

E.1 ECONOMIC ENGINES OF THE COMMUNITY, TRADITIONAL AND EMERGING

Amber Paul

The community of Britannia beach was originally founded as a mining town. Ore deposits were first discovered in 1888 and by 1905 copper extraction had reached full production. Accordingly, a community of mine labourers settled near the mine and laid the foundation of what was to become the main town site. Britannia mines were in operation for almost 70 years, with the last shift for the mine's 300 employees being on Nov. 1 1974. Since the mine closed, the local economy of Britannia has expanded to allow for new economic opportunities.

Today, the local economy of Britannia consists primarily of small retail businesses and home businesses. Most of the locally owned retail businesses are the small street front shops that face the *Sea to Sky* highway. There are currently 12 small businesses which include a few restaurants, a cafe, a gift store, a general store and a couple stores promoting and selling locally produced artwork. Furthermore, there are a number of home businesses also in operation. For example, "Betty's Best Mushrooms" which sells and exports chantrell mushroom, "From the forest" which collects and exports non-timber forest products and also sells goods made from these products, as well as various handyman or house cleaning businesses. Most of the small businesses employ only 1 or 2 people. Larger employers include the BC mining museum (employing 9 people year round and 15 people during the busy summer months), Betty's Best Mushrooms (employing up to 6 people) and the Britannia Bay properties (employs 4 people). It should be noted that this information came from local community knowledge as no official data could be found.

Another significant employer in the community is the movie industry. Although this work is temporary, it is a popular form of employment among the locals and the community would like to see the relationship with the film industry continue.



Finally, many of Britannia’s residents commute into Squamish for work. Accordingly, Britannia is often referred to as a “bedroom community”, a place where people live and sleep but commute elsewhere to work. With Squamish continuing to expand and new jobs being created, this trend will likely continue.

With Britannia beach being slated for development, the future is uncertain. The area is a favourite for developers because of the high scenic quality and good access. Likewise, these characteristics also provide for good tourism opportunities. The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) has recognized the tourism potential, especially in light of the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympics, and is trying to promote tourism within their district.

Similarly, the regional district is trying to promote the use of the community as a commercial filming location by encouraging building forms and designs which are in the character of the town and by preserving and protecting the popular heritage buildings already used.

The SLRD also mentions the potential for new commercial businesses. The new development might provide as many as 2000 new units which would need to be serviced by local convenience and retail stores.

The commercial harvesting of non-timber forest products is a growing business in BC and Britannia has the potential to contribute to this economy. The surrounding forest lands provide potential for agro-forestry operations and some of the locals already have experience in this area. Within the larger SLRD, pine mushrooms, salal and other floral greenery are presently being exported.

Finally, if the BC Center for Mining Innovation is established in Britannia beach, this could provide the impetus for more high-tech industries and research services basing themselves in Britannia. This would be in partnership with the museum and would combine a world class research center with a public attraction.

2001 Census data combines the communities of Furry Creek and Britannia Beach for a total population of 750. Of the 750:

- 475 receive employment earnings
- 410 people are regularly employed
 - 15% work at home
 - 17% have no fixed address
 - 66% work at a regular jobsite

With 190 people out of 750 being too young or too old to work,

- *Unemployment rate is 11%*

Average earnings for this area are above the BC average

	Britannia (\$)	BC (\$)
Part time	39,061	31,544
Full-time	49,273	44,231

Household data

	Britannia (\$)	BC (\$)
Median household income (MHI)	50,090	46,802
MHI- one person	36,159	23,703
MHI – two persons	59,194	57,773

E.2 REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Maureen Hetzler

Real Estate History: Britannia Beach: Until recently all real estate in Britannia Beach was owned by the Britannia Mine Company. This complete land ownership resulted in a community of primarily single-family rental dwellings.

In the 1920s Britannia Beach saw its largest numbers of accommodations. A few bunkhouses were constructed during this time to accommodate the single worker. The peak production rate at the Britannia Mine naturally coincided with the high numbers of housing units.

When Britannia Mine went bankrupt in 1974 the housing stock had already been in decline. Flooding had destroyed many areas and a declining infrastructure had left the community with only minimal facilities. These factors have continued to present day and have resulted in the lowest rental costs in Howe Sound.

Real Estate History: Furry Creek: The adjacent community of Furry Creek was developed in 1990 by the Japan-based firm of Tanac Development Canada Corp. The 419 hectares of land was developed into two dwelling types: a waterfront townhouse complex called Oliver's Landing and a series of single-family lots. Financial difficulty forced Tanac Development to sell Furry Creek Golf & Country Club in 1999 and bankruptcy resulted in the sale of the remaining property. The asking price was \$10.5 million.

The problem with this development was threefold: it had no public facilities or amenities, no economic base and was relatively isolated. These factors required automobile trips for essential services.

Ten hectares (25 acres) of waterfront property at Oliver's Landing were sold to United Properties, and 75 single-family residential lots to individual purchasers. In 2003 Tanac Development Canada Corp bought back the remaining 255 hectares of land at Furry Creek for upwards of \$7 million and announced a partnership with Parklane Homes of Vancouver and will work together on the undeveloped residential areas of Furry Creek.

A discussion of Furry Creek is relevant for a number of reasons. The primary reason is that the census data for Britannia Beach and Furry Creek is combined in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District D. Furry Creek is in a similar economic situation and in the future the communities will likely meld and share community facilities.

