

IT TAKES A VILLAGE
Pemberton Child Care
Needs Assessment and Strategy:
2019-2023

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Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION AND REPORT OVERVIEW	1
2.0	CONTEXT.....	2
2.1	LOCAL CONTEXT	2
2.2	BROADER CHILD CARE CONTEXT	4
3.0	METHODOLOGY.....	7
4.0	VISION FOR CHILD CARE IN PEMBERTON	9
5.0	GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS	9
6.0	NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY.....	10
7.0	CHILD CARE SPACE TARGETS	13
8.0	STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS.....	18
9.0	PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION.....	24
10.0	MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION	26

1.0 Introduction and Report Overview

Child care is a vital part of a community's social infrastructure. In addition to helping the families and children using the care, it benefits the broader population, contributes to the economy, and enhances the overall health and well-being of the community.

Recognizing the importance of child care, and the serious challenges being faced with respect to child care delivery in Pemberton, the Sea to Sky Putting Children First Initiative, with funding support from the Pemberton Valley Utilities and Services (PVUS) Committee¹ commissioned the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to prepare a Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy for Pemberton. A similar Initiative was undertaken for the District of Squamish earlier in 2018.

The overarching theme of the Pemberton Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, as captured in the document's title, borrows from the African proverb: it takes a village to raise a child. The reality is that making improvements to the child care system in Pemberton is a shared responsibility, with shared benefits, requiring the contributions of several parties to succeed.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment and Strategy is threefold:

- 1) Provide guidance to the Village of Pemberton (VOP), Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD)², Sea to Sky Community Services Society, and other interested parties (e.g., child care providers, community agencies) in addressing child care needs in Pemberton to 2023;
- 2) Identify a vision, strategic priorities, and space targets for child care in Pemberton
- 3) Propose a framework for implementation of the recommendations contained herein.

The Needs Assessment and Strategy is organized into ten (10) sections, as follows:

- ◆ Section 1.0 – Introduction and Report Overview
- ◆ Section 2.0 - Context
- ◆ Section 3.0 - Methodology
- ◆ Section 4.0 – Vision for Child Care in Pemberton
- ◆ Section 5.0 – Guiding Principles and Assumptions

¹ The PVUS Committee consists of elected officials and senior staff representatives from the Village of Pemberton and Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. Its primary focus is on the planning and delivery of various shared services in the Village and Area C of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (e.g., Landfill, Recreation). The Committee also allocates annual grant funding to support community recreation, social, and cultural activities in the service area (including funding support for this Needs Assessment and Strategy).

² It is recognized that the SLRD, with its broad regional focus, would have a relatively limited role and stake in Pemberton-specific child care issues. Nonetheless, the Regional District is considered a stakeholder because 1) through the PVUS Committee, the SLRD provided funding support for this Needs Assessment and Strategy, 2) at the time of initiating the research, the SLRD was responsible for the management of recreation service delivery for Pemberton and will be transferring to the Village of Pemberton effective June 1, 2019, and 3) it is important for the Regional District to be apprised of, and offer appropriate support in responding to, issues being faced within its boundaries (i.e., child care concerns in Pemberton).

- ◆ Section 6.0 – Needs Assessment Summary
- ◆ Section 7.0 – Child Care Space Targets
- ◆ Section 8.0 – Strategic Directions and Recommended Actions
- ◆ Section 9.0 – Partnership and Collaboration
- ◆ Section 10.0 – Monitoring and Implementation.

Additional supportive information is contained in the background technical reports for this document.

At the outset, it should be noted that the recommendations contained herein are just that: recommendations. They were based on extensive research and targeted engagement with the community. The document is meant to inform and provide a starting off point for government and community stakeholders to tackle the pressing childcare needs in Pemberton. In order for positive action to occur, key stakeholders in the community need to endorse the recommendations, refine them as necessary over time, and commit to playing an appropriate role in putting them into effect.

2.0 Context

One of the initial steps in undertaking a Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy is to gain an understanding of context – both for the local jurisdiction and for the broader child care delivery system. An overview of the local and broader child care context is provided below.

2.1 Local Context

With respect to child care planning, some noteworthy socio-economic characteristics of Pemberton are as follows:

- *Relatively small and geographically isolated community* - 2,574 people lived in the Village of Pemberton in 2016.
- *Relatively high rate of growth* – the overall Village population increased by 5.8% between 2011 and 2016.
- *Young population* - 545 children aged 0 – 12 years lived in Pemberton in 2016 (21.1% of the total population), with 245 of these children being infants/toddlers and pre-school aged (i.e., 0 – 4 years) and 300 being school aged (i.e., 5 – 12 years).
- *Limited diversity* - The overwhelming majority of people in Pemberton are Canadian-born and have English as a mother tongue. It should be noted, however, that 6.6 % of Pemberton population in 2016 were Indigenous, and a large First Nations Reserve exists nearby (1,285 people living in the Lil'wat Nation).
- *High level of home ownership* – 76.7% of Pemberton households owned their homes, while 22.8% were renters.
- *High percentage of household income devoted to housing costs* - 31.1% of homeowner households and 48.9% of renter households spent more than 30% of their household income on shelter costs – higher rates than both the SLRD and province. It is likely that the percentage of household income devoted to housing costs has risen even higher since the

Census, as housing prices have increased quickly: the average assessed value for a single-family home in Pemberton was \$828,500 as of July 1, 2018 (up 14% since July 1, 2017).

- *Relatively low (and falling) proportions of children (0-14 years old) in lone parent families* – 9.4% of children (0-14 years old) lived in lone parent families in 2016, down from 15.3% in 2011. The proportion of children in lone parent families in Pemberton is much lower than the proportions in the SLRD and BC.
- *Relatively low but still concerning rate of child poverty (based on Statistics Canada Low-Income Measure After Tax data)* - 12.9% of children (0-17 years old) lived in poverty in Pemberton, similar to the SLRD but much lower than in BC. Further, the median total income of couple families with children in Pemberton (\$103,936) was lower than comparable figures for the SLRD and BC.
- *Very high labour force participation rate among core working age (25-64 year old) population* - 91.6% of Pemberton’s core working age population was participating in the labour force in 2016, higher than the rates for both the SLRD and BC.

