

A proposal by



PROJECT PROPOSAL

Making Chá7elkwnech/Gambier Island More Livable

A Response to Gambier Island Community Association's Request for Proposal

OCTOBER 2023



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Executive Summary

Gambier Island (Chá7elkwnech), the largest island in Howe Sound, is situated within the traditional territory of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and is home to approximately 150* permanent residents year-round. The island offers ample summer-time recreation to visitors and seasonal residents, and sees an increase to approximately 600 total residents throughout the summer months. The majority of residents live on the island's south west peninsula, specifically in New Brighton, Gambier Harbor, and West Bay, and this area is serviced by a passenger ferry from Langdale to New Brighton. However, a significant portion of the Gambier population resides in the many remote and off-grid communities around the island, which remain boat-access only. Due to the geography and accessibility of Gambier Island, it has been challenging for the communities and local governance to establish robust infrastructure and servicing that would support an improved quality of life for residents.

In partnership with the Gambier Island Community Association (GICA), this project will seek to investigate and ultimately determine the key issues and challenges to livability that Gambier island residents across all communities experience. The SCARP Studio team will devise a prioritization methodology that will support GICA in determining the most pressing issues surrounding livability for which to dedicate resources. Building on the knowledge gained through the studio team's research, survey analysis, and community consultation, this project will inform the development of a strategic plan and an implementation pathway for GICA to address the livability values and concerns identified.

This project will take on a multi-phased approach over the next 8 months. The work plan is comprised of three main phases:

Phase 1: Research, Analysis and Project Planning

Phase 2: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Phase 3: Recommendations, Prioritization Methodology, Implementation Plan

The implementation phase of this initiative will be carried out by GICA and their partners. The SCARP Studio team is eager to support the establishment of foundational planning efforts that will inform the future development of Gambier island, and provide a community-centered vision of livability for this unique context.

*May vary from year to year

Statement On Positionality

We acknowledge that we are invited by GICA as student practitioners to the Gambier Island Community - as such, we do not take this learning opportunity and responsibility to do good work lightly. As aspiring racialized planners in Canada, we bring with us an eclectic bundle of values, ways of knowing and living, which at times may juxtapose from those of the community. We therefore commit to accurately capture and convey the story and relationships that make Gambier Island unique and embark on a journey to explore a more livable future on the Island. This will be a reflexive journey for our team, and we intend to grow ourselves as life-long learners and foster respectful relationships with the land, water, and the people served by them.

~SoundPlanning Team (Melissa, Santiago, Peter & Nadine)

The Project Team



MELISSA PAIS (SHE/HER)

Melissa is from Brampton, ON, and has completed an undergraduate degree in Environment and Business at the University of Waterloo prior to attending the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC. She is a strong advocate for equitable resilience planning, and is interested in exploring the unique context of what “livability” means for the various communities on Gambier Island.



SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ (HE/HIM)

Santiago is from Bogotá, Colombia, from the ancestral and traditional territories of Muisca People. He has a background in Civil Engineering and he worked on engineering project coordination before coming to Planning school at UBC. His interests in rural planning, community economic development and healthy environment will shape his approaches when working towards the wellbeing of Gambier Island’s existing and future communities.



PETER PENGCHENG FANG (HE/HIM)

Peter is a first-generation Chinese immigrant-settler living and studying on the unceded and traditional territory of xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation. Prior to SCARP, Peter completed his Bachelor of Arts Honours in Sociology and minor in Commerce at UBC. His planning interest lies at the nexus of strategic policy planning and conflict resolution, and is excited to learn more about Gambier Island’s unique planning context.



NADINE BELL (SHE/HER)

Nadine is a Guatemalan adoptee/immigrant-settler who was raised in Coquitlam, BC, on the traditional territories of the kwikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem First Nation). She completed her undergraduate degree in Human Geography at UBC prior to enrolling at SCARP. Nadine is passionate about equitable and inclusive development, and is eager to explore and develop impactful solutions to support the liveability of communities on Gambier Island.

