

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **Economic Development Strategy**

### **City of Nanaimo**

Second Draft Report

December 7, 2020

# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging that what is now known as Nanaimo is situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) is to provide a roadmap to strengthen the economic base of the region. The City of Nanaimo and its partners recognized the need to develop a new strategy that ensures the benefits of growth are shared and that there is opportunity for the entire community to participate in the economy. The Strategy has been prepared with the guiding principles of sustainable prosperity, collaboration and economic reconciliation with local First Nations.

An economic development strategy is important because it acknowledges the control local government has over critical inputs into economic activity such as land, zoning, infrastructure and municipal services. It thereby exerts an influence on business activity, employment and community income. An economic development strategy is based on the premise that the community can develop local visions and goals and apply local resources to achieve them. The City's key planning documents have already mapped out a general direction for economic development based on diversification, job creation, investment, downtown and waterfront development. This Strategy is a roadmap for creating new jobs, increasing wealth, further diversifying the economy, increasing the tax base and to the extent possible achieving economic and social equality which will improve quality of life for all residents.

The Strategy was based on an analysis of the available research and engagement with local stakeholders on their aspirations and expectations for the economic future of the city and central island region. This engagement entailed focus groups, business survey, community survey, planning workshops and regular meetings with the City and its Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) throughout the project.

## Current Situation

Nanaimo is a growing regional centre that will continue to increase its population well into the future. Household incomes are slightly lower than the provincial average but the average population age of 46 is slightly higher. Projections call for robust growth over the next 25 years, when as many as 47,000 new residents may arrive. The economy is concentrated in services while manufacturing is the major goods producing sector. Overall, the city's economic base is diversified and not reliant on a single sector.

The surveys conducted as part of this Strategy show relatively consistent views on economic development goals, priorities and sector opportunities. Economic growth, jobs and Quality of Life were top-rated goals, while economic development priorities included improved infrastructure, an expanding business base and better business climate. Top-rated sectors were tourism, technology, health services and education.

Nanaimo's economy is closely affected by global trends, with the economy heavily influenced advances in technology. The growing adoption of technologies such as artificial intelligence is changing how advanced economies will develop in the future. Economic development is focusing on technology infrastructure, technology-led innovations and technology transfer as a source of business investment but also to improve overall socio-economic conditions for residents.

The natural environment and location that have transformed the city into a regional service and transportation hub is one of Nanaimo's core strengths, which has been augmented by reasonably good infrastructure and transportation services. Weaknesses relate to the local business climate, poor perceptions of community image and crime rates, and the challenges of building infrastructure for a rapidly growing community. Potential threats to community wealth and resiliency are linked to global and national events and trends, including COVID-19, trade issues, competition for talent and population dynamics. Opportunities are extensive and diverse but can be summarized in four key areas, people development, sector diversity (e.g. tourism, technology), infrastructure development and partnerships.

## Strategy Direction

### Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles underpin this strategy with specific regard to how the City will interact with its partners, businesses and the public. The principles transcend stakeholder differences and viewpoints and because they remain fixed over time they serve as a foundational reference point for all strategic planning.

1. Partnerships
2. Long term
3. Equity and Reconciliation
4. Focus on Local
5. Authenticity
6. Circular Economy

### Vision

Nanaimo is THE city of choice, a vibrant, globally connected gathering place at the forefront of innovation in economic and community development.

### Mission

Our mission is to leverage the city's strategic assets, grow a sustainable economy and enhance the exceptional quality of life, by providing leadership, a culture of collaboration and resources for growing investment and innovative practices in economic and community social development.

### Goals and Strategies

1. Economic Capital
  - 1.1 Create a Community Infrastructure Plan
  - 1.2 Protect & Expand Employment Lands
  - 1.3 Revitalization of the Downtown and Waterfront
  - 1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics of Vancouver Island
  - 1.5 Develop Robust Broadband Connectivity
  - 1.6 Focus on Urban Tourism Product

- 1.7 Create a Health Care Centre of Excellence
- 2. Human Capital
  - 2.1 Education, Training and Industry Integration
  - 2.2 Create an Inclusive Workforce
  - 2.3 Talent Attraction and Retention
- 3. Social Capital
  - 3.1 Build on Strategic Partnerships
  - 3.2 Address Health and Housing Challenges
  - 3.3 Expand Health Care Capacity
  - 3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation
- 4. Business Development
  - 4.1 Compile Research and Data
  - 4.2 Export and Trade
  - 4.3 Develop a Positive Business Climate
  - 4.4 Business Retention and Expansion
  - 4.5 Promote Home-based Business
  - 4.6 Economic Emergency Preparedness and Recovery
- 5. Innovation & Technology
  - 5.1 Connect the Tech Sector
  - 5.2 Strengthen the Innovation Ecosystem
  - 5.3 Leverage Tech
- 6. Place Making & Attraction
  - 6.1 Global Trade and Foreign Direct Investment
  - 6.2 Place Marketing and Investment Promotion Toolbox
  - 6.3 Managing the Investment Promotion Process – Creating Deal Flow

## Immediate Priorities

In developing the strategy, the EDTF has identified the following key priorities for implementation in year one of the Strategy.

Strategy #	Immediate Priorities	Estimated Completion	Key Partners
7. Implementation	Set up external agency, align communications and responsibilities with City, recruit	2021 Q3	City, NPA, NA, VIU, SFN

	partners, secure operational funding		
1.4.1 Facilitate transportation connections	Passenger Ferry Downtown Nanaimo to Downtown Vancouver	2021 Q3	City, NPA, SFN, Chamber
3.2.1 Provide support to health and housing initiatives	Support Initiatives around Health and Housing	2021 Ongoing	City, BC Housing, Island Health, Non Profits
1.3.1 Continue to Invest in Waterfront	Invest and Lead with Waterfront Development at 1 Port Drive and Departure Bay & Newcastle Channel waterfront walkway	2021 Ongoing	City, NPA, SFN
1.5.2 Work with existing broadband initiatives 1.5.3 Move toward a gigabyte city	Advocate and support tech hub in downtown Nanaimo, SFN, Hospital & VIU with deployment of community based fibre	2022 Q4	City, NPA, SFN, VIU
4.3.1 Improve City services	Help to develop and implement solutions which will significantly reduce development approval timelines	2021 Q4	City, Development Community
1.4.2 Transportation & Logistics Hub	Complete a transportation and logistics hub for industrial lands at Duke Point and Nanaimo Airport	2021 Q4	City, SFN, NPA, Airport

## Implementation Timeframe

2021	2022	2023
1.3 Revitalizing the Downtown & Waterfront	1.1 Community Infrastructure Plan	2.3 Talent Attraction and Retention
1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics	1.2 Employment Lands	3.1 Strategic Partnerships
1.5 Robust Broadband Connectivity	2.1 Education, Training and Industry Integration	4.2 Export and Trade
1.6 Urban Tourism Product	2.2 Inclusive Workforce	4.5 Home-based Business
1.7 Health Care Centre of Excellence	3.3 Health Care Capacity	4.6 Economic Emergency Preparedness and Recovery
3.2 Nanaimo Health and Housing	4.1 Research and Data	5.3 Leveraging Tech
3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation	4.4 Business Retention and Expansion	6.2 Place Marketing and Investment Promotion Toolbox
4.3 Positive Business Climate	5.2 Strengthening the Innovation Ecosystem	6.3 Managing the Investment Promotion Process – Creating Deal Flow
5.1 Connecting the Tech Sector	6.1 Global Trade and Foreign Direct Investment	

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*Note: refers to powerpoint version*



# Introduction

## Background

Prior to contact with Europeans, the Coast Salish people word for Nanaimo meant ‘gathering place’ and the modern City continues to be the gateway to Vancouver Island. With a population of just under 100,000 in 2020, Nanaimo is on the verge of substantial population and economic growth that will transform the City over the next 25 years.

The City of Nanaimo and its partners recognized the need to develop a new Economic Development Strategy that ensures the benefits of this growth are shared and that there is opportunity for the entire community to participate in the economy.

The development of this Economic Development Strategy took a collaborative approach to ensure all the key partners in the local economy were at the table and were able to create a joint vision, strategy and action plan.

## Purpose

The purpose of the strategy is to provide a roadmap to strengthen the economic base of the region. The Strategy has been prepared with the guiding principles of sustainable prosperity, collaboration and economic reconciliation with local First Nations.

The strategy will set the future direction of the City’s efforts to grow existing businesses, attract new investment and enterprises and enhance opportunities for employment and household incomes. These activities need to be undertaken in a way that minimizes our impact on the environment and ensures that as a community we are not over taxing our natural eco system.

The Economic Development Strategy is the second of two reports delivered as part of this project. Attachment A contains the Current Situation Report. The Report describes baseline conditions with reference to demographic, labour market, economic base, land development, business activity and sector indicators. Reviews of the local planning, economic assets and infrastructure, economic development trends, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and Nanaimo’s unique selling proposition were also assessed.

## The City’s Role in Economic Development

Economic development can be described in terms of objectives such as employment creation, wealth creation and quality of life, or as a process that shapes economic, business and related activities in pursuit of community well being. Local government controls access to and prescribes policies for critical inputs into economic development, things like land, zoning, infrastructure and municipal services. It thereby influences where, how and when productive capacity can occur, which in turn influences business costs, business climate and investment risk. An economic development strategy is based on the premise that the community can develop local visions and goals and apply local resources to achieve them, in the context of broader macro-economic forces.

Chapter 2 of this report outlines how the City has expressed in its key planning documents a general direction for economic development based on diversification, job creation, investment, downtown and

waterfront development. Much of the City's key plans are in the process of being updated and these themes will be reinforced and, in some cases, broadened to capture the interactions with social, cultural and environmental issues and objectives. *Reorienting economic development with a more expansive role for socio-community objectives can create a more inclusive and sustainable approach to community wealth and well being.*

The economic vision and mission for economic development stated in Chapter 3 requires explicit consideration of the City's role and the relationships it intends to pursue during implementation. To achieve this vision, it will be necessary to make strategic investments and work collaboratively with community partners pursuing similar goals. This strategy is a roadmap for creating new jobs, increasing wealth, further diversifying the economy, increasing the tax base and to the extent possible achieving economic and social equality which will improve quality of life for all residents.

## Methodology

The methodology for this strategy consisted of primary and secondary research. Secondary data sources, statistics, documents and studies were compiled and synthesized to interpret economic conditions in the City and central island region. Direct outreach to stakeholders involved the following:

- Focus groups, June 2020 in Nanaimo;
- Scenario planning workshop, June 2020 in Nanaimo;
- Business survey, June 2020;
- Community survey, July-October 2020;
- Planning workshops, September 2020 in Nanaimo; and
- Regular meetings with the City and EDTF throughout the project.

A complete list of references, including focus group participants, is provided in the Current Situation Report. Additional documentation cited in this document is listed in Chapter 7.

# Current Situation

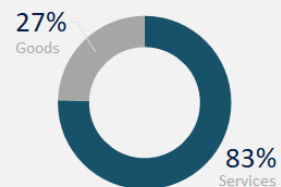
## Key Indicators

Nanaimo's population has grown strongly over the last two decades, outpacing provincial growth. Household incomes are slightly lower than the province but the average population age of 46 is higher. Projections call for robust growth over the next 25 years, when as many as 47,000 new residents may arrive. The economy is concentrated in services while manufacturing is the major goods producing sector. Overall, the city's economic base is diversified and not reliant on a single sector.