The foregoing statistics are highlights only. More detailed information on the local population is included in the *Pemberton Statistical Analysis*, a background technical document for this review.

With respect to child care supply, the following services are available in Pemberton:

Licensed Child Care Services in Pemberton – November 2018				
Program Name	Operator	Program Type	Ages Served	Licensed Capacity
Cricketts	Pemberton Children’s Centre	Group Child Care	11 – 24 months	12
Beetlebugs	Pemberton Children’s Centre	Group Child Care	2 – 3 years	12
Dragonflies	Pemberton Children’s Centre	Group Child Care	30 months to school age	25
Super Spuds ³	Private	Family Child Care	Birth to school age	7
Le Petit Bonheur	Private	Family Child Care	Birth to school age	5
Pemberton After School Club	Sea to Sky Community Services	Out of School	5 – 12 years	12
Total				73

³ Super Spuds is situated immediately outside the VOP boundaries, but because of its close proximity to the Village, it is being included in the Pemberton inventory. Two additional group child care programs are operated by the Lil’wat Nation at the Ullus Childcare Centre: Tsuqum (Chickadee; 12 spaces for children aged under 3) and Tsvkatsvka (Blue Jay; 15 spaces for children aged 3 – 5 years). Pemberton families are able to enroll their children in the Ullus centres. Those centres are not included in the Pemberton inventory, however, because they are located roughly 8.5 kilometers from the Village boundaries.

All of Pemberton’s licensed child care programs are fully subscribed (i.e., no vacancies exist) and all have extensive wait lists. No registered license-not-required child care operations (i.e., for two or fewer children) exist in Pemberton.

While the focus of this review is on licensed child care, it is important to note that complementary unlicensed programs provide a valuable supplement to (not replacement of) the regulated system. The value of the complementary programs is particularly strong in Pemberton, given the acute shortage of available licensed child care options in the Village. Parents, licensed caregivers, and others consulted for this review acknowledged the key roles played by such operations as the Pemberton and District Community Centre, Stewardship Pemberton, and the Pemberton and District Public Library in supporting families and delivering programs for preschool-age and school-age children.

2.2 Broader Child Care Context

Child care is a complex field, with no one jurisdiction or entity being responsible for its planning, funding, or delivery. Rather, it can more aptly be described as a patchwork quilt, involving an array of parties playing varying roles, and requiring broad-based collaboration to respond to ever-changing needs and circumstances.

Key partners, and their respective roles, are as follow:

- **Federal Government** – Advocates have long been calling on the Federal Government to develop a national strategy for child care. While that has not happened, the Federal Government initiated a *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework* in 2017 to guide efforts of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments on child care matters. The Framework articulates the commitment of the respective governments to work towards investments to increase quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and child care, placing priority on those with greatest needs. Funding commitments were outlined in the 2017 Federal Budget and include \$540 million in 2018-2019, and \$550 million in 2020-2021. By 2026-2027, the Government of Canada’s child care allocation is envisioned to reach \$870 million annually. To date, the Federal contribution to BC through the Framework has been \$153 million. These funds are being used to support initiatives set out in the Province’s *Child Care BC* plan (discussed below). The funding will be targeted at increasing the number of infant and toddler child care spaces in areas of highest need, providing low-cost infant and toddler care spaces, supporting culturally appropriate care for Indigenous families, and facilitating other initiatives to help vulnerable families.
- **Provincial Government** – The Provincial government has historically played several roles with respect to child care including:
 - ◆ Developing legislation, policy, and regulations
 - ◆ Funding supportive programs and services (e.g., Child Care Resource and Referral programs, Supported Child Development program)

- ◆ Providing Major and Minor Capital Grants to eligible child care providers
- ◆ Providing fee subsidies and program supports for families with low incomes

In its 2018 Budget, under the umbrella of the *Child Care BC* initiative, the Provincial government announced over \$1 billion in new investments for child care and early learning over a three-year period. The funding constituted the single largest commitment to child care in BC history and is intended to set the foundation for universal child care in the province.

Highlights of *Child Care BC* are as follows:

- ◆ Assisting parents with fees – Under the new *Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative*, if a provider signs up for the program, parents are eligible for fee reductions of up to:
 - \$350/month for group infant/toddler care
 - \$200/month for family infant/toddler care
 - \$100/month for group care for children aged 3 to Kindergarten
 - \$60/month for family care for children aged 3 to Kindergarten.

Under the new *Affordable Child Care Benefit* (which replaces the former *Child Care Subsidy* program), additional affordability relief is available for families with annual incomes up to \$111,000. Through the Benefit, parent fees will be eliminated for most families earning less than \$45,000 annually with children in licensed child care aged under 3 years.

- ◆ Enhancing wages and education of BC's Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals - Under the new *Recruitment and Retention Strategy*, ECE professionals will receive two wage lifts over the next two years (each at \$1 per hour, or approximately \$2,000 annually). They will also receive a range of enhanced education supports, including expanded bursaries, paid practicums, professional development opportunities and more spaces for post-secondary ECE training.
- ◆ Funding establishment of additional spaces - Capital funding is being made available to support the creation of a total of 22,000 new licensed spaces (24,000 spaces with Federal funding) over the next three years. Priority is being placed on public partnerships (e.g., with school districts, local governments). Grants are also being offered to support child care planning processes at the community level. In addition, funding is being offered to assist with facility maintenance costs, move unlicensed spaces into the licensed sector, expand options for families working non-standard hours and increase resources for young parent programs and children with additional support needs.

- Local Government - Under Provincial legislation, local governments do not have a direct assigned role with respect to child care. Further, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has long contended that Canadian municipalities only receive eight cents of every tax

dollar collected in Canada.⁴ As such, municipalities lack the mandate and resources of their senior government counterparts to address child care needs.

Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people, however, and they generally have the deepest understanding of local needs and circumstances. Municipalities can also play a vital role in facilitating establishment of quality child care in their communities. Examples of supportive actions taken by municipalities in BC include:

- ◆ Adopting municipal child care policies
- ◆ Convening child care planning tables
- ◆ Advocating to senior governments on local child care needs
- ◆ Undertaking child care needs assessments
- ◆ Providing grants to child care providers
- ◆ Amending zoning bylaws to facilitate development of child care spaces
- ◆ Making space available in municipal facilities, at nominal or below market rates, for the provision of child care
- ◆ Securing built child care spaces or cash in lieu from developers through the development approval process (e.g. by providing bonus density in exchange for child care contributions)
- ◆ Supporting a child care website or link with information targeted both to child care operators and interested parents.

It would be unrealistic to expect a small jurisdiction such as the Village of Pemberton to make the same level of contributions to child care as its larger municipal counterparts. Nonetheless, the Village has shown its support for child care through such actions as:

- ◆ Incorporating policies on community facilities, a healthy and diverse economy, and affordable housing in the Village of Pemberton Official Community Plan (OCP) which, while not directly addressing child care, are complementary to the proposals put forward in this document
- ◆ Establishing provisions for child care facilities in the Zoning Bylaw
- ◆ Providing permissive property tax exemptions for the Pemberton Children's Centre
- ◆ Assisting with the research and review of this Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy.

Further, local governments can play an important role in providing recreation services which benefit families and complement the licensed child care systems. When work on this Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy was initiated, the SLRD was responsible for delivering Pemberton's community recreation services (e.g., operation of the Pemberton and District Community Centre). As of June 1, 2019, the management of recreation service delivery will come under the auspices of the Village of Pemberton.

⁴ See, for example, the FCM report, *The State of Canada's Cities and Communities 2012*.

- Other – Several other parties are involved with the planning, development, support, and operation of the child care system. Examples include child care operators, health authorities, school districts, community service agencies, parents, and the broader community. Additional information on the key child care partners in Pemberton, and their respective roles, is presented in Section 9.0 of this report.

Before closing this discussion, it should be noted that, prior to completion of this Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, the Union of BC Municipalities was inviting applications for two programs: the *Community Child Care Space Creation Program* (funded through the Federal Government) and the *Community Child Care Planning Grant* program (funded through the Provincial Government). Unfortunately, the application deadline for both programs (January 18, 2019) has passed and details regarding further rounds of funding have not been announced. When such details become available, however, information from this document should provide child care stakeholders in Pemberton with solid backup in pursuing future funding opportunities.

3.0 Methodology

Preparation of the Pemberton Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy benefited from coming on the heels of a similar project for the District of Squamish. Several of the same individuals and organizations were involved in both projects. And some key information for the Pemberton initiative had already been gathered for the work in Squamish.

The Pemberton Needs Assessment and Strategy is very much a “made for Pemberton” initiative. While some of the challenges identified for the two jurisdictions overlap (e.g., shortage of spaces, challenges with attracting and retaining qualified Early Childhood Education workers, affordability of care), the particulars differ. Further, the recommended strategies, presented in Section 8.0 of this report, reflect the distinct needs, circumstances, and capacities in Pemberton.

Work on the Pemberton project involved two key components: the Needs Assessment and the Strategy development.

- Needs Assessment- Information for the Needs Assessment was gathered from a variety of primary and secondary sources and utilized both quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data came from:
 - ◆ Consultation workshops – Two consultation workshops were held on November 26, 2018 in Pemberton. The first workshop was for child care providers (four attendees) and the second was for parents and the broader community (31 attendees). Both workshops followed a similar format, whereby participants were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and suggestions for child care in Pemberton. All comments were recorded on flip charts, and participants were invited to identify their top three priorities for each category (i.e., a total of 15 dots for five categories each). Participants at both workshops were fully engaged and offered a breadth of valuable information and insights for the project.

- ◆ Community questionnaire – An online questionnaire was widely circulated throughout the community on November 28, 2018, with a submission deadline of December 10, 2018. The questionnaire sought information on the child care needs, situations, and concerns of respondents (primarily parents from the Village of Pemberton). A \$150 cash incentive prize was offered for completion of the survey. The questionnaire elicited 116 responses – a remarkable response rate, especially given the relatively small size of the Pemberton population and the short duration for which the survey was online.
- ◆ Key informant interviews – The consultants conducted several in-person and telephone interviews with key informants for the project (e.g., representatives from Sea to Sky Putting Children First, VOP, SLRD). The interviews helped clarify the context, issues, options, and other matters pertinent to the project and to child care in Pemberton.

Secondary data for the Needs Assessment came from the 2016 Census, child care licensing records, and assorted government and non-government documentation (e.g., VOP Official Community Plan). Examples of information gathered included:

- ◆ The child and family populations in the area;
 - ◆ Existing child care services and complementary children’s programs;
 - ◆ Other socio-economic and demographic information;
 - ◆ Child care plans, policies, and research from other jurisdictions.
- Strategy Development – The Strategy development flowed from the research for the Needs Assessment. The consultants considered the array of suggestions, opinions, and concerns regarding Pemberton’s child care situation identified through the workshops, questionnaires, and key informant interviews. The consultants also came up with additional options, based on the assessment of needs and research on “best practice” approaches used in other jurisdictions.

The consultants shared draft versions of the Needs Assessment and Strategy with representatives of the Sea to Sky Community Services, VOP, SLRD, and other selected stakeholders who will be directly affected by, or involved with, implementation of recommendations from this document. The consultants made revisions accordingly, reflecting the comments and suggestions received. The intent was to ensure that the information was accurate, stakeholders were comfortable with the roles proposed for them, and the recommendations were thorough, realistic, and appropriate for the Pemberton context.

4.0 Vision for Child Care in Pemberton

In developing a child care strategy, it is useful to have a vision – an aspirational statement of the desired end that the strategy should ideally help a community achieve. The statement should provide a high-level touchstone or reference point both for the strategy preparation and implementation process.

The following is a proposed Child Care Vision Statement for Pemberton:

Families in Pemberton will be able to obtain safe, high quality, and affordable child care services that meet the unique and changing needs of their children.

