

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community of Sunshine Valley wants to have a voice in servicing and development decisions and a greater role in shaping its future. A vision for the future of the community, based on shared values and aspirations, is a starting point. The vision will assist residents, community organizations, government agencies, and developers in making decisions that move the community toward the future it wants. This is the vision:

Sunshine Valley aspires to be a cohesive rural community of informed and active citizens who value the natural environment; participate in decisions that affect the community; and work together to achieve the provision of fair, accountable and transparent local decision making and services for everyone.

This report sets an overall direction for the community and then provides more details for achieving the vision in four key areas - local decision making, development, environment and services/infrastructure:

Local Decision Making	There should be established opportunities for participation in local decision-making which are open and accessible for the entire community.	
	While respectful of differences, Sunshine Valley should come together to present a strong and collective voice to external agencies, industry, government and developers.	
	Government agencies and developers should inform the community of matters that may affect community interests and provide meaningful opportunities for consultation and input.	
Development	Modest development should be balanced with the need to retain rural quality of life and resort/recreational character through community planning. A community plan should be shaped by the entire community and serve as a foundation for decision making.	
	Crown land managers should anticipate the local impacts associated with resource and industrial development in the lands surrounding the Sunshine Valley community in a forward and comprehensive manner.	
	Crown agencies and industry should work with the community to identify and address local values such as visual aesthetics, drinking water sources and recreational opportunities.	
	New development should bring benefits to the entire community.	
Environment	New development should be of a scale and form that is compatible with the rural environment. Resource activities should be planned and designed to maintain visual and environmental values, views and aesthetics and environmental qualities.	
	Environmental impacts of development should be assessed and mitigated during the development approval process. Planning for the community should include the identification of environmentally important areas to ensure their long-term conservation.	
	The community should work with government and resource/development groups to create improved trail access and recreational facilities, and find ways to reduce environmental impacts of recreational activities. Opportunities for public places which enhance the rural recreational character of the community should be identified through community planning processes.	
త	The Sunshine Valley community wishes to be a part of decision-making and build their understanding of the local service delivery functions. Through an inclusive process, citizens can develop trust and participation in how their community infrastructure functions.	
ucture 18	Satisfactory drinking water is a primary right for all citizens. Sunshine Valley's drinking water needs to satisfy governmental regulations and have effective oversight systems to ensure compliance.	
Services, Infrastructure & Institutions	As a community of rural neighbourhoods, Sunshine Valley should have a common meeting place to bring residents together. Sunshine Valley should consider ways to address community concerns and establish support for existing community facilities in order to provide a place which is accessible to all and paid for by everyone.	
	While it is recognized that rural communities can not provide the same level of services found in urban centres, Committee members identified the desire for improved communications infrastructure – specifically high speed internet and cellular phone service – to enhance safety and provide economic and social opportunities.	

To translate this vision into action, the Sunshine Valley Committee recommends that the community should:

- 1. develop a strategic land use plan to provide recommendations to the subdivision approving officer, government agencies, and developers about development and land use in the valley;
- 2. request the FVRD Regional Board include Sunshine Valley in the forthcoming engineering 'gap analysis' of community services in the Electoral Areas to provide baseline information about existing services;
- 3. explore how to assist owners in resolving or improving long-standing issues with ownership and tenure:
- 4. work with the Ministries of Transportation and Forestry to improve road conditions to a level appropriate for a residential area;
- 5. seek support for workshops on community-building, conflict resolution and community representation;
- 6. identify Crown land values that are important and develop a plan to protect them;
- 7. evaluate local decision making and authority options, and set out a series of steps necessary for achieving the desired option.

These recommendations represent a multi-year program of work that will require dedication, persistence, cooperation and assistance from all levels of government, and the setting of priorities. A local committee must be established to guide this work and provide a structured, open and accountable forum for community decision-making and organization.

The Sunshine Valley Committee invites everyone to read the vision and let this become a new opportunity for Sunshine Valley to work together to shape the community.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

Sunshine Valley residents have expressed their desire to come together to address community concerns about local decision making, the environment, infrastructure/services and development. This Vision report is the first step towards identifying a response to these concerns and setting a direction for the future of the community.

