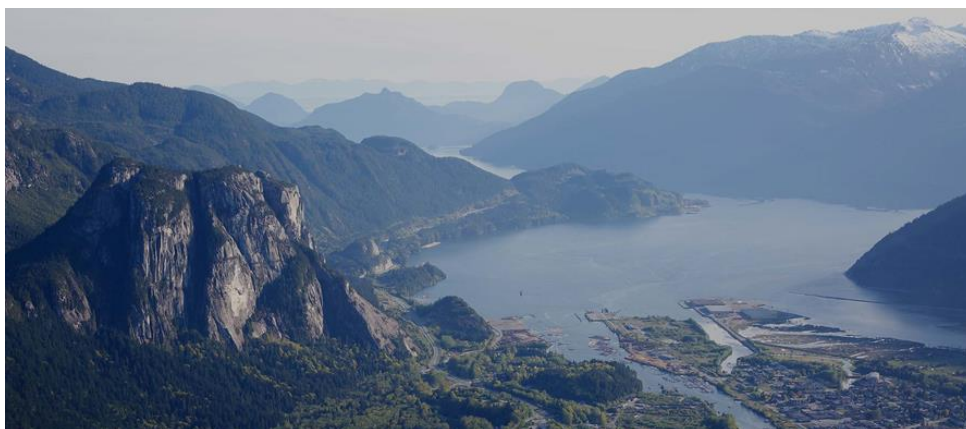


DRAFT

***District of Squamish Economic
Development Strategy and Action Plan
Draft Final Report***



Prepared for
District of Squamish



By



ECONOMIC GROWTH SOLUTIONS INC.

In association with:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period October 2015 through May 2016 the District of Squamish undertook a comprehensive process to develop an up to date Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, in order to provide overall direction for enhancing the region's economy over the next decade or more. The project was undertaken by a consulting team led by Economic Growth Solutions Inc., working closely with staff and stakeholders within the District of Squamish. This included extensive input provided by the business community and District Council. The key recommendations are summarized in the following paragraphs and tables.

RECOMMENDED VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Economic Development Vision

The recommended vision statement for the Squamish area economy is as follows:

<i>Squamish Economic Development Vision Statement</i>
<i>Squamish will have a vibrant, balanced, diversified and sustainable economic base (founded on existing sectors where the community already has demonstrated success) that provides a wide range of live-work career opportunities for local residents, a focus on innovation and learning, superior quality of life and community amenities, as well as a strong and competitive non-residential tax base.</i>

Having a focus on superior quality of life and community amenities (including protection of the natural environment) will enable Squamish to attract the talented human resources it needs to continue transformation of the economy via increased entrepreneurship and innovation.

Overall Goals

The overall goals of this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan are as follows:

- ◆ To strengthen and diversify Squamish's economic base.
- ◆ To create more high value-added businesses in several priority sectors that offer career oriented jobs for local residents, including:
 - Forestry and wood products
 - Port, shipping and marine industry
 - Technology, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses
 - Small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses
 - Tourism/recreation and arts/culture

- Retail/commercial.
- ♦ To manage the development of Squamish's economy in a manner that reflects the community's values and aspirations.

Strategic Directions

We recommend that the District of Squamish pursue the following five overall strategic directions in order to fulfil the above noted overriding economic development goals:

1. Economic Development Leadership and Accountability	2. Land Use Planning for Economic Development	3. Strategic Infrastructure Development	4. BRE, Entrepreneurship and Business Development/ Attraction	5. Priority Sector Enhancement, Development and Investment Attraction
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RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The recommended objectives and strategies are designed to support each of the five overall strategic directions, and to build on Squamish's competitive strengths and value propositions for the targeted sectors and businesses.

1. Economic Development Leadership and Accountability

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
1.1 To determine the most appropriate economic development leadership and organizational structure for the District of Squamish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake an updated review of comparable approaches in other jurisdictions. 2. Determine the preferred approach for Squamish based on the review, as well as Council and Business Community input.
1.2 To provide adequate financial and human resources to establish and operate a revitalized Squamish Economic Development Function.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocate an appropriate level of funding to the Economic Development Function within the District's budget. 2. Identify and pursue appropriate partnerships and funding opportunities, in order to augment the District's resources. 3. Assign adequate full-time staff positions to the Economic Development Function.
1.3 To establish an effective economic development function for the District of Squamish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set-up the new Economic Development Function including organization structure and an accountability structure/mechanisms. 2. Recruit appropriate staffing for the Economic Development Function. 3. Ensure strong linkages with potential partner organizations and suitable partnerships with the local

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	business community.
1.4 To put in place an effective economic development monitoring and evaluation process and mechanisms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify baseline measures of economic development activity to be used. 2. Establish an annual monitoring and evaluation assessment and reporting process. 3. Put in place a 3-5 year review process.

2. Land Use Planning for Economic Development

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
2.1 To provide strong economic-development oriented input into the District's Official Community Plan and Zoning By-law review process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the Squamish Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is a key point of reference as the OCP Review Process proceeds. 2. Proactively identify areas with adjoining incompatible land uses and recommend approaches for mitigating existing and potential conflicts.
2.2 To implement priority recommendations of the Employment Lands Strategy and designate sufficient employment lands for long-term needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the short and long term land use requirements for the District's priority sectors, with reference to the Employment Lands Strategy. 2. Update employment lands inventory annually and monitor capacity available for growth and expansion 3. Ensure an appropriate mix of retail, commercial/office, light industrial, and industrial lands to meet the short and long term needs of priority sectors. 4. Establish density and building height policies that will facilitate revitalization and enhance employment lands capacities. 5. Provide a secure land base for maintaining strong forestry resources processing and shipping activities.
2.3 To align transportation planning priorities with economic development needs and the transportation requirements of residents.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and update the District's Transportation Plan for roads and bridges. 2. Review and update local and regional public transit plans with a view to enhancing the connectivity of residential areas with employment zones. 3. Work with marine industrial and recreational users to ensure that recreational boating and commercial shipping interests are balanced and coordinated.

3. Strategic Infrastructure Development

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
3.1 To enhance local arterial road infrastructure to provide better separation of local residential, visitor and commercial/industrial traffic.	1. Develop improved truck route infrastructure and connections that reduce conflicts between commercial/industrial trucking and passenger vehicles.
3.2 To develop incremental marine transportation infrastructure to meet existing and future commercial/ industrial and recreational needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with developers as they establish and build out the marine industry zone within Oceanfront lands. 2. Ensure that recreational marina facilities developed on the Oceanfront lands will complement existing operations. 3. Investigate the potential of developing some type of ferry service connecting to Vancouver, combined with the capability of docking small cruise ships. 4. Over the longer term consolidate the dryland log-sorting infrastructure with direct connection to the highway. 5. Work with the Port, Squamish Terminals and related operators (CN Rail, trucking companies) to capture Pacific Gateway shipping opportunities.
3.3 To ensure that Squamish is “hardwired for business”.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Align the Squamish Digital Strategy with economic development goals and objectives. 2. Determine communications bandwidth and capacity requirements of Squamish area businesses and industry. 3. Where required, facilitate augmentation of fibre optic cable and other communications infrastructure to better meet the existing and future needs.
3.4 To enhance local wayfinding, highway and entrance/gateway signage for the benefit of visitors, businesses and industry.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the Squamish Comprehensive Signage and Wayfinding Plan and initiate implementation. 2. Update signage guidelines for businesses, suited to the character of business and commercial zones.

4. BRE, Entrepreneurship and Business Development/ Attraction

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
4.1 To implement an ongoing, systematic Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program to better connect with and help strengthen existing businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue implementation of BC Business Counts program in Squamish. 2. Leverage the BRE program and business licenses database to collect up to date information on businesses and employment. 3. Develop and implement initiatives recognizing Squamish

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	business successes in partnership with the Chamber and BIA.
4.2 To work with partners to encourage, support and facilitate local entrepreneurship.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an entrepreneurial facilitation partnership with local and regional business organizations and universities/colleges. 2. Work with partners to develop and implement targeted workshops, programs, and other education and resources geared to Squamish area entrepreneurs. 3. Investigate the potential of developing and/or linking with incubator/accelerator programming to facilitate start-up businesses/entrepreneurs. 4. Encourage development of home-based small business formation.
4.3 To maintain competitive local commercial/industrial taxes, regulatory regimes and approvals processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and streamline development approvals processes. 2. Where possible, review and monitor taxes, fees and other user charges, including development charges, which are deployed in other BC municipalities.
4.4 To develop an enhanced online presence and access to information for Squamish Economic Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a strong economic development web portal for Squamish Economic Development. 2. Develop and activate a social media communications plan.
4.5 To effectively respond to and follow-up on business and economic development enquiries.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with internal and external partners to systematize the enquiry response process. 2. Establish protocols for enquiry prioritization and follow-up. 3. Develop site selector visitation programming and protocols.

5. Priority Sector Enhancement, Development and Investment Attraction

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
5.1 To market Squamish for business investment/attraction targeting priority sectors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brand Squamish Economic Development in a manner consistent with the overall “hardwired for adventure” community branding. 2. Develop an effective marketing and communications plan focused on priority sectors. 3. Implement cost effective marketing and promotional activities.
5.2 To expand and diversify existing and develop new forestry processing, value-added wood products, and research/education/training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly identify incremental primary forestry processing and value-added wood products opportunities suited to Squamish. 2. Work with existing businesses and undertake business

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
opportunities.	<p>and investment attraction marketing in relation to the incremental opportunities identified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Undertake appropriate feasibility analyses, acquire capital investment funds, and implement the new processing and manufacturing opportunities. 4. Explore the development of collaborative research and training opportunities between Squamish industry (resource/forestry) and BC post-secondary educational institutions.
5.3 To develop incremental port, shipping and marine industry business opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the advantages of the Port of Squamish as an intermodal transfer point for break-bulk cargo for both imports and exports.
5.4 To strengthen the knowledge-based infrastructure and develop/attract additional technology, clean energy and knowledge-based entrepreneurs and businesses to Squamish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an inventory of knowledge-based, clean energy and technology businesses in Squamish. 2. Determine which sub-segments of this sector are the best fit and should be targeted. 3. Establish “Squamish Tech” as a networking entity in support of tech, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses.
5.5 To attract additional small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses to Squamish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a comprehensive inventory of existing manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses in Squamish and determine incremental market potential. 2. Prepare an inventory of suitable locations for expanding and locating similar new businesses in Squamish. 3. Target appropriate businesses within the Lower Mainland that may benefit from a Squamish location.
5.6 To further develop/enhance tourism and outdoor recreation infrastructure and connectivity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen the tourism mandate of the Squamish Adventure Centre as a focus for visitor information services and tourism, recreation, and outdoor adventure organizations and businesses. 2. Develop suitable parking area and infrastructure for the windsurfing/kiteboarding area on the Estuary. 3. Design and develop enhanced interpretive infrastructure, parking and washrooms for the eagle-viewing area in Brackendale. 4. Establish a tourist shuttle service that would link major attractions and features scattered throughout the valley. 5. Undertake incremental development of mountain biking trail infrastructure and examine possible user pay revenue sources to help finance infrastructure upgrades and ongoing maintenance costs.
5.7 To add a stronger cultural tourism dimension to the Squamish attractions base.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop First Nations’ cultural heritage interpretation in partnership with the Squamish Nation. 2. Work on the development of a shoulder or winter season performing arts festival.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
5.8 To enhance the visibility/presence of Squamish retail areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectively brand and market Squamish's distinct retail areas/clusters. 2. Implement appropriate signage, streetscape and other features that support the distinct branding. 3. Determine gaps in Squamish's retail inventory and encourage strategic recruitment to fill gaps.
5.9 To strengthen visibility and access to the downtown retail/ business core and enhance its vitality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with BIA and Chamber to encourage further downtown shopping marketing/promotion and events, as well as more façade enhancements. 2. Visually and functionally link the downtown retail area with the retail cluster closer to the highway. 3. In connection with wayfinding project, improve the signage to downtown and consider developing a gateway or archway into the downtown shopping area (e.g. similar to the one in Cranbrook, BC). 4. Develop a plaza in the downtown core to serve as a gathering place for festivals, events and public markets.

SHORT TERM ACTION PLAN

On the following page in Figure 1 are the key steps we recommend, in order to initiate implementation of many of the key strategic actions and short-term economic development opportunities. This will also ensure some forward momentum, without requiring substantial resources, which may take more time to acquire for some strategies and projects.

Figure 1: Short Term Action Plan for Years 1 and 2

Action Plan Step	Responsibility	Timing (Jul 2016 - Jun 2017)											
		Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun
1. Adopt Squamish Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan in principle	• Staff and Council	■											
2. Distribute the Strategy to key partners in the economic development process	• Staff and local/regional business and economic development organizations		■										
3. Determine organizational framework for Economic Development Office (EDO) and allocate budget	• Staff and Council, possible funding partners		■										
4. Recruit Economic Development Manager, establish new EDO and prepare year 1 Operational Plan	• Staff and Council			■									
5. Seek funding support for short term initiatives in 2016 and 2017	• EDO, Staff and Council, funding partners			■									
6. Provide Economic Development Input in to the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review process	• EDO, Staff and Council, Business Community			■	■								

Action Plan Step	Responsibility	Timing (Jul 2016 - Jun 2017)											
		Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun
7. Undertake upgrades to the District website for Economic Development	• EDO and web designer				■								
8. Implement enhanced Business Retention and Expansion Program	• EDO, staff, Business Community				■	■							
9. Develop and implement appropriate communications tools for supporting economic development (e.g.- newsletter, networking sessions)	• EDO, staff, Business Community				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
10. Initiate implementation of the Land Use Planning for Economic Development strategies	• EDO, Development Services, Planning and Building Departments					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
11. Initiate Strategic Infrastructure Development strategies	• EDO, staff, Funding Partners						■	■	■	■	■	■	→
12. Initiate Entrepreneurship and Business Development strategies	• EDO, Funding Partners, Business Community						■	■	■	■	■	■	→
13. Initiate Business/ Investment Attraction and Priority Sector Development strategies	• EDO, Partners, Business Community							■	■	■	■	■	→
14. Undertake monitoring and evaluation of years 1 and 2 implementation	• EDO, staff, Council											■	→

1 – INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT CONTEXT

Two of the key elements of the Economic Development Strategy are the planning framework in which the strategy will be implemented and the analytic framework in which the community finds itself. A significant body of research and planning has already been undertaken in the District of Squamish, which provides the basis for the community's long term economic development. These include the Official Community Plan (OCP) which outlines the vision and goals for Squamish and serves as the overarching planning document for the community. Flowing from this framework are several public engagement initiatives that articulate economic goals and objectives, land use planning and decision criteria, as well as sector targeted efforts to support and grow the economy of Squamish. Each process has involved extensive research and public input with the goal of creating a dynamic and sustainable Squamish economy.

Previous local planning initiatives have been developed within the context of a community in transition. From its origins as a resource-based economy and transportation corridor, Squamish has transitioned to an economy dominated by tourism and the service sector, with a diminished, yet still vibrant, resource-based component. Future improvements to the highway linkage with the Interior (via Highways 99 and 97) are likely over the longer term, with opportunities for the Squamish port and for tourism. Squamish continues to experience rapid population growth owing largely to its proximity to Vancouver and its high quality of life and amenities. Understanding the District's overall economic development context, as well as the present economy and its drivers, is helpful for developing an effective strategy for meeting its short and long term economic objectives.

RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The Squamish Sustainability Corporation (SSC) was intended to be the District's lead organization for economic development and was established in 2005 with the following goals:

1. To establish and grow a sustainable economy in Squamish
2. To expand the tourism industry in Squamish
3. To promote and support existing businesses
4. To attract new businesses
5. To manage the Squamish Adventure Centre.

Since that time, both the tourism and economic development functions have been decoupled from the Sustainability Corporation and in 2010 the District Council decided that Tourism Squamish would be set up as a separate non-profit society funded by the Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT). The economic development function has been staffed directly by the District since. Moreover, the economic development function has not been fully staffed in recent

months as the Economic Development Officer position is vacant. It is intended that the economic development function will be fully staffed and resourced once Council has adopted an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan upon which it can base its decisions regarding the most effective organization and staffing to proceed with.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

There are several organizations based in Squamish that also provide support for economic development and tourism. These organizations include the following:

- ♦ **Tourism Squamish** is a non-profit destination marketing organization (DMO) with a mandate to market the Squamish area as a premier tourism destination. It is funded by the AHRT and implements a comprehensive range of marketing and promotional activities including the Explore Squamish website.
- ♦ **Community Futures Howe Sound** which is a non-profit community economic development organization that provides small business loans, self-employment programs and other business training and support programs, as well as small business counselling.
- ♦ **Squamish Chamber of Commerce** which advocates on behalf of the business community, promotes member businesses through their website, offers business seminars, and sells advertising opportunities.
- ♦ **The Downtown Business Improvement Association (BIA)**. This organization has a mandate to stimulate and promote the downtown neighbourhood as a vibrant hub of the community. The BIA offers several programs in support of businesses in the downtown area including marketing and promotion, holding festivals and events, and seeking community grant funding for improvement initiatives.
- ♦ **Training Innovations Inc.** This organization has over 20 years of experience designing and delivering employment programs in British Columbia, and has been active in Squamish since 2001. It is the Sea to Sky service provider for the Employment Program of BC which is funded by the Province of BC and the Government of Canada. Services offered include job search resources, personal employment planning, workshops, Wage Subsidy Work Experience placements, job creation partnerships, job posting distribution, and access to HR trends and labour market information.

In addition, there are other sector-based organizations, associations and networks, such as the Squamish and District Forestry Association. There is also an informal network of knowledge-based companies and workers in the Sea-to-Sky corridor called Inside Edge, which is intended to further enable economic diversification and growth and to create a larger talent pool of knowledge-based workers in such areas as technology, new media and communications. While this currently exists as a very informal online network, occasional face-to-face events are held, so there may be potential to leverage this into a more formal organization, similar to the Forestry Association, in support of the tech and knowledge-based sectoral group.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT ECONOMIC STRATEGIES AND PLANNING STUDIES

There is a long list of strategies, sectoral studies and planning documents in support of economic development that have been undertaken over the past 10-15 years. Many of these contain some recommendations that are still relevant today, although some of the material is now outdated. Of particular importance for the development of the current Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan are the *Official Community Plan* of 2010 for which an update process has been initiated, the *Council Strategic Plan 2015-18*, the *Employment Lands Strategy* completed in 2015, and recent Business Retention and Expansion documentation produced in 2013.

Official Community Plan (adopted 2010)

The *Official Community Plan* (OCP) establishes the vision, objectives, goals and priorities for how Squamish will grow and evolve over time. It sets out a clear vision to shape the community's future in a way that is healthy and sustainable, while providing a high quality of life for current and future residents.

The following is the OCP's vision statement for the community and a description of the desired future for Squamish in the year 2031:

"We are a spectacular seaside mountain community where people come to live, learn, work and play in harmony. We are multicultural, compassionate, vibrant and diverse. We are leaders in fostering social integrity, economic development, and environmental sustainability."

By 2031, the District's leadership efforts and effective partnerships with community groups, businesses, First Nations, and government agencies will have contributed to the fulfillment of the Community Vision by becoming a community with the following attributes:

- ◆ A well-balanced community where residents of all ages, cultures, and incomes enjoy the highest quality of life.
- ◆ Diverse, affordable housing options coupled with an efficient transportation system allow residents to live, learn, work and play within our borders.
- ◆ Our community celebrates cultural harmony and encourages opportunities to support the arts.
- ◆ An attractive downtown and vibrant oceanfront also provides residents and visitors with a mix of amenities and acts as a vibrant social heart.
- ◆ Has an international reputation for outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that are used by residents and visitors who respect and protect the surrounding natural environment.
- ◆ Urban design and development that is sensitive to the unique natural environment and spirit of Squamish, and ensures that the environment is sustained for future generations.
- ◆ Serves as a 'centre for learning' and as a regional centre and hub to the Sea-to-Sky corridor.

- ◆ A model complete community with a diversified, self-sustaining economy that maintains environmental integrity and provides residents with satisfying, high-paying jobs.
- ◆ An economy which is resilient and provides residents and local businesses with the resources and opportunities to prosper and flourish over the long-term.

These are all important elements that need to be taken into consideration in developing the vision, goals and objectives for the current Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Council Strategic Plan 2015-18 (adopted July 2015; Update adopted May 2016)

The plan charts a philosophical and action-oriented course for the next four years and beyond. It is intended as a “living” document designed to be forward thinking and progressive.

The overall economic vision for Squamish as articulated in the “Economy” Strategic Focus Priority Area is for a **“Balanced and Resilient Economy”** based on the following considerations:

- ◆ Encouraging diverse well paid jobs
- ◆ Reducing the need to commute
- ◆ Growing business opportunities and supporting hubs for entrepreneurs.

Specific guiding principles in relation to the economy articulated in the Strategic Plan include:

1. The community is supported to enable a strong hub of entrepreneurial activity.
2. Job creation and the long-term health of our economy are considered in land use decisions.
3. A diversity of businesses that create long-term sustainable jobs for our citizens are attracted to and remain in Squamish.
4. The tax structure is diverse and supports our community.
5. Success is measured by the triple bottom line: economic, environment, and social measures

These are appropriate guiding principles and need to be embraced in the current Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

Employment Lands Strategy (March, 2015)

Employment lands refers to privately and publicly owned properties that support institutional, industrial, commercial, office and other land uses that employ people in a variety of jobs and a diversity of sectors (e.g. manufacturing, sales and service, research, etc.).

The decline of resource-based industries combined with significant residential development has resulted in large areas of industrial employment lands being re-designated and rezoned. The loss of these lands has greatly reduced the District’s overall employment lands inventory and,

according to some stakeholders, has resulted in a shortage of affordable and suitable light and medium industrial employment lands.

The Employment Lands Strategy includes 16 phased recommendations for the District and stakeholders to consider in helping address employment lands issues and to support three key employment objectives:

1. To maintain and optimize the current inventory of employment lands
2. To expand the inventory of employment lands (particularly for medium industrial employment lands)
3. To help improve employment lands use management.

The 16 recommendations, which are relevant to the current study, are summarized in Figure 1.1. The specific employment lands objectives (stated above) that each recommendation supports are noted in the far right column.

Figure 1.1: Employment Lands Recommendations

	Recommendation	Description	Per Objective
1	Zoning Bylaw – general amendments	To include new <i>Light Industrial</i> , <i>Medium Industrial</i> and <i>Heavy Industrial</i> zones	1, 2, 3
2	Rezone Paco Road	Rezone to a Comprehensive Development zone that permits mixed-use <i>Light Industrial</i> and appropriate <i>Residential</i> (e.g., live-work).	2, 3
3	Update Squamish Business Park Sub Area Plan	Clarify Business Park focus and zoning. Revised plan area should be expanded to include the former BC Rail lands.	1, 2, 3
4	Squamish Nation joint planning	Continue to meet with Squamish Nation to discuss employment lands and joint opportunities, including Site B.	1, 2, 3
5	NAIOP Municipal Report Card Approach	NAIOP (Commercial Real Estate Development Association – Vancouver chapter) to include Squamish in future editions of its Commercial Development Report Card	3
6	Update Squamish Official Community Plan	Scheduled to begin in 2015, the update provides multiple opportunities to resolve employment lands considerations.	1, 2, 3
7	Clarify industrial employment lands in existing industrial and aggregate extraction areas	Two priority areas include: Loggers Lane between Upper Mamquam Blind Channel and Robin Drive; and the eastern end of Centennial Way	2, 3
8	Produce Economic Development Strategy	Confirm and coordinate economic development objectives with OCP and employment lands policies	3
9	Review/extend Revitalization Tax Exemption Program	Program scheduled to end 2016 and should be reviewed and extended if appropriate and feasible.	1, 2
10	Explore Waterfront Landing employment lands opportunities	Explore expanded employment lands development options as opportunities arise through the development process.	2
11	Update Employment Lands Inventory	Update inventory based on completed immediate and short-term recommendations	3
12	Explore industrial traffic route	Complete background study for the proposed industrial traffic connector options to connect Squamish Terminals, Squamish Business Park, and Highway 99.	2, 3
13	Facilitate Cheekye Fan mitigation	Facilitate and advocate for provincial and other support for mitigation.	2, 3
14	Cheekye Fan – Squamish Airport Sub Area Plan	Should a realistic mitigation option come forward, develop sub-area plan for Cheekye Fan – Squamish Airport area.	2, 3

	Recommendation	Description	Per Objective
15	Business Retention and Expansion Program	Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program should be maintained and updated to incorporate new Light and Medium Industrial zones in Business Park.	3
16	Explore Crown Land opportunities Cheekye Fan area	Where appropriate and feasible, explore future light and medium industrial employment opportunities	2

Source: District of Squamish Employment Lands Strategy, 2015

Continuing work with regard to implementation of most or all of these recommendations will be an important element of the current Economic Development Strategy.

Business Retention and Expansion – Squamish Business Counts (2013)

In May of 2011 the District of Squamish Council adopted the *Outline for Economic Development Activities*, which facilitates the initiation and implementation of a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Later in 2011 the District of Squamish participated in *BC Business Counts*, a program funded by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. Past research has suggested that up to 80% of a community's job growth may be generated by existing businesses.¹

Data and information collected through the 2013 Business Counts Survey provides extensive input on the economic conditions and challenges facing Squamish employers. Some of this research is reflected within the base analysis of the Squamish economy, including reference to the importance of existing businesses in growing the local economy.

The short-term goals for the Squamish Business Counts program are as follows:

- ◆ Build better relationships with local business.
- ◆ Understand the issues currently facing Squamish businesses.
- ◆ Identify solutions in addressing the issues facing Squamish businesses.

The long-term goals for the Squamish Business Counts BRE program are:

- ◆ Enhance the competitiveness of local business.
- ◆ Incorporate an economic development focus, where appropriate, in the District of Squamish's policies and procedures.
- ◆ Improve the effective use of local resources by coordinating with the existing economic development organizations.

These BRE goals are relevant for the current Economic Development Strategy. Some updating to the Squamish Business Counts program occurred in 2014 and 2015, although there are apparently some data non-comparability issues with previous years as changes were made to the survey of businesses.

¹ Dr. David L. Birch, MIT and Cognetics Inc. (cited in *Squamish Business Counts Report*, 2013)

SQUAMISH ECONOMY IN TRANSITION

The District of Squamish sits in a spectacular setting at the north end of Howe Sound, halfway between the City of Vancouver and the Resort Municipality of Whistler. Squamish is located within the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, which includes the municipalities of Pemberton, Lillooet, several unincorporated areas, and Whistler.

Freight Transportation and Forestry Played Key Roles in Squamish’s Development

The history of Howe Sound begins with its First Nations people, the Squamish Nation, descendants of the Coast Salish who have lived in this area for thousands of years. Members of the Squamish Nation currently reside in 23 villages scattered from Vancouver to Gibsons and the area north of Howe Sound. The Squamish Nation is directly involved in the development and protection of their lands through ongoing treaty negotiations and related agreements, while also holding exclusive timber rights over an area covering 218,000 hectares north of Squamish.