5.0 Guiding Principles and Assumptions

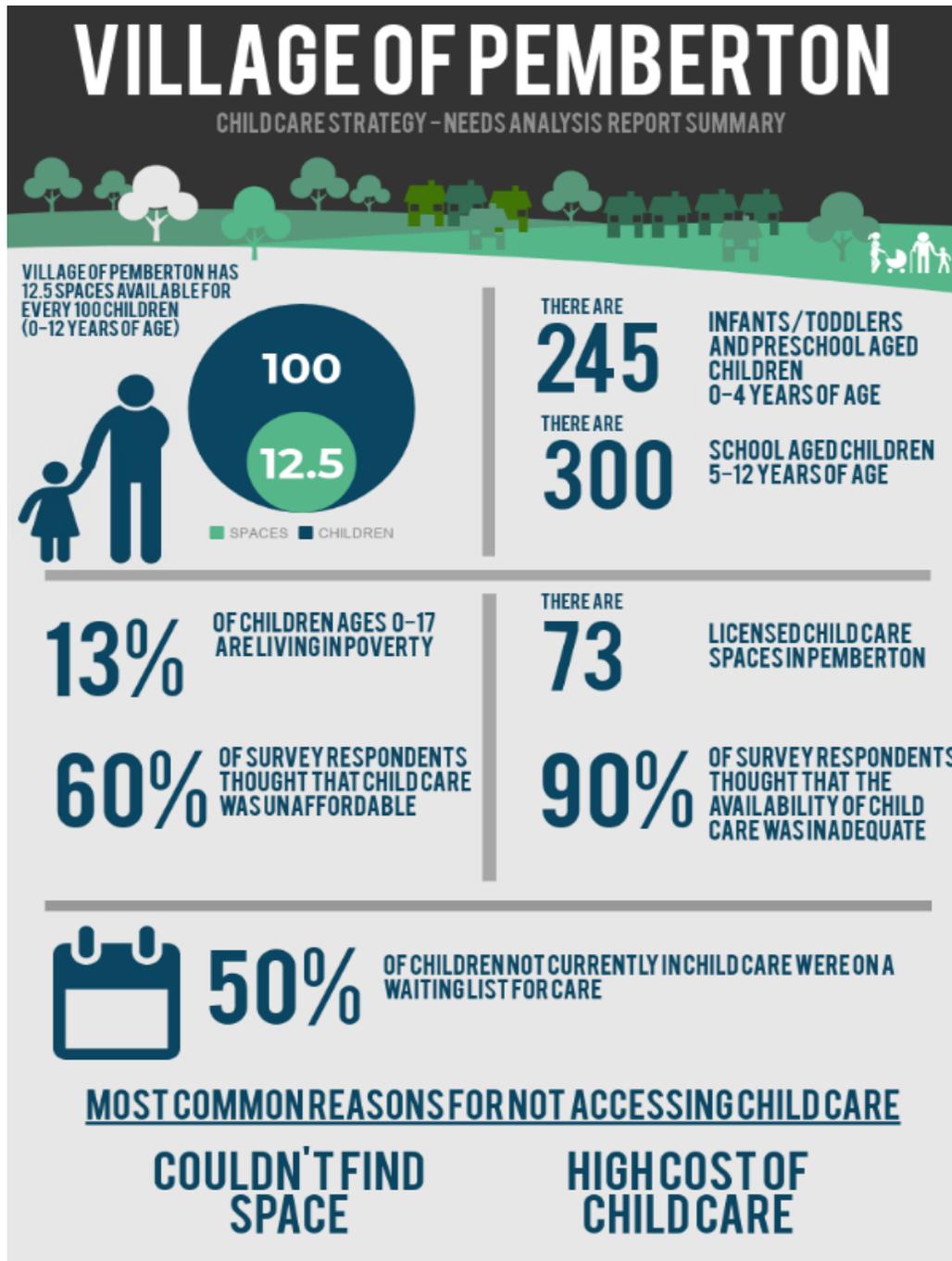
In addition to a vision statement, it is important to articulate the underlying principles and assumptions that guided preparation of the Needs Assessment and Strategy:

- a) Child care is an important community service, a key component of Pemberton's social infrastructure. It facilitates the healthy development of children, supports families, assists the businesses and the economy, and contributes to the overall quality of life of the community.
- b) No one jurisdiction or organization is responsible for child care. Therefore, partnerships and collaboration amongst many parties are essential if child care needs are to be successfully addressed (i.e., it takes a village . . .).
- c) The Child Care Strategy must be founded on solid research.
- d) The Strategy should be ambitious, but also practical, realistic, and within the means of the pertinent stakeholders to pursue.
- e) The Strategy should build on the community's strengths.
- f) The Strategy must be appropriate and responsive to the needs and circumstances of the local jurisdiction.
- g) The community and partners need to be meaningfully engaged and have a sense of shared ownership – both in the development and implementation of the Strategy.

6.0 Needs Assessment Summary

As noted, information for the Needs Assessment came from a variety of sources, both primary (e.g., workshops, questionnaires, interviews) and secondary (e.g., Census, Vancouver Coastal Health). A full version of the Needs Assessment, complete with supporting statistics and data, is provided as a background technical report for this document.

Pertinent highlights are summarized in the following infographic:



With respect to planning for the future, the workshops, questionnaires, and interviews for the project yielded important information on the key strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats regarding Pemberton's child care situation. Highlights are as follows:

Strengths – The main strengths, or positive aspects with respect to child care in Pemberton are:

- Small close-knit community where people know each other and help one another out
- The availability of other recreational and cultural programming to complement licensed child care (e.g., Pemberton and District Community Centre, Pemberton and District Library, Whistler Blackcomb Ski School, One Mile Lake Nature Camp)
- Increased Provincial and Federal funding to assist with parent fees, establish additional child care spaces, and generally enhance the child care system
- Interest of Village of Pemberton, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and other parties regarding child care (e.g., funding for the Needs Assessment and Strategy)
- The quality of ECE workers at Pemberton child care facilities.