### 2.1 Sunshine Valley – A Special Place

Sunshine Valley is a rural community of residential and recreational homes 19 kilometres east of Hope, BC. The community is set in a mountain valley with rivers and lakes, near the E. C. Manning and Skagit Valley Provincial Parks. Residents describe the community as a place where one can know their neighbours or enjoy the solitude of a clear night sky and clean mountain air. Outdoor recreation opportunities are abundant year round, from hiking or fishing to snowmobiling in the winter months. For these reasons and many more, residents describe Sunshine Valley as a special place.

## 2.2 History of Sunshine Valley

Sunshine Valley has a unique past. Over the years the area has been home to a series of distinct activities and individuals. Interestingly, the common historical thread for this area is not the people. Rather, it is the original farm structures such as the barn and the chicken coop which have been used in very different ways as the nature of the community changed through time.

The following is a brief timeline of the history in Sunshine Valley:

- 1930's Amos Bliss Trites is granted 360 acres for a homestead and ranch named AB Trites Hope Farm
- 1940's (early) Tashme, a Japanese internment camp
- 1940's (late) property returned to use as AB Trites Hope Farm
- 1955 –Boys Town Association home for 'wayward' boys
- 1962 resort development interests emerge
- 1965 Hope slide
- 1970 recreational resort development by Sunshine Valley Developments Ltd

In 1967 Sunshine Valley became a part of Electoral Area "B" of the Fraser Valley Regional District (formerly Fraser-Cheam Regional District) as an un-incorporated community. However, in 1984 zoning, Official Community Plan and building inspection services were removed from the area. Each of the neighbourhoods has private services and individual land use agreements and building inspection is done by private arrangement.

Although some services of the Regional District were withdrawn, Sunshine Valley continues to be a part of the FVRD. It receives a variety of Regional District services and local representation to the Regional Board through an elected area director.

## 2.3 Sunshine Valley Now

Development in Sunshine Valley consists of a series of six distinct recreational/residential neighbourhoods, sometimes referred to as villages<sup>1</sup> – Alpine, Cedar, Meadow, Sumallo, Parkhill, and Huckleberry – established in the 1970's and 1980's. Within these neighbourhoods there are over 389 lots or sites.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Map of Sunshine Valley at end of this document.

While individual neighbourhoods may have capable organizational structures, the community lacks a forum to come together to make decisions, agree on objectives, and resolve disputes. For this reason and others, Sunshine Valley has been place of internal division and discord. Residents wish to overcome this aspect of the past, focus on the many values and objectives they share and work together to shape the future of the Valley.

### 3.0 DEVELOPING THE VISION

### 3.1 Why a Vision?

Over time, Sunshine Valley has become a more complex community with a larger year round population. Along with these changes comes increased concern about: 1) the fairness, accountability and transparency of community services and institutions; and, 2) impacts of development and resource extraction. Expectations of the community for input in development decisions have greatly increased.

In order to respond more effectively to local issues, the community members approached Fraser Valley Regional District to begin a process to identify the type of community the residents want and provide an opportunity for citizens to work together. This visioning process is a starting point for addressing community concerns and actively shaping the future of the Valley.

#### A Definition of Vision:

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a vision as the ability to think about the future with imagination or wisdom, or a mental image of what the future will or could be like.

A Vision is a process through which the community creates shared values and objectives for its future and plans to achieve the vision over time.

## 3.2 The Role of a Vision – a Direction not a Blueprint

The Vision for Sunshine Valley outlines commonly held community values and a positive course for the future of the community. The Vision is not a legally binding document, bylaw or regulation nor is it a new financial commitment for Sunshine Valley. Rather it is a good-faith guide for Sunshine Valley to work together towards achieving its goals.

#### Common elements of a vision:

- positive tone, something to work towards
- shared values
- reflects the uniqueness of the community
- mark the goals
- provides the big picture

To guide and manage the achievement of these shared values, the community must come together and publicly express their values in writing. This written commitment is the essence of the Vision Plan. It allows the community to anchor their values in a tangible way and provide a consistent and informed basis for future decision making for not only Sunshine Valley residents but also government decision makers, industry, and developers.

## 3.3 The Sunshine Valley Committee

The Sunshine Valley Committee was established in March 2007 to develop a community vision based on co-operation and consensus. The Committee consisted of thirty-four people with at least one person from every neighbourhood in Sunshine Valley. The Fraser Valley Regional District facilitated committee meetings to ensure a fair, meaningful and respectful discussion of community issues and to provide a format where participants could work progressively toward a vision for the community.

