

Tahsis

## Child Care Action Plan



Village of Tahsis  
December 2019



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Village of Tahsis would like to thank the following individuals for their input and assistance with the Community Childcare Space Creation Action Plan:

- Village of Tahsis staff, especially Mark Tatchell, Deb Bodnar, Sarah Jepson, Janet St.Denis, Amanda Knibbs and Carlene Calder
- Council members
- School District #84, especially Lawrence Tarasoff and Deane Johnson
- Parents of children in Puddle Ducks Daycare
- City of Richmond for their willingness to share related survey templates and reports
- Vancouver Island Health, especially Kaiflyn Nohr
- Participants in attendance at Vancouver Island West Early Years Table meeting (October 29 in Gold River)

This plan was funded by the Union of BC Municipalities under the Province of British Columbia's *Community Child Care Planning Program*. The report was prepared by Ruth Malli, a temporary employee of the Village of Tahsis and Sarah Morden of Defero-West Consulting on contract to the Village of Tahsis.

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## 1 Introduction

The Village of Tahsis is located in the Strathcona Regional District on the west coast of Vancouver Island. As a small, remote community, the municipality plays an active, supportive role in the social well-being of the community, including providing programs and services for local children, youth and families.

Child care needs in Tahsis are unique due to the community's small population and remote location. Before exploring the needs, it is useful to have a broad understanding of the community's history and the circumstances that have given rise to the need for strong municipal involvement and leadership in directing local planning and future investment in child care.

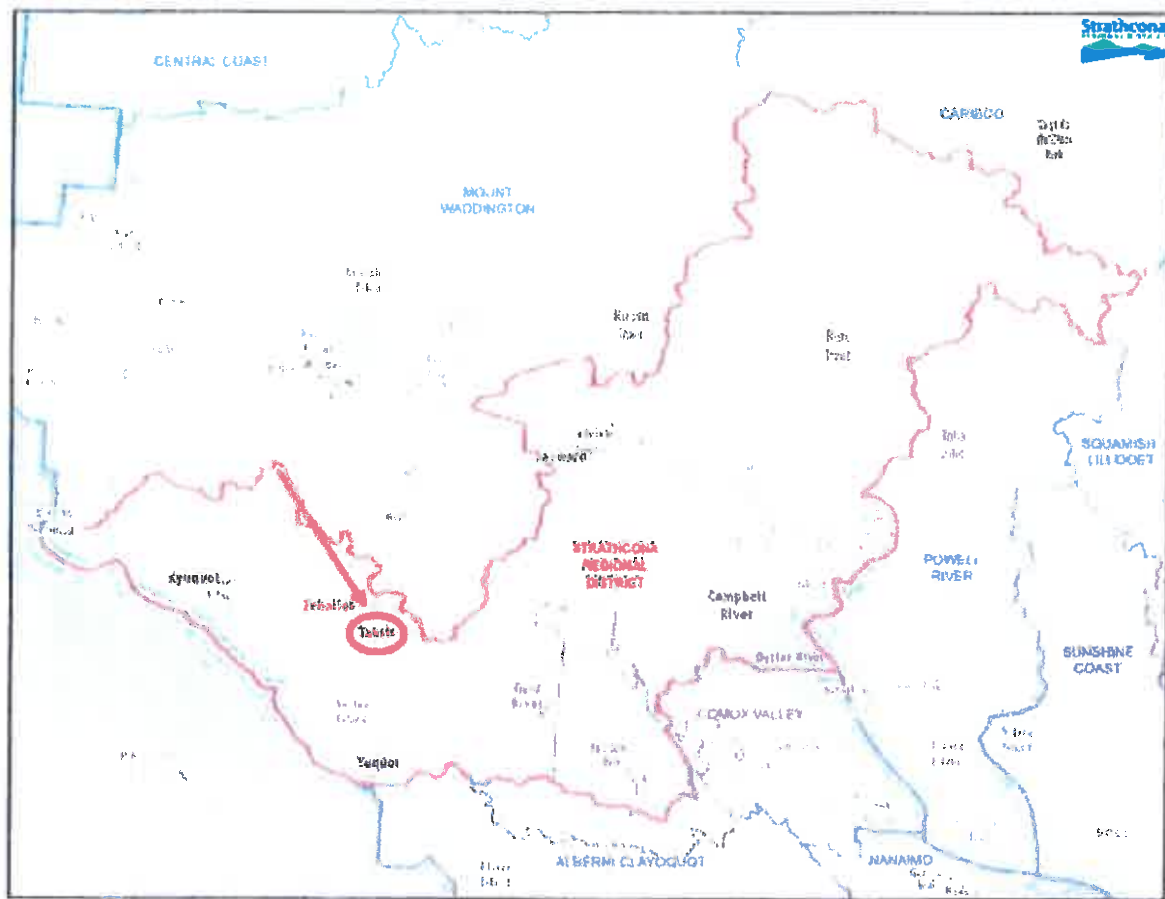


Figure 1 – Strathcona Regional District Overview Map (Source: Strathcona Regional District)

### 1.1 Local Context / History

Tahsis is located within the traditional territory of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, and Ehattesaht First Nations, whose Nuuchahnulth-speaking tribes have lived in the Nootka Sound region for over four thousand years. Surrounded and sustained by a wealth of natural resources for centuries, the Nootka people traditionally changed locations with the season, depending on the availability of resources. Tahsis ("the gateway") was their winter home, where they hunted

deer and bear, and fished the rivers – the community evolved as an important gateway to a significant aboriginal trade route leading over land and the Nimpkish River to the east coast of what would later be named 'Vancouver's Island'. Tahsis first experienced European contact by the Spanish and the British in the late 1770s, when the two countries vied to establish territory claims and initiate trade with the local First Nations communities. European contact also introduced several deadly diseases and significant cultural upheaval, which was devastating for the Nuu-chah-nulth tribes – with an estimated population of 30,000 at first contact, it is reported that upwards of 90% of the Nuu-chah-nulth population had lost their lives by 1830, as a direct result of European contact.

