TOFINO’S VITAL CONVERSATION ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Report to Tofino Council
August 27, 2019
Background

- Vital Conversation on Sustainable Tourism
- April 23, 2019
- 32 participants
- Objective was to better understand how Tofino’s tourism economy interrelates with community life in Tofino and to consider this experience through the lens of varied community stakeholders.
Vital Signs

- National Program led by community foundations
- Uses local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and support action towards improving quality of life
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust publishes biennially
- Recent Vital Signs reports aligned with United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals

The Vital Conversation

- Model for community dialog developed by Community Foundations of Canada
- Intended to ignite community dialog to dig deeper into issues identified through Vital Signs
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Vital Conversation Themes

- People and Work
- Environment
- Housing
- Health and Wellness

Community Presenters

- Environment and Climate Change
- Work and People
- Poverty and Income Inequality
- Housing
- Safety
- Transportation
- Health
- Arts and Culture
- Learning
- Youth

3 minute video of Vital Conversation
https://vimeo.com/333853511
Six Key Lines of Tension &
System Pressure Areas

1. As number of visitors increases, health of natural environment decreases.
2. As costs increase for visitors, job satisfaction decreases.
3. As number of visitors increases, local access to emergency services decreases.
4. As number of visitors increases, demand for high-cost infrastructure increases and affordability of municipal property tax decreases.
5. As the proportion of work force in tourism increases, individual median wage decreases.
6. As number of visitors increases, sense of well-being for locals decreases.
Priority Pressure Areas

- Affordable Housing
- Sense of Place
- Widening Income Gap
- Living in Balance
- Regional Wildlife Threats
- Marine Pollution
- The Boom Bust Cycle
- Youth Mental Health & Well Being
- Emergency Services
- Reconciliation
Priority Pressure Areas

Affordable Housing
- Apply for MRDT Tax for affordable housing

Sense of Place
- Invest in local culture and cohesion

Living in Balance
- Set limits and slow growth

Marine Pollution
- Partner to reduce water and sewer costs

Youth Mental Health and Well Being
- Invest in local youth education and training

Reconciliation
- Partner to reduce inequality

Emergency Services
- Increase emergency service provision

The Boom Bust Cycle
- Invest in retaining local workforce

Regional Wildlife Threats
- Prioritize conservation of habitat and diversity

Widening Income Gap
- Close the gap between wages and cost of living
Deeper Patterns

- Seasonality: we feel differently in the Winter than the anxiety we feel in the Summer.
- Business owners need help to manage the seasonal boom-bust cycle.
- We’re really a region and we may need to recommit to our sustainability vision (e.g. Biosphere Region designation, core protected areas).
- We need to look at both the balance & the process of re-balancing of resources (for social, economic, ecological well-being).
- The gap is widening between visitor expectations and the quality of life for staff and local residents.
- We have a limited municipal government tax-base with which to service costs such as infrastructure that should supported by federal and provincial taxes *(based on Tofino’s $57 million annual Tourism revenue tax contribution).*
- We have an opportunity to use MRDT to service costs
- How can we access other Tourist assets, what can they give?
- We need to invest in Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action & UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People...we are guests in FN territories.
Next Steps:

- How can tourism invest in priority pressure areas to build the resilience of the community?
  - What is the tension?
  - What is possible?
  - What has worked before?
  - What are others doing?
  - What can we do right now to shift the pattern?