### Population Growth 2001-2019

Nanaimo CA	2001	89,560
	2019	115,615
	growth	29%
British Columbia	2001	4,076,880
	2019	5,071,335
	growth	24%

### Experienced Labour Force 2016



### Median personal income 2016

**\$32,350**

Close to provincial average

### Average Age 2016

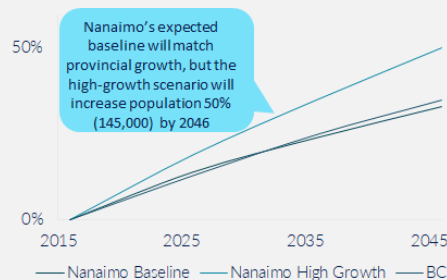
**45.9**

Nanaimo CA

**43.0**

British Columbia

### Population Projections to 2046



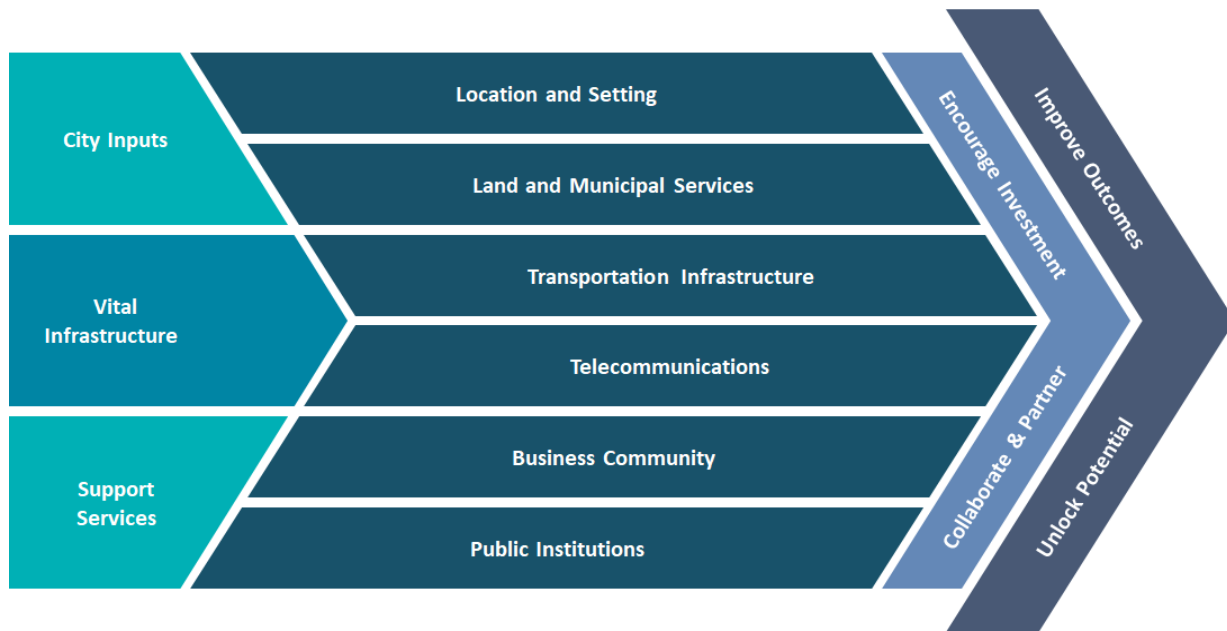
### Top Industries by Employment 2016

- Food and beverage services
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Education services

### Key Sectors

- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Public Services
- Retail/Wholesale Trade
- Technology
- Tourism

## Strategic Assets



Nanaimo's strategic assets are both natural and built, with its coastal location in proximity to the Lower Mainland and Puget Sound complemented by a well-developed regional centre with quality infrastructure, including an expanding port, airport, ferry, highway and telecommunication backbone. A dynamic business community and public institutions drive private and public investment into productive capacity. Investment flows will have to increase in the future in order to unlock economic potential and generate the household wealth and quality of life for the City of the future.

## Corporate Economic Goals

This strategy is being prepared simultaneously with several other City plans as part of the coordinated *Reimagine Nanaimo* process. This will result in an integrated and cohesive planning context that aligns extensive public input with the corporate objectives and intra-departmental service mandates of the City.

2020

### Corporate Strategic Plan

- To be a community that is livable, environmentally sustainable and full of opportunity for all generations and walks of life.
- Downtown development
- Business development
- Public access to the waterfront

2011

### Economic Development Strategy

- Establish an Effective and Sustainable Economic Development Program
- Expand and Diversify Employment Opportunities
- Increase Nanaimo's Image as a Destination for Opportunities
- Establish Nanaimo as a Leading Investment Destination

2008

### Official Community Plan

- Support business, political, and community leaders
- Support well-informed decision makers
- Encourage a business-friendly environment
- Focus on economic drivers that generate new and sustainable wealth
- Provide a community with a skilled and talented workforce
- Provide a physical infrastructure that connects businesses to their markets
- Promote unique features that contribute to the quality of life for people and business
- Encourage a positive local attitude and external view about Nanaimo

## Engagement Feedback

Two surveys were conducted to help prioritize the direction and content of the strategy, one with local businesses and the other with residents which was delivered as a component of Reimagine Nanaimo. The feedback shows a consistent agreement between the business community and the public on economic development goals, priorities and sector opportunities, with some minor differences in rank.

The top goals for businesses were Quality of Life and economic growth, whereas for residents it was jobs first and Quality of Life second. Regarding economic development priorities, improving infrastructure came out on top in both surveys, with business expansion also ranked in the top three. For businesses, business climate issues are very important, while residents clearly see growth from within as critical—they were more likely than businesses to value entrepreneurship and business expansion over business attraction.

Respondents in both surveys were asked to rank 11 sectors according to their potential for future development. Interestingly, four of the top-five sectors in each group were the same: tourism, technology, health services and education. Generally, the goods producing sectors like manufacturing and natural resources were seen as having much less potential.

Top 5 Goals						Top 5 Priorities						Top 5 Sectors		
	Business	Community					Business	Community					Business	Community
1	Quality of Life	Jobs				1	Infrastructure	Infrastructure				1	Tourism	Tourism
2	Economic Growth	Quality of Life				2	Business Climate	Business Expansion				2	Technology	Health Services
3	Jobs	Diversification				3	Business Expansion	Entrepreneurship				3	Construction	Technology
4	Incomes	Economic Growth				4	Business Attraction	Business Climate				4	Education	Education
5	Diversification	Incomes				5	Entrepreneurship	Business Attraction				5	Health Services	Arts, Culture

## Community Survey – Select Quotes

We need to improve education to fill the jobs that are currently vacant and support the ones that will be created in the future. Attracting a new, skilled labour force will still leave many current residents on the margins. So we need to work a cultural shift that places higher value on education.

Nanaimo does not appreciate or optimize its potential and prime location as part of a broad regional context.

We have very few large employers, but Nanaimo is not known for its skilled workforce and I see this as a barrier.

I would like to see Nanaimo develop affordable housing not only for Nanaimo residents in core housing need, but also with a vision of poaching artists from stunningly unaffordable Vancouver.

Arts, culture and entertainment jobs are clean, workers are highly educated and have a small environmental footprint. Having a vibrant arts scene makes the City attractive to high tech workers, health and public sector workers who have stable jobs and disposable income.

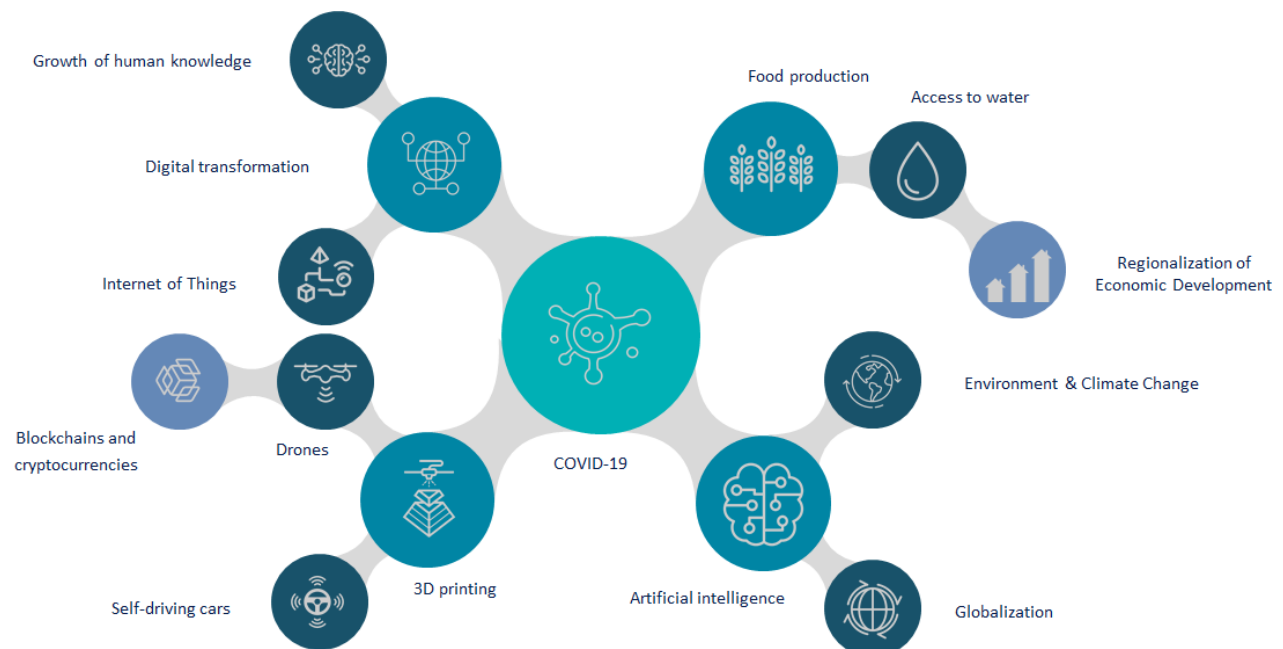
Many students who graduate from VIU move away for work. We need opportunities in technology, health, tourism and the arts. We also need to start using our great agricultural land for agriculture not housing. The way the world is going we need to work towards being as self sufficient on the island as we can.

My company has opened a branch here because it is a great location and more affordable for workers, but still near Vancouver. This is something that can be leveraged in many industries.

## Key Trends

The global economy is being heavily influenced if not led forward by major advances in technology. The growing adoption of technologies such as artificial intelligence is changing how advanced economies will develop in the future.

In turn, economic development is increasingly focused on technology infrastructure, technology-led innovations and technology transfer. Communities that embrace a knowledge-innovation-technology ethic, are positioning for success in the decades ahead. It is noted, however, that this is occurring in the context of the growing importance of basic resources like food and water as potential differentiators in an era of climate change.





## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The natural environment and location that have transformed the city into a regional service and transportation hub is one of Nanaimo's core strengths, which has been augmented by reasonably good infrastructure and transportation services. Weaknesses relate to the local business climate, poor perceptions of community image and crime rates, and the challenges of building infrastructure for a rapidly growing community. Potential threats to community wealth and resiliency are linked to global and national events and trends, including COVID-19, trade issues, competition for talent and population dynamics. Opportunities are extensive and diverse but can be summarized in four key areas, people development, sector diversity (e.g. tourism, technology), infrastructure development and partnerships.



# Strategy Direction

## Guiding Principles – Strategic Direction

The following guiding principles underpin this strategy with specific regard to how the City will interact with its partners, businesses and the public. The principles transcend stakeholder differences and viewpoints and because they remain fixed over time they serve as a foundational reference point for all strategic planning.



## Vision

Nanaimo is THE city of choice, a vibrant, globally connected gathering place at the forefront of innovation in economic and community development.