Challenges - The main challenges facing Pemberton's child care system are:

- An acute shortage of licensed child care spaces and associated long waitlists – especially for infants/toddlers and preschool age, and school age care
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified ECE staff (due to low salaries and other factors)
- Insufficient local access to education and training for ECE staff
- Limited capacity for serving children with extra needs (e.g., shortage of funding, lack of specialized staff training and experience)
- Difficulties for parents in juggling child care and children's activities
- High cost of living in Pemberton – particularly for housing (affects families and ECE workers)
- Lack of child care options for parents who work irregular shifts (e.g., evenings, weekends)
- Affordability concerns re: fees for parents (despite new Provincial fee reduction initiatives)
- High cost of providing child care (i.e., most of budget goes to staff salaries)
- High cost of establishing new facilities

Opportunities – The main opportunities or things that can be built on concerning child care in Pemberton are:

- Continued funding and policy support for child care from the Village of Pemberton (e.g., permissive tax exemptions for the Pemberton Children's Centre, advocacy to senior governments re: child care needs)
- Availability of senior government funding to create new child care spaces
- Possible space at the community centre to use for licensed child care

- Possible collaboration with developers of multi-family housing projects (e.g., include space for child care operation or establish affordable housing units that could be occupied by ECE staff)
- Enhanced collaboration and partnership amongst child care providers and other supportive organizations (e.g., Village of Pemberton, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, School District 48, Pemberton and District Public Library, Ski School)
- Encouragement of Pemberton residents to set up licensed family or registered license-not-required child care operations
- French school to be built (and potential for exploring inclusion of space for child care)
- Mobilization of the community to have a stronger collective voice re: child care and related matters.

Threats – The main threats to childcare in Pemberton are:

- Fast population growth making it difficult to meet child care demand, both now and in the future
- Lack of ECE staff (issues such as poor wages, not enough incentives, cost of living, staff burnout).
- Affordability of child care
- High cost of education for ECE staff
- High cost of living in Pemberton

Looking specifically at the questionnaire, 116 responses were elicited – a remarkable response rate given the relatively small size of Pemberton and the short duration for which the questionnaire was available. Respondents were asked questions on a variety of matters such as their household characteristics (e.g., incomes, household composition, mobility), their children, and their child care situations and needs (e.g., waiting lists for placement and extra support requirements for their children).

Selected highlights include:

- Just over half of the respondents had only one child (0-12 years old)
- Approximately seven in ten respondents had no other family members who provided regular care for their child
- Over seven in ten respondents needed full-day care (business hours) for their children, with large numbers of respondents also needing before and after school care
- The majority of respondents needed child care during weekdays
- Approximately three in five respondents thought that child care in Pemberton was unaffordable
- Approximately nine in ten respondents thought that the supply or availability of child care in Pemberton was inadequate
- Respondents wanted child care programs to be close to outdoor parks, recreation services, library services and close to home

- Most respondents worked in Pemberton or Whistler: approximately four in ten respondents worked in Pemberton, with roughly four in ten respondents working in Whistler
- Respondents used a range of methods to find child care, with friends/word of mouth being the most common method, followed by internet searches
- Over two-thirds of respondents had used childcare at some point; however, just over half of all children of respondents were currently using child care outside the home
- Monthly child care costs per child varied widely amongst respondents, with \$601-\$800/month being the most common range, followed closely by \$401-\$600/month and \$201-\$400/month
- For parents whose children were not in child care, the most common reason given by respondents was that they couldn't find a space for their child, followed by the high cost of child care
- Approximately half of the children not currently in child care were on a waiting list for care.

7.0 Child Care Space Targets

As noted in the foregoing section, a shortage of spaces is likely the most serious child care issue facing Pemberton. At present, there are an estimated 12.5 licensed child care spaces per 100 children aged 0 – 12 years in Pemberton. This ratio is well below the Provincial average of 18.4 spaces per 100 children aged 0 – 12 years.⁵ It is also well below the ratio of 20 spaces for children aged 0 – 14 years in Squamish,⁶ and lower than the ratio for the 0 – 12 year group for several Lower Mainland municipalities (e.g., City of North Vancouver [24.0: 100], the District of North Vancouver [27.1: 100] and West Vancouver [25.6: 100]).⁷

Rather than merely stating the obvious that Pemberton has a serious shortage of child care options and desperately needs additional spaces, it is important to set targets - identifying the number and type of spaces needed in Pemberton over the next five years (i.e., 2019 - 2023). Targets are useful for providing direction and clarity for future planning efforts and for substantiating capital funding requests to senior governments. Targets also provide a benchmark against which efforts to achieve more spaces over the next five years can be measured.

Unfortunately, no pre-existing age-specific population projections were available for the target-setting exercise for Pemberton. The consultants thus came up with their own population estimates, using a hybrid approach which 1) used data from the Census and BC Stats (P.E.O.P.L.E. forecasts), 2) estimated

⁵ *Early Education Care in Canada, 2016*. Child Care Canada, Child Care Resource and Research Unit. 2016.

⁶ *Squamish Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, 2018 – 2023*. District of Squamish and Putting Children First. 2018. Note: the Squamish Strategy used a 0 – 14 year age cohort, rather than a 0 – 12 year cohort, for its space per child ratios.

⁷ *A Municipal Survey of Child Care Spaces and Policies In Metro Vancouver*. Metro Vancouver Social Issues Subcommittee. 2015.

future growth based on various assumptions for both data sets, then 3) took an average of both.⁸ The resultant estimates are presented in the table below:

Child Population (0-12 Year Old) by Child Care Age Groups, Pemberton, 2016, 2018, 2023 – Average of P.E.O.P.L.E. Projection and Past Census Growth Methods					
Age group	2016 Census Population	2018 pop'n (est.)	2023 pop'n (projected)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (%)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (#)
Infant and toddler (0-2 years old)	145	152	160	5.3%	8
Preschool aged (3-4 years old)	100	105	117	12.0%	13
School aged (5-12 years old)	300	326	378	16.0%	52
Child (0-12 years old)	545	583	655	12.5%	73

It must be stressed that the methodology for the foregoing estimates is crude and more detailed analysis – possibly associated with an update of the Village of Pemberton Official Community Plan – would need to be conducted to produce projections that have greater reliability. The estimates and targets should thus be regarded as preliminary and illustrative only – subject to future verification and refinement.

Having established population estimates, three optional scenarios were considered for setting the targets:

- a) Status quo – Assumes a continuation of the current ratio for 12.5 licensed child care spaces for 100 children aged 0 – 12 years to 2023
- b) Modest – Assumes that the current ratio will increase by 50%, rising to 18.2 spaces per 100 children by 2023
- c) Ambitious – Assumes that the current ratio will increase by 100% to 25.0 spaces per 100 children by 2023.

