

Coast, the past year has seen very strong home prices for the region.

“The average sale price for single family homes on the Sunshine Coast has risen by 3.0 percent in the last 12 months, with September 2007 setting a record average sale price of \$447,000.”

The Vancouver Real Estate Board reveals that “for the last two years, the sales to listing ratio have maintained a healthy level, between .5 and 1.0 on a three-month moving average. The ratio of sales to listings shows a cyclical pattern, rising in the winter months as new listings drop.”

### Gibsons

As of 2006, with a climbing tally of 4,182 residents, Gibson's population digits are expected to double in the next twenty-five years. The area is made up of mostly families with young children with a higher percentage of single parent homes and fewer people of retirement age. Just a few minutes west of the Langdale ferry dock, past the small communities of Hopkins and Grantham Landing, Gibsons is considered the main marine gateway to the Sunshine Coast and is experiencing rapid growth and development. Gibsons is tucked into the sheltered shoreline on Howe Sound to the east, surrounded by Mount Elphinstone to the north, and the Strait of Georgia on the southwest. Take the Heritage Walk to explore the bustling working harbour, stroll along the public wharf and the boardwalk to the vista gazebo, a great place for Fido to stretch his legs. Buffy's See Spot Run Pet Services offers pet owners peace of mind on the Sunshine Coast should you need to leave home and your four-legged companions behind. Beyond the harbour's marine activity, alive with kayakers, sailboats and yachts stop by Molly's Reach, the site of the 1971-1990 *Beachcombers* CBC series, once a TV soundstage now a popular hangout for locals and visitors.

### Roberts Creek

Funky and eclectic best describes this unconventional community coined the gumboot capital of the world; Roberts Creek is part throwback to the '60s where hippies add a colourful splash to the offbeat and creative landscape — part progressive community. Locals, affectionately known as “Creekers” are a diverse lot; they don't all hold identical beliefs, but several passionate consistencies emerge as a common thread: they are keen to maintain the rural character of the community, they're avid supporters of tree and



Sechelt beach, Sunshine Coast. Photo: Graham Osborne/VCM Tourism.

water conservation, they encourage home-based businesses and low-speed, tree-lined roadways, they hold belief in community gatherings, and they choose to preserve a centralized commercial area in keeping with a unique Roberts Creek character. Harvest fresh mussels or oysters at Roberts Creek Picnic grounds, and then reel in a coho or chinook at nearby Chapman Creek, the only stream on the Sechelt Peninsula where anglers can keep these favoured salmon. Close by, you can tee-up at one of BC's golfing jewels, the 18-hole public Sunshine Coast Golf and Country Club.

### Sechelt

Taking its name from one of the Coast Salish Indian bands, “Sechelt” means land between two waters. Suitably labelled given that this community sits on a sandbar; on one side of Sechelt is the Strait of Georgia and on the other side, Porpoise Bay.

If it weren't for this small neck of land less than a kilometre wide, a large portion of the peninsula north of Sechelt would be an island, cut off from the mainland. Sechelt is the Lower Coast's largest town where retirees make up approximately 30 percent of the population. Don't miss the Festival of the Written Arts in August, held annually at the Rockwood Lodge. The natural seaside beach creates an ideal summer destination for families where camping, water activities, and golfing make for lasting memories. Check out the activity underway at Seaview Villa Estates, an exclusive community in West Sechelt featuring townhomes/garden apartments on three ocean-view acres.

### Halfmoon Bay

A sweeping scalloped bay protected from the open sea by South Thormanby Island, this sleepy village of permanent homes, summer cabins, and five regional parks is a visual feast; check out Halfmoon Bay Lookout for a panoramic view of Welcome Pass, the Thormanby Islands, and Malaspina Strait. From the Heritage General Store, a gathering place located on the waterfront, access to Redroofs Trail provides a historical and interpretative stroll along a gently pitched, forested walkway. If you visit in July, join in the Halfmoon Bay Country Fair, a traditional community event. Visit the Sargeant Bay Provincial Park, excellent for bird watching, or explore the Smuggler Cove Provincial Marine Park and hike into the wilderness.

### Pender Harbour Area

North of Halfmoon Bay, three communities surround the Harbour: Madeira Park (the business and population centre of Pender Harbour), Garden Bay (about a quarter of Pender Harbour's population) and Irvine's Landing. Scuba dive in any season in the protected waters: the Harbour is known to be one of the world's best sites for underwater exploration. Coined the “Venice of the North” because of its complex maze of waterways and lakes, water taxis are the preferred mode of transportation in and around the area. Tour the Chatterbox Falls, a waterfall at the head of Princess Louisa Inlet or take in the newer parks, Millennium Park and wooded Francis Point Marine Park. Watch for the new luxury condo development the Painted Boat: Sunshine Coast Resort Homes coming soon.