## Mission

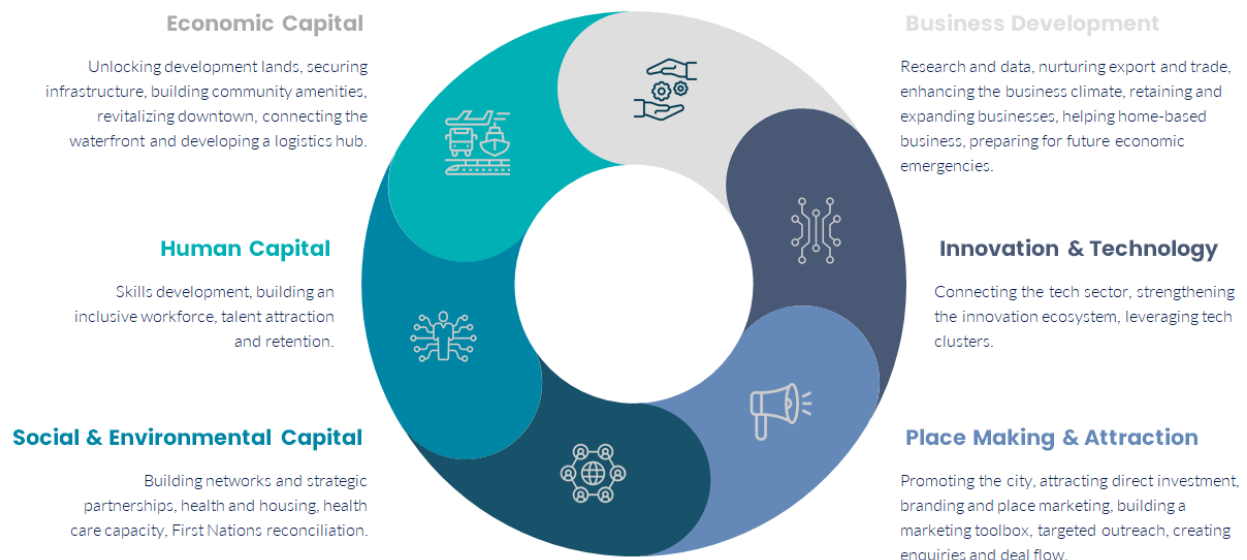
Our mission is to leverage the city's strategic assets, grow a sustainable economy and enhance the exceptional quality of life, by providing leadership, a culture of collaboration and resources for growing investment and innovative practices in economic and community social development.

## Goals

The Strategy has six goals where the City and its partners energy should be focused to create meaningful, impactful change. All the activities under these goals are measured against the guiding principles of the Strategy.

Economic, human and social capital will catalyze business and investment activity throughout the community. Economic capital are core assets like infrastructure and land that are important inputs for building productive capacity. Human Capital embraces skills and talent development, while Social and Environmental Capital includes partnerships in community development such as health and housing.

Business Development targets retention, expansion and entrepreneurship as pathways to growing the local economy. Innovation and Technology includes initiatives that exploit Nanaimo's existing base of technology companies as well as leverage technology to unlock potential in other sectors of the economy. Finally, Place Making and Attraction is concerned with refining the City's approach to promoting itself to the entrepreneurs, investors and innovators who will drive growth in the future.



# The Strategy in Full

## 1 Economic Capital

### 1.1 Create a Community Infrastructure Plan

The engagement process indicated that infrastructure was a major priority for Nanaimo residents and businesses. Cities like Nanaimo face extraordinary economic, demographic, fiscal and environmental challenges that make it imperative for the public and private sectors to provide for modern, efficient and reliable infrastructure. Many of the initiatives deemed priorities in this Strategy depend on it, whether through more robust downtown and waterfront neighbourhoods to better transportation and transit for moving people and goods into, across and out of the region. Infrastructure connects households, businesses and institutions and leverages opportunities for employment, healthcare and education. It can be the ticket to sustainable energy, combating climate change and expanding technology-led development. At the same time, ratepayers and businesses expect quality infrastructure services but are often reluctant to pay for the higher levels of service through more taxes.

In 2017, the City produced a 20 Year Investment Plan and Asset Management Update (City of Nanaimo 2017) that includes long-term investment plans and funding strategies. The plan focuses on municipal infrastructure and the City's Asset Management System to maintain current levels of service as the city grows in the next two decades. The plan is updated periodically to align with changing conditions and priorities.

There are two areas where the Economic Development Agency can address long-term infrastructure issues in support of economic development, the first in communicating City plans and priorities to developers and investors, and the second leveraging municipal assets with other public and private infrastructure.

#### 1.1.1 Infrastructure research

- Prepare an inventory of infrastructure asks and needs over the next 10 years, by sector and project, accounting not just for municipal services but those of other public and private service providers.
- Identify infrastructure gaps and opportunities with partners at Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nanaimo Port Authority, Nanaimo airport, Vancouver Island University (VIU) and other levels of government, focusing on projects with tangible, quantifiable benefits for economic development.
- Provide research and assistance for articulating how infrastructure investments provide robust public benefits in alignment with Nanaimo's community development objectives. This will require a framework for evaluating the benefits and costs of projects.
- Work with other City departments to improve the coordination of infrastructure investments to account for network effects, that is leveraging non-municipal infrastructure to achieve socio-economic objectives.
- Research market mechanisms that can capture the increased value in land that accrues from infrastructure and enhance the benefit-cost relationship that will allow more ambitious and timely investments.

### 1.1.2 Outreach and engagement

- Create a mechanism for getting more consistent, ongoing stakeholder engagement in defining infrastructure priorities. Public consultations to share information and solicit feedback on opportunities and priorities will increase public and business acceptance of transformational change.

### 1.1.3 Funding mechanisms

- Maximize uptake of infrastructure program funding, including the Economic Infrastructure and Innovation Program, by providing economic research and content to the City's grant funding applications. Where possible work with partner organizations to present joint-asks for infrastructure projects.

## 1.2 Protect & Expand Employment Lands

Employment lands are industrial, commercial and institutional zones in the municipality that host job-creating activities and businesses. Together with infrastructure, they are a key input into all forms of economic activity.

In the City of Nanaimo there is a total of 661 hectares of land designated for industrial use, concentrated in the Duke Point and Northfield/Boxwood areas. Of this total, 64 hectares are vacant and developable, with an additional 10 hectares currently hosting construction. The commercial land inventory is approximately 915 hectares, concentrated in downtown and North Nanaimo (Colliers 2020).

While it is true that the growth of the service economy has shifted demand for industrial land across the country, the long-term land use implications for growth in land-intensive sectors and industries is far from clear. If Nanaimo is to become a distribution/logistics hub and take advantage of its trade zone status and deep harbor at Duke Point, the City should safeguard employment lands from conversion to other uses, while unlocking the potential of under-developed properties.

### 1.2.1 Research and monitoring

- Research and communicate emerging trends in land use and demand that will improve the planning process and ensure an appropriate supply-demand balance.
- Monitor vacant and underutilized property and work with landowners to better understand barriers to use and strategies for repurposing and adapting to market demand.
- Assist the City's real estate sector exercise tools such as land assembly that will meet community development objectives by providing economic, sector and trends research and forecasts.

### 1.2.2 Work with industry and landowners

- Include landowners into the BRE program and create a local real estate trends profile.
- Work with large industrial land owners such as Harmac to identify future uses for their surplus industrial properties including opportunities for innovative uses of their energy and utility systems.
- Work with Nanaimo Airport to stimulate demand for air cargo services on their surplus industrial lands (50 acres).

## 1.3 Revitalization of the Downtown and Waterfront

Commercial and residential growth along the Island Highway, e-commerce and changing consumer trends have collectively contributed to the decline of downtown Nanaimo. However, downtown remains a centre for many types of business, arts and culture and tourism. Shopping niches and hospitality services are diversifying but vacant properties are still a problem. Yet its downtown and waterfront is one of Nanaimo's strongest strategic assets with exceptional potential for both economic and civic transition. There has been a shift in the demand for the types of built assets that are best suited for downtown. COVID-19 has pushed forward an emerging trend of more remote or work from home, coupled with an increase in demand for mix commercial/residential developments. An aging demographic is creating new demand for health services and downtown residential accommodation.

The City has initiatives underway for these areas. In 2013, it purchased 1 Port Drive to create a new signature waterfront community. A master plan was adopted by Council in 2017 for Port Drive which set out a future development framework. Through the Nanaimo Downtown Mobility Hub Project, Council is identifying and advancing short-term projects that could be built in the next five years to take achievable steps towards the vision of a safer, inclusive, and connected downtown (City of Nanaimo 2020c). In 2017, the City developed a Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan with a 10-year strategy for a multimodal pedestrian and cycle facility from Departure Bay to the Nanaimo River Estuary. The waterfront walkway is currently 5.5 km in length. Functional design work has been completed for the Departure Bay section and work is ongoing along Newcastle Channel.

Continuing to invest in the downtown core and in the waterfront walkway will help reinforce downtown as the heart of the community and increase the number and variety of businesses downtown and attract shoppers and tourists to the community.

### 1.3.1 Continue to Invest in the Waterfront

- Continue to work on the phased development of 1 Port Drive by supporting rezoning, subdivision and disposition of the property to create a signature waterfront development. Complete Investment Package for 1 Port Drive.
- Support the development of the Departure Bay Waterfront Walkway and ensuring the full economic impacts of the investment are leveraged. Obtain approval of Electors for Departure Bay Walkway.
- Work with the Nanaimo Port Authority in redeveloping the properties along Stewart Ave (Newcastle Channel) to encourage the development of the waterfront walkway and investment in new marina, office and tourism development.

### 1.3.2 Leverage investor interest in downtown development

- Include downtown property owners in the BRE program to better understand the development goals and challenges for their properties.
- Continue to work with SFN and BC Parks on improved connectivity between the City and Satsutshun (Newcastle Island).
- Monitor properties for sale or rent and engage in direct recruitment of businesses that are a good fit for specific areas and retail/service gaps.
- Support reestablishment of the Commercial Street Night Market. For 11 weeks in the last two summers, the Night Market brought thousands to downtown with upwards of 70 street vendors downtown before being cancelled in 2020. Having this activity take place downtown created a new vibe in the downtown core in the summers and is important in creating a new feel and character for

the downtown and waterfront area. Metrics for this section could include: # of Downtown businesses in BRE program.

- Periodically review the Downtown revitalization tax exemption (RTE) program to ensure it is providing the required support for target businesses in the downtown core. Ensure the RTE is marketed and understood by the development community.

## 1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics Hub of Vancouver Island

Nanaimo has strategic locational assets that could catalyze development in the transportation, cargo and distribution/logistics sector and at the same time enhance investment and development in associated sectors. Improvements in transportation capacity and efficiency would have beneficial knock-on effects for any industry or project that seeks competitive services that move either people or goods in and out of the region. Nanaimo could position itself as an extension of the Lower Mainland transportation network, providing economic benefits locally but also contributing to reduced traffic congestion and greenhouse emissions for the entire region. Nanaimo has an opportunity to become the distribution/logistics hub for Vancouver Island. There are various initiatives that are in the research of planning stages that the Economic Development Agency can support. These include increasing direct vessel calls from international carriers, short sea shipping opportunities, passenger foot ferry and airport park development.

### 1.4.1 Facilitate transportation connections

- Facilitate private sector interests that wish to establish a foot ferry passenger service from Nanaimo to Vancouver, by liaising with the Nanaimo business community and institutions, lobbying senior government for funding support and participating in research that improves the business case for service. If possible, negotiate lease and benefit agreements with proponents and assist with funding commitments.
- Continue to support connectivity to Vancouver via BC Ferries, float plane and Helijet and identify opportunities to encourage further investment in Nanaimo.

### 1.4.2 Transportation and logistics hub

- Commission a Transportation and Logistics Strategy with a long-term, multi-modal perspective that positions Nanaimo in an economic, demographic and technological future that is much different than today. The strategy is required because of the complexity of transportation planning and the need to align highway, ferry, port, airport and transit services in the context of a high-growth region.
- Assist the Port of Nanaimo's efforts to develop international direct vessel calls and regional short sea shipping by:
  - supporting the development of a distribution/logistics facility at Duke Point
  - supporting expansion of the Vehicle Processing Centre at the Assembly Wharf property
  - partnering in an attraction program aimed at attracting coastal resource industries
  - forging a deep seas and short sea shipping network of shipping companies, rail lines, manufacturers, importers and exporters
  - identifying future municipal infrastructure needs at Duke Point that will leverage private sector investment and ensure these are considered in future updates to the City's asset management planning.