Modern-day Squamish had its beginning during the construction of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway in the early 1900s. It was the first southern terminus of the railway, connecting Squamish with the province’s interior Cariboo region. The railway was taken over by the province in 1918, changing its name to BC Rail (British Columbia Railway) in 1972. The railway was one of the largest employers in the area and the RailWest railcar manufacturing plant had 130 to 140 employees during the 1970s. A few hundred people were still working in the locomotive and railcar shops and railyards through the 1990s. In 2004, CN Rail assumed control of BC Rail operations after negotiating a 99-year lease agreement with the BC Government.

Closely related to the railway operation is Squamish Terminals, which is a major break bulk cargo handling facility established in 1972. In addition to handling the import and export of forest products, it handles a wide range of products that are not typically put into containers and are not bulk commodities. Such things as steel products (e.g. pipe, structural steel), bagged products (e.g. sand, fertilizer), and industrial equipment are handled at the facility. Squamish Terminals continues to be a major local employer and employs 40 full-time management, administration and longshore employees, and over 70 dispatch employees depending upon the level of business. It is currently the single largest taxpayer in the District of Squamish, as the terminal covers 60 acres (24 hectares) and includes three warehouses totalling 510,000 square feet (47,400 square metres).

Forestry and logging were traditionally the main source of industry in the Squamish area, with operations dating back to the early part of the 20th century. While logging continues in the region, the large-scale forest product manufacturers in Squamish are no longer operational. In 2003 International Forest Products closed its sawmill operation eliminating 117 jobs. This was followed by the closure of Western Forest Products Woodfibre mill in 2006, putting 325 people out of work after 94 years of operation. Others impacted by these developments included workers at CN Rail (formerly BC Rail), where 80 maintenance workers lost their jobs. Altogether, Squamish lost around 600 jobs and \$3 million in annual tax revenue during this transformative period.

Recent Economic Growth Concentrated in Tourism, Knowledge, Construction, and Value Added Industries

Today, Squamish is a dynamic community as it continues to undergo a rapid socio-economic transformation. Offering west coast mountains, alongside expansive oceanfront, Squamish is a unique place to work, live and recreate. Squamish is now leveraging its enviable recreational assets and quality of life amenities to help diversify the local economy. Supported by these assets, Squamish is attracting new residents and businesses and has established itself as a fast-growing yet relatively affordable community.

Tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities, along with the incremental potential associated with its port operations and waterfront lands are immediate opportunities that can and are being pursued. Squamish is also emerging as a knowledge and education-based community, particularly with the creation of Quest University in 2007, the presence over the years of Capilano College/University and its Tourism Management and Outdoor Recreation program, as well as the Academy of Music. Quest University offers university level programming and continues to attract a growing student body.

Squamish has begun to attract new business start-ups in high tech, film production, light manufacturing and recreation technology, while attracting a more highly educated community. Today, Squamish is home to a number of “rec tech” businesses in the areas of product design, advanced materials, performance measurement, and web and multimedia marketing.

Other opportunities still remain in the area’s traditional resource sector even though the shift towards a more service-based economy continues. Woodfibre LNG proposes to construct and operate a liquefied natural gas export facility on the previous Woodfibre mill site located southwest of Squamish in Howe Sound. The proposal could utilize a vacant industrial site and a well-established deep water port facility.

Opportunity also exists in forestry where the potential sustainable harvest can be increased. There is presently an under-harvest of AAC in the region, and the potential timber supply is expected to increase over the longer term.

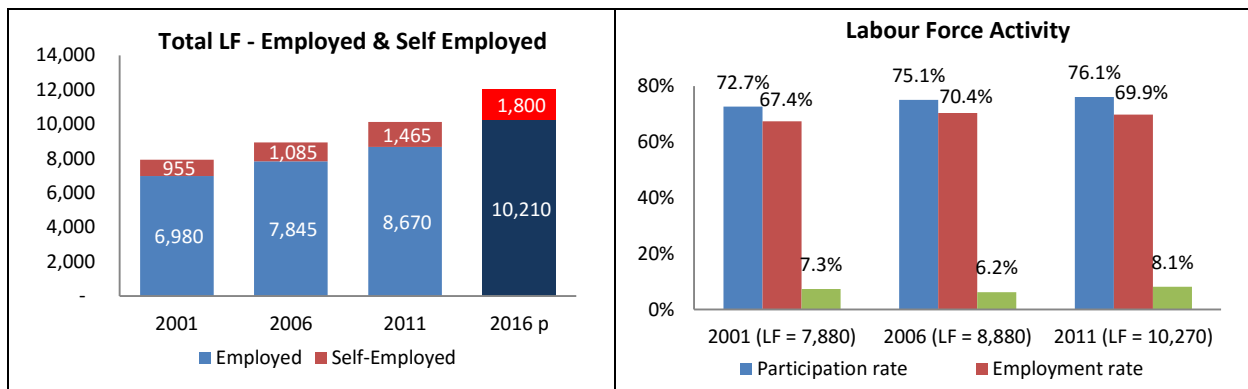
2 – ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

The economic base analysis provides an overview of the Squamish economy based on readily available statistics and administrative data provided by the District. For communities the size of Squamish (under 20,000), most data sets are limited to Census and National Household Survey data within the 2001-2011 timeframe. Where appropriate, the consultants have developed projections through 2016 to assist the analysis. As part of this Economic Development Strategy, the consultants will make recommendations for a data collection program for performance monitoring and evaluation purposes.

LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

The Squamish labour force grew at an annual rate of 2.8% between 2001 and 2011, above the District's population growth rate of 2% over the same period. The percentage of the labour force that is self-employed also increased from 12% in 2001 to 14% in 2011. Based on a participation rate of 75%, the labour force is projected to grow to more than 12,000 workers, including 15% self-employed workers.

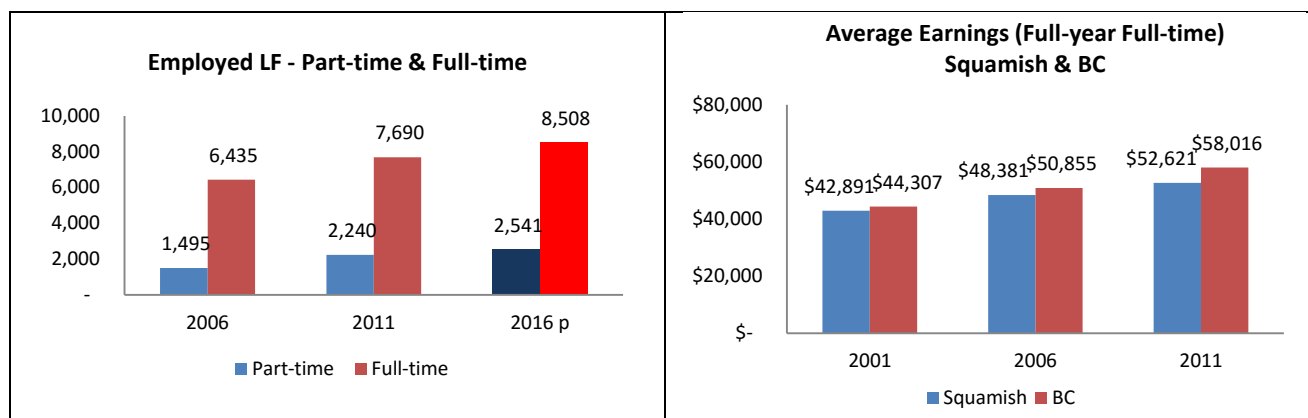
Figure 2.1: Labour Force and Employment



Source: Statistics Canada Census data, National Household Survey, LMI Insight

Among the employed labour force, the percentage of part-time workers increased from 19% in 2006 to 23% in 2011. Assuming 23% of the employed labour force remains part-time through 2016, the number of part-time workers would increase to 2,540 during 2016. There is an expectation that the trend towards more part-time work will continue, as the local economy will be challenged to absorb all new entrants into the expanding labour force. In part, this may help explain the growing earnings gap amongst workers in Squamish and BC between 2001 and 2011.

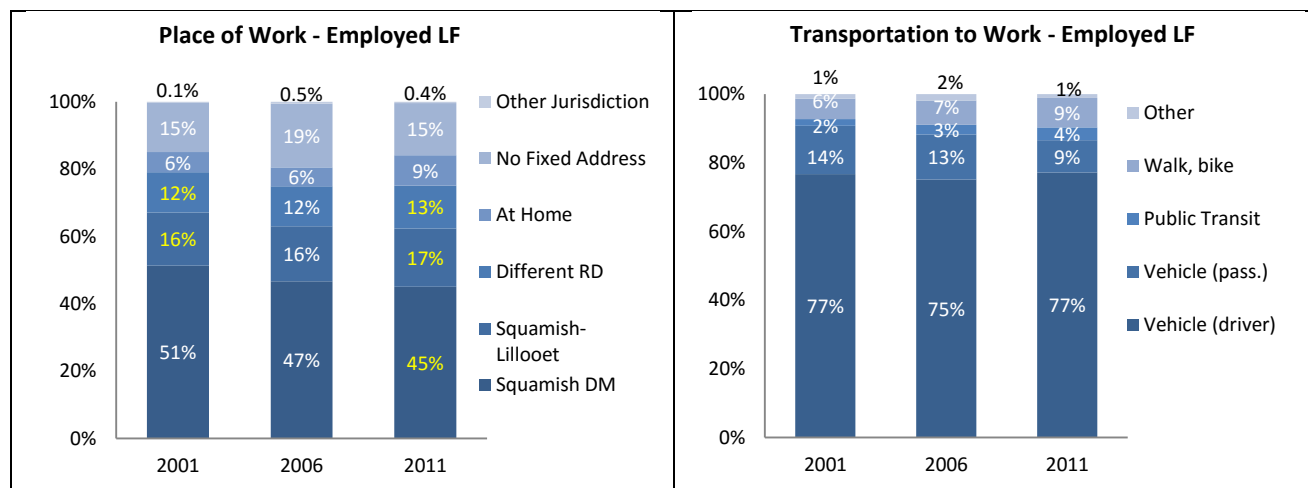
Figure 2.2: Labour Force and Employment



Source: Statistics Canada Census data, National Household Survey, LMI Insight

The percentage of the employed labour force that works outside the District (commuters) increased to over 30% between 2006 and 2011. In this Economic Development Strategy consideration may be given to having some sort of jobs/housing balance as an objective, so that Squamish does not become primarily a “bedroom” community. The vast majority of all Squamish workers still rely on vehicle transportation to work. As of 2011, 13% of the workforce was biking, walking or taking public transit to work – up from 8% in 2001.

Figure 2.3: Labour Force Place of Work and Transportation Mode to Work



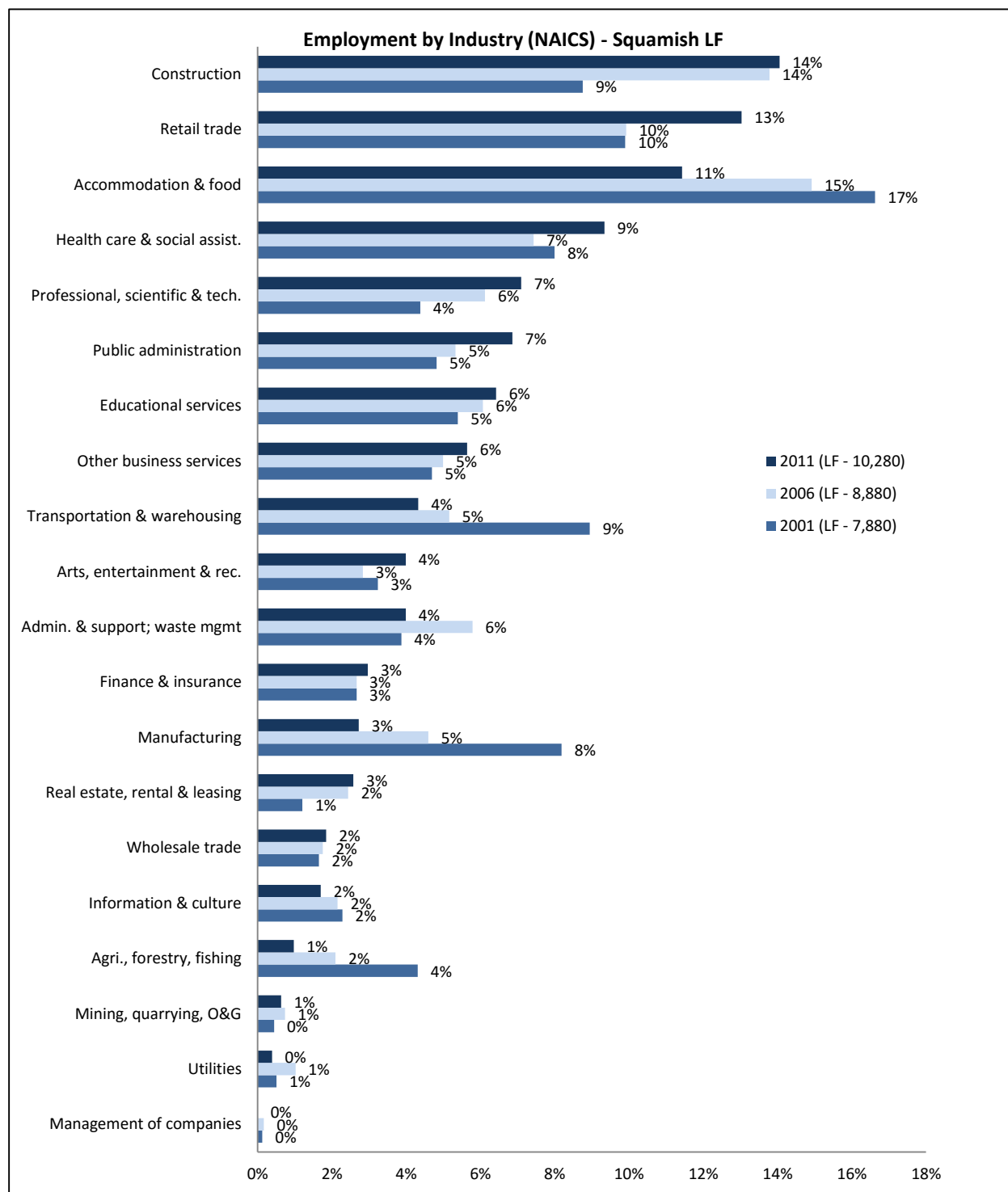
Source: Statistics Canada Census data, National Household Survey; LMI Insight (note: figures highlighted in yellow have been imputed)

INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

The ongoing shift towards a service-based economy is reflected within the industry employment sectors of the Squamish economy, which is shown in Figure 2.4. The increasing proportion of employment in construction, retail and the public sectors is an indication of the growing industries within Squamish and throughout the regional district. Conversely the declining

proportion of workers in manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and the primary industries demonstrate the economy's reduced dependence on the resource sector.

Figure 2.4: Employment by Industry, 2001-2011



Source: Statistics Canada Census data

Perhaps surprising is the relative decline of the accommodation and food services labour force between 2001 and 2011, suggesting it has found ways to reduce staffing and/or increase the proportion of its workforce that are full-time rather than part-time. In terms of food services there have clearly been a number of new operations established since 2011, the year of the most recent Census data. It should be stressed that the 2016 Census will provide an update and reflect more recent trends, although this data will not be available until 2017 at the earliest. Therefore, the employment by industry data really just illustrates the past trends, showing the shift away from resources and manufacturing/processing to an economy more strongly focused on the services sector including tourism/recreation.

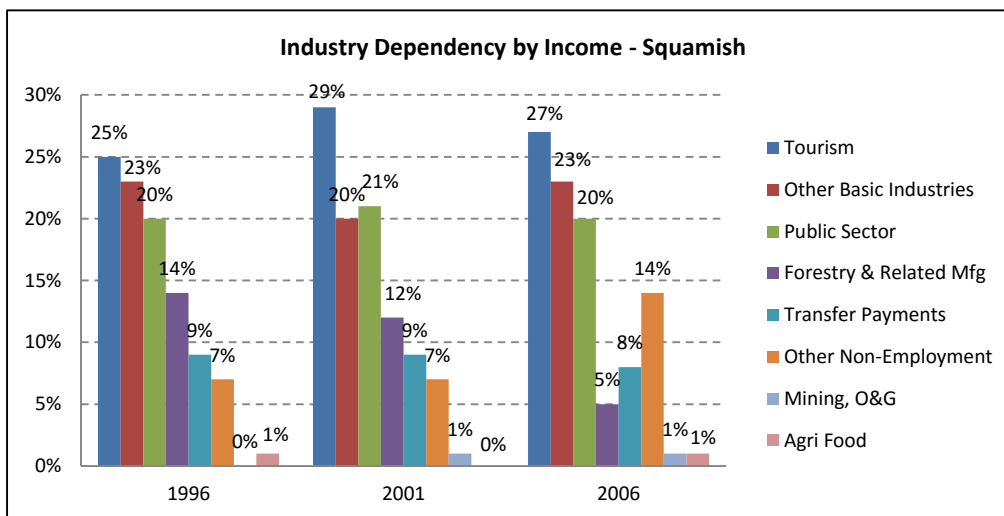
INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONS ANALYSIS

Today the Squamish economy is predominantly driven by the tourism sector based on the area's natural amenities and outdoor recreational assets. It also functions as the service and distribution hub for the Sea to Sky corridor, with its integrated road, rail and deep sea port infrastructure. Diversification of the Squamish economy has been the primary objective of the community since the closure of the Interfor sawmill in 2003 and the Woodfibre mill in 2006. These and related events significantly impacted the tax and employment base of the Squamish economy, challenging community and business leaders to develop alternative industry growth strategies for the long term.

Local Area Dependency

Local area dependencies prepared by BC Stats (2009) identify and quantify the sources of income that support local economies. While the study is dated, it illustrates the Squamish economy's dependence on tourism and other export-oriented industries, and how forestry and other primary industries have diminished over time as drivers of the local economy. Export-oriented industries are critical to economic development as they bring in revenue from outside customers and support related service businesses, such as local retailers and service companies. Some service businesses, such as Squamish's Port and Terminal operations are also primarily export-oriented in that they cater to significant clientele from outside the region, so are similarly bringing in revenue to the community, as well as supporting activities in other communities. Economies with a healthy mix of export oriented and local population serving industries are generally more resilient to downturns in individual sectors.

Figure 2.5: Income Generated by Major Sector, 1996-2006



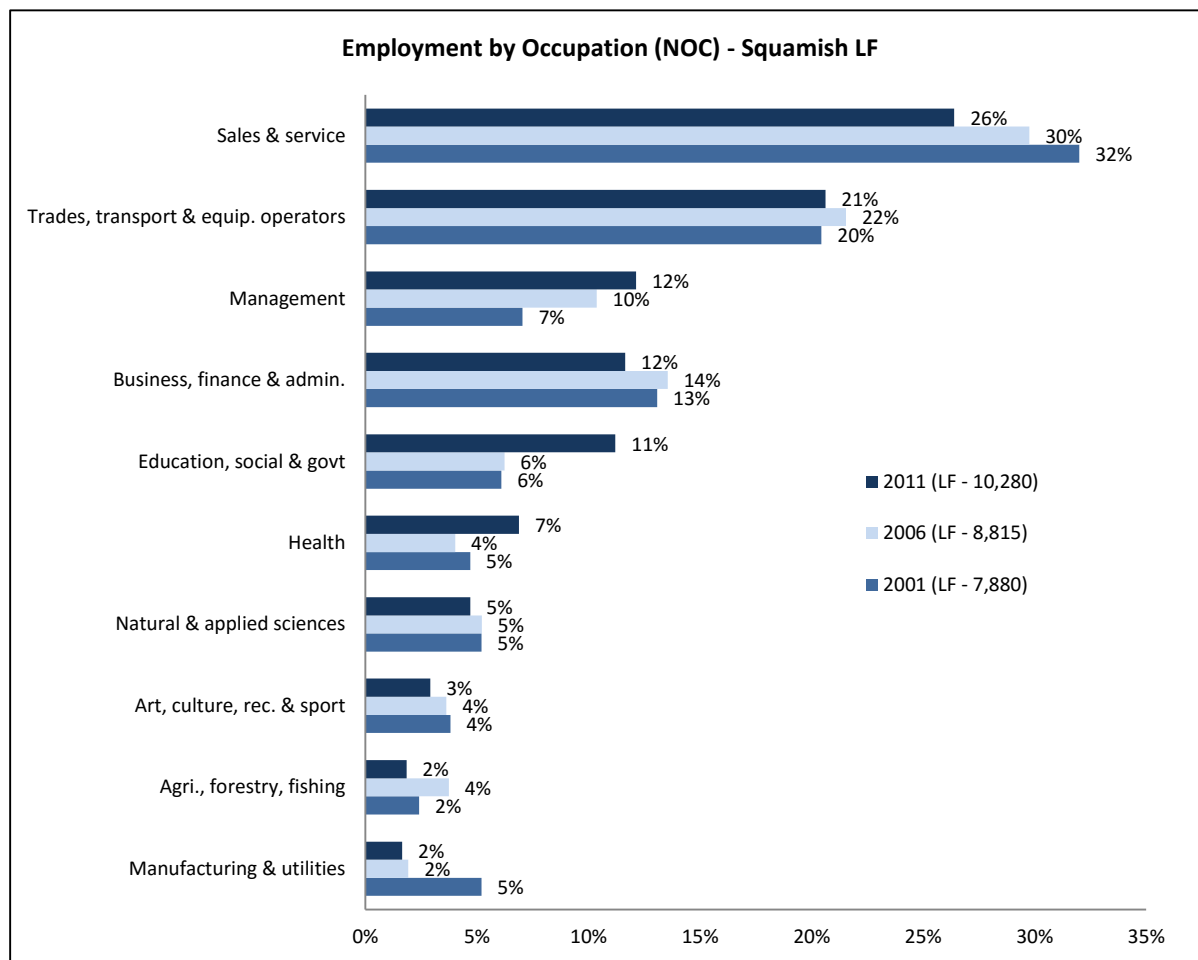
Source: Statistics Canada Census data

Occupational Structure

The transition towards a service economy has coincided with changing occupational requirements within the Squamish labour force, as shown in Figure 2.6. With fewer primary and manufacturing operations, the need for loggers, processors, assemblers and other skilled workers unique to these industries has declined. In return, the transitioning economy has experienced growth in public sector jobs (teachers, health care workers) and management occupations.

Again, it may be surprising to see a significant drop in the relative size of the sales and service workforce between 2001 and 2011, a trend which has likely shifted upwards from 2011 to 2015.

Figure 2.6: Employment by Occupation, 2001-2011

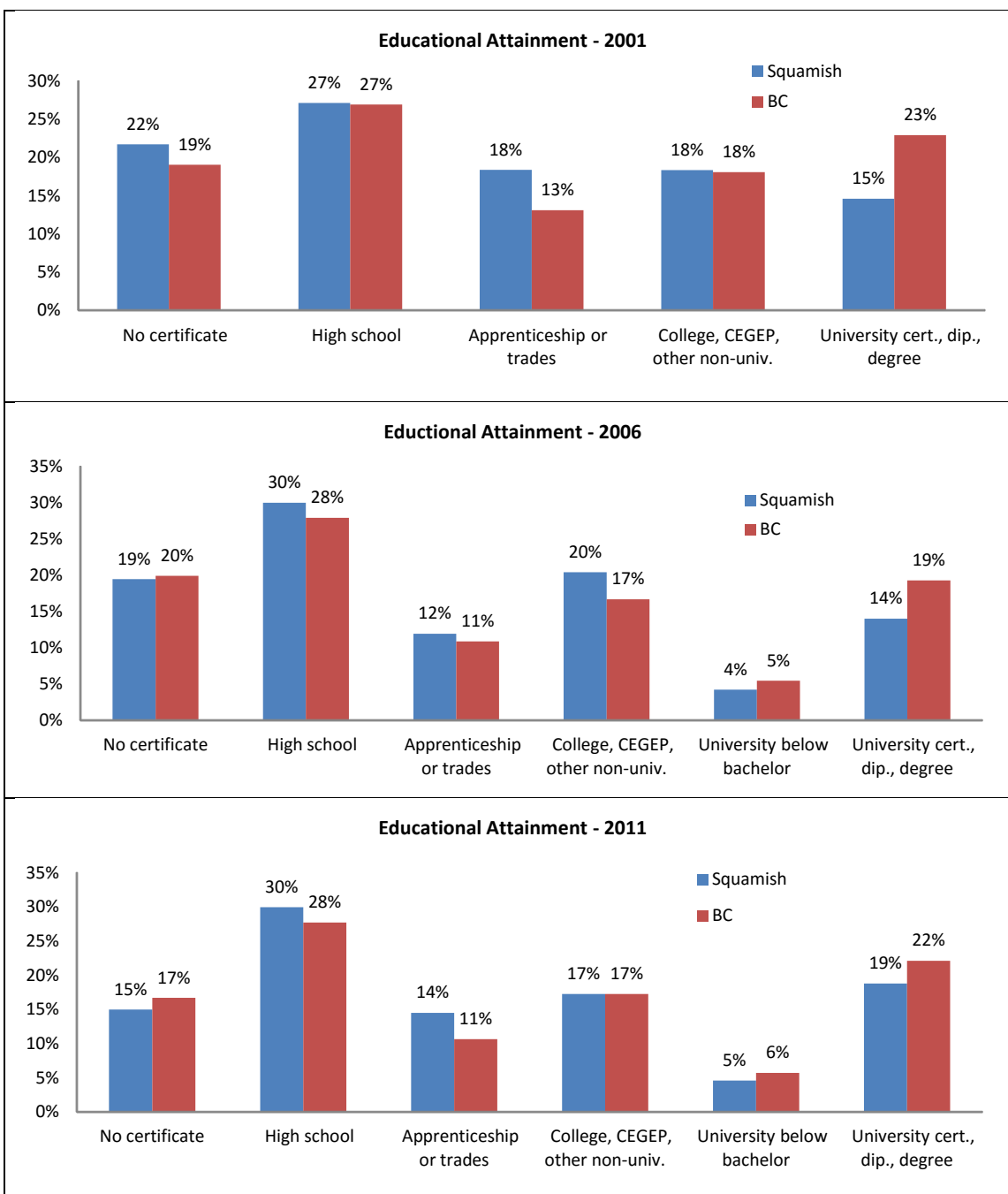


Source: Statistics Canada Census data

Educational Levels

The economy's changing occupational structure brings with it the need for a labour force that possesses different skill sets and educational backgrounds. For the most part, educational attainment levels of the Squamish labour force have remained fairly constant over the years, with the exception of those workers with a university credential, as shown in Figure 2.7. As of 2011 a much larger share of the labour force now possesses a university credential, driven largely by the presence of two post-secondary institutions in the District and the emergence of a nascent high tech and rec tech sector.

