

# IMAGINE BC

*Dialogues on the Future of British Columbia*  
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



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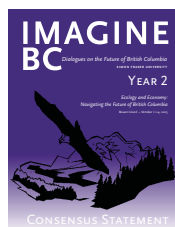
## HABITAT, LIVELIHOODS AND HEALTH: FIVE YEARS OF BIG IDEAS FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

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## I INTRODUCTION

“Imagination defies the constraints of expectation and the everyday. It is the means by which we discover who we are and what we might become.”

MAX WYMAN, PRESIDENT  
CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

Imagine BC (IBC) has had an incredible five-year journey – from annual thought leaders’ dialogues on Bowen Island, to regular policy gatherings at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, to public radio dialogues hosted by CBC’s BC Almanac, to regional and community dialogues all over the province – Prince Rupert, Prince George, the Cowichan Valley, Victoria, Abbotsford, Sea to Sky Corridor, the North Shore, and Smithers. Hundreds of citizens have attended our public dialogues to deepen their understanding of what BC is and what it could be if we were all change makers.

Through these gatherings we have learned anew that climate change, population upsurge, and global economic development threaten ecosystems all over the world, resulting in loss of diversity and compromised habitat for all species, including humans. BC is not immune to such global shocks. We cannot take our ecological and human capital for granted.

But we can seize the opportunity to be a world leader in how we address the trials before us. We can begin with an ongoing, frank, and informed dialogue characterized by broad regional and inter-sectoral engagement, and shared decision making and strategy building. These conversations must focus on what matters to people locally, while also embracing broader BC and global perspectives.

Over the past five years, Simon Fraser University’s Dialogue Programs has served as convener of these conversations, providing a neutral space where curious, committed, and caring people from diverse sectors – business, arts, First Nations, government, environment, nonprofit, seniors, education, labour, health services, and others – co-create an inclusive, productive, and collaborative narrative for BC. Where old assumptions and agendas yield to new understandings about the trends shaping the future of our province. Where the fire of traditional ideological differences forges fresh ideas, possibilities, and solutions for the acute challenges we face, locally and globally.

One way to create a common vision and to translate that vision into a plan for action is to focus on issues fundamental to creating a resilient future – human and natural habitats, health, and livelihoods. In addition to identifying these three themes, it was evident in IBC’s many dialogues that a truly resilient society calls for creativity and innovation in both the public and private sectors.

Innovation requires a highly educated workforce, an engaged citizenry, spirited and financially independent entrepreneurs (particularly in energy technology), an enabling policy environment for innovation, and a local, national, and global market for innovative ideas. Neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach alone will work. We also need opportunities for creative and trained people “in the middle” to meet in focused and productive ways to generate innovative ideas together.

Imagine BC is an experiment in innovation. Its foundation is dialogue, a form of open-source democratic architecture that is inclusive and nonpartisan. IBC’s five years of programming have been an education in what is needed to create an effective forum for experts and interested members of the public to dialogue about issues of shared concern. Unexpected relationships between individuals and organizations have coalesced over common goals. New tributaries of knowledge have emerged. All of this has the potential to inform public discourse and public policy and to create positive social change. It has also given rise to questions on the following pages that will require sustained exploration by all sectors of our society, by experts and ordinary citizens alike. These persistent questions about health, habitat and livelihoods and related issues should be at the forefront of our continued deliberations.

Please take a serious look at these questions and the ideas captured in this report. They are the springboard for positive action and change.

DR. JOANNA ASHWORTH  
DIRECTOR, IMAGINE BC  
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
AUGUST 2009

“Let us honour the three generations – past, present, and future...Let us pay homage to our ancestors. Because of them we are all here today.”

AUDREY RIVERS  
ELDER, SQUAMISH FIRST NATION

“We need imagination in innovation. Too rarely do we look at the connection between imagination and problem-solving.”

DAVID HELLIWELL  
CEO, SMALL ENERGY GROUP

“I’m interested in what happens when you suspend perspectives. Surprising synergies can happen when dialogue is present.”

TONY PENIKETT  
AUTHOR, RECONCILIATION: FIRST NATIONS TREATY MAKING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Rudy North of the North Growth Foundation sparked the Imagine BC dialogues with the question, “Why are we not thinking long-term in BC?” and has been a sustaining sponsor since its inception, as has the Province of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. Other sponsors include CBC Radio, Western Economic Diversification, the Government of Canada, and the Vancouver Foundation. The Vancouver Sun also deserves a bow for its ongoing interest and coverage, thus allowing for the wider public to be part of the conversation.

## II PERSISTENT QUESTIONS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS

The following questions are based on advice and recommendations from the IBC Advisory Committee; from key members of BC organizations such as the Vancouver Native Health Society, Smart Growth BC, BC Healthy Communities, Vancity Credit Union, BC Real Estate Foundation, the Fraser Basin Council; and from IBC delegates and advisors.

### Health Questions:

How do we define “sustainable health care” for different ages and backgrounds?

How can we move from “disease care” to a system that truly promotes health?

How do we, as a society, come to grips with dying?

### Habitat Questions:

Are there complementary roles for the urban and rural portions of BC in a resilient future for the province?

Are there inevitable trade-offs that need to be made between individual and collective rights?

How can we leverage BC’s inherent diversity to create a resilient future?

### Livelihood Questions:

How can we leverage existing capital (human, social, ecological, economic, etc.) to achieve resilience goals?

How can wealth be redistributed to ensure that highly trained knowledge workers remain in BC?

How can decision makers and citizens engage with each other to examine and understand the relationship between ecology and economy?

How can we narrow/eliminate the gap between the rich and poor in BC?

How can we build economic literacy at the community level?

How can community learning sites (workplaces, community centers, etc.) generate and nurture active, engaged, and adaptive learners within BC’s communities?

How can BC direct its own future in the face of population pressure, urbanization and the pervasiveness of the global market system?

“DIALOGUE IS NOT ABOUT REAFFIRMING WHAT WE KNOW, OR CONFIRMING WHAT WE AGREE WITH. IT’S ABOUT PARKING OUR AFFILIATIONS...WHAT WE NEED ARE LEADERS WILLING TO ASK DIFFICULT QUESTIONS AND NOT PRETEND THAT THEY CAN FIND THE ANSWERS ALONE.”

Dr. Joanna Ashworth  
Simon Fraser University

## Overarching Questions:

How might we shift from reactive problem solving with one-off disciplinary frameworks to a culture of creative experimentation and social innovation? How can we foster front-loading ingenuity that increases our resilience?