- Work with other landowners, including Mosaic, Harmac and Seaspam, to work out a collective approach to a transportation and distribution/ logistics hub in the Duke Point area.
- Work with Nanaimo Airport to integrate air cargo logistics within the larger distribution/logistics network.

## 1.5 Develop Robust Broadband Connectivity

Broadband connectivity has become an essential utility, as vital to community development as electricity, water and transportation. Fast, affordable, reliable and scalable broadband is essential to the long-term success of a community, to business competitiveness and to the health and happiness of residents. The engagement process made it clear that Nanaimo's future lies in knowledge-led, technology and service sectors that demand increasingly powerful and complex telecommunications capabilities. Meanwhile, more intense development of the downtown and waterfront areas will depend on high-quality telecommunications capacity to achieve cluster conditions. Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) expansion, the campus of care initiative and aspirations to bring a medical school to Nanaimo will require elevated connectivity and service capabilities.

If Nanaimo is to become a next-century city it will have to explicitly target the digital economy, businesses and talent without impedance from conventional service providers. Many North American cities have gone this route to great effect. A robust telecommunications infrastructure provides a distinguishable competitive advantage for attracting new skilled workers and companies to the region.

### 1.5.1 City policy and planning support

- Include broadband and technology infrastructure in the new OCP's objectives and policy statements to underline their importance to all aspects of community and economic development.
- Review municipal access agreement policies and revise as necessary to make it easier, faster, and cheaper for facilities-based telecom service providers to deploy fiber-optic infrastructure.
- Develop infrastructure standards for the construction of civil works necessary to support the deployment of fiber-optic cables and invest in enabling this infrastructure.
- Develop an Intelligent Community Plan and Broadband Strategy that identifies how the community will use digital infrastructure, information and communications technologies.

### 1.5.2 Work with existing broadband initiatives

- Work with VIU and NRGH to develop a protocol and funding mechanism to support the mapping of broadband infrastructure and the development of an econometric model that will ascertain broadband impacts on sector development, employment and GDP.
- Support VIU's high speed Wi-Fi initiative for campus and explore opportunities for broadening service to include the Downtown, Harewood, Snuneymuxw Reserve and Hospital districts.
- Work with the Connected Coast initiative to identify opportunities for linking their network to Nanaimo.

### 1.5.3 Move toward a gigabyte city

- Establish a Nanaimo Broadband Task Force to build a community-wide movement toward a Gigabyte City.



- Research a business case to build, own and operate a municipal broadband utility to service the Downtown, Hospital and University districts, i.e. a community fibre initiative.
- Identify one or two IoT pilots to demonstrate the socio-economic value of a digital ecosystem in action. This could include a partnership project in the arts and culture, health or education sectors.
- Monitor and apply for federal government broadband infrastructure funding programs.

## 1.6 Focus on Urban Tourism Product

Tourism is an important component of the regional and Vancouver Island economy, bringing in hundreds of thousands of visitors annually from across Canada and around the world. Nanaimo is a major beneficiary of leisure and business travel because of its gateway destination status to Vancouver Island and sizeable hospitality sector, including hotels, food and beverage operations and transportation services. The engagement process showed that many stakeholders view tourism as a growth industry moving forward, however, the role and scope that the Economic Development Agency should play in this growth has yet to be determined.

The City currently contracts with Tourism Association of Vancouver Island for tourism marketing and visitor servicing with the goal of strengthening Nanaimo's position as a tourism destination, under the aegis of Tourism Nanaimo. The Nanaimo Hospitality Association, with the support of the City and the Nanaimo Regional District, receive the provincial Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) that is used to market Nanaimo region. The Tourism Association of Vancouver Island is one of six regional destination marketing organizations in the province whose purpose is to create and market visitor experiences with an emphasis on regional markets in BC, Alberta and Washington State. Destination BC and Destination Canada are the provincial and national market arms that are responsible for marketing the province and nation to long-haul and international markets.

Between, national, provincial and regional destination marketing organizations and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, tourism marketing is well resourced, coordinated and targeted to key visitor markets. Tourism plans at the provincial and regional levels are also in place with the support of Destination BC and the Tourism Association of Vancouver Island.

The City and the Economic Development Agency should refocus their efforts in the tourism sphere on urban product and destination development that will complement the marketing efforts being delivered by its tourism partners.

### 1.6.1 Committing resources to product and destination development

- Re-evaluate existing City contracts for tourism services and shift spending priorities to product and destination development, as well as visitor services.

### 1.6.2 Product development downtown

- Deliver a hospitality excellence program within visitor services that will create some spark and interest among business owners in the downtown-waterfront tourism precinct.
- Structure a tourism offering around the downtown and waterfront, working with hospitality operators to draw visitors off the ferries and highways for activities not available elsewhere on Vancouver Island.
- Focus on creating signature tourism events in the off season as a call to action to visit the city, drawing on the regional markets in southern BC, Puget Sound and Alberta cities with regional air connections.

- Encourage showcase spaces for arts, culture and food that can animate downtown foot traffic and pedestrian ambiance.
- Enhance and promote access to and use of trails, greenways and parks that connect the downtown and waterfront, so visitors have opportunities to explore more of the city on foot or cycle.

## 1.7 Create a Health Care Centre of Excellence

Health Care and Social Assistance is the second largest sector employer in the city, only marginally smaller than retail sales. In 2019, 6,380 people were employed, 14.8% of the total labour force. At the centre of this sector is the NRGH, a regional referral hospital with 409 beds with surgery, maternity, pediatrics, intensive care, rehabilitation, psychiatry and extended care services. Outpatient services include radiology, laboratory diagnostics, diabetes education centre, the Nanaimo Cancer Centre and a pacemaker clinic. The hospital houses approximately 435 doctors. The catchment area for NRGH is the central and north island, which represents a population of approximately 430,000. NRGH will be expanding its existing building in 2021 to meet growing demand.

The hospital district is growing into a regional campus of care. In 2018, Council adopted the Hospital Area Plan to help guide the redevelopment of this neighbourhood. Significant private investment is now occurring along Dufferin and Boundary supporting the concentration of medical services and the introduction of new services. The long-term goal of the Hospital Campus is to create a walkable community with connectivity between the hospital, specialist offices, accommodation, food and beverage and integrated public transportation.

Creation of the Hospital Campus presents significant economic opportunity to the City and requires coordination between the City, Island Health, VIU and the private sector.

### 1.7.1 Supporting health care initiatives

- Advocate for new health care activities and services at NRGH that meet the service standards of similar communities in the province.
- Support NRGH's efforts to become a tertiary hospital and establish a cancer centre.
- Explore initiatives that would position NRGH as a centre of excellence and expand its service offerings in specialty health care services.
- Work with NRGH and VIU to establish a medical school in Nanaimo.

## 2 Human Capital

### 2.1 Education, Training and Industry Integration

Nanaimo has a strong education sector, featuring a major local university and other educational and training programs. VIU offers a diverse, comprehensive range of post-secondary certificates, diplomas, degrees and masters programming delivered in the classroom and on-line. Full-time equivalent enrollment has risen by 32% over the past four years (from 6,884 in 2014-15 to 9,066 FTEs in 2018-19), reflecting increasing numbers of both domestic and international students.

Responsibility for preparing the next generation of workers is not solely the responsibility of educators. Local employers need to take a more active role in working with educators in the design of programs and curricula as well as in helping institutions build the business case for expanding programs by demonstrating demand for graduates. Local employers also need to get more involved in hiring students participating in co-op programs and other forms of experiential learning. The City and the Economic Development Agency can help strengthen linkages, encouraging employers to test out prospective workers whom they may hire upon graduation, and reduce the extent to which students may graduate locally but move elsewhere for employment.

#### 2.1.1 Creating a more participatory labour market

- Establish a Labour Market Advisory Committee or Mayor's Task Force to provide input on major labour market issues and opportunities facing Nanaimo, facilitate collaboration among key entities, provide recommendations for action regarding attraction, development and retention of human capital, and monitor the progress made.
- Secure Labour Market Partnership Program funding to conduct primary and secondary research to compile labour market information, and then develop and implement a regional labour market strategy.
- Promote programs that link educators, students and employers, including existing and proposed programs such as the Centre for Transition to Work, MITACS (Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems), VI Solutions and other co-op and internships programs.
- Work with local educators, trainers, employment agencies and employers to define and communicate pathways from university, college and training programs which connect students with meaningful careers in Nanaimo.

### 2.2 Create an Inclusive Workforce

The percentage of Nanaimo residents with a post-secondary education (61% according to the 2016 Census) is comparable to that of other BC cities such as Prince George (56%), Kamloops (61%) Kelowna (63%) and Victoria (68%). However, this figure is impacted by the high percentage people moving to Nanaimo who bring with them a post-secondary education. According to key informants, local secondary students are less likely to complete high school and obtain post-secondary education. For example, in 2017-18, the high school graduation rate for the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District (71%) was significantly lower than the rates in other comparable school districts such as Prince George (80%), Kamloops (84%) Kelowna (85%) and Victoria (88%).

Lower education levels are a contributor to elevated poverty levels amongst Nanaimo residents (17% of Nanaimo residents were living in poverty in 2017, compared to 15% in Prince George, Kamloops, and Kelowna and 14% in Victoria). According to the 2018 BC Child Poverty Report, nearly one in four children

in Nanaimo live in poverty, which is significantly higher than the BC average. The 2020 Point-in-Time (PiT) homelessness count documented 435 homeless individuals in Nanaimo, nearly twice the number in 2016, and estimated that another 150 to 200 homeless were not captured in the count.

Less educated and lower income residents are at much greater risk of being displaced from the work force as advances in technology reduce reliance on lower cost manual labour while increasing the demand for higher skilled positions. COVID-19 has accelerated this process. The unemployment rate on Vancouver Island increased from 5% in January 2020 to nearly 12% in June before declining to 9% in September. The impact of COVID-19 has tended to be much greater for people at the lower end of the income scale.

Nanaimo can pursue the type of sustainable development envisioned for the doughnut economy by targeting programs for the unemployed and underemployed.

### 2.2.1 Prioritize social procurement

- Develop and adopt a social procurement framework for the City of Nanaimo. The Framework will enable it to use its purchasing power strategically to increase access to training and employment opportunities for lower income people by increasing economic opportunities, diversifying the supply chain, and promoting workforce diversity.

### 2.2.2 Bring services to those in need

- Advocate and provide support for programs that work to increase the percentage of secondary students who carry on to post-secondary education through encouraging initiatives such as the VIU Canada Learning Bond Accelerator Program.
- Promote programs that create employment opportunities and link diverse and under-represented groups to those opportunities.
- Support Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)'s initiatives and programs aimed at opening doors for recent immigrants to find meaningful employment.

## 2.3 Talent Attraction and Retention

The effectiveness of the economic development strategy will be determined, in large part, by the ability of Nanaimo to attract and retain talent.

The population of the City of Nanaimo is projected to grow by at least 40% over the next 20 years, driven by the in migration of people from other parts of BC, the rest of Canada and outside of Canada. The challenge to Nanaimo will be to shape that migration in a way that results in a well-functioning labour market, addresses gaps in key occupations and key sectors, and attracts younger families who will help rebalance an aging population.

In seeking to attract skilled workers, Nanaimo can leverage two significant emerging trends. The nature of the pandemic has contributed to a desire, amongst some, to get out of the larger urban areas and into smaller communities. Just as importantly, it has also demonstrated the feasibility of distributed workplace models, in which many staff members work remotely. As a result, some businesses have become more footloose, able to operate from a much broader range of communities. Even before COVID-19, communities across North America had identified remote workers as a key target in their resident attraction and economic development strategies. Remote workers are valued because they bring with them their own jobs and tend to be more mobile and easier to attract and service than

businesses, are younger and interested in the higher quality of life and lower costs of living that a smaller centre can provide. They also tend to have above average disposable incomes.

