relationship building
- Promoting understanding of the benefits of regional climate action and build support for regional climate initiatives
- Identifying opportunities to collaborate regionally on climate action initiatives
- Identifying regional priorities for advocacy

The climate summit was hosted by the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee and facilitated by the Community Energy Association (CEA), with funding support from member regional districts.

Moving forward, the VICC Steering Committee intends to make the climate summit an annual event and will continue to work with CEA to follow up on regional collaboration opportunities.



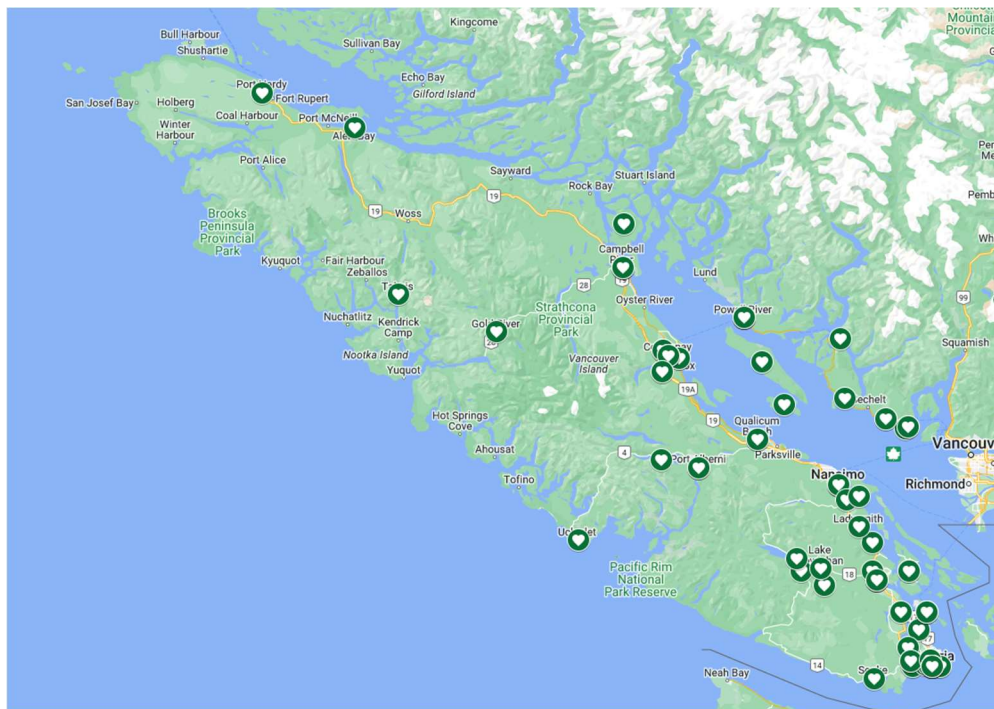
OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE & ADVOCATE



- Local Watershed Governance (with First Nations)
- Private managed forest land regulations (slow cut to slow flows)
- Agriculture (transition to water scarce farming)
- Residential (water conservation retrofits/net zero water)
- Water Licensing (comprehensive monitoring)
- Land Protection (E&N land buy back)
- Other?

Participation

The two-day online summit attracted over 100 registrants, with 73 attendees on the first day and 63 on the second day. Attendees included a mix of staff and elected officials from across the region, as well as representatives from regional partner organizations including the Climate Action Secretariat, the University of Victoria, and Vancouver Island Health Authority. Registered attendees represented 36 communities from across the region.



Map: Communities represented by attendees at the Summit

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

CRD:

- Regional trails (existing) - widening and lighting
- Role to coordinate connections between municipal bike networks?
- Infrastructure grants - fed, prov, FCM, UBCM

SCRD:

- Municipalities are leading AT upgrades
- Key challenges are Hwy 101 corridor through downtowns, and roads in Electoral Areas
- Citizen advocacy group is campaigning for an all ages/all abilities route Langdale to Lund

About CEA and the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee:


The **Community Energy Association (CEA)** accelerates bold action by local governments and Indigenous communities related to climate and energy. CEA grew from a committee established by the Government of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities in the 1990s and was incorporated as a non-profit in 2003. CEA facilitates several peer networks for local government staff and elected officials across BC and Alberta. In early 2023, CEA launched the **Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Action Network (VICC-CAN)**, a regional peer network that connects and supports local government staff from across the region in their climate action work.

SESSION PURPOSE

To connect with colleagues from across the region, learn about and contribute insights for the upcoming VICC Climate Summit, and learn how to use CEA's newly launched Climate Action Dashboard. The meeting will also feature a presentation on the CVRD's Green Shores Coastal Mitigation project.