⁸ Technical notes and additional details on the methodologies are included at the end of this section.

The table below identifies child care space targets under three scenarios:

Pemberton Child Care Space Targets: 2018 - 2023				
Space Target Scenario	Projected 0 – 12 Year Population for Pemberton for 2023 (Based on Average of P.E.O.P.L.E. Projection and Past Census Growth Methods)	Existing Number of Licensed Child Care Spaces in Pemberton (2018)	Total Licensed Child Care Spaces Required by 2023	Child Care Space Targets -Additional Licensed Child Care Spaces Required from 2018 to 2023 ⁹
Status quo – 12.5 spaces per 100 children	655	73	82	9
Modest – 18.2 spaces per 100 children	655	73	119	46
Ambitious – 25.0 spaces per 100 children	655	73	164	91

As Pemberton currently faces a severe shortage of licensed child care spaces, it is believed that the Status Quo scenario for space targets should be rejected out of hand. An argument could be made for supporting the Ambitious scenario, as a 100% increase in the child care space/ child population ratio still yields a ratio lower than existing ratios for various Lower Mainland municipalities. While potentially desirable, the Ambitious target is not considered achievable and is thus not recommended. The Modest targets are considered to be the most reasonable to pursue (i.e., an increase of 46 licensed child care spaces over the next five years). Admittedly, a 50% increase in the ratio of spaces per child may not seem modest; however, it is still slightly below the Provincial ratio of 18.4 spaces per 100 children and is thus the recommended target.

⁹ The space targets should be considered as interim only, which should be revised once more precise population projections are developed for Pemberton. Also, because of limitations in the methodology, it was considered prudent to set the targets for the 0 – 12 group as a whole rather than for finer age breakdowns. It is recommended that the targets be used as a guide for future planning, with decisions about more specific age breakdowns being made at the local level, with up to date local knowledge, when senior government funding is pursued.

Technical Notes on Methodology for Establishing Population Estimates

Step 1: Use the P.E.O.P.L.E forecast for the Howe Sound Local Health Area (LHA) and extrapolate the 2016-2023 growth rates by age group for the LHA to Pemberton's 2016 Census population by age group.

Child Population (0-12 Year Old) by Child Care Age Groups, Pemberton, 2016, 2018, 2023 - P.E.O.P.L.E. Projection Method					
Age group	2016 Census Population	2018 pop'n (est.)	2023 pop'n (projected)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (%)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (#)
Infant and toddler (0-2 years old)	145	155	159	2.6%	4
Preschool aged (3-4 years old)	100	102	110	7.2%	7
School aged (5-12 years old)	300	319	334	4.7%	15
Child (0-12 years old)	545	577	603	4.6%	26

The advantage of this method is that it uses projections based on an actual cohort model developed by BC Stats, but its weakness is that the growth rates are dominated by the population dynamics of Squamish and Whistler instead of Pemberton. Given that Pemberton's total population grew by 5.8% between 2011 and 2016, compared with 13.7% for Squamish and 20.7% for Whistler (Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2016 Census – Census subdivisions), this method has a potential for overestimating future demand for Pemberton.

Step 2: Calculate the annual growth rate by age group between the 2006 and 2016 Censuses for Pemberton (Village) and extrapolate these growth rates out until 2023.

Child Population (0-12 Year Old) by Child Care Age Groups, Pemberton, 2016, 2018, 2023 - Past Census Growth Method					
Age group	2016 Census Population	2018 pop'n (est.)	2023 pop'n (projected)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (%)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (#)
Infant and toddler (0-2 years old)	145	150	162	8.0%	12
Preschool aged (3-4 years old)	100	107	124	16.7%	18
School aged (5-12 years old)	300	332	422	26.9%	89
Child (0-12 years old)	545	589	708	20.3%	119

This method has the advantage of being based on what has actually happened in Pemberton in the past (instead of relying on larger geographies dominated by Squamish and Whistler). Its weaknesses are that it does not respond to cohort changes and assumes that future growth in Pemberton will be the same in the future as in the past.

Step 3: Develop the projection figures to be used for this project, based on an average of figures from the P.E.O.P.L.E. Projection and Past Census Growth Methods.

Child Population (0-12 Year Old) by Child Care Age Groups, Pemberton, 2016, 2018, 2023 – Average of P.E.O.P.L.E. Projection and Past Census Growth Methods					
Age group	2016 Census Population	2018 pop'n (est.)	2023 pop'n (projected)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (%)	2018-2023 pop'n growth (#)
Infant and toddler (0-2 years old)	145	152	160	5.3%	8
Preschool aged (3-4 years old)	100	105	117	12.0%	13
School aged (5-12 years old)	300	326	378	16.0%	52
Child (0-12 years old)	545	583	655	12.5%	73

Because of the dramatic differences in the five-year population growth figures between the other two projection methods (i.e., 26 additional children under one method and 119 additional children under the other), it seemed prudent to use the average method for purposes of this project. As noted, however, the methodology is crude and more detailed analysis – possibly associated with an update of the Village of Pemberton Official Community Plan – would need to be conducted to produce projections that have greater reliability.

8.0 Strategic Directions and Recommended Actions

There are no magic bullets or simple solutions for responding to Pemberton’s existing or future child care needs. Rather, a variety of actions must be pursued, with each addressing a particular piece of the puzzle. Patience, determination, collective action, and commitment will be required. The work will be challenging – and successful results cannot be guaranteed for all efforts. A further challenge is that the local level of government in Pemberton lacks the capacity of its counterparts in larger jurisdictions to devote significant time or resources to child care matters. It is hoped, however, that the recommended strategies and directions presented below will help the pertinent stakeholders to address community child care needs in a more strategic and coordinated manner in the future.

Three Strategic Directions are proposed for addressing priority child care issues for Pemberton to 2023: enhancing availability and viability, improving access and coordination, and strengthening collaboration. Further background on each Strategic Direction is provided below, along with recommended actions, time frames, and potential partners for implementation.