As a city featuring a high quality of life, comparatively low costs of living, and a small town feel with big town amenities, Nanaimo is well positioned to benefit from these trends. However, attraction is only part of the solution. Nanaimo must have needed services and support in place to ensure that newcomers not only move to our community but also remain here.

### 2.3.1 Develop talent recruitment capacity

- Key targets will include skilled workers who have experience in priority occupations, entrepreneurs, young families, and people who already have a connection to the community as former residents or visitors or are otherwise drawn by our recreational opportunities and other amenities.
- Examine the potential to establish a recruitment program targeted specifically at remote workers who would bring their own job to Nanaimo. Such programs tend to target a broad cross-section of remote workers (not just tech workers), commonly provide access to co-working spaces, a community of remote workers, and settlement assistance, and may provide financial incentives.

### 2.3.2 Use the Provincial Nominee Program

- Encourage employers to access the Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP), specifically on skills immigration and express entry, which has a tech pilot stream.

## 3 Social and Environmental Capital

### 3.1 Build Strategic Partnerships

The Economic Development Agency, along with the City, will play a lead role in delivering the economic development strategy. To empower that leadership, it will be necessary to nurture strategic partnerships outside the economic realm with organizations who have a mandate and capacity for building social and environmental capital. Social capital is defined as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD 2020). The engagement program strongly suggested that the city’s economic prosperity was linked to socio-community conditions, for example, in the areas of homelessness and poverty levels. Communities that can address social issues in an economic context are more likely to see economic payoffs in core metrics like business investment, employment and household incomes. Research demonstrates that strong social networks encourage entrepreneurship, skills development and employment creation, all which Nanaimo needs if it is to prosper (Hanka and Engbers 2017).

Environmental capital’s link to the economy can be explained by the so-called doughnut economic model popularized by British economist Kate Raworth. The inner ring of her doughnut sets out the minimum needed to lead a good life according to the UN’s sustainable development goals. The outer ring represents the ecological ceiling across which cities should not go. The inside of the doughnut represents the disadvantaged who can be targeted for inclusion in the inner ring.

#### 3.1.1 Pursue productive partnerships

- Prepare a Partnership Strategy outlining participation in Council committees and task forces, identifying strategic partners and the projects or initiatives that they are associated with, and prescribing engagement, communication, oversight and monitoring mechanisms for ensuring partnerships are active and engaged.
- Periodically review and amend the Economic Development Agency Board makeup to ensure representation by social, cultural, community, environmental as well as economic, development interests.

#### 3.1.2 Exploring new roles for the non-profit sector

- Undertake research to quantify the value of the non-profit sector to the Nanaimo economy, with reference to revenues, jobs, incomes and other socio-economic indicators.
- Work with the non-profit sector and First Nations on innovative solutions to addressing social issues, including the financing of social capital projects, impact investment models such as social impact bonds and the role that social enterprise can play in addressing homelessness and poverty reduction.

### 3.2 Address Health and Housing Challenges

The City’s Health and Housing Task Force was created to develop an Action Plan to address the health and housing crisis in Nanaimo. Its objectives covered affordable housing, homelessness and poverty reduction. The work of the Task Force will be completed in the spring of 2021, replaced by a new Council of Champions and a Social Planning Organization to deliver the Action Plan. There are clear economic consequences for the city stemming from these issues, whether that is in relation to the labour market, the housing market or downtown and waterfront development. An improvement in the socio-economic

welfare of all residents, including the most vulnerable, will have positive implications for local quality of life measures and the city's ability to grow and sustain its business and economic base. Such initiatives require the support of the Economic Development Agency.

### 3.2.1 Providing support to health and housing initiatives

- Work with the Council of Champions and the Social Planning Organization on community economic development initiatives.
- Work with BC Housing to secure 250+ new units of supportive housing in 2021/2022.
- Coordinate labour market initiatives (see Human Capital section of this strategy) that include services targeting populations such as disadvantaged residents, as describe in the Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness 2018-2023.
- Participate in partnerships envisioned in the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy (CitySpaces 2018).
- Work with social organizations to develop a show-case homelessness project in Nanaimo, leveraging senior government funding initiatives, including Canada Mortgage and Housing Corps \$1 billion Rapid Housing Initiative.

## 3.3 Expand Health Care Capacity

The Nanaimo Medical Staff Engagement Society has indicated that recruiting health care professionals, especially surgeons, has been challenging in part because equipment and facilities are not keeping up with population growth and the standards seen in other health regions. In late 2019, the Nanaimo Medical Staff Association outlined in a presentation to City Council a five-year services plan to address gaps and improve services in support of Nanaimo Regional General Hospital's tertiary status, specifically improving equity and access to programs currently lacking (NMSA 2019). The EcDev can provide logistical support to improving health care capacity in the city.

### 3.3.1 Working together with health care organizations

- Work with the Nanaimo Medical Staff Association, Nanaimo Foundation, the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation and other philanthropic organizations to build health care capacity in the region.
- Support efforts to achieve tertiary hospital status for NRGH.
- Work with NRGH to promote a centre of excellence and expand health care services in line with tertiary status.
- Assist with the recruitment and retention of health care professionals by sharing investment and people attraction resources that the EcDev develops.

## 3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation

The city is located within the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. The City acknowledges the role of First Nations in community planning and economic development in its protocol agreements and planning priorities outlined in major City documents like the OCP. The Nation is very active in economic and business ventures through Petroglyph Development Group (PDG), a wholly-owned corporation delegated to manage business and economic development. It intends to further stimulate economic growth, foster equitable partnerships and support their people with access to employment, education, housing, health care. PDG's current areas of focus are in Forestry and Tourism. The City and the Economic Development Agency should seek out mutually beneficial economic outcomes by working closely with all area First Nations on joint planning and initiatives.

### 3.4.1 Increasing the dialogue and generating options for reconciliation

- Work with the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Stz'uminus First Nations to build support for strategy implementation and identify areas of joint action.
- Engage Reconciliation Canada resources for increasing dialogue between First Nations, the City and the business community on economic issues. Request a speaker service and a dialogue workshop.
- Assess options for further collaboration on economic development and business development initiatives between the Petroglyph Development Group, the City and the Economic Development Agency specifically around tourism and forestry.
- Work with the Chamber and SFN on the development of an Indigenomics Program within the City of Nanaimo to help local first Nations take a seat at the economic table.



## 4 Business Development

### 4.1 Compile Research and Data

Data, information and research is an essential economic development tool because it is linked to so many different planning and operating functions, including strategic planning, communications, partnership development, marketing, attraction and business development. A primary economic development practice is that of information brokering, where the organization gathers, creates, curates and disseminates demographic, economic, sector and other socio-community information to help improve planning and decision-making activities. Data and information packaged as strategic intelligence empowers programming and makes for the efficient allocation of resources. It is critical for informing partnerships and stakeholder relations. There is a critical role for Economic Development Agency in using data to embrace and build bridges to the digital economy.

#### 4.1.1 Use data to inform decision makers

- Evaluate the use of non-conventional data sources to create new insights into Nanaimo's economy. Telus Insights, LinkedIn, ESRI, WorkSafeBC, BC Hydro and Canada Post are examples of organizations with published and non-published data that could be accessed through subscription or partnership agreements to create activity, sector or market profiles. Scraping the internet for information on emerging sectors or labour market data such as job classifieds that are not captured in traditional statistical datasets can be highly useful for uncovering local trends and opportunities.
- Work with the City on a data strategy, specifically targeting business development and investment through enhanced access to City data and streamlined procurement, for example through the adoption of open contracting and social procurement concepts.

#### 4.1.2 Report and communicate to audiences

- The Economic Development Agency should develop a GIS-based, searchable web portal with business climate, business establishment, industry/sector, land use, infrastructure, labour market and major project data. The City's existing data subscriptions like Community Analyst can power a user- friendly, map-based research tool that will a front-facing support for BRE and attraction programs.
- Create a local economy dashboard that reports key City and region economic indicators. A single-page dashboard with demographic, labour market and business information can be populated from City (e.g. the existing open data catalogue) and statistical agency data sources. Strategically placed links can engage viewers, have them explore the services, activities and news feeds and reach out to the EcDev if they require assistance.
- Maintain and update website content.
- Develop and deliver data, research and information packages for business development, business attraction and marketing purposes.
- Fulfill custom data requests in support of other initiatives in this strategy.

### 4.2 Import/Export and Trade

Trade and export development focuses on firms that export their products and services to outside markets, directly or indirectly through their involvement in local supply chains. Advances in technology, transportation and trade liberalization means the global flow of goods and services is likely to increase

in the future. Firms that are able to compete in this environment will enhance their own performance while contributing to a more diversified local economic base.

The Province assists trade activities by offering services from research and market data to outbound missions through the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness, and Trade and Invest BC. Export development sector specialists and international trade representatives provide direct access to export market intelligence.

Trade is also a priority for the Government of Canada. Industry Canada offers information with toolkits and guidance on exporting basics, while the Canadian Commercial Corporation works with suppliers on all aspects of government procurement including defence industries. Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank (BDC) both offer export financing assistance. The BDC also offers a consulting service for a variety of business planning areas, including export development. They will assist with identifying high-potential markets and international business plans. Global Affairs Canada is responsible for international trade policy, trade negotiations and agreements, as well as import and export controls. It manages Canada's Trade Commissioner Service which represents national interests around the world and provides access to trade incentive programs like Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ's).

In 2018, Vancouver Island was designated a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) by the Government of Canada. Designation enables marketing of the Island region to attract international trade activity and expansion of Vancouver Island production of goods for export. It will also enable streamlined access to government programs to improve trade (VIEA 2018). This designation enables Nanaimo to be both an import and export hub.

The economic development function can play a valuable role by providing access to research, technical assistance, and senior government and industry programs.

#### 4.2.1 Identifying and promoting trade and export opportunities

- Work with Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) and the Port of Nanaimo to access federal assistance available to FTZ designates.
- Promote VIEA's Export Distribution Centre Program and backhaul container opportunities to Nanaimo-based export enterprises.
- Provide ongoing research and access to existing free trade agreements and opportunities for local enterprises.

### 4.3 Develop a Positive Business Climate

The business climate in a community is critical to ensure that existing businesses feel welcomed in the community and that new investment is able to engage efficiently and consistently. A CitiesSpeak survey found that service professionals valued three things above all others in their local government: a licensing system that is simple and makes compliance easy; a tax system that has clear rules and is easy to understand; and training and networking programs that help service professionals get their businesses up and running, comply with the local rules, and meet other professionals in their industries. (CitiesSpeak 2014)

In the City of Nanaimo there has been strong development activity in recent years, which has placed high demand on the services of the City's Building Inspection Section. It reviews building permit applications within a framework of municipal policies and bylaws, and Provincial regulations and status. Further to building permit processing and administration of the building bylaw, additional services

include liquor occupant load calculations, building licence referrals, securing works and services, covenant conditions, development permit calculations, and the administration of development cost charges. The City is currently reviewing these processes to help strengthen the economic health and livability of Nanaimo (City of Nanaimo 2020a). The City and Economic Development Agency should prioritize business climate improvement as an economic development building block.

#### 4.3.1 Streamline Development Approvals

- Explore the viability of on-line services to foster a more timely and efficient development process. Many communities have moved in this direction, for example through e-permits, to streamline processes, ensure transparency and improve processing times.
- Help to develop and implement solutions for current planning, subdivision and building permit processes which will significantly reduce development approval timelines.

#### 4.3.2 Consider the provision of concierge services

- Establish a concierge service to support businesses navigating the development and building processes. A single point of contact as a developer moves through these processes can enhance service levels and lower costs.
- Provide periodic educational workshops targeting at realtors, commercial and industrial property owners, and developers to highlight zoning and development activities and updates on current permitting and approval processes. This educational process could also be used to support education on use of on-line services.