Figure 2.7: Educational Attainment, 2001-2011

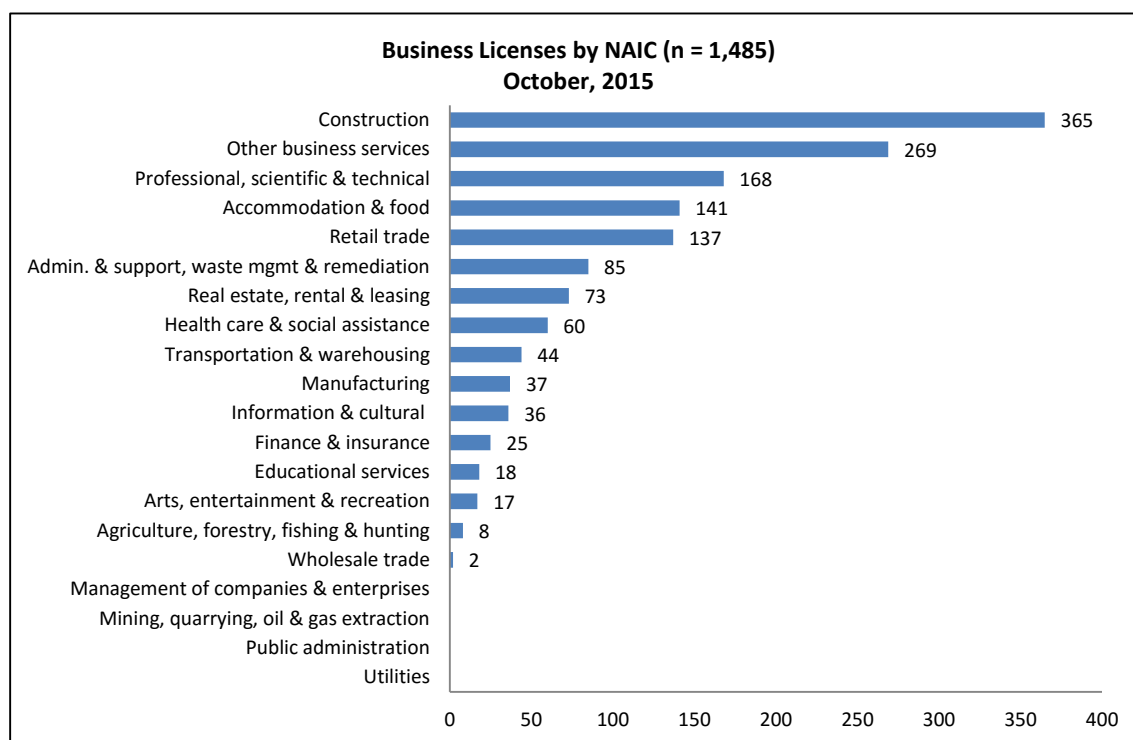


Source: Statistics Canada Census data

LOCAL BUSINESS

As of October 2015, the number of licensed businesses operating in the District of Squamish was 1,485. The consultant has coded these businesses according to the NAICS code in which they most likely belong. To some degree, the business structure in Squamish does reflect the industry employment structure, though the two are not meant to be correlated. Numerous businesses licensed in other jurisdictions also operate in the District of Squamish. Those licensed in Squamish are dominated by construction companies followed by a range of service based operations.

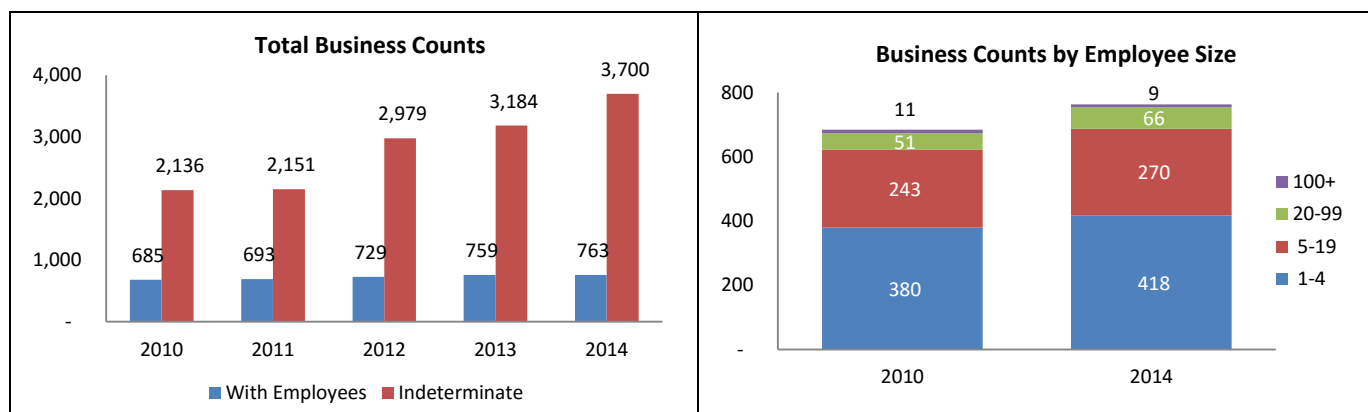
Figure 2.8: Number of Business Licenses by NAICS Code, 2015



Source: District of Squamish Business Licenses Database

As part of the District's efforts to support local business, the Squamish community has been a participant in the BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA) Business Counts program since 2010. The program works to improve the competitiveness of local businesses to help ensure long term viability within communities.

Figure 2.9: District of Squamish Business Counts, 2010-14



Source: District of Squamish Business Counts Database

Since 2010, Squamish has experienced a rapid influx of new businesses, the majority of which are “undefined” operators or businesses with no reported employees. These businesses are typically independent consultants who are educated and qualified, and represent an excellent (though sometimes untapped) resource upon which the local economy can build. Marketing and networking support for these businesses can be a worthwhile investment for the community, as some of these businesses will become future employers in Squamish. Encouraging independent operators to become licensed in Squamish is an important first step to strengthening the business relationship.

Over the same period, the number of businesses with employees increased by 11%, providing evidence of the community’s growing potential as a business destination. Businesses with 19 employees or less dominate the local economy.

In terms of Squamish businesses with employees, registrations increased by 11% between 2010 and 2014, providing evidence of the community’s potential for investment and business development. Most encouraging is the increase in registrations of businesses with between 20 and 99 employees, which grew by nearly 30% over the five-year period. However, it is still important to note that Businesses with 19 employees or less dominate the local economy.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXTERNAL ECONOMY

Squamish connects to the external economy primarily through its position as a transportation hub within the Sea to Sky corridor. Highway 99 runs north-south through the District of Squamish and serves as the sole access into and out of Squamish for all vehicle traffic. The stretch of highway between Horseshoe Bay and Whistler (known as the Sea to Sky Highway) underwent significant upgrades as part of the 2010 Winter Olympics to accommodate greater traffic loads. Because of its location, the Squamish road network is heavily influenced by external trips between Greater Vancouver and Whistler. Today close to 10 million motorists travel the Sea to Sky Highway annually.

CN Rail operates the Vancouver to Prince George rail corridor which generally runs parallel to the Sea to Sky Highway and eastward into the BC Interior. The rail corridor is largely used to transport forest products and other resource and manufactured goods to various ports along the west coast, including Prince Rupert, Vancouver and Squamish. The full network of track reaches ports from western to eastern Canada, and down through the southern United States to the Gulf of Mexico.

Squamish Terminals is a deep-water, break-bulk terminal serving customers in Western Canada, across North America and around the world. It is situated at the north end of Howe Sound, 32 nautical miles north of Vancouver and is open to all major break-bulk shipping lines. Squamish Terminals has developed strong working relationships with various trucking companies to facilitate the effective movement of break-bulk shipments via truck. It is part of Canada's Pacific Gateway, an integrated transportation network that includes airports, seaports, railways and roadways, bringing Canada and the North American market to Asia and the world.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN MAJOR SECTORS

In the past the District of Squamish has branded itself as the “Outdoor Recreation Capital of Canada” because of its outstanding natural features, accessible play areas and diverse winter-summer, water-land recreation opportunities. Residential construction and new commercial developments are on the rise as new migrants continue to move into the District. The opening of Quest University in 2007 and continued presence of Capilano University has opened the way for further developments in the education sector, including a recently announced partnership opportunity with UBC. The District has also managed to attract a growing number of innovative companies in the knowledge-based sector, many of which are attracted to the area for its healthy outdoor lifestyle.

Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

The tourism sector has experienced unprecedented investment in recent years, particularly in terms of new accommodation, arts, entertainment and recreation facilities and events. The 2010 Olympic Winter Games in neighbouring Vancouver and Whistler attracted investments that helped double Squamish's fixed roof accommodation capacity to nearly 600 units. The Games were also a key catalyst in attracting millions of dollars for the renewal and expansion of two Squamish area attractions – the Britannia Mine Museum and the West Coast Railway Heritage Park.

The same physical attributes that make Squamish an “Outdoor Recreation Capital” create some interesting development opportunities. Howe Sound and the numerous lakes and rivers provide wonderful opportunities for diving, windsurfing, kite boarding, swimming, boating and fishing. Biking, hiking, birding, rock climbing and mountaineering in the mountains, valley trails, an estuary, and world-class sports fields provide diverse opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts year-round. Squamish is a community of unparalleled scenic wonder, lifestyle advantages, business opportunities and outdoor recreation.

The tourism sector continues to thrive with an ever-increasing demand for outdoor adventure and recreation activities. New tourism projects under consideration within the District include the Great Wolf Lodge, a \$150 million indoor-outdoor water park proposal located near Centennial Way and Highway 99. Garibaldi at Squamish is a proposal for an all-seasons ski

resort destination at Brohm Ridge. The resort would have 23 ski lifts on 124 developed ski trails, as well as extensive private and commercial living accommodations. Other opportunities include expansion of the Squamish Spit facility at the Estuary, where high winds make the area a must-visit for high performance wind and kite surfers.

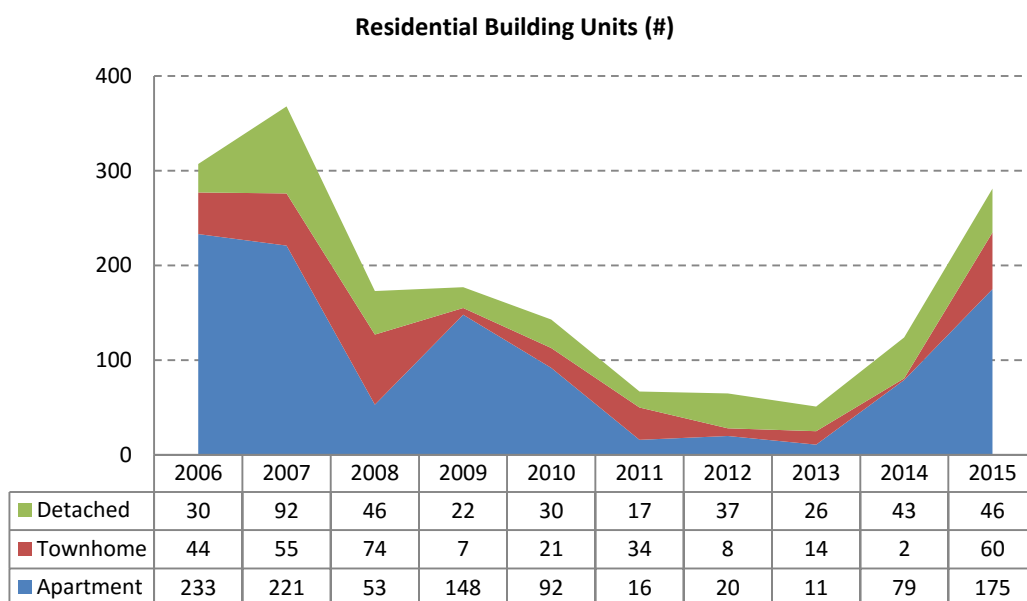
Construction and Development

The District of Squamish is poised to experience a building boom, driven by strong population growth and the launch of several new development initiatives. At the center of this expansion is the recently signed Oceanfront Development project at the northern tip of Howe Sound. The peninsula property consists of 59 acres of former industrial land and 44 adjacent acres of submerged water lots to be developed over a 20-year project period. The sub area plan envisions mixed-use development that aims to provide opportunities for light marine industry, an educational complex, as well as commercial, retail and restaurant space, setting it apart from purely residential development.

The construction industry has benefitted from the influx of new migrants to the District over the last decade, driving the need for increased residential housing options. Residential and commercial development in Squamish is now recovering from the global economic downturn of 2007-08.

The number of residential building permits issued in Squamish has been on the rise since 2013, following a prolonged period of declining activity (see Figure 2.10). In 2015, the number of residential building permits issued by number of units was up significantly over 2014, mostly in the multi-unit dwelling and single unit secondary suites categories. Demand for new residential housing is expected to continue over the long term, driven by the District's rapidly growing population and relatively affordable property values compared to Vancouver.

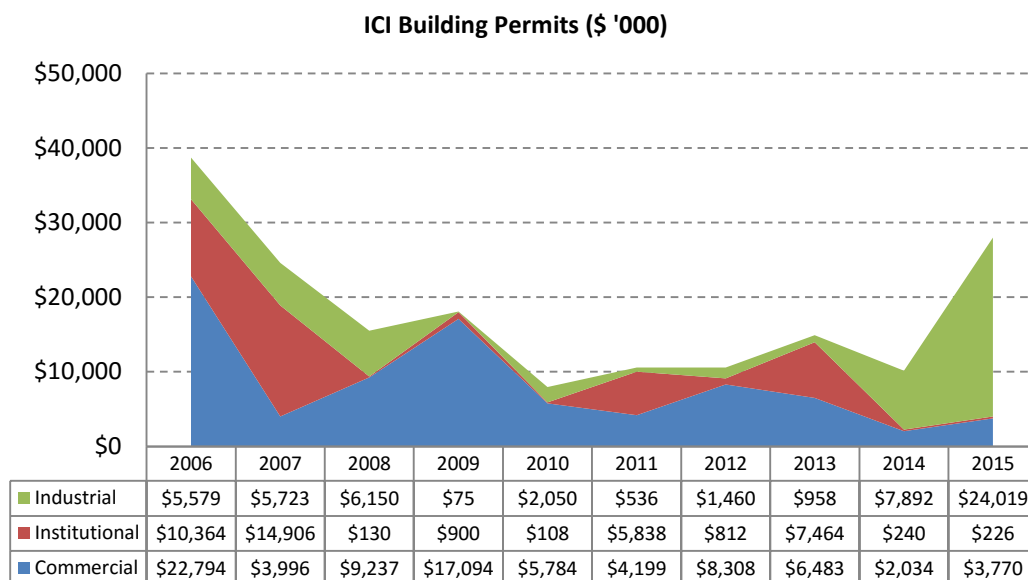
Figure 2.10: Residential Building Permits by Number of Units, 2006-2014



Source: BC Stats, District of Squamish

The District's Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector has yet to recover to levels reached prior to the global recession of 2007-08, although there has been a spike in industrial development activity in 2015, as shown in Figure 2.11. A number of developments are in the planning stages, particularly in the commercial sector. Projects such as the Downtown Transformation Initiative and its connection to the Oceanfront Development project are expected to spur further development in the District's commercial zones over the next 20 years. The high cost of industrial land and uncertainty concerning zoning regulations governing industrial properties have contributed to a slowdown in activity within this sector. The District has completed a review of its employment lands and is currently in the process of updating the District's Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Bylaw which will be very helpful.

Figure 2.11: Value of Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Building Permits, 2006-2014



Source: District of Squamish

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing sector in Squamish has undergone dramatic restructuring over the past decade, transitioning away from large single industry employers to smaller emerging diversified industry producers. As a result of its favourable location, Squamish is in a position to attract manufacturing and light industry investment through suitably-zoned and affordable land. Manufacturers have ready-access to the full range of basic materials, including forestry, agriculture and mining based inputs. The area further benefits from its position as a transportation hub with well-developed port, rail and road transportation connections.

Small manufacturers in forest-based products (log processing, furniture, millwork, custom manufacturing), beverage products (brewing, distilling) and fabricated metals (structural, motion controls) continue to experience positive growth within the District. The key factor to future expansion, however, is access to suitable land for growth and investment. Residential and commercial development pressures continue to impact land availability and cost for industrial and manufacturing purposes. One area of opportunity includes the vast land holdings of the Squamish Nation and areas designated for industrial use over the long term (Site B of the Squamish Estuary, Cheekeye Fan). Discussions are ongoing between the Squamish Nation and representatives of the District (among others) regarding employment lands development and joint opportunities that promote value-added production.

Resources and Transportation

The District of Squamish and surrounding regional areas possess a bounty of natural resources underpinned by the forest resource. The Sea to Sky Forest District comprises a total land area of more than one million hectares, of which about 125,000 hectares is allocated for timber harvesting. Tree farm license 38 within the Forest District provides the Squamish Nation

harvest rights over an area covering 218,000 hectares and an annual allowable cut of 250,000 cubic meters per year. Given the lack of domestic demand and international log market access for coastal hemlock/balsam timber, TFL 38 will continue to harvest well below its annual allocation. Timber harvesting throughout the forest district is managed predominantly by market loggers.

The District's intermodal transportation infrastructure, including the Squamish Terminals deep-sea port, CN Rail and Highway 99, provides vital connections to North American and world markets. Squamish Terminals and the Mamquam Blind Channel port facilities handle a wide range of industrial cargo, including forest products, steel products, and special project freight such as trailers and heavy equipment. The transportation infrastructure is connected to industrial land development opportunities within Squamish, which are being constrained by other developments in the area. Without sufficient access to tidewater for marine transportation, the health of the regional forest industry will be compromised.

Knowledge-Based

The knowledge-based sector is the one of the economic growth leaders within the Squamish area economy. Anchored by Quest University, Canada's first private not-for-profit degree granting institution, student enrolment has increased from 75 in 2007 to more than 700 today, with faculty expanding to more than 100 positions. The Squamish campus of Capilano University has been providing program support to Squamish industry since 1973, including a bachelor's degree in tourism and certificate programs in outdoor recreation. New programs and partnerships with leading universities are being developed to attract students and help build Squamish as a higher learning destination.

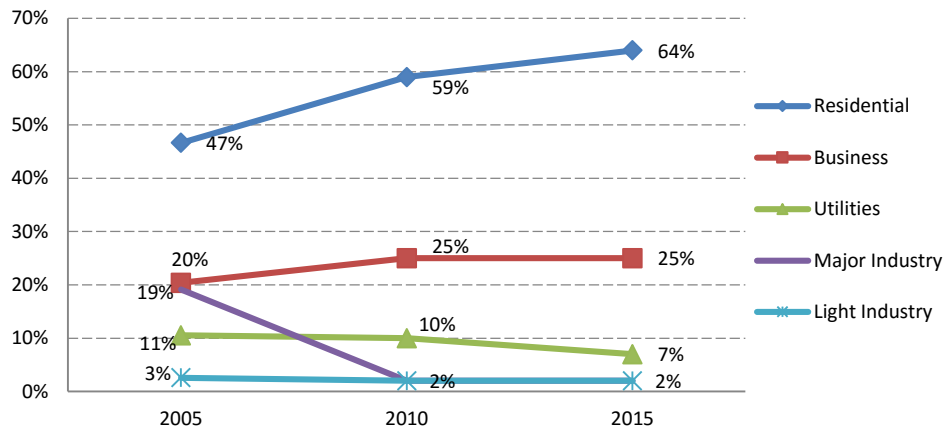
Recreational and sporting technologies ("Rec Tech") is a growing global industry, linking innovations in engineering, design and materials science to the testing and production of sports and recreation products. Squamish provides an ideal environment for this industry, with inspiring outdoor testing and training areas, passionate and professional industry leaders, and world-class outdoor recreation venues as testing grounds.

Squamish is also home to a growing GeoTech and EnviroTech industry that focuses on the natural and physical environments in which we live and work. With its geographic diversity and resource-based history, Squamish provides an excellent location in which to perform environmental testing and geotechnical engineering for development purposes around the world. The industry is supported by an educated community of professional engineers and scientists, and testing facilities to help build the knowledge-based sector.

LOCAL TAX STRUCTURE

Squamish's transitioning economy has resulted in a shift in the tax burden away from major industry and towards the residential and business communities. The closure of the District's two forestry mills in the 2000's created a major hole in the non-residential tax base. A growing population over the last decade has absorbed much of this shift but this trend is considered unsustainable without related growth in the non-residential tax base. The business community is feeling the impact of higher taxes, having seen their share of the tax burden increase by 25% between 2005 and 2015.

Figure 2.12: Tax Burden by Property Type, 2005/2010/2015



Source: District of Squamish

Ensuring that the District of Squamish maintains a diverse and competitive tax base is an important consideration for the Economic Development Strategy as it has an impact on the viability of existing businesses and ability to develop and attract new ones.

* * * * *

The vision, goals, objectives and strategies/actions recommended in the following chapters of this report are designed to address the issues raised in this economic base analysis, as well as issues raised in the consultations and SWOT analyses undertaken for this project, as reported on in Appendix B.

3 – VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The overall vision, goals and strategic directions for economic development in the District of Squamish are based on the findings of the background research, consultations and analysis undertaken by the consulting team.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

The District of Squamish's *Council Strategic Plan 2015-2018: 2016 Update*, which was adopted unanimously by Council in May of 2016, outlines an overall community vision for the Squamish area economy. This economic development vision statement is as follows:

The District builds a balanced and resilient economy by focusing on:

- *Encouraging diverse well paid jobs*
- *Reducing the need to commute*
- *Growing business opportunities and supporting hubs for entrepreneurs.*

The consulting team generally concurs with the aspirational elements included in this vision for the Squamish economy. However, we believe that it should be broadened in its scope for the Economic Development Strategy and include an element that points to continued economic diversification to ensure that the community is not too strongly dependent on one or two key sectors, as well as emphasizing livability and quality of life. Therefore, we recommend that the vision statement for the Squamish area economy for the Economic Development Strategy be as follows:

Squamish Economic Development Vision Statement

Squamish will have a vibrant, balanced, diversified and sustainable economic base (founded on existing sectors where the community already has demonstrated success) that provides a wide range of live-work career opportunities for local residents, a focus on innovation and learning, superior quality of life and community amenities, as well as a strong and competitive non-residential tax base.

We believe this is a realistic vision that, with a significant commitment of time and resources over the next ten years, is achievable. Having a focus on superior quality of life and community amenities (including protection of the natural environment) will enable Squamish to attract the talented human resources it needs to continue transformation of the economy via increased entrepreneurship and innovation. This vision is grounded in the research, analysis and consultations of this study and incorporates input from the Advisory Committee and District Council.

OVERALL GOALS

The overall goals of this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan are as follows:

- ◆ To strengthen and diversify Squamish's economic base.
- ◆ To create more high value-added businesses in several priority sectors that offer career oriented jobs for local residents, including:
 - Forestry and wood products
 - Port, shipping and marine industry
 - Technology, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses
 - Small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses
 - Tourism/recreation and arts/culture
 - Retail/commercial.
- ◆ To manage the development of Squamish's economy in a manner that reflects the community's values and aspirations.

A stronger and more diversified economy will provide more and better jobs for local and regional residents and help to soften the impacts of periodic downturns in specific sectors. High value added businesses, whether they be forestry, tourism, manufacturing/processing, technology, transportation or other service businesses, typically offer a higher proportion of career oriented jobs with higher median income levels, which helps to reduce the rate of commuting outside the community in search of these career opportunities. Managing economic growth to meet the values and aspirations of the community will enable Squamish to sustain a vibrant live-work community and to strike the right balance between economic development and protection of the area's spectacular natural environment. The overall livability of Squamish will be enhanced accordingly.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

We recommend that the District of Squamish pursue the following five overall strategic directions in order to fulfil the above noted overriding economic development goals:

1. Economic Development Leadership and Accountability	2. Land Use Planning for Economic Development	3. Strategic Infrastructure Development	4. BRE, Entrepreneurship and Business Development/ Attraction	5. Priority Sector Enhancement, Development and Investment Attraction
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Each of the preceding is described briefly in the following paragraphs:

- 1. Economic Development Leadership and Accountability.** This primarily involves organizing and resourcing the District's economic development function in a manner that will facilitate achievement of the overall goals. This will require preparation of an appropriate organizational strategy for the economic development function that ensures its accountability, as well as strategies for adequately staffing and funding economic development programming and activities. There must be a systematic monitoring and evaluation process that can be used to measure progress on an ongoing basis.
- 2. Land Use Planning for Economic Development.** The focus here is on strategically deploying land-use planning policies and tools in support of economic development. In the research and consultations, it became clear that the current land-use planning regime is out of sync with community aspirations, current business needs, and overall economic development goals and objectives. The current Official Community Plan update process, including updating the Zoning Bylaw, is an ideal opportunity to initiate implementation of this strategic direction. It will be important that the resulting updated OCP and Zoning Bylaw is suitable for and put in place for the long term. Businesses require suitable locations for them to develop and expand – without this, economic development is seriously constrained. Also, the business community requires long term certainty when making major investments in new businesses and facilities.
- 3. Strategic Infrastructure Development.** It is important to plan for and develop strategic infrastructure that will enhance economic diversification and growth. Infrastructure needs have come up frequently in the background research and analysis, including all types of hard infrastructure such as water, sewer, and electricity. Also critical is good telecommunications infrastructure, particularly being adequately hard-wired with fibre optic cable, which is now an important part of community infrastructure that is essential for economic development and growth.
- 4. Business Retention and Expansion (BRE), Entrepreneurship and Business Development/Attraction.** Maintaining a strong focus on business retention and expansion is an initial priority of this strategic direction. An important role of the economic development function is to provide support for local businesses by maintaining an ongoing dialogue and information base, and determining what the District and its partners can do to facilitate the retention and expansion of local businesses. Specific entrepreneurship strategies must be deployed to increase entrepreneurship and new business start-ups within Squamish. This strategic direction is designed to ensure that much of Squamish's economic development is spawned from within the community and not just dependent on business attraction.
- 5. Priority Sector Enhancement, Development and Investment Attraction.** This involves building an enhanced business and investment attraction capability and then strategically pursuing business and economic development opportunities in targeted sectors in which Squamish has long term competitive strengths. It is important to focus on sectors which are major drivers of the local economy, as well as any emerging sectors that show significant growth potential, have a high value-added component, and demonstrate competitive strength being located in Squamish.

