



Regional Climate Adaptation Planning on the West Coast

Vital Conversation Summary Report | April 2025



VITAL CONVERSATIONS:
VitalSigns.

Summary - Vital Conversation on Climate Planning

Hosted by the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District
Ucluelet Community Centre, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ haḥuutii/ Ucluelet BC

April 16, 2025 9:00am – 3:30pm

Attendees:

Toquaht Nation:	Brett Freake Toni Buston Niamh O'Reilly	ACRD	Amy Needham Vaida Siga
Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government	Catie Bateman Savannah McCarthy Jeneva Touchie	NTC	Linden Baker
District of Ucluelet	Anneliese Neweduk Maddy Haynes Mark Maftei	Redd Fish	Mandala Smulders Kasia Kistowska
Tla-o-qui-aht	Sean Quick Kali Touchie	Synergy	Margaux Martin-Jarrand
District of Tofino	Josh Welsh Tom Stere Will Creba Jill Creba	Island Health	Faye Missar Paivi Abernethy
MHSS	Gemma MacFarlane	FCM	Kaylyn Gervais
		PICS	Daniel Arbour
		CBT	Colin Robinson Janessa Dornstauder Barb Beasley Rebecca Hurwitz Erika Goldt

1) Executive Summary

Representatives from Nuu-chah-nulth and Municipal Governments:

- Shared and learned about existing projects that relate to climate adaptation, identifying regional themes:
 - Drinking and stormwater water infrastructure
 - Natural asset identification, management, and restoration
 - Zoning bylaw, development permit areas, and community planning
 - Disaster preparedness and emergency planning
 - Shoreline stabilization
 - Low-carbon and active transportation
 - Waste management
 - Housing development
- Discussed the organizational and structural contexts they're working in:
 - Funding programs are often misaligned with operational context of small governments

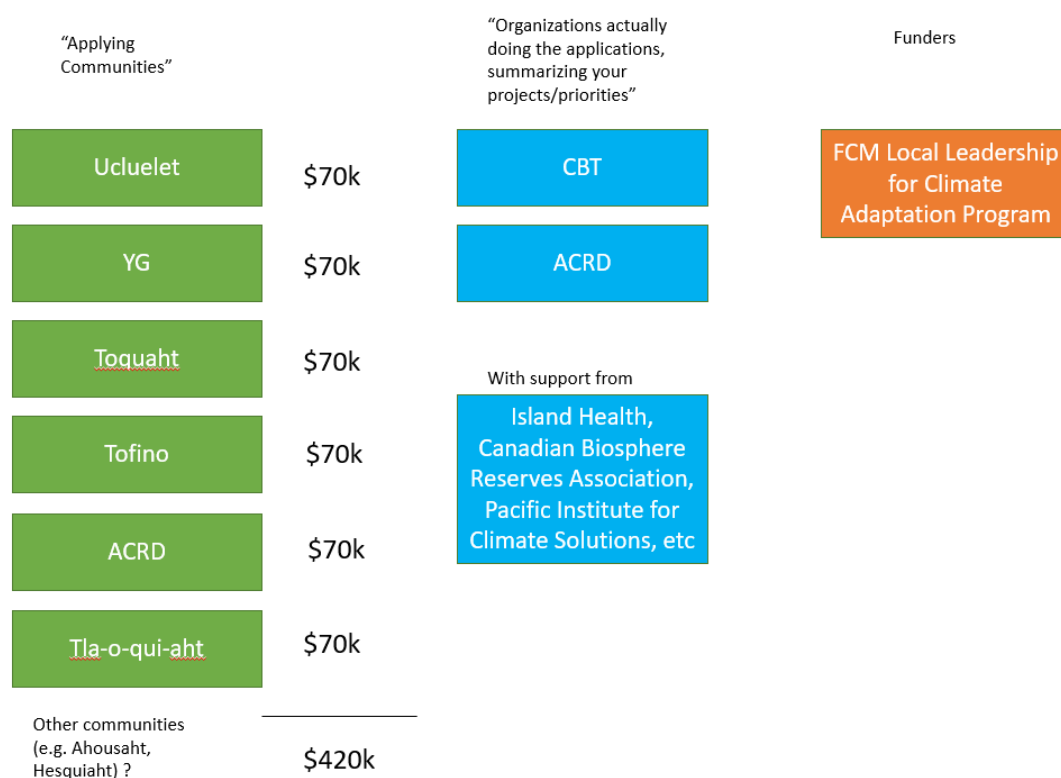
- Climate (and other systems-change) work requires cross-departmental/cross-community coordination but there are rarely the appropriate personnel available to lead it
- Small governments/departments are vulnerable to personnel loss, frequently resulting in staff being stretched and simply needing to prioritize basic functions over of future-oriented work
- Projects and key relationships often held by individual champions instead of integrated organizationally
- Housing issues, remoteness, and competition from other sectors challenge staff retention
- Regional collaboration can mitigate personnel/capacity risks and allow governments stability over longer term to advance projects through the “shifting tides of capacity”
- Heard from sectors outside their “governmental siloes”
 - *Public health* – built and natural environment are key determinants of health; climate is a key focus for Island Health; they’re keen to provide support to municipal and NCN climate initiatives
 - *Tourism and hospitality* – the industry is taking large steps towards climate resilience; 4VI and the DMOs are supporting individual operator initiatives; lots of collaboration opportunities especially with emergency management
 - *Environment* – Many ecosystem-based projects related to climate adaptation including: marine ecosystem and terrestrial watershed restoration; natural asset mapping; carbon quantification
- Learned about 2026 ACRD-level climate adaptation planning and discussed how:
 - Local community projects can be the foundation for a regional plan
 - Regional planning can directly support or advance existing projects and priorities
- Heard from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities about a Climate Adaptation Funding opportunity:
 - Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation – planning and implementation funding
 - ACRD and CBT have proposed a solution well-aligned with community capacity and priorities

2) The FCM Grant opportunity and pathways to pursue it as a regional collaborative

- FCM Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA) is a grant that provides:
 - A chance to advance local projects by bringing money, capacity, and cooperation to the west coast
 - Phase 1) planning funding at \$70k per community (\$420K+ together)
 - Phase 2) implementation funding at \$1M per community (\$6M+ together)
- The results of the grant could be (but aren’t limited to):
 - Unique plans for each community that stitch together existing local work and develop areas where regional cooperation is helpful (Phase 1)
 - An ACRD-wide plan that builds upon and supports the projects outlined in each local plan (Phase 1)

- Implementation money (Phase 2) to start delivering on projects
- Plans, documentation, and networking to start accessing many other funding opportunities and also developing more sustainable/grant-independent ways to fund our projects
- The grant aligns with our context because:
 - FCM is open to ACRD and CBT doing the legwork:
 - Application: writing (with appropriate input from community staff) and submitting the applications
 - Administration: ACRD can actually receive the funds on behalf of the community if that's helpful
 - Execution: ACRD and CBT could hire and support a consultant who would create the Phase 1 plans that are community-specific but regionally cooperative (A similar model—already piloted by ACRD-- we can learn from is The Housing Needs Assessments created by M'akola Development Services)
 - Our regional collaboration can likely qualify for 100% funding (instead of the usual 60%) because we:
 - Small population (+20%)
 - Meaningfully address reconciliation and/or anti-racism, equity and inclusion (+15%)
 - Collaborate between two or more municipal governments (+5%)
 - The LLCA team is flexible and committed to better supporting small, rural, remote communities
 - We can even advocate as a collective (e.g. using the results from our Vital Convo) about ways the grant can be better aligned with small community needs

3) Joint application structure



4) The structure of the work if we're successful

