DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH

EMERGING SECTOR ROADMAP AND ACTION PLAN

SQUAMISH

HARDWIRED *for* ADVENTURE

Table of Contents

Prepared with support from Research on Investment.

BACKGROUND

With its location between the world-famous City of Vancouver and the Resort Municipality of Whistler, the District of Squamish (the District) has experienced a steady growth in new firms, investment, and entrepreneurship over recent years. With this growth, the District has recognized the need for a proactive approach to its business ecosystem development, to ensure that limited resources such as local employment space and local talent direct towards the types of firms and investment that can best align with Council's Strategic Goals, in their ability to create a diversity of high-value jobs for local residents.

In 2017, the District's Economic Development team began the process of developing a data-driven sector development plan to support Strategic goals for the community. In its initial phase, federal funding supported foundational research work, to inform Sector Recommendations. This research, combined with insights from local business stakeholders, created a vision for a proposed diversified business ecosystem:
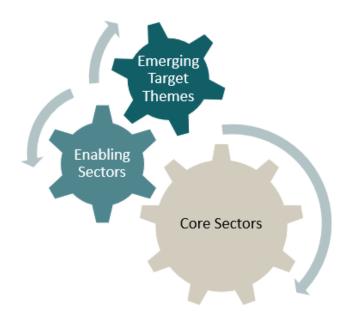
Local Ecosystem Vision

The goal of this work is to facilitate a local business ecosystem that supports high-value local employment and employment reflective of the local workforce, where the composition of the local economy is diverse and adaptable to changing conditions, and where local firms are supported by innovation, research and development capacity, supportive infrastructure and a positive business climate.

Squamish will be a business destination known for its creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

EMERGING TARGET THEMES
| GREEN ECONOMY
| OUTDOOR RECREATION

CORE & ENABLING SECTORS

| EDUCATION
| HIGH TECHNOLOGY
| CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
| TRANSPORTATION
| TOURISM
| FORESTRY
| WOOD PRODUCTS

Emerging Target Themes

Enabling Sectors

Core Sectors

Core and Enabling Sectors and Emerging Target Themes

In this Ecosystem, Core and Enabling Sectors serve as a foundation for local economic growth. These sectors consist of local firms that significantly contribute to local employment and/or enable other sectors of the economy to operate. As Squamish's current economic engine, these sectors are operating as small and medium-sized businesses, defined by Statistics Canada as companies with less than 99 employees (small) and companies with 100-499 employees (medium). While the Plan addresses primarily the development of the Emerging Target Themes, the Pan among other strategic work of the District will support Core and Enabling Sectors. Sector Impact Studies, the Marine Action Strategy (MASt), the Forestry Memorandum of Understanding, and the 2020 Zoning Bylaw Update are examples of other plans and strategic work being undertaken to support Core and Enabling Sectors. Companies comprising the Emerging Target Themes, the Green Economy and Outdoor Recreation, are a grouping of complementary sectors in their nascent stage that are well positioned to grow and provide valuable employment opportunities and socio-economic benefit for the community, B.C. and the rest of Canada.

Clusters and the Emerging Target Themes

This report uses the term "clusters" frequently to describe concentrations of competing and collaborating firms that produce innovation and other synergies. Clusters often consist of several different sub-sectors, and firms may serve different parts of a supply chain. They are a group of interconnected businesses, suppliers, innovative entrepreneurs, and associated institutions that have created a critical mass of resources and competencies to drive competitive advantage and create economic value for a community/region.

The research and consultation to date identified the two aforementioned thematic areas, or rather potential groups of clusters, to target for future growth. These clusters also align with Squamish2040 Official Community Plan values and priority areas and goals outlined in the 2019 to 2022 Council Strategic Plan.