These five overall strategic directions are the basis for the more detailed Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan recommendations presented in the following two chapters.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

During the course of preparing this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan many possible economic development opportunities were identified, as indicated in the Opportunities sections of the SWOT Analysis included in Appendix B of this report. In order to ensure that we focus on strategic actions for opportunities that have merit, we applied a series of evaluation criteria as a first level of screening of these numerous possibilities. The resulting strategic actions included in chapters 4 and 5 of the report are related to opportunities that rank well against the majority of the following evaluation criteria:

1. Complementary to existing businesses/enterprises
2. Contributes to diversification of the area's economic base
3. Leverages key strengths, infrastructure and other existing assets
4. Supports and enhances one or more of the region's economic drivers including tourism/recreation, services, forestry, industrial shipping/transportation, manufacturing/processing, and knowledge-based businesses
5. Supports and enhances existing productive relationships and partnerships for business and economic development
6. Practicality in terms of implementation
7. Potential costs of implementation are reasonable compared with anticipated benefits
8. Time frame required for implementation fits into short term (2016-2018), medium term (2019-2023), or long term (2024-2030) time horizons
9. Is generally aligned with a "triple bottom line" approach – financially, environmentally and socially responsible and sustainable.
10. Consistent with community values and maintaining a high quality of life.

4 – OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The recommended overall objectives and strategic actions are designed to support the strategic directions, and to build on Squamish's competitive strengths and value propositions. Recommendations associated with the first four strategic directions are reported on in this chapter, while the recommendations related to the priority sector development strategic direction are reported on in Chapter 5 of this report.

The Objectives (outcomes desired) and Strategic Actions for the first four strategic directions are presented in the tables on the following pages. We have included additional explanatory commentary in *italics* points under most of the strategic actions to provide additional context or insight on how the action should be pursued (such as some key steps or sub-actions involved, or possible partners).

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The focus of this strategic direction is on organizing and resourcing the District's Economic Development Function and ensuring its accountability. In the following table four key objectives or outcomes are listed, along with supporting strategies and actions for each of them.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
1.1 To determine the most appropriate economic development leadership and organizational structure for the District of Squamish.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an updated review of comparable approaches in other jurisdictions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Assign a staff member or specialist with expertise in economic development organizations to do the analysis and prepare the organization and staffing plan.</i> <i>Focus on communities of comparable size and complexity, primarily in BC.</i> <i>Examine types of organizational structures and how successful they are.</i> Determine the preferred approach for Squamish based on the review, as well as Council and Business Community input. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Regardless of the approach, ensure there is accountability to Council.</i>
1.2 To provide adequate financial and human resources to establish and operate a revitalized Squamish Economic Development Function.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate an appropriate level of funding to the Economic Development Function within the District's budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There should be sufficient funds for the purposes required.</i> Identify and pursue appropriate partnerships and funding opportunities, in order to augment the District's

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p>resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This includes tapping into potential funding sources and expertise that may be available from provincial or federal governments.</i> <p>3. Assign adequate full-time staff positions to the Economic Development Function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regardless of the organizational structure, to effectively implement this Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan will likely require two full-time positions, in addition to support for various initiatives, when appropriate, from District departments and Council.</i> • <i>Economic development is a time consuming activity requiring extensive ongoing communications, activities, research and analysis in relation to a multitude of projects, organizations and active players at any one point in time.</i>
<p>1.3 To establish an effective economic development function for the District of Squamish.</p>	<p>1. Set-up the new Economic Development Function including organization structure and an accountability structure/mechanisms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If the function is positioned within the District's line departments and divisions, then there should be at least an Advisory Board with strong representation from the business community.</i> • <i>If the function is a separate organization, then its Board must be accountable to Council.</i> • <i>The Board or Advisory Board and Council can also provide continuity of local knowledge and experience.</i> <p>2. Recruit appropriate staffing for the Economic Development Function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is the most critical step and a well-written job description is essential, along with in-depth investigation of the person's effectiveness in previous similar positions.</i> • <i>The success of the economic development function is extremely dependent upon the effectiveness of the individual recruited as Manager of Economic Development.</i> <p>3. Ensure strong linkages with potential partner organizations and suitable partnerships with the local business community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Liaising closely with organizations such as Tourism Squamish, the Chamber and the BIA will be helpful for achieving this.</i> • <i>Community Futures is another important partner organization to maintain a close association with.</i>
<p>1.4 To put in place an effective economic development monitoring and evaluation process and mechanisms.</p>	<p>1. Identify baseline measures of economic development activity to be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progress made against the specific goals and</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p><i>objectives of this Strategy are the most important baseline measures, combined with measuring changes in overall economic activity.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• This includes such things as employment by sector, new businesses established, bankruptcies, building permits (residential, commercial and industrial), unemployment rates, occupational distribution of the labour force</i> <i>• While some information is available from Statistics Canada and BC Stats, it is mainly tied to Census data collected every 5 years.</i> <i>• Data collected in Squamish such as building and development permit activity, business licenses issued, and other local statistics will be most helpful.</i> <p>2. Establish an annual monitoring and evaluation assessment and reporting process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• An annual report of activities and achievements, as well as financial reporting, should be prepared and presented to Council.</i> <i>• This should include reporting on the various measures of business growth and economic indicators.</i> <p>3. Put in place a 3-5 year review process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• This would be a more comprehensive review process of measuring outcomes against objectives.</i> <i>• It could be designed to help ensure ongoing compatibility with Council Strategic Plan and the District's Official Community Plan (OCP).</i> <i>• Recommendations would be made for enhancement going forward.</i>

2. LAND USE PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This overall strategic direction involves strategically deploying land-use planning policies and tools in support of economic development and encompasses five overall objectives and a multitude of supporting strategies and actions, as described in the following table.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
2.1 To provide strong economic-development oriented input into the District's Official Community Plan and Zoning By-law review process.	<p>1. Ensure that the Squamish Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is a key point of reference as the OCP Review Process proceeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Align the Official Plan policies related to economic development with the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.</i> <i>• These OCP policies should reflect the vision, overall goals and specific objectives of the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p>2. Proactively identify areas with adjoining incompatible land uses and recommend approaches for mitigating existing and potential conflicts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This requires a careful and detailed analysis of where these conflicts currently occur and where they are likely to in future.</i> • <i>Where possible, buffer zones should be established between incompatible uses.</i> • <i>Where a buffer zone is not possible at minimum some visual screening should be required which may be as simple as planting a row of tall evergreen trees as a visual and partial dust screen for adjacent industrial activities.</i>
<p>2.2 To implement priority recommendations of the Employment Lands Strategy and designate sufficient employment lands for long-term needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the short and long term land use requirements for the District's priority sectors, with reference to the Employment Lands Strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>These priority sector groupings include: forestry and wood products; knowledge-based, tech and green tech businesses; commercial/industrial transportation and shipping; small-scale processing, fabricating and manufacturing; retail/commercial; and tourism/recreation/arts/culture.</i> 2. Update employment lands inventory annually and monitor capacity available for growth and expansion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This could be handled under the new economic development function.</i> • <i>If practical, consider development of an employment lands database that can be updated in 'real time', as transactions and developments occur.</i> 3. Ensure an appropriate mix of retail, commercial/office, light industrial, and industrial lands to meet the short and long term needs of priority sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This can be based on the inventory of what is available now and what will be available in future, taking into account any additions to inventory as a result of development.</i> 4. Establish density and building height policies that will facilitate revitalization and enhance employment lands capacities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Height restrictions should be examined for each of the existing and future commercial and industrial areas to allow for enough density to expand the practical capacity of the zoned lands.</i> • <i>This is particularly relevant for any office/commercial zoning. Current height restrictions in the downtown core may limit potential future office development required for knowledge-based and tech businesses.</i> 5. Provide a secure land base for maintaining strong forestry resources processing and shipping activities.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the land base concerns of the forestry, wood products and marine shipping sectors. • Provide direct input into the OCP review process. • Recognizing that these are particularly land intensive activities, ensure protection of the existing land base with potential for expansion.
<p>2.3 To align transportation planning priorities with economic development needs and the transportation requirements of residents.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and update the District's Transportation Plan for roads and bridges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major concern is arterial roads and trucking routes which are essential to the viability of the port and the primary and secondary industrial operations. • Routes in and out of Squamish Terminals and the industrial lands which have fairly direct connectivity to the highway are essential. • Determine the future viability of a direct link to Highway 99 from the south end of downtown and the oceanfront lands, reflecting requirements associated with full buildout of these lands. 2. Review and update local and regional public transit plans with a view to enhancing the connectivity of residential areas with employment zones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These include downtown and various commercial and industrial areas. • Limitations in the coverage and scheduling of public transit services have been raised in the consultations for this study. • This can restrict the ability of businesses to recruit employees, so transit enhancements should be considered where possible. 3. Work with marine industrial and recreational users to ensure that recreational boating and commercial shipping interests are balanced and coordinated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing liaison with these groups should be designed to minimize the conflicts between commercial/industrial shipping and recreational boating activity, while ensuring that both can thrive and continue to make strong contributions to the local economy. • While the oceanfront lands development has planned for some specific recreational and small-scale commercial/industrial infrastructure and businesses, it is essential that all marine transportation initiatives are coordinated and can take advantage of the excellent natural port and waterfront setting.

3. STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

This strategic direction entails careful planning for and development of strategic infrastructure that will enhance economic diversification and growth. The relevant objectives, strategies and actions are included in the following table.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
3.1 To enhance local arterial road infrastructure to provide better separation of local residential, visitor and commercial/industrial traffic.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop improved truck route infrastructure and connections that reduce conflicts between commercial/industrial trucking and passenger vehicles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This involves implementing road and bridge transportation planning recommendations developed under Objective 2.3.</i> • <i>Several proposals have been made in this regard, so it is essential to closely examine their viability or develop new proposals that are viable.</i>
3.2 To develop incremental marine transportation infrastructure to meet existing and future commercial/industrial and recreational needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with developers as they establish and build out the marine industry zone within Oceanfront lands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is currently designated as “Waterfront Employment” land use and the intended dominant uses include boat building, leasing, sales, repair, manufacturing, and other maritime uses.</i> • <i>Encourage strategic recruitment/establishment of some initial businesses will create a nucleus that will help attract similar businesses.</i> 2. Ensure that recreational marina facilities developed on the Oceanfront lands will complement existing operations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>These should complement existing marina and yacht club facilities by offering additional needed services and facilities including transient marina berths, refuelling facilities and some light marine services (the heavy services could be located in the “Waterfront Employment” zone noted earlier).</i> 3. Investigate the potential of developing some type of ferry service connecting to Vancouver, combined with the capability of docking small cruise ships. 4. Over the longer term consolidate the dryland log-sorting infrastructure with direct connection to the highway. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This should all be located on the east side of the Channel – the current segment on the west side of the Channel is designated for future housing development, more compatible with the overall oceanfront development.</i> 5. Work with the Port, Squamish Terminals and related operators (CN Rail, trucking companies) to capture Pacific Gateway shipping opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Completion of the East Berth rebuild project in 2016</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p><i>should help the Port and Squamish Terminals to leverage new opportunities for importing and exporting a range of break bulk cargo.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The attributes and advantages of this inter-modal exchange facility should be highlighted in the marketing and promotion of Squamish for business and investment attraction. It is one of the major break bulk terminals in the Pacific Northwest and has the benefit of significant recent investments in modernization and upgrading.</i>
<p>3.3 To ensure that Squamish is “hardwired for business”.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Align the Squamish Digital Strategy with economic development goals and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ensuring that all of the employment lands are networked with fibre optic cable is essential, as well as extending to the Oceanfront lands and residential areas, where possible.</i> <i>While wireless connectivity is currently being extended within the Valley, the fibre optic cable is considered essential for most high tech businesses and many that are not part of the high tech sector, as most businesses today are heavily reliant on the latest communications technology.</i> Determine communications bandwidth and capacity requirements of Squamish area businesses and industry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is an important issue to be addressed by the Digital Strategy.</i> Where required, facilitate augmentation of fibre optic cable and other communications infrastructure to better meet the existing and future needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interview businesses to determine fibre optic cable and IT needs and requirements.</i> <i>Identify and work with appropriate telecommunications partners to implement infrastructure enhancements.</i>
<p>3.4 To enhance local wayfinding, highway and entrance/gateway signage for the benefit of visitors, businesses and industry.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Squamish Comprehensive Signage and Wayfinding Plan and initiate implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This is already well in progress so the priority is to ensure full implementation in the short term.</i> Update signage guidelines for businesses, suited to the character of business and commercial zones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Consistent theming should be encouraged, particularly within each of these zones.</i> <i>Where appropriate, such as in the downtown area, the signage guidelines should be used to enhance the ambience of the area, similar to heritage oriented communities.</i>

4. BRE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/ATTRACTION

Much of future business development and growth can be generated within Squamish itself, by maintaining a strong focus on business retention and expansion, encouraging entrepreneurship, and facilitating new business development. The key objectives and supporting strategic actions are summarized in the following table.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
4.1 To implement an ongoing, systematic Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program to better connect with and help strengthen existing businesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue implementation of BC Business Counts program in Squamish. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work to continually strengthen relationships with existing and new businesses in Squamish.</i> • <i>Help address barriers to growth and expansion such as: difficulties in accessing financing; lack of suitable premises; accessing new markets; issues related to development approvals, local regulations, zoning, taxes and utilities; employee recruitment and retention.</i> 2. Leverage the BRE program and business licenses database to collect up to date information on businesses and employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider developing an annual survey of businesses that must be filled-out when renewing or applying for a business license.</i> • <i>Data collected should at least include type of business by NAICS code, year established, and number of full-time and part-time employees.</i> 3. Develop and implement initiatives recognizing Squamish business successes in partnership with the Chamber and BIA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This could include annual awards as well as awards events/ceremonies.</i> • <i>Another component could be appropriate media publicity and recognition.</i>
4.2 To work with partners to encourage, support and facilitate local entrepreneurship.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an entrepreneurial facilitation partnership with local and regional business organizations and universities/colleges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure that this includes the following components: entrepreneurship training and educational opportunities; networking opportunities with other entrepreneurs and existing businesses; access to mentors and venture capital; access to affordable office, commercial or industrial space; availability of potential employees and contractors with diverse skills.</i> • <i>Collaborate with public and private sector partners including educational institutions, the Economic Development Office, Community Futures and the Chamber of Commerce.</i> 2. Work with partners to develop and implement targeted workshops, programs, and other education and

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p>resources geared to Squamish area entrepreneurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine the needs of various sectors that would benefit from entrepreneurship facilitation.</i> • <i>Targeted workshops and educational programs could include such things as: business planning and new venture start-up; innovation and commercialization; entrepreneurial marketing and sales; digital marketing and social media marketing; entrepreneurial business-to-business selling; and accessing venture capital and private equity.</i> • <i>Appropriate seminars and programs could be supported by corporate sponsors and geared to the needs of the local entrepreneurial community.</i> <p>3. Investigate the potential of developing and/or linking with incubator/accelerator programming to facilitate start-up businesses/entrepreneurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This concept was temporarily tried-out recently with an initiative called Start-up Squamish – the idea had a lot of merit, although was not sustained for a long enough period to realize its potential.</i> • <i>There may be potential to link with an entrepreneurship centre or incubator/accelerator in Vancouver which has several in connection with universities and colleges. There are also autonomous accelerators, such as Wavefront, the communications technology accelerator sponsored by the federal and provincial governments, along with Rogers Communications.</i> <p>4. Encourage development of home-based small business formation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a directory of home-based businesses/services to assist in marketing, promotion and business development.</i> • <i>Ensure that local bylaws permit home-based businesses, subject to appropriate guidelines and restrictions.</i> • <i>Ensure there are locations home-based businesses can expand to when they outgrow the home.</i>
<p>4.3 To maintain competitive local commercial/industrial taxes, regulatory regimes and approvals processes.</p>	<p>1. Review and streamline development approvals processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue the ongoing improvement process in this regard, by establishing benchmarks of current development and business approvals and then further improving them through regular reviews and streamlining of approval processes.</i> • <i>Clearly communicate regulatory requirements and approvals timelines for all types of developments.</i> • <i>Endeavour to speed up the approvals process, where practical, to provide greater predictability for builders and developers, enabling them to more effectively manage the risks associated with rezoning applications</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p><i>and site plan approvals.</i></p> <p>2. Where possible, review and monitor taxes, fees and other user charges, including development charges, which are deployed in other BC municipalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintain up-to-date comparisons with other similar municipalities, where information is readily available, to help the District understand the extent to which its taxes, fees and user charges differ from others in BC.</i> • <i>Where these rates appear to be notably higher than elsewhere, the District may give consideration to making adjustments, if this is creating a problematic competitive disadvantage for business retention, expansion and attraction.</i>
<p>4.4 To develop an enhanced online presence and access to information for Squamish Economic Development</p>	<p>1. Create a strong economic development web portal for Squamish Economic Development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Squamish Economic Development web portal should be a separate website that can be accessed separately from the District of Squamish website.</i> • <i>Any of the existing information on business and economic development already on the District of Squamish website would be part of this web portal.</i> • <i>Additional features could include a more interactive community profile (in addition to the pdf version) that would enable data and information to be directly downloaded.</i> • <i>Priority sectors should be highlighted, along with the competitive advantages and value propositions offered by a Squamish location relative to these sectors.</i> • <i>It should be possible to access inventories and links to commercial and industrial lands and buildings available.</i> <p>2. Develop and activate a social media communications plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It will be important to have a presence on both business-oriented and general social media including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, among others.</i> • <i>This would need to be coordinated with the District of Squamish's overall social media and marketing and communications activities, to ensure consistency and compatibility of the messages and information being communicated.</i>
<p>4.5 To effectively respond to and follow-up on business and economic development enquiries.</p>	<p>1. Work with internal and external partners to systematize the enquiry response process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Initial enquiries are typically made online or by telephone, with the exception of networking events where face-to-face enquiries may occur.</i> • <i>The initial response is to ensure a suitable package of information is available to any who enquire that can be provided electronically and in print, as appropriate.</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Establish protocols for enquiry prioritization and follow-up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Criteria should be developed to prioritize the leads that come in, in order to ensure that the best prospects are receiving strong follow-up.</i> • <i>Activities should include ongoing liaison with the business or investor who is enquiring, facilitating access to potential properties, resources and local suppliers and identifying any business supports or incentives that may be applicable to what is being considered or proposed.</i> 3. Develop site selector visitation programming and protocols. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This should include guidelines for putting together appropriate community information packages, as well as templates for these packages</i> • <i>Protocols should be developed regarding who an investor will meet in terms of District and other community officials, including elected officials, when appropriate.</i>

5 – PRIORITY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

This fifth strategic direction has a focus on the enhancement, development and attraction of investment and businesses in priority sectors. Businesses and investment attracted may also have a tie-in with local businesses as companies relocating or setting-up a satellite operation may find it more effective to work with a local business partner. The priority sector groups included in this strategic direction are:

- ♦ Forestry and wood products
- ♦ Port, shipping and marine industry
- ♦ Technology, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses
- ♦ Small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses
- ♦ Tourism/recreation and arts/culture
- ♦ Retail/commercial.

These sectoral groups have been prioritized in order to build upon existing strengths in sectors which already have a strong or emerging presence in the Squamish area and demonstrable short and long term growth potential.

PRIORITY SECTOR ENHANCEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The Objectives (outcomes desired) and Strategic Actions for these priority sectors are presented in the table on the following pages. We have included additional explanatory commentary in italics points under most of the strategic actions to provide additional context or insight on how the action should be pursued (such as some key steps or sub-actions involved, or possible partners).

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
5.1 To market Squamish for business investment/attraction targeting priority sectors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brand Squamish Economic Development in a manner consistent with the overall “hardwired for adventure” community branding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Perhaps consider “hardwired for adventure . . . and for business!”</i> • <i>The “hardwired for adventure” in a business context is evocative of “hardworking and entrepreneurial” (entrepreneurs tend to be more adventurous), which are two very positive traits in the business world.</i> 2. Develop an effective marketing and communications

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p>plan focused on priority sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This should focus on priority sectors such as: forestry and wood products; port, shipping and marine transportation; technology, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses; small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses; tourism/recreation and arts/culture; and retail/commercial.</i> • <i>The plan should lay out specific goals and objectives relative to each of the target sectors.</i> • <i>A series of marketing and communications strategies and activities will need to be prepared, recognizing realistic budget constraints.</i> <p>3. Implement cost effective marketing and promotional activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Effective communications, networking and public relations can be particularly cost effective.</i> • <i>Internet-based marketing and promotional tactics and social media are well-suited to economic development marketing and can be very cost effective.</i> • <i>Actual advertising would need to be highly strategic and targeted, such as in relevant trade publications and websites.</i>
<p>5.2 To expand and diversify existing and develop new forestry processing, value-added wood products, and research/education/training opportunities.</p>	<p>1. Clearly identify incremental primary forestry processing and value-added wood products opportunities suited to Squamish.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Squamish and District Forestry Association has extensive information on the industry and could help to facilitate the opportunities identification process.</i> <p>2. Work with existing businesses and undertake business and investment attraction marketing in relation to the incremental opportunities identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Liaise closely with the businesses involved to facilitate approvals for new investments and development related to the forestry and wood products sectors.</i> <p>3. Undertake appropriate feasibility analyses, acquire capital investment funds, and implement the new processing and manufacturing opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There may be opportunities to work with the Wood Innovation and Design Centre at the University of Northern British Columbia, along with other innovation and R & D organizations, such as Forestry Investment & Innovation.</i> <p>4. Explore the development of collaborative research and training opportunities between Squamish industry (resource/forestry) and BC post-secondary educational institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This would need to be pursued with appropriate educational institutions that have forestry and natural</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<p>resource management programs such as BCIT and UBC, UNBC, and Forestry Investment and Innovation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic advantage to undertaking this type of programming in the Squamish area is the close access to resource harvesting, processing and secondary manufacturing operations, which would enhance training and apprenticeship opportunities.
<p>5.3 To development incremental port, shipping and marine industry business opportunities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the advantages of the Port of Squamish as an intermodal transfer point for break-bulk cargo for both imports and exports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The economic development office should help facilitate partnerships with importers and exporters in other parts of the province, by networking with their counterparts in appropriate communities. • The related marketing and promotional activities should emphasize the extent and capabilities of the ship, rail and truck interface at Squamish. • Working in partnership with other communities could be the most effective way of realizing some of these opportunities.
<p>5.4 To strengthen the knowledge-based infrastructure and develop/attract additional technology, clean energy and knowledge-based entrepreneurs and businesses to Squamish.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an inventory of knowledge-based, clean energy and technology businesses in Squamish. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge-based study undertaken several years ago is a starting point for this inventory, which could be updated to the present, reflecting some significant additions in recent years such as the relocation to Squamish of the headquarters of PinkBike, the world's largest mountain biking website. 2. Determine which sub-segments of this sector are the best fit and should be targeted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently the “rec tech” and software, communications and media businesses that relate to Squamish’s outdoor recreation and adventure strengths have been the focus and, based on success to date, should be targeted to build more critical mass in this niche. • With the announcement of the partnership with UBC and the Squamish Nation in relation to a “green tech” (clean energy) hub on the Oceanfront lands, this is clearly another sub-segment that can be targeted. 3. Establish “Squamish Tech” as a networking entity in support of tech, clean energy and knowledge-based businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This networking group could possibly be a further evolution of the informal network known as Inside Edge, or at least encourage Inside Edge participants to join the Squamish Tech networking entity. • With the administrative support of the EDO, this network could convene seminars, forums and events geared to technology and knowledge-based businesses.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A website and social network presence would need to be established, along with the protocol for joining and participating in the network. • Local and regional business partners and sponsors could be involved, particularly in relation to specific events.
<p>5.5 To attract additional small-scale manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses to Squamish.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare an inventory of existing manufacturing, assembly and industrial service businesses in Squamish and determine incremental market potential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of these relate to existing industries such as forestry and wood products businesses, in addition to marine, truck and rail transportation. • Consider which of these businesses require locations to expand. 2. Prepare an inventory of suitable locations for expanding and locating similar new businesses in Squamish. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on implementation of the land use planning and zoning strategic actions of objective 2.2, there should be locations available, likely in the Industrial Park and Business Park. 3. Target appropriate businesses within the Lower Mainland that may benefit from a Squamish location. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will involve a research process and networking within these sectors to identify possible target businesses and what competitive advantages a Squamish location would offer. • Direct contact via outreach initiatives including phone and e-mail can be effective for identifying and creating interest among targeted companies.
<p>5.6 To further develop/enhance tourism and outdoor recreation infrastructure and connectivity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen the tourism mandate of the Squamish Adventure Centre as a focus for visitor information services and tourism, recreation, and outdoor adventure organizations and businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities to spotlight the various recreation opportunities Squamish has to offer • Market the Squamish Adventure Centre as the ultimate source for recreation and adventure information in the valley 2. Develop suitable parking area and infrastructure for the windsurfing/kiteboarding area on the Estuary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey users to define needs. • Identify suitable area for parking/infrastructure upgrades. • Develop a site plan and design new infrastructure. 3. Design and develop enhanced interpretive infrastructure, parking and washrooms for the eagle-viewing area in Brackendale. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is much needed during eagle-viewing season and makes an attractive river viewing venue, interpretive and rest stop the rest of the year.

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Establish a tourist shuttle service that would link major attractions and features scattered throughout the valley. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At minimum this should include the downtown area, the Estuary, West Coast Railway Heritage Park, Stawamus Chief, and Sea-to-Sky Gondola.</i> • <i>The major attractions linked could be partners in this shuttle venture.</i> 5. Undertake development of mountain biking trail infrastructure and examine possible user pay revenue sources to help finance infrastructure upgrades and ongoing maintenance costs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This could include upgraded trails, bridges, trailhead parking areas, signage, etc.</i> • <i>Through a survey of users determine possible user pay options, such as parking fees and/or trail use permits, particularly for tour operators, that could help finance enhanced maintenance and further improvements.</i>
<p>5.7 To add a stronger cultural tourism dimension to the Squamish attractions base.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop First Nations' cultural heritage interpretation in partnership with the Squamish Nation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the consultations this was recognized as a gap in the local tourism product base, in spite of the strong growth in Aboriginal Tourism in BC.</i> • <i>The initial step is to work with Squamish Nation to identify potential opportunities for collaboration.</i> • <i>Then undertake relevant research and consultations.</i> 2. Work on the development of a shoulder or winter season performing arts festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The initial step would be to determine interest among local performing arts organizations who would need to be essential partners.</i> • <i>Then an appropriate theme would need to be developed that would appeal to local/regional residents and visitors – could embrace one or several arts disciplines including theatre, music, dance, film and visual arts.</i>
<p>5.8 To enhance the visibility/presence of Squamish retail areas.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectively brand and market Squamish's distinct retail areas/clusters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider options to develop a unique character for each retail node, supported by design guidelines.</i> • <i>Identify other ways to differentiate the appearance of different nodes, via signage, banners, etc.</i> 2. Implement appropriate signage, streetscape and other features that support the distinct branding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work closely with the businesses in each area to achieve this.</i> 3. Determine gaps in Squamish's retail inventory and encourage strategic recruitment to fill gaps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work closely with the businesses in each area to achieve this.</i>

Objectives/Outcomes	Strategic Actions
5.9 To strengthen visibility and access to the downtown retail/ business core and enhance its vitality.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with BIA and Chamber to encourage further downtown shopping marketing/promotion and events, as well as more façade enhancements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is important to continue to revitalize the downtown core and increase traffic to enhance viability of existing and new businesses.</i> • <i>Continue façade improvements making use of any incentive programming available.</i> 2. Visually and functionally link the downtown retail area with the retail cluster closer to the highway. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine priority elements for improving linkages to the downtown core.</i> • <i>These will likely include improved streetscaping, sidewalks, lighting, banners and other elements to enhance continuity and connectivity, all with a similar look and feel.</i> 3. In connection with the wayfinding project, improve the signage to downtown and consider developing a gateway or archway into the downtown shopping area (e.g. similar to the one in Cranbrook, BC). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine the best location for the gateway or archway.</i> • <i>Undertake detailed design, costing and determine funding sources.</i> 4. Develop a plaza in the downtown core to serve as a gathering place for festivals, events and public markets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify potential locations for the plaza.</i> • <i>Determine components/ amenities required for plaza.</i> • <i>Undertake detailed design, costing and determine funding sources.</i>

SHORT TERM CATALYST PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Currently there are major initiatives underway in Squamish which will make major economic contributions to the community and regional economy once they are implemented. First and foremost, the Oceanfront lands development is already proceeding with the developer doing initial work in relation to developing the waterfront park component of the project, as well as the employment lands. For the employment lands a “green tech” focus has been initiated by the developers in partnership with the Squamish Nation and University of British Columbia. Among other things, it will include educational programming and research and development activities, along with private sector businesses in the “green tech” field. This is certainly a major catalyst project for economic development and a demonstration of the power of public and private sector partnerships.