AGENDA

Welcome
Coffee Table Breakout
BC Hydro EV Update
VICC-CL Steering Committee Update
Breakout Activity for VICC Climate Summit Planning
Break 2:00 to 2:05 pm
Update from CEA Peer Networks
Dyke Rd Park Green Shores Coastal Mitigation Project
LGCA update and introduction to CEA's Climate Action Dashboard, followed by interactive dashboard activity
Wrap-Up & Next Steps



Since 2022, CEA has supported the **VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee** in a Secretariat role. The Steering Committee is made up of elected officials appointed by their regional districts from across Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, the Sunshine Coast, and the qathet Region. The Committee was formed in 2019 to work together to support regional collaboration on climate action in the VICC region. The group was originally led by three Vancouver Island Mayors and has most recently been co-chaired by Councillor Ben Geselbracht, Councillor Will Cole-Hamilton, and Mayor Michelle Staples.

Steering Committee Mission:

To connect local elected officials and staff from diverse communities in the VICC region and empower them to accelerate their work on climate change and meet their goals by sharing best practices, collaborating on problem solving and advocating to other orders of government.

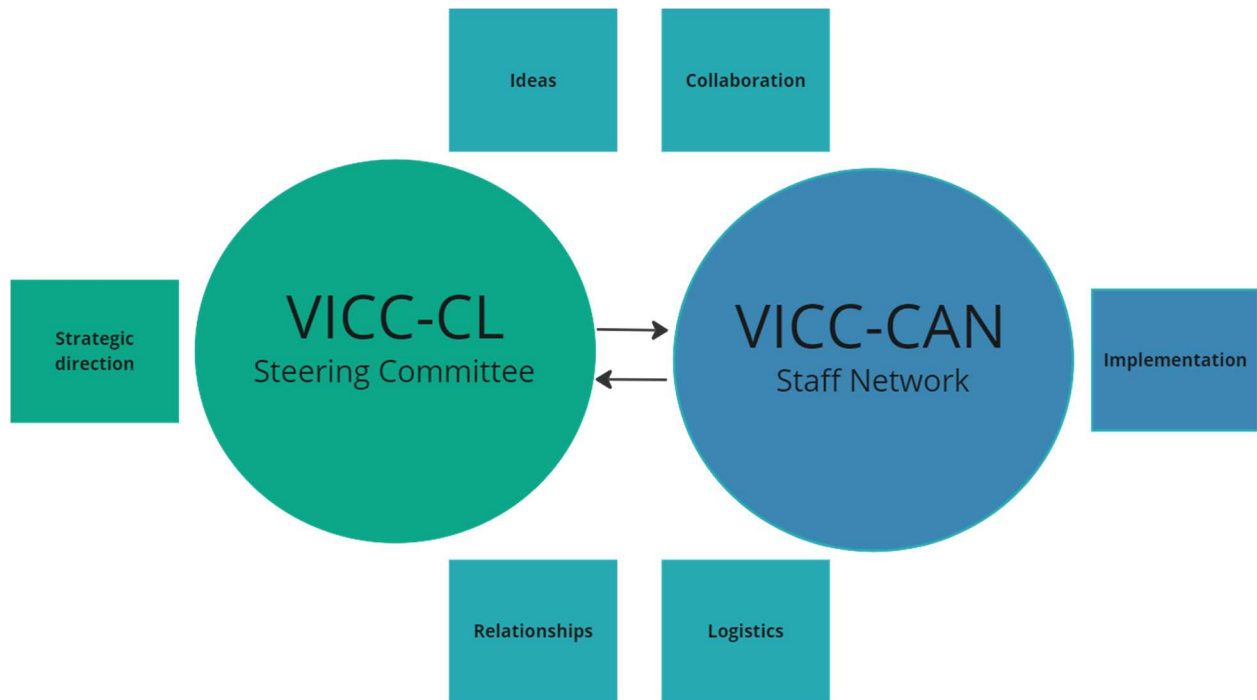
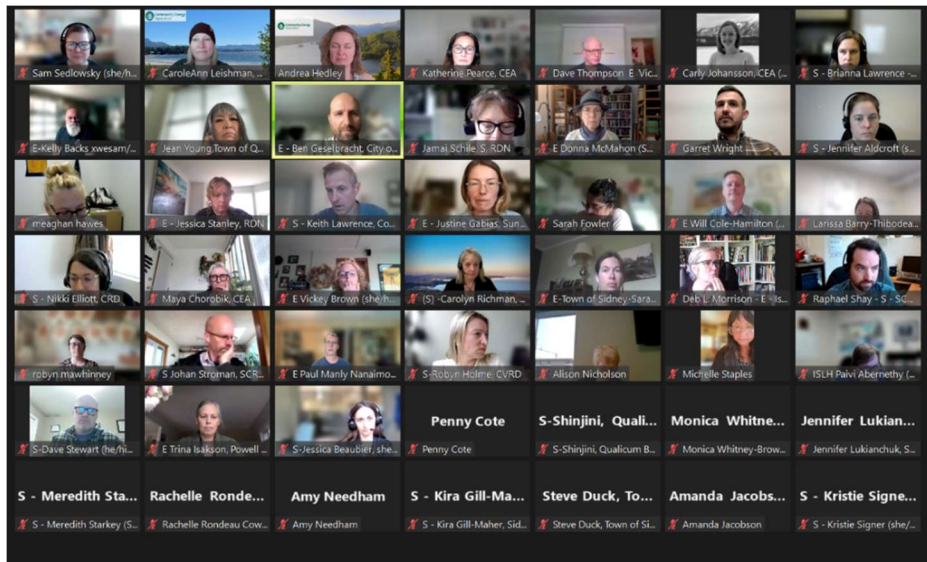