How can we support efforts to engage youth in public decision-making?

How can we create a model of education that integrates all fields of knowledge and that recognizes that complex problems require non-linear responses?

How can education link the celebration of diversity and the celebration of values that enhance resilience?

How can we heal/reconcile the relationship between First Nations and settlers/new immigrants?

How would we justify our vision for the future of BC to the residents of China, India and Africa?

How can we redefine prosperity in non-monetary terms in order to reduce our human ecological and social footprint?

How can we change our mindset from scarcity to abundance?

What will government look like in a resilient BC?

Where do our resources come from? Where do they go?

What new forms of language and communication can we employ to create accessible conversations about the need for change?

What values do we need to guide our decision making today and in the future?

How can collaboration and adaptive management help us make better decisions at various scales?

Would it be beneficial to form a provincial “expert-citizen” assembly on genuine, systemic, integrated and participatory sustainability? What would such an organization look like?

What does it mean to be a citizen of the community, province and/or world?

What are the core skills, abilities and values of resilient citizenship, and what would be required to teach and learn them?

Who is being left behind by the education and informal learning systems, and what can be done to correct this?

### III FIVE YEARS OF IMAGINING BC

“IT’S ABOUT SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS, SHARING RESOURCES, COMING TOGETHER, HARMONIZING, BRINGING NEW LEADERS TO THE PLAYING FIELD.”

Lyle Leo  
Lil’wat Nation

What follows here is a synthesis of key learnings from IBC dialogues over the past five years, arising from the following shared imperatives:

- Creating new stories of and for ourselves
- Reconnecting with our inherent diversity
- Learning and teaching new models and tools
- Catalyzing the transition from vision to action

Settlers and First Nations alike espouse strong values of stewardship of our natural habitats. But despite our declared values, we have witnessed dramatic deterioration of ecological and social resilience in BC. Dialogue presents an opportunity to reaffirm our highest values and to craft new stories to shape a future that sustains and nourishes us all. The IBC dialogue process should be broadened in scope to further develop its capacity to create new stories of an inclusive, healthy, and resilient BC.

#### Creating New Stories

*“We lose our soul when we can’t tell our story.”*

-Eritrean tribal belief, quoted by Dr. Frances Westley

Communities learn from stories, which express the underlying values by which they live. The collective story or mythology of a people is the primary means of communication across a society and, as such, plays an integral role in that society’s capacity to realize its own destiny. Through its many dialogues convened around the province, IBC has sought to articulate and to honour the traditions and values of First Nations whose ancestors who have been here for thousands of years, as well as those of settlers, newcomers, and decision makers. IBC has also sought to express the complex and paradoxical storyline that arises in the conjunction of these diverse viewpoints.

To assist in generating a new collective story, consider the iconic BC salmon. We resonate strongly with the plight of the mighty salmon in its fierce determination to survive and in its importance in our province’s ecosystems and economies. The salmon are an inspiration and teacher, exhibiting tremendous ingenuity, tenacity, and resilience as they work their way over, around, and through obstacles to reach their spawning grounds. To care about the salmon is to care about the sustainable future of all ecosystems, species, and people in BC.

To care about BC requires making imaginative and bold choices today regarding our livelihoods and consumption patterns. We must bring new visioning and problem solving strategies to complex challenges in a way we have yet to do in our province. Seeing the world as a giant web rather than as a series of disconnected lines can help shift our individual and cultural percep-

tion towards this end. As we learn to see our inherent interconnectedness with all of life, we become less fragile and more resilient.

## Re-Connecting with Diversity and Engaging All British Columbians

*“There are people who have not gone to university who can’t talk easily about what is happening to them... These are the people we have something to learn from. We can’t afford to leave them behind. They matter. You don’t build on people who aren’t part of the discussion.”*

-IBC Delegate

Homogenization tends to make ecological and social systems less resilient, whereas diverse systems tend to be highly resilient. Throughout the IBC process, ecological and cultural diversity have consistently been cited as BC’s greatest asset. However, through historical appropriation of land, resources, and culture from BC’s First Nations, much of this diversity has been lost. Moreover, in the growth of urban sprawl and “big box” development, people of all backgrounds have become increasingly disconnected from their communities and from each other.

We need to make a conscious effort to reconnect people with their hearts and minds, and with their human and bioregional communities. IBC plays a leading role in this regard by creating and holding a space in which people of all walks can gather and foster deeper connections with place and with their fellow citizens.

The three areas of human diversity highlighted by IBC include culture, age, and regionalism. There remains in BC a healthy pluralism of cultures, and this diversity needs to be encouraged in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance. We need to overcome our lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture and values and to foster genuine connection among BC’s First Nations and all other cultural groups. Youth of all cultures are a powerful resource, and their creativity and innovation

must be engaged more actively to help solve our challenges. Similarly, seniors have considerable experience and resources to offer and must be part of solving the problems they have seen arising during their lifetime. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the relationship between the urban core of the Lower Mainland and the rural parts of the province and how each can contribute to BC’s new stories.

## Learning and Teaching New Worldviews and Tools

*“In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who will inherit the future while the knowers will find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”*

-Eric Hoffer, Author, *The True Believer*

The education system is a microcosm of what is occurring in the economic system and in many of its subsystems. Although BC boasts one of the top-rated education systems in the world, many experts say that our approach to educating our citizens of the future and to measuring the success of our efforts isolates students at risk, resulting in a fragmented, highly vulnerable social fabric. Championing an efficiency model over an effectiveness model in the way we organize our governance structures and deliver services such as education and health care has institutionalized an assessment approach based primarily on costs as opposed to effectiveness or contribution to the overall resilience of the system. The resulting social fragility is exacerbated by our practice of measuring how the system has performed in the past rather than how it serves us currently or will serve us in the future.

Many IBC delegates and participants are working to change our education system, beginning with new worldviews or paradigms. Understanding the need to transcend “silo” or disciplinary thinking, most use systems thinking rather than linear thinking models. Most recognize that successfully integrating and honouring all learners means engaging their hearts, hands, and minds; encouraging their curiosity; and validating

“Your community is as wide as your awareness is and  
your willingness to take responsibility.”

DELEGATE

their life experiences, stories, and dreams. Such educators demand that schools be active training grounds for citizenship, understanding that a sustainable education system needs to produce compassionate, caring, fully engaged people who are responsible for their own lives, as opposed to compliant workers and consumers.