The Committee met five times between August and December 2007 to complete their work. Each of the sessions is summarized in meeting reports publicly available on the FVRD web page at (http://www.fvrd.com).

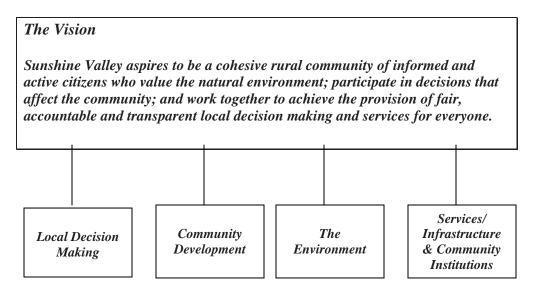
### 4.0 A VISION FOR SUNSHINE VALLEY

Sunshine Valley is a place where citizens celebrate their rich natural environment, recreation opportunities and rural character. These assets provide a strong base for the community and opportunities for responsible growth, but local stewardship is required to maintain them.

Current divisions within the community make it difficult to capitalize on opportunities for improvement and stewardship of assets. In particular, many felt that Sunshine Valley lacks a collective voice to express concerns and values to those outside the community such as industry and government. It is clear that the status quo is not satisfactory.

If the community is to be more involved in decision-making and achieve goals for the environment, development and services, it must set aside past differences, identify common interests and create a vision for the future which broadly reflects the values of the community.

The following is an overall vision for Sunshine Valley:



The following sections expand upon and apply the vision to the areas of services/infrastructure, development, local decision-making and the environment.

## 4.1 Local Decision Making

Sunshine Valley will become a place where everyone has an opportunity to contribute in a respectful and transparent manner to create a collective voice that represents and advocates the community's collective values.

The Sunshine Valley Committee is proud of their community and considers it to be a place where people participate in community life, contribute their unique skills and knowledge, and accept differences. While there are numerous positive features of the community, most felt that it is struggling to find a cohesive voice. Over time, divisions within the community have created fertile ground for disputes, confusion and lost opportunities to make decisions or effectively advocate for community interests. There are different opinions about the cause of community divisions. Rather than dwell on the cause, the Committee chose to move beyond divisions to find common values and approaches to bring the community together.

The committee identified the following fundamental principles to achieve the Vision as it relates to local decision-making:

### 4.1.1 Build a fair, accountable, and transparent Sunshine Valley

There should be established opportunities for participation in local decision-making which are open and accessible for the entire community.

### 4.1.2 Create a collective voice which includes everyone

While respectful of individual differences, Sunshine Valley should come together to present a strong and collective voice to external agencies, industry, government and developers.

#### 4.1.3 Be consulted and informed

Government agencies and developers should inform the community of matters that may affect community interests and provide meaningful opportunities for consultation and input.

### 4.2 Community Development

Sunshine Valley will become a place where citizens are engaged in decision making to create a sustainable Sunshine Valley, where a rural lifestyle functions together with planned modest growth and resource development.

Sunshine Valley is located within a two hour drive of more than two million residents of the Lower Mainland. Everyday over three thousand vehicles pass the community on Highway #3<sup>2</sup>. Given this proximity and access, Sunshine Valley will continue to experience pressures for recreational development and resource extraction.

Currently, there is no overall plan for development within the community and no strategy for protecting community interests in Crown land activities. This leaves the community pressured to respond to individual development proposals within a limited time, with little information and without an overall cumulative perspective.

The Committee generally supported modest planned growth that protects environmental values, recreational assets and the rural nature of the community.

To achieve the Vision, the Committee identified the following key principles:

#### 4.2.1 Plan for our future

Through community planning, the desire for modest development should be balanced with the need to retain Sunshine Valley's rural quality of life, and the resort/recreational character. The community plan should be shaped by the entire community and serve as a foundation for decision making and certainty.

### 4.2.2 Collaborate in crown land management

Crown land managers should anticipate the local impacts associated with resource and industrial development in the lands surrounding the Sunshine Valley community in a forward and comprehensive manner.

The surrounding crown lands are extension of the community and decisions without local input and planning can affect Sunshine Valley. Planning ought to be a collaborative process where crown agencies and industry work with the community in partnership to identify and address local values such as visual aesthetics, drinking water sources and recreational opportunities.

