

Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Format will follow the Strategic Plan 2021-2025

About Britannia

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2026, the Britannia Community Services Society traces its origin in cooperative community action of the 1970s. At the time, recognizing urgent local needs, strong grassroots activism spearheaded the creation of the Britannia complex to provide a range of education, recreation, library and social services. At the time, while the Society recognized and sought to address systemic social, political, and economic discrimination and worked towards equality, social justice and institutional reform, it did not acknowledge Indigenous lands, rights, cultures, experiences or contributions.

The neighbourhood, situated in the heart of Coast Salish Territories, on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm|Musqueam, Sḳwx̣ẉú7mesh|Squamish & sə̣lilẉətaʔ |Tsleil-Waututh Nations, has changed a lot. Over the decades, the area, traditionally known as Khupkhahpay'ay in the Halq'eméylem language, meaning "cedar tree," has experienced waves of displacement, immigration and gentrification, altering both the land and the communities who call it home. Similar to many other neighbourhoods in Vancouver, the area has experienced rising housing costs and redevelopment pressures. While these shifts have brought new investments and amenities, they have also raised concerns about affordability and the displacement of long-time residents.

Grandview-Woodland is one of Vancouver's most diverse neighbourhoods, known for its mix of cultures, languages, identities, economic diversity, housing types and its role as a safe and welcoming community for 2SLGBTQIA+ residents. The area has the highest proportions of Indigenous residents in Vancouver. As of the 2021 Census, approximately 10% of the neighbourhood's population identifies as Indigenous, compared to about 2.5% citywide. It is also home to vibrant newcomer and settler communities, as well as long-standing Italian and Portuguese families who have lived here for generations and who have helped shape the social fabric of Grandview-Woodland and Strathcona. The Britannia Community Services Centre, working alongside Indigenous-led organizations, plays a central role in supporting Indigenous youth, families, and cultural programming, as well as providing services to the many communities who contribute to the neighbourhood's rich mix of experiences, languages, and traditions.

The demographic landscape of the neighbourhood is also shifting. The senior population (65+) is projected to increase at a rate that outpaces both adults (25–64) and children and youth (0–24). Seniors in the Britannia catchment are significantly more likely to live alone than the Vancouver average, heightening the importance of accessible, community-centred services.

Economic disparities are pronounced. Twenty-eight percent of residents live below the after-tax low-income measure, and 11% experience "working poverty." Strathcona, in particular, has a high concentration of low-income residents, with 61% of households living on less than \$30,000 per year.

Grandview-Woodland shows a wider distribution of incomes, though median incomes still trend lower than the citywide average.

Britannia has become a second home to many residents in the neighbourhood facing diverse and complex challenges, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, single-parent households, seniors, and many others who have been connected to Britannia since the day the doors first opened on June 5, 1976. Through affordable programs, inclusive services, and a commitment to belonging, the Society continues to play a stabilizing, supportive and empowering role in the lives of many who face barriers.

Our Strategic Plan

Looking ahead, this Strategic Plan positions the Society to proactively prepare for a future that will see thousands of new residents moving into the area. These neighbours will not only use the facilities; they will influence and reshape the spirit and character of the community. In turn, the Society's principles, values, vision, and culture will shape the experiences and expectations of new residents. With major developments on the horizon, including the new St. Paul's Hospital, redevelopment around Commercial–Broadway, and significant changes along the Hastings corridor, the coming decade presents an important opportunity for the Society to scale up its mission and deepen its impact.

This Strategic Plan will guide the Britannia Board of Directors, staff and committees to ensure our organization is secure and relevant and that day to day work aligns with our shared goals, principles and values. This plan was led by a working group of community members and developed with our community that included surveys, listening circles, workshops and online and in person outreach.