Beyond shifting paradigms, what tools can we use to help average people “connect the dots” and realize that social, economic and ecological variables are not disconnected? How can we support a holistic worldview in order to create a coherent and common vision for a healthy and resilient BC?

We need to champion prevention in health care so that we can learn to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent disease in the first place, avoiding the unnecessary expenditure of billions of dollars to treat the symptoms of preventable diseases.

*“Health is so much more than what can be seen under the microscope. It’s not just about healing a wound. It’s about healing a spirit, a culture, a province, and a world.”*

Dr. Nadine Caron  
Ojibway Nation

We also desperately need to build full life cycle assessment and accounting mechanisms into our governance structures and into all sectors of the economy. Such mechanisms will illuminate the folly of relying on short-term decision-making and of externalizing the social and ecological costs of our destructive practices. Specific integrative tools, such as Ecological Footprint

Analysis and The Natural Step can assist in this regard. Furthermore, specific sustainability-focused governance models such as the landmark agreement surrounding the Great Bear Rainforest need to be studied and replicated at every possible opportunity.

## Catalyzing the Transition: From Talk to Action

*“It’s nice to talk about the big ideas but it doesn’t really mean anything unless you do something.”*

-IBC Delegate

A central tenet of IBC thinking is that, in dialogue, the process equals the product. Dialogue allows participants to realize that the intellect is inseparable from the personal and to understand that thought is inseparable from action. Treating talking and acting as separate creates a false dichotomy. Thinking and talking about the future is only useful if it affects how we live today. Because IBC has proved its value, there is a strong appetite to move the process into broader decision making circles, including deputy ministers, cabinet ministers, CEO’s, Chairs of Boards, and senior staff.

That being said, just as we are all learners, we are all decision makers. We all influence others’ decisions in our conversations and in countless other ways we may not realize. Consequently, the broadening out of IBC must be as inclusive and all-encompassing as possible. In addition to serving as written records of IBC events, IBC consensus and regional reports should continue to be distributed as “conversation starters” in the wider community where they may serve to stim-

“WE NEED TO BUILD A KIND OF INNER RESILIENCE IN  
WHICH IT’S OK NOT TO KNOW WHAT’S HAPPENING NEXT.”

Nadia Chaney  
Artist and Youth Engagement Leader  
IBC Delegate

“WE REPRESENT VERY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. THE  
OUTCOME IS BETTER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL PIECES.”

IBC Delegate

## IV RESILIENT HABITAT, HEALTH AND LIVELIHOOD FUTURES

ulate discussion and debate, which can then inform or ultimately take shape as policy.

Maintaining and enhancing communities' adaptive capacity and resilience in the face of ecological and socio-economic changes is at the heart of the current human challenge, both globally and locally. To be able to respond to the unpredictable without experiencing total collapse of our ecological and/or social systems, means we need plans for a variety of scenarios, in addition to financial and human resources, and healthy measures of genuinity and flexibility.

Concentrating on topic areas independently of overarching issues is insufficient to catalyze change and to foster resilience and sustainability. To coalesce conversations across sectors and cultural boundaries, IBC has highlighted habitat, health, and livelihood as essential elements of life in BC. With these themes as the focus, we can more readily grasp the impact of such global trends as climate change, energy descent, and population growth.

No place or people will remain unaffected by climate change. For proof, we need look no further than the beetle-infested forests of BC's Interior. Integrating climate change adaptation into decision-making is essential to enhancing resilience and reducing the long-term costs and impacts of climate change on our ecological and human habitats, health, and livelihoods. Adapting building and infrastructure design, implementing water and energy conservation strategies to reduce demand, and reducing reliance on climate-sensitive livelihood sectors through economic diversification are examples of actions that will enhance the resilience of communities and economies, both in the short and long-term.

Volatile oil prices and the inevitable peak in global oil production are having noticeable effects on the ability of communities and regions to provide essential goods and services for their citizens. Smaller diversified economies within a bioregional context are a likely outcome of this trend. How a "local-regional economy" is modeled and replicated will become an increasingly important area for deliberation and experimentation. Forward thinking communities who take advantage of their adaptive capacity will tend to be much more resilient to impending economic shocks brought on by

energy descent and climate change. This process can occur while gaining simultaneous benefits, such as living and working more locally, spending more time in community, and reducing fossil fuel dependency (and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) by shortening the length and energy intensity of supply chains.

At IBC's culminating Leaders' Summit on February 23, 2009, Dr. Rob Butler of *The Pacific Wildlife Foundation* noted the continuing rate of human population growth and its relationship to environmental degradation, declining health standards, famine, poverty, and other ills. On the plus side, Dr. Butler pointed to two worldwide occurrences: a faster drop in the human growth rate than had been predicted and mass movement of people to cities. He noted that while cities can be a source of innovation, such migration also distances us from the natural world. Maintaining our connection with nature as we become more urban is a challenge we need to meet.

Stressing the positive impact of human intervention and the infancy of our understanding of the natural world, Dr. Butler told the story of Yellowstone National Park where the introduction of several wolves unexpectedly changed the movements of elk and deer, thereby allowing the revival of trees such as willow, aspen, and cottonwood trees along the river banks. In turn, beavers returned to the area, along with several species of insects and birds. The park's biodiversity has been reclaimed.

Dr. Butler also underlined that while BC encompasses only 1 percent of the North American economy, it can nonetheless be a model for the rest of the world. British Columbians can't compete with India and China in creating inexpensive consumer goods, but we can be great innovators. Pointing to historic innovations such as the City of Vancouver's 405-hectare (1000-acre) Stanley Park, established 100 years ago, as well as BC government's 4.7 million-hectare (11.6 million-acre) Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), which protects lands with potential for food production, Dr. Butler asserted that BC can take a leadership position in addressing climate change, finding ways to produce food within our ecosystem, and designing "a natural economy in a nature state, as opposed to a capitalist economy in a capital state."

How do we have a restorative footprint and still create sustainable livelihoods? As a society we've become addicted to growth as a way of fulfilling our desires. Does it make sense for a person to drive to downtown Vancouver from the suburbs, only to spend an entire day in front of a computer? Delegates at the Leaders' Summit asserted that, in the global ecological and economic shift that we're in the midst of, "the new normal will not be the old normal." We will have to live our lives differently and redefine wealth as something other than the accumulation of goods.