Figure: Diagram representing the relationship between the VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee and the VICC-CAN staff network

CEA liaises between both groups as secretariat to both the steering committee of elected officials and the VICC-CAN staff network. Through this role, CEA facilitates relationship building and deeper connection between passionate elected officials from across the region and the work happening on the ground in communities, all with an overarching goal of supporting and accelerating collaborative climate action.



Summary of the Event:

This virtual event offered a unique opportunity to bring staff and local elected officials from across the VICC region together to learn, collaborate, and discuss climate action solutions. Being hosted virtually and spread across two mornings supported inclusivity and accessibility of the event.

Day One – May 6, 2024

The first day of the summit focused on providing strong framing to ground discussion and answer, “**Where are we now?**”, featuring presentations from regional district staff on climate action highlights and challenges from their respective regions.

Key Components of Day One:

1. Welcoming remarks and introduction to the summit from VICC Climate Leadership Committee co-chair and Mayor of Duncan Michelle Staples and VICC Climate Leadership Committee co-chair and Nanaimo City Councillor Ben Geselbracht. Representatives from key regional partner organizations, including the Province of BC’s Climate Action Secretariat, Vancouver Island Health Authority’s Healthy Environments program, and University of Victoria researchers offered introductions and spoke to collaborative opportunities.
2. Fireside chat between Allison Ashcroft, Director of Sustainability, Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) and Maya Chorobik, Director of Climate Leadership, Community Energy Association (CEA), highlighting how local climate action has evolved over the past decade and providing key insights into regional collaboration opportunities between local government staff and elected officials. Some of the key themes touched on included the importance of climate action co-benefits, opportunities to align policy regionally (e.g. Zero Carbon Step Code), the importance of data and planning, and the need for effective impact measurement. (For more information about MFA’s suite of pooled investments for local governments including several Fossil Fuel Free Funds, and a Carbon Light Fund, contact MFA directly.)
3. Regional District panel presentations by local government staff. The presentations highlighted regional climate action projects and progress, as well as challenges and keys to success moving forward. Some of the common challenges shared included: funding and human resource capacity constraints, competing priorities, finding alignment across local governments, siloed work structures, and the need for coordination. Some key needs for successful climate action going forward that were highlighted by staff presenters included: prioritizing and resourcing implementation, aligning with Provincial Ministries including Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI), need for more transit funding, supportive leadership, consistent and reliable funding, internal capacity, coordination/relationships, and clear climate-focused mandates and policies.
 - a. **Strathcona Regional District** presented on their success with Disaster Risk Reduction Climate Adaptation Grants and Watershed Restoration Projects in Partnership with First Nations which were funded by UBCM grant funding. They acknowledged the struggles

with implementation on climate action due to being a small regional district yet geographically large with low population municipalities and electoral areas. They do not have a climate action strategy yet nor do they have a dedicated staff person to work on climate action or apply for grants. They have identified several education opportunities on climate action and risk reduction. Challenges identified as human resource capacity within the organization and project partners. Staff are having to wear many hats and are not able to specialize in areas related to climate action, decarbonization and resiliency work. Keys to success would be prioritizing climate action at the elected and staff levels; partnerships with community organizations and First Nations are key to successful outcomes; and resourcing the implementation of climate actions plans and projects is critical.