### 4.4 Business Retention and Expansion

Effective economic development is founded on a strong local business base. The purpose of a business, retention and expansion (BRE) program is to listen to local businesses, address their concerns and develop a strategic approach to business facilitation. Existing businesses are responsible for most new jobs in a community, as high as 90% depending on the structure of the economic base. A BRE program exploits this potential first by trying to understand what is driving business activity and investment and second by crafting services to unlock growth potential. In effect BRE helps the community become more strategic and tactical when striving for employment and diversification targets.

Nanaimo was one of earliest adopters of BC Hydro's modified BRE program known as Business Care when it was rolled out across the province in the 1990s. Those early services were refreshed in the 2011 Economic Development Strategy but in the latter years of the Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation BRE took a back seat to other initiatives. More recently, the City has re-engaged BRE programming around round table discussions with key sectors of the local economy. This outreach should be extended and amplified so that the street-level insights of local business become central to the decision-making apparatus of the Economic Development Agency.

#### 4.4.1 Outreach to local businesses

- Continue the business resiliency program that provides on-line access to businesses dealing with COVID-19 business downturn. Reach out to businesses to where assistance is most required and target services accordingly.
- Work with the Province to undertake a business walks program and do initial data collection and aftercare requirements.

- Based on the results of the business walks, upon an evaluation, reestablish a full BRE program by setting up a task force that will oversee the program, identify target sectors and support interviews. Business walks are best suited to retail BRE but is not the best option for outreach to most other sectors.
- Research the appropriate customer relationship management software as an information repository.

## 4.5 Promote Home-Based Business

The City has recently updated its home-based business regulations in Zoning Bylaw 4500 (City of Nanaimo 2020b). The update modernizes the regulations to support home-based businesses while balancing the needs of the neighbourhoods in which they operate. A home-based business can be either a business operated at or from home.

An estimated 2,300 licensed home-based businesses operate in the City, providing approximately 3,400 jobs and covering a wide range of sectors. Home-based businesses should be viewed as a source of job growth in the community and supported in their development and diversification.

### 4.5.1 Encourage home-based businesses to grow and expand

- Promote home based business opportunities to small business and the self-employed as a viable option for early-stage business development.
- Include home-based businesses in BRE programming.
- Provide support to home-based businesses that are looking to grow and may need commercial or light industrial space in the City.

## 4.6 Economic Emergency Preparedness and Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters like wildfires and flooding can exert severe dislocation on local economies. As the frequency of these events increase, communities will be forced to plan against these threats to health and wellbeing. This will increasingly apply to the economic realm as well, with economic development offices mobilizing assistance to businesses during event occurrence, in addition to pre-event mitigation and post-event recovery. The City and EcDev can get a head start on preparedness and response for the inevitable economic emergencies of the future.

### 4.6.1 Preparing for the next economic emergency

- Prepare a pre-disaster economic recovery plan for the City, linked to other emergency and disaster response programs.
- Undertake periodic disaster scenario planning assessments that can be used to refine response and recovery programming.

### 4.6.2 Assisting businesses with response and recovery

- Build and maintain a database of economic preparedness, response and recovery resources for business.
- Work with industry partners to develop a best practice knowledge base for dealing with disasters.
- Adapt BRE programming to trigger services for vulnerable and at-risk firms.

## 5 Innovation and Technology

### 5.1 Connect the Tech Sector

There is no specific North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for the tech sector. BC Stats estimates of the sector encompass a broad cross-section of firms such as manufacturers, traditional media companies, telecommunications firms, engineering companies, local labs, and environmental and other consultants that may not normally be defined as tech firms. Based on this methodology, the Nanaimo Regional District (with 248 tech businesses) ranks fifth in the province behind Metro Vancouver (6,934), Capital Regional District (1,012), Central Okanagan (407), and Fraser Valley (346).

A closer examination indicates that the tech sector in Nanaimo consists of a small and quite diverse group of companies, almost of all which have fewer than 10 employees. Most of our “tech companies” are not pure tech companies but rather are manufacturers or service companies (e.g. engineering firms) that incorporate a focus on tech as part of their business. While there are notable companies in areas such as robotics, clean tech, marine technology, social media, and website and app development, there are only two companies with over 100 employees (VMAC Global Technology and Real Estate Webmasters).

There are few connections between the tech companies, no formal clusters and no central hub or tech park. Strengthening physical and personal connections between companies is an important part of sector development, something EcDev should prioritize in its mandate. Located near the harbour front, downtown Nanaimo has many of the ingredients key to the development of a tech hub; it is an interesting, walkable neighbourhood, featuring a small but developing community of tech companies, artists, and design firms, coffee shops, bars and restaurants, and many opportunities for development. There may also be opportunities to develop a more formal tech park, like what had been proposed near Diver Lake; the original proposal focused on robotics and marine technology but could be broadened to cover cleantech. There will also opportunities to stage events, which bring people together, building on the occasional events which were staged prior to COVID-19.

#### 5.1.1 Develop a downtown tech hub

- Promote development of a downtown hub involving the tech sector and complementary sectors and services, through promoting neighbourhood development, working to improve local infrastructure, amenities and security, and increasing the critical mass by promoting vacant storefronts, implementing business and remote worker attraction programs, and creating a digital nomad program.

#### 5.1.2 Networking with the tech sector

- Support development of a central directory and a program of networking events to increase interaction between members of the tech sector and raise the profile of the sector. Following up on best practices that have been employed elsewhere, networking events could be scheduled quarterly featuring guest speakers who would discuss key issues (ranging from technology to business issues), market opportunities, or available programs and resources. The events would not need to be restricted to tech companies or strictly Nanaimo companies.

## 5.2 Strengthen the Innovation Ecosystem

The challenge for any community seeking to build its tech sector is to create the conditions for growth by establishing a positive business climate, increasing access to entrepreneurs, business support services, skilled workers, capital, and markets as well as capabilities related to research, technology development and commercialization. Those resources do not necessarily need to be located in the region for the tech sector to grow; however, they need to be readily accessible to businesses in the region.

The tech sector has important strengths on which to build. Nanaimo is an attractive place for workers and businesses to locate and develop. It is situated in the same time zone and in relatively proximity to larger tech centres including Victoria, Vancouver, Seattle and other west coast cities. BC has a deep pool of talent combined with accommodative immigration policies and is cost-competitive relative to US centres. The federal and provincial governments have identified the tech sector as a priority for development and there is a growing innovation ecosystem in the province and an emerging ecosystem in Nanaimo.

Innovation Island serves as the primary tech programming organization for Vancouver Island outside of Greater Victoria, delivering a range of programming including the Venture Acceleration Program, the RETHNIK series, the Digital Economy Restart, Recover, Reimagine Program (DER3), and Technology Resiliency Program. Other business development services are offered by Community Futures and Small Business BC (including the Export Navigator program). Nanaimo has three co-working spaces, a makerspace, and a small investment fund (the VIVA Fund). Government financing and funding is available through Community Futures, BDC, and various other programs. VICEDA (TechIsland.io) and Mid Island Business Initiative (MIBI) operate websites intended to attract investment to the broader region.

A common criticism of the existing ecosystem is the lack of collaboration and coordination between key players. Efforts to develop the tech sector on Vancouver Island will be much more effective if implemented in association with other partners and regions, again an obvious role for Economic Development Agency. Gaps in the innovation ecosystem focus primarily on access to capital and experienced talent, the need to further strengthen linkages between industry and the local university, the low profile of the region, and an under-developed base of entrepreneurs.

### 5.2.1 Enabling an ecosystem

- Ensure that the tech sector is appropriately represented on the Economic Development Agency Board.
- Foster greater collaboration and coordination between the key players involved in promoting development of the sector.
- Work to raise awareness that Nanaimo as an emerging tech hub amongst tech businesses, other types of businesses, skilled workers, remote workers and investors.

### 5.2.2 Tech facilitation services

- Facilitate greater access to coaching, mentoring and business support services for start-up and growing businesses, including those locating in co-working spaces.

- Over time, facilitate development of a regional angel investment network, perhaps like the CRAG network that has been established in Campbell River, and work to improve the investor readiness of local companies and facilitate their introduction to investors.

## 5.3 Leveraging Tech

The underdeveloped nature of local tech sector is a concern both because tech is the fastest growing sector of the global economy and because technology will be integral to the success of all economic sectors going forward. Primary production, manufacturing and service industries are under tremendous pressure to digitize their operations, adopt advanced processes and technologies, reduce costs, and become green and energy efficient.

The lack of larger local technology hub can serve to slow the rate of innovation in areas such as digital transformation, Industry 4.0, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and machine learning, and adoption of advanced manufacturing technology, processes, and materials by businesses in the region. This may negatively impact on the competitive position of Nanaimo's more traditional industries going forward. It is critical that Nanaimo and Economic Development Agency target the regional tech sector for growth and strengthen the linkages between it and other economic sectors.

### 5.3.1 Brokering and bridging programs for cluster development

- Lever existing programs which build linkages between tech companies, students and other companies and facilitate the development and adoption of technology for traditional industries (such as DER3, VI Solutions and MITACS)
- Encourage further development of VIU as a regional centre for technology development and innovation. This may require accessing increased funding for research, technology development and commercialization relevant to local industry, developing an industry technology centre, and strengthening relationships with industry through partnerships, research & development, co-ops and support services.
- Examine the feasibility of using strategies such as creating a Nanaimo City Studio, modelled on City Studio Vancouver, hackathons and Smart City Programs to address technical issues and accelerate the rate of technology adoption by the City of Nanaimo and other participating partners.
- Stage a discovery day which would bring local tech companies together with potential partners and buyers, who could be representatives from government, other sectors in the region and other regions, to provide participants to find out more about products and services of the local tech sector and the associated market opportunities.

## 6 Place Making and Attraction

The most competitive cities that excel at Investment Promotion and Attraction have spent a decade or more developing strong intellectual infrastructure that supports their advantages and value propositions. They also can rapidly adjust their direction or pivot because they have a strong foundation and a deep understanding of their assets, and how those resources fit into a shifting world around them. This is the most important competitive advantage any city can possess.

Nanaimo is already gifted with some advantages, as identified and articulated in this strategy. Going forward, the most transformative differentiator will rely on the City's efforts over the next few years to improve performance with its economic development functions with an emphasized focus on investment promotion.

Investment promotion and attraction is an integral part of economic development that is most effective when executed cohesively as part of a community's business retention, expansion and attraction (BREA) activities. The promotion of investment (and trade) is a bilateral approach to supporting investment from existing businesses as well as new ones, and they often have a direct relationship that emerges from consistent and integrated local BREA programs.

This section focuses on specific actions and tools Nanaimo can employ to strengthen its competitive position, and subsequently its effectiveness around investment promotion and attraction.

### 6.1 Global Trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Understanding global investment and trade, its influences and the impacts of associated changes is important to developing and executing effective investment promotion programs. Currently for example, major global trends related to digital transformation and supply chain de-risking are being heavily influenced by geopolitics and COVID19. This has created a new paradigm of place marketing and investment promotion for cities and regions.

An increasingly digitized world combines an accelerated knowledge curve with access to innovation and technologies that are evolving at a pace beyond human capacity. For humans, this means adapting to change or getting left behind. Fortunately, at the leading edges of digital adoption is the development of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML) tools that are supporting the integration of biological and digital tools as defined in The Fourth Industrial Revolution. These technologies and their integration are exciting advances. However, they have also hyper-focused the world's attention on the cyber security of sovereign nations and their allies, creating vulnerabilities – especially in democratic societies that are susceptible to destabilization. This is only beginning to be fully understood.

The implications for economic development are that geopolitical tensions which previously existed around investment and trade have become amplified, and industries in advanced nations that previously benefited from off-shoring their supply chains to cheaper global regions (like China) have become acutely exposed to supply chain disruptions like COVID19. They have become unmanageable risks, costing the global supply chain billions of dollars that are both caused and compounded by a global pandemic.