A key component of "the new normal" is social inclusion. The Great Bear Rainforest, which brought together First Nations people, unions, loggers, forest companies, mining companies, governments and environmentalists to preserve this environmentally and economically rich region, is a powerful example of social inclusion's essential role in engendering habitat, health and livelihood futures. Other examples of social inclusion include moving from a curing paradigm to an inclusion/asset paradigm to support people with mental illness; using the experience and talents of BC's new immigrants to support initiatives of an international nature; and recognizing children's' rights and responsibilities of citizens as soon as they enter school; and emphasizing public engagement, as opposed to government, as the initiating force for social change.

“RESILIENCE IS NOT ABOUT PROMOTING GROWTH OR CHANGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE. IT IS ABOUT PROMOTING THE ABILITY TO ABSORB SHOCKS AND STRESSES AND STILL MAINTAIN THE FUNCTIONING OF SOCIETY AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS. HOWEVER, RESILIENCE ALSO REQUIRES COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO SELF-ORGANIZE AND TO MANAGE RESOURCES AND MAKE DECISIONS IN A MANNER THAT PROMOTES STABILITY. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, RESILIENCE REQUIRES SOCIETIES TO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ADAPT TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES AND RISKS. THESE OBJECTIVES GIVE GENERIC GUIDANCE ON HOW TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AT DIFFERENT SCALES.”

Dr. Neil Adger  
Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research  
University of East Anglia

## V MOVING FROM A WORLD OF RISK TO A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY

Imagine standing in an enormous parking lot with ten Mac trucks bearing down on us, each representing a different shock such as population growth, environment damage, energy scarcity, climate change or economic inequality.

Dr. Thomas Homer Dixon sees this looming apocalypse as “a crisis that can create an opportunity to plan now what we’re going to do then.” In his recent work, *The Upside of Down*, he claims that in order to thrive, we need to make a profound paradigm shift in social learning. We need to move from a growth imperative to a resilience imperative, where economic development becomes secondary to the primary principle of social and ecological resilience. This means increasing our resilience, or our capacity “to withstand shock without catastrophic failure.”

Fundamental to increasing our resilience is developing a “prospective mind” – “a mind that is never surprised by surprise,” “a mind with the capacity to respond nimbly to possibilities and to exploit these possibilities.” A prospective mind seeks to make us more resilient to external shock and increases our ability to respond to rapid change. If and when breakdowns do happen, we will have the psychological and physical capacity to capitalize on opportunities for creating the inclusive, healthy, and resilient communities we desire. In addition to being comfortable with uncertainty, risk and change, people with a prospective mind know that maintaining resilience requires constant creativity and ingenuity, particularly in finding innovative ways of re-organizing human, economic, and natural resources to solve the health, livelihood, and habitat challenges that communities face.

## Thomas Homer-Dixon's 'To Do' List:

1. Recognize the complexity of problems and solutions, and explore multiple solutions as opposed to a "silver bullet."
2. Focus on increasing resilience.
3. De-centralize our response to problems so that we have lots of groups experimenting, problem solving, and teaching each other what works and what doesn't.
4. Develop a prospective mind.
5. Replace our distorted, mechanistic worldview with a perspective of a series of complex systems.
6. Create a steady state economy, or an economy that maintains a roughly constant output of goods and services.

## VI STORIES OF RESILIENCE

A concept as multidimensional as the future that British Columbians are imagining, the theme of resilience has been a connecting thread for the entire IBC series of dialogues, and has been accorded a composite of attributes:

inner strength, overcoming adversity, coping, innovating, imagining, rolling with the punches, having an expanded vision and acting accordingly, letting go of what is no longer necessary but retaining the essence, benefiting from one's experience, being able to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, perseverance and adaptability combined...

Resilience in offering health care often requires going beyond formal job descriptions and joining forces with other community agencies. IBC Leaders' Summit co-chair, Dr. Nadine Caron, spoke of assisting Dorothy (not her real name), a First Nations woman with a lump on her breast, who had no car and had to travel nine hours from her reserve to see a doctor. After persuading overtaxed hospital staff to give Dorothy an ultrasound, mammogram, and biopsy on a single afternoon, Dr. Caron intervened with police and social services to rescue Dorothy from hitchhiking home on the ill-reputed "Highway of Tears" and give her a safe place for the night.

Here are some other examples of British Columbians' resilient solutions to a range of challenges.

*Enrolment was low at the two-room elementary school on Saturna Island, and the spectre of closing it down loomed large. However, the community rallied to make the school the site of the Saturna Ecological Education Centre, which provides Southern Gulf Islands students with elementary eco-adventures and high school environmental studies programs.*

*Wishing to meet their energy needs without using fossil fuels, the T'Souke Nation in Sooke, BC is well on its way to becoming Canada's greenest community with solar panels on public buildings and houses. Besides creating quiet, healthy, and environmentally friendly power production, the project provides residents with valuable training and employment.*

*To encourage young children to eat healthy food, to learn about nutrition, and to understand where their food comes from, the Farm-to-School Salad Bar program in BC's North and Interior brings local farmers and schools together by providing fresh produce to children.*

*“After enduring the pain and suffering of The Holocaust, my grandmother moved to LA with next to nothing and created a stable, secure, and happy life for her family. She instilled values and a work ethic in her sons and laid the foundation for our family in America.”*

*“An American Robin nested in an open bush in May and had its young predated by a crow. It re-nested in June in a denser bush and successfully fledged three young.”*

*“My son, born with special needs, demonstrates his resilience on a daily basis. He is a constant reminder that the human spirit is continually learning and developing.”*

*“My father knew he had just a few months to live. He took me on a long walk and broke the news to me. I was nine. But he left me with three words to guide my life – explore, inspire, share. I’ve never forgotten them.”*

## VII GROWING IDEAS FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE



Over the past five years, IBC delegates have cultivated many “big ideas” that represent some of the central issues that need to be addressed with courage, rigor, imagination, and creativity as we co-create our resilient future. These ideas were explored at the 2009 Leaders’ Summit and were published in The Vancouver Sun over a three week period. The essence of these ideas are outlined below;

### Natural Wellbeing: “Get outside!”

Nature is essential for our wellbeing. Although playing in nature results in happier and more aware children, only 5 percent of BC kids play outdoors on a regular basis. Instead they are spending an average of six hours a day in front of a computer. The Children and Nature Alliance is already engaged in a conversation with NGOs and government about facilitating opportunities for children and families to connect with and appreciate the benefits of nature, and to make positive environmental choices. This is about more than promoting a healthy lifestyle option. Today’s children will determine the future conservation of our natural world.