Backgrounder

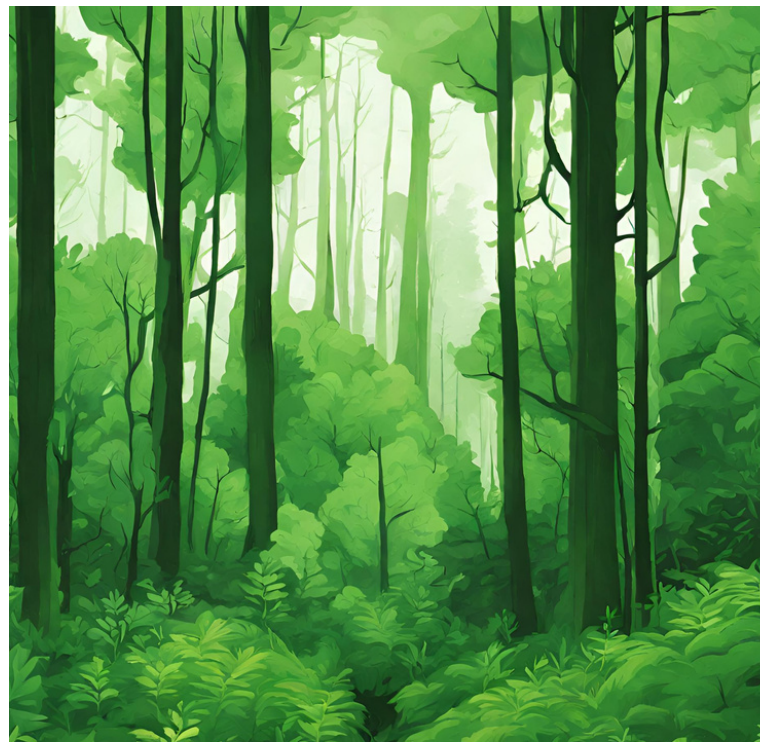
on Livability

Cities and communities are regularly ranked for their livability at both a global and national scale, yet the term livability itself remains a muddled concept when applied in planning. On the one hand, it can be an inclusive term, aligning itself with principles of social justice and equity (McArthur & Robin, 2019). On the other hand, livability can be interpreted as an aesthetic concept (Godschalk, 2004), with an emphasis on urban design and the built environment that focuses primarily on indicators of capital accumulation and consumption. After reviewing the RFP and the Gambier Island Community Survey, we would like to put forward the following definition by Lauster (2019), a renowned UBC Neighbourhood Sociologist to guide our internal understanding of livability - where he defines the term as:

“a shorthand for resident quality-of-life, itself influenced by policies that govern ownership and tenure, services and amenities, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy of living conditions” (Lauster, 2019, p.185).

Recognizing Vancouver’s mixed success with livability throughout its planning, Tolfo and Doucet (2022) underscore the need for planning practitioners to ask the question of: “livability, for whom?” to surface any differences and conflicts and mitigate potential impacts of displacement and exclusion. For example, while the political party that dominated Vancouver’s municipal politics in the 1970s - TEAM (The Electors’ Action Movement) did augment environmental amenities and quality of life through encouraging deindustrialization and rezoning around False Creek, livability has also erased the area’s historically working-class community in order to deliver vibrant spaces and profitable developments.

It is without question that everyone wants to reside in a livable community, yet it is also apparent that this term should be critically engaged with such that the studio team along with GICA can truly maximize the benefits of improved livability to more Gambier residents. In the context of this project, it will be important to not only analyze what are the dimensions of livability that Gambier community members have identified in the community survey, but also to validate survey results and surface any underlying tensions during the community consultation. The outcome from the studio project is to develop a strategic plan along with implementation pathways for GICA to manage assets and concerns identified in the survey and the community consultation. A key component of this studio project is to develop a methodology to transparently prioritize community goals and future actions before the strategic plan is formalized.



Project Context

About Chá7elkwnech, Gambier Island

Gambier Island is located in Howe Sound, about 10 kilometers northwest of the Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal in West Vancouver. The island has a year-round population of about 150* residents, increasing to approximately 600 throughout the summer. Most residents are located on the island's southwest peninsula, served by passenger ferry service from Langdale to the New Brighton dock. There are also several off-grid communities on other parts of the island, with boat access only, and a number of non-profit societies. Gambier also has a unique local government system, with the Sunshine Coast Regional District handling solid waste services, docks, and parks, and the Islands Trust handling issues related to zoning and preservation, among other things.