- b. **Comox Valley Regional District** presented an overview of what they have accomplished recently, mostly through their Regional Growth Strategy Service, including a Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (2023); a Corporate Energy & Emissions Plan (2023); a Residential Emissions Reduction Action Plan (2023); a Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy; the Dyke Road Park Green Shores Demonstration Project; a Home Energy Navigator Program; Municipal Top-up Program & Fuel-Switching Rebates; the Comox Valley Local Government Climate Action Working Group; a Regional Climate Action Strategy; Corporate Decarbonization work; and Active Transportation Projects; all of these achievements showing the benefit of having dedicated staff working on climate action, decarbonization, and resiliency projects. It was also mentioned that challenges arise with implementing projects when Provincial Ministries are not aligned with Regional policies, priorities and timelines and the Province downloading climate responsibility onto local governments to implement large capital projects leaves local governments overloaded.
- c. **qathet Regional District** presented their new Resource Recovery Centre Project for recycling, solid waste and organics transfer that is in final stages of completion remediating a former landfill and incinerator site into a Resource Recovery Centre. 6,000 new trees were planted; they built 1000 sq m of Hügélkultur Berms for repurposing clean woody debris onsite; repurposed discarded asphalt, and concrete onsite for trails and road subgrade; trees harvested onsite were milled locally and used in the new buildings; discarded metal was repurposed onsite for functional art pieces, signage, fencing, and bridges; two large wetland areas were saved from destruction, cleaned, and remediated; installed a natural asset solution for mitigating stormwater runoff instead of a hardscape engineered stormwater solution which saved the project \$700,000. Challenges presented were the complexities of getting all government partners aligned at every step of the way and meeting timelines. A direct benefit from this project will be the reduction of the amount of regional waste transported 770 km to landfill in Washington State; the co-benefits from this project include animals and vegetation returning to the site; an Active Transportation Network trail connecting to a City-wide network system in development; energy efficient buildings onsite; EV charging and electric vehicle equipment onsite; and modelling best practices for responsible waste diversion.

- d. **Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD)** presented about an adaptation project for their water supply, the Grantham Well Field Project, a priority since the SCRD has exceeded the worst-case scenario for summer precipitation for 2050 already in eight of the last twelve years with extreme drought. This project will reduce their water supply deficit by 50%. Another project presented are their waste diversion projects: the creation of curbside organics collection and landfill biocover feasibility study phase 2 which will reduce carbon emissions and save money once implemented. Challenges to progress identified are lack of market readiness, and lack of the level of service required to adopt some key implementation. SCRD has adopted an ambitious Transit Future Action Plan but identified challenges collaborating with the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure for projects in smaller communities and rural areas to be able to achieve a substantial mode shift.
- e. **Regional District of Nanaimo** presented about progress they have been making in the region on building decarbonization through climate-adapted home retrofits with their Home Energy Navigator Program as a regional offer, and in new buildings, the communities within the region collaborated on consultation on Zero Carbon Step Code and BC Energy Step Code which allowed for the sharing of resources and consistency in messaging across the region. The City of Nanaimo has led the way by adopting the Zero Carbon Step Code before mandatory Provincial implementation that can help inform smaller communities on best practices going forward. The RDN is working on a Board Climate Policy that will help clarify responsibilities and levels of service relative to climate change to manage both liability and clarify local governments' role in climate change. It was identified that increasing competing priorities for local governments without the necessary funding being attached means that some priorities fall off the table as staff are stretched beyond their capacity. Keys to success would be regional transportation plans aligning with Provincial climate policy; ambitious transit funding; and reliable, flexible, low barrier funding that aligns with the scale of climate action needed. It was acknowledged that the Local Government Climate Action Program Funding (LGCAP) is being provided to local governments and treaty First Nations but that it does not meet the level of funding required to achieve the necessary decarbonization goals nor assist with community resiliency at the scale required.
- f. **Cowichan Valley Regional District** presented the risks to their 18 watersheds and the embedded ecosystems within. Concerns about the water supply stress risk, water quality and floods, as well as wildfire, extreme heat, coastal sea level rise, and landslides are just a few of the climate impacts they are assessing and preparing for. They have developed a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy which has informed a series of vulnerability and risk assessments and a staged approach leading to an implementation plan and a GHG mitigation strategy developed on a regional basis. Regional highlights include the development of a CVRD Modernized OCP and Municipal Partner OCP updates; asset management planning policy review to include natural assets; a Hazard Risk & Vulnerability Assessment; Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Program; Flood Management Planning; Cowichan Adapts Communication Program; and the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy. Challenges include coordinating numerous actions and entities; capacity to deliver; information sharing to stay current; and the need for stable

sources of funding for ongoing program delivery. Keys to success: continue to build upon the work of the Regional Adaptation Advisory Group to support information sharing; continue to work with local First Nations on the development of collaborative climate adaptation initiatives; and strengthen relationships with subject matter experts at the local level.

- g. Capital Regional District** presented their updated climate strategy and how they support all the regional partners in the municipalities within the region. Regional highlights include CRD has the benefit of having created a Regional Climate Action Service which is fairly unique for regional districts and allows them to support inter-municipal/agency coordination, data collection, modelling & analysis, community programs, policy support, capacity building & education. Having a robust Climate Action Department allows them to advocate, convene, support, and implement strong climate action programs and projects. Challenges they are facing have been the rapidly changing climate impacts, a growing region, varying authorities with competing mandates, capacity and lack of necessary funding. The current grant funding structure means that the same local governments are competing year over year for the same pot of money and there is not enough to go around to accomplish what is needed at the scale that is required. Keys to success are having supportive leadership at the elected level; consistent funding & internal capacity is always needed; coordination and relationships are essential; clear climate-focused mandates and policies must be put in place to be successful.

