



Hornby Island Community Tourism Project 2007

*Supported by funding from the
Province of British Columbia's
Community Tourism Project*

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HICEEC expresses its appreciation to the Province of British Columbia, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Regional District of Comox-Strathcona for funding support to make this project possible.

November 2007

Executive summary

This project was carried out as Phase 2 of HICEEC's on-going Tourism Program. This program, based upon the Community Vision for Tourism, is being carried out in three phases:

Phase 1: Research and Community Discussion – 2006

Phase 2: Consultation, Planning and Promotion – 2007

Phase 3: Implementation – 2008-09

Phase 1 included a visitor survey, a community questionnaire, a tourism study conducted by the Recreation and Tourism Research Institute, community discussion meetings and the drafting of an outline tourism strategy based on developing off season visiting, mitigating the impacts of summer tourism, enhancing the summer visitor experience and resulting benefits and providing more information to visitors.

Phase 2 was focused upon developing off-season visiting and was made possible through funding from British Columbia's Community Tourism Program, managed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and administered regionally by the Comox-Strathcona Regional District.

(Originally, this project was to be conducted in partnership with the Denman Island Community Economic Enhancement Committee, but DICEEC was unable to conduct its planned activities.)

Tourism on Hornby Island has been characterized by an intense two-month period of visiting based upon the beaches and summer activities and very little visiting during the rest of the year. The purpose of this project has been to position the Island as a destination for off-season visiting, with a particular focus upon recreation and creativity.

This has involved discussions with the community to ensure the approach taken is broadly supported. It has entailed discussions with businesses and service providers to ascertain what they have to offer and to facilitate their involvement in collaborative efforts (a new approach for many of these entities that have tended to operate independently).

Promotional activities focused upon direct contact with summer visitors, the establishment of an extensive electronic mailing list and the upgrading of the website. Advertising has utilized regional marketing channels to portray Hornby Island as an attractive spring destination.

A successful pilot learning event was carried out to determine Hornby's capacity as a host for conferences and workshops. This event brought an infusion of about \$20,000 into the community. If only one third of people signed up for the electronic newsletter return to Hornby and each spend only \$200, then this project will have generated \$60,000 in new business. In addition, HICEEC is daily receiving enquiries from potential visitors as a result of advertising.

The costs of the project were as follows:

Consultation, planning and development	\$ 744.11	<i>[Budget: \$900]</i>
Promotion	\$2599.66	<i>[Budget: \$2,500]</i>

Advertising	\$1913.74	<i>[Budget: \$2,000]</i>
Administration, preparation of report	\$ 64	
TOTAL:	\$5,321.51	<i>[Budget: \$5,400]</i>

Guiding Documents
For the Hornby Island Community Tourism Project

OUR COMMUNITY VISION FOR TOURISM (2003)

“In 2020 tourism is only one part of Hornby Island’s diverse and thriving economy. Tourism is now actively planned and managed by the community for the benefit of residents, visitors and the island itself. We foster low-impact, “intentional” tourism and have a manageable, comfortable number of visitors each year.

We prefer the concept of a "visitor" rather than a "tourist". A visitor is someone who comes to the island in the same manner in which they would visit a friend - respectfully and lovingly - and we welcome them accordingly. We have found ways to inform visitors and summer residents about the lifestyles, values and ecology of the island so that tourism is a positive experience for both year round residents and visitors.

The ideal visitor would:

- come here because they appreciate and share our interests and values
- walk, bike or use public transportation
- purchase local goods, food and services
- walk lightly on the land (including water use and disposal)
- contribute time and energy for the benefit of the community and participate in the community

We have incorporated some of the ideas from the "Slow Cities” movement such as preserving and celebrating our traditions and lifestyles and then encouraging our visitors to participate in them. We work at what we love and people come to learn about what we have to offer. Visitor accommodation is accessible for people of all income levels. The community feels energized and stimulated by visitors to the island and welcomes the excitement and fun provided by interaction with new people and new ideas. Visitors leave the Island feeling revitalized in body, mind and spirit.”

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN OBJECTIVES FOR TOURISM (2004)

- To allow, through appropriate zoning, for a variety of types of small-scale visitor accommodation operations that meet health, safety and environmental objectives,
- to allow forms of accommodation which have the least impact on the quiet rural character of the Island,
- to ensure all accommodations can be adequately serviced,
- to allow for recreational opportunities to the citizens of the Province without stressing the existing natural and social systems and services,
- to encourage a kind of tourism which is compatible with preserving and protecting the environmental and social qualities of Island life for present and future generations and to discourage large scale tourist accommodation,
- to emphasize activities which involve quiet, low impact use of existing natural features

- and amenities rather than man-made ones, and
to prevent undue cost to the local taxpayers in providing basic facilities for visitors.

