

**DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH SHARES PUBLIC INPUT FROM LAUNCH OF
“CREATE THE OCEANFRONT” PLANNING PROCESS**

**Participants Aligned on Waterfront Access; Diverse on Jobs and Housing;
Question Landowners’ Impact on Outcome: All Topics for Discussion in
Ongoing Process**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2008

SQUAMISH, B.C.—The District of Squamish and planning firm HB Lanarc today released a summary of Squamish residents’ thoughts and ideas for the oceanfront peninsula. The summary incorporates participants’ input into the ongoing District-led “Create the Oceanfront” planning process submitted at the June 28 public launch event and through email, phone calls, website submissions, flyer feedback forms and interviews.

“We are encouraging residents to get involved in planning the future of our very unique and special oceanfront peninsula and, as usual, they are responding enthusiastically and passionately; and voicing a welcome diversity of opinions,” said Ian Sutherland, Mayor of Squamish.

Participants agreed on the broad Vision, Principles and Goals compiled from previous planning work. They also agreed on the need for ongoing public access to the ocean’s shores for all ages and interests through parks and trails; a desire for special and enjoyable gathering places; the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environment; and the need to accommodate “useful” activities in the overall plan. Some respondents questioned the role of the various landowners in the process and wanted assurances that the community’s vision will be reflected in the new plan, and the new plan followed when actually implemented.

While the principle of a mix of uses was generally supported, participants had a range of ideas about which specific uses should be incorporated. Although a few residents preferred to limit commercial or industrial uses, many others submitted ideas for restaurants, shops, hotels, marinas and light industrial uses. Participants noted that such business would provide quality, local employment for the community and contribute to the tax base of the community.

Similarly, a few people questioned the idea of housing on the Oceanfront, but most participants supported some form of residences, especially as a potential way of addressing Squamish’s housing affordability challenges. When it comes to the details of neighbourhood and housing design, however, there were again a variety of perspectives on density, building styles and heights. Maintaining the community’s character and existing views was agreed to be very important and will be further addressed through the planning process.

"We are very pleased that more than 300 residents have participated to date and are confident that even more people will get involved in the coming weeks and months," said Sutherland. "The broad support for public access and multiple community uses and the varied opinions on commercial and industrial uses, and the appropriate location and types of housing to fund such uses, will generate a lively and healthy public planning process for the oceanfront peninsula."

"Neither the District nor the landowners were surprised at the community's concerns around the owners' interests. But it's important that we convey to the public that the District, with the full support of the landowners, is leading this process and that it is being managed by independent, professional planners. The resulting new plan, which will be submitted to Council in Spring 2009, will be based on community input and the reaffirmed planning principles."

A summary and more in-depth report on the public's early input is available on the project website at www.createtheoceanfront.ca or through the District's site at www.district.squamish.bc.ca.

The "Create the Oceanfront" process will continue to gather public ideas and input over the Fall. The next phase will narrow in and explore the broader range of ideas and their overall implications, and look at different mixes and combinations of land use. The new plan will be submitted to Council in the Spring of 2009. The District is inviting all residents of Squamish to share their views on these and other ideas in the coming months by:

- visiting www.createtheoceanfront.ca;
- calling 1-604-688-9769 x123;
- emailing: info@createtheoceanfront.ca or planning@squamish.ca;
- visiting City Hall; or
- joining the Facebook group "District of Squamish: "Create the Oceanfront".

"Create the Oceanfront" is being led by the District of Squamish, with the support of the three current oceanfront landowners: the Squamish Oceanfront Development Corporation, Westmana Development Corporation and BCR Properties.

The planning process is being managed and facilitated by HB Lanarc (www.hblanarc.ca), a planning and consulting firm who provide excellence and innovation in creative and responsive project development and management; in public engagement; and in plan development to create healthier, more vibrant, and increasingly sustainable communities.

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