Building a Resilient Ecosystem

The existing economic climate resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic further highlights the need for ensuring that Squamish's sector ecosystem is diversified and resilient. Existing Core and Enabling Sectors means that Squamish has a more diversified local economy than that of other similar-sized communities. While local businesses are experiencing significant business impacts from this pandemic, it is likely that Squamish's diversified economy has helped to offset short-term job losses. This plan seeks to build upon the District's diversified ecosystem through a combination of nurturing existing Core and Enabling Sectors, while expanding existing and attracting new businesses and investment in the Emerging Target Theme areas.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to develop a strategic roadmap and action plan that provides the District and its stakeholders with tactics, timelines and ideas for emerging sector development. The in-depth industry profiles completed as part of this project provided an overview of key trends influencing the Green Economy and Outdoor Recreation target industries -- what drives their growth and which opportunities Squamish positioned-well to capitalize on.

The goal of the Plan is to align with and action Squamish2040 Official Community Plan (OCP) objectives. In particular, the Plan focusses on addressing the following objectives:

- (24.1 a) to understand and address labour needs and gaps within the community, as well as skills expertise and talent of our citizenry;
- (24.1 b) increase local employment opportunities and job participation rates;
- (24.3 a) to support diversified and sustainable economic growth and productivity; and
- (24.3 b) to enhance employment infrastructure to meet local business needs.

The Plan also supports employment land use objectives as specified in section 13 and 14 of the OCP. In addition, Plan actions seek to create a focused and *industry-led* vision that aligns with key Squamish assets and leverages the Squamish brand in order to attract new businesses and investments to Squamish. There is also an opportunity for local Green Economy businesses to play an important role in the implementation of the District's Community Climate Action Plan. For example, local firms could respond to procurement opportunities that arise as the District works towards the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Key to any sector growth strategy is support from the community or region for new firms, jobs, and infrastructure needs. They are also directly supporting several Council Strategic Plan goals, as highlighted under the Strategy Summary.

This report is a starting point to build an understanding of the sectors that can provide the most significant impact on the future attractiveness and business growth in Squamish. It is part of a collaborative framework in development with local stakeholders and as a complement to the other initiatives and projects currently underway in the District. It will also provide not just the District, but also its business, education and non-profit stakeholders with an overview of where their activities fit into the strategic focus areas and the wider community development and what actions they can take to contribute to success of the target sectors and business growth. Over time, with continued engagement, each of the actions will evolve into more sector-specific initiatives and results, although the interviews and workshops have pointed to a clear overlap between the concerns and needs of all consulted subsectors.

It is worth addressing the sphere of influence that the District of Squamish has within this Roadmap. The intent is that District of Squamish Economic Development staff will facilitate the formation of cluster working groups, provide information and resources from all levels of

government, and work to address clusters' needs where possible within the District's bylaws, processes and policy. To maximize the effectiveness of working group sessions, District staff plan to seek support from an external facilitator. The businesses and entrepreneurs, who know their industries best, will drive other activities and collaboration within the clusters.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The foundation for this Sector Roadmap and Action Plan was set in 2018 with the Data Analysis for Sector Recommendations report. It contextualized Squamish local industry and workforce assets, as they pertain to provincial, national and international growth industries, to identify sectors with the most promising momentum on which to focus resources and define future strategies. This project expanded on the preliminary work in several ways. The project's approach combined data analytics with face-to-face stakeholder input, as well as an awareness of key external trends affecting Squamish's economy, and a close familiarity with global best practices. A reliance on data only would miss valuable insights gleaned from stakeholders "on the frontlines" of business and economic development. Conversely, basing the analysis wholly or mostly on stakeholder impressions runs the risk of being too anecdotal or being skewed towards participants' individual industries or functional areas. Finally, an in-depth understanding of how broader national and global economic and business trends play out at the local level is essential for a community's ability to facilitate the growth of its existing economic base, attract external companies to invest locally, and foster the creation of new businesses in emerging industries and industry segments.

Industry profiles for each of the two major themes, Green Economy and Outdoor Recreation provided the baseline for strategy development. By reviewing not just Squamish and regional assets, but aligning them with key growth sectors and trends, they provide the market intelligence and rationale for proactively nurturing each of the subsectors and the products and technologies that are driving them. The subsectors (energy/efficiency technologies, green buildings, agri-food, outdoor recreation apparel and tech, and adventure-based media and film) each have their own story, challenges, and needs. However, as interviews and subsequent workshops uncovered, at the most foundational level, there is significant overlap.