Community Tourism Program – Phase 1 (2006)

RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Preparation

- Research partnership

In April 2006, HICEEC established a research partnership with the Recreation and Tourism Research Institute (RTRI) at Malaspina University College to look at existing tourism on Hornby Island and to identify challenges and opportunities

- Initial Community Meeting

In May 2006, Dr Nicole Vaugeois of RTRI facilitated a community discussion meeting to identify community issues with respect to tourism.

- Agency consultation

Over the spring consultations took place with the Denman Island Economic Enhancement Corporation (DICEEC), Comox Valley Tourism and Tourism Vancouver Island.

Research

- Visitor Exit Survey

In July and August 2006, with support from Service Canada, HICEEC undertook a survey of visitors leaving Hornby using a survey tool developed with the help of RTRI.

- Case study

Over the summer, RTRI undertook a case study of tourism on Hornby Island.

- Community questionnaire

In September a community questionnaire was conducted to elicit information on the benefits and impacts of tourism.

Results

- Publication

In September, the RTRI case study was published in *Informed Leisure as Gem of the Gulf: Community Tourism Development on Hornby Island*.

- Discussion of Results

On October 22, preliminary research results were presented and discussed at a community meeting.

- Draft action plan

On December 11, *Towards a Tourism Action Plan*, a document prepared by HICEEC based upon the research and discussions, was presented and discussed at a community meeting.

- Preparation for Stage 2

HICEEC submitted an application for funding through the Province of British Columbia's Community Tourism Program to proceed with the next stage of consultation and implementation.

Hornby Island Visitors' Survey 2006 – Summary

Highlights:

- Hornby attracts regional visitors – Vancouver Island (45%), elsewhere in BC (40%)
- Visitors are generally high income – 35% over \$100,000; 69% over \$60,000
- They decide to come because of previous experience (50%) or word of mouth (38%)
- The main attractions are the beaches (77%) and the scenic beauty (74%)
- For most (87%) Hornby is their main destination. 55% are repeat visitors.
- They generally stay for 2-7 nights – 43% four to seven nights; 29% two to three nights
- The majority stay in campgrounds (37%), rented houses (27%) or with friends (21%)
- Most visitors participate in outdoor activities
- Over three quarters visit Tribune Bay, the beaches and local shops
- Over half visit Helliwell Park and the Farmers' Market
- About a third take in galleries, studios, wineries, events/concerts
- Visitors are spending less money than is usual at other destinations
- Two-thirds buy local food/wine; a third buy crafts or clothing; a quarter buy fine arts
- Visitors overall are extremely satisfied (74%) with their Hornby experience
- 91% say they are inclined to come again.
- 33% would consider coming in the off-season

How visitors describe Hornby:

Peaceful Relaxing
Beautiful Paradise
(Also: Awesome, Idyllic, Serene, Magical, and Fantastic)

The highlights of their visits:

Beaches and provincial parks Outdoor activities
Experiencing nature and beauty Social interactions
(Also: community activities and particular locations)

Biggest difficulties encountered:

Ferries Accommodations
Water Noise
(Also: food services, Co-op closing time, outhouses, and lack of information)

Suggestions for what needs improving:

Accommodations/food Don't change anything
Ferry service Information
(Also: less noise, longer opening hours, more bike paths, and better water)

Suggestions for what would encourage off season visits:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| Cheaper (and better) accommodation | Festivals and events |
| Existing values/activities | Workshops and retreats |
| (Also: open stores/services, better food, activities/entertainment, cheaper ferries) | |

Survey of Hornby Residents about Summer Tourism, 2006 - Summary

Experience of summer tourism

- 46% had a negative experience; 43% had a positive experience.
- 68% of people receiving tourism income experienced tourism as positive.
- Only 14% of people with tourism-related jobs experienced tourism as positive.
- Only 23% of people with no income from tourism experienced it as positive.
- Younger people found it a more negative experience than older people.
- Two thirds experienced tourism as neither very positive nor very negative

Perception of Island carrying capacity

- 83% perceive that the Island has reached or exceeded summer carrying capacity.

Personal benefits from tourism

- 47% reported receiving income from summer tourism.
- 34% reported enjoying social and cultural activities associated with tourism.
- 27% experienced no personal benefits.