Gambier Island is situated on the traditional and unceded land of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). The island, and all lives it sustains, was a part of Squamish culture, tradition, and way of life as it was a celebrated deer hunting area and extensively used for resource gathering (Gambier Island Conservancy, 2023).

Working with funding from the Province of British Columbia's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP), the main parties involved in this project are the Gambier Island Community Association (GICA), the REDIP Project Coordinator, and the REDIP Oversight Committee.

*May vary from year to year

Potential Sensitivities or Challenges

- *Through survey analysis and community consultation, there may be polarizing visions of fostering livability held by different Gambier Island residents that blurs a path forward. It is therefore important for the studio team to develop a robust and transparent prioritization methodology so the community can fully entrust the eventual implementation of the strategic plan.*
- *There is a degree of uncertainty regarding how much the Island Trust can support the recommendations and actions outlined within the strategic plan. The studio team will work with GICA to gauge Island Trust's capacity in supporting key directions.*
- *Community buy-in to the strategic plan will be central to the long-term success of a more livable Island. Considering variables like seasonal residency and off-grid access on remote parts of the Island, we anticipate compounding barriers to engaging with diverse voices and interests beyond the Island's main settlement on the South West Peninsula. We therefore hope to explore and co-design targeted engagement methods with GICA to ensure all voices are being heard.*
- *As we will be mapping the next steps forward from Phase 1 and 2, institutional and/or political constraints at a regional and provincial level may emerge and limit the extent to which the preferred option(s) can be fully actualized. Therefore, we intend to present a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and limitations of various funding options in the final report to ensure implementation can be sustained beyond the studio project timeline.*

Project Objectives

1

To understand the priorities, issues, and needs around livability as identified by Gambier Island residents



2

To develop a robust, transparent prioritization methodology for addressing any competing priorities within the community



3

To create a strategic plan and implementation resources that GICA can utilize as a part of the REDIP grant



Our Theory-Guided Approach

Given Gambier Island's unique physical geography and accessibility conditions, we plan to apply a framework for Substantive Rural Planning to our work. Composed of four elements, Substantive Planning Theory is concerned with applying context-specific planning practice. Extending beyond norms, values, and processes specific to the planning field, substantive planning centers areas or objects of the 'material world' as the subject matter with which planning practice is concerned. The theory investigates the "What?", "Why?", "Who?", and "How?" of specific planning practice, and enables the construction of comprehensive planning directions and objectives (Hibbard & Frank, 2019).

In the Gambier Island context, Livability as a goal is still broad and unresolved. Therefore, our endeavor centers on recognizing how the residents perceive and envision livability, by identifying, understanding, and untangling the values that matter the most to them. The team will augment our understanding by analysing and refining the community-wide survey recently performed, and build on it with community consultation session(s) and reviewing plans and programs with similar contexts and scales, additionally to other available data. Considering the differing views between residents present in the survey, the team will be cautious when prioritizing both noticeable and underlying issues and values.

Accordingly, multiple parameters and methodologies to evaluate and prioritize them will be explored, and after discussions with and feedback from the different stakeholders, the most relevant to the project's context will be collectively agreed upon. The outcomes from implementing such methodologies will inform the Team to put forward recommendations and implementation strategies as guidance for REDIP upcoming phases in the short to medium term ranging from 1-5 years. This will result in a clearer path for GICA to follow as representatives and advocates of the community. A description of the approach indicated above is shown in the Work Plan.



Work Plan

Phase 1:

Initial Analysis, Research and Alternatives: Our team will first undertake a quantitative analysis of the survey closed-question results, and a high-level qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions. Concurrently the team will compile relevant background materials to reference for the next phases. This phase will contain:

- Survey Analysis and Graphic output (Preliminary)
- Data and context research
- Strategy alternatives for evaluating and prioritizing,
- Stakeholders mapping
- Engagement objectives and strategy exploration

Phase 2:

Stakeholders Engagement: We will summarize our findings from the previous phase and identify knowledge gaps that require additional examination through engagement. This will inform community and stakeholder engagement sessions, if necessary. This phase will contain:

- Definition of engagement objectives and strategies
- Stakeholders engagement
- Report on engagement sessions

Phase 3:

Recommendations, Prioritization Methodology, Implementation Plan: The team will provide recommendations and implementation strategies as guidance for upcoming phases in GICA's REDIP project, which will set the agenda moving forward in the future on Gambier Island.