Following the decline of the area's fur trade in the 1800s, the region remained largely unchanged until the 1900s when logging was introduced, attracting more permanent European settlement and further displacing the Mowachaht/Muchalaht people and disrupting their seasonal nomadic patterns. The first sawmill operation in Tahsis was established in the 1940s and by 1972, the bustling community enjoyed road access to Gold River, boasted a population of approximately 2,500 residents and had officially incorporated as a Village municipality.

The prosperity continued until the late 1990s when the continuing decline in lumber prices coupled with increased competition from abroad led to a province-wide decline in the timber industry. Following the closure of the sawmill in 2000, the community's population began to experience a significant decline – today, Tahsis is home to approximately 250 year-round residents and about 1,500 in the summer. Today, the Nuu-chah-nulth speaking people, including the Mowachaht/Muchalaht, number about 1,000 and are scattered throughout northern Vancouver Island, with villages located at Espinoza Inlet (Ocluje), near the Village of Zeballos (Ehatis), and Gold River (Tsaxana).

## 1.2 Recovery and Transition

In the years since the mill closure, the Village has been steadily focused on transitioning from a primary resource economy to a tourist and service-based economy. A tremendous amount of effort has been invested in implementing economic development strategy that prioritizes sector development in eco-tourism, aqua/marine related industries, value-added wood processing and lifestyle home-based/telecommuting opportunities. Construction of a new Canadian Coast Guard Station is currently underway in Tahsis, which will operate on a 24-hour basis, creating approximately 8 permanent, full time jobs. The federal project involves an employment partnership with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, which is aligned with the Village's repatriation efforts.

Despite recent progress, the loss of several local businesses and related services continues to be a challenge for Tahsis. In this context, the importance of municipal quality of life services is amplified, particularly where there is focused effort to attract young families and grow the community. Currently there is only one licensed child care provider in Tahsis – Puddle Ducks Daycare, which is operated by the municipality. Though the local population has declined significantly since 2000, the ongoing focus on economic diversification and First Nations repatriation could result in considerable community growth over the next decade – with only one licensed child care provider, even an increase of 3-5 children is significant, yet is likely not enough to sustain a second licensed group child care facility. The municipal child care service

therefore needs to be both flexible and scalable, able to accommodate and care for a changing number of children and mix of ages.

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Reconciliation is a key focus area for Mayor and Council – in 2016, the Villages of Tahsis and Gold River along with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation signed a joint Vision Statement confirming their collective commitment to open communication, relationship building and collaboration as a way of moving forward for the betterment of all residents, members and businesses within the region. The Village of Tahsis is actively working to encourage and welcome the Mowachaht/Muchalaht people home – Council's vision is for Tahsis to one day be a safe haven for all its traditional indigenous and non-indigenous residents alike.

For child care providers, being mindful of the generational trauma that indigenous families have experienced as a result of colonization and the residential school system is very important. Licensed child care facilities must foster an environment that is safe, inclusive, welcoming and respectful.

In Tahsis, the Village is committed to ensuring that all municipal services, including Puddle Ducks Daycare, are aligned with the spirit of the joint Vision Statement, thereby adopting an organizational cultural that is respectful of Indigenous cultural, language and history.

### Vision Statement

*The three communities of Mowachah Mowachah First Nation, Gold River and Tahsis, each with our own form of government, peoples and cultural backgrounds share a desire to move forward together for the betterment of our residents, members and businesses.*

*Through ongoing effective communications, relationship-building and strategic positioning, the three communities shall strengthen their ability to influence the outcome of developments throughout the lands, waters and air of the Gold River area, Nootka Sound and Tahsis Inlet.*

*We cherish and enjoy healthy lifestyles surrounded by some of the world's most beautiful and pristine natural environment on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. We are progressive communities that share a desire to responsibly manage our natural resources in a manner that will stimulate new business opportunities and develop a diversified economy whilst always respecting each other.*

*Our success shall be built on a strong work ethic, open communications, honesty, understanding, respect, and productive working relationships with each other and our partners. We shall strive to provide superior services to our people in a timely, effective and efficient basis and shall maintain the highest levels of professional integrity while maintaining our uniqueness as independent entities.*

*Signed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016, in Tsaxana, BC.*



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Mayor Brad Unger

Chief Miki Maquinna

Mayor Jude Schooner

### 1.3 Additional Considerations for Child Care Planning

The figure below (Figure 1) is taken from the [2019 Tahsis Community Profile](#), using 2016 Census data. Notably, the median age of Tahsis residents (58 years) is significantly higher than the provincial average of 43 years. The Village's age distribution also varies significantly from provincial and regional patterns – in particular, the community has a much smaller youth population (just 8% under the age of 20) and a much larger proportion (50%) in the 45-64 age category. According to BC Stats, population growth in the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) through 2040 is expected to average 0.4%, compared to an expected province-wide growth rate of 1.0%.



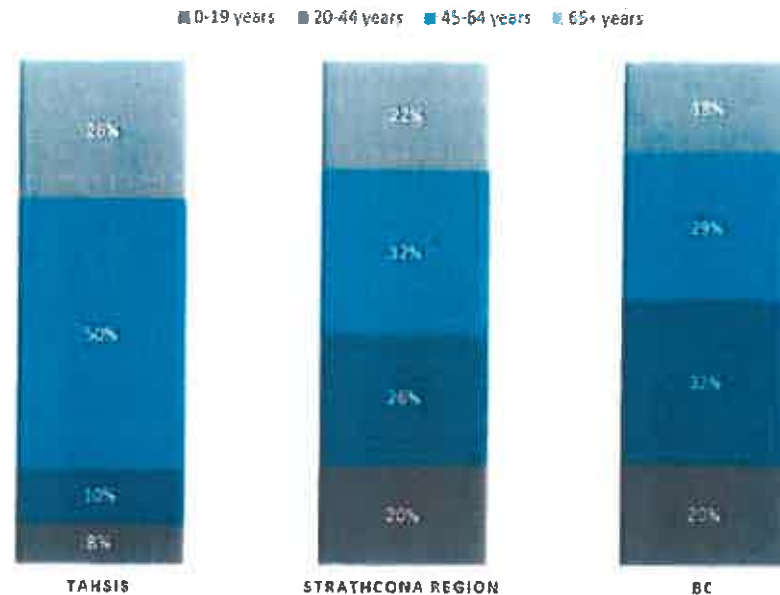


Figure 2 - Source: Statistics Canada (taken from the 2019 Tahsis Community Profile, prepared for the Village of Tahsis by McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. March, 2019)

Though the Village is actively engaged in efforts to grow the local economy, attract young families and repatriate the Mowachaht/Muchalaht people, the low year-round population density and lower proportion of children/youth presents important challenges for child care planning and service delivery. As with other small, rural and remote communities in BC, the solutions require a high level of collaboration, creativity and commitment on behalf of local stakeholders and partners.

