vision statement

Advance community connections and well-being in West Vancouver through leadership and innovation in social responsibility.

"The Group deliberated on what a socially sustainable community meant for West Vancouver. They concluded that issues such as quality of life, health, equity and social inclusion are fundamental to the health and well being of a vibrant community."

West Vancouver Community Grants / Social Services Working Group (2007)

guiding principles

1. Imbed the importance of community social services in the District's culture.
2. Anticipate and meet community needs as demographics change thorough a short and long term strategy for the delivery of social services.
3. Adopt a proactive approach that anticipates needs rather than reacts to issues.
4. Respond to and identify new challenges and directions through a social services delivery model that is both innovative and flexible.
5. Ensure a purposeful and accountable response to community needs by measuring, evaluating and monitoring progress regularly.
6. Embrace the values of equity, diversity, social inclusion, security and adaptability in all District initiatives.

framework

The Social Action Plan will incorporate the following key areas in its framework.

BLUEPRINT FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & CHANGE: A SOCIAL ACTION PLAN

Policy	Funding	Infrastructure	Community Capacity Building	Accountability & Responsiveness
strengthening commitment and response through policy	annual grants and other resources to community service providers	new facilities and support systems	collaboration, networking, shared resources / strategies	research, monitoring, education, awareness

"Social sustainability issues are not only about addressing pressing social problems, but equally about celebrating the initiatives and citizens whose activities result in lively public and community spaces, more inclusive participation in civic life, and celebration of the differences that make cities so vibrant. In this regard, partnerships between citizen groups and local governments — both formal and informal — are often essential."

Metro Vancouver Sustainable Region Initiative Social Action Team (2007)

social action plan—recommended action 1

Recognize social services as one of the municipal priorities.

strategies

- Ensure the municipal budget cycle is informed of social services needs.
- Communicate this intent to the public.
- Reflect this priority in communications to residents and ensure that staff is aware and acting on this direction.
- Through the community benefits amenities program, create a social services fund.

"We are not a needy community but we are a community with needs."

West Vancouver Community Foundation (2008)

social action plan—recommended action 2

Ensure the resources distributed through the municipality are meaningful to West Vancouver residents.

"Community organizations are on the front lines of every important social, cultural, environmental and community issue in Canada. They run homeless shelters, provide child care and deliver meals-on-wheels....and serve Canadians in countless other ways in order to respond to their needs and help them to participate fully and actively in social, economic, community and civic life."

Building Blocks for Strong Communities: Key Findings and Recommendations—Canadian Policy Research Network (2006)

strategies

- Develop a mechanism to clarify, assess and determine social services needs of West Vancouver based on the findings over the previous year.
- Ensure that the community grants process supports organizations that meet the needs of, and are accessible to, West Vancouver residents.
- Focus on identifying gaps in services in West Vancouver by engaging in dialogue with community service providers and partners, including non traditional providers, and by engaging with residents.
- Prepare and maintain a current matrix of service providers in West Vancouver for use in evaluating current needs within the District.

social action plan—recommended action 3

Become a resource centre for all information relevant to social services and establish one 'Community Services Information Hub' to provide a central location for a number of non-profit social service agencies in West Vancouver.

strategies

- Examine what is currently in place and identify the logistics, communications, resources and infrastructure needs to fulfill this vision.
- Create a social services page on the municipal website to provide broad based information and access to social support services available to District residents. Allocate resources to ensure content management can be maintained.
- Ensure that the web site provides linkages to all relevant sites that support social services, has a West Vancouver focus and is a dynamic tool that provides opportunities and supports resource sharing amongst community groups.
- Create an inventory of meeting spaces available to community agencies within municipal buildings and other areas in the community.
- Ensure that municipal services and volunteer opportunities are accessible and inclusive for West Vancouver's diverse community.
- Develop a fact sheet that matches West Vancouver's needs with the agencies providing service (produced in combination with the matrix of service providers).

social action plan—recommended action 4

Establish mechanisms for monitoring community needs.

"... most residents want a community that is crime-free, where public facilities are maintained, the environment protected, people feel connected to their community, the needs of young and old are met, health care and community services are accessible to all, and services reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community."

West Vancouver Community Grants / Social Services Working Group (2007)

strategies

- On a regular basis monitor, review and respond to community trends and associated needs and inform council and the community.
- Host regular community forums to generate dialogue on issues.
- Examine the community grants application process on a regular basis to ensure service review, evaluation and adjustment meet municipal and community needs.
- Showcase community social service organizations to highlight what they are doing for residents.

social action plan—recommended action 5

Build on the existing capacity in the community to increase awareness of social needs and foster a sense of responsibility and collaboration for social well being.

"Capacity building describes processes and activities that maximize human potential. A comprehensive, integrated approach to capacity building nurtures excellence, expansion and positive change in all areas of human experience: social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural. In this way, our capacity building efforts reflect the complexity of people, and the communities in which we live our lives."

BC Healthy Communities (2006)

strategies

- Create community facility space for the delivery of social services in new developments as provided for in the public amenity contribution policy.
- Liaise with community agencies, funders and philanthropists to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Work with First Nations to investigate ways of working in collaboration to meet social service needs.

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social action plan—recommended action 6

Make prudent use of resources to support the long term sustainability of community social services .

strategies

- Allocate additional resources to enable West Vancouver to participate fully as a partner in social service provision across the North Shore.
- Examine the allocation of municipal resources to social services to determine if budget allocations adequately reflect community needs.
- Review the community grants budget to determine if budget allocations adequately reflect community needs and values.
- Ensure that social service organizations have access to and visibility in all major community events (e.g. Community Day, Harmony Arts, Coho Festival) to promote awareness of services and volunteerism.

"...invest in the life of your community: its heritage, its environment and most of all, its people. It is an investment in the future."

West Vancouver Community Foundation (2008)

social action plan—recommended action 7

Communicate with federal and provincial governments concerning the pressures on local resources in dealing with social services needs.

strategies

- Strengthen relationships and communication with provincial and federal government departments.
- Participate in regional planning tables to share knowledge and implement sustainable strategies for addressing priority social issues.
- Participate in tri-municipal planning and joint funding initiatives.

"...work to strengthen community social support systems and ensure that social issues are considered as an integral part of our long term planning for community sustainability."

District of West Vancouver
Corporate Business Plan 2006-2008

social action plan—recommended action 8

Work with organizations who receive a permissive tax exemption from the municipality, to address emerging community social service needs.

strategies

- Review the municipal tax exemption policy, process and history.
- Define how tax exemptions can help to accomplish community needs and goals.
- Harmonize the tax exemption process with the municipal grants process.
- Encourage organizations applying for a municipal tax exemption to provide space or resources for social and child care services.

"The District of West Vancouver's grant programs are an essential strategy in helping the residents of West Vancouver to equitably access the resources, services, and programs they need and desire."

District of West Vancouver Community Grants Program - A Framework for Action (2003)

social action plan—recommended action 9

Work with existing groups or foundations in the community to identify ways of securing funding for long term social services sustainability.

"Social Sustainability—Everything we do is intended to deliver a high quality of life, and bring people together to create a strong and vibrant community."

District of West Vancouver
Corporate Business Plan
2006-2008