Vision and Mission

Recognizing its roots and context, the Society's vision is: **The wellbeing, sense of belonging, joy, and empowerment of everyone in our community.**

To help realize its vision, the organization defines its mission as: **We are stewards of spaces that support social connection, creativity, recreation, reconciliation and the realization of the full potential of people and communities. In partnership with our communities, we create integrated programs, services, and opportunities on the unceded territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́l ilwətaʔt / sél íl wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.**

Principles of practice

Over the years, the Society has operated according to a set of guiding principles. While these have not always been formally documented, they have been consistently understood and upheld by the Board, administration, and staff. As the Society approaches its 50th anniversary and looks ahead to its next chapter, it is important to clearly articulate these longstanding commitments:

- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation**
A commitment to fostering belonging, addressing inequities, and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- **Community Engagement and Social Action**

Supporting residents in shaping the future of their neighbourhood and advocating for the well-being of the community.

- **Community Development in Recreation, Library, and Social Services**

Delivering accessible, high-quality programs and services that strengthen individuals, families, and community life.

- **Local Procurement to Support Local Businesses and Residents**

Prioritizing neighbourhood-based vendors, creators, and service providers to strengthen the local economy and contribute to community resilience.

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Strategic Commitments

Our strategic commitments reflect key areas we have identified as priorities for development in the next 5 years. We will invest time, care, and resources in these community-identified priority areas.

We acknowledge that during the consultation process, community members raised other important and pressing issues such as affordable housing and access to mental health support that they hoped we would prioritize. We recognize that growing economic disparity is placing more people in vulnerable situations and that many in our neighbourhood are facing complex challenges such as unaffordable housing, mental health concerns and addiction. At the same time, as a community centre, the Society has limitations in the range of services it can directly provide.

As a community centre, staff's primary skills and expertise are in recreation. We define recreation broadly to include arts and culture, and activities that foster individual and community health and wellness. Grounded in Britannia's history, we remain committed to providing accessible recreation services for the most vulnerable members of our community and to removing barriers to access and participation. We also commit to embedding anti oppression, anti racism and decolonizing practices in all aspects of our work. As we learn to recognize and deconstruct harmful systems, we will continue to build new ways of being and doing that promote dignity, equity and belonging for all.

We will (GOALS):

- [1. Maintain and expand welcoming and safe environments](#)
- [2. Collaborate with the City to ensure the development of a new aquatics, community, social services, and cultural facility](#)
- [3. Deepen Indigenous reconciliation and decolonization practices](#)
- [4. Continue strong accountability to community, financial stability and political awareness to achieve the objectives of the society](#)
- [5. Strengthen relationships with on-site and community partners](#)
- [6. Increase organizational capacity and enhance staff and volunteer experiences](#)
- [7. Develop youth leadership](#)
- [8. Build seniors' communities of belonging and care](#)

1. Maintain and expand welcoming and safe environments

- Fix, clean and maintain existing facilities
- Improve building and space accessibility and safety
- Create space and prioritize facility and programming for underrepresented communities
- Expand outreach practices to reach a larger portion of the community

Some actions will include:

- Work with the RIA Circle to better understand and establish safer accountable space
- Build staff capacity by providing conflict resolution, cultural safety and trauma informed training
- Develop policies for more equitable use of facilities, particularly the ice rink
- Conduct accessibility audit
- Improve structural elements and conduct renovations on existing buildings

2. Collaborate with the City to ensure the development of a new aquatics, community, social services and cultural facility

(note: The City and Park Board have made a commitment to replace and expand the existing Britannia pool, fitness centre and skateboard park, build a new gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms, administrative space and child care.)

- Leverage community and city wide engagement to ensure that the project proceeds to construction by 2031.
- Create opportunities for the community to engage with the development process.