Other child care related challenges that must be addressed in Tahsis include service affordability and flexibility, as evidenced by the following data taken from the 2016 Census profile:

- the median total income of Tahsis households in 2015 was \$37,248, compared to the regional (SRD) median of \$62,366 and provincial median of \$69,995;
- the unemployment rate in Tahsis was 13.3% in 2015, compared to 9.9% in the SRD and 6.7% for BC;
- census sampling suggests that somewhere around 20% of the employed labour force in Tahsis are commuting outside of the local community for work;
- while housing affordability in Tahsis is favourable compared to the regional average (median value of dwellings in Tahsis for 2015 was \$80,125, compared to \$500,874 for the SRD), this is tempered by higher costs for items such as groceries and personal items, which are more expensive due to transportation costs.

It is important to note that municipal governments, whose powers derive from provincial legislation, do not have a direct responsibility for economic development or social services. However, municipalities do have a significant stake in the well-being of their communities, and strong local leadership is particularly important during times of economic challenges and transition. As the only licensed child care service provider in Tahsis, and as the lead organization actively working to encourage the return of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht people and to attract



new residents and businesses to Tahsis, the Village recognizes the need for a Community Child Care Action Plan that identifies local child care needs (current and future), and provides practical strategies and recommendations to ensure the continued provision of quality, affordable child care over the next 10 years.

affordable and  
flexible  
care

Small  
Small  
Indigenous  
Respectful  
Safe  
Flexible  
Safe  
Inclusive  
Vulnerable  
Small  
Remote  
Safe  
Resilient  
Safe

## 2. Project Methodology

### 2.1 Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of the Tahsis Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan is to:

1. Identify key child care needs for Tahsis over the next 10 years; and
2. Identify and evaluate facility options to avoid the closure of the community's only licensed daycare, Puddle Ducks Daycare. (see section 2.3 below – *Project Importance / Project Urgency*)

Its objectives are to:

1. Identify child care needs (opportunities and priorities for action) for Tahsis for 2020-2030;
2. Identify key child care usage patterns and concerns of parents and caregivers;
3. Identify stakeholder preferences (parents, care providers, community partners) for the future of Puddle Ducks Daycare; (see section 2.3)

4. Provide recommendations for addressing priority child care needs in the Village over the next ten years.

## 2.2 Scope of Work

The following key research activities were completed as part of the development of this Action Plan:

**Background research**, including a thorough review of related municipal plans and documents, Census data, related local/regional/provincial initiatives and services, historical information; and, engineering reports on the existing Puddle Ducks daycare facility. Key documents included, but were not limited to the following:

- Village of Tahsis Official Community Plan (new OCP in draft), Community Profile and Council's Strategic Priorities
- Wave 6 Early Development Instrument
- Vancouver Island West Childhood Resiliency Project
- Strathcona Regional District Community Health Network Strategic Plan
- UBCM's report entitled Child Care Needs in Small, Rural and Remote Communities in British Columbia
- Village of Tahsis Recreation Complex Improvements Analysis (McElhanney Consulting)
- Village of Tahsis Flood Risk Assessment Report

**Interviews** in person and by phone/email with municipal staff (in particular Mark Tatchell – Chief Administrative Officer; Deb Bodnar and Janet St. Dennis, Finance; Sarah Jepson – Director of Recreation; and Carlene Calder, Early Childhood Educator), Council members, School District #84 Superintendent Lawrence Tarasoff, consultants (engineers) and community stakeholders to understand the current state of child care, the condition of the existing daycare facility and alternate facility options for avoiding the closure of Puddle Ducks Daycare;

**Site tour** of the Tahsis Recreation Centre (including the existing Puddle Ducks daycare) and Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School as a new facility option;

**Community survey**, primarily targeted towards parents/guardians, but also open to the broader resident population to obtain community feedback and suggestions on the future of child care services in Tahsis;

**Further stakeholder consultation**, including attendance at the October 29<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Island West Early Years Table Meeting, along with follow up conversations with local and regional partners.

### 2.3 Project Urgency

Mayor and Council have prioritized the development of this plan within the current [Official Community Plan \(OCP\)](#) and their [Strategic Priorities for 2019](#). Notably, the Village is currently in the process of updating its OCP - the new Plan should be complete by the end of 2019. The review process has included extensive consultation with the community in order to articulate a long-term vision, values and priorities for the community, as they relate to community facilities, services and infrastructure. This broader conversation is particularly timely given the development of this Action Plan and the current situation with the community's only licensed child care facility (Puddle Ducks Daycare).



*Puddle Ducks Daycare is the community's only licenced child care facility, currently operated out of the Tahsis Recreation Centre.*

Project urgency is primarily driven by the results of a recent building assessment that found the existing Village-operated Puddle Ducks Daycare facility (an addition to the main Recreation Centre) to be structurally unsound and in need of removal (see Appendix 2). A secondary factor, however, is the demand for recreational programming – even if senior government funding can be secured to reconstruct the addition, the space will be needed to meet the broader community's recreation needs. A review and evaluation of child care facility options is therefore addressed as part of this Plan.

