



Strategic Priority 1:

City of Delta - Leading the Change

What are we trying to achieve: OBJECTIVES

- Improve public awareness of and access to services and community facilities available in Delta.
- Utilize an evidence-based approach to inform City Council, community partners, funders and senior levels of government about emerging community needs and social planning priorities.
- Enhance Delta's social planning capacity and plan for long-term community impact.

A table of actions for each strategic priority can be found on page 57.

Why it is important:

Traditionally, Canadian municipalities had limited jurisdiction over social services; however, local governments have always been the closest level of government to their residents and are often the first point of contact, particularly in crisis situations, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last several decades, municipalities have been gradually assuming a more active social role in the communities and have been doing it regardless of a limited mandate in the realm of social service provision and limited resources. However, they rely heavily on community partnerships to advance social initiatives.

This section provides information about the needs, gaps and challenges identified through community consultations, which are city-wide concerns spanning various sectors and population groups.



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What we know: LOCAL CONTEXT

People: The City has many departments working together to support and improve residents' wellbeing, including Corporate Services, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Engineering, Bylaws & Compliance, and Community Planning and Development Departments. There are 1,552 staff altogether, including 202 employed by Delta Fire Department and 307 by Delta Police.

Mayor and Council: There are six Councillors and the Mayor. Through a majority vote, council members make collective decisions in the best interest of Delta residents.

The Social Planning Function: The first Social Planner in Delta was hired in 2016. The position is housed in the Corporate Services Department within the Corporate Policy team.

Policy Context:

- **Social Action Plan:** In 2017, Delta's first Social Profile was developed, which informed the development of the first Social Action Plan in 2018.
- **Official Community Plan:** Social Planning is included in Delta's Official Community Plan under the Community Services objective: *Facilitate social planning in the community to build capacity, identify community needs, and encourage the provision of services to meet these needs.*
- **Delta Foundation for the Future:** The Social Pursuit is one of the key pillars of the Delta Foundation for the Future and provides a broad overview of the City's objectives and priorities in this area.
- **Other Plans:** In 2020, the first Delta Child Care Action Plan was developed and endorsed by Council; in 2021, the first draft Delta Housing Plan was developed, and the City initiated a comprehensive poverty needs assessment in 2021.

City of Delta: Permissive Tax Exemptions | 2020

The City waives over \$2 million a year in property taxes for more than 70 community organizations in Delta.

bc211 Service Referrals in Delta

In 2020, out of 1,002 referrals for services given through the bc211 helpline to Delta residents, more than 75% of those services were located **outside** of Delta.

What we can build on: DELTA'S ASSETS

Vibrant Community: Delta is home to a vibrant community of caring neighbours who are active participants in civic life and strong advocates for equity and social justice.

Council Priorities: In the past five years, since the establishment of the social planning function, the City of Delta has made significant strides in advancing social planning priorities, from developing its first Social Action Plan to facilitating the opening of an Extreme Weather Shelter and a Women's Transition House in Delta. Various social planning policies and actions plans have been developed.

Service Agreements: the City provides annual funding to local community organizations serving vulnerable populations, including Deltassist, REACH, Boys and Girls, the Phoenix Society and the Delta Children and Youth Committee. In addition, the City funds counselling services to support Delta youth in crisis.

Community Tables: There are various community collaborative tables that bring together multiple sectors to address community-level challenges such as overdose crisis, food insecurity, racism, and violence; there are also community collaborations, such as the Delta Children and Youth Committee that builds sector capacities to improve the lives of children and youth in Delta.

City's Advisory Committees: the City established a robust roster of Advisory Committees to support and advise Council and staff on various social issues; including the Mayor's Taskforce on Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, the Mobility and Accessibility Committee, and the Mayor's Youth Council. These advisory bodies provide opportunities for community members to bring diverse perspectives to the City's decision making processes.

What we heard: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Limited access to funding: Delta's unique geography presents significant challenges for residents in accessing services in Delta and service providers in accessing funding to address community needs. Historically, funders have divided Delta into South and North Delta, with North Delta often being included in service provision areas for agencies located in Surrey and South Delta being included in service provision

areas for agencies located in Richmond. As a result, Delta's current social services infrastructure does not adequately address the complex needs of its residents. In 2020, out of 1,002 referrals for services given through the bc211 helpline to Delta residents, less than 24% were referred to services located in Delta²¹.

Limitations to advance the City's social planning priorities: As the scope and complexity of social issues in Delta increases over time, the social planning function has also been expanding. The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations and the impacts of extreme weather, paired with the overdose crisis, have added new layers of complexity and demands on social planners across British Columbia.

Challenges finding services in Delta: There are several online listings and databases of services in Delta that are not consistently updated and maintained. At the City consultations session in 2019, participants identified a need for accurate data collection about services and resources and requested that an online map of social service providers and resources be created.

Room for growth in capacity building in Delta: While Delta enjoys a strong culture of collaboration, community partners have identified the need for improved coordination and capacity building in Delta with the City playing a convener role in these efforts across multiple sectors (joint efforts to build staff capacities, joint fundraising, joint proposal writing, joint needs assessments, and collective work to reduce duplication of services).

Limited access to community-level data: One of the challenges for Delta-based social agencies is to demonstrate the need for services. The City can play a leadership role in data collection, compilation, analysis and sharing community-based data with community partners, which will inform community responses and social services programming.

Gaps in communications: At the 2019 stakeholder workshop, community partners identified gaps in communications as one of the key challenges in developing city-wide responses to emerging and systemic community challenges. The City is well-positioned to inform, amplify messages, provide education, and raise awareness in situations of crisis and develop and enhance its day-to-day community communications function to support better coordination and collaboration in the community.

1. Through a collaborative funding effort involving the City of Delta, Delta School District, and the federal and provincial governments, the new **North Delta Track & Field Facility** was opened in August 2021.
2. Delta has 17 Parks, Recreation and Culture facilities that offer diverse programming tailored to different audiences. **Sungod Recreation Centre** features a swimming pool, arena and other recreational facilities.
3. **North Delta Centre for the Arts**, the 2-storey, 146-seat, multi-function theatre, has been designed to facilitate a flourishing arts community in Delta. The Centre was completed in 2020 and features state-of-the-art sound and visual equipment, several multi-purpose rooms, and a piano room.