*“Bring nature close to schools. New schools should include parks or natural areas in their design. The curriculum should be experiential with nature at its core.”*

-Dr. Rob Butler  
Bird Studies Canada

### Energy Conservation and Demand Side Management: “Big Buildings, Small Energy”

Building construction is a significant source of energy outflow, but we can have a construction industry that is fuel-efficient. Currently, there is a lack of regulation over the amount of greenhouse gases being emitted when a structure is being built. Also, while there are codes in place to prevent the collapse of a building, there are no fuel-efficiency building codes in BC. How do we articulate energy efficiency in buildings? How do we monitor it? California has begun to have such codes and may provide a model. The government needs to step up and show courage in leading us toward greener building standards in BC.

*“Energy efficiency will be the largest and most important way to deal with many of the world’s energy crises for decades to come.”*

-David Helliwell  
CEO, Small Energy Group





## Land Tenure and Ecosystem-based Management: “The Individual, the Group, and the Place”

Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) is a way to manage resource development such as logging, fish farming, and others in a way that sustains the lands and waters, honours ancestral land-use wisdom, and respects the relationship between the people and the environment. For example, the small footprint shellfish aquaculture operation in north and central coast First Nations communities has resulted in one community going from 5% to 80% employment. It is an approach that is creating hope and confidence in a joyful future for their children.

*“Our many accomplishments to date could not have taken place within the confines of the two-decade-old treaty process. Working outside the process has allowed us to play a leadership role in bringing together a range of interests on the coast to address the unsustainable policies and practices that have damaged the environment and devastated coastal economies and communities.”*

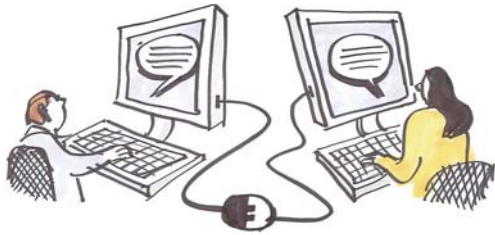
-Art Sterritt, Executive Director  
Coastal First Nation

## Re-imagining Mental Health: “Prevention, Partnership, and Inclusion”

Mental health is a concern that crosses all sectors and all age groups in our society and needs to be addressed within a public health framework. By the time a child is seven there are many attachment processes in place, which means that parenting and early childhood development need to be critical areas of focus. Just as schools are the place for preventative mental health programs for children, the workplace is where adults can receive the support they need to address the multiple stresses that they face. Seniors are another important population. We also need to become more knowledgeable about new immigrants and their mental health needs. Creating inclusive communities as opposed to vertical ghettos of mental illness is essential.

*“We need to take action now on stigma. If mental health were a human rights issue, it would change everything. Right now the burden is on those dealing with mental illness. It should be a community undertaking.”*

-Nancy Hall  
Former Mental Health Advocate for BC



## New Media and Citizen Engagement: “A Vast Network of Social Affiliations”

With more and more people getting their news from The Internet and its many portals, knowledge has become democratized. People have more responsibility for and command over how they consume information. With much information exchange occurring, the question is how to create productive, thoughtful dialogue through new media.

Social media have the potential to catalyze knowledge into action. During the IBC Leaders’ Summit, a delegate from GranvilleOnline.ca, sent out a steady series of Twitter posts so that those not in attendance could benefit from the proceedings and take the ideas into their own communities. These included some questions on the issue of new media: “You can’t stop kids from ‘plugging in’ so how are we going to work with that?” “How do we who have a lot of access to the Internet help ensure there is accountability there too?” “How do we help those who aren’t connected catch up?”

*“Engagement at some point requires collectivity; it feeds on community...It is not something the broadcasting of facts can accomplish on its own.”*

-Candis Callison, PhD candidate, MIT

## The Power of Diversity: “Coming Together, Connecting”

Bringing together different communities should not only occur at festivals or in times of crisis. Diversity involves a constant flow of contact, engagement and learning from and with on another. There is untapped potential in our ethnic communities – valuable perspectives that aren’t being heard by the mainstream. People from different parts of the world bring skills of sustainability and living locally. We need to capitalize on that.

Community building is happening right now with labour and cultural and grassroots organizations sharing skills and resources to work on common interests such as childcare. In Vancouver’s Oppenheimer Park and Powell Street areas, Japanese Canadians, First Nations, and labour are working together on the redevelopment plans. They are acknowledging each other’s history in the area and are working together with the Park Board to plan commemorative features for the park.

*“Imagine an exponential explosion of connections!”*

-Lorene Oikawa, Vice-President  
BC Government and Service Employees’ Union

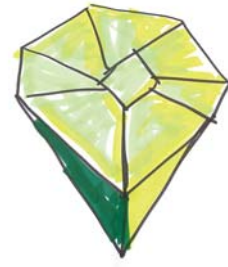


## Foregrounding Food: “A Staple, not a Commodity”

Food is as important as water and air but is not treated with the same urgency. Large-scale food producers experiencing the fallout of climate change (e.g., drought in Australia and fires in California) could seriously impact our food supply. We need to interact with the land directly in order to understand the implications of climate change on our region.

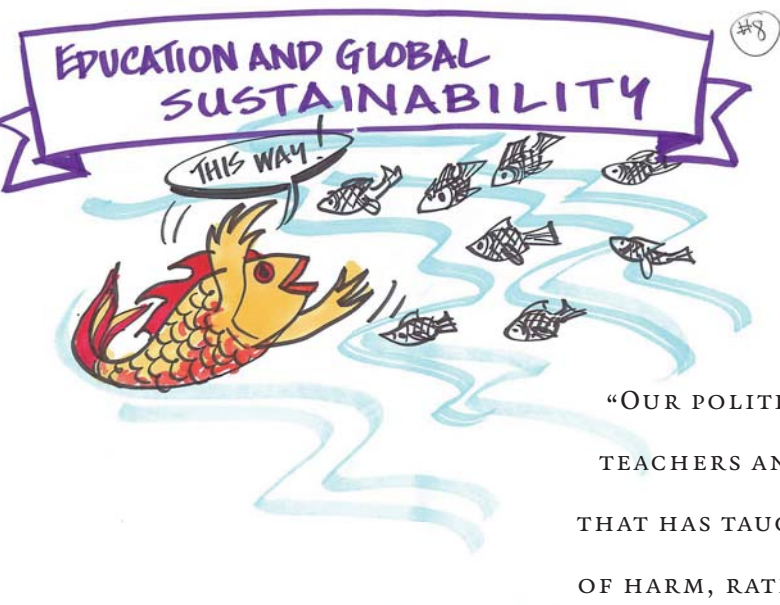
The encroachment of the city onto rural land increases the market value of farmland, which makes it too expensive for farmers. We should look to Switzerland and Germany where permits are issued to farmers, not only making the land affordable but also “weeding out” people who are not serious about farming. The Fraser Valley is a wonderful resource with the climate, soil and water to feed us if we nurture its potential in the right way.

