

Member Stories

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Village of Queen Charlotte



The Village of Queen Charlotte is a community set between the sea and mountains of Haida Gwaii, formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands. The coastal community offers visitors and residents alike a unique opportunity for outdoor life experiences as well as the comfort and accessibility of a wide choice of restaurants, businesses and accommodations. The small community, with a population of almost 1,000, is made up of loggers, artists, fishermen, government workers and many more.

The Village of Queen Charlotte was incorporated in 2005. At that time, there was very little mapping data in existence – just a few Corel Draw maps. The small community had not inherited any mapping information from the Regional District and had the daunting task of starting from scratch.

The Local Government of this small community has a staff of nine. Like many Local Governments, low staffing levels meant that most of the employees wore multiple hats. In the case of the Village of Queen Charlotte, Jeni Bulbrook was given the GIS role – along with her other tasks which included accounts payable and counter service at the municipal hall.

The Local Government leadership group knew that they needed assistance with identifying and acquiring both the tools and the training required to move forward with their GIS efforts. They learned about the programs and support offered by ICIS and became a member in 2005, about the same time as their incorporation.

“We had some urgent initiatives that required accurate mapping data,” says Debra Uliana, Chief Financial Officer of the Village. “We needed to be able to provide services to council to facilitate planning. We had to prepare for the zoning process, the official community plan and the by-laws to enforce the plan.”

As a new community, this was all on their to-do list. In her role of manning the counter at the municipal hall, Jeni saw a lot of “walk-ins” looking for property information. “It was a challenge to properly meet the requirements of our community,” remarks Jeni Bulbrook. “With only a few Corel Draw maps to work with, it was like the Wild West out here!”

Recognizing the needs of the community, the Village worked with ICIS to get the area’s GIS data created. They invested in the necessary software and with the assistance of ICIS, updated the software with the newly created GIS data.

The next challenge was making sure that Jeni was trained to operate the software. She attended a course at Okanagan College that was focused on the basics and tailored to meet the needs of Regional Districts and Municipalities. She then attended a course in Kelowna that brought her up to speed on the more advanced tools and functionality. Jeni’s GIS education was funded partially by ICIS and partially by the Gwaii Trust Society.

Queen Charlotte Village is now resourced to take on all of the challenges that are common to a new and growing community. “Jeni is an exceptional member of our team and has taken ownership of the GIS process for the Village,” states Debra Uliana. “She now has a number of GIS projects in progress that will help us to better serve our community.”

One such project is matching civic house numbers in the Municipal Accounting & Information System. Properties have legal descriptions but no civic address numbers. This project not only includes assigning civic house



VILLAGE OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE QUICK FACTS	
Population:	1,000
ICIS Member since:	2005
GeoShare Delivery:	
Parcels	✓
Addresses	
Event Host	
Board Member	
Strategic Advisor	
Funding Organization	
Grant Recipient:	
Parcels	✓
Addresses	
Data Quality	✓
ICIS Labs Participant	✓



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numbers but also having them posted on the houses. "Having civic house numbers assigned to properties and posted will be a big improvement for the Village – making the activities of the utility companies, public works employees and emergency first responders faster and more efficient," says Jeni Bulbrook.

Another GIS related project for Jeni is the Village's planned switch from flat rate water billing to usage based. This involves the installation of meters with serial numbers and mapping their locations. Locations have to be 'true' before the Village can start the usage based billing process.



The Village of Queen Charlotte has many gaps in their GIS information that will keep Jeni very busy - among them, getting organized for new sub-divisions and development by coordinating all new information into the GIS. In the future, they would like to cross-train in order to create another GIS resource to cover vacations and other absences. "Overall, we're delighted with how far we've come with our GIS efforts," states Debra Uliana. "As a small community, the help we received from ICIS was essential and continues to positively impact our progress."

What's New?

Jeni Bulbrook has managed to keep very busy since this story was originally published. While the plan has changed slightly, there has been a significant list of work completed with Jeni's newly acquired skills. Some of the completed mapping projects include the Official

Community Plan (adopted in 2011) that defines land use areas. Supporting the OCP are maps for Heritage and Archaeological sites, Watercourses, Water Serviceable Area, Waste Water Serviceable Area, Road Networks and Sensitive Areas. The Zoning Bylaw (adopted in October 2013) followed the OCP and the resulting Land Use Map for zoning was created.

Jeni continues to be actively involved in providing services to constituents with property inquiries. The GIS software is most often used for the purpose of public inquiries like:

- identifying properties that are listed for sale
- telling people the dimensions of their property
- identifying who the property owners are for specific lots
- supplying survey plans

Some of the original initiatives when The Village of Queen Charlotte joined ICIS were centered on facilitating planning. To that end Jeni has a number of projects in progress. Some of these include:

- developing mapping for road maintenance priorities
- identifying properties that are involved in the annual tax sale
- creating mapping for proposed Crown Land applications for example; new industrial sites or new parklands
- creating mapping for grant applications- ex: new trail systems identified and measured
- identifying residents within buffer zones (residents who are affected by councils decisions)

The project of matching civic house numbers in the Municipal Accounting & Information System is about to begin. This is a critical part of The Village's planned participation in the ICIS AddressBC project. Jeni will be providing ICIS with civic numbers for all addresses in The Village of Queen Charlotte.

You can learn more about AddressBC at: <http://www.icsociety.ca/about-icis/icis-projects/addressbc/>

"...the help we received from ICIS was essential and continues to positively impact our progress."

Debra Uliana,
Chief Financial Officer



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