We believe there are a few other much smaller scale catalyst projects that should be implemented in the short term in order to create further economic development momentum.

Each of these projects could potentially tap into some infrastructure funding which may be available via federal programs in the relatively short term. The three short term catalyst projects we are recommending for consideration in some form are the following:

- ◆ Research and develop an entrepreneur-focused business incubator and accelerator, which would help to facilitate more new business start-ups, as well as helping recent start-ups through the difficult early stage growth period.
- ◆ Implement a new downtown enhancement project which would include development of a gateway which creates stronger visibility at Highway 99, as well as a downtown community plaza and enhanced theming and connectivity between downtown and the highway.
- ◆ Enhance the Squamish Spit with some appropriate waterfront park and parking lot infrastructure to better support the signature outdoor adventure activities including windsurfing and kite boarding.

For each of these recommended catalyst projects we have prepared a preliminary project brief providing some background and context regarding the rationale for each project, defining the key components of the project, and outlining the key action plan or implementation steps that need to be undertaken in each case.

Entrepreneur Incubator/Accelerator – Development of a Small-Scale Incubator/ Accelerator-Type Facility/Program to Facilitate Start-Ups and Early Stage Growth

Background and Context

Local entrepreneurship and new business start-ups can be an extremely important source of business and economic development and represent an important component of growing the economy from within, particularly if a suitable entrepreneurship support system is in place. The focus of this incubator/accelerator would be on high tech, “Rec Tech”, knowledge-based and other service businesses.

An approach that has been highly effective across North America, and has even helped accelerate development of such iconic “hotbeds” of entrepreneurship such as Silicon Valley, is the availability of formalized entrepreneurship centres offering business incubator and business accelerator facilities and programming. There are several such centres in British Columbia already, primarily associated with universities and colleges and/or sponsored by major private sector partners. For example, a notable success in the wireless communications field is the Wavefront Communications Accelerator located in Vancouver.

In Squamish an initial attempt at developing an incubator facility for entrepreneurs occurred during the past couple of years when Start-up Squamish was operational. This provided inexpensive office space, networking opportunities, and mentoring primarily for young entrepreneurs. However, it did not have sufficient longevity to achieve its objectives, particularly when the building it was located in was sold. However, it was beneficial in the interim and developing a more sustained approach to an entrepreneurship centre with a broader range of partners is an appropriate initiative at this point in time.

Project Definition

The proposed Entrepreneurship Centre would primarily be an incubator and accelerator project which would provide inexpensive office space as well as appropriate programming for entrepreneurs, particularly those in the knowledge-based, technology and services sector. The principal project elements would include the following:

- ◆ An initial upfront research component, including a survey of entrepreneurs in various sectors to determine the needs and requirements of different sectors.
- ◆ Seeking participation of appropriate project partners.
- ◆ Allocation of inexpensive office space.
- ◆ Specific entrepreneurship incubator programming.
- ◆ Start-up immersion idea generation programming.
- ◆ Incubator services including facilitating access to planning, research, technical expertise, access to capital and commercialization guidance.
- ◆ A mentoring program, ensuring mentors have sectoral experience relevant to the businesses they are mentoring.
- ◆ Accelerator services including access to early stage growth venture capital financing.
- ◆ Extensive networking, information exchanges and related activities.

Key Implementation Steps

The following steps would need to be undertaken in order to implement this opportunity:

1. Develop the concept and programming in more detail, in order to make formal presentations to prospective partners.
2. Seek interest from prospective partners.
3. Secure funding commitments for implementing the incubator and accelerator programming over a 3-5 year start-up period.
4. Formalize agreements with partners and secure funds and in-kind contributions from various sources.
5. Establish the location or locations for the incubator and accelerator facilities and equip the space appropriately.
6. Recruit entrepreneurs for the initial start-up and launch operations.

Downtown Enhancement Project – Development of Gateway, Community Plaza and Enhanced Connectivity to and Visibility of the Downtown Core

Background and Context

The District is committed to strengthening its downtown core. This has been reinforced through a number of documents and plans that have been developed in recent years. Each plan/strategy recognizes the downtown as the most important business and service centre of the community.

As per the OCP, *“the appearance and character of the downtown have an important effect on the community’s sense of identity and pride”*. The downtown is also meant to be a tourism-oriented destination by providing visitors with the *“opportunity of experiencing a community’s downtown that is attracting, unifying and inviting”*.

This Economic Development Strategy reinforces the importance of these policies by including the enhancement of the downtown core in the recommended strategies, as well as highlighting it as one of the early “catalyst projects” to implement.

The District has also recognized the importance of developing a new downtown square or plaza which will, if developed and programmed well, provide an important gathering space for both residents of and visitors to Squamish.

Project Definition

To strengthen the draw and vibrancy of the downtown core for both visitors and residents alike, we recommend that the District proceed with implementation of the following key project components over the short term (next 1 to 2 years):

- ◆ *Work with the BIA and the Chamber to encourage further downtown shopping marketing/promotion and events, as well as more façade enhancements.* The BIA and Chamber have provided marketing and promotional support including various shop local promotions and seasonal events, which should be continued perhaps seeking additional marketing partners to add to resources and further strengthen awareness of downtown as a shopping and activities destination. The facades improvement program has had a positive impact and needs to continue as the more upgraded facades are in place the better the downtown ambience and appeal to residents and visitors alike. Work on strategic recruiting of retailers to fill any gaps identified in the downtown retail/services inventory – for example, more tourist oriented retailing might fill a gap and help to draw more visitors downtown. This upfront work will make any of the following strategic initiatives more beneficial as it is important to strengthen downtown critical mass and quality to retain customers once they are drawn downtown.
- ◆ *Develop an improved gateway feature to the Downtown Core.* One of the challenges downtown Squamish faces is its lack of visibility from and connection to the highway. As a result, visitors to Squamish may stop at the retail plaza on the intersection of Highway 99 and Cleveland Avenue or continue driving on their way to Whistler. We recommend

that the District of Squamish develop an improved Gateway feature into downtown which is highly visible from the highway. This will make it easier for visitors to locate and proceed into the downtown core.

- ◆ *Proceed with the development of a community plaza downtown.* If a plaza functions well it can be the place where celebrations are held, where social and economic exchanges take place, where friends run into each other and where cultures mix. They contribute to a sense of community and are utilized for numerous activities.

Key Implementation Steps

With assistance from an urban design professional (possibly in combination with the plaza), it is recommended that the District proceed with the following key steps required for implementation of the Downtown Gateway project:

1. Select a location for the Gateway which is easily visible from Highway 99.
2. Engage with community members and a focus group of visitors to establish what they think it is important to know about the downtown.
3. Develop clear directional and informational signage for Downtown Squamish (perhaps to complement the brand for outdoor recreation and adventure).
4. Work with an urban designer to develop initial plans and renderings for the gateway and for wayfinding.
5. Define cost estimates and identify potential funding options, including corporate contributions.
6. Proceed with fabricating and installation of the Downtown Gateway.

It is also recommended that Squamish proceed with the initial steps in the development of the downtown community plaza as identified in the Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan (2014). These steps include:

1. Engage with the community and other stakeholders about what they would like to see and do in the plaza and where they think it should be located.
2. Select a location for the plaza.
3. Work with an urban designer to develop initial plans and renderings.
4. Share options with community and stakeholders to select a preferred option.
5. Define cost estimates and identify potential funding options.
6. Undertake detailed design, issue tenders and manage construction.

Squamish Spit Enhancement Project – Development of Waterfront Park Infrastructure and Parking Lot for the Windsurfing/ Kiteboarding Area

Background and Context

The Squamish Spit is located at the mouth of the Squamish River, where it enters Howe Sound. It is considered by many windsurfing enthusiasts to be one of the top 10 windsurfing locations in the world. It has a consistent, southerly wind. With speeds reaching 60km an hour in the summer, this area is frequented by advanced windsurfers and kite-boarders. Squamish means “Mother of the Wind” in Coast Salish.

The Squamish Windsports Society (SWS) was created to secure access to the southern tip of the Squamish River training dyke for recreational windsurfers. The Society employs up to three on-site staff from May to September to run retrieval boat services and maintain on-site facilities which includes a large container that contains two change rooms and 2 portable washroom facilities outside the change rooms. According to their website, SWS hosts an annual race series and the Canadian National Championships in Kiteboarding Freestyle.

Project Definition

The Economic Development Strategy recommends the development of more permanent infrastructure which would serve the needs of windsurfers/kite boarders, spectators and other visitors to the Estuary. It is recommended that any infrastructure be as low impact as possible and utilize green technologies such as solar panels and composting toilets. This would support an important community priority which is to provide better access to the waterfront for local residents as well as visitors. Subject to consultations with the Squamish Estuary Management Committee and user groups, the principal project components may include:

- ◆ Improved signage to the Squamish Spit
- ◆ Improved road to the Spit, perhaps surfacing it with chip-seal
- ◆ Development and installation of interpretive signage at the waterfront
- ◆ Construction of permanent but low impact washrooms and change rooms located in one or two small buildings
- ◆ Installation of picnic tables and garbage/recycling receptacles in the park area
- ◆ Creation of a defined parking, with a possible equipment drop-off area close to the water
- ◆ Possibly a small concession kiosk or building for renting windsurfers and kiteboards, signing-up for lessons and competitions, and purchasing light snacks.

Key Implementation Steps

Following are a number of the key implementation steps that would need to be pursued:

1. Facilitate discussions with the SWS and the Squamish Estuary Management Committee.

2. Ask community members and other stakeholders how they use the area and how they would like to use it.
3. Based on input from various stakeholders, review and refine the proposed project components.
4. Create a site and buildings plan, as well as an operations and maintenance plan and share with the community and stakeholders for final input.
5. Refine the plan based on the input and then design the agreed upon project components.
6. Identify and secure funding from public and private sector partners, as required.
7. Tender and manage construction.
8. Create public information materials and implement appropriate communications activities so that users and the general public know about the upgraded and new facilities at the Spit.

It is intended that this will not only provide a short term infrastructure enhancement in support of some key outdoor recreation activities and businesses, but will also enable long term management and sustainability of this natural area while providing waterfront accessibility. It will be complementary to any waterfront recreation access provided on the Oceanfront lands which will have a more urban setting.

6 – ACTION PLAN

For the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to be effective progress towards implementation must be initiated following completion of this report. Therefore, we have developed a short term Action Plan to be pursued over the next two years and recommended various monitoring activities for measuring progress. Some key potential funding sources for major economic development projects are also identified as significant resources will be required to implement the Strategy recommendations over the next 5-10 years.

SHORT TERM ACTION PLAN

The short term action plan, shown in Figure 6.1, outlines the specific steps, who has primary responsibility, and the approximate timing from initiation of this Action Plan in July of 2016 to the end of Jun 2017. These are the key steps we recommend, in order to initiate implementation of many of the key strategies and short-term opportunities identified. This will also ensure some forward momentum, without requiring substantial resources, which may take more time to acquire for some strategies and projects.

Figure 6.1: Short Term Action Plan for Years 1 and 2

Action Plan Step	Responsibility	Timing (Jul 2016 - Jun 2017)											
		Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun
1. Adopt Squamish Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan in principle	• Staff and Council	■											
2. Distribute the Strategy to key partners in the economic development process	• Staff and local/regional business and economic development organizations		■										
3. Determine organizational framework for Economic Development Office (EDO) and allocate budget	• Staff and Council, possible funding partners		■										
4. Recruit Economic Development Manager, establish new EDO and prepare year 1 Operational Plan	• Staff and Council		■										
5. Seek funding support for short term initiatives in 2016 and 2017	• EDO, Staff and Council, funding partners		■										
6. Provide Economic Development Input in to the Official Community Plan (OCP) Review process	• EDO, Staff and Council, Business Community			■									
7. Undertake upgrades to the District website for Economic Development	• EDO and web designer				■								
8. Implement enhanced Business Retention and Expansion Program	• EDO, staff, Business Community					■							

Action Plan Step	Responsibility	Timing (Jul 2016 - Jun 2017)													
		Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun		
9. Develop and implement appropriate communications tools for supporting economic development (e.g.- newsletter, networking sessions)	• EDO, staff, Business Community														
10. Initiate implementation of the Land Use Planning for Economic Development strategies	• EDO, Development Services, Planning and Building Departments														
11. Initiate Strategic Infrastructure Development strategies	• EDO, staff, Funding Partners														
12. Initiate Entrepreneurship and Business Development strategies	• EDO, Funding Partners, Business Community														
13. Initiate Business/ Investment Attraction and Priority Sector Development strategies	• EDO, Partners, Business Community														
14. Undertake monitoring and evaluation of years 1 and 2 implementation	• EDO, staff, Council														

Timing shown on the preceding chart is approximate and intended to stage implementation of the multiple strategies and actions, in order to be manageable and to provide sufficient time to seek funding and other resources. This timeline will likely need to be reviewed and adjusted occasionally, in order to reflect changing circumstances.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

It is important that progress towards achieving economic development objectives is monitored on an ongoing basis and that measurements and indicators are put in place to facilitate this. It can be difficult to measure the results of economic development activities in the short-term as many of the recommended strategies and opportunities will be implemented over several years or more. However, in the longer term it is possible to track the impacts more specifically as it is then possible to track such impacts as the number of new businesses created or expanded and jobs created or retained.

In general, there are four categories of indicators you can measure to track the progress of economic development in Squamish:

- ◆ Progress against an Annual Work Plan prepared prior to the beginning of each fiscal year
- ◆ The economic development initiatives and activities actually undertaken each year
- ◆ Participation in economic development initiatives by the District's partners
- ◆ Actual results of the economic development activities that are reflected in various measures of business and the economy.

The following table includes lists of monitoring activities and measures of progress recommended in relation to the strategies/actions under each of the five recommended strategic directions.

Figure 6.2: Monitoring Progress of Implementation Under the Five Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction	Key Measurables, Milestones and Monitoring Activities
1. Leadership and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of new Economic Development Office (EDO) Sustainable funding allocated to establish, staff and operate the EDO Full-time EDO staff recruited and new office established Performance measurement framework put in place Change in the District's annual business license renewal process to include the provision of quantitative data pertaining to industry (by NAIC code), number of employees (full-time / part-time), and gross revenue category Continued participation in Business Counts program and undertake new round of interviews Updates to economic data every Census year, and analysis of income, employment and occupational trends over time Coordinating with Province and Tourism Squamish to regularly monitor traffic counts along Highway 99 and into/out of Squamish, bookings and vacancy rates for both fixed roof and other accommodation, visitor counts for major tourism attractions
2. Land Use Planning for Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress re implementing specific recommendations from Employment Lands Strategy study Additional lands zoned for heavy and light industry in appropriate locations Best practices review and long term vision consistent with updated Squamish OCP Change in Industrial, Commercial and Institutional building permits and values over time Change in inventory of industrial/commercial/institutional space over time
3. Strategic Infrastructure Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of specific infrastructure planning initiatives Completion or portion complete of each individual project being pursued
4. BRE, Entrepreneurship and Business Development/ Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new businesses established annually Change in business counts (with/without employees) over time Change in business licenses (by NAIC code) over time Change in tax rates, utility rates, regulatory burden, commercial rents over time Sponsorships/ local networking events Progress in the development of a local-regional entrepreneurship centre (incubator/accelerator)
5. Priority Sector Enhancement, Development and Investment Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing marketing/promotional activities development Number of stakeholders involved in economic development marketing and promotional activities Progress of implementing sectoral business and investment attraction strategies Feasibility studies undertaken to investigate specific sectoral opportunities Development of directory of technology and knowledge-based businesses (including home-based businesses) Tracking business and economic development enquiries and number of leads generated as a result of marketing and promotional activities

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Significant costs are associated with implementation of many of the recommended strategies and opportunities, particularly those involving built infrastructure and development of completely new initiatives (e.g. new festivals and events). Federal and provincial funding programs are available that will support specific initiatives that fit their eligibility criteria. These programs are constantly changing so it can be difficult to keep track of what is still current and applicable.

Examples of relevant programs that Squamish should consider tapping into are shown in the following table (Figure 6.3). The Squamish Economic Development Office (in whatever form it takes) will need to contact the department or agency involved in each case to determine what specific initiatives they should seek funding for.

Figure 6.3: Examples of Potential Funding Sources for Implementing Projects

Program	Department or Agency	Description/Eligibility Requirements
Western Diversification Program (WDP)	Western Economic Diversification Canada	<p>This is one of the programs through which Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) makes strategic investments in initiatives that enhance and strengthen the economy of Western Canada. Economic Development Corporations and municipalities are eligible for this funding. Eligible projects must directly support one (or more) of the following WD Strategic Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Skills Development and Training • Trade and Investment • Building Capacity for Defence Procurement Opportunities • Economic Growth Acceleration Opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) <p>Strong projects will demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear alignment to one or more of WD's above noted priorities (listed above); • Strong market/industry demand • Clear, measurable economic outcomes for Western Canada • Effective governance measures and management team in place to carry out the project • A strong rationale for the project • Leveraged funding from provincial governments, the private sector, and other non-government sources (typically 50 percent or more)
New Building Canada Fund – Small Communities Fund	Infrastructure Canada	<p>This federal program is administered via the provinces and is a potential source of funding for a variety of infrastructure oriented projects in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield Redevelopment • Connectivity and Broadband • Disaster Mitigation • Drinking Water • Green Energy • Highways and Major Roads • Innovation • Local and Regional Airports • Public Transit

Program	Department or Agency	Description/Eligibility Requirements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Sea Shipping Shortline Rail Solid Waste Management Wastewater
Bike BC	BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a new project Is part of an adopted bicycle network plan Is ready for construction and can be completed within one year of funding approval (shelf-ready) Promotes transportation (commuter) cycling Helps to reduce traffic congestion Helps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions Provides a safe cycling environment
Building Communities through Arts and Heritage – Community Anniversaries	Department of Canadian Heritage	<p>This program provides funding for non-recurring events (including capital projects up to \$25,000). Successful applicants may receive up to 100 percent of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$200,000 for events that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorate a significant local historical event or pay tribute to a significant local historical personality; Mark a 100th anniversary or greater, in increments of 25 years (e.g., 125th, 150th); Present the work of local artists, artisans, or performers of historical heritage; Actively involve members of the local community; Are intended for and accessible to the general public.
Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage – Legacy Fund	Department of Canadian Heritage	<p>This program provides funding for community capital projects. Successful applicants may receive up to 50 per cent of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$500,000 in funding for community capital projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commemorate a significant local historical event or pay tribute to a significant local historical personality; Mark a 100th anniversary or greater, in increments of 25 years (e.g., 125th, 150th); Involve the restoration, renovation, or transformation of existing buildings and/or exterior spaces with local community significance; Encourage arts and heritage activities in your community; and Are intended for and accessible to the general public.
Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage – Local Festivals	Department of Canadian Heritage	<p>The Local Festivals component provides funding to local groups for recurring festivals. Successful applicants may receive up to 100 percent of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$200,000 for festivals that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the work of local artists, artisans, or performers of local historical heritage; Actively involve members of the local community; Are intended for and accessible to the general public.

An important role of the economic development function is to monitor funding opportunities on an ongoing basis in relation to strategy implementation priorities. The economic development organization would take the lead in preparing funding applications, working with other District departments and economic development partners, as appropriate. Clearly there are other potential sources of funding that can be explored, depending upon the specifics of individual projects as they are pursued.

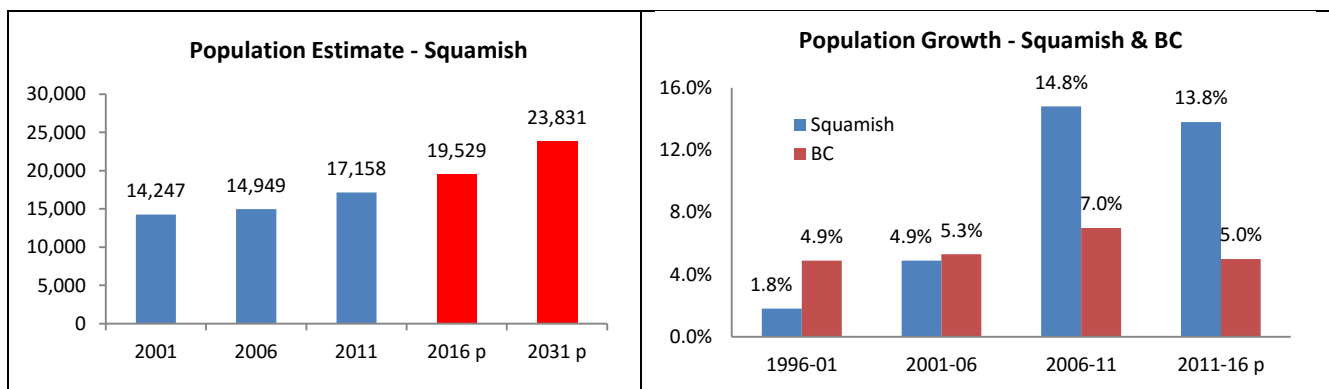
APPENDIX A – ADDITIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

In addition to the economic data and analysis presented in Chapter 2 of this report, the consulting team also undertook an analysis of demographic characteristics of the District of Squamish, as well as an analysis of tourism activity in the region, and a review of businesses and economic interests of the Squamish Nation, an important local and regional economic development partner. These analyses are reported on in the following pages.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Despite moving from a resource-based to a service-based economy over the past two decades, Squamish has benefitted from a rapidly growing population that has helped buffer this transition and offset the loss of the non-residential tax base. The population of Squamish is projected to reach 19,529 residents by 2016 – up 37% since 2001 – an annual growth rate of 2.5%. BC Stats projects the population of Squamish to increase 1.4% annually through 2031.

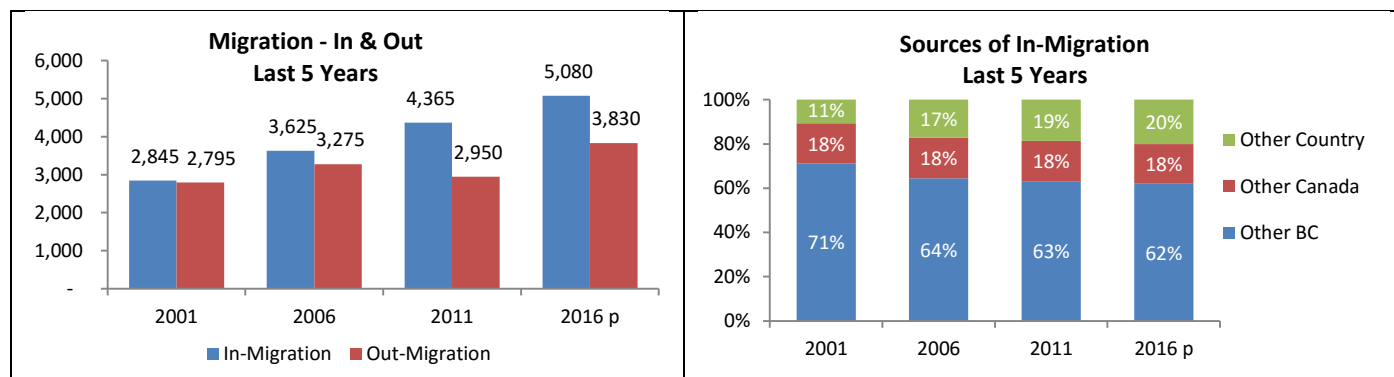
Figure A.1: Squamish Population Estimates and Growth Projections



Source: Statistics Canada Census data, BC Stats, LMI Insight (projections)

Growth is driven largely by an influx of new migrants from other parts of BC (largely Greater Vancouver) and natural population increase. It is estimated that natural population change accounted for just under half (47%) of Squamish's net population growth between 2011 and 2016. This has contributed to a relatively younger population in Squamish, which had a median age of 36.8 years compared to 41.9 years for all BC in 2011. Similarly, the number of migrants moving to Squamish has outpaced those leaving the District by an increasing number since 2001. Migrants from other countries have been the fastest growing segment of the migrant population to Squamish over the past 15 years.

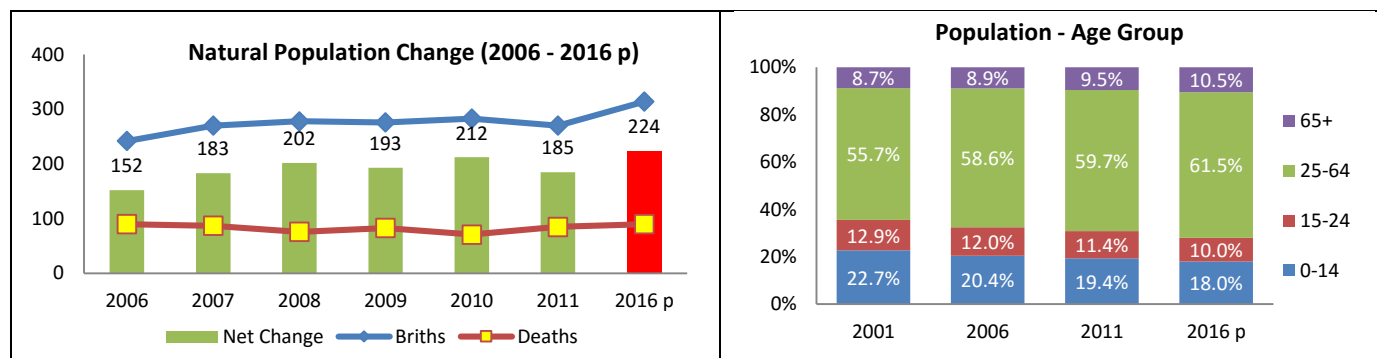
Figure A.2: Squamish Population Migration Patterns, 2001-2016



Source: Statistics Canada Census data, LMI Insight (projections)

Population growth has been highest among “working-age” residents aged 25-64 years. In part, this reflects the movement of younger British Columbians and families who are attracted to Squamish for lifestyle options and proximity to Greater Vancouver. Workers commuting from Squamish to Vancouver and Whistler have become a more common feature within the local community.