Residential Objectives:

- *Encourage the development of a variety of densities & housing types.*
 - *Reinforce the historic town site by retaining the existing affordable community.*
 - *Plan for residential use where there are no hazards or environmental sensitive areas.*
 - *Encourage development that is visually unobtrusive as viewed from the highway.*
 - *Encourage tree protection in residential areas.*
- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Community Plan

Oliver's Landing Townhouses



Real Estate Trends: Britannia Beach/Furry Creek vs. Howe Sound: Due to changing census boundaries in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, in 1991 as well as in 1996, there is no comparable data over this time span. The 1990 development of the affluent community of Furry Creek has skewed census data by increasing residential growth rates and significantly altering the average house value.

Lions Bay	1996	2001
Total #	490	520
Owned	85.7%	90.4%
Rented	14.3%	9.6%
Single	-	85.5%
Row Houses	-	3%
Apartments	-	11.5%
Growth	-	6%
Average Value	\$478,049	\$513,468

Squamish	1996	2001
Total #	4,910	5,150
Owned	72.7%	72.4%
Rented	27.3%	27.6%
Single	-	69%
Row Houses	-	10%
Apartments	-	21%
Growth	-	5%
Average Value	\$212,063	\$200,237

Squamish and Lions Bay represent both small and large scale communities along Howe Sound. The analysis of their real estate trends may shed some light on the future of Britannia Beach and Furry Creek. Lions Bay located on the southern boundary of Howe Sound is a small affluent community that has seen a 6% growth in dwellings over the last 5 years. The trends in this community indicate increasing house values and decreasing residential mix. The number of privately-owned dwellings highly exceeds rental accommodations.

Squamish is a larger community 12 km north of Britannia Beach. It has seen 5% growth in dwellings in the past 5 years. The trends in this community show stable house values and residential mix. More recent statistics from Building Permit Statistics indicate an increased growth rate, probably due to the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympics.

Impact of Real Estate Trends on Britannia Beach: If the dwelling types in Lions Bay and Squamish are continued in Britannia Beach an unsustainable community may likely develop. House prices will be high and single-family homes dot the hillside and waterfront. To maintain the residential objectives as described in the Community Plan a higher emphasis on mixed housing types is essential. With the coming 2010 Olympics home speculation and price inflation may be a future concern.

Britannia Beach & Furry Creek	2001
Total #	335
Owned	68.7%
Rented	31.3%
Average Value	\$ 266,835

Furry Creek dwelling asking prices:

Oliver's Landing:

- \$380,900 - \$605,000

Single-family homes:

- \$400,000 – 1 million

Building Permits: Residential

	Squamish	Lions Bay
1998	33	2
1999	20	1
2000	64	2
2001	37	1
2002	72	-

E.3 EXISTING MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Kelly Rodgers

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) has identified key investment priorities for the economic vitality of the Region, including improvements to the transportation system, an increased awareness of the Region as a welcoming place for investment and an increased awareness of public and private sector innovation of the Region. The SLRD recognizes that the Olympics provide an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of and leverage resources for the Region's economic development objectives.

With the above priorities in mind, the following economic development opportunities were identified by the SLRD board:

Economic Diversification

- Deep water port development
- Film industry
- New technologies industries
- Capitalization of research and development spin-offs
- Small-scale run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects

Strengthen the Existing Economy

- Recreation and tourism
- Arts and culture
- Forestry

Joint Marketing

- An opportunity to raise the profile of communities and industries in the Region and assets in the Region as a whole

SLRD is the fastest-growing district in B.C. and it is plausible that projections for increased population growth will also provide a good return on investment

Demand for recreational services has driven recent economic growth of the SLRD

Tourism comprises the region's largest income dependency at 23%, primarily from an increased attraction to Whistler as a tourist destination

Forestry ranks second at 16%, which includes activities from forest harvesting to pulp manufacturing

The recent impacts to the forestry industry underscore the need to diversify the economy

Joint marketing is essential to ensure cooperative and appropriate attraction of development to all parts of the region

Transportation and Infrastructure Development

- Rail, water and the Highway 99-97 link to Northern British Columbia
- Improved highway link to Squamish

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District is divided into several Electoral Areas, with Britannia Beach located in Electoral Area D. In April 2001, the Area D Official Community Plan was adopted by the SLRD Board of Directors and divided the area into three sub areas. The Howe Sound East sub area contains Britannia Beach.

The plan for Howe Sound East was revisited in August 2001, and more detailed planning objectives were created for Britannia Beach:

Commercial

- Promote tourist commercial business, in particular the adaptive reuse of historic and heritage buildings
- Promote non-polluting commercial and recreational uses of the Britannia waterfront, in particular with a historic focus
- Encourage building forms and designs that promote uses of the community as a commercial filming location
- Encourage provision of local convenience retail services to accommodate needs of the local community
- Support existing business uses and provide for their continued existence within the community
- Support development of a or small inn or hotel

Industrial

- Encourage non-polluting industry in Britannia North area

Britannia and the B.C. Museum of Mining has been featured in over 50 film productions in the past 15 years; enhanced rehabilitation of the site should ensure its continued use as a film location



Film site for the television series Hope Island

Officials and community members recognize that contamination from the Britannia mine must be addressed before economic development objectives can be realized

The proposed Britannia Centre for Mining Innovation provides an opportunity to leverage infrastructure improvements, attract innovative industry and provide resources to resolve mine contamination issues