The opportunity for cities like Nanaimo – who have key infrastructure and location advantages, especially around affordability – is they can offer a more de-risked environment as a medium-sized manufacturing and logistics centre with access to an international marketplace. Combined with quality



of life, livability and stable governments, this is where Nanaimo and its new investment promotion and attraction effort has an opportunity to build a strong foundation.

The real opportunities will emerge from targeting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from companies looking to take advantage of re-shoring and near-shoring their operations in smaller, more affordable regional centres that offer safe environments for both operational logistics and employees. Smaller facilities, smaller offices (given COVID and work-from-home trends, as well as the cost of re-fitting expensive office towers to accommodate physical distancing) are important trends to take notice of. The global pandemic appears to already be accelerated emerging trends towards deurbanization, particularly when it comes to affordability and livability. These are advantages cities like Nanaimo can lever by understanding the implications of political changes and trade policy in North America, including and especially the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) that is expected to reorient some trade away from increasingly expensive and risky countries, and towards a strengthened continental-trade environment.

### 6.1.1 Trade Advisory Board

- Establish an advisory board with specific expertise on trade, transportation and manufacturing that can oversee the development of the following research plans.

### 6.1.2 Profiling priority sectors

- Trade & Investment Priority Sectors Study: Develop an action plan with deep-dive profiles for priority sectors with a special focus on opportunities to enhance the city and region's intermodal and multimodal infrastructure, include a strong global analysis of current trade activities with the potential to establish Nanaimo as a secure port of trade and advanced manufacturing – these should especially include supply chain and value chain mapping with gaps and opportunities.

## 6.2 Place Marketing and Investment Promotion Toolbox

Globally there are multiple examples of investment promotion best practices, and some regions in Canada are at the top of the list such as Montreal International. Named the best economic development Investment Promotion Agency (IPA) in the world, Montreal international has been building their programs for more than 20 years. Even closer to Nanaimo, the Comox Valley has developed some strong programs over time. For a smaller region, they have made some impressive advances in their approach to investment attraction despite limited resources.

One of the major facets of success for both agencies has been their ability to consistently apply improvements over time to both their investment environment and their attraction programs.

The recommendations in this strategy are based on the characteristics of best practices across Canada, and from agencies around the world. They especially focus on efforts Nanaimo can make to enhance the region's investment readiness and build a strong promotion and marketing program that can lever the area's strengths.

1. Investment Readiness: assess and improve how effectively the City can facilitate investment by identifying and removing or mitigating barriers.
2. Investment Branding: an investment marketing brand with a clear narrative and set of compelling value propositions that form the framework for an investment promotion digital

toolbox with deep data that connects investing business leaders to locations and opportunities in Nanaimo.

3. Promotion and Attraction: evolving campaigns and tools, mostly digital, that include brand visuals, collateral materials, data and research, strong web portals and trackable outcomes used for generating awareness and deal flow.
4. Amplifying Through Strategic Partnerships: leveraging the right partners, internally and externally, to amplify Nanaimo's narrative and investment opportunities.

Levering partners, especially government agencies whose role it is to carry out investment and trade, is an advanced tactic the best agencies lever regularly and consistently to ensure their message reaches a broader audience.

There has never been a better time for smaller cities and regions to compete for investment and talent attraction. Since the advent of the first industrialized era (mid 1700's) and the early days of professional economic (then industrial) development (mid 1900's), it has been extremely difficult for smaller communities to compete for investment, and the attention of site-selection decision-makers. Whether targeting corporate locations, entrepreneurs or tech talent, it was usually a near-impossible task that required determination, professional ingenuity and often a big budget.

Technology has changed all that.

Access to broadband, reasonable affordability and livability, personal safety and security, logistical access to an international marketplace, a competitive tax environment, thought leadership and a willingness to support a strong business environment, etc. These are all game changers today that were not tangible differentiators even a decade ago. Combined with geopolitical frictions and a global pandemic, the opportunity to compete for investment has never been this feasible with the right tools.

Building an effective toolbox to attract investment relies heavily on the value proposition of the community or region. Nanaimo has a strong platform to launch from, and given the opportunities identified in this strategy can elevate its position significantly over the next 10 years. It's important to note that Place Marketing for tourism, and Investment Promotion for economic development are not the same practice. Though there are parallel methodologies to the research and development of target markets and promotion of complementary assets, the content and messaging associated with targeted outreach require different approaches, and therefore should be funded, executed and tracked separately.

For Investment Marketing, the top performers employ exceptional rigor in their data and information and have built a reputation with decision-makers based on credible data and responsive services. Competing however also means understanding Nanaimo's strengths and weaknesses and being transparent about them along with the solutions employed to address them.

### 6.2.1 Become investment ready

- Conduct a benchmarking analysis or 'report card' that produces a rigorous analysis of Nanaimo's competitive positioning against cities it both compares to and competes with, that will serve as a foundation for the development of a strong investment marketing program.
- Execute an investment readiness analysis that identifies where and how the community will improve its ability to facilitate and accommodate investment – especially from a regulatory perspective.

## 6.2.2 Build a credible investment promotion brand and marketing program

- Create a visual brand and general narrative that is credible but aspirational, that avoids excessive hubris or hyperbole.
- Prepare a communications strategy with visual brand campaigns and social media channels that form the foundation of a digital strategy, that especially includes a web site/s designed for investment decision-makers and social media campaigns with earned, owned and paid content.
- Develop evidence-based value propositions with sector-specific narratives, opportunity descriptions and case examples.
- Produce a short-list of key targets and location decision-makers that form part of a work plan – this should be part of an ongoing outreach program that is continually refreshed and reported on.
- Develop a digital relationship-management program, or CRM, that can track and help manage ongoing business relationships and track deal-flow.

## 6.3 Managing the Investment Promotion Process – Creating Deal Flow

Setting up a business development process would be an important first step for an economic development and investment promotion agency. Like any sales and business development program, almost all the organization's activities should be designed to produce deal flow, a portion of which will lead to new business investment.

In the early years of any new economic development organization, the challenge is often related to prioritizing and allocating limited resources where they are needed.

That can mean having to harmonize priorities between building an investment-ready community and selling it. It is difficult to achieve success if either of those priorities are incongruent or not compelling enough.

Once the objectives of 'building' and 'selling' are balanced, creating deal flow and supporting new business investment becomes almost the entire focus of an investment promotion agency.

The organization's work-programs should be designed to develop leads at the top of a sales funnel, manage those leads so they can be converted to prospects, and eventually into investment deals that generate economic growth and employment.

As is recommended in this strategy, focusing on opportunities related to Basic economy industries will generate the most beneficial impacts to the community because they create the highest value through the export of goods and/or services. Support could, however, be provided for businesses that are considered Non-basic where they would add significant value to local and regional supply chains, or sometimes to quality of life such as targeted retail.

### 6.3.1 Developing champions and partners

- Establish a local leaders education program that can help build a knowledgeable ground team of city officials and business leaders. Round table sessions, workshops and a speaker series can develop a strong knowledge base on international business and trade, including and especially trade flows, FDI, geopolitical influences, economics and investment.
- Select and engage the best of the area's leaders to become part of an investment promotion team that can champion the area's advantages and value propositions – their role would be to help host inbound investors and assist in 'closing the deal' with new business.

- Leverage strategic partners to create deal flow. This is especially true in economic development and investment promotion when resources are limited. Levering partnerships to amplify messaging is an effective tactic for smaller agencies that don't have large travel/event budgets. Establishing a purposeful partnership program with key intermediaries and investment attraction partners from public sector agencies like Invest BC and Invest in Canada, as well as private sector representatives that can support Nanaimo's objectives, will amplify the city's value proposition narratives driving traffic into the sales funnel.

### 6.3.2 Targeting an outreach plan

- Conduct marketing and outreach. When operationalized, every aspect of an investment attraction strategy (like this one) funnels an agency's focus to its core mandate of identifying and landing investment. The priority objective is to narrow the scope as close to the investment decision-maker as possible. Every aspect of this strategy is designed to help accelerate this process, getting Nanaimo's economic development team closer to opportunities. Developing and executing a Targeted Outreach Plan is the most important operational priority and should include corporate targets and agents like site selectors who help them make location decisions. They can also include key events, missions, activities and other related outreach that gets the team in front of decision makers. Levering professional targeting services that sort trends and data, though a bit more costly, is an ideal way to accelerate this process as well.

# Strategy Implementation

## 7 Organizing for Delivery

### 7.1 Economic Development Agency

The review of service delivery models commissioned by the City in 2019 (Neilson 2019) recommended an In-House/City-Owned Hybrid model for the delivery of economic development services. The report further recommended the City approve and develop the ownership, funding, governance, staffing, and other elements of a City-owned economic development agency. In the fall of 2019, City Council endorsed a new approach to the delivery of economic development services. A hybrid organizational model was proposed comprising an in-house economic development function, to be operated by City staff, and an arm's-length external agency, incorporated and owned (primarily) by the City.

These agency recommendations should be implemented as a precursor to a broader roll-out of the strategy. The consultation undertaken by Neilson generated broad support an expanded service delivery model. A robust and sustainable organization framework is necessary so the allocation of resources and responsibilities by the City and its partners occurs as efficiently and effectively as possible.

#### 7.1.1 Setting up the agency

- Confirm the form of organization, name, ownership, governance, articles of incorporation, place of business and other legal necessities for the EcDev.
- Vest the Agency with a core budget sufficient to implement this strategy, based on a fee-for service agreement between the City and its partners for a minimum three-year term. The recommended budget for economic development as a whole is between \$0.75 million and \$1 million annually.
- To facilitate the involvement of partners in the Agency, link their annual contributions to specific programs or projects that they, as well as the City, have prioritized.

### 7.2 External and Internal Delivery

The hybrid model presumes a close working relationship between the internal City component and the external component. In theory, the hybrid concept makes sense because it strives to accommodate the command-control nature of municipal government on matters of infrastructure, land use and development with the more market-oriented mandate of the external agency that is focused on innovation, attraction and entrepreneurship.

In practice, the hybrid approach presents many management and operating challenges because the internal and external components report and answer to different organizations. Even though the City is the ultimate authority, it will be necessary to articulate and land on a framework that realistically guides on-the-ground working relationships, roles and responsibilities and shared outcomes.

#### 7.2.1 Align delivery between City and Agency

- Prepare a policies and procedures manual, staffing plan, job descriptions and other documentation as deemed appropriate by the EDTF.

- Prepare an internal communications plan with the City that will establish objectives, means and timetable. The plan should incorporate shared planning, monitoring and reporting using the performance measurement model in this strategy. Quarterly meetings and reporting are strongly recommended.
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a capital reserve amongst partners that can be used to coordinate and leverage priority projects or initiatives.
- Engage training and professional development, including leadership training, for all Agency board members and management.

## 7.3 Performance Measurement

Performance Measurement is a best practice in the successful delivery of any economic development program or initiative. The purpose of the performance measurement system is providing accountability for the resources used, report to key audiences including the City and public on the progress made and support annual operating and longer-term strategic planning as well as tactical decision-making.

### 7.3.1 Annual Work Plan

- Prepare an annual work plan for review and approval by Agency and the City. The plan will identify initiatives, responsibilities and budget using the Action Plan in the following Section. Key indicator resources for measuring progress will also be included.

### 7.3.2 Annual Reporting

- Prepare an annual report on the progress made in implementing the strategy, including reporting on the inputs, activities, outputs and actual and projected outcomes. The reference document is the Annual Work Plan.
- Prepare metrics and indicators on broader changes in economic conditions and key economic drivers, which will feed into decision-making and the development of an annual work plan for the following year. Examples of key indicators, most of which will be drawn from secondary sources, include the value of building permits, housing starts, major projects, regional employment and unemployment data, household income, business licensing, economic output, commercial and industrial vacancy rates, and education and training metrics. These data would be drawn from the reporting dashboard referenced in Strategy 4.1 and Strategy 6.2.