Figure A.3: Natural Population Change and Population by Age Group



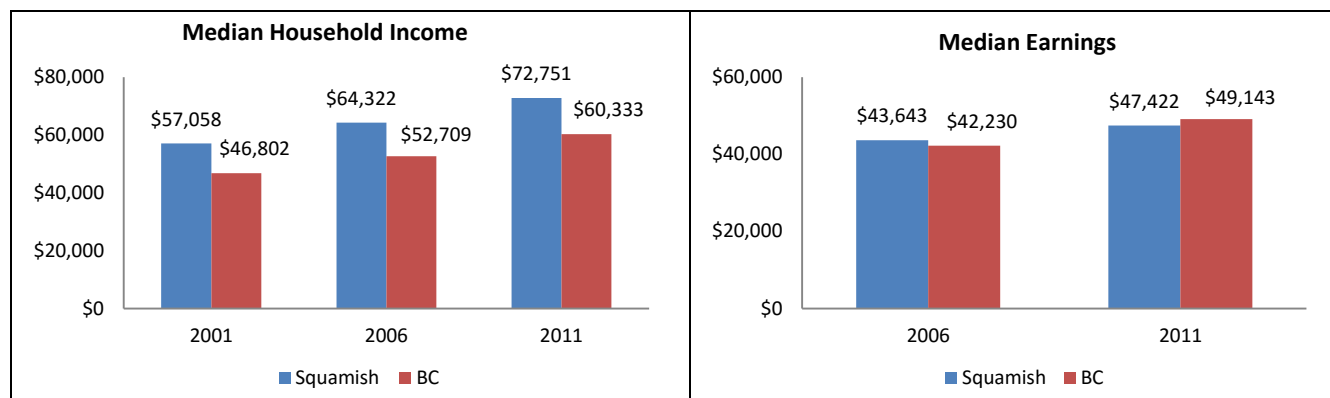
Source: Statistics Canada Census data, LMI Insight (projections)

These population trends are expected to continue for many years, given Squamish’s proximity to Vancouver and quality of life and amenities. This will have far reaching impacts on community planning, particularly as it relates to land use decisions and the need for affordable housing. As in the rest of BC, property values have increased significantly over the last decade, raising affordability issues for both owners and tenants.

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Median household incomes in Squamish have generally been about 20% higher than those in the rest of BC, while median earnings of individuals have been roughly equivalent. This might suggest that a higher proportion of Squamish households have access to additional sources of income (e.g. investment, pension, RRSP), besides employment earnings.

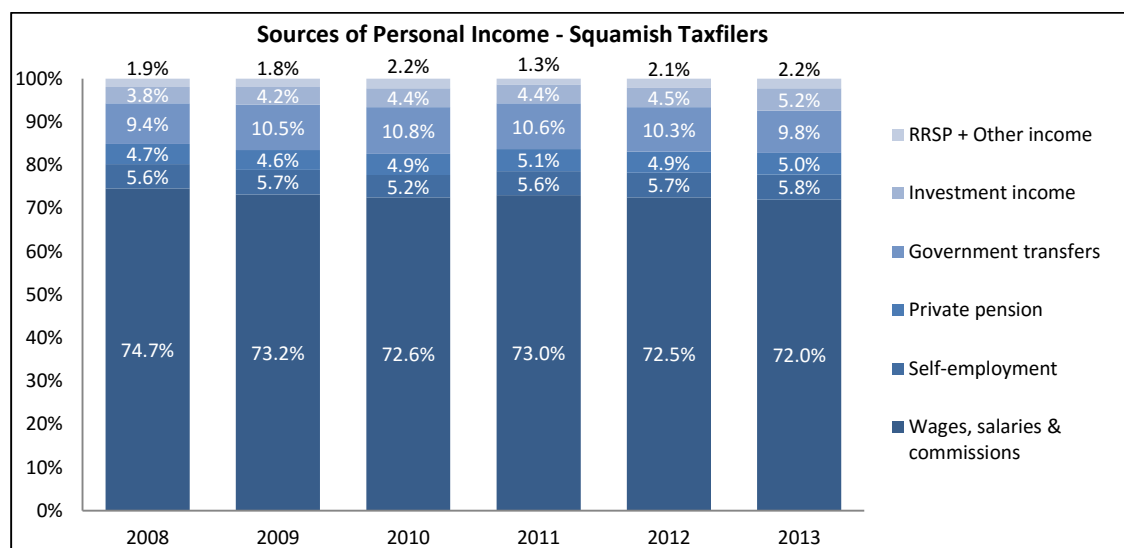
Figure A.4: Median Household Income and Median Earnings



Source: Statistics Canada Census data, National Household Survey

Income from employment and self-employment accounts for the large majority of total income amongst tax-filers. Between 2008 and 2013, income from wages, salaries and commissions decreased as a share of total income, while income from self-employment remained stable over this period. One might expect income from self-employment to account for a larger share of total income, given the growing number of self-employed businesses in Squamish. Although small by comparison, income from investments and RRSPs now account for a larger share of total income, which may be at least partly related to the income sources of migrants from other countries.

Figure A.5: Sources of Personal Income for Squamish Taxfilers



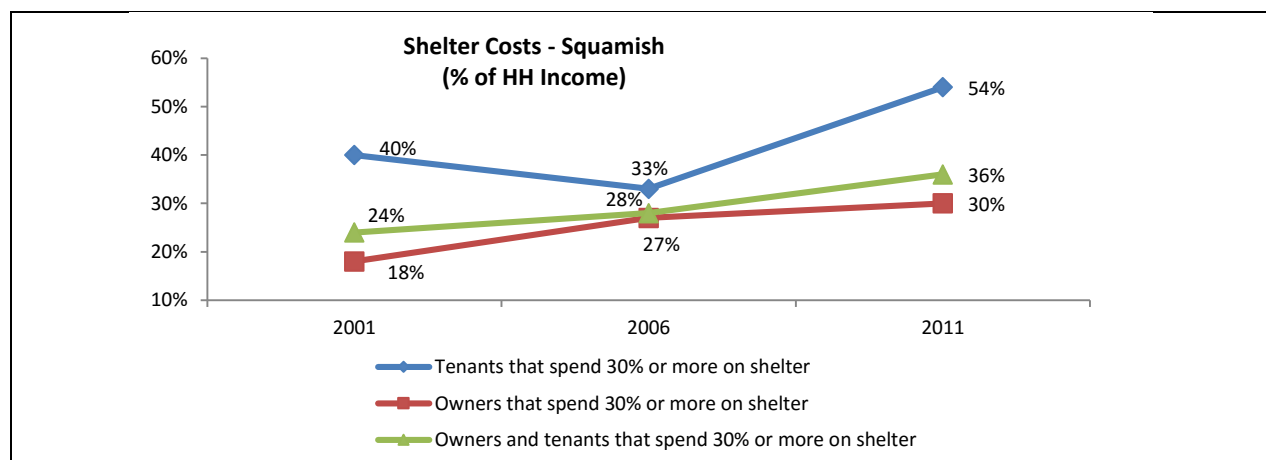
Sources of Income (\$'000)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Share of Total Income (2008-13)
Employment earnings:	\$393,285	\$393,075	\$394,145	\$423,760	\$451,590	\$487,065	78.6%
- Wages, salaries & commissions	\$365,880	\$364,725	\$367,960	\$393,670	\$418,745	\$450,640	73.0%
- Self-employment	\$27,405	\$28,350	\$26,185	\$30,090	\$32,845	\$36,425	5.6%
RRSP	\$895	\$1,275	\$1,340	\$1,950	\$1,895	\$2,335	0.3%
Private pension	\$22,925	\$23,060	\$24,630	\$27,330	\$28,370	\$31,225	4.9%
Other income	\$8,315	\$7,365	\$9,535	\$5,000	\$10,245	\$11,100	1.6%
Investment income	\$18,470	\$21,065	\$22,465	\$23,880	\$26,005	\$32,585	4.4%
Government transfers	\$46,120	\$52,395	\$54,465	\$57,015	\$59,705	\$61,590	10.2%
Total Income	\$490,010	\$498,235	\$506,580	\$538,935	\$577,810	\$625,900	100.0%

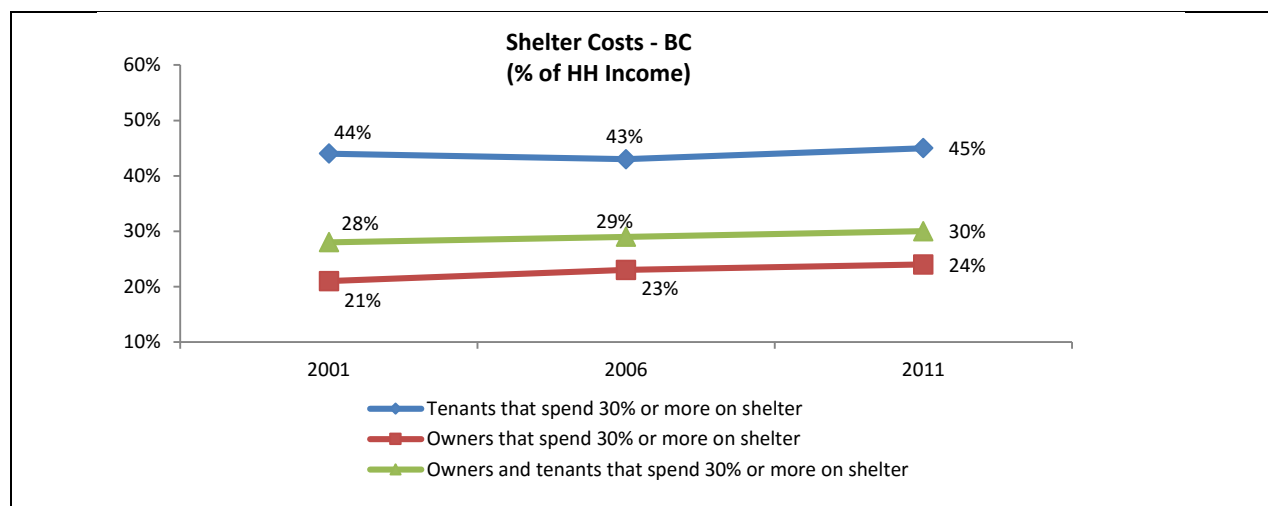
Source: Statistic Canada. Table 111-0007, Neighbourhood Income and Demographics (Taxfilers)

HOUSING COSTS

As a result of continuing increases in residential real estate prices, shelter costs have become increasingly expensive for Squamish households, as a higher percentage of owners and tenants now spend more than 30% of their income on shelter (an increase from 24% to 36% between 2001 and 2011). Tenants in particular have been impacted by rising costs, with 54% of tenants spending more than 30% of household income on shelter in 2011 – up from 33% in 2006. In contrast, 44% of tenants across all BC reported spending more than 30% of income on shelter costs in 2011.

Figure A.6: Shelter Costs as a Proportion of Household Income, 2001-2011

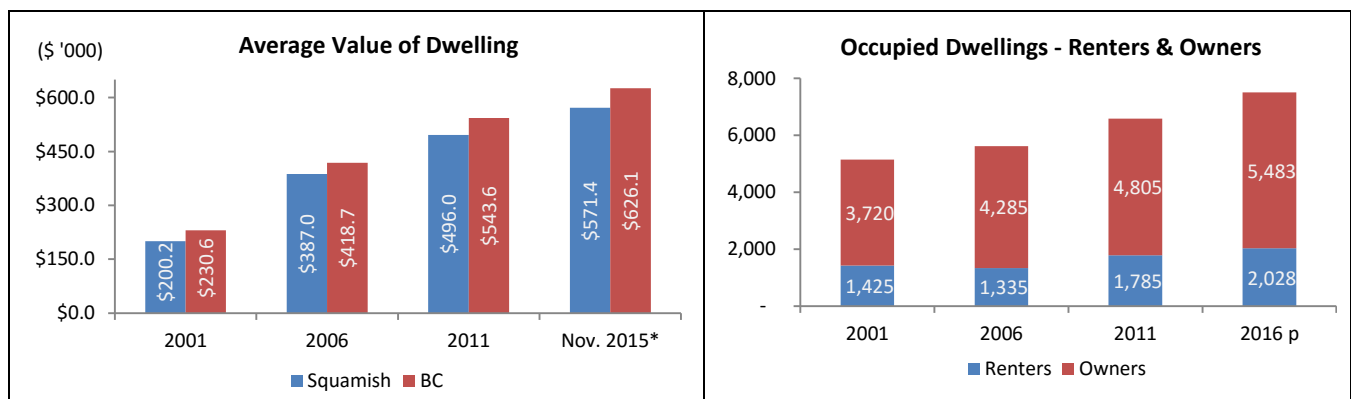




Source: Statistic Canada data

As in much of BC, the average value of dwellings in Squamish has nearly tripled since 2001. The total inventory of occupied dwellings (apartments, townhomes, single family homes) reached 6,590 units in 2011, the majority of which were owner-occupied (73%). As of 2011, 74% of Squamish home owners carried a mortgage on their property, up from 71% in 2006. Based on a projected population of 19,529 (2016), the number of dwellings required to maintain the average household size of 2.6 persons would be 7,511 units – a 14% increase.

Figure A.7: Housing Values and Proportion Owner Occupied versus Rentals



Source: Statistics Canada, Census, National Household Survey, LMI Insight

*BC Real Estate Association (Nov. 2015 forecast representing a 15.2% increase since 2011 for Squamish & BC)

With the continued influx of younger residents moving to Squamish, it is expected that apartments, townhomes and rental housing will become increasingly important options in the coming years. Increasing the stock of rental housing will be particularly important for those households currently spending more than 30% of their income on shelter. Home ownership will likely be more affordable for those working outside of Squamish than for those living and working in the District, as higher income job opportunities are more abundant in the Greater Vancouver area.

TOURISM AND RECREATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

This is a major sector of the economy for the District of Squamish. In terms of the NAICS code industries, the tourism and recreation sector is primarily comprised of major portions of the following:

- ◆ Accommodation and food services
- ◆ Retail trade
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Information and cultural
- ◆ Arts, entertainment and recreation

Therefore, it is typically quite difficult to measure the precise number of jobs as in some of these sectors, such as retail trade, a significant component of the sector is supported by local and regional residents.

Principal Tourism Assets

Squamish has a significant inventory of tourism attractions, facilities, and services including a multitude of tours and excursions offered by local and regional operators. The accommodations infrastructure is also significant. A summary of the principal tourism attractions and features is shown in Figure A.8.

Figure A.8: Squamish Area Principal Tourism Attractions and Features

Category	Name of Attraction or Business	Features/Description
Museums, Galleries and Cultural Attractions	West Coast Railway Heritage Park	Exhibits and preserves historic railway equipment, artifacts and memorabilia. Visitors can ride the miniature railway and walk through the park's exhibits.
	Britannia Mine Museum	National historic site. Located in Britannia Beach. The mine operated from 1904 to 1974. It now features museum exhibits, a 20-storey Mill building, as well as an underground train and gold panning area.
	Commercial Art Galleries	6 commercial galleries including 2 galleries specializing in First Nations art
Other Unique Attractions	Sea to Sky Gondola	The gondola provides access to mountain adventures 885 metres above Howe Sound. Includes interpretive loop walking trails, cantilevered viewing platforms, Sky Pilot Suspension Bridge, numerous hiking trails, rock climbing, access trails to backcountry routes and food services at the summit and at the base.
Provincial Parks	Alice Lake	Four freshwater lakes, trails for hiking and mountain biking. Tent and RV sites incl. 55 sites with electricity. Vehicle accessible camping and walk-in sites.

Category	Name of Attraction or Business	Features/Description
	Brackendale Eagles	The Squamish River in the Brackendale area provides opportunities for eagle-viewing which is at its peak during December and January.
	Garibaldi	Offers 90km of hiking trails. Several areas of access for backcountry adventure including Diamond Head/Elfin Lakes, Garibaldi Lake, Singing Pass, and Wedgemount. Overnight Shelter at Elfin Lakes.
	Murrin Lake	Various climbing walls available. Located alongside HWY 99 between Britannia Beach and Squamish. Swimming and hiking opportunities.
	Porteau Cove	Features waterfront campsites. An old ship has been sunk to provide for scuba diving opportunities. Moorage facilities available.
	Shannon Falls	Comprised of a series of cliffs rising 335 meters above Highway 99 at the south end of Squamish. It is a popular day-use park. There is a concession, information centre and walking trail to the falls.
	Stawamus Chief	Protects the 700-metre high granite cliffs that stand at the southern entrance to Squamish. Provides rock climbing opportunities of international significance. There are also hiking trails.
	Tantalus	Provides opportunities for hiking, fishing, mountaineering and advanced backcountry skiing. A remote wilderness area with limited access. Walk-in Wilderness Camping and a cabin for public use.
Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Businesses	Aerial Kiteboarding	Kiteboarding lessons and rentals; paddleboard rentals
	Camp Summit	Children/youth summer camp
	Canadian Outback Adventure	Team building, event and group activity producer
	Cheakamus Centre	Outdoor field school
	Dialed In Cycling	Mountain biking camps, clinics and coaching
	Garibaldi Custom Tours	multi adventure vacation packages in the Squamish area
	Seat to Sky Kiteboarding	Kiteboarding lessons
	Squamish Kiteboarding School	Kiteboarding lessons and rentals
	Squamish Rock Guides	Rock-climbing guiding and instruction
	Westcoast Mountain Guides	Squamish and Whistler rock, alpine ice and ski guiding service
	Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau	Guides in Whistler and Squamish specialize in avalanche courses, backcountry skiing, rock climbing and mountaineering
	Canada West Mountain School	Rock Climbing/ Mountaineering

Category	Name of Attraction or Business	Features/Description
	Sea to Sky Adventure Company	Bike and watersport rentals Guided tours Overnight experiences Shuttle service
	Squamish Harbour Marine Adventures	Boat rentals, eco tours, cruise excursions
	Sunwolf Outdoor Centre	Tours, whitewater rafting
	Coast River Kayak	Kayaking and canoeing, tours and activities
	Wedge Rafting	White-water rafting
	Diamondhead Outfitters	Horse riding tours, equestrian trails
	Aerial Kiteboarding	Kiteboarding lessons and rentals
	Kiteboarding Squamish VKS	Kiteboarding lessons
	Glacier Air	Charter flights, sightseeing tours, flight training (airplane/ helicopter)
	Sea to Sky Air	Charter flights, sightseeing tours, flight training (airplane/ helicopter)
Other Recreation	Garibaldi Springs Golf Resort	Disc Golf
	Squamish Valley Golf and Country Club	Par 72 golf course, pro shop, restaurant, curling rink and squash courts, in a jointly operated 3-club complex

Sources: District of Squamish (Business licenses); Explore Squamish Adventure Guide; BC Parks; individual company websites

Note: The preceding table is not an exhaustive list, but is designed to demonstrate the scope of what is available.

The strong outdoor adventure and recreation focus of Squamish's tourism industry is evident from the preceding list. It should be noted that industrial businesses and projects help to support tourism infrastructure such as accommodation facilities, backcountry road access, boat docks, and water taxi vessels used for weekend boat tours.

There are also a significant number of annual festivals and event, as shown in Figure A.9.

Figure A.9: Squamish Area Principal Festivals and Events

Category	Name of Festival or Event	Time of Year or Dates
Festivals	Squamish Days Festival Featuring Loggers Sports	BC Day long weekend in August
	Squamish Valley Music Festival	3 days in August
	On the Street	August 25
	Squamish Mountain Festival	July 15-18
	Beer Festival	Weekend in July
	Squamish Wind Festival	July 24-26
	Sikh Festival	June
Sports Events	BC Bike Race	7-day multi-stage race in June

Category	Name of Festival or Event	Time of Year or Dates
	Gear Jammer Mountain Bike Race	July 18
	Squamish Youth Triathlon	May
	Squamish Triathlon	July
	Arc'teryx Climbing Academy	4-day rock climbing celebration from July 11-15
	Canadian National Kiteboard Racing Championships	August 4-6
	Squamish Day Loggers Sport Festival	August 2-4
	Grand Fondo	10-Sep
	Test of Metal Series (4 Races)	June-Sept
	Squamish 50 Ultra marathon relay	August 11
	Tenderfoot Boogie	Trail run from Squamish to Whistler
Markets and Fairs	Squamish Summer Farmers Market	Every Saturday (May-Oct)
	Squamish Winter Farmers Market	Every Saturday (Nov-Apr)
	Brackendale Fall Fair	September
	Refresh Market	November
Other Special Events	Day out with Thomas	May at West Coast Railway Heritage Park
	Polar Express	Nov-Dec at West Coast Railway Heritage Park
	Brackendale Eagle Count	One week in January in Brackendale
	Christmas Parade	December in Downtown Squamish

Source: Explore Squamish Adventure Guide; individual festival/event websites

In Figure A.10 a list of transportation businesses (in addition to the air services already noted in Figure A.8) is shown along with the number of restaurants and food services available by category.

Figure A.10: Other Tourism Services – Transportation and Restaurants

Category	Type of Service Business	Features/Description
Transportation	Taxi Service	Local taxi service available in and around Squamish
	Bus, shuttle and limousine service	Transportation services available between Vancouver, Squamish/Whistler
	Tour Companies	Several tour companies from Whistler and Vancouver make stops in Squamish.
Restaurants and Food Services	17 Cafés	These restaurants do not offer table service. Customers order food from the counter and seat themselves. Outdoor seating is common.
	19 Casual Dining	These offer full table service in a relaxed environment. They typically have a bigger menu and often serve alcoholic beverages or have a full service bar.

Category	Type of Service Business	Features/Description
	13 Fast Food Outlets	These quick serve restaurants focus on convenience, low prices, and speed. They are dominated by brand name chains.
	4 Pubs	These are establishments with a bar and one or more public rooms licensed for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, often also providing meals.
	Portable Food Vendors	There are several of these mobile vendors, usually food trucks.

Source: District of Squamish (Business licenses); Explore Squamish Adventure Guide; company websites

In Figure A.11 the principal accommodation establishments are listed by category, including roofed accommodations and commercial campgrounds.

Figure A.11: Inventory of Principal Tourism Accommodations*

Category	Name	No. of Units	Price/Night	Description of Facilities
Hotels	Best Western Mountain Retreat Hotel	87	\$80 - \$150	Coffee bar, indoor heated pool with waterslide, fitness centre, hot tub, meeting and banquet facilities.
	Chieftain Hotel	26	\$69 - \$79	Restaurant, located in downtown Squamish
	Executive Suites Garibaldi Springs	111	\$100 - \$145	Outdoor heated pool and hot tub, fitness centre, spa services, restaurant and lounge, located in Garibaldi Highlands
	Hotel Squamish	21	\$55 - \$69	Bar and grill, located downtown
	Sandman Hotels, Inns, Suites	95	\$100 - \$175	Indoor pool, whirlpool, fitness facility, business centre, meeting and banquet facilities, along Hwy 99
	Sea to Sky Banquet and Conference Centre	52	\$100-\$199	Conference and meeting facilities, restaurant and lounge, beer and wine store, fitness centre. Whirlpool, located in Garibaldi Highlands
Motels	August Jack Motel	38	\$65-\$75	Located in downtown
Lodges/ Inns	Howe Sound Inn and Brewing Company	20	\$69 - \$99	Restaurant/Pub, Brewery, brewery tours, meeting rooms, sauna, located in downtown
	Squamish Budget Inn	30	\$75	Located downtown
	Squamish Adventure Inn	25	\$25 - \$75	Hostel with communal kitchen, located along HWY 99

Category	Name	No. of Units	Price/Night	Description of Facilities
Bed and Breakfasts/ Cottages	Coneybeare Lodge/B&B, Highlands B&B, Meadowbrook B&B, Oasis Hostel, True North B&B	14	\$30-\$180	Range of facilities available, depending upon the establishment
Camping and Cabins	Klahanie Campground Inc.	125	\$32.00 - \$46.00	Open year round, boat access camping, firepits, picnic tables, flush toilets and hot showers, coin laundry, rabbits, RV hookups, tent sites, located 5km south of Squamish
	Paradise Valley Campground	49	\$35.00 - \$45.00	Washroom, shower, bike rentals, located along Cheakamus River, trails, RV hookups, tent sites
	Sunwolf	6 cabins	\$100 - \$300	Restaurant, access to rafting, eagle float tours, located in Brackendale
	Wonderland Valley Resort, Campground and Lodge	48	Hotel Room: \$114 Campsite: \$40-\$50	Access to Alice Lake trail network, tent sites, serviced RV sites, kitchenette hotel rooms
	Whistlepunk Hollow Adventure RV Park	50	\$48	Serviced RV sites, playground, trails, located east of HWY 99 on the Mamquam River, mini-golf course
	Alice Lake Provincial Park	108	\$23 - \$35	Trail system, lakes, canoe and kayak rentals, interpretive programs, showers, playground

* This does not include evolving non-traditional visitor accommodations, such as over 300 rentals listed on airbnb

Source: District of Squamish (Business licenses); Explore Squamish Adventure Guide; company websites

Currently more than 500 rooms/units are offered by the 15 roofed accommodation establishments shown on the list. In Figure A.12 the roofed accommodations average monthly and annual occupancy, along with average net room rates achieved, are shown for 2015. The annual average occupancy has been increasing over the past few years.

Figure A.12: Squamish Roofed Accommodation Occupancy and Average Rate, 2015

Month	% Occupancy	Average Net Rate
January	49%	\$73.27
February	58%	\$73.56
March	55%	\$72.15
April	54%	\$73.40
May	66%	\$77.00
June	69%	\$82.16

Month	% Occupancy	Average Net Rate
July	74%	\$93.67
August	86%	\$102.37
September	69%	\$83.77
October	58%	\$69.62
November	45%	\$53.51
December	58%	\$61.92
Annual Average	62%	\$76.37

Source: Tourism Squamish

While it is not possible to precisely measure the number of visitors that stop in Squamish, statistics regarding visitors to the Squamish Adventure Centre show that visitation is on the increase, as the Centre recorded more than 45,000 visits in 2015, compared with 34,500 in 2014 and a little over 20,000 in 2013.

It is worth noting that Squamish hotel accommodation businesses are strongly supported by business and industry clientele, good examples of which include: Combustion Solutions Inc. rents a floor at Sandman Inn; Squamish Adventure Inn hostel has been rented entirely for a construction project crew over many months; BC Timber Sales log haulers from out-of-town stay at August Jack (due to convenient truck parking); and construction projects are major off-season clientele for Best Western Mountain Retreat and Executive Suites Garibaldi Springs.