“Climate and environment exist beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Collaborative work is the future for measurable and lasting climate action.”

~ Summit Presenter

Day Two – May 13, 2024

The focus of the second day of the summit was on **“Where do we want to go and how do we get there?”** Four key themes were introduced – **Land & Water Resiliency, Food Security, Sustainable Transportation, and Buildings**. Following presentations from VICC Steering Committee members, attendees broke into groups on each topic to discuss opportunities for alignment and collaboration.

Key Components of Day Two:

1. Welcoming remarks and introduction to the summit from VICC Climate Leadership Committee co-chair and Mayor of Duncan Michelle Staples and VICC Climate Leadership Committee co-chair and Courtenay City Councillor Will Cole-Hamilton.
2. Keynote presentation by Andrea Reimer on power and three things to know about effective staff/elected relationships. The presentation touched on the important separation between the staff operational level and the elected official role of governance and oversight, the adaptive cycle as a conceptual framework for understanding how organizations remain resilient in the face of challenges, and power literacy. On power, Andrea described the power we each have and

said, “If you can’t fundamentally change the way you understand your power, you can’t fundamentally change the way you’re making public policy.”

3. Panel presentations by VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee members on regional collaboration and advocacy opportunities on the themes of **Land & Water Resiliency, Food Security, Sustainable Transportation, and Buildings**. The presentations were followed by breakout discussions on the four theme topics. Attendees self-selected theme topics and engaged in discussions about action steps that can be taken independently or collectively, and other emerging priorities.



KEYS TO SUCCESS



- Build upon the work of the Regional Adaptation Advisory Group to support information sharing
- Continue to work with local First Nations on the development of collaborative climate adaptation initiatives
- Strengthen relationships with subject matter experts to have up to date understanding of impacts at the local level and identify communities most in need of support

Thematic Discussion Outcomes:

Theme 1: Land & Water Resiliency

Diverse and fragmented watersheds and water related mandates present a governance challenge. The Province has primary jurisdiction for much of the land use regulations that affect water, pointing to needs for collective advocacy. There are successful models of collaborative local watershed governance co-managed with First Nations including the Cowichan Watershed Board. Other needs related to land and water resiliency include addressing impacts from privately managed forestry land, supporting agricultural water needs, and encouraging residential water conservation.

Key Takeaways:

- Advocate to upper tiers of government wisely and strategically. It is recommended to build support and understanding within the local government council or board and community as well as developing a full understanding of the legislation prior to engaging in advocacy.
- Collaborate with partner Regional Districts, Municipalities, and Indigenous Communities through the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and other organizations to advocate for increased regulation, oversight and enforcement on forestry management practices affecting watersheds and water sustainability in general.
- There are opportunities to collaborate with the Vancouver Island Health Authority on studies and data needs related to climate, health, and water.
- Education and communication are critical. Regionally pooled resources and shared materials could be created to support community awareness, education, and literacy on the issues pertaining to water and the types of development and decisions and actions that will affect water sustainability.
- We can learn to think differently about resources and how they are managed from Indigenous Nations.

Links and Reports Shared:

- <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/programs/freshwater-sustainability/>
- RDN Drinking Water and Watershed protection: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/drinking-water-and-watershed-protection>
- RDN example of simple messaging on watersheds: <https://youtu.be/l8O5Hy4UzJg?si=3e9Oqqg-8g5Q9cXW>
- Tla'amin Watershed Protection Plan: <https://youtu.be/W9c5oachodY?si=t7egM-vQ56X2EPzt>
- Strategic plan example: <https://www.rdn.bc.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/RDN-Strat-Plan-DF01-WEB.pdf>

Theme 2: Food Security

Food security on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast is closely connected to water, with water scarcity during drought periods affecting the sustainability of farms. To support food security, there is a need to prioritize agricultural water usage. Data is needed to better understand and measure water supplies and usage. Different governance approaches, including watershed committees and plans could support better management of water. Water conservation and advocacy related to water usage is also critical. Food security is also connected to transportation, particularly in rural and remote areas. Some communities such as Tahsis are addressing challenges by implementing programs like the Good Food Box that support food security while reducing GHG emissions and providing other co-benefits.