- Community Livability Values and Asset Inventory (Final)
- Survey and Community Consultation Summary (Final)
- Key Livability Issues and Challenges
- Prioritization Methodology
- Recommendations
- Budget and Funding Opportunities
- Implementation Strategies

Deliverables

Based on the previous work plan, the Team will present two main deliverables along the project's time frame as a result from the process stated on this proposal.

- **Interim report:** Mid-way checkpoint to communicate and illustrate what the Team identified as possible alternatives in terms of prioritization methods and engagement strategies to fill knowledge gaps in next phases. Accompanied by contrasting exercise to recognize tradeoffs inherent in choosing either of the alternatives. This will work as a starting point to focus on a single alternative for development and implementation in the next phases. This document will contain the outputs from Phase 1.
- **Final report:** Detailed presentation of all results and outputs from the project addressing the project's objectives indicating recommendations as next steps for GICA to make in the following years in order to improve and/or mitigate Livability issues and priorities for the Gambier Island communities. This document will contain the outputs from Phase 2 and 3.



Budget & Communications

Budget

Item/Expense	Cost	Details	Phase
Transportation for the SCARP Studio Team to Gambier Island	\$480	GICA In-kind contribution will cover transportation around/within Gambier Island Includes: - Terrestrial & Maritime transport to Gambier Island Calculation is based on an approximate cost of \$30 per team member for a round trip from Horseshoe Bay-Langdale-Gambier Island, and an estimation of 4 trips throughout the school year	1&2
Community Engagement	\$100	GICA In-kind contribution will cover contribution of a rental space (ex. community center) Includes: - Community engagement materials (printing posters, flyers, equipment, miscellaneous, food and drinks) *Food, Beverage and Incentives for community gathering is not accounted	2
Final Presentation	\$50	Includes: - Poster printing, other materials	3
Total	\$630		

Communications

The Team will be the consultants for GICA, and GICA will work as the liaison between the Gambier community and all levels of government and stakeholders. Sound Planning will support, report and be accountable to GICA through the REDIP Project Coordinator (PC) who was hired by GICA. All channels of communications and information sharing will be directed through the REDIP PC, unless stated otherwise.

References

Gambier Island Conservancy. (2023). *Since Time Immemorial*.

<https://gambierislandconservancy.ca/history-of-the-conservancy/firstnationshistory>

Godschalk, D. R. (2004). Land use planning challenges: Coping with conflict in visions of sustainable development and livable communities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70 (1), 5-13.

Hibbard, M., & Frank, K. I. (2019). Notes for a substantive theory of rural planning: Evidence from the US experience. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 20(3), 339-357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2019.1627572>

Lauster, N. (2019). What's livable? Comparing concepts and metrics for housing and livability. In M. Moos (Ed.) *A research agenda for housing*. Massachusetts. Edward Elgar Publishing.

McArthur, J., & Robin, E. (2019). Victims of their own (definition of) success: Urban discourse and expert knowledge production in the Liveable city. *Urban Studies*, 56 (9), 1711 - 1728.

Tolfo, G., & Doucet, B. (2022). Livability for whom? Planning for livability and the gentrification of memory in Vancouver. *Cities*, 123, 103564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103564>

Appendix A

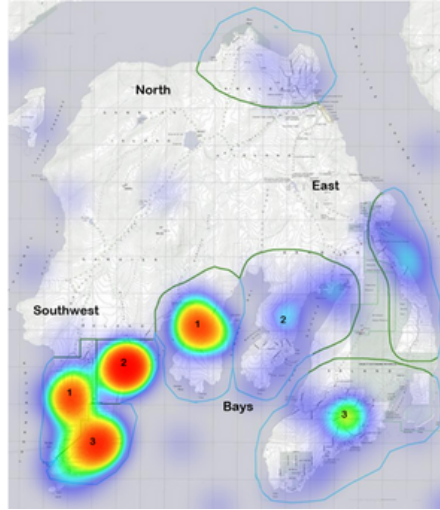
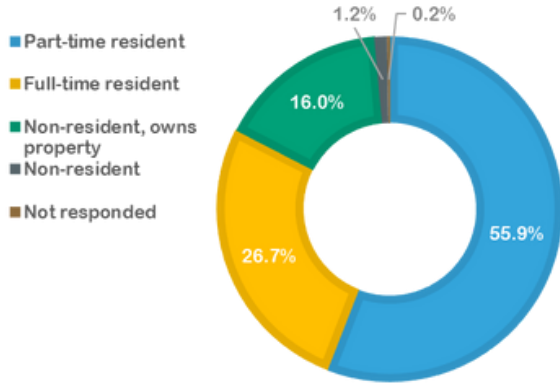
Descriptive Survey Data