Once the stage was set with the industry profiles, in-depth interviews took place in October and November 2019 with local and wider regional stakeholders within the target industries. The interviews focused on confirming and refining key value propositions in niche industries, and uncovering potential strategies to grow the subsectors that comprise the two theme areas. Complementing the interviews, on November 13-14th, 2019, the District convened a set of Strategy Action Plan workshops open to any interested stakeholders, whether government, non-profit, community or industry, to collaborate on actionable next steps for the community that would support the growth of these clusters. Over 70 people participated in the workshops. The results of the fact-finding tasks, the interviews and the workshops resulted in the strategies and action steps outlined in this document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the exceptional growth of Squamish in recent years, combined with limited resources, capacity building is one of the most important fundamentals for cluster growth and business attraction. The collaborative nature of many of the strategies proposed is a first step in making sure all stakeholder input is part of the process going forward – to validate and participate in any new actions and initiatives affecting their sectors. At the same time, assumed is that the District will continue to provide detailed fact-based products and tools, as a steward of local data intelligence, that makes sure all current information is used to the fullest potential and industry demands for additional data and intelligence are met. In the future, this includes support products such as a welcome kit for new businesses to outline key contacts, regional planning and regulatory policies, available rental/sites, contacts to other cluster members, and an overview of current business activities in each sector.

To make sure this plan stays relevant, the strategies and action steps document requires regular revisions in alignment with the District's strategic planning cycles based on the feedback of identified strategy leads and in consultation with the recommended cluster organizations. This is in line with Council's objective of accountability to "account for and disclose information on its activities and use of resources in a transparent manner." This review should include an update on timelines and deliverables, revisions to timelines based on results, new stakeholders, and changes to action steps. At a minimum, there should also be clear communication from the District twice a year about cluster-related activities, whether directly or indirectly linked to the strategies laid out in this document. The first step is to develop what this communication strategy will look like, whether in the form of email, online forums, etc.

Given the community's capacity-building need, Priority 1 recommendations focus on shorter-term fundamentals, rather than complex long-term strategies. These recommendations are complemented by investment-specific foundation building strategies in Priority 2. More significant long-term visions are presented in the second section and require more investigation and coordination with other initiatives and policies to form concrete action steps. The ongoing Economic Impact Studies, the District's Community Climate Action Plan, the Marine Action Strategy, and the Agricultural Plan, might influence the prioritization of these longer-term strategies with respect to the sectors, while the update of the business zoning bylaws, the update on rental regulations, affordable housing strategies and the Employment Space Modelling project will impact the actions with respect to workforce and infrastructure development. A first step would be to inventory and update the community on these ongoing activities, as well as the purpose and role of any existing or planned organizations, such as the Squamish Clean Technology Association, to be shared with all stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts.

The clusters will form networking groups, and the intent is that these networking groups will serve as a platform for the groups to pursue additional initiatives, or further formalization. For example, some groups may choose to form their own industry associations. A good example is the Squamish Craft Beverage Association, which consists of local beverage manufacturers from various different sub-sectors. The association was formed after the companies initially created an informal networking group.

STRATEGY SUMMARY

The following pages highlight key strategic recommendations, and break them down into concrete action steps, expected deliverables, relevant stakeholders, and suggested timelines. This is followed by an overview of foundational business and investment attraction strategies that set the stage for a more comprehensive outreach strategy building on current activities.