Key Takeaways:

- There is a key connection between food security and water management. Watershed based governance models could support water conservation and preservation of water supplies for agricultural usage. A collaborative advocacy opportunity involves working with the provincial government to advocate for a watershed-based model.
- Encouraging water conservation is an important step local governments can take to support farmers and ensure adequate water is reserved for agricultural usage. Approaches at the community level can include residential water metering, providing education to residents, and providing incentives. Water can be conserved by reducing watering of turf in areas including boulevards, small parks, and golf courses, although this needs to be balanced with maintaining natural assets.
- Local governments should review their bylaws and policies to ensure that they support residents growing their own food. Some existing bylaws can inadvertently be used to restrict opportunities for food growing in neighborhoods.
- Farmers are experts on what they need. Local governments should engage more with them to understand current practices and data needs. There are opportunities to build on existing initiatives such as the Agricultural Adaptation Plan for Vancouver Island produced in 2020.

Links and Reports Shared:

- Vancouver Island Agricultural Adaptation Plan 2020:
<https://www.bcclimatechangeadaptation.ca/library/vancouver-island-adaptation-strategies-plan/>

Theme 3: Sustainable Transportation

Transportation is a major source of GHG emissions, accounting for around 50% of GHG emissions in most communities. The Clean BC Roadmap calls for reducing transportation related GHGs by 27-30% by 2030. Local governments can influence reducing transportation emissions in several ways, through promoting transit and active transportation, and supporting the uptake of EVs and E-bikes. There are opportunities for collaboration and partnerships to fill transportation gaps, but there are also many challenges, especially related to active transportation and transit needs outside of municipalities.

Key Takeaways:

- **Systems Change:** The group emphasized the need for advocating for provincial-level changes to focus on moving people and freight rather than just motor vehicles. This includes policy, budget, and data shifts to facilitate a mode shift towards active transportation and transit. This requires a system shift at regional and provincial levels. Currently budgetary processes, policies, and jurisdictional divisions constrain the ability of local governments to enact the level of change required.
- Coordinated advocacy is needed to support a system shift. This could start with a provincial interagency working group. Advocacy efforts need to be coordinated at multiple decision-making levels to effect change.
- There is strong support for creating broader, coordinated active transportation networks across regions. This includes safe routes to schools and better connections between communities, with a push for active transportation to be considered in all major road projects.
- Advocacy should include calls for updating outdated legislation such as the Motor Vehicle Act and pushing for mode shift targets that consider both urban and rural needs.
- We need to use languages and lenses that resonate with the government and electorate such as focusing on urgent issues such security, safety, and equity. Emphasizing co-benefits rather than solely GHG emission reduction can resonate with a broader audience.
- There is a need for more active transportation data. The CRD's Ecocounter data tracking programs for cyclists and pedestrians is an example of a successful initiative that could be replicated.

Links and Reports Shared:

- Island Coastal Inter-Community Transportation Study: <https://islandcoastaltrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Transportation-What-We-Heard-Report.pdf>
- Planning Together BC: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/driving-and-transportation/transportation-infrastructure/planning/planningtogetherbc/documents/planning_together_bc-framework-2023.pdf
- Cyclist and pedestrian count program platform for the CRD area: [CRD - Regional Cyclist and Pedestrian Count Program](#) (eco-counter.com)
- Active Transportation Grants: <https://communityclimatefunding.gov.bc.ca/>

Theme 4: Buildings

Buildings are responsible for 40-60% of community GHG emissions for local governments in BC. The Province of BC has set ambitious targets for GHG reductions from buildings (59-64% by 2030). Adopting higher buildings standards including higher steps of the BC Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code (ZCSC) are important ways for local governments to reduce building emissions in new buildings. A number of local governments on Vancouver Island have moved forward with ZCSC and there is interest in other communities to accelerate adoption; however, there are challenges related to addressing misinformation in the community related to the affordability and reliability of zero carbon options. Addressing emissions of existing buildings is also critical. Many local governments across the province have endorsed moving forward a provincial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program to support residential retrofits.

Key Takeaways:

- There is a major opportunity for sharing lessons learned from early adopters of Zero Carbon Step Code (ZCSC), including an identified need for good communication about the differences between the Energy Step Code and ZCSC to counter pushback and misinformation. Regional coordination and alignment can support local governments to adopt ZCSC. Collective support related to public communication is a good alignment opportunity.
- A collaboration opportunity related to decentralized energy generation and localized distribution capacity challenges could involve coming together for an inter-regional working group with BC Hydro.
- Shared advocacy to the provincial government could focus on supporting retrofitting of existing buildings through promoting the adoption of a provincial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. Some municipalities are exploring alternative finance levers that could be implemented at the local scale in the absence of PACE and these learnings could be shared with others.
- Several local governments in the region have established or are in the process of exploring various retrofit support programs and can share lessons learned.
- There are equity concerns related to building related programs, for example, many programs exclude rental buildings and homes in First Nations territories since programs are based on ownership. Other gaps and challenges related to buildings related to contractor capacity, DIY culture, and contractors that are not program qualified.