## 3 Current State of Child Care in Tahsis

### 3.1 Licensed Child Care in Tahsis

Puddle Ducks Daycare is the only licensed child care facility in the community. It is operated by the Village of Tahsis out of the Tahsis Recreation Centre, and is licensed for up to 8 multi-age child care spaces, one of which can be for an infant (birth-36 months). Puddle Ducks offers full and part time child care, as well as before and/or after school child care, pro-day care and "other" care on a daily drop-in basis. Operating hours are licensed for 8:15-5:15, Monday to Friday except for statutory holidays. The facility is operated on a year-round basis, including the summer season. Please refer to the attached Child Care Planning Inventory in Appendix 3.

The most urgent child care challenge that Tahsis is currently grappling with is the fact that Puddle Ducks' current location (an addition to the Tahsis Recreation Centre) must be decommissioned due to a major structural issue, as outlined in the attached



building assessment (see Appendix 2). If the daycare is forced to close, Tahsis will be left with no licensed child care facilities.

Community partners were sought to house a relocated Puddle Ducks – and School District 84 (within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School) has indicated that they are willing to consider options. These options were considered during the research/consultation phase of this Plan (see Section 5).

### 3.2 Alternate Child Care in Tahsis

With no other licensed child care facilities in Tahsis, the Community Survey results indicate that alternate child care typically involves parents/guardians asking family or friends for help, taking time off work to care for their child(ren) or hiring a babysitter/nanny. Refer to Section 4.2 for more details.

### 3.3 Related Child/Youth Services & Resources in Tahsis

There are a number of other programs and institutions to support the healthy development of children in Tahsis, including the Recreation Centre which offers free access to the swimming pool, bowling lanes, a fitness room, a weight room, sports courts and a climbing wall; numerous parks and playgrounds; a library; and, opportunities for organized sports and recreation. Weekly family story times at the library are offered through the [Campbell River Area Family Network Program](#), which works to connect parents, caregivers and service providers throughout the broader region with programs, services and resources designed to help children and families live healthy lives. This program also supports the Children's Health Hub in Gold River, which was launched in 2017 and is available to Tahsis families. The Hub hosts regular drop-in activities for children and their families, weekly no-cost lunch and learn sessions for pregnant and/or new parents, and generally works to connect families with health resources and service providers as needed.

School District #84 has previously offered the provincially funded Strong Start BC program at Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School. Strong Start is an early learning program providing school-based services for parents/caregivers and their young children, aged birth to five, at no cost to families. For older youth, the School District also offers the Nootka Sound Outdoor program, which enables students to earn credits toward graduation and industry certifications while engaging in weekend/holiday wilderness pursuits and contributing towards traditional and modern stewardship projects.

## 4 Plan, Bylaw and Policy Review

### 4.1 Municipal Considerations

Child care initiatives are supported by the Tahsis Official Community Plan and Council's current strategic priorities.

Official Community Plan – the current OCP is directed towards the realization of six overarching values, the first of which is: *"To promote Tahsis as 'home' to residents of any age and ability, and to create a community which offers a wide range of lifestyle choices, and a variety of economic and recreational opportunities."* Creating an age-friendly community means providing programs, resources and infrastructure required for residents of all ages to thrive, including

children and youth. Municipal action to create age-friendly communities helps to attract and retain residents through opportunities for healthy lifelong development and an enhanced level of community well-being. This is recognized within Section 10 of the OCP – Institutional and Public Service Needs, which notes “...In order to maintain a healthy community and a stable population it is recognized that service levels must be re-established and ultimately enhanced.” A related policy under the same section states: “The provision of daycare facilities to meet community needs will be strongly encouraged.” As previously mentioned, the Village is currently in the process of reviewing the OCP. Community consultation is underway, and the updated Plan is expected by the end of 2019. The updated Plan will set a new long-term vision, goals, values and priorities for the community – services and facilities for children and families are sure to be prioritized.

**Council's Strategic Priorities** – Council sets its strategic priorities on an annual basis. Typically, the broad priority focus areas remain relatively stable, and the specific goals within each focus area are updated annually. For 2019, the focus areas include Watershed Protection and Forest Sustainability; Community Wellness, Asset Management; Economic Development and Community Safety. Child care is supported under Community Wellness – the goal being to develop options for moving Puddle Ducks Daycare, possibly to within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School. A thorough review and evaluation of child care facility options is included in this Plan. The Village's daycare rates for Puddle Ducks Daycare were reviewed and updated in 2018 to accept the Provincial Government's new daycare subsidy program.

#### 4.2 Regional Considerations

At a regional level, the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) has established a Community Health Network to improve community wellness throughout the region by addressing the social determinants of health through collaboration among a variety of partners that includes public, private and non-profit organizations. Healthy Children is one of the key determinants of health, and the Village (along with all other SRD member municipalities) is a partner in the SRD's Community Health Network initiative.

Access to quality, affordable child care is a key measure of supporting healthy children – this is particularly important in School District 84 (Vancouver Island West) where 53% of Kindergarten children are deemed vulnerable, meaning that without additional support, these children may





experience future challenges in school and society. Provincially, the vulnerability rate is much lower, at 32.2%<sup>1</sup>

In 2015, the SRD Community Health Network hosted a series of community health forums in order to develop a strategic plan, identify gaps and establish measurable goals and priorities. Under Healthy Children, the role of the Network is focused mainly on improving childhood resiliency, mental health and capacity/knowledge building around trauma-informed practice.

The Village of Tahsis' Child Care Action Plan and associated efforts to ensure the continued provision of quality, affordable childcare in the local community is aligned with the Health Network's strategic priorities.

The theme of **resiliency** was further explored in 2017/2018 through a joint regional initiative between School District 84, the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, Nuw-Char-Nulth Tribal Council, the Campbell River Family Network, and the Strathcona Community Health Network entitled the Vancouver Island West Childhood Resiliency Project (VIWCRP)<sup>2</sup>. The objectives of the VIWCRP was to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to early childhood vulnerability in the Vancouver Island West region, and to document the assets that encourage early childhood development, with the intention of building on established strengths in planning to reduce vulnerability.