“Grow food everywhere!”  
-Delegate



“AGRICULTURAL URBANISM LAYS OUT A STRATEGY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN AND AROUND OUR TOWNS AND CITIES, INCLUDING SUPPORTING URBAN AGRICULTURE, LOCAL FOOD PROCESSING CAPACITY, FOOD SECURITY, LOCAL FOOD CULTURE AND FESTIVALS AND EDUCATION IN FOOD.”

-Mark Holland and Janine de la Salle  
HB Lanarc



“OUR POLITICIANS, MANAGERS, POLICY MAKERS, DESIGNERS, TEACHERS AND CEO’S ALL COME FROM AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT HAS TAUGHT US HOW TO MANAGE THE FAMILIAR ENGINES OF HARM, RATHER THAN TO SEE HOW OUR DISCIPLINES RELATE TO THE NATURAL WORLD, TO SOCIETY, TO THE CARBON CYCLE, AND TO EACH OTHER.”

-Janet Moore, Simon Fraser University  
Duane Elverum, Emily Carr University of Art and Design

## Education and Global Sustainability: “Schooling Innovation, not the Bottom Line”

Rather than serving economic imperatives, both personal and societal, schools ought to inspire self-betterment and the betterment of our world. How can an education enable students and graduates to pursue the causes they care about? Teaching critical thinking has to take precedence over teaching “stuff,” whether it’s history, biology, or painting.

Building and retrofitting schools to generate their own power, collect rainwater, and grow their own food could help to educate both students and the community. Here are some core questions designed to stimulate change:

1. Why doesn’t every school, university and colleges produce their own food water and energy?
2. What would a school that creates paradigm pioneers look like?
3. If culture is the chief educator, then who are the real teachers?
4. What would the perfect sustainability course look like?
5. When do we get to stop looking to Sweden for examples of sustainability?
6. What does the Ministry of Advanced Education’s new name, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, mean for future generations of BC citizens?

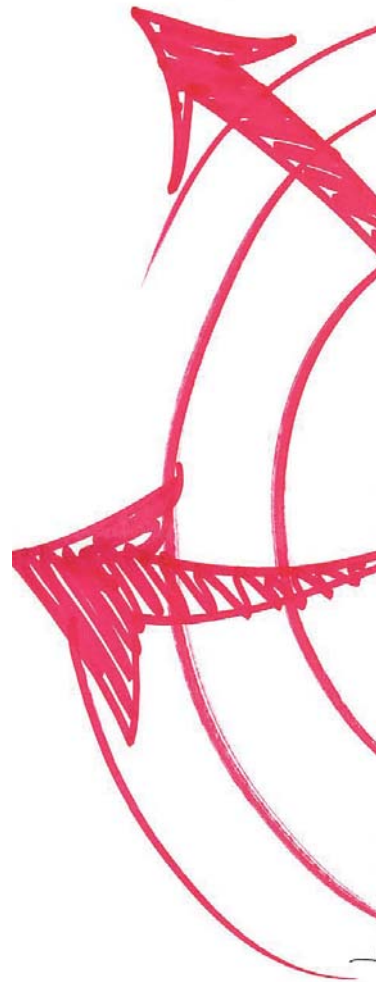
“INCREASING LITERACY IS ONE OF THE BEST INSURANCE POLICIES  
A COMMUNITY CAN TAKE OUT ON ITS FUTURE. LITERACY BRINGS  
EMPLOYABLE SKILLS; IT PRODUCES STRONGER ECONOMIES, STRONGER  
FAMILIES, AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES.”

-Cynthia Whitaker, Executive Director  
Literacy BC

## Community Learning and Literacy: “Treating the Place as if We Plan to Stay”

The predominant educational paradigm, the knowledge economy, disregards the idea that sustainable futures are to be found in communities. Literacy is not only reading and writing but also ecological literacy. The role of education is to connect people with place. Can our present universal curricula provide for local learning and connection? At the Fraser Basin Youth Conference, youth discovered the power of engaging with others to make change in communities of place and interest.

We can integrate Complexity, Appreciation, Responsibility Ethic (CARE) into the school curriculum, and extend it to other sectors of the community, including families and businesses. An example of connecting education with place is in Hazelton, where the community bought a farm for educational purposes, thus providing residents with increased literacy skills and greater knowledge of sustainable food production.





## Educating for Creativity: “Holistic Education Within and Without the System”

How we are educated has nothing to do with the education system. Too often students emerge from university with \$40,000 in student loans and no life skills. All too often, the education system induces a lack of creativity.

A healthier and more creative system might include creating a community of practice; offering more experiential learning opportunities; establishing ad hoc communities for more intimate learning; teaching critical thinking and emotional intelligence at a young age; giving parents the educational tools to assist and support their child’s growth and education; and bridging alternative programs with the public schools. Most importantly, creativity should be taught as a constant activity that can be learned and harnessed throughout one’s life.

*“Creativity equips young people with the skills and aptitudes they need to encounter a world no one could have imagined 50 years ago.”*

-Nadia Chaney

Poet, Performer & Educator

## Empowerment and Health: “Education and Leadership are the Tools”

Health is not just the absence of disease. It is an all-encompassing sense of wellness that arises from having sovereignty over the circumstances of one’s life. Throwing money at our health care system detracts from more central concerns such as eliminating disparities, defining our priorities as a society, building resilience, and developing leadership on all levels, from children to elders. The focus needs to be on prevention, taking a holistic and integrative approach to health, advancing economic measures that incorporate wellbeing, and empowering individuals.

*“Self-government can have a positive impact on the health of a community. When a sense of empowerment grows and self-determination becomes a reality, then individuals, their families and communities are better able to stand up for what they deserve, need and expect.”*

Dr. Nadine Caron, Ojibway Nation

*“Consumer culture breeds unhappiness by giving people unrealistic expectations...the only antidote is self-knowledge and the well-being that comes from contributing in a valued role.”*

-Tony Penikett,

Author of *Reconciliation: First Nations Treaty Making in British Columbia*



## Innovation: “A Well-tended Garden”

Innovation is becoming the most important determinant of economic success, not just for emerging industries but for all sectors. Although BC has been behind the rest of Canada in this regard, recently the provincial government has boosted innovation in medical research, life sciences, computer science, applied sciences, clean energy, and graduate education.