Strategic Direction 1: Enhancing Availability and Viability

The overarching child care issue facing Pemberton is a shortage of child care spaces. Long waiting lists exist for all child care operations in Pemberton and many parents are not even able to get on lists. Also, the number of spaces per child in Pemberton is well below the average for the province. Parents are concerned that the problem could get worse as the population of the Village continues to grow.

In addition to a shortage of spaces, several concerns exist regarding Early Childhood Education professionals – the people needed to staff the facilities. Key issues relate to low wages (despite recent wage enhancements from the Province), challenges in attracting and maintaining workers, and lack of localized or accessible training opportunities. Put simply, there will be no point building more child care facilities if ECE employees can’t be found to staff them.

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
Endorse and commit to supporting the target of establishing an additional 46 licensed child space spaces for Pemberton by 2023 (i.e., increasing the licensed capacity from 73 to 119 spaces over the five-year horizon)	Short term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • SLRD
In partnership, apply for capital grants to fund establishment of required additional child care spaces in Pemberton (e.g., expansion of Pemberton Children’s Centre)	Short term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Pemberton Children’s Centre • Provincial Government • Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
Review VOP plans, policies, and regulations to remove or reduce potential barriers for establishing child care facilities in Pemberton	Short term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP
Continue to offer grants, permissive property tax exemptions, and other appropriate support to help in addressing child care needs in Pemberton	Short term, ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • PVUS Committee
<p>Include specific provisions for child care in the next update of the Village of Pemberton’s Official Community Plan (OCP) such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating the importance of child care to the social infrastructure of Pemberton • Identifying child care as a community amenity that could be pursued through density bonusing • Identifying child care as use for consideration in future plans for community facilities • Acknowledging the roles that the VOP plays in facilitating development of child care in Pemberton (e.g., provision of permissive property tax exemptions for non-profit child care operators) 	Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
Consult with School District #48 regarding future opportunities, potential collaboration, and planning parameters for establishing child care facilities on school grounds (particularly out of school care operations)	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School District #48 • VOP • Local Member of Legislature (MLA) • Ministry of Education
Update the Community Services Master Plan, exploring opportunities to include child care spaces in future recreation or park developments ¹⁰	Medium term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP
Recognizing that community centre recreation programs, library programs, and other recreation and cultural programs provide a valuable complement to licensed child care services and help bridge child care needs for families, request that the providers of those programs liaise with child care operators on service and program planning for children (e.g., regarding opportunities for collaboration, schedules for summer and after school programming)	Short term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Pemberton & District Public Library • Child care providers
Explore opportunities for targeting a share of affordable rental housing units secured through VOP Affordable Housing Strategies to benefit ECE workers	Short term/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Developers • Child Care Resource and Referral • Child care providers
Explore incentives to encourage people to set up home-based (family child care and license-not-required) child care facilities in Pemberton	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea to Sky Community Services Society • Child Care Resource and Referral

¹⁰ As noted, when this study was initiated, the SLRD was responsible for delivering recreation services for Pemberton. The VOP will assume responsibility for recreation service delivery for the Village as of June 1, 2019. The VOP is thus cited as the responsible partner for recommended actions involving community recreation in this document.

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
Explore opportunities for making ECE training more accessible, affordable, and enticing for child care workers in Pemberton (e.g., courses delivered in Pemberton, enhanced online or video conferencing options)	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care providers • Child Care Resource and Referral • Capilano University/ Ts'zil • Lil'wat Nation • Other institutions that offer ECE training

Strategic Direction 2: Improving Accessibility and Inclusion

In addition to measures aimed at increasing the supply or viability of spaces, it is also important to reduce barriers to access of child care. The Province has done much to improve affordability and accessibility through its *Child Care BC* initiative. Through the community questionnaire, and consultations with care providers and parents, however, it is clear that concerns persist in Pemberton (e.g., cost of care, lack of services for children with extra needs).

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
Offer assistance to Child Care Resource & Referral in advocating for enhanced resources to reduce waiting lists and improve services for children with extra support needs	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea to Sky Community Services Society (Supported Child Development Program) • VOP • Provincial Advisory Group for Supported Child Development

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
<p>Develop and maintain a one-stop online information resource aimed at helping parents understand the options and make informed decisions about child care and related services for their children, linking local information with that available province-wide (e.g., https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children)</p>	<p>Medium term/ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea to Sky Community Services • Pemberton & District Public Library • Child Care providers
<p>Request School Districts #48 and #93 to explore the possibility of establishing consistent closing times amongst public schools to better coincide with the schedules of recreation centre, library, and other after school programming for children</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Sea to Sky Community Services • Child care providers • School District #48 • School District #93
<p>Explore options for encouraging, supporting, and promoting community-based approaches, outside the regulated child care system, to assist families with child care needs (e.g., families helping families approaches - a complement to, not a replacement of, licensed child care)</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care providers • Child Care Resource and Referral
<p>Examine the viability and feasibility of establishing short-term, drop-in, and extended hour (evening and weekend) child care services in Pemberton</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care providers • Child Care Resource and Referral
<p>Explore opportunities for establishing inter-generational programs, whereby seniors interact with children from child care and recreation programs</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Child care providers • Child Care Resource and Referral

Strategic Direction 3: Strengthening Collaboration

As noted, no one organization or jurisdiction is responsible for child care. Indeed, the theme of this Needs Assessment and Strategy is that it takes a village to raise a child. To effect required change, a coordinated approach, involving a variety of partners, is required.

Child care providers, parents, and others consulted for this project indicated that a key strength of Pemberton is that it is a small close-knit community where people know and support one another, and agencies have a history of positive collaboration. It will be important to build on this identified strength in future efforts to affect change and address child care needs in Pemberton.

