



FAIRFIELD GONZALES  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
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Fairfield Gonzales Community Association

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# Strategic Plan

2024-2029



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# I. Introduction

The Fairfield Gonzales Community Association (FGCA) is a non-profit society and registered charity that has been operating for almost 50 years. The organization plays a vital role in our community as a connection point, resource, and neighbourhood hub. FGCA's vision is that Fairfield Gonzales is a connected, collaborative, inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable community. We achieve this vision by offering a wide array of social services for people of all ages and backgrounds, with a focus on support for children, youth, and families. This includes childcare, youth and family support, recreation classes, youth and family counselling, and community development work. We also act as the neighbourhood association for the Fairfield and Gonzales neighbourhoods of Victoria. This role includes learning about what is important to residents and advocating for their needs, providing opportunities for celebration, and fostering a sense of belonging for everyone in our community.



FGCA's work is centred around its main location at Fairfield Gonzales Community Place, a community centre and neighbourhood house at 1330 Fairfield Road in Victoria, BC. Operations also take place at offsite locations including within several local schools. We serve about 20,000 people every year, employ over 100 individuals, engage more than 200 volunteers, and manage a budget of over \$3.5 million.

## Strategic planning

The FGCA has undertaken a strategic planning process to ensure focused decision-making and effective execution of our purpose. This process aimed to clarify our priorities, set achievable goals, and outline concrete actions for the next five years. Engagement for this updated strategic plan included collaboration with senior staff, Board of Directors, committee members, and frontline staff. We also heard from over 250 residents via a forum and survey about their priorities for Fairfield Gonzales.

The FGCA is well positioned to fulfil our purpose of serving and strengthening our community. We possess a broad range of service, strong team of staff and volunteers, financial capacity, essential programming, and credibility with partners, funders and the community.

Despite these strengths, there are some pressure points in FGCA's operations that are addressed in this plan. One pressure point is finances, due to increased restrictions on FGCA's funding alongside inflationary pressures. Another concern is increasing community needs driven by soaring cost of living along and rising mental health challenges. A third pressure point is FGCA's organizational complexity, particularly in our dual role as a neighbourhood association and social service provider. These pressure points have guided where we will allocate resources with our strategic plan for 2024 to 2029.

## II. Priorities

FGCA has identified five strategic priorities to guide our efforts over the next five years.



*Increase financial stability and resilience*



*Grow our impact*



*Increase community space*



*Build the capacity of our people*



*Enable Board governance and neighbourhood functions to thrive*

### 1. Increase financial stability and resilience

FGCA has adequate financial reserves and a more diversified funding base than many similar non-profit organizations. However, a majority of our funding comes from government grants and sources outside of the organization's control, meaning that potential changes and existing restrictions on funds pose challenges.

FGCA needs to manage risk by growing our revenue, being innovative and efficient in program delivery, and advocating with funders for appropriate and sustainable funding. We invested in staff recruitment and retention over the last three years, most notably by becoming a Living Wage employer. Now that the labour shortage is softening, we need to build back our financial reserves to increase resilience and be in a position to take advantage of opportunities that arise.

Goals:

- a. Create a fund development plan
- b. Advocate for sustainable funding
- c. Increase unrestricted revenue
- d. Build back financial reserves

### 2. Grow our impact

Community needs are high, and growing as the neighbourhood grows. FGCA has a long history of offering essential services that meet many of these community needs. Our



programs serve neighbourhood families, youth, and children, and provide services on behalf of all levels of government. These and other partnerships present significant opportunities in service delivery.

While we may be tempted to go beyond our expertise into new areas of programming, the feedback we gathered showed that we may already be trying to do too much, diluting our focus and limiting our ability to respond to emergent issues. FGCA will want to leverage its strengths – expertise in current program areas, connections to children, youth, and families, and the high demand for current services.

To ensure that everyone can access FGCA services, the organization will undertake assessments and initiatives in inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. In response to the provincial government's adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, FGCA will focus resources on truth and reconciliation to create new relationships with Indigenous people based on trust and respect.

Goals:

- a. Expand programming in current service areas
- b. Promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in our organization and community
- c. Advance truth and reconciliation with Indigenous people

### **3. Increase community space**

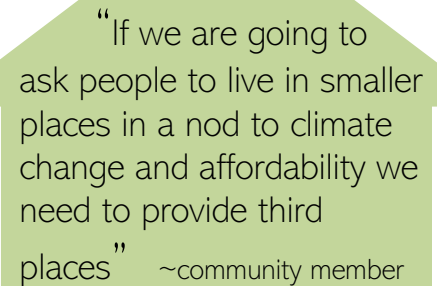
FGCA enjoys a beautiful physical building and location, but is challenged by aging infrastructure, limited space for programming, and the lack of a current operating agreement with the City for its main facility. Our ability to offer in demand services, like childcare, is limited by space and not by our ability to offer those services, should we be provided sufficient space.

At the same time, the neighbourhood is losing some key gathering spaces as it grows. For its size, Fairfield Gonzales has never had an abundance of community gathering space, and Gonzales is one of only two areas in Victoria that is not within a short walking distance of a seniors or recreation centre.

By preparing for opportunities in facility expansion and monitoring availability of other non-commercial space in the neighbourhood, FGCA will support the well-being of Fairfield Gonzales into the future.

Goals:

- a. Execute a new operating agreement with the City
- b. Identify opportunities for expanding or preserving community space
- c. Plan for facilities that meet future programming needs



“If we are going to ask people to live in smaller places in a nod to climate change and affordability we need to provide third places” ~community member

#### **4. Build the capacity of our people**

A vast majority of our resources are our people. This plan asks FGCA’s people to have a greater impact and serve increasingly complex needs, and they will need to be supported and resourced to do so. This includes training, recruitment and retention, and succession planning.

Goals:

- a. Improve training & onboarding for staff and Board
- b. Invest in recruitment, retention, and succession planning

#### **5. Enable Board governance and neighbourhood functions to thrive**

FGCA is a social service provider operating a myriad of programs, and we are also the neighbourhood association for Fairfield Gonzales. As the neighbourhood association, residents count on us to speak up for their needs, bring positive changes to the community, create opportunities for celebration, and build a strong sense of neighbourhood identity

Our current structure requires the Board of Directors to perform two roles; governing the organization to ensure its operational and financial success, and acting as the neighbourhood association. Both require time, energy, and expertise. We need to ensure that we have the time and resources to do both of these things well. Over the next several years we will explore and pilot promising practices that support success in both of these areas.

Goals:

- a. Identify promising practices in similar organizations

- b. Explore and pilot a new structure for the governance function and neighbourhood function of the Board, with each function appropriately resourced

### III. Outlook

This living document will guide FGCA's work for the next five years and will be used frequently to evaluate our progress toward our priorities. We will also periodically re-evaluate how community needs are evolving and whether updates to the plan are needed. This strategic plan will position us to serve our community well over the next five years and beyond.