SQUAMISH NATION BUSINESSES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The District of Squamish lies within the traditional territory of the Squamish Nation. Squamish Nation has a total of 4,166 members and has 23 village sites encompassing 28.28 square kilometres. Thirteen of the village sites, encompassing 18.24 square kilometres are located in and around the District of Squamish. The total area of the Squamish Nation Traditional Territory is 6,732 square kilometers (673,200 hectares).

Economic Activity

The Squamish Nation is very active in economic development. The Squamish Nation's main sources of revenue are taxation, leases and Squamish-owned businesses, such as:

- ◆ Mosquito Creek Marina
- ◆ Lynnwood Marina
- ◆ Marina Grill
- ◆ North Vancouver Smoke Shop at Mosquito Creek
- ◆ Squamish Valley Gas LP
- ◆ Superstore Gas Bar, North Vancouver
- ◆ Capilano River RV Park, West Vancouver

- ◆ Newhaven Construction, Squamish Valley
- ◆ Northwest Squamish Forestry LP
- ◆ The Park Royal Shopping Centre, International Plaza, and Greater Vancouver Storage Sewage Plant, are a few examples of existing tenants on Squamish Nation lands.

In addition to revenue generated from existing leases and businesses, Squamish Nation plans to develop various parcels of land, including proposed developments at Seymour, Capilano, Kitsilano, Chekwelp, Stawamus, and the Cheekeye Fan area in Squamish. Squamish Nation has also been involved in the consultations associated with the proposed \$1.7 billion Woodfibre LNG project that may be developed in the District of Squamish, so have shown an interest in pursuing a range of economic development initiatives.

Xay Temixw (Sacred Land) Land Use Plan

This Land Use Plan describes the community's vision for the future of the forests and wilderness of their traditional territory and outlines how to achieve the community's vision by protecting and managing Squamish Nation's land for the benefit of present and future generations. The Plan specifies four types of Land Use Zones to be managed for the uses or values that the community has identified as important. Each zone has its own management priorities.

Of particular relevance to economic development for the region is the Forest Stewardship Zone which is to be managed for many uses including cultural and heritage preservation, forestry, tourism, outdoor education, hunting and fishing, etc. Jobs and economic development opportunities are a very important part of the Land Use Plan, which emphasizes the need for more training and meaningful employment for Squamish Nation members, especially in the forestry and tourism/recreation sectors, so this coincides.

There are three important agreements Squamish Nation has entered into that have a bearing on community and economic development:

- ◆ **The BC Rail Agreement.** This was signed by BC Rail, BCR Properties, British Columbia, and the Squamish Nation in 2000. The Agreement protects the Squamish Estuary, provides Squamish Nation with opportunities to acquire land, and confirms provincial support for additions to their reserve lands.
- ◆ **Tree Farm License.** The 2005 Tree Farm License 38 grants the Squamish Nation rights to harvest timber over an area of land totaling 218,000 hectares north of Squamish, in the Squamish, Elaho, Sims and Ashlu River drainages.
- ◆ **District of Squamish – Squamish Nation Intergovernmental Accord.** This 2011 Accord addresses critical lands bearing on economic development, including 'Site B' acquired under the terms of the BC Rail Agreement.

Clearly Squamish Nation is an important economic development partner, particularly for the forestry, wood products and tourism/recreation sectors.

APPENDIX B – RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The principal consultations for this project included individual interviews and meetings with a number of key stakeholder organizations and businesses, as well as conducting a series of sectoral focus group discussion sessions, which were attended by a wide cross section of representatives from the business community. These consultations were further supplemented by an online survey of businesses which any business could respond to. The results of these consultations are summarized in this chapter of the report.

RESULTS OF FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

A series of sectoral focus group sessions were held in Squamish during late November and early December 2015 to provide an opportunity for a broad cross section of representatives from the business community to provide input to the consulting team. The sessions were particularly helpful at highlighting key issues to be addressed by the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan as well as providing input to the SWOT Analyses, which are summarized later in this chapter.

Forestry, Wood Products and Related Transportation

In addition to input provided for the SWOT analysis issues discussed included the following:

- ◆ Local forestry industry representatives feel their industry has been marginalized in public consultations in recent years and their contribution to the Squamish community and economy is not fully recognized.
- ◆ This “mindset” should change given the forest industry’s continued importance as an anchor for the local economy, a higher wage job creator, and contributor to the tax base. The District is still struggling financially following the loss of Woodfibre mill in 2006 and the Interfor sawmill in 2003, which accounted for large components of the industrial tax base.
- ◆ It is important for the industry to re-connect with local decision-makers and to re-build this important relationship.
- ◆ An overriding issue of concern to the local forestry sector is the loss of industrial lands for forestry operations, transportation and related purposes:
 - Neighbourhood interface issues, as well as water and land use availability, may constrain current operations and will certainly limit business growth potential for both Squamish Terminals and Mamquam Blind Channel industrial operators.
 - Constraints for Squamish Terminals include lack of dedicated truck routes and connectivity with BCR properties, encroaching residential development, and limitations imposed by oceanfront covenants/bylaws.
 - A marine strategy that encompasses forestry and commercial/industrial transportation is an important economic development need.

- Access to tidewater for marine transportation is vital to the survival of the regional forest industry.
- Squamish is well serviced by transportation infrastructure, including road, rail, and port, as well as by energy infrastructure.
- ◆ The local forest industry would invest more in Squamish if there was support and certainty around its long term plans.
 - Industry proponents believe the industry needs protection and that the current population does not support it.
 - They also feel that the Employment Lands Strategy and other plans are “flawed”, as they need to net-out those lands that are not usable (e.g. rock) for industry development. In particular, the Growth Management Strategy (2005) and the following OCP (2009) failed to net-out from the industrial lands inventory such areas as the rock bluffs across from the Small Boat Harbour and the Malamute rock bluff.
 - ‘Site B’ of the Squamish Estuary needs to remain as a site for log handling and processing.
 - Industry proponents feel there is no vision, and Squamish continually experiences an identity crisis, resulting in disjointed development.
- ◆ It is important to note that Squamish Nation has a large portion of the timber rights in the area, and will need tidewater access to capitalize on this asset. The Squamish Nation’s tenures encompass 25% of the regional AAC. The total First Nations held share (including Lillooet River and N’Quatqa) is approximately 53%.
- ◆ BC Rail properties are among the last potential development sites in Squamish. Although little wood processing remains, there is potential for more primary processing (sawmilling), as well as secondary manufacturing and remanufacturing.
- ◆ BCR properties is also a vital link to Squamish Terminals for cargo import/export, industrial development, and overall transportation infrastructure, as Squamish Terminals is a cargo transit facility with finite space and is not a long-term storage facility.
- ◆ Industry proponents believe the branding of Squamish as “hard wired for adventure” completely dismisses the resource sector. Why can there not be additional branding for industry and business?
 - They also believe Squamish is not ready for investment or potential investors and that the District needs to develop an effective business process/understanding for attracting investors.
 - An approved plan is needed to move things forward, as nothing has really changed over the years.

Regarding the overall development of Squamish’s economy, the forestry industry representatives made several observations:

- ◆ In terms of business Squamish is perceived to have an environment that is good for low wage businesses, but not so for forestry or manufacturing. Council is in difficult situation and needs to make long term commitments.

- ◆ Squamish not just a bedroom/recreational community – it is still a working town. Forestry is one of the few industries offering more highly paid jobs to people living and working in Squamish.
- ◆ There is a need to strengthen relations between forestry sector businesses and the rest of the business community, as well as the community at large.

Other Manufacturing and Industrial

In addition to input provided for the SWOT analysis issues discussed included the following:

- ◆ The overriding message conveyed in this session is the declining availability of industrial land for manufacturing and other industries. The Employment Lands Strategy was completed 2014, but nothing has been acted upon. Manufacturers need certainty and continuity around the land base.
 - There is a “lack of attention” to the industrial needs of the community, and no strategy for future business development, particularly for the North yards.
 - Business investors need certainty, and Council is not able or unwilling to provide this. It is much easier (and a quicker return) to sell property to developers. This may be short term thinking (although housing in Squamish is in very short supply). What are the vision and priorities for economic development?
 - Squamish is not ready for investment; it is currently without an Economic Development Officer, which participants felt was a telling sign.
- ◆ There are few opportunities for growth as even small manufacturers (machine shops, fabricators) which are needed in Squamish have little opportunity to grow because of a lack of available zoned lands and buildings.
 - It is not just the lack of space, but lack of quality space for manufacturers.
 - The existing industrial park is not really an industrial park, but rather a business park, primarily for big box retail and commercial.
 - Without industrial land, there is no ability to attract new industry. Lenders are reluctant to lend if there is no clear long term land use strategy for industrial lands.
 - In addition, land prices have been rising, creating an affordability problem.
- ◆ Additional wood processing is certainly possible on the BC rail properties.
- ◆ This group supports a land allocation of one-third for industrial development on the oceanfront lands (although these are designated employment lands, not specifically industrial).
- ◆ Squamish Nation may present an opportunity for industrial development and partnership, as they own much of the freehold land in the area. The Cheekye Fan area has also been identified for some industrial use.

Regarding the overall development of Squamish’s economy, the manufacturing/industrial representatives felt that Squamish must be better prepared for investment and investors. There is a need to ensure cohesion between government, industry and community. Investments in manufacturing by nature are long term, so it is essential to plan for it.

Knowledge-Based and Technology

In addition to input provided for the SWOT analysis issues discussed included the following:

- ◆ High tech in Squamish is always on the radar and is small but growing. At one point in the past efforts were made to attract large international tech companies to Squamish, although where they would locate is unclear.
 - Lifestyle is the major asset. Those in high tech wish to integrate work and lifestyle, which Squamish offers (e.g. Anthill Films).
 - In future land decisions, Squamish needs to consider the effects the built environment has on investment decisions by small business. Make sure to do a “walk around” first.
 - Squamish is considered “hard wired for adventure” but not for high tech and knowledge-based businesses.
 - Not having fibre optic cable throughout the community is considered a “deal breaker” for some businesses. There is fibre optic cable along the highway and some main streets and roads, although further extensions are needed. The District is undertaking a Digital Strategy, which is an opportunity to further assess this issue and propose strategies for enhancing the fibre optic cable infrastructure.
- ◆ Commercial space is available in Squamish but it is not all suitable. The industrial park is adequate as a work space, but not as a space for business clustering. The lack of second floor commercial space available in the major retail areas is a constraint. Tech space needs amenities surrounding it. The oceanfront development would very attractive for the high tech industry.
 - In many ways, high tech businesses could locate anywhere. Squamish is valued by the industry due to its lifestyle amenities and proximity to Vancouver.
 - Development decisions will impact the industry, particularly around the waterfront.
 - Affordability also an issue with smaller businesses needing suitable space at the right price.
- ◆ The “rec tech” sector attempts to capture the benefits of Squamish’s outdoor lifestyle.
- ◆ One job households are an issue in Squamish, as it is difficult to find work for spouses. This is limiting in-migration.

With regard to the overall development of Squamish’s economy the knowledge-based and technology sector representatives felt that the built environment not inviting, but once you are here and experience the outdoor lifestyle, it is the perfect place to work and live.

- ◆ There is a need to strengthen relationship between developers, business and community.
- ◆ Build a vision that reflects the growing high tech industry.
- ◆ Strengthen relationship with post-secondary institutions such as Quest University.

Retail/Commercial/Services

In addition to input provided for the SWOT analysis issues discussed included the following:

- ◆ There is a need for downtown core improvements and enhanced downtown planning and streetscaping.
- ◆ Squamish needs to be more of a retail draw with greater continuity of development and connectivity between retail areas, especially those relatively close to each other, such as the downtown and the nearby retailing closer to the highway.
 - Consistent signage can help create continuity and connectivity.
 - There is a need for more design flair and “pizzazz”.
 - Currently Squamish is considered just a stop between Vancouver and Whistler so there is a need for a stronger offering.
- ◆ There is a lack of some key local retail and services to needed serve the community, especially in clothing, fashions and high end restaurants.
- ◆ Development appears disjointed and Squamish needs a stronger built infrastructure presence and identity as it is “aesthetically all over the map”.
- ◆ Approvals processes can be challenging and expensive.
 - There is a perception that the rules are very strict for some businesses but not for others, so are being applied differently
 - At times there seem to be lots of hurdles.
- ◆ While the retail sector is frequently criticized for offering mainly part-time jobs, participants at the session, including some big box retailers, stated that generally 50-70% are full-time employees.
- ◆ Some specialty retail businesses, such as cycling and outdoor gear stores, are fueled by tourism with about 30% of business local and 70% tourism-based.
- ◆ Participants believe that Squamish is not necessarily business friendly.
 - There are barriers to coming into town as the approvals process is very challenging, which inhibits other businesses from even considering coming to Squamish
 - At times in the past the District appeared to be very prescriptive about what they wanted.
- ◆ In the summer there are lots of visitors spending time in the area, although this drops off significantly the rest of the year.
 - But there is an issue of how long visitors stay in Squamish, which is typically a day visit.
- ◆ One of the larger retailers did a study a few years ago on the traffic flow along Highway 99 – this showed there were 20,000 travelers every day, but only a low percentage stop, even though the retailer is right on the highway; the percentage of visitors at the store is highest on weekends, when they also have Whistler and Pemberton residents shopping there.

- ◆ Grocery retailers get gets shoppers from Oregon, Washington, Vancouver
- ◆ Stronger continuity of the appearance of the various retail areas would be helpful – currently each retail zone has a dramatically different look and feel. The downtown core needs to be further upgraded in appearance. The DBIA is currently trying to extend its area which may help. They provide grants for façade enhancements as well as marketing the downtown.
- ◆ Some specialty bike retailers do a lot of marketing down as far down the west coast as California, using lots of social media; they took on their own identity over time as the Squamish brand has not been widely promoted.
- ◆ Chamber is doing the “Buy Local” program and “Passport to Win”, both of which are helpful promotions for the retail sector.
- ◆ What else can we do to encourage entrepreneurship? Start-up Squamish was initiated to assist entrepreneurs start up their businesses, but no longer operates:
 - It was focused on the local, smaller entrepreneurs
 - The idea was to create business from within the community
 - This is now a gap that needs to be filled.
- ◆ We need to attract the businesses here from outside of Squamish; we need additional brand name retail businesses here.
- ◆ The outdoor enthusiasts are growing; one specialty outdoor retailer has had people approach them to do a pop-up shop next to the business; a food truck doing very well in Garibaldi Highlands
 - These are not just mountain bikers but also rock climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts.
- ◆ The retail sector is supporting many local community organizations.
- ◆ There are now changing demographics in the area; completely different groups of people live in Squamish now.
 - Young families are coming here and are oriented to the outdoors
 - However, there is a need for more things to do for younger people (e.g. adolescents)
 - The community is in transition and this must be embraced by businesses and the District.
- ◆ Downtown retailers feel that the train is a major issue when it blocks off downtown – some feel it is even a critical safety issue, beyond the general inconvenience for everyone when blocked by a train. The railway corridor is vital to economic growth and diversity, but it would be helpful if there was a second connection between downtown and the highway as currently the only routes in and out of downtown can be fully blocked by a train at the level crossing.
- ◆ Transit is considered to be inadequate in Squamish which makes it difficult for both retail customers and employees. It is difficult to employ people outside of transit hours. Also, there is no evening transit on weekends.

- ◆ Retail businesses have been growing in the last two years, as the population has grown by 13%.
- ◆ Squamish needs to be open for business, with a clear and transparent development process – it is essential that the planning framework including the OCP be updated.
- ◆ Rental space is at a premium in the downtown core and has made it very difficult to improve business and the downtown core.
- ◆ Some of the business representatives attending the session were uncertain about the new “hardwired for adventure” branding while others quite liked it.
- ◆ The waterfront development is very important to the downtown area and to the community as a whole.

Tourism/Recreation/Arts/Culture/Environment

In addition to input provided for the SWOT analysis issues discussed included the following:

- ◆ There is lots of potential, but the area is very lacking in tourism infrastructure:
 - There are activities in various locations but a lack of supporting tourism infrastructure in between, so we are catering to the 3 to 4-hour tourist.
 - There is a need for better signage including more way-finding signs.
 - Squamish needs to be a tourism town, as what is good for tourists in terms of facilities and infrastructure is also good for community residents.
- ◆ Downtown there is no mention of the iconic features of Squamish.
 - Visitors see all this when they arrive in Squamish yet there is no signage in town providing the story of the Chief, Estuary, eagles, etc.
 - We must provide this and other information on suitable interpretive signage as these icons are the major draw for many visitors
- ◆ Visitors don’t know where the downtown is; there is a need for pedestrian friendly access; perhaps build a downtown plaza, similar to what Whistler has, as a gathering space for events.
- ◆ There is no reference to the First Nations culture that is here – this needs to be included, in partnership with the Squamish Nation.
- ◆ Current state of the tourism/recreation industry is great – visitors really like Squamish, occupancy rates are high overall and have increased from about 40% to 70% in recent years;
 - “We are finally telling people what we are”
 - “Squamish is becoming a destination” in and of itself (not just a stop en route)
- ◆ Sea to sky – need the waterfront infrastructure here to keep people here (deliver on the “sea” aspect of Sea to Sky)
 - Way-finding is very important and there is not a lot of signage (e.g. need a sign for waterfront trail)

- ◆ A local citizen has created “Laughing Turtle Trail” – connecting different routes in the District, a concept which could be expanded. Walking tours can be effective but need really good directional signage, as well as iconic interpretive signage for iconic features.
 - Looking for other people to partner with – effective signage could attract many different groups.
 - Squamish is not an accessible place; there are different ages so “hardwired for adventure” perhaps doesn’t work for everyone. We need to be planning for the 8 and the 80 year olds as well.
 - There is a need for more public spaces, green walks, nature walks – reaching far more people. Lack of signage is a major frustration
- ◆ There are very strict guidelines for highway signs which constrain the tourism signage possible.
 - Apparently the signage along the highway is going to be enhanced with visitors in mind.
 - Also, the District is going through a way-finding exercise
- ◆ There are now 350,000 people per year going on the Sea to Sky Gondola, so this has been an outstanding success – having enough parking is the issue right now.
 - The original business plan for the Gondola was based on an 80/20 rule, assuming that 80% of the business would come from travelers on their way to Whistler and 20% day-trippers from Vancouver; but in actuality it is 80% day-trippers from Vancouver and 20% passers-by.
- ◆ There are a few things Squamish could do wrong – for example a misalignment between brand and what tourism/recreation activities and facilities are developed.
 - For example, it was suggested that Whistler has a lot of complexity and noise, whereas Squamish needs more simplicity and a lower ebb or “volume” in general, although it is not clear that recent developments have been along these lines.
 - Whistler’s Valley Trail system is considered a good model and is vital to Whistler as a destination. Many visitors are looking for pedestrian activities and sightseeing, which needs to be further catered to in Squamish.
 - It is important that Squamish has the infrastructure available for the types of visitors it wishes to attract.
- ◆ A major issue is the Adventure Centre – visitors are passing by as it projects a community centre image and not a tourism centre. To the visitor it appears cluttered and messy, at least from the exterior.
 - Need a tourism information centre with standardized information centre signage.
 - The concept is to get people into the Centre and convert them into overnight visitors.
 - Feeling that the importance of the Adventure Centre is not recognized by the community.
 - Need to have improved signage to advertise what the building is for.

- ◆ Tourism is about demographics and population base – especially those in the Greater Vancouver and Puget Sound regions. Maintaining simplicity in the tourism offering and the proximity of marketing to these regions are advantages for Squamish.
- ◆ We need to understand and articulate real value of the tourism sector – it is a large tax revenue generator and employer in the region.
- ◆ Need to understand what the tourism sector generates for this town, in the mountains and on the water. There must be a place to go to on the water. Tourists (and local residents) need easy access the waterfront.
- ◆ We need more “beds” in Squamish – let’s forget about being a stopover. Squamish is a destination.
- ◆ As noted in the Vital Signs 2014 Report, learning is embedded in this community and represents a niche market for Squamish. This could be what knits everything together in Squamish. An oceanfront mountain community and learning destination community – A study was done on this in 2006, entitled *Squamish: An Oceanfront Mountain Community – Learning Destination Strategy*.
- ◆ Should we develop a “Dragon’s Den” for new entrepreneurs in the Squamish area?
- ◆ Squamish must incorporate First Nations culture into the tourism experience
- ◆ As a collective we should come up with the top 10 things the District and its partners should do in the next several months, such as the following:
 - Clean-up the park on Loggers Lane
 - Remove derelict boats
 - Garbage removal
 - Signage
 - Eliminate some of the wire gates on district properties
 - Fix streetlights that are out in downtown Squamish
 - Clean-up public meeting areas
 - What about developing a Squamish app?
 - Work on finishing off the trail system from the Gondola to Alice Lake
- ◆ BC Parks needs to be represented here as well, since there are several major Provincial Parks in the area.
- ◆ There are two major festival operations, Squamish Live and Logger Sports, which need to be preserved and grown. The lease is up on their grounds which are on District lands.
- ◆ We need to link-up the different sectors within tourism – a way to build relationships/ networking.
- ◆ There are 50 trained volunteers for the eagle-watching who are hosting and acting as ambassadors to the area.

- On the same theme, the Executive Hotel offers an “eagle rate” and hosts an Eagle Watch Gala as a fundraiser to support the eagle-watching initiatives; there is lots of other similar connectivity that could happen in Squamish.
- ◆ There is a disconnect between the downtown and the waterfront; the Harbor Authority has done some work on the dock facilities, but is now waiting for the Oceanfront developers to move ahead.
 - Dredging: a few stakeholders had the channel dredged, but it is quickly filling in – commercial tugs and private vessels are hitting bottom. It is not possible to put in marker buoys because of the larger ships.
 - There is an area for a marine centre as part of the oceanfront lands development.
- ◆ The eagles are here because of the salmon and there is also hatchery nearby.
- ◆ Perhaps transportation co-ops would work well. It may be possible to apply for funding to move things forward and piggyback off a business that is already operating.
- ◆ Keep the waterfront in mind – it is important to attract the transient boaters market as they are spending money. They come in to attend the music festival. Howe Sound is really another highway to Squamish.
 - There is potential to market in Puget Sound with its 500,000 boat owners who at the beginning of the season are looking for places to go.
 - There is a need for a marine strategy for inner Howe sound; there are pocket cruise ship operators asking what Squamish can do for them – these operators would bring 300 passengers per ship. Currently they cannot visit Squamish because it is too shallow dockside and there are no extra facilities in the high season.
- ◆ The local lakes are really important as well – they are at capacity on weekends and there is a major parking problem, so perhaps a free shuttle from town should be considered – this could be a pilot project for a summer to determine the viability. The shuttle service could link the other major attractions as well.

RESULTS FROM ONLINE SURVEY OF BUSINESSES

The consultants developed an online survey of businesses which was posted on the District of Squamish website for almost a month and 54 surveys were completed during this period and subsequently tabulated. The survey was intended as an opportunity to obtain additional input from the business community, particularly from individuals that did not attend the sectoral focus group sessions. In the following paragraphs and accompanying tables we have included highlights of the results of the surveys. Many of the responses to open-ended questions in the survey are reflected in the SWOT analyses presented later in this chapter of the report.

As indicated below, the vast majority of those who responded were owners or partners in a Squamish area business or organization.

Category of Respondent	Percentage
Owner/partner	73%
Manager	15%
Employee	13%

Responses to the survey were provided by a wide cross section of businesses representing most major sectors of the economy, as indicated in the following table.

Industry Sector of Respondent	% of Total
Forestry and logging	7%
Other primary industry (e.g. agriculture, fishing, mining)	2%
Value added wood products (e.g. sawmill, remanufacture, furniture, millwork)	2%
Tourism/recreation/arts/culture/accommodations	13%
Utilities	0%
Construction (residential, non-residential)	9%
Manufacturing (e.g. metal fabricating, other light industry)	2%
Wholesale trade	2%
Retail trade	9%
Transportation (road, rail, marine, air) and warehousing	7%
Information technology	6%
Finance and insurance	2%
Real estate, rental and leasing	7%
Professional, scientific and technical services	17%
High tech services (e.g. interactive media, "rec tech", film, video, geotech)	2%
Waste management/ remediation services	0%
Educational services	7%
Health and social services	6%
Total	100%

The most important factors influencing the decision to locate (and/or retain) the respondents' businesses in Squamish are shown in the table below. This indicates that personal/lifestyle factors are most important, which is why the quality of life in a community is so important to economic development as it attracts talented entrepreneurs and their businesses. The second and third most important factors shown in the following table are proximity to major markets and access to inputs/resources.

Appendix B – Results of Consultations and SWOT Analysis

Most Important Factors Influencing Location of Business in Squamish	Ranking % of Total			Overall % of Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Proximity to major markets	12	17	13	14
Access to inputs/resources	12	10	9	10
Availability of suitably skilled labour	4	2	9	5
Availability of serviced industrial land	12	2	2	6
Availability of suitable office or commercial space	0	6	9	5
Labour costs	0	2	0	1
Land/lease costs	6	2	7	5
Housing costs	6	8	13	9
Availability of good local public transit	2	2	0	1
Highway accessibility	0	15	11	8
Rail accessibility	0	2	0	1
Marine accessibility	6	4	0	3
Personal/lifestyle factors	24	13	11	16
Competitive local tax structure	0	8	0	3
Business friendly regulations	4	2	7	4
Other	14	4	11	10
Total	100	100	100	100

The current major issues/concerns facing the respondents' business and/or sector in Squamish are primarily the increased difficulty in recruiting skilled labour and competition from similar businesses both within and outside the region, as shown in the responses summary below.

Major Issues/Concerns Facing Businesses/Sectors	% of Total
Competition from similar businesses within the region	19%
Competition from similar businesses outside the region	17%
It is more difficult to recruit skilled labour	39%
It is easier to recruit skilled labour	2%
More stringent regulatory requirements	14%
More difficult to obtain financing for expansion/new initiatives	15%
Other	46%

With regard to the other category above, the high cost of housing is flagged as a key issue, along with the lack of available commercial/industrial land for businesses to develop or expand.

Respondents indicated that the most significant changes that have occurred in the past few years in their business/sector were primarily that overall business has increased and it has become more difficult to recruit skilled labour. More stringent regulatory requirements and more difficulty in obtaining financing for expansion and new initiatives were also significant changes noted, as shown below.

Most Significant Changes Over Past Few Years	% of Total
Overall business has increased	57%
Overall business has decreased	9%
It is more difficult to recruit skilled labour	41%
It is easier to recruit skilled labour	4%
More stringent regulatory requirements	19%
More difficult to obtain financing for expansion/new initiatives	15%
Other	24%

The principal comments noted in the other category above were the lack of affordable housing for potential employees and the high costs of land and/or premises for businesses in Squamish.