424 total respondents (after data cleaning)

Residents of Gambier

(Response rate: 99.8%)

More than half of respondents are floating population



Where do they live?

(Response rate: 70.3%)

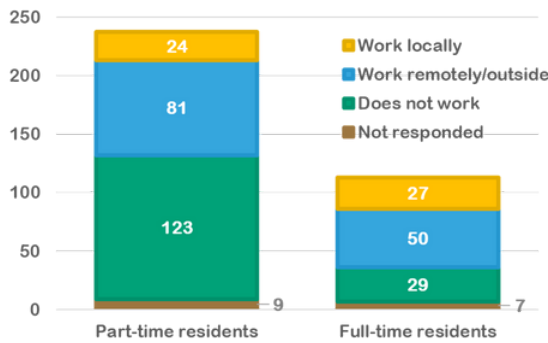
REGIONS	
Southwest	45
East	54
Bays	49
SUBTOTAL	148
North	19
Other	25
SUBTOTAL	97
TOTAL	418

Southwest region is the most populated

How do they work?

(Response rate: 95.4%)

Only 14.6% of respondents work locally on Gambier

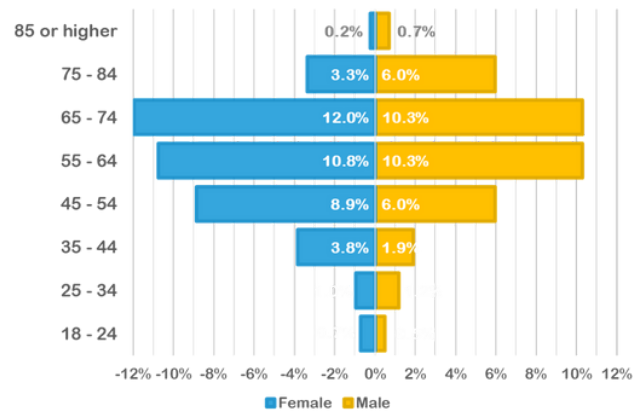


Gender + Age Distribution

(Response rate: 81.8%)