Negative impacts from tourism

- 93% reported experiencing negative impacts from tourism.
- Over half reported impacts with ferry waits, noise, traffic and litter.

Issues for the Island

- 77% identify water as an issue resulting from summer tourism.
- 64% identify stress upon the community as an issue.
- Over half identify policing, stress on infrastructure and waste.

Suggestions to improve summer tourism for visitors and/or residents

1. Use controls, regulations and enforcement (e.g. for vacation rentals, raves)
2. Attract the visitors we want and educate them.
3. Limit the number of visitors.
4. Improve what we offer visitors (e.g. better services, better attitude)
5. Make improvements for residents (e.g. access to ferry service)

Developing off-season tourism

- 44% support efforts to develop the off-season.
- 28% are neutral and 28% do not support off-season tourism

Community Tourism Program – Phase 2 (2007)

CONSULTATION, PLANNING AND PROMOTION

(FOCUSING UPON OFF-SEASON VISITING)

Focus

The draft strategy, based upon the research and discussions carried out in 2006, identified four potential areas of activity:

1. Developing off season visiting
2. Mitigating the impacts of summer tourism
3. Enhancing the summer visitor experience and resulting benefits.
4. Providing more information to visitors

HICEEC decided that Phase 2 would focus upon developing off-season visiting (while finalizing the overall tourism strategy). This would be carried out through:

- Consultation

Consultation would be carried out with businesses and other service providers on how to develop off-season visitation, public input would be encouraged and discussions would take place with potential off-island partners.

- Marketing

Marketing of off-season visiting would take place directly with summer visitors, through developing the capacity of the Realthornby marketing agency to promote off-season visitation and through the use of regional tourism marketing channels.

- A pilot event

An off-season learning event would be piloted to assess the potential for this kind of event to effectively bring business to Hornby Island

[Report on pilot event

In April of 2006, HICEEC organized a regional conference on housing drawing 110 participants from 30 communities. Most commercial accommodation providers were utilized as well as four food providers. Hornby businesses and activities were advertised at the conference. Some participants extended their stay on the Island. A questionnaire was provided to participants to elicit information about their spending on Hornby. It was estimated that this event brought \$20,000 into the community. (This event was not part of the project work funded through the Community Tourism Program.)]

Report on consultation activities

- Consultations with the public

On 6 June 2007, Dr Nicole Vaugeois of RTRI made a public presentation and conducted a discussion on the Hornby Island case study. HICEEC wrote articles for the June and July editions of *The First Edition* (Hornby Island's monthly community journal) to provide information on tourism planning and to solicit input.

- Consultation with the business community

On 1 May 2007, a tourism planning meeting was held for businesses to provide input on how this project would proceed. Over the spring and summer, one-on-one consultations were held with the following:

Fords Cove Marina	Hornby Island Outdoor Sports
Sea Breeze Lodge	Hornby Island Kayak
Hornby Island Resort	Old Rose Nursery
Tribune Bay Campground	Coast Realty / Tourism Information
Bradsdadsland	Island Gallery
Outer Island R&R	Hornby Island Arts Council
Jan's Café	Hornby Island Athletic Association
Pizza Galore	Hornby Island Theatre
Hornby Island Co-op	Hornby Festival Society
Lix	Groundwater Institute
Fibres	Farmers Market
Celestial Sphere	Carbrea Winery
Hornby Island Diving	Middle Mountain Meadery

In October 2007, a letter was sent to 48 businesses and organizations to outline a proposal for promoting spring visiting, to solicit information and comments and to provide an invitation to a planning meeting. On October 21, 2007 a planning meeting for spring tourism was conducted.

- Consultations with other entities

DICEEC – HICEEC had originally planned to work on this project with its equivalent organization on Denman Island. However, DICEEC decided to change its approach. Its proposed activities were not completed within the project timeframe.

Comox Valley Tourism – HICEEC consulted with Comox Valley Tourism on how best to present Hornby Island within the context of overall marketing.

Tourism Vancouver Island – HICEEC consulted with Tourism Vancouver Island on regional marketing options and, in particular, explored the possibility of an off-season cruise ship visit.

BC Ferries – HICEEC met with BC Ferries management to explore the potential of special promotional fares linked to events and activities.

Report on marketing activities

- Promotion to summer visitors

Display boxes were set up at the following locations on the Island:

Fords Cove Store	Island Gallery
Tourist Information	Arbutus Arts
Sea Breeze Lodge	Carbrea Winery
Tribune Bay Campsite	Middle Mountain Meadery
Hornby Island Resort	32 Books

A marketing presence was maintained at the twice weekly Farmers market and at special events (Hornby Festival and Fall Fair) to offer information directly to visitors and to provide a card with information on the website.