The VIWCRP report was reviewed and carefully considered during the development of this Child Care Action Plan. Key findings included the following:

1. VIW is a naturally resilient region. Given the geography, there is no other choice.
2. Across the region, there is a low awareness of the importance of early childhood development.
3. The more remote a community is, the fewer the services offered there.
4. The region is served by agencies and organizations from across Vancouver Island. When services are housed outside of the community, the capacity of the community is reduced.
5. In some instances, communication between service providers inside and outside of the region has been lost, resulting in broken referral pathways.
6. Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities co-exist in VIW, and deeper consideration needs to be given to provide culturally safe services while building the relationships between communities.

The report went on to note that as with all communities, there are assets that support the development of healthy children and families (and healthy communities in general), and barriers that restrict it. Through community consultation, the researchers discovered that in Tahsis, one of the most widely recognized assets that support the development of healthy children and

<sup>1</sup> Source: Wave 6 EDI Results (2016) – [Vancouver Island West Community Profile](#).

<sup>2</sup> Source: [Vancouver Island West Childhood Resiliency Project](#)

families is Puddle Ducks Daycare. The long-term retention of this service within Tahsis is truly essential for supporting and building the capacity of the community, both socially and economically.

The municipality and the broader community are keen to successfully relocate and resume operations of the Puddle Ducks Daycare. There are no regional bylaws, policies or strategies that present any barriers to implementation of the recommendations contained within this Plan. In fact, the VIWCRP's conclusion is an especially powerful call to action for significant investment in child care for this region:

*"Like families all around the world, families in VIW benefit from supports and services during their children's earliest years to thrive. There are many barriers to service delivery, including geography, time and cost of travel, and insufficient infrastructure. However, there is much opportunity to work with each of the communities in VIW to leverage their many, many assets and to ensure families' needs are being met. Though this research project is a beginning, it is only that. **For the sake of every child, parent, and family in VIW, it is essential that each of us commits to the ongoing health and development of this region.**"*

*– Vancouver Island West Childhood Resiliency Project, 2018 (report conclusion)*

#### 4.3 Provincial Considerations

In 2018, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC) undertook a study of child care needs in small, rural and remote communities in BC. Their survey of local governments garnered 62 responses (including a response from Tahsis), which were used to develop a series of 10 recommendations based on the experiences and suggestions submitted by the responding communities. While the recommendations were primarily developed for the benefit and information of the provincial government, they help to shed some light on what other small, rural and remote communities throughout the province are doing (or recommend doing) to address local child care needs. The recommendations were reviewed, considered and reflected, as applicable, within this local Action Plan.

The provincial government, itself, plays several roles regarding child care including:

- Planning and funding social services, including early learning, child care and related programs (e.g. child care resources and referral centres);
- Developing child care legislation, policy, and regulations;
- Providing Major and Minor Capital Grants to eligible child care providers;
- Licensing and inspecting child care programs (via regional health authorities);
- Providing fee subsidies and program supports for families with low incomes; and
- Providing qualifying families with additional financial supports

In 2018, the Province of BC issued a Child Care Plan, charting a path towards universal child care. This Action Plan is aligned with the provincial government's vision of "Affordable, quality child care that is available to every family that wants or needs it." Puddle Ducks Daycare in



Tahsis is licensed according to provincial regulations and, as previously noted, the Village's daycare rates were reviewed and updated in 2018 as per the provincial government's new daycare subsidy program. This Action Plan is funded through the BC Community Child Care Planning Program.

## 5 Key Research Findings

### 5.1 Community Survey

As part of the development of this plan, community survey was initiated in September of 2019. A total of fourteen (14) responses to the Community Survey were received. Refer to Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey. All of the respondents indicated that they currently have children in the 0-12 age group, which represents an excellent parent/guardian participation rate, considering that at the time of the most recent Census (2016), Tahsis was home to just 20 children/youth in the 0-14 age group.

Key findings from the community survey are summarized below.

#### *On Child Current & Future Care Needs:*

- There is currently a greater need in Tahsis for child care services that support school aged children (i.e. before/after school care, school break care and drop-in care), than there is for infants and preschoolers.
- Only two (2) respondents indicated that they intend to have, adopt or foster more children within the next ten years. Therefore, over the next ten years, the demand for infant/preschooler care is expected to remain lower than the demand for child care options in support of school aged children.
- Four (4) respondents indicated that they sometimes require care for children over age 12, particularly during school breaks and/or for evening/weekend care.
- Four (4) respondents believe that there is currently an adequate supply of all forms of child care in Tahsis to meet the community's needs, while four (4) disagreed (i.e. answered 'no') and five (5) were unsure. One respondent noted that daycare is the only child care option, and there is a need for more care/program options for older children during school breaks.

#### *On Seeking Child Care:*

- The top three reasons that Tahsis parents/guardians seek child care is so that they can work (10), support their child(ren)'s development (9) and to create personal time (7).
- The top three qualities that Tahsis parents/guardians seek in a child care arrangement are safety/licencing; a professional, dependable service; and, a fun/stimulating environment for their child(ren);
- Only two respondents indicated that they would change their current child care arrangement if an alternative was available. Those respondents would prefer an arrangement that is more flexible, offering weekend, evening and early morning care.

*On Child Care Related Challenges:*

- The top three most common child care related problems experienced by respondents during the past year include the cost of care and availability of temporary care and/or care for a sick child.
- Nine (9) respondents indicated they have had, on occasion, to make alternate child care arrangements in the past year – most commonly, they have asked family or friends for help, taken time off work to care for their child(ren) or hired a babysitter/nanny.
- A few respondents indicated that over the past year, a lack of suitable child care has affected their ability to attend appointments, run errands or perform daily tasks (4), while three (3) reported it affected the ability to find work and three (3) indicated it affected the ability to participate in community events or recreational activities.

*On the Relocation of Puddle Ducks:*

- Respondents were asked if they preferred where Puddle Ducks daycare is relocated - nine (9) respondents felt it should be within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School while four (4) checked 'other'. (no preference; within the Valley neighbourhood for school children to walk to daycare; close to school and something with evening care).

## 5.2 Facility Research

A new location for Puddle Ducks Daycare must be secured in order to avoid permanent closure of the community's only licensed child care facility. As outlined, the Village sought community partners with an interest in accommodating Puddle Ducks Daycare within their existing buildings – School District 84 (within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School) has expressed an interest. This interest was considered during the development of this plan, as was the possibility of a modular building on municipal or school property.