#### 4.2.3 Identify local benefits

New development should contribute to the entire community. Sunshine Valley should work together with industry and developers to identify benefits which address broad community needs, such as road or trail improvements, new local services, and assistance with a community infrastructure, amenities or other improvements.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ministry of Transportation, 2006 traffic count figures for Highway #3 near Sunshine Valley

### 4.3 The Environment

Sunshine Valley will become a place where the natural environment and rural landscape are respected and the community lives in harmony with the environment, protects ecological integrity, and supports responsible outdoor recreation opportunities.

Sunshine Valley is located in an environmentally rich and diverse area. It is north and west of two major parks – E. C. Manning and Skagit Valley Provincial Parks – and surrounded by crown protected areas and managed lands. Local citizens take pride in their location and recognize their role as environmental stewards. It is important to retain the natural environment for both the local citizens and the general public's recreation enjoyment.

Sunshine Valley Committee members often mentioned that their reason for purchasing in Sunshine Valley was the natural environment and its outdoor recreation opportunities. Committee members also valued the absence of air, noise and light pollution.

The community has demonstrated their strong commitment and appreciation of the local environment through an initiative to designate nearby crown lands as a Community Forest. The Committee wishes to build upon this initiative and has identified the following principles to support Sunshine Valley in becoming a sustainable community.

### 4.3.1 Preserve the rural landscape

For most Sunshine Valley citizens, the surrounding environment is the basis for the rural quality of life and aesthetic appeal of the area. For instance, Committee members identify the importance of natural viewscapes and a clear night sky as values which contribute to the rural landscape. These values should be carefully balanced through a collaborative plan with crown agencies. New development should be of a scale and form that is compatible with the rural environment and existing community. Resource activities should be planned and designed to maintain visual values, views and aesthetic and environmental quality.

#### 4.3.2 Value environmental sustainability

Development and resource industries bring significant pressures to local wildlife and habitat areas. Environmental impacts of development should be assessed and mitigated during the development approval process. Planning for the community should include the identification of environmentally important areas to ensure their long-term conservation.

### **4.3.3** Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities

Sunshine Valley should work with user groups, government and the resource and development industries to create improved trail access and recreational facilities, as well as reduce environmental impacts of recreational activities. Opportunities for public places which enhance the rural recreational character of the community should be identified through community planning processes.

### 4.4 Services, Infrastructure & Community Institutions

Sunshine Valley will become a place where fair, transparent and accountable services and community institutions are provided for the benefit of everyone.

Sunshine Valley's rural recreational lifestyle is supported by a number of infrastructure services, amenities and community institutions. Committee members indicated that many of the services and institutions are inadequate, confusing, unequal, or lack accountable frameworks for citizen participation.

To move forward, the Committee identified the following principles for services, infrastructure and community institutions:

### **4.4.1** Participate in service delivery

The Sunshine Valley community wishes to improve their understanding of how their local services function, and engage in the decision making process. Improved communication and inclusive decision-making processes are necessary for citizens to develop trust in service providers and participate in community infrastructure functions.

### 4.4.2 Ensure drinking water is safe and clean for everyone

Satisfactory drinking water is a primary right for all citizens. Sunshine Valley's drinking water needs to satisfy government regulations and have effective oversight systems to ensure compliance.

### 4.4.3 Provide a meeting place for everyone

As a community of rural neighbourhoods, Sunshine Valley should have a common meeting place to bring residents together. Sunshine Valley should consider ways to address community concerns and establish broad support for existing community facilities in order to provide a place which is accessible to all and paid for by everyone.

### **4.4.4** Improve communication infrastructure

While it is recognized that rural communities can not provide the same level of services found in urban centers. Committee members identified the desire for improved communications infrastructure – specifically high speed internet and cellular phone service – to enhance safety and provide economic and social opportunities.

### 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Recommendations

The Sunshine Valley Committee makes the following recommendations which summarize the vision and principles and put them into action:

### 5.1.1 Develop a strategic land use plan

Sunshine Valley residents want a more active role in shaping the future of their community. The community should develop a strategic land use plan for Sunshine Valley to outline community values and provide recommendations to the subdivision approving officer, government agencies, and developers about development and land use in the Valley.

### 5.1.2 Complete a baseline study of existing community services

Many residents are unsure of the status of services, especially drinking water services, in the community. The community should ask the FVRD Regional Board to include Sunshine Valley in the forthcoming engineering 'gap analysis' of community services in the Electoral Areas. This analysis could provide baseline information about existing services within the community such as documenting current service levels and availability, and identifying responsible agencies.