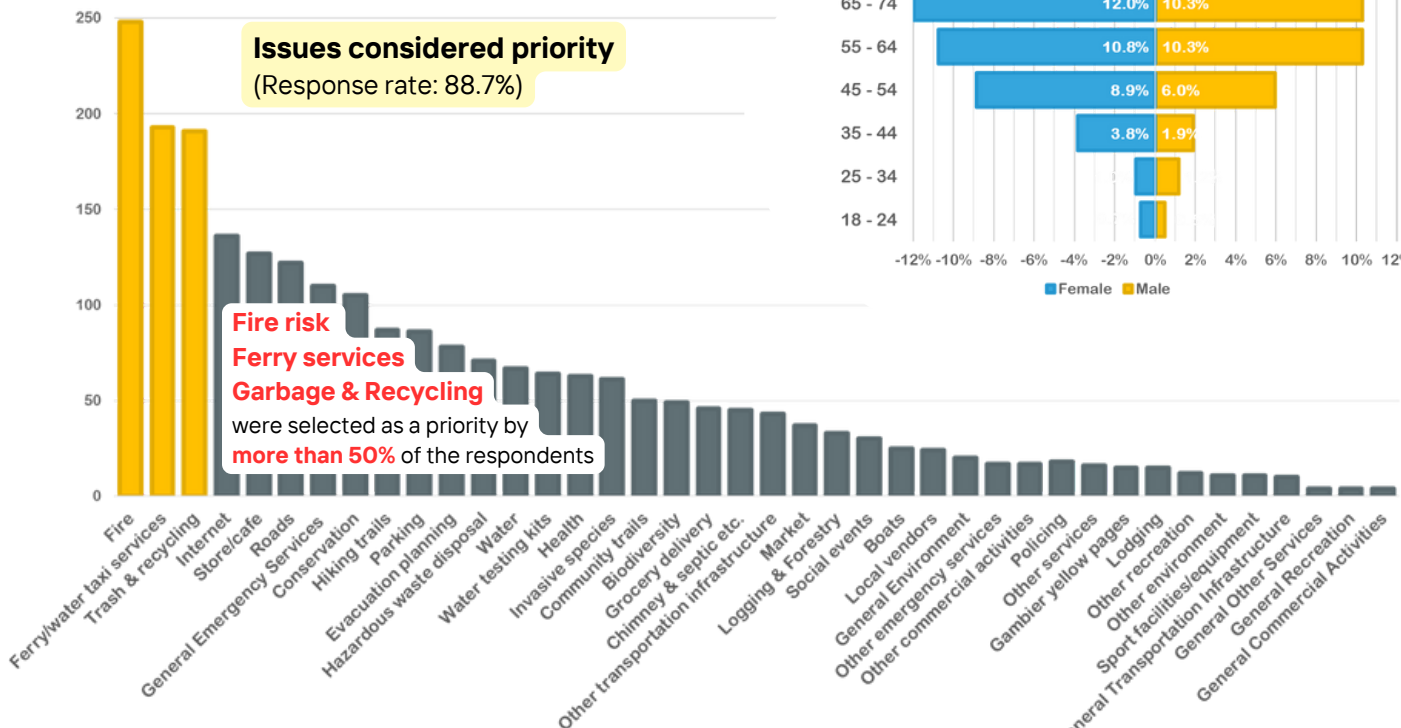


53.6% of respondents are aged above 55



Issues considered priority

(Response rate: 88.7%)



Appendix B

Work Plan

Item	Phase	Lead	Timeline	Deadline	Status
0	Phase 0: Project Start-Off				
0.1	Request For Proposal (RFP)	GICA			Complete
0.2	Launch Meeting	Sound Planning + GICA		September 26th, 2023	Complete
0.3	RFP Refinement	Sound Planning			N/A
◆	0.4 Proposal	Sound Planning	End September-Mid October	October 17th, 2023	Complete
💬	0.4.1 Proposal response/comments/approval	GICA	Mid-End October		Complete
	0.4.2 Proposal refinement (optional)	Sound Planning	End-October		In Progress
1	Phase 1: Research, Analysis and Project Planning				
1.1	Survey Analysis (Stage 1)	Sound Planning	Early October-End November	December 5th, 2023	In Progress
1.1.1	Closed-questions analysis and summary	Sound Planning	Early October-Mid October	October 24th, 2023	In Progress
1.1.2	High-level analysis of qualitative survey data	Sound Planning	Early October-End November	December 5th, 2023	In Progress
1.1.3	Graphic output (Poster)	Sound Planning	End November	December 5th, 2023	In Progress
1.1.4	Research (Elaborate Background & Context)	Sound Planning	Mid October-End November		In Progress
1.1.5	Community Profile (Preliminary)	Sound Planning	Mid October-End November	December 5th, 2023	In Progress
💬	1.1.6 Community Values and Asset Inventory (Preliminary)	Sound Planning	Mid October-Mid November	December 5th, 2023	In Progress
1.2	Community Consultation Planning	Sound Planning	Mid October-End November	January 15th, 2023	Not Started
1.2.1	Stakeholder mapping	Sound Planning	Mid October-Mid November		In Progress
1.2.2	Identifying knowledge gaps	Sound Planning	Mid November-End November		Not Started
1.2.3	Engagement Strategy Alternatives	Sound Planning	Early November-End November	December 5th, 2023	Not Started
◆	1.2.4 Engagement Plan + Dates for Engagement Session	Sound Planning		December 18th, 2023	Not Started
💬	1.2.5 Engagement Plan Feedback	GICA	Early December-Early January	January 8th, 2024	Not Started
1.2.6	Engagement Plan Refinement	Sound Planning	Early-Mid January	January 15th, 2024	Not Started
1.3	Interim Report & Presentation	Sound Planning		December 5th, 2023	Not Started
V.1	Site Visit #1	Sound Planning + GICA		November 18th, 2023	N/A
V.2	Site Visit #2 (Tentative)	Sound Planning + GICA		December 9th, 2023	N/A
2	Phase 2: Stakeholders Engagement				
2.1	Partner Check-in	Sound Planning + GICA	Early January	TBD	Not Started
2.1.1	Review of Engagement Plan and Dates	Sound Planning + GICA	Early January		Not Started
💬	2.1.2 Engagement Plan approval	GICA	Early January	January 15th, 2024	Not Started
2.2	Community Consultation Preparation	Sound Planning + GICA	January		Not Started
2.2.1	Notice of Engagement Session(s)	GICA	Early-Mid January	(Min. 2 weeks prior to Engagement Session)	Not Started
2.2.2	Engagement Materials	Sound Planning + GICA	Early-End January		Not Started
2.3	Community Engagement	Sound Planning + GICA	Mid January-Mid February		Not Started
2.3.1	Engagement Session #1	Sound Planning + GICA	Early February	TBD	N/A
◆	2.3.1.1 Review Session #1 Outcomes	Sound Planning	Early February		Not Started
2.3.1.2	Session #1 Debrief	Sound Planning + GICA	Mid February		Not Started
2.3.2	Engagement Session #2 (Tentative)	Sound Planning + GICA	End February	TBD	N/A
◆	2.3.2.1 Review Session #2 Outcomes	Sound Planning	Early March		Not Started
2.3.2.2	Session #2 Debrief	Sound Planning + GICA	Early-Mid March		Not Started
💬	2.3.3 Community Engagement Analysis	Sound Planning	Mid February-Mid March		Not Started
3	Phase 3: Recommendations, Prioritization Methodology, Implementation Plan				
3.1	Survey + Engagement Analysis (Stage 2)	Sound Planning	Mid February-End March	April 2nd, 2024	Not Started
3.2	Mitigation Plan	Sound Planning	Mid February-End March	April 2nd, 2024	Not Started
3.3	Final Report & Presentation	Sound Planning	April	April 2nd, 2024	Not Started