However, we can't simply look for leadership from government but must cultivate leadership at a grass roots level. How do we foster innovation in our society? Diversity and openness are important principles. A useful metaphor is a garden with a broad variety of “plants,” i.e., people's ideas, that is well tended so that it isn't overrun by “weeds,” i.e., glitches, thereby allowing for an unhindered proliferation of ideas and innovation.

*“Innovation need not be technological in nature, nor does it have to involve big leaps in quality or performance. Indeed, most of the innovation that goes on within organizations is based on a steady march of small-scale improvements in product design, production processes, management knowledge, and employee skills.”*

-Jock Finlayson, Executive Vice President  
Business Council of British Columbia

“WHAT ARE THE LEVERAGE POINTS WHERE SMALL DECISIONS CAN RADICALLY ALTER OUR FUTURE? ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING IS OPEN DATA. TODAY OUR GOVERNMENTS SIT ON HOARDS OF DATA THAT, IN THE HANDS OF CITIZENS, COULD ENABLE EMERGENT ANALYSIS, SERVICES, AND SOLUTIONS. SET OUR DATA FREE, AND UNLEASH THE COLLECTIVE CREATIVE SKILLS OF OUR CITIZENRY.”

- IBC Delegate



## Place-based Economics: “Bringing the Economy Back Home”

We need to reclaim our economy from the current impersonal global consumption machine from which we are disconnected as humans. We need to bring it into our communities and make it our own. We need to use it to develop our assets at a community level in ways that are inspiring, joyful – even poetic. Practices such as local currencies, microcredit, and community investment funds are worth considering. Small, prosperous economies in places like Finland, Singapore, Sweden, and Northern Italy can serve as models.

*“The frank conversations about the problems of our current economic paradigm really made me hopeful that we can move from defending the mistakes we have made to forgiving them – and moving on appropriately.”*

-IBC Delegate



“British Columbia is a miracle of biology, geology, cultures 10,000 years old and an abundance of people willing to take risks and dream out loud. The province is home to renewable energy renegades, biodynamic farmers and less-mess-making manufacturers still driving a new economic reality, each and every day.”

DONNA MORTON, CO-FOUNDER  
CENTRE FOR INTEGRAL ECONOMICS

## VIII SMALL THREADS MAKE A WEB— A NEW NARRATIVE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

How do we mobilize around a sustainable, resilient future? This question, which resounded at the IBC 2009 Leaders' Summit, echoes beyond the corridors of SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue and into the hearts and minds of all British Columbians who want their children and grandchildren to thrive.

Imagine BC's nonpartisan dialogue approach to framing complex issues, where every voice matters, where differences engender rather than destroy, and where multiple solutions are possible, is the kind of innovation that is essential in every domain of our society as we co-create a resilient future for British Columbia.

We know in our bones that climate change, growth patterns, and resource management are past the tipping point. Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon doesn't mince words: "Later this century, we will see extreme droughts and floods, extensive die-off of forests, more and larger storms, rapidly rising sea, urban heat emergencies, declining food production, and widespread water scarcity."

Now is the time for action. Now is the time to reorient society, public policy, and public involvement toward innovative approaches to resilient habitats, livelihoods, and health. These approaches needn't be grand, as Dr. Nadine Caron reminded delegates at the Leaders Summit: "In a complex system, small things have a big effect. If each of us took a small thread and made a spider web, anything is possible."

*"If they see lots of people getting engaged, governments will follow. This is absolutely critical. Change has to happen with all of us."*

-IBC Delegate

*"We need the capacity for making small choices that have incremental impacts in good ways."*

-IBC Delegate

## Small Innovations for Resilient Habitat, Livelihoods, and Health in BC – A Sampling of Suggestions

Local currencies	“WHILE I BELIEVE WE WILL EACH
Mixed income/mixed generational housing	CONTINUE TO HAVE SPECIALIZED
Community feasts	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THAT
Community gardening	WE APPLY TO OUR WORK, I WOULD
Guerrilla gardening	LIKE OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS
Engaging youth in land-use decisions	TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR AREA
Media and graphic designers for environmental responsibility and advocacy	OF SPECIALIZATION CAN CONNECT,
Neighbourhood food networks	INTERACT AND ENHANCE OTHER
Health advocacy for people with disabilities	AREAS, WHETHER THEY BE THE
Neighbourhood gatherings for a meal and a conversa- tion about sustainability	NATURAL, ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL
Sustainable commuting	OR SOCIAL/CULTURE FABRIC OF OUR
Supporting prevention in substance abuse	COMMUNITY.”
Exploring transition towns in the Fraser Valley	-IBC Delegate
Sustainable buildings	
Green jobs	

“the roundness is found in three sixty vision  
making choices in stillness, not making decisions,  
fusing death with the living, using words with precision  
believing that the deeps of the heart will be risen  
once the light reaches the dark and they both become stark  
when everything’s whole that once was apart”

FROM ROUNDNESS BY NADIA CHANEY  
POETRY INSPIRED BY IMAGINEBC DIALOGUES



## VIII CONCLUSION

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

-- LEGENDARY ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER BUCKMINSTER FULLER

Building on the ideas emerging from five years of public engagement, Imagine BC, SFU and partners will take the next steps to identify and prototype models of social, economic and ecological innovations that support, strengthen and protect human health, natural habitats and meaningful livelihoods.

We will foster opportunities to showcase the world’s leading innovators/innovations that are:

- transforming the world of renewable energy, including solar, wind and electric powered transport;
- creating resilient environments including urban, industrial and natural habitats around the world;
- developing new forms of livelihoods through social innovation and accelerating human and social development;
- experimenting with new forms of governance systems to align the efforts of business, government, NGO’s and communities.

We will share these innovations widely through knowledge exchange encounters and using our methods of whole system inquiry to establish a program for catalyzing social innovations.



## APPENDIX ONE: A GUIDE TO CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

By Joanna Ashworth, *Director of Dialogue Programs, Simon Fraser University*

Dialogue is a unique form of conversation, one with the potential to improve collective inquiry, produce coordinated action, and bring about genuine change. Dialogue enables groups to dis-identify with polarized positions and to engage in critically examining their underlying assumptions and tacitly held views.