Co-location within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School is the recommended option for the following reasons:

- The School District is committed to retaining the school facility in Tahsis and is willing to assist with arranging for long-term tenancy for Puddle Ducks;
- The building is already fully accessible and constructed to meet the needs of children, which will help to reduce the scope and cost of renovations;
- The community survey showed that there is strong parent/caregiver support for co-location within the school;
- Co-locating services at the school is more convenient for families and research has shown that collaboration between learning programs helps to improve children's transition from one program to the next.

The School District has identified an opportunity to achieve significant operational efficiencies and cost savings by reducing the amount of square footage used for K-12 school programs. A renovation project is currently being planned to consolidate and improve classroom and activity space, which will leave plenty of space for development of a new, co-located Puddle Ducks Daycare. Further, the School District is willing to work with the municipality to determine the renovation requirements and associated costs, in support of an application for funding to the

Childcare BC New Spaces Fund. The space is renovation-ready, meaning work could begin immediately upon confirmation of funding.

## 6 Action Plan Targets and Goals

### 6.1 Space Creation Targets

Each of the targets and goals outlined in this section are also captured in the attached Child Care Planning Inventory – see Appendix 3.

#### Short Term (one to two years)

- Create 8-10 full time and up to 5 part time licensed multi-age spaces at a new Puddle Ducks Daycare in Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School. Given the community's emphasis on First Nations repatriation, economic growth and diversification, consideration should be given to the scalability of the facility in order to accommodate additional spaces for a range of ages in the medium to long term future.

#### Medium Term (two to five years)

Be responsive to community growth and create additional spaces as needed, possibly in the range of 5-10 new full or part time multi-age spaces, depending on demand.

#### Long Term (five to ten years)

- Continue to be responsive to community needs, evaluating child care spaces and services on a continuous basis depending on birth rates and in/out-migration patterns of local families.

### 6.2 Action Plan

#### Short Term (one to two years)

1. Finalize agreements with the School District to avoid the loss of Tahsis' only licensed daycare, and open a new Puddle Ducks Daycare within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School. The new location should be able to accommodate the anticipated growth of child care in the next ten years.
2. Develop a conceptual design plan, needs assessment and cost estimates for new space in order to prepare for funding applications. Note the need for the space to be scalable (to accommodate additional children resulting from community growth), accessible and welcoming/appealing to a range of age groups. Facility design should include engaging activities and spaces for each age group – from infants and toddlers to older children attending before/after school care or for school break care. The Village may wish to involve local children and youth in a design workshop to help envision, create and inspire the new space.

3. Engage the Ministry of Children and Families in developing an application for funding under the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund for renovation and improvements to the new space.
4. Continue to apply for Canada Summer Jobs grant to support the hiring of a post-secondary student to expand summer break programming either through Puddle Ducks or the Tahsis Recreation Centre, with an emphasis on activities that appeal to older children and youth. This would respond to the comments in the community survey indicating a desire for programming (especially during the summer) for older children (aged 12+) who have aged out of daycare but would benefit from social and recreational activities.
5. Ensure that there are regular events for new people to integrate into the community. Tahsis is an extraordinarily resourceful community, much is achieved informally. However, with new people moving to the community, there is an opportunity to leverage new services and re-energize programs that have been successful in the past but are no longer offered. Often this is because they rely upon the individual skills in the community at the time. Regularly re-evaluating these skills (and child needs) could help ensure that services continue. For example, a community dinner and movie night.
6. Establish community hubs for service and needs communication, both in person and online.
7. To close the gap between identifying service need and resources available in the community, it is recommended that daycare staff be encouraged to regularly connect with regional partners such as Island Health, and that they be supported to take on leadership roles within the region.
8. To ensure that the current employee of Puddle Ducks Daycare can maintain her Early Childhood Education exemption, ensure that she has enough back up for vacations. (see also #1. In medium term). Also investigate the online course option (20 hours) for other staff to ensure that the employee gets regular breaks.
9. Investigate and prepare flexible transition plans to accommodate the possibility of growth of the program in the short term. For example, if demand suddenly increases and there is no other ECE trained, Puddle Ducks could consider offering multi-age care until 2:30 and then switch to after school care, this would permit up to ten children with one ECE.

#### Medium Term (2-5 years)

1. The VIWCRP initiative highlighted that there are residents in the region who are interested in becoming early childhood educators, and encouraged local communities to advocate for increased education and training opportunities in the region. The Early Childhood Educators of BC has an Education Support Fund that provides bursaries to help students with their ECE education goals. While the first intake to the program was fully subscribed, the Village may wish to watch for future intakes and then work with

community partners to identify residents interested in obtaining their ECE certification - the addition of a local family child care facility to complement Puddle Ducks Daycare could help to create some flexible (evenings/weekends) care spaces. Currently, once training is complete, there are additional funding programs available to assist with start-up costs.

2. Though not directly related to child care space creation, the Village may wish to explore the feasibility of developing a casual, welcoming youth drop-in space within the Tahsis Recreation Centre. A similar space in Ladysmith – the Rec Room – provides a safe space where youth can participate in a range of healthy activities such as playing pool, ping-pong, air hockey, watch TV, listen to music, create art, play video games, meet friends and get involved in community events. This helps to extend the continuum of care for children/youth in the community and promote healthy choices and lifestyles.
3. In support of the community's repatriation efforts, explore possible partnership opportunities between Puddle Ducks Daycare, the School District and the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation to bring more Indigenous perspectives and knowledge to the school community. This could possibly be modelled after a recent initiative launched by the Cowichan Valley School District, which earlier this year involved hiring the province's first full-time District Elder and Knowledge Keeper. See: <https://sd79.bc.ca/cowichan-valley-school-district-announces-district-elder-knowledge-keeper/>