Priority Area 1 - Foundational Cluster Development Strategies	
Documenting Clusters	1. Document initial ecosystem maps and inventories of clusters and create tool to promote collaborative updating
Cluster Organization	2. Identify cluster stakeholders to support Action Plan implementation
Cluster Visioning	3. Support development of cluster vision statements and communicate that vision to key community stakeholders
Cluster Needs Assessment and Actions	4. Engage with cluster stakeholders to further specify priorities and needs (shared resources, marine, land, and built space, infrastructure, workforce, training, research and development, innovation, policy/regulatory) and plan action items
Sharing and Cluster Networking	5. Convene initial cluster kick-off events
Priority Area 2 – Foundational Business and Investment Attraction Strategies	
Attraction Vision	1. Define strategy for business and investment attraction
Resource and Capacity Build	2. Build team (internal/external), and develop team's capacity to pursue business and investment attraction
Investment Readying	3. Enhance investment readiness with data, communication, partnerships
Develop Messaging	4. Develop and implement a targeted communication strategy, including marketing collateral
Test and Target	5. Market test subsectors
Evaluate and Share	6. Evaluate and share impacts

While the selection of promising clusters earlier in this report is based on in-depth economic analysis, including evidence of emergent cluster networking, the actual formation of cluster organizations is rooted in community social dynamics, leadership acts by key 'anchor' individuals and political considerations. Initially, pursuing Priority Area 1 is recommended while beginning to build full capacity for business development and attraction activities. The actual scope and mission of specific cluster organizations will emerge out of this process. The selection of target clusters so far has been consultant-driven via desktop analysis, and confirmed by select interviews. In the long term, the practical formation of real-world cluster groups will evolve as an outcome of cluster participant dialogue and the initiatives of a few dedicated business leaders.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed in collaboration with the District's Economic Leadership Team as part of the Foundational strategies. The District will consider its ability to directly influence as part of its impact measurement.

STRATEGY 1: DOCUMENTING CLUSTERS

The need for improved networking among cluster businesses, as well as more comprehensive intelligence of Squamish sector activities was raised at all workshops. Initially, the District Economic Development team will lead the cluster ecosystem mapping and inventory process, with input garnered from key business stakeholders and refinement by the Economic Leadership Team. Solutions should be sought that promote open-source, community-driven development of mapping and inventories to continue refinement beyond their initial state, such as using the District's GIS and Open Data tools. This could be initiated through a student project, which would serve to both conserve District resources as well as further engage local educational institutions in the cluster building process.

Strategy	Action Steps	Early Deliverables	Lead / Partnership	Goal Deadline
1. **Document an initial ecosystem map and inventory clusters and create tools to promote collaborative updating**	**1.1** Create tools and process for cluster ecosystem mapping and inventories to promote participation from business stakeholders and encourage evergreen updating. Consider leveraging existing District open source tools such as the District's Open Data portal.	A tool for District staff and cluster members to collaborate on creating and updating cluster maps/inventories.	Economic Development and Cluster Stakeholders	End of 2020
	1.2 Inventory cluster members and document cluster ecosystems. For inventorying incorporate: • Profile, size and composition • Competencies and areas of expertise • Industry connections For cluster ecosystem mapping incorporate: • Supporting resources/inputs • Gaps and opportunities	Collaborative, evergreen and shareable resources.	Economic Development and Cluster Stakeholders	End of 2020

STRATEGY 2: CLUSTER ORGANIZATION

All industry clusters identified by this project are in the early stages of growth and development. Workshops confirmed few formal linkages between cluster players and only a few nascent clusters/industry associations. Participants are looking for more partnerships among local actors. Positioning Squamish for growth calls for the formation of cluster-based stakeholder groups to provide an informal networking community to enable the District and its partners to engage with the clusters on a regular basis. Individual participating businesses will have a voice, a way to explore mutually beneficial initiatives and opportunities, and a channel to communicate their key needs to District staff. The intention is for stakeholders to set their own vision, mandate, and key performance indicators.

Examples today of local networking for the common cluster good include the way in which stakeholders recently come together to craft the soon-to-be-released Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan (SVAP), with recommendations such as the "New Squamish Farmers Group" and the already active Squamish Beverage Association. Initially, the District's Economic Development team can play a pivotal role in facilitating these groups, by creating informal networking opportunities and events that engage the clusters. Once the groups are in place informally, the networking groups can choose to drive further activities and initiatives, such as formalizing as an association to pursue a specific mandate.