Dialogue is a process and a form of purposeful talk that requires equality and empathy. The aim of dialogue is not to reach agreement, win points, or look for flaws in the other's argument but rather to examine and challenge assumptions and reach new understandings.

Dialogue involves a spirit of curiosity and willingness to learn the stories of those with whom you are in conversation.

Dialogue requires a willingness to listen to the meaning beneath and between others' words.

Dialogue needs a commitment to suspend the need for certainty and specific outcomes

Dialogue is a process of talk that engenders trust through the demonstration of respect and transparency of thought.

### CONVENING CONSIDERATIONS

#### Inclusiveness

Inviting individuals who are not usually involved in public discussions is essential. Meaningfully involving people who may have felt silenced, ignored, or left out of previous discussions on important public issues can also take time – to establish trust and to break down social hierarchies.

#### Clarity of purpose

The specific outcomes of dialogue – in terms of ideas, plans or relationships formed --- cannot be predetermined. However, clarity of purpose is essential and needs to be well communicated among all involved.

#### Open-ended questions

Determining the central questions that frame the dialogue are often best determined through the collaboration of key participants, sponsors, or partners of the dialogue, not simply pronounced by the planner. Powerful open-ended questions can stimulate the imagination and give rise to fresh ideas and solutions. Example: "If you were to paint a picture of an inclusive community, what would you see?"

#### Shared leadership

36

Planning for dialogue requires the involvement of diverse perspectives and interests. Consider this diversity as you develop planning and advisory governance of your process. Example: business sectors, faith-based organizations, youth, policy makers and or governors.

## Engagement, not information

Experts knowledge has the potential to inform thinking, broaden and deepen our understanding and challenge our pre-conceived notions. Invite experts to share their knowledge without dominating the process. Background documents, question arising, provocative statements, and central and persistent challenges are all girst for talking through QUOTE BY YANKALOVICH Always seek ways for experts to interact with others about what each has heard and understood.

## Telling and listening to good stories

Jumpstart the dialogue by inviting participants to share heartfelt stories about, for example, their attachment to place, to people or to personal history.

## Involving artists

Including music, song, painting, photographs, poetry, etc. of community members engages participants beyond ideas and opinions and brings richness to the dialogue.

## Alert to emergence

Dialogue means being comfortable with not knowing the outcome and being open to new collaborations, ideas for action, and possibilities for future work together.

“YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOOD TALK THAT ISN’T ABOUT  
ADVOCATING FOR YOUR POSITION AS MUCH AS IT IS ABOUT EXPLORING AND  
UNDERSTANDING WHAT TRENDS ARE SHAPING YOUR FUTURE, TO LEARN FROM THIS  
FUTURE AND TO TAP OUR COLLECTIVE POTENTIAL TO DO BETTER IN CURRENT, DAY  
TO DAY POLICIES AND PRACTICES – BY OUR GOVERNMENTS, OUR ORGANIZATIONS  
AND OUR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS.”

JOANNA ASHWORTH, ED.D  
DIRECTOR OF DIALOGUE PROGRAMS, SFU

## **APPENDIX TWO: IMAGINE BC ADVISORS, SECRETARIAT, DELEGATES AND POLICY PARTICIPANTS**

### **IMAGINE BC ADVISORY GROUP**

Ann Cowan, Executive Director, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Campus

David Helliwell, CEO, Small Energy Group

Cheeying Ho, former Executive Director, Smart Growth BC

Caroline North, North Growth Foundation

Rudy North, President and Director, North Growth Foundation

Tony Penikett, former Premier, Yukon Territory

Dr. Mark Roseland, Professor, Simon Fraser University and Director, Centre for Sustainable Community Development

Dr. Peter Williams, Professor, School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University, and Director, Centre for Tourism and Policy Research

Dr. Mark Winston, Professor, Simon Fraser University and Director, Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Project Secretariat, Jennifer De Roo, Kate Power

Project Director

Dr. Joanna Ashworth, Program Director, Dialogue Programs, Continuing Studies, Simon Fraser University

## DELEGATES

### **IMAGINE BC – YEAR 1 MAPPING THE AGENDA**

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Be Well Consultants Ltd.

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Kevin Huscroft  
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Jan O'Brien  
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BC Labour Relations Board

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Former Director, Agency and  
Community Services  
United Way of Lower Mainland

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Moderator  
Tony Penikett Negotiations Inc.

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Mavis Erickson  
Barrister and Solicitor  
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Nancy Hall  
President  
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erator)

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Bruce Sampson  
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Carol Seable  
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Ltd.

Mossadiq Umedaly  
Chairman  
BC Hydro

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Professor  
Simon Fraser University

Ronald Wright  
Novelist and Historian  
Author of "A Short History of  
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Storytellers' Foundation

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Undergraduate Semester in  
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Bruce Ford Education Coordinator Metro Vancouver	Helen Goodland Executive Director Light House Sustainable Building Centre	Mark Holland Principal HB Lanarc
Andrea Foster Climate Change Outreach Coordinator David Suzuki Foundation	Deirdre Goudriaan Regional Facilitator BC Healthy Communities	Thomas Homer-Dixon Director, Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University College, University of Toronto
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Graeme Johnston Graduate Student Harvard University	(Canadian Commission for UNESCO)	Check Your Head
Barbara Kaminsky CEO Canadian Cancer Society, BC & Yukon Division	Danielle Lukovich Senior Planner Ministry of Community Development	Shiva Mojtabavi Programming Consultant Innovico
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Ted Kuntz Board Chair Coquitlam Civic League	Pavlo Marchenko Student SFU	Ross Moster Convenor Village Vancouver
William Kurchak Executive Producer Greengarage.tv	Barbara McMillan Director of Regional Strategies Community Foundations of Canada	Danna Murray Consultant Minerva Foundation/Dalai Lama Center for Peace
Peter Ladner Vice President Business in Vancouver	James McNish Student, Undergraduate Semes- ter in Dialogue Simon Fraser University	Larry Myette Director, Strategic Workplace Health Healthcare Benefit Trust
David Lee Board Member Community Arts Council of Vancouver	Jennifer McRae Student, Undergraduate Semes- ter in Dialogue Simon Fraser University	Patricia North North Growth Foundation
Danika Littlechild Lawyer, LLM Candidate,	Kevin Millsip Executive Director	David Northgraves Student, Undergraduate Semes- ter in Dialogue SFU

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Avril Orloff Graphic Artist	William Rees Professor University of British Columbia/ SCARP	Lianne Smithaniuk Owner Inner Evolution Coaching & Consulting
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