### 5.1.3 Analyze land tenure and ownership structures

The particular ownership structures and land tenures within the Valley raise a number of issues for owners. The community should explore how to support owners in resolving or improving long-standing issues with ownership and tenure.

### **5.1.4** Improve local road infrastructure

Many residents are concerned with the condition of the community's roads, especially the Sumallo Forest Service Road. The community should continue to work with the Ministries of Transportation and Forestry to improve road conditions to a level appropriate for a residential area.

#### 5.1.5 Build local capacity and knowledge

In order to develop a tradition of collaboration and cooperation, the community should seek support for workshops on community-building, conflict resolution and community representation.

### 5.1.6 Establish a crown lands management plan

Crown lands surrounding the community are vitally important for recreation, aesthetic, environmental quality, health and wellbeing. The community should identify Crown land values that are important and work with provincial agencies and resource companies to protect them.

### **5.1.7** Complete a governance study

The community should further evaluate governance options, and set out a series of steps necessary for achieving the desired option.

### 5.2 Implementation: a Local Committee

These recommendations represent a multi-year program of work that will require dedication, persistence, cooperation and assistance from all partners, including the community, industry and government. Clearly the community will have to determine priorities for action.

It will also be important to set realistic expectations. There are no easy answers to many of the community's problems and some issues may not be solvable, but all of them can be improved in meaningful ways. On the other hand, if residents expect nothing then nothing will be achieved.

It is certain that the community must be cohesive, well organized and supported by the Regional District and senior governments if the community is to achieve its vision. **This means that a local committee must be established.** 

One option would be to constitute this committee as an Advisory Planning Commission (APC) which has the advantage of:

- providing members with protection against legal actions for damages arising out of the proper performance of the duties of the APC;
- having a direct relationship to the Regional Board; and,
- being better understood and formally recognized by government agencies.

Other suitable models may be available. The specific model for the committee is less important than the establishment of a working committee to implement the recommendations.

The committee must be:

- representative of the community;
- fair, open and transparent in its operation;
- operate according to defined procedures;
- host open meetings with published meeting notes; and,
- make a difference.

The role of the committee would be to:

- set and accomplish priorities;
- relate to government agencies in planning and approval processes;
- guide the development of plans and strategies for the community;
- provide a structured, open and accountable forum for community decision-making and organization;
- advise the Electoral Area Director and the Regional Board on a variety of matters;
- enhance capacity and expertise within the community; and,
- establish a track record of working together and achieving success.

## **5.3** Regional District Commitments

Support from the Regional District is vital. The Sunshine Valley community should request the following commitments from the Regional Board:

#### 5.3.1 Provide advisory assistance

Provide support in establishing a local committee (or an Advisory Planning Commission as desired), including recommendations for appointing members, operating the committee, etc.

### 5.3.2 Offer technical support

Provide information, mapping and professional advice from time to time.

### **5.3.3** Develop an information resource

Create a web page as a central place for the local committee's meeting notes, background information and public notices related to the Commission.

### 5.3.4 Cover expenses

Through the EA Director, establish a small budget to cover local committee volunteer member's expenses.

### **5.3.5** Participate in referrals

Engage the local committee in crown land and development referrals.

#### 5.3.4 Make connections

Establish formal linkages between the local committee and decision makers such as the Regional Board and other government agencies.

### 6.0 CONCLUSION

Following a series of five community-directed sessions, members of the Sunshine Valley Committee and the Fraser Valley Regional District presented a draft of the Vision for Sunshine Valley to the general community for discussion and feedback in January 2008.

The Vision was, overall, well received and supported by the approximately 75 people in attendance. Comments provided verbally at the meeting and in written feedback forms, confirmed that the Sunshine Valley community strongly values the natural environment, recreational amenities and the rural lifestyle. Clearly, the community wants to actively preserve and enhance these values and address community concerns about development, the environment, services and community institutions. There was consensus that a local committee should be established to follow-upon the Vision and achieve these objectives. It will be vital that this new committee is representative, fair, transparent and open.

The Vision is a starting point for achieving this future. However, Sunshine Valley must decide for itself how to move forward, address community priorities, and create a tradition of cooperation and success to ensure that the valley continues to be a special place for everyone.