Legend:

- ◆ Partner Check-in
- 💬 Partner's Feedback
- ◆ Main Deliverable
- 🏝 Team Visiting Island

Appendix C

Graphic Summary

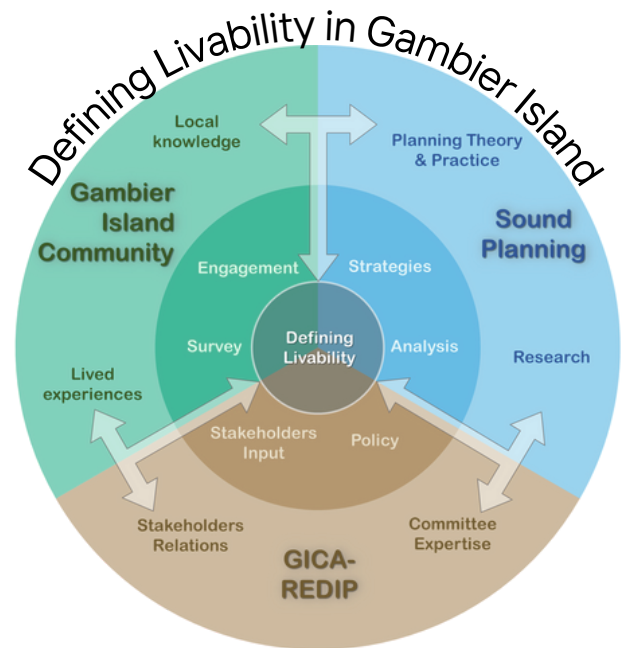


Gambier Island (Chá7elkwnech), the largest island in **Howe Sound**, is situated within the traditional territory of **S̓k̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)**. Approximately **150 year-round** and **600 seasonal residents** live in the Island, being the **Southwest the most populated** where the main dock is located.

Sound Planning was reached:

- 1 To understand strengths, priorities and needs around livability as identified by Gambier Island residents
- 2 To develop a transparent prioritization methodology for differing priorities within the community
- 3 To create a strategic plan and implementation resources that GICA can utilize as a part of the REDIP grant

Our Approach



Stakeholders Context



Our Work Plan