#### Long Term (5 to 10 years)

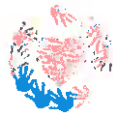
1. Continue to be responsive to community needs, evaluating child care spaces and local child/youth services on a continuous basis depending on birth rates, age distribution and in/out-migration patterns of local families.
2. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Village of Tahsis Flood Risk Assessment Report, which responds to climate change adaptation for critical infrastructure, including Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

Through the course of this project, Tahsis has shown itself to be an exceptionally resilient community that cares very deeply for its residents, and especially its young people. As is the case in many small, rural and remote communities, the people of Tahsis continually come together to mitigate barriers and find creative solutions where circumstances often conspire against them. Child care is no exception – faced with having to demolish the community's only licensed daycare, individuals and organizations came together to offer several options to save the service. As well, parents and caregivers candidly shared their child care needs and provided thoughtful input and suggestions for the future of Puddle Ducks Daycare. This has resulted in an achievable, made-in-Tahsis Child Care Action Plan that charts a clear path for sustaining a municipally-operated, quality, affordable child care facility in the community for the next 10+ years – provincial investment through the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund or the UBCM Community Child Care Space Creation Program must now be actively pursued to take the plan from paper to reality.

## Appendix 1 – Community Survey





## 2019 Child Care Community Survey

### Dear Parents/Guardians and Community Members

The Village of Tahsis invites you to complete the 2019 Child Care Community Survey, which will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is primarily for parents/guardians, but the Village welcomes feedback from all residents. Your input will help the Village understand current and future child care needs in our community, and create a Child Care Action Plan. Thank you for your participation.

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### PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

1. I am a parent or guardian of a child(ren) aged 0-12 years of age:  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
2. I plan to adopt, foster, or have more children within the next ten (10) years:  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Unsure
3. The primary reasons that I need, or would pursue, child care for my child(ren) is: (Check all that apply)  
☐ So I can work  
☐ So I can attend school  
☐ For my child's development  
☐ For personal time  
☐ So that I can attend appointments  
☐ I do not require child care  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not currently have children, please skip to Question 14

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### THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS IS FOR CURRENT PARENTS/GUARDIANS

4. The number of children aged 0-12 years for whom I am a parent or guardian to is: (Please check one option)

- ☐ 0      ☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4 or more



**5. How much child care do you currently need for each child to whom you are parent or guardian?** (Please indicate the level of care required for each child aged 12 and under, to whom you are a parent or guardian)

	Child(ren) Under 3 years	Child(ren) 3 years to Kindergarten	School Aged Child(ren) (Kindergarten to 12 years)
Full Time			
Part Time			
Before/After School			
School Break Care (Pro D days, early dismissals, holidays, spring/winter/summer breaks)			
Evening Care			
Overnight Care			
Sick Child Care			
Drop in Care			
Other (please indicate)			

**6. What type of child care do you currently use?** (Please indicate type of care used for each child aged 12 and under, to whom you are a parent or guardian)

	Child(ren) Under 3 years	Child(ren) 3 years to Kindergarten	School Aged Child(ren) (Kindergarten to 12 years)
Care by parent/guardian in your home			
Care in relative's home			
Care in your home by relative			
Care in your home by non-relative			
Care in non-relative home			
Combination of above as needed			
Daycare facility			
Currently searching for care			
Other (please indicate)			

7. When securing child care, the top three qualities that I seek in a child care arrangement are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

8. I would change a current child care arrangement if an alternative was available:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not Sure

\*\*\*Answer Question 9 if only if you would change your current child care arrangement.\*\*\*

9. I would prefer an arrangement for my child such as:

10. If you are parent/guardian to any youth who are age 13 years and older, do you ever require care for them? If so, please detail what kind of care you require (i.e. evening, overnight, school breaks, etc.), and how often you require it.

11. Have you experienced any of the following child care related problems during the past year? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Cost of care  
☐ Finding temporary care  
☐ Finding care for a sick child  
☐ Finding care for a child with special needs  
☐ Transportation to/from care  
☐ Dependable care  
☐ Quality of care  
☐ Scheduling of child care to match work schedule  
☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Reasons that I have had to use alternate child care arrangements in the past year include:**  
(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ I had to cover days that my child(ren)'s child care service is not open
- ☐ My child care provider quit or cancelled
- ☐ My work hours changed
- ☐ My child care provider was sick
- ☐ My child was sick
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Not Applicable

**13. I have had to use these forms of alternate child care arrangements during the past year:**  
(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ I asked family or friends for help
- ☐ I took time off work to care for my child
- ☐ I hired a babysitter or nanny
- ☐ I worked from home
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Not Applicable

**14. In the past year, lack of a suitable child care arrangement has affected my ability to:**  
(Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Find work
- ☐ Attend work
- ☐ Attend school or training
- ☐ Attend appointments, run errands or perform daily tasks
- ☐ Participate in community events or recreational activities
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Not Applicable

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**PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT CHILD CARE IN TAHSIS**

**15. I believe there is an adequate supply of all forms of child care services in Tahsis to meet the community's needs:**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

16. The Village of Tahsis operates the community's only licensed daycare (Puddle Ducks Daycare), which must be relocated from its current location at the Recreation Centre. Puddle Ducks currently offers daily full or part time child care for infants and children up to Kindergarten age and several other services for children age Kindergarten and up (i.e. before and/or after school care, Pro D Day care and 'other' care available during the week days at \$10 per hour).

a. Do you have a preference for where Puddle Ducks should be relocated?

- ☐ Within Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School
- ☐ In a standalone facility elsewhere within Tahsis
- ☐ Other (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

b. Are there other child care services you would like Puddle Ducks to offer in the future?

17. Do you have any other input or advice that you would like the Village to consider with respect to the relocation and/or future operations of Puddle Ducks Daycare?