- Electronic mailing list and newsletter

The display boxes and the tables at the Farmers' Market etc provided an opportunity for visitors to sign up and subscribe to a quarterly newsletter. (Subscribers were eligible for a raffle of Hornby art work).

Over 1,000 subscribers were entered into the electronic data base and a format was set up for the newsletter. A fall newsletter was prepared and sent to subscribers.

- Website

The *realHornby* website was further developed in order to provide more information to potential visitors and to have an up-to-date listing of events.

- Regional marketing

Comox Valley Tourism

HICEEC became a partner of Comox Valley Tourism, establishing a link from the CVT web site to realHornby which is a source of regular enquiries regarding off-season visiting. HICEEC also took advertising space in the 2008 Visitors' Guide.

Tourism Vancouver Island

HICEEC provided a reconfiguration of Hornby Island's profile for Tourism Vancouver Island's marketing material. HICEEC also subscribed to the web site establishing a link to the realHornby website.

BC Ferries

HICEEC established some parameters with BC Ferries with respect to joint marketing.

Report on outcomes and follow-up

- Outcomes

- strong capacity to market off season visiting;
- proven ability to hold successful learning events on Hornby;
- establishment of consensus around appropriate approach to tourism;
- working relationships built with partners;
- potential future activities, events and packages identified
- outline tourism strategy prepared

- Challenges

- high ferry fares discourage visitors;
- some community resistance to increased tourism;
- lack of strong history of collaboration

- Opportunities

- potential visit by Cruise West cruise ship
- recreation packages
- week of arts workshops
- learning events (e.g. water issues, seniors)

- Next steps

- identify and promote services and activities for Spring 2008;
- event planning for Spring 2009;
- work with partners to develop packages

- On-going activities

- regular electronic newsletter;
- up-dating website with events, etc
- exploring potential collaborations with partners;
- utilizing marketing opportunities as they present themselves

Note

This project was focused upon developing the capacity to cater to and promote off-season visiting beginning in spring 2008. It is therefore not possible to measure its actual impact upon tourism. Rather, it is expected that continuing work based upon the foundations of this project will create incremental growth in future off-season visiting. If only one third of people signed up for the electronic newsletter return to Hornby and spend only \$200, then this project will have generated \$60,000 in new business. In addition, HICEEC is daily receiving enquiries from potential visitors as a result of advertising.

Financial Report

Consultation, planning and development

30 hours at \$16 (Exec. Director)	\$ 480
16 hours at \$15 (Marketing Manager)	\$ 240
Other (postage, travel)	\$ 54.11
	<hr/>
<i>[Budget: \$900]</i>	\$ 744.11

Promotion

Presence at Farmers' Market, etc	
44 hours at \$15 (Marketing Manager)	\$ 660
16 hours at \$15 (contract help)	\$ 240
Establishing electronic mailing list	
2 hours at \$15 (Marketing Manager)	\$ 30
Data entry (contract help):	\$ 169
Materials:	\$ 138.66
Website development	
2 Hours at \$16 Exec. Director)	\$ 32
40 Hours at \$15 (Marketing Manager)	\$ 600
Technical assistance (contract help):	\$ 730
<i>[Budget: \$2,500]</i>	<hr/>
	\$2599.66

Advertising

CVT – Partnership fee	\$ 198
CVT - Advertisement design.	\$ 90
CVT – Purchase of advertisement space	\$1428.80
TVA – preparation of text	\$ 32
TVA – preparation of website page	\$ 60
TVA – purchase of website package	\$ 104.94
<i>[Budget: \$2,000]</i>	<hr/>
	\$1913.74

Administration, preparation of report

4 hours at \$16 (Exec. Director)	\$ 64
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<u>Total Expenditures:</u>	<i>[Budget: \$5,400]</i>	<hr/>
		\$5,321.51

APPENDIX: A Tourism Strategy for Hornby Island

1. Develop off-season tourism

The surveys and community discussions indicate that:

- 33% of summer visitors are interested in returning off-season
- For these, main attractions would be outdoor recreation and events
- Obstacles to returning include costs (eg. ferries) and accommodation
- Almost half of summer visitors are from Vancouver I. (86% are from BC)
- Residents are divided about developing the off-season.