## 8 Action Plans

### Immediate Implementation

#### Organizing for Delivery

	Strategy	Priority
7. Implementation	7.1 Economic Development Agency	High
	7.2 External and Internal Delivery	High
	7.3 Performance Measurement	High

## Year 1 - 2021

Goal	Strategy	Priority
1. Economic Capital	1.3 Revitalizing the Downtown & Waterfront	High
	1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics	High
	1.5 Robust Broadband Connectivity	High
	1.6 Urban Tourism Product	Flex
	1.7 Health Care Centre of Excellence	Moderate
3. Social & Environmental Capital	3.2 Nanaimo Health and Housing	Moderate
	3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation	Moderate
4. Business Development	4.3 Positive Business Climate	Moderate
5. Innovation & Technology	5.1 Connecting the Tech Sector	Flex



## Year 2 - 2022

Goal	Strategy	Priority
1. Economic Capital	1.1 Community Infrastructure Plan	Moderate
	1.2 Employment Lands	Moderate
2. Human Capital	2.1 Education, Training and Industry Integration	Flex
	2.2 Inclusive Workforce	Flex
3. Social & Environmental Capital	3.3 Health Care Capacity	Moderate
4. Business Development	4.1 Research and Data	Moderate
	4.4 Business Retention and Expansion	High
5. Innovation & Technology	5.2 Strengthening the Innovation Ecosystem	Flex
6. Place Making & Attraction	6.1 Global Trade and Foreign Direct Investment	High

## Year 3 - 2023

Goal	Strategy	Priority
2. Human Capital	2.3 Talent Attraction and Retention	Moderate
3. Social & Environmental Capital	3.1 Strategic Partnerships	High
4. Business Development	4.2 Export and Trade	Moderate
	4.5 Home-based Business	Flex
	4.6 Economic Emergency Preparedness and Recovery	Flex
5. Innovation & Technology	5.3 Leveraging Tech	High
6. Place Making & Attraction	6.2 Place Marketing and Investment Promotion Toolbox	High
	6.3 Managing the Investment Promotion Process – Creating Deal Flow	High

## Goals – Economic Capital

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
1.1 Community Infrastructure Plan	1.1.1 Infrastructure research	Moderate time \$15,000 benefit cost framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research output</li> <li>• # partners engaged</li> </ul>
	1.1.2 Outreach and engagement	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> </ul>
	1.1.3 Funding mechanisms	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant funds applied &amp; secured</li> </ul>
1.2 Employment Lands	1.2.1 Research and monitoring	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research output</li> </ul>
	1.2.2 Working with industry and landowners	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Land sold/developed</li> </ul>
1.3 Revitalizing the Downtown & Waterfront	1.3.1 Supporting revitalization efforts	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Port Drive activity</li> <li>• Walkway length</li> <li>• Revite incentive uptake</li> </ul>
	1.3.2 Leveraging investor interest in downtown development	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewart/Newcastle activity</li> <li>• Businesses contacted, recruited</li> <li>• Night market status</li> </ul>
1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics	1.4.1 Facilitating transportation connections	Major time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in service capacity</li> </ul>
	1.4.2 Transportation and logistics hub	Moderate time \$5,000 annually target marketing \$45,000 Logistics Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Business contacted, recruited</li> <li>• Strategy completion</li> <li>• Strategy implementation</li> </ul>
1.5 Robust Broadband Connectivity	1.5.1 City policy and planning support	Minor time \$30,000 Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy changes</li> <li>• Strategy preparation</li> <li>• Strategy implementation</li> </ul>

	1.5.2 Working with existing broadband initiatives	Major time \$30,000 mapping and modelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping and modelling status</li> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Connected Coast services</li> </ul>
	1.5.3 Moving toward a gigabyte city	Minor time \$25,000 business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task Force status</li> <li>• Business case completion</li> <li>• Grant funds applied &amp; secured</li> </ul>
1.6 Urban Tourism Product	1.6.1 Committing resources to product and destination development	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product costs</li> <li>• Marketing savings</li> </ul>
	1.6.2 Product development downtown	Moderate time \$10,000 delivery evaluation \$25,000 research on signature events \$15,000 feasibility showcase spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellence program status</li> <li>• New events</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• New spaces</li> <li>• # partners engaged</li> </ul>
1.7 Health Care Centre of Excellence	1.7.1 Supporting health care initiatives	Minor time \$25,000 business case for medical school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Business case completion</li> </ul>

## Goals – Human Capital

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
2.1 Education, Training and Industry Integration	2.1.1 Creating a more participatory labour market	Moderate time \$150,000 Labour Market Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee status</li> <li>• Grant funds applied &amp; secured</li> <li>• Program uptake</li> <li>• Strategy implementation</li> </ul>
2.2 Inclusive Workforce	2.2.1 Prioritizing social procurement	Minor time Social Procurement Framework, \$25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social procurement framework status</li> </ul>
	2.2.2 Bringing services to those in need	Moderate time Education promotion 10,000 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Program uptake</li> </ul>
2.3 Talent Attraction and Retention	2.3.1 Developing talent recruitment capacity	Moderate time Attraction program, \$10,000 Talent recruitment, \$20,000 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program status</li> <li>• # enquiries</li> <li>• # people recruited</li> </ul>
	2.3.2 Using the Provincial Nominee Program	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # businesses contacted</li> <li>• Program uptake</li> </ul>

## Goals – Social and Environmental Capital

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
3.1 Strategic Partnerships	3.1.1 Pursuing productive partnerships	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># partners engaged</li> <li>EcDev Board makeup</li> </ul>
	3.1.2 Exploring new roles for the non-profit sector	Moderate time \$20,000 non-profit economy \$25,000 studies on social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profit study status</li> <li>New solutions identified and implemented</li> </ul>
3.2 Nanaimo Health and Housing	3.2.1 Providing support to health and housing initiatives	Moderate time \$20,000 feasibility for homelessness project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributed time</li> <li>Homelessness project status</li> <li># Housing units secured</li> </ul>
3.3 Health Care Capacity	3.3.1 Working together with health care organizations	Minor time \$10,000 promotion and recruitment materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># partners engaged</li> <li>Tertiary hospital status</li> <li>Contributions to health care professional recruitment</li> </ul>
3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation	3.4.1 Increasing the dialogue and generating options for reconciliation	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># partners engaged</li> <li>Value of partnered investments</li> </ul>

## Goals – Business Development

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
4.1 Research and Data	4.1.1 Using data to inform decision makers	Moderate time \$10,000 data strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data strategy status</li> <li># of data products/publications</li> </ul>
	4.1.2 Reporting and communicating to audiences	Minor time \$30,000 dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website/dashboard status</li> <li>Website metrics (visits, bounce rate, page views, visit duration)</li> <li># custom data requests</li> </ul>
4.2 Export and Trade	4.2.1 Identifying and promoting trade and export opportunities	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FTZ assistance secured</li> <li># partners engaged</li> <li># custom data requests</li> </ul>
4.3 Positive Business Climate	4.3.1 Improving City services	Moderate time \$50,000 for studying reductions in development approval timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in on-line services</li> <li>Solutions to development approval timelines</li> <li>Average time for development approvals</li> </ul>
	4.3.2 Providing concierge services	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concierge service status</li> <li># business assisted</li> <li># workshops offered, uptake</li> </ul>
4.4 Business Retention and Expansion	4.4.1 Outreach to local businesses	Major time \$10,000 research information repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Walks status</li> <li>BRE program status</li> <li># businesses visited, assisted</li> <li>CRM status</li> </ul>
4.5 Home-based Business	4.5.1 Encouraging home-based businesses to grow and expand	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># businesses visited, assisted</li> <li># relocations to commercial space</li> </ul>

4.6 Economic Emergency Preparedness and Recovery	4.6.1 Preparing for the next economic emergency	Minor time \$10,000 recovery plan and scenario planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery plan status</li> <li>• # rollouts</li> </ul>
	4.6.2 Assisting businesses with response and recovery	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database status</li> <li>• # businesses visited, assisted in event of emergency</li> </ul>



## Goals – Innovation and Technology

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
5.1 Connecting the Tech Sector	5.1.1 Developing a downtown tech hub	Moderate time \$10,000 annual, networking & events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program status and uptake</li> <li>• # downtown tech businesses</li> <li>• Downtown tech employment</li> </ul>
	5.1.2 Networking with the tech sector	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• # events hosted</li> </ul>
5.2 Strengthening the Innovation Ecosystem	5.2.1 Enabling an ecosystem	Minor time \$10,000 annual sector promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EcDev Board makeup</li> <li>• # partners engaged</li> <li>• Tech awareness in Nanaimo</li> </ul>
	5.2.2 Tech facilitation services	Moderate time \$25,000 angel investor network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # businesses visited, assisted</li> <li>• Angel Network status</li> <li>• # and value of investments</li> </ul>
5.3 Leveraging Tech	5.3.1 Brokering and bridging programs for cluster development	Minor \$20,000 City Studio feasibility \$10,000 for a Discovery Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program uptake</li> <li>• VIU tech capacity</li> <li>• Discovery Day status</li> <li>• # and uptake of tech events</li> </ul>

## Goals – Place Making and Attraction

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
6.1 Global Trade and Foreign Direct Investment	6.1.1 Trade Advisory Board	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory Board status</li> </ul>
	6.1.2 Profiling priority sectors	Major time \$60,000 to \$120,000 Deep-Dive Sector Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sector analysis study status</li> <li>FDI strategy Implementation</li> </ul>
6.2 Place Marketing and Investment Promotion Toolbox	6.2.1 Becoming investment ready	Major time \$90,000 Benchmarking Report & Score Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmarking status</li> <li>Investment readiness analysis status</li> </ul>
	6.2.2 Building a credible investment promotion brand and marketing program	Major time \$80,000 - \$180,000 Marketing program and digital toolbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing program and toolbox status</li> <li>CRM status</li> </ul>
6.3 Managing the Investment Promotion Process – Creating Deal Flow	6.3.1 Developing champions and partners	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders education program status</li> <li>Promotion team status</li> <li># partners engaged</li> </ul>
	6.3.2 Targeting an outreach plan	Moderate time \$30,000 - \$80,000 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach plan status</li> <li>Outreach metrics, # firms engaged, enquiries, prospects, investments, employment</li> </ul>

## Organizing for Delivery

Strategy	Activity	Key Indicator Resources	Resource
7.1 Economic Development Agency	7.1.1 Setting up the agency	Moderate time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hybrid agency status</li></ul>
7.2 External and Internal Delivery	7.2.1 Aligning delivery between City and Agency	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Status of supporting documents</li><li>• City and EcDev views on alignment</li></ul>
7.3 Performance Measurement	7.3.1 Annual Work Plan 7.3.2 Annual Reporting	Minor time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivery status of work plan and annual report</li></ul>

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## Abbreviations

BCEDA	British Columbia Economic Development Association
BCPNP	BC Provincial Nominee Program
BDC	Business Development Bank
BIA	Business Improvement Area or Association
BRE	Business Retention and Expansion
BREA	Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction
CA	Census Agglomeration
CBA	Community Benefits Agreement
CCSPI	Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative
CMA	Census Metropolitan Area
EcDev	Nanaimo Economic Development Agency
EDTF	Economic Development Task Force
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTZ	Foreign Trade Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
MIBI	Mid Island Business Initiative
MITACS	Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems
MRDT	Municipal and Regional District Tax
NAICS	North American Industrial Classification System
NEDC	Nanaimo Economic Development Corporation
NRD	Nanaimo Regional District
NRGH	Nanaimo Regional General Hospital
NMSA	Nanaimo Medical Staff Association
OCP	Official Community Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
PiT	Point-in-Time
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy
RTE	Downtown revitalization tax exemption
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
USMCA	US-Mexico-Canada Agreement
VIEA	Vancouver Island Economic Alliance
VIU	Vancouver Island University

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