Some actions will include:

- Develop working group
- Regular contact with City administration responsible for the project
- Advocacy, information sharing and relationship building with elected officials
- Ensure that there are concrete plans to include 55+ and Teen Centre accessible spaces for programs and services in the new building

3. Deepen Indigenous reconciliation and decolonization practices

- Strengthen partnerships with xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ / səliłwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations and Urban Indigenous communities
- Reflect Indigenous protocols, beliefs, and ways of being throughout the organization (ensure there are guidelines around what this means)
- Increase Indigenous leadership and representation on the Board and management team

Some actions will include :

- Create and support All Nations Elders Circle
- Anti-racism training for Board, Committees and staff to understand the impact of privilege and power in decision making
- Update programming principles to reflect meaningful change
- Increase Indigenous staff through improved HR processes and onboarding

4. Continue strong accountability to community, financial stability and political awareness to achieve the objectives of the society

- Transition from Board of Management to a governance Board to focus on the strategic direction of the society and accountability to the community
- Diversify board and staff to better represent the organization's different communities
- Utilize relevant, diverse and contemporary communication tools and platforms to share information, facilitate dialogue and build community
- Secure Society endowment to be able to support appropriate and emerging programs as needed
- [Establish a collaborative, long-term strategy to enhance alignment of child care services at Britannia while increasing service capacity and availability within the broader community.](#)

Some actions will include :

- Implement changes to the Society by-laws and provide Board training for good governance
- [Provide leadership and support in developing and implementing the child care strategic plan, ensuring alignment with organizational goals and community needs.](#)
- Establish long range fund development plan that includes a capital campaign and regular giving
- Achieve \$5M in assets held by the Britannia Community Services Foundation to benefit Society objectives
- \$100,000 in annual giving to support programming for emerging needs such as Food Security, Youth Services and Seniors Programs

5. Strengthen relationships with on-site and community partners

(note: Onsite partners are City of Vancouver, Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Public Library. Community partners include Sage Nation, Progress Lab, REACH Community Health Clinic, Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society, Indian Residential School Survivors Society, Commercial Drive Community Policing and many others that support program delivery at Britannia)

- Enhance institutional partnerships to coordinate facility sharing and community access to public assets
- Recognize and find alignment in mandates, principles of consent and freedom of expression
- Increase opportunities to amplify shared identity, interests, values, and contributions
- Increase community connections and program offerings with partner organizations
- Expand the team to include an onsite social worker through partnerships

Some actions will include:

- Improve operational processes and information sharing between organizations for example collaboration on the Britannia Art Gallery with the Vancouver Public Library
- Establish relationship with the Parent Advisory Committee of neighbourhood schools
- Coordinate facility sharing such as arts program in the school and gymnastics in Gym A/B

- Identify and implement projects through collaborative partnerships

6. Increase organizational capacity and enhance staff, and volunteer experiences

- Create opportunities for staff advancement and career growth
- Upgrade technology to streamline processes, create efficiencies, and support staff workloads
- Enhance internal communications and transparency
- Develop emergency preparedness processes and capacity
- Create an effective working relationship between committees and staff

Some actions will include:

- Celebrate the organization's 50th anniversary
- Establish, diversify and grow funding sources to support the future of Britannia
- Designate a staff member to each committee
- Balance Committee autonomy, with consistency and accountability to the Society

7. Develop youth leadership

- Create opportunities for youth to amplify their voices and prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation
- Establish pathways to meaningful employment for youth
- Develop arts and cultural programming for youth
- Invest in friendship and youth led initiatives

Some actions will include:

- Secure funding for internships
- Establish mentorship program with high schools in our catchment
- Create more student employment and volunteer opportunities

8. Build seniors' communities of belonging

- Enhance the space for seniors in the 55+ and across the site
- Create meaningful representation of elders, seniors and older adults participating and guiding society
- Support elders, seniors and older adults to participate in programming throughout the aging process

Some actions will include:

- Increase enrollment and drop in space in programs
- Develop programming that addresses cognitive, psycho, social and physical aspects of aging
- Cultivate meaningful volunteer experience for 55+ focusing on building a sense of belonging and inclusion
- Expand partnerships with groups and ongoing support of groups such Quirke