



# SQUAMISH

HARDWIRED *for* ADVENTURE



## Squamish BUSINESS COUNTS PROGRAM

### Your Business Counts in Squamish

Through the business retention and expansion (BR&E) program, Squamish works strategically with local business operators to assess risk areas, analyze barriers to business growth and apply solutions. A healthy local economy starts with the businesses in place today. Their success means local jobs, expanded services and a reliable tax base to support the community, plus a thriving economy that attracts new investment in the future.



## Supporting Squamish Businesses

Too often, economic development initiatives focus solely on attracting new investment as the top priority, when in reality, proven success lies with supporting existing businesses. Research shows that as much as 80% of job growth is generated by existing companies rather than new industry. So if existing businesses flounder or fail, the community loses jobs, tax revenue, services and other important community benefits. The Business Counts Program offers viable options to address issues and mitigate business risks by connecting businesses to resources such as specialized assistance, expertise and other services.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Business Counts Program identifies needs areas and develops tangible tactics to deliver viable solutions. In short – actions will speak louder than words. Working together with partners and local businesses, the program:

- Helps businesses at risk of leaving/downsizing;
- Identifies opportunities to help businesses expand in the community;
- Identifies problems that could cause employers to leave a community;
- Builds relationships with individual business owners.

*A typical business with 10 employees with an average wage of \$14/hour generates about \$292,000 in payroll, \$15,000 in local taxes and \$2,000 in community donations. That's more than \$300,000 directly into the local economy each year from one business and Squamish has about 1,500 active businesses.*

## Building Connections. Tackling Challenges.

The proven success of BR&E programs in communities like Vernon, Chilliwack, and Powell River demonstrates the potential for Squamish. The Business Counts Program tackles the tough challenges experienced by local Squamish business owners by connecting them to resources and services, and aligning internal policies and procedures to meet needs.

Connect with the Business Counts Program to:

- Link to services and resources;
- Expand networks;
- Align strategies and policies;
- Address issues.

*"Business Retention and Expansion works to improve the competitive strength of local businesses, which is crucial to the long term economic stability of communities. Businesses that stay competitive are more likely to remain and expand in their community, pay taxes, create employment and help to expand the services available to local residents." - Dale Wheeldon, Chief Executive Officer, Economic Development Association of BC/Linx BC*

## Success through Partnership.

Partnership is the core principle for the Business Counts Program. Squamish works with the Economic Development Association of BC to secure specialized resources and tools that will assist in the delivery of this effective BR&E program.

As the program moves forward, the economic development staff and key partners will continue meeting with local businesses to build relationships and coordinate support for the BR&E program and effective business service delivery.

Program partners include the Squamish Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, the Downtown Squamish Business Improvement Association, Training Innovations, Tourism Squamish and Inside Edge. Together, these partnerships are building a collaborative approach to business service delivery.

*"We can choose to partner and work together to develop successful comprehensive strategies and opportunities for our local economy here in Squamish or we can go off in a dozen separate and conflicting directions and then wonder why nothing ever seems to happen. We're on board with working together – it just makes good business sense." - Jeff Dawson, General Manager, Community Futures*

## Squamish Shows How Business Counts

With dedicated Economic Development Staff, collaborative partnerships and a proven BR&E program, Squamish has the resources to support business. Many support services can be enlisted to help local business including:

- Technical assistance
- Business facilitation
- Site relocation assistance
- Export and trade development
- Funding assistance
- Attracting or developing skilled workers
- Appreciation initiatives
- Business and community roundtables
- Municipal tools for shaping the business climate (e.g. zoning, revitalization programs, infrastructure placement, one-stop permitting, property taxes, business costs)

## Benefits and Business Outcomes

Tackling tough issues and developing viable solutions through the Business Counts Program creates an effective partnership in the community with proven outcomes. The program:

- Focuses limited resources on the greatest opportunities ;
- Builds a comprehensive approach to working with existing business;
- Collects information beneficial to business development, business retention, and business-attraction programs;
- Enhances the local business environment making it more attractive to potential investors;
- Highlights success stories;
- Diversifies the economy.

*Up to 80% of a community's job growth is generated by existing companies.*



# From Planning to Action

As part of the BC Business Counts Program and the District of Squamish's ongoing Business Retention & Expansion Program, the Economic Development Department will launch the third phase of the initiative focusing on the businesses that fall within the Squamish Business Park.

In fall of 2016, staff from the Economic Development Department will meet one-on-one with with approximately 35 business owners in the business park to discuss the health of their business and what can be done to help their business thrive in Squamish.

The goal of this initiative is to build stronger relationships with local business owners and provide the District with a better understanding of issues relating to retaining and expanding business. This initiative also supports Council's Strategic Plan that aims to "Grow business opportunities and support hubs for entrepreneurship".

Information collected during the interviews will help inform the Economic Development Department of new opportunities for business growth, and will provide valuable insight for the department moving forward.



To learn more about this program and other related opportunities, please contact the Economic Development Department at:

District of Squamish  
economicdevelopment@squamish.ca | www.squamish.ca  
604.815.4963

## Program Partners