## **Appendix A: Table of Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **Assets**

- Natural Environment
- Recreation opportunities
- People
- Hope-Princeton/Highway #3 access
- Proximity to Lower Mainland
- Rural character
- Affordability

### Challenges

- Community divisions
- Confusion on governance structure
- Lack of united community voice
- Patchwork quilt of villages with complicated ownership and tenure structures
- Low priority community for Provincial agencies
- Needed infrastructure improvements (water, roads, recreation centre)
- Hazard and environmental management
- Disconnected from communication sources (high speed internet, newspaper, etc)
- Impacts from resource development
- Volunteer burnout

#### **Future potential**

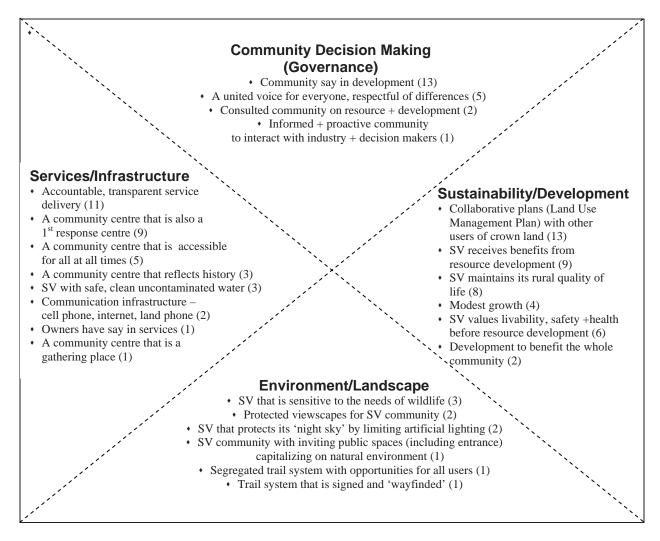
- Improved amenities and services (i.e. commercial space, public gathering and recreation areas)
- Tourist traffic & commercial activities
- Desire for community cohesion and harmony
- Shared responsibility and community input
- Responsible growth and development
- Enhanced community aesthetics built form and natural environment
- Retention of unique rural character
- Expanded outdoor recreation areas
- Stronger environmental protection measures & community stewardship

#### **Outside Barriers**

- Inability to communicate as one voice to external agencies/industries
- Lack of infrastructure funding
- Limited involvement in crown land development
- No community profile with the Province
- Increased demand for recreational lands, decreasing affordability
- Uncertain natural hazards and impacts to development
- Restricted access to financing mechanisms
- Conflicting land values resource development vs. environmental protection
- Unknown developer, new to the community

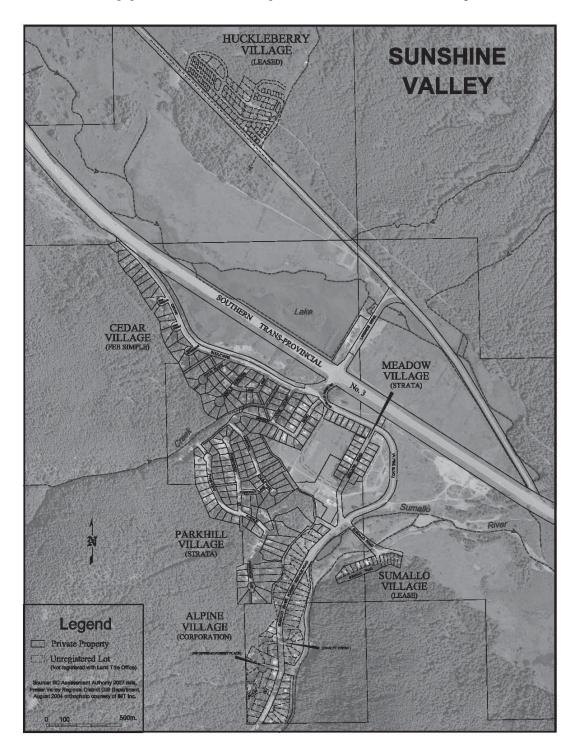
This table is summary of the challenges and opportunities identified during the August 4, 2007 visioning session.

## **Appendix B: Table of Interests and Values**



This table is the result of a values prioritization session during the October 20, 2007 visioning session. The numbers shown in brackets (x) represent the number of votes each specific value received.

# **Appendix C: Map of Sunshine Valley**



### **Fraser Valley Regional District**



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