Respondents felt that networking opportunities and easy availability of business and market information would assist them with developing their businesses, as indicated below:

What Would Assist in Developing Your Business?	% of Total
Networking	42%
Seminars/workshops	17%
Business and market information	35%
Mentoring by an experienced business person in the same type of business	17%
Other	44%

In the other category above, the most prevalent comment related to having more skilled workers available. The comments also implied that the District and its partners could do more to assist businesses – such as reducing “red tape” and being more supportive of some types of businesses.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Primarily based on the research, analysis and consultation undertaken by the consultants, as well as input from the sectoral focus group sessions, we have prepared overall SWOT analyses for each of the five principal sectoral groupings.

Forestry and Wood Products

For this sectoral grouping the Squamish and District Forestry Association provided the consultants with SWOT Analyses they had already undertaken, so the consultants have used this material as the basis for the following, with some changes and additions that the consulting team considered appropriate.

+ Strengths
<p>Primary Forest Industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Renewable resource with an underutilized Annual Allowable Cut ♦ First Nations partnerships ♦ Timber rights in the region held by established local licensees ♦ High quality raw material available ♦ Diversity of species ♦ Extraction and processing infrastructure, equipment and expertise is locally available ♦ Land and Resource Management Plan in place ♦ Tidewater access for marine shipment of inputs and products ♦ Rail access via CN for shipping products ♦ Regional timber is unencumbered – not tied to manufacturing companies or plants elsewhere ♦ Activities of primary forestry companies provide ancillary community benefits including: logging road access to backcountry for tourism/recreation and use by other sectors, community groups; high degree of local purchasing <p>Value Added Wood Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Availability of high quality wood for remanufacturing ♦ Cluster of established businesses in cedar sawmilling, advanced processing (e.g. CNC), RF kiln drying, timber frame, advanced wood building systems ♦ Improved highway linkage to Lower Mainland facilitates transportation of finished products and non-local inputs <p>Industrial Transportation and Shipping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Squamish Terminals (SQT) with its marine-rail-truck intermodal capabilities ♦ SQT a major regional break-bulk operation handling \$1 billion in goods annually, via 60-80 vessels, 8,000-10,000 railcars and 3,000-8,000 trucks ♦ Less congested than other break-bulk facilities in lower mainland

– Weaknesses
<p>Primary Forest Industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Difficult terrain and long trucking distances = higher log delivery costs ♦ Lack of access to international log markets ♦ Constraints at log handling facilities: ♦ Site B highway re-entry (safety), lack of services (water, power), potential neighbourhood interface issues ♦ Watts Point physical constraints ♦ Uncertain future availability of potential upland sites in Cheekye Fan area ♦ Limited opportunities to diversify into other significant forestry markets <p>Value Added Wood Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ High cost of land ♦ Uncertain future ownership and zoning at BCR North Yards industrial park

– Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Limited number of suppliers of high quality Douglas-fir for timber framing uses ♦ Poor quality road access to BCR North Yards industrial park ♦ Lack of financing for start-up enterprise <p>Industrial Transportation and Shipping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Need for additional truck routes to reduce industrial traffic on roads well-utilized by local residents and visitors ♦ Lack of access to skilled labour, perhaps in part because of lack of affordable housing ♦ Community's lack of understanding of the value of the terminal locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and the extent to which it handles a diversity of import and export products ♦ Perception that port and marine shipping are not good environmental stewards ♦ CN Rail service is essentially a monopoly vis-à-vis Squamish Terminals which can be a constraint

↑ Opportunities
<p>Primary Forest Industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Develop additional capabilities for local processing of logs ♦ Enhance access to international log markets ♦ Handling and processing of Interior raw materials, taking advantage of rail access and interface with marine shipping ♦ Processing of biomass material for energy/other uses ♦ Potential for Squamish being a training centre for forestry (like VIU and TRU) <p>Value Added Wood Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Healthy, stable regional construction industry activity ♦ Corridor well-travelled by tourists – advantageous for showcasing products and building systems ♦ Development of more environment-friendly, “green building” products ♦ Capitalizing upon growing market interest in energy-efficient wood building systems ♦ Local Douglas-fir and western red cedar lumber supply <p>Industrial Transportation and Shipping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Further diversify the break-bulk cargos being handled ♦ Further diversity the shipping lines that use the terminal ♦ Leverage relationship with CN to attract new cargo ♦ Educate the community on the value of SQT and that viable industry, environmental protection and healthy communities are achievable simultaneously (SQT is a good example of this) ♦ Additional industrial development on BC Rail lands ♦ East Dock Rebuild – leverage this new \$30million investment

↓ Threats

↓ Threats
<p>Primary Forest Industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Reduced access to the U.S. market (Softwood Lumber Agreement affects industry as a whole) ♦ Insecure access to tidewater, due to uncertain policy and planning processes ♦ Lack of availability of suitable, affordable industrial lands for processing facilities (heavy industry) ♦ Reduced availability of suitable, affordable industrial lands and premises for equipment and servicing shops (with provision for oil and fuels handling) ♦ Limitations in long term availability of suitable lands for sorting of logs ♦ Lack of training, instructional and industry career orientation programs for younger people ♦ Neighbourhood interface issues between waterfront industrial and adjacent land uses, and potentially elsewhere in the valley <p>Value Added Wood Products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ High property taxes, land costs and lease rates ♦ Loss of BCR North Yards as “medium industry” manufacturing area ♦ Rezoning of BCR North Yards to light industrial would potentially result in loss of area for wood manufacturing, increased costs of land and premises, and neighbourhood interface issues <p>Industrial Transportation and Shipping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Containerization of break-bulk cargo ♦ Downturns in shipping market as a result of economic conditions ♦ Competition from other ports ♦ Fluctuations in the value of the Canadian dollar ♦ Infrastructure development tax breaks for Port Metro Vancouver terminals, puts SQT at a competitive disadvantage

Other Manufacturing and Industrial

This analysis incorporates some input provided by participants in the sectoral focus group discussion for this sector, as well as significant input based on the research and analysis of the consulting team.

+ Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ In addition to forestry and wood products, several other types of manufacturing activities are successfully operating in Squamish including: metal and steel fabricating, concrete manufacturing, craft breweries and a distillery; waste management processing; and outdoor recreation clothing/equipment design, testing and manufacturing ♦ Zoned lands are available for various types of light industry as well as some heavy industry ♦ Ability to transport inputs and manufactured/processed products via truck, rail and marine modes of transportation ♦ Intermodal capabilities of Squamish Terminals facilitate industrial/manufacturing transportation capabilities ♦ Local management and operational industrial/manufacturing expertise as a result of the region's

+ Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long term industrial experience ♦ High quality of life facilitates recruitment of senior management and skilled labour.

– Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Limited industrial lands available for heavy industry – largely restricted to BC Rail lands which are owned and controlled by the Province ♦ The major industrial/business park along the highway has largely been taken over by big-box retail, with some commercial and light industrial away from the highway ♦ The limited availability of industrial lands makes it difficult for existing manufacturing and industrial operations to expand ♦ One manufacturing operation located on the BC Rail lands is only able to secure short-term tenure of the site by leasing (10 to 12 years) which limits the extent of capital investment into development and expansion of the operation ♦ Several manufacturing businesses (employing dozens of people) are working under month-to-month lease arrangements on the BC Rail lands which is a severe obstacle ♦ Perceived by the industrial/manufacturing business community that there has been a lack of attention to the industrial needs of industry and no strategy for future industrial development, particularly in relation to the BC Rail north yards ♦ Business investors need certainty with regard to industrial and manufacturing development, which needs to be clearly articulated in the OCP and Zoning Bylaw, as well as by the District Council ♦ As a result of rising real estate prices and limited industrial land, what is available is relatively expensive, including light industrial ♦ For new small-scale manufacturing operations there is a lack of suitable buildings and quality space available, so it is usually necessary to build from scratch, affecting start-up viability ♦ It is difficult to get financing to develop industrial buildings on spec ♦ There are a number of regulatory constraints associated with the flood plain, as well as issues related to development of any industrial land in the Cheekeye Fan area ♦ Industry representatives feel that in the past it has been a very slow process to subdivide industrial lands, which can discourage development ♦ There is also a need to overhaul the Zoning Bylaw for industrial lands ♦ There are also areas where land that is designated industrial cannot practically be developed as such (such as the rock bluffs south of town) ♦ Existing mechanical shops, machine shops and metal fabricating operations are constrained in terms of being able to expand or relocate to larger premises within Squamish ♦ Shipping costs are expensive, both in terms of acquiring inputs from outside the region, as well as shipping manufactured goods and processed products to market. ♦ Key recommendations of the Industrial Lands Strategy have yet to be implemented ♦ While the Squamish oceanfront development has a portion of lands planned for industrial/commercial, this will preclude any heavy industry

↑ Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Proper zoning and development of BC Rail industrial lands, along with handover of control and/or

↑ Opportunities
<p>ownership to the District and private sector purchasers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Designating sufficient lands for light industrial use ♦ Development of additional craft brewery/distillery businesses in appropriate locations ♦ Developing suitable locations and premises for expansion of machine shops and metal fabricating businesses ♦ Encouraging development of value-added wood products businesses on the BC Rail lands ♦ Developing new lands for heavy and light industry in the Cheekeye Fan area, once these lands have been made suitable for development ♦ Update the Zoning Bylaw and Official Plan Policies with regard to industrial lands for both light and heavy industry ♦ Streamline the development permit process for industrial developments that meet OCP and zoning requirements ♦ Partner with the Squamish Nation for certain types of industrial development (e.g. forestry related), as they own much of the freehold land and the Cheekeye Fan lands are within their territory ♦ Proposed Woodfibre LNG project which has recently been undergoing a federal environmental review ♦ Encourage more design, testing and manufacturing of outdoor recreation equipment and clothing, building on the existing nucleus of companies

↓ Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Continued lack of long term availability of the BC Rail lands for heavy industry ♦ Competition for land use from residential development ♦ Significant fluctuations in the value of the Canadian Dollar which can constrain major investments in industrial/manufacturing development ♦ Continued transportation bottlenecks including the Sea-to-Sky Highway during busy periods ♦ Continued “squeezing out” of industrial development ♦ Inability to use Cheekeye Fan lands for industrial development because of flood and landslide risks

Knowledge-Based and Technology

This analysis incorporates some input provided by participants in the Knowledge-Based and Technology sectoral focus group discussion, as well as significant input based on the research and analysis of the consulting team.

+ Strengths
<p>Knowledge/Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Presence of existing post-secondary educational institutions including Quest University and

+ Strengths
<p>Capilano University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Attractive lifestyle setting for drawing both students and faculty ♦ Excellent infrastructure and facilities at Quest University ♦ Developers of the oceanfront lands focusing on a green tech initiative for the employment lands which would have educational and research and development components ♦ Proximity to Greater Vancouver area facilitating networking with other educational institutions and R&D organizations <p>Technology and “Rec Tech”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The “Rec Tech” sector is starting to develop a critical mass, based on several existing operations, which will likely draw other new “Rec Tech” businesses ♦ The high quality lifestyle is a major asset for recruiting entrepreneurs and workers in high tech and “Rec Tech” ♦ Close proximity and easy access to the Greater Vancouver Area and its growing technology sector is important ♦ Squamish is an ideal outdoor laboratory for outdoor clothing and recreation equipment, providing opportunities to test all types of products, as well as inspiring product design ideas ♦ Entrepreneurs in “Rec Tech” are very connected to the sports they produce/design products for, so the availability of a multiplicity of high quality outdoor recreation opportunities helps attracts these entrepreneurs ♦ The proximity to Vancouver and accessibility to Asia where most “Rec Tech” products are manufactured is an asset ♦ The “hard-wired for adventure” branding works well for the “Rec Tech” sector in particular. <p>Other Knowledge-Based Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Availability of university students as potential entrepreneurs ♦ Inside Edge, a not-for-profit association of knowledge based industry workers in the Sea-to-Sky corridor, is based in Squamish ♦ Existing nucleus of high-tech businesses including computer servicing, software development, film production, consulting services and communications technology ♦ Attractive lifestyle and potential to start-up these types of businesses as home-based businesses ♦ Availability of some commercial space and sites potentially suitable for start-up or small-scale technology and knowledge-based businesses. ♦ Outdoor recreation activities have spawned film production companies that specialize in this niche

– Weaknesses
<p>Knowledge/Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Need for increased diversity of post-secondary educational offerings ♦ Reduced presence of Capilano University, at least in the short term, is a concern ♦ Limited interaction of Quest University faculty and students with the local business community because of the relatively removed campus location ♦ Need for a post-secondary educational presence within or close to the downtown area of Squamish <p>Technology and “Rec Tech”:</p>

– Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Lack of suitable commercial and office space for “Rec Tech” and high tech businesses ♦ Most opportunities available are relatively expensive and not a significant savings over other locations within the Lower Mainland ♦ No suitable locations for larger-scale high tech operations ♦ A major concern is the lack of fibre-optic cable available throughout the community – while Squamish is “hard-wired for adventure”, it is not hard-wired for business which requires fibre-optic cable being available to most major industries and businesses ♦ There is a shortage of suitable space for “Rec Tech” and high tech businesses to locate – what is required is sort of a blend of office/retail/warehouse type space, depending on the individual operation ♦ There is a need for a nucleus or focal point for “Rec Tech” and high tech businesses which are currently in scattered locations ♦ A need for enhanced networking opportunities and potentially incubator type opportunities for high tech businesses ♦ Need for more high quality affordable housing to attract qualified workers ♦ Lack of local skilled labour supply for technology sector <p>Other Knowledge-Based Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Lack of suitable space to expand to when knowledge-based businesses move beyond being home-base businesses ♦ Lack of suitable quality office space in general

↑ Opportunities
<p>Knowledge/Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Oceanfront lands development represents a significant opportunity for the addition of one or more post-secondary educational programs, as well as research and development facilities ♦ Potential to re-energize the presence of Capilano University within Squamish, particularly in relation to its tourism and outdoor recreation-oriented programming ♦ Development of new campus facilities for Capilano and other post-secondary institutions that can be attracted to Squamish ♦ Diversification of educational programming at Quest University to encompass more business and technology components, including industrial design ♦ Potential to expand education/training opportunities into the forestry/resource sector <p>Technology and “Rec Tech”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Creation of a high tech focus (e.g. cluster) on the employment lands within the oceanfront development, in support of the developer’s planned “green tech” focus ♦ Possible development of an incubator-type facility that would facilitate start-ups and early stage growth for high tech, “Rec Tech” and knowledge-based businesses ♦ Making Squamish a SMART community by extending fibre-optic cable throughout all industrial and commercial areas ♦ Development of additional high quality office space, partly spec and partly in tandem with attraction/development of new businesses ♦ Fostering appropriate partnerships between Quest University and the technology sector ♦ Enhancing the availability of local venture capital sources for small start-ups and early stage

↑ Opportunities
<p>growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Develop the Squamish tech sector based on an approach similar to that used for Boulder, Colorado <p>Other Knowledge-Based Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Encourage development and attraction of environmental protection and environmental remediation type knowledge-based businesses, building on existing local and regional expertise♦ Further developing networking opportunities for knowledge-based businesses of all types as well as providing additional business skills training opportunities.

↓ Threats
<p>Knowledge/Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Continuing increases in the high costs of post-secondary education, both in terms of the costs of providing this education and tuition fees charged to students♦ The inability of Capilano University and other potential post-secondary programs and initiatives to find suitable locations and facilities in the Squamish area <p>Technology and “Rec Tech”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Increased competition from outside the region♦ Increasing lack of affordability of housing♦ Lack of available highly educated and skilled labour♦ Inadequate provision for suitable locations for these businesses to expand and develop <p>Other Knowledge-Based Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Lack of affordability of housing♦ Lack of available skilled labour force♦ Lack of development of suitable office space for expanding knowledge-based businesses

Retail/Commercial/Services

This analysis incorporates some input provided by participants in the Retail/Commercial/Services sectoral focus group discussion, as well as significant input based on the research and analysis of the consulting team.

+ Strengths
<p>Retail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Strengthening retail sector in downtown Squamish with a significant number of new retail, restaurant and services established over the past several years♦ Enhanced appearance of the downtown core retail area, in part through the efforts of the Downtown Business Improvement Association and façade enhancement assistance program♦ A vibrant highway retail corridor with significant developments and numerous new retail

+ Strengths
<p>establishments over the past decade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Successful brand name and big box retailers in the Squamish area, reducing the need for the local and regional population to travel to Vancouver♦ Landscaping, design and signage guidelines and requirements have resulted in upgraded appearance of all major retail areas♦ Promotion of the downtown area by the BIA and the Chamber of Commerce's "buy local" promotion have strengthened awareness of Squamish's retail opportunities among local and area residents♦ Cycling and other shops specializing in outdoor and recreation clothing and equipment have developed in connection with the multiplicity of outdoor recreation and adventure activities available in the Squamish area♦ New restaurant, food service and retail businesses reflect Squamish's changing demographics (a younger, more highly educated population moving in) <p>Commercial (Office) and Other Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Recent development of new high-quality office space such as the professional building developed by Bethel Corporation♦ Additional office and commercial space opportunities being developed in the Industrial Park near the big box stores♦ Opportunities for business and personal services to locate throughout the downtown area, in the Industrial Park and in other small retail and commercial centres located within the valley♦ Significant market catchment area including local and regional residents as far as Whistler and Pemberton, as well as passing by highway traffic, depending on the type of business
– Weaknesses
<p>Retail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Lack of continuity in the appearance of Squamish's various retail zones and even within specific zones (e.g. downtown area, highway retailing zones)♦ Need for better signage directing visitors to the downtown shopping area, since it is not visible from the highway♦ Concerns regarding railway track where the road to and from downtown is totally blocked when slow moving trains pass by – sometimes for as long as 10 to 15 minutes♦ Perception by some members of the business community that rules and regulations relating to planning, zoning and development permits are unevenly applied♦ Need for a more vibrant downtown area with further enhancement of facades, streetscaping and landscaping♦ Need for improved connectivity of the downtown retail area with the nearby retail developments located closer to the highway♦ Absentee landlords asking unrealistic rents for streetfront locations in the downtown area results in some empty storefronts♦ Problem of small floor plate of retail infrastructure in the downtown area, resulting in migration to highway retail locations♦ Some notable gaps in Squamish's retail offerings including fashionable clothing and shoes, as well as high-end fashions, and a lack of high-end full-service restaurants – this results in significant out-shopping for these services

– Weaknesses

- ♦ Lack of retail brand names in Squamish, except for a few big box operations
- ♦ Fragmentation of retail shopping areas with limited critical mass in each location.
- ♦ Need for more retail businesses that cater to the outdoor recreation and adventure markets which are being attracted to Squamish
- ♦ Squamish needs to be “open for business”
- ♦ Need for an additional transportation link out of the downtown area at the south end, connecting to the highway

Commercial (Office) and Other Services:

- ♦ Very limited supply of suitable quality office space for service businesses
- ♦ Very little Class A office space
- ♦ Limited warehousing space available for distribution and wholesaling operations
- ♦ Perceived slow approval processes for new retail and commercial developments
- ♦ Costs of commercial, office and storefront locations for service businesses perceived as high for what is being offered in many cases

↑ Opportunities

Retail:

- ♦ Improved signage and gateway into the downtown shopping area
- ♦ Linking the downtown retail area with that closer to the highway via improved streetscaping, sidewalks, lighting and other elements to enhance continuity and connectivity
- ♦ Development and promotion of additional festivals and events that will help to draw visitors to the downtown and other retail areas
- ♦ Strategic recruitment of specific types of retail operations where there are gaps such as in fashionable clothing and shoes, high-end fashion, and high-end restaurants
- ♦ Completion and implementation of the new Business Licence Bylaw
- ♦ Planning and development for a future link between the highway and the downtown area, to be developed in connection with the oceanfront lands
- ♦ Development of suitable commercial/office space within the employment lands component of the oceanfront lands development
- ♦ Development of tourist-oriented retailing in proximity to the waterfront within the oceanfront lands development

Commercial (Office) and Other Services:

- ♦ Development of new office buildings and commercial centres suited to service businesses
- ♦ Repurposing some residential space above retail establishments in downtown area for small-scale office purposes
- ♦ Development of new retail space with two or more floors of commercial/office space above, where possible.

↓ Threats
<p>Retail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ongoing competition from large-scale retail opportunities outside the community, such as in the Vancouver area ♦ An increase in absentee landlords as a result of foreign purchases of retail/commercial buildings <p>Commercial (Office) and Other Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Insufficient development of new office and commercial space ♦ Insufficient employment lands zoned for office and commercial use

Tourism/Recreation and Arts/Culture

This analysis incorporates some input provided by participants in the Tourism/Recreation and Arts/Culture sectoral focus group discussion, as well as significant input based on the research and analysis of the consulting team.

+ Strengths
<p>Tourism/Recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Extremely attractive natural environment combining mountains, ocean and river valleys ♦ Iconic natural features including Howe Sound and the Squamish Chief ♦ Iconic built tourism attractions including the new Sea-to-Sky Gondola ♦ Outstanding trails infrastructure including hiking and biking trails, multi-use trails, backcountry logging roads, etc. ♦ Well-maintained cycling and walking trails within the valley ♦ Marinas and yacht club operations catering to recreational boaters ♦ Squamish Adventure Centre as a nucleus for visitor information services and tourism/recreation-oriented organizations and businesses ♦ Eagle-viewing in Brackendale has become provincially and nationally significant ♦ Significant infrastructure of quality roofed accommodations and campgrounds ♦ Multiplicity of outdoor recreation activities available including: hiking, cycling, mountain biking, windsurfing, river rafting, kayaking and canoeing, recreational boating, mountain climbing, rock climbing, backpacking, ATViing, etc. ♦ The Squamish Estuary and Howe Sound with its outstanding windsurfing suitability ♦ Established destination marketing organization, Tourism Squamish, which promotes the area's tourism industry ♦ High quality provincial park facilities in immediate area including Shannon Falls and Alice Lake Provincial Parks, with excellent outdoor recreation and campground facilities ♦ Sea-to-Sky Highway corridor which is transited by millions each year, in part because of the significant draw of Whistler to the north ♦ Important and provincially significant heritage attractions including the West Coast Railway Museum and Heritage Park <p>Arts/Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Numerous festivals and events held throughout the year including Squamish Days in the summer ♦ Successful major festival and events including the Squamish Valley Music Festival, which draws

+ Strengths
<p>up to 30,000 attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A vibrant arts and cultural community which embraces all of the fine arts including visual arts, music, live theatre, and film production ♦ The area's First Nations cultural heritage is a strength that should be built upon

– Weaknesses
<p>Tourism/Recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Replacement of highway entrance signage has been a slow process ♦ Need for better signage directing visitors to the downtown area ♦ Need to improve streetscaping and pedestrian-friendly access to downtown area, including linkage to nearby highway-oriented retailing ♦ Lack of reference to First Nations' culture ♦ Need for more interpretive signage as well as directional signage to tourism attractions and features (e.g. Railway Museum) ♦ Constraints associated with the blue highway signs designed to direct visitors towards major attractions ♦ Enhanced walking/cycling trail systems throughout the valley needed, similar to concept in Whistler ♦ Financial and identity problems associated with the Adventure Centre – should it be more strongly positioned as a visitor information centre and hub of Tourism/outdoor recreation companies? ♦ Lack of awareness among local residents of benefits derived from the successful tourism/recreation and arts/culture sectors ♦ Some parks and public areas in need of a significant clean-up ♦ Limited packaging and partnerships among different types of tourism operators and with the arts and culture sector ♦ Lack of easy public access to the waterfront ♦ Lack of signage and infrastructure for the windsurfing and kite-surfing site on the Estuary ♦ Lack of fueling facilities for recreational boaters ♦ Need for a marine strategy that accommodates both recreational boating and shipping ♦ Limited capability for access by small cruise ships ♦ Need for some type of tourism shuttle service to major attractions and features which are spread out throughout the valley ♦ Lack of understanding of the full economic value of the tourism/recreation sector ♦ Concerns about parking availability during peak periods in downtown Squamish ♦ Need for clean-up of some provincial recreation sites (e.g. Brohm Lake and Cat Lake) – lack of provincial resources to maintain these facilities ♦ Need for enhanced public transit for tourism/recreation sector workers ♦ Inability to commercialize recreational amenities to offset maintenance and development costs <p>Arts/Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Need for more live theatre venues ♦ Concerns regarding long term tenure for the Squamish Loggers' sports operation is in question ♦ Need for enhanced promotion of the local arts and culture sector to local and regional residents as well as visitors

↑ Opportunities
<p>Tourism/Recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Development of enhanced welcome and gateway signage to the District of Squamish, as well as to the downtown area ♦ Implementation of enhanced streetscaping, sidewalks and linkages between the highway turn-off and downtown Squamish ♦ Strengthening the tourism mandate of the Squamish Adventure Centre as a focus for visitor information services and tourism/recreation organizations and businesses ♦ Development of First Nations' cultural heritage interpretative features in partnership with the Squamish Nation ♦ Implementation of a tourist shuttle service that would link major attractions and features scattered throughout the valley including downtown area, the Estuary, West Coast Railway Heritage Park, and Sea-to-Sky Gondola ♦ Improved directional signage system to major tourism attractions and features ♦ Development of additional accommodation facilities, particularly those geared to outdoor recreation and adventure including more B&Bs and small inns or lodges ♦ Development of the Sea-to-Sky learning route concept ♦ Extension of the Laughing Turtle Trail concept and other related green walks, nature walks, and self-guided (and guided) heritage walking tours downtown and elsewhere ♦ Enhancement of and extensions to the valley trail system for walking and cycling ♦ Incremental development of mountain biking trail infrastructure and possible development of a business model to help finance infrastructure upgrades and ongoing maintenance costs ♦ Development of waterfront parks and recreation component of the oceanfront lands and re-aligned road linkage to the downtown area ♦ The development of suitable parking, park area and infrastructure for the windsurfing area on the Estuary (similar to Hood River, Oregon) ♦ Development of a tourism ambassador program ♦ Design and development of better infrastructure and parking for the eagle-viewing area in Brackendale ♦ Possible development of the proposed Garibaldi at Squamish Mountain Resort, which has been undertaking consultations and seeking various approvals ♦ Possible development of the proposed Great Wolf Lodge Water Park Resort, for which Squamish has recently been identified as a potential site <p>Arts/Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Develop a plan for retaining the Brackendale Art Gallery as a local cultural and commercial facility ♦ Development of additional live theatre venues ♦ Developing more festivals and events for the shoulder and inter seasons

↓ Threats
<p>Tourism/Recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Fluctuations in value of Canadian Dollar which affect tourism visitation ♦ Inability to effectively implement enhanced tourism signage and streetscaping

↓ Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Conflicts between tourism/recreation and resource extraction activities where these overlap <p>Arts/Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Limitations in public funding support of arts and cultural activities (all levels of government)♦ Potential loss of locally significant cultural facilities such as the Brackendale Art Gallery