Links and Reports Shared:

- Highest Efficiency Equipment Standards: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/electricity-alternative-energy/energy-efficiency/highest_efficiency_equipment_standards_-_consultation.pdf
- CRD Home Energy Navigator Program: <https://homeenergynav.ca/>
- Nanaimo home energy retrofit financing feasibility study: https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/sustainability/atta_feasibilitystudy_homeenergyretrofitfinancingfeasibilitystudy_rpt_c240422.pdf

Next Steps

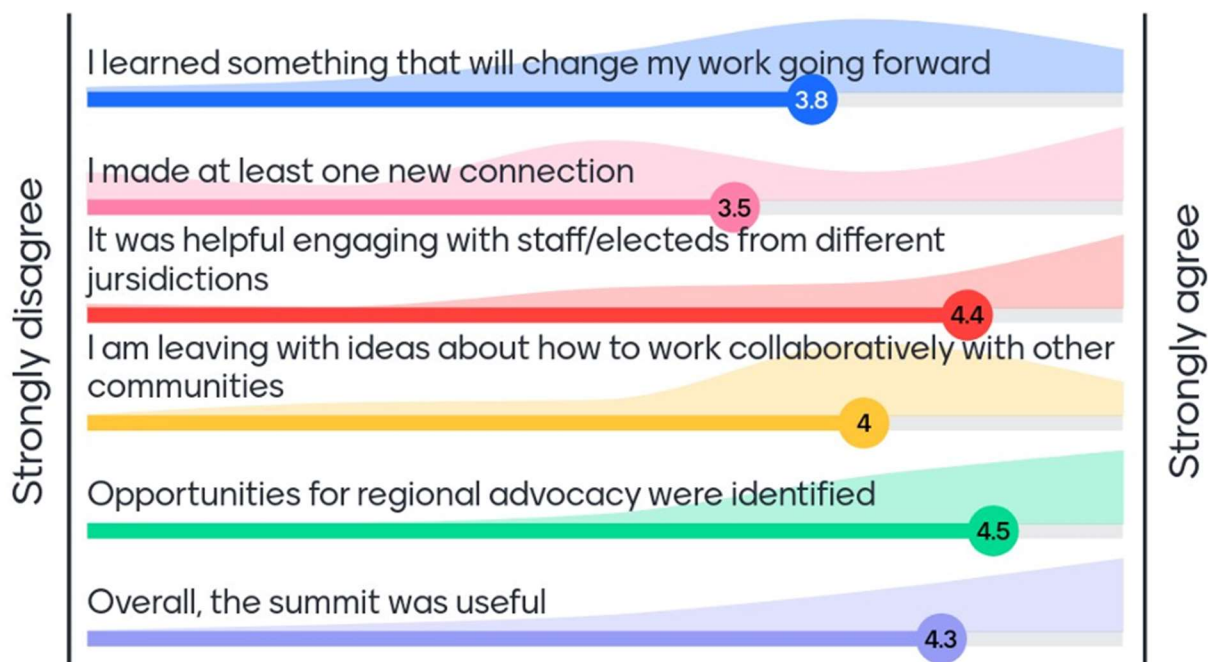
- The VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee has reviewed the outcomes of the summit and will continue to determine collaborative priority actions for the remainder of 2024 and beyond.
- The Steering Committee intends to make the VICC Climate Summit an annual event and will continue to work with CEA and the existing staff network to follow up on regional collaboration opportunities.
- The committee will review the existing structure and funding model and seek funding to continue for another two-year period.

Priority Actions from each theme identified from the Climate Summit (not in a prioritized order):

Issue	Theme Area	What type of Action
Adoption of provincial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program	Buildings	Advocacy
Share lessons learned on retrofit support programs	Buildings	Information sharing
Share learnings about finance levers to support retrofits	Buildings	Information sharing
Share lessons learned on Zero Carbon Step Code (ZCSC)	Buildings	Information sharing
Align ZCSC communications regionally	Buildings	Collaborate
Inter-regional working group with BC Hydro on energy generation	Buildings	Collaborate
Increase transit funding & support for inter-community transit	Transportation	Advocacy
Coordinate interagency working group to advocate for system shift	Transportation	Advocacy
MOTI change including better active transportation support in rural areas	Transportation	Advocacy
Share data and learnings about data tracking programs for active transportation	Transportation	Collaborate
Shared learning about co-benefits and using language that resonates with key audiences	Transportation	Collaborate
Increased funding to protect critical watershed lands in Esquimalt & Nanaimo (E&N) Land Grant	Land & water resiliency	Advocacy
Increased regulation, oversight and enforcement on forestry management practices affecting watersheds	Land & water resiliency	Advocacy
Shared comms materials related to water sustainability	Land & water resiliency	Collaborate
Work with health authorities on studies/data needs	Land & water resiliency	Collaborate
Increase internal and community understanding of issues and related legislation	Land & water resiliency	Information sharing
Learn: how can we learn about resource management from Indigenous practices?	Land & water resiliency	Information sharing
Share learnings & resources related to water conservation and initiatives to improve food security within RD's	Food security	Collaborate
Advocate for watershed based governance model to support food security	Food security	Advocacy
Share learnings to support duplication of Tahsis food program in other communities	Food security	Information sharing
Review bylaws and policies that support residential food production	Food security	Information sharing
Engage with farmers & build on existing initiatives (Agricultural Adaptation Plan)	Food security	Collaborate