18. Other thoughts or questions I have regarding child care service delivery in Tahsis are:

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**THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR THOUGHTS ON CHILD CARE IN TAHISIS.**

Completed forms can be mailed or dropped off at:  
Tahsis Municipal Office, 977 South Maquinna Drive, Tahsis, BC V0P 1X0

Questions may be directed to Ruth Malli, [rmalli@villageoftahsis.com](mailto:rmalli@villageoftahsis.com)

Completed surveys must be received by **July 15, 2019**

## Appendix 2 – Village of Tahsis Recreation Complex Improvements

***(Excerpted from the November 19, 2018 Report "Tahsis Recreation Complex Improvements Analysis" by McElhanney Ltd.)***

### **Daycare and Concession Area**

This section of the complex is experiencing significant ground settlement resulting in shear cracks in the walls around the windows and doors. It is suspected that this last addition to the building is founded on a shallow spread footing placed on top of questionable soils that are likely dominated by an old sawdust (hog fuel) land fill.

Figure 9 below shows an example of the shear cracks in the daycare area.

The settlement has also caused noticeable depressions in the concrete floors resulting in an uneven walking surface and tripping hazards.

***There is a large window separating the playroom from the daycare lobby area that should be removed due to a safety risk. There is a large shear crack on the window opening and this movement could put pressure on the glass window causing it to break or shatter.***

The evidence of significant settlement and structural cracking in the structures leads to the conclusion that this addition is founded on poor soils and is going to continue to create stress in the walls of the original building causing a more significant degree of structural damage. The effect of the settlement of the addition is the cause of the observed shear cracks on the walls that were part of the main building. **In order to prevent further damage from occurring, it is recommended that the daycare and kitchen structures be removed (demolished).** The walls and slabs can be repaired in the original corridor once the lateral loads are removed from the settling daycare/kitchen buildings. This area should be rebuilt as a separate structure from the original complex on a proper foundation, which would include subsurface improvements prior to construction, as per geotechnical engineer's recommendation. A new structure can be connected to the original structure with a breezeway to allow the children and staff dry passage between buildings throughout the year. An allowance has been made for the demolition of these structures with replacement of similar floor areas in the same area.

***A monitoring program should be put into place immediately on all cracks in this area of the building. This monitoring should take place bi-weekly by staff. A mark should be drawn on the wall at the end of the crack with the current date. The cracks should also be measured, and the value and date written on the wall at the measured location. Staff members shall notify McElhanney if any movements are recorded. This is a simple but effective way to monitor the structure issues until a proper assessment can be completed by structural and geotechnical engineers.***

**Figure 9**



### Appendix 3 – Child Care Planning Inventory from UBCM data

#### Facility Information

Facility Information												
Facility Name	Municipality or Unincorporated Area	Standard Geographic Classification	Facility Street Address 1	Facility Street Address 2	Postal Code	Universal Child Care Prototype Site	Service Type (Group or Family)	Is Facility a Publicly-owned Asset? (Yes or No)	Non-Profit/Private	Name of Any Co-located Family Service Organization(s) (if applicable)	Co-located School (if applicable)	Location Type
PUDDLE DUCKS DAY CARE	Tahsis	5524030	285 ALPINE VIEW RD	N/A	V0P1X0	N	Group	Yes	Non Profit	Tahsis Recreation Centre	N/A	Other Non-Profit Building (e.g. community centre, municipal building, etc.)

Number of Child Care Spaces						
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 Months) Spaces	Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age) Spaces	Licensed Preschool Spaces	Care (School Age)	Multi-Age Child Care Spaces	Family Child Care Spaces	In-Home Multi Age Child Care Spaces
0	0	0	0	2	0	0

Facility's Care Schedule (enter "Y" or "N")					
Extended Hours (Before 6AM and/or After 7PM)	Before School Care	After School Care	Overnight Care	Open on Statutory Holidays	Number of Non-Statutory Holiday Closures Per Year
N	N	N	N	N	0

#### Child Population

Geographic Area	Child Population				Households	
Municipality or Unincorporated Area	0 to 2 years	3 to 5 Years	6 to 12 Years	0 to 12 Years	Number of Households	Number of Households with Children
Tahsis		5	5	10	150	20



Appendix 3 – Child Care Planning Inventory from UBCM data

**Summary of Spaces and Programs**

Geographic Area	Geographic Area	Summary of Child Care Spaces by Municipality or Unincorporated Area						
Municipality or Unincorporated Area	Municipality or Unincorporated Area	Group Child Care (Birth to 36 Months) Spaces	Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age) Spaces	Licensed Preschool Spaces	Group Child Care (School Age) Spaces	Multi-Age Child Care Spaces	Family Child Care Spaces	In-Home Multi Age Child Care Spaces
Tahsis	Tahsis	-	-	-	-	8	-	-

Number of Child Care Programs by Municipality or Unincorporated Area						
Group Child Care (Birth to 36 Months) Programs	Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age) Programs	Licensed Preschool	Group Child Care (School Age) Programs	Multi-Age Child Care Programs	Family Child Care Programs	In-Home Multi Age Child Care Programs
-	-	-	-	1	-	-

Care Schedule (Number of Facilities)				
Extended Hours (Before 6AM and/or After 7PM)	Before School Care	After School Care	Open on Statutory Holidays	Overnight Care
-	-	-	-	-

### Appendix 3 – Child Care Planning Inventory from UBCM data

#### Space and Creation Targets

Year	Number of New Licensed Spaces	Total Number of Licensed Spaces in Community	Project Lead(s) for Creation of New Licensed Spaces	Location(s) of New Licensed Spaces	Age Group(s) and License Type(s) of New Licensed Spaces (e.g. Group Under 36 Months)
<b>Current Status</b>					
Current		8*			
<b>Short Term Targets</b>					
Year 1	8-10 full time	8 to 10	Village of Tahsis	Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School	Multi-Age
Year 2	up to 5 part time	13 to 15	Village of Tahsis	Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School	Multi-Age
<b>Medium Term Targets</b>					
Years 3 -5	5 to 10 (mix of full and part-time, depending on demand)	Approximately 20	Village of Tahsis	Captain Meares Elementary Secondary School	Multi-Age
<b>Long Term Targets</b>					
Years 6-10	Continue to be responsive to community needs, evaluating child care spaces and services on a continuous basis depending on birth rates and in/out-migration patterns of local families.				

\* Puddle Ducks' current location (an addition to the Tahsis Recreation Centre) must be decommissioned due to a major structural issue. If the daycare is forced to close, Tahsis will be left with no licensed child care facilities