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
<p>Establish a Pemberton Child Care Steering Committee with a mandate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinate implementation of the recommendations from this document • exchange information • collaborate on joint initiatives • monitor changing needs and issues regarding child care in Pemberton • prepare annual reports on progress made in advancing the recommendations from this document • In the 2022 annual progress report provide recommendations on initiation of a follow up Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy for 2024 – 2028. • pursue other activities considered appropriate for improving the child care situation in Pemberton 	<p>Short term, ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea to Sky Community Services • VOP • Pemberton & District Public Library • School District #48 • School District #93 • Vancouver Coastal Health • Ministry of Children and Family Development • Pemberton Child Care Society

Recommended Actions	Time Frame: Short Term (1-2 years), Medium Term Action (2- 5 years), or Ongoing	Potential Partners
<p>Liaise with senior levels of government on potential partnerships and funding opportunities for enhancing child care services in Pemberton (e.g., through developing or improving facilities, providing equipment or resources, augmenting programs)</p>	<p>Short term, ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • Sea to Sky Community Services • Local Member of Parliament (MP) and Member of Legislature (MLA) • Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
<p>Advocate to the Federal and Provincial Governments on priority child care issues facing Pemberton, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions to support the recruitment, retention, and training of child care workers, including wage enhancement initiatives and improved local training opportunities • Capital funding for establishment of new or expanded child care facilities • Operational funding to support further research on child care solutions for Pemberton as well as implementation of recommendations from this document • Enhancements to the Supported Child Development Program 	<p>Short term, ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOP • SLRD • Local MP and MLA • Sea to Sky Community Services Society • Child Care Resource and Referral • Provincial Advisory Group for Supported Child Development

9.0 Partnership and Collaboration

The foregoing section identified potential partners to collaborate on the recommended actions for addressing Pemberton’s child care needs. Also, Section 2.2 of this report provided a high-level overview of key roles various jurisdictions and organizations play with respect to child care in BC.

The following is a list of key groups and organizations having a stake or interest in child care in Pemberton, along with the types of roles they can play:

- Village of Pemberton (VOP): Advocate to senior governments, regulate land use, establish supportive policies in the Official Community Plan
- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD): Receive information, provide appropriate support (e.g., through role on PVUS Committee)
- Pemberton Valley Utilities and Services (PVUS) Committee: Allocate community grant funding (including funding for this Needs Assessment and Strategy), support child care advocacy efforts, serve as conduit to the SLRD on Pemberton child care needs
- School Districts #48 (SD48) and #93 (L'école La Vallée): Share information, pursue joint planning and service delivery opportunities including space sharing and/or siting child care facilities on school property
- Lil'wat Nation – Share information, pursue joint planning and service delivery opportunities, collaborate on ECE training opportunities
- Community agencies and services (e.g., Sea to Sky Community Services Society, Child Care Resource and Referral, Supported Child Development Program, Pemberton and District Community Centre, Pemberton and District Public Library): Share information, co-develop policies and strategies that are supportive of child care, submit joint proposals for child care funding, explore space-sharing opportunities for child care
- Child care providers: Share information, co-develop policies and strategies that support child care providers
- Individual practitioners (e.g., behaviour consultants, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists): Share information, explore opportunities for collaboration on child care services
- Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH): Share information, administer licensing requirements, inform child care policy development for the VOP
- Provincial Advisory Group for Supported Child Development: Share information, advocate for additional funding and staffing supports for children with additional support needs, inform VOP on child care policy development
- Growing Great Children – Sponsoring community-based initiatives targeted to Pemberton families with children aged from 0 – 6 years
- Parents/caregivers: Share information, inform child care policy development for Pemberton
- Developers: Explore opportunities for collaboration on, and possible incentives for, establishing space for child care in new developments
- The local business community and Pemberton & District Chamber of Commerce: Share information, understand and support child care needs of employees, lend support to funding requests and advocacy to address local child care needs
- Local MLA and MP: Share information, advocate to senior government on local child care needs and issues

- Senior governments (Federal and Provincial): Develop and enact child care policies, assist families with child care needs, subsidize people pursuing ECE education, provide stable and reliable funding for a comprehensive child care system in Pemberton (i.e., through enhancing wages for ECE workforce, capital grants for child care facilities).

10.0 Monitoring and Implementation

To effectively advance the actions recommended in this document, it is essential that a coordinated approach be taken. Without such coordination, actions could be piecemeal and fragmented, and this document could run the risk of just being another study gathering dust on a shelf.

As indicated in Section 8.0, it is recommended that a Pemberton Child Care Steering Committee be established with a mandate to:

- Coordinate implementation of the recommendations from this document
- Exchange information
- Collaborate on joint initiatives
- Monitor changing needs and issues regarding child care in Pemberton
- Prepare annual reports on progress made in implementation of recommendations from this document, as well as any adjustments required to advance child care needs in Pemberton (reports to be shared with the VOP, PVUS Committee, and other key stakeholders)
- In the 2022 annual report, provide recommendations on initiation of a follow up Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy for 2024 – 2028
- Pursue other activities considered appropriate for improving the child care situation in Pemberton.

Proposed members of the Steering Committee include:

- VOP
- SLRD
- Sea to Sky Community Services
- Pemberton & District Public Library
- School District #48
- School District #93
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Growing Great Children.

Early establishment of the Steering Committee is considered essential, given the magnitude and urgency of child care challenges to be addressed for Pemberton. Early establishment is considered all the more important given that funding for Putting Children’s First Initiative (PCFI) is scheduled to end in March 2019. PCFI could not have been expected to take on the tasks of the proposed Pemberton-specific

Steering Committee; however, it played a valuable role with respect to information sharing, joint planning and coordination of efforts in the Sea to Sky corridor. It is hoped that another region-wide entity will be established to replace the PCFI and support the efforts of the Pemberton Steering Committee in advancing this Strategy.

To conclude, this document was intended to:

- 1) Provide guidance to the VOP, SLRD, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, and other interested parties [e.g., Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), child care providers, community agencies] in addressing child care needs in Pemberton to 2023;
- 2) Identify a vision, strategic priorities, and space targets for child care in Pemberton
- 3) Propose a framework for implementation of the recommendations contained herein.

This document followed on and benefited from work on a similar child care project for the District of Squamish; however, its findings and recommendations are very much unique to Pemberton. The recommendations respond in a strategic manner to Pemberton-specific needs, while also respecting the capacities and resources of the various stakeholders involved..

Advancing the recommendations in this document will be challenging. It is believed, however, that with the concerted and coordinated efforts of the community and local government partners, positive headway should be made to improve the child care situation for Pemberton over the next five years.