Engagement Results

At the close of the summit, participants were asked for their feedback about the event. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with most participants indicating that they found it helpful engaging with staff and elected officials from different regions and that they had gained new ideas about working collaboratively with other communities.



Participant quotes:

“There is genuine interest in regional collaboration in climate action and amazing work already underway that I am excited to be a part of.”

“Climate change is an emergency, and we need to treat it like one.”

“There are more allies and more support than I realized, and we are poised to move forward together.”

“Collaboration is key! Working together will amplify and strengthen our advocacy efforts, as well as increase staff capacity – no need to reinvent the wheel, others may already have solutions.”

“Between us all, there are more tools, resources, and opportunities than I had realized.”

“I’m taking away new information and new strategies for addressing climate change in my region.”

“It was refreshing to speak so openly between staff and electeds outside of the internal organizational constraints.”

“There is a need to have regional collaboration to be able to tackle these large challenges.”

Speakers

VICC Climate Leadership Steering Committee Co-Chairs 2022 - 2024:

Michelle Staples (Duncan/Cowichan Valley Regional District)

Ben Geselbracht (Nanaimo/Regional District of Nanaimo)

Will Cole-Hamilton (Courtenay/ Comox Valley Regional District)

Day One Fireside Chat:

Maya Chorobik, Director of Climate Leadership, Community Energy Association (CEA) leads CEA's Climate Leadership programming with elected officials, designer of peer networks, information systems, and strategic collaboration across local, regional, and provincial levels.

Allison Ashcroft, Director of Sustainability, Municipal Finance Authority is responsible for expanding MFA's strategy and processes for managing sustainability and climate-related risk and opportunities. In her previous role as Managing Director of the Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners (CUSP), Allison assisted sustainability practitioners in Canada's large and leading cities with the pivot from climate action and sustainability planning to implementation.

Regional Partners:

Yaheli Klein, Senior Policy Analyst, Climate Action Secretariat, Province of BC

Dr. Paivi Abernethy, Manager, Healthy Environments, Island Health

Dr. Tamara Krawchenko, Assistant Professor, School of Public Administration, UVic

Dr. Katya Rhodes, Assistant Professor, School of Public Administration, UVic

Dr. Kara Shaw, Associate Professor, School of Environmental Studies, UVic

Regional District staff (Day One Snapshot Presentations):

Renee LaBoucane, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Strathcona Regional District

Monica Whitney-Brown, Long Range Planner, Comox Valley Regional District

Arnold Schwabe, Manager of Asset Management & Strategic Initiatives, qathet Regional District

Raph Shay, Manager, Sustainable Development, Sunshine Coast Regional District

Jessica Beaubier, Climate Change and Resilience Coordinator, Nanaimo Regional District

Amy Needham, Sustainability Planner, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

Keith Lawrence, Senior Environmental Analyst, Cowichan Regional District

Nikki Elliott, Manager, Climate Action Programs, Capital Regional District

Day Two Keynote speaker:

Andrea Reimer served four terms in local government including three terms on Vancouver City Council and Metro Vancouver Regional District where she championed bold climate action, green cities, and social justice initiatives. In 2018 she left government and was awarded the Loeb Fellowship at Harvard's Graduate School of Design in recognition of her achievements while in office. Today she teaches about power as an Adjunct Professor of Practice at UBC's School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, and Simon Fraser University. Andrea supports courageous leaders willing to act boldly on the biggest challenges of our times through her consultancy firm Tawâw Strategies.

VICC Climate Leadership Members (Day Two Regional Collaboration Panel):

Alison Nicholson, Cowichan Valley Regional District

Deb Morrison, Islands Trust

Justine Gabias, Sunshine Coast Regional District

Sarah Fowler, Strathcona Regional District

Dave Thompson, Capital Regional District

Donna McMahon, Sunshine Coast Regional District

Ben Geselbracht, Regional District of Nanaimo

Will Cole-Hamilton, Comox Valley Regional District

The Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership (VICC-CL) Steering Committee has been facilitated by the Community Energy Association (CEA) since 2022 as the Secretariat. This Summit Report has been created by CEA staff with direction from the VICC-CL Steering Committee.