Possible actions:

What	Who	How
Extend the summer season	Businesses + organizations? + HICEEC	- Commitment to “stay open” - Events? - June and/or September? - Promote to visitors other than families - Promote values other than beaches
Promote weekends (<i>eg. holiday weekends</i>)	Businesses + organizations + HICEEC	- Businesses “open” certain weekends - Cluster of events (eg. play, art show)
Develop packages	Providers of: -accommodation - meals -services HICEEC	- Themed (recreation., art, food/wine, nature, personal care, etc.) - Or combined - Inclusive price
Offer workshops	Providers of: -workshops -accommodation - food HICEEC	- Determine workshop ideas (series?) - Combine (eg with Denman)? - Identify audience - Establish accommodation, food
Create events	Community group(s) + Businesses + HICEEC	- Community group to lead? - Significant buy-in required - Long-range planning required - Major promotion required - Pilot a learning event? - Pilot an arts event?
Provide information on off- season opportunities	HICEEC +?	- See 4 (below)

2. Mitigate impacts of summer tourism

The surveys and community discussions indicate that:

- 83% of residents perceive that the Island has reached its carrying capacity
- 93% report experiencing negative impacts
- 77% identify water as an issue (as do some visitors)
- 64% see stress on the community as an issue
- Solutions offered include enforcing regulations, limiting numbers and education
- 37% of visitors stay in campgrounds, 3% in B&Bs and 3% in resorts
- 27% stay in rented dwelling units, 21% with friends and families

Possible actions:

What	Who	How
Provide information to visitors on environment, community, conservation, “living lightly” <i>(Also to encourage visits in early July, late August rather than peak period)</i>	HICEEC? + ?	- See 4 (below)
Limit accommodation	LTC	- Regulate number and occupancy levels of short term rentals?
Spread visitation	Festival Society Businesses, other	- Change date of Festival? - Events in early and late summer? - Accommodation deals early/late summer?
Address noise, rowdiness, speeding, litter, etc	CSRD LTC RCMP HIRRA	- Improve noise bylaw? - TUPs for events? - Enforce regulations? - Education/outreach re. raves? - Limit liquor on long weekends? - Contract for litter pick-up?
Improve ferry access options	FAC to BCF	- Lobby for reservation system?

3. Enhance summer visitor experience and resulting benefits

The surveys and community discussions indicate that:

- Residents perceive that Island carrying capacity has been reached
- Hornby's tourists are more affluent but spending less than elsewhere.
- Visitors are not eating out as much as might be expected.
- Majority do not buy crafts, art, books, CDs, recreational or personal services.
- Problems with cash availability and utilization of credit cards.
- Visitors have identified difficulties with facilities, noise, services and ferries
- Hornby's visitors value the peace and beauty of the Island
- Most enjoy nature and outdoor activities.
- Most are repeat visitors; nine out of ten plan to return.

Possible actions:

What	Who	How
Provide more information to visitors on services and businesses	HICEEC? + ?	- See 4 (below)
Broaden food services	Businesses	- Prepared meals? - Catering? - More/improved eating-out options?
Improve accommodation	Businesses	- Better quality camping? - Standards for rentals? (association?)
Increase access to stores and cash	Co-op? / stores? Credit Union? HICEEC?	- Later opening hours? - Ensure ATM availability - Credit card option at Farmers Market
Build on interest in outdoor activities and nature	Businesses Organizations Individuals (HICEEC?)	- Guided tours? - Guide books? - Evening presentations? - Outdoor recreation packages?
Protect peace and beauty of island	CSRD LTC All	- Improve noise bylaw? - Protect island character
Improve ferry access options	FAC to BCF	- Lobby for reservation system?

4. Provide more information to visitors

To help implement 1, 2 and 3:

- Inform about businesses and services
- Educate about the environment and the community
- Encourage conservation and treading lightly
- Support visitation at non-peak times
- Promote off-season packages, weekends, workshops and events

Possible actions:

What	Who	How
Use electronic media	HICEEC (realhornby)	- Using realhornby website (links to other websites) - Using electronic newsletter (increase email list)
Provide on-island info.	HICEEC + businesses + realtors? + other?	- Visitors' Guide? - Pamphlet(s)? - Good quality map? - Hornby "visa" - Vouchers? Treasure hunt? - Visitor information kiosk? - Greeters at ferry (summer students)? - Central information board? - Standardized directional signage? - Other
Participate in regional marketing	HICEEC + businesses	- Partnership in CTV - Special ad in CV Visitor Guide? - Page on TVI web-site? - Links with other communities?
Focus promotion to particular target groups	HICEEC + businesses	- Arts/culture - Outdoor recreation/nature - Personal growth - Demographic groups

Report prepared by Tony Law – 29 November 2007

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