Strategy	Action Steps	Early Deliverables	Lead / Partnership	Goal Deadline
2. Engage cluster stakeholders	2.1 Convene roundtables with cluster stakeholders and supporting groups to inform District work and support cluster networking. This process should be business-led. While convened by the District, Stakeholders should actively engaging in encouraging cluster participants, informing and taking action.	Complete one virtual session per cluster	District Economic Development	Initial outreach to all target clusters by the end of summer 2020

STRATEGY 3: CLUSTER VISIONING

At all five workshops, participants believed the growth of their cluster was somewhat stunted because of a lack of near and long-term vision for their industry in Squamish. As a result, several future needs of the industry, such as employment space, training/education, transportation, and high-speed broadband are not being articulated well enough to reach decision-makers in the community.

To address this, the clusters can create vision statements that serve as a first step and a foundation toward creating a long-term, shared vision. Industry vision statements can be effective if they are prepared in everyday language, are visually appealing, frequently communicated and used as launching pads for a variety of industry initiatives over time. An industry vision statement is successful to the extent it is made known first to all members of the industry group (internal buy-in) then to the wider community.

Strategy	Action Steps	Early Deliverables	Lead / Partnership	Goal Deadline
3. Craft vision statements for each cluster and communicate that vision to key community stakeholders	**3.1** Convene stakeholders from each target cluster to participate in a visioning process with the intent of drafting Industry Vision Statements to share with cluster members for input/refinement.	Draft Vision Statement with the purpose of sharing how the particular cluster's future aligns with the broader community vision articulated in the OCP and related District documents	District Economic Development staff, supported by external facilitator	Final Vision Statement end of 2020
	3.2 Present cluster vision statements to the District Council and other interested/relevant civic organizations.	Easy to read, visually appealing, concise vision statements.	Cluster working groups	No later than early 2021

STRATEGY 4: CLUSTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT and ACTION

This strategy will involve engaging with cluster stakeholders to understand their specific priorities and needs. The needs assessment will identify clusters' needs in several areas, including shared resources, marine, land, and built space, infrastructure, workforce, training, research and development, innovation, policy/regulatory improvements, and any accelerator/incubator programs.

In terms of workforce, although there is an influx of skilled workers to the Squamish region, there are still specific training/workforce gaps that could hinder cluster growth and a sense that not all local skills are used effectively. Internships and short-term work assignments got particular mention at the workshops. Partnerships with stakeholders to facilitate skills development and more market-based education and training are already a key objective of the District and can be further strengthened around the clusters. The workforce/training needs of clusters vary considerably, and efforts to support clusters must be tailored to each.

Space needs are always present in young growing clusters. The workshops specifically identified space issues, which were discussed in productive breakout sessions with District Planners. Recognizing a demand for more commercial and light industrial space in Squamish, an Employment Lands Model was recently developed, which confirmed there is a current vacancy of approximately 0% for both office and light industrial built space at present. There is also considerable displacement between types of space, where businesses are occupying a type of space that may be better suited for a different type of business. (For example, the Model revealed many situations in which businesses operating as offices were occupying spaces that would be best suited to a retail business use, with a storefront and high-traffic ground-level location.) As a next step in the Employment Lands Model, work is underway to engage with local businesses to understand their space requirements in detail. The insights gained will inform the 2020 Zoning Bylaw Update. Workshops conducted in November 2019 uncovered some initial insights:

➢ There is a desire for shared space from some businesses, with access to shared amenities or services such as logistics, lockable space, and communal workshop space with specialty equipment for rent.
➢ The most pressing needs are for warehousing, storage and better logistics for small growing enterprises. Some interest in product testing/prototype development space was indicated, suggesting an in-depth market analysis may be warranted. Such innovation space can take various forms, requiring considerable planning to be successful. Providers can range from for-profit real estate enterprises to local non-profits to facilities affiliated with educational/training institutes. This market research could be considered for the 2021 Economic Development work plan.

➢ In addition to space and workforce, there are likely to be supply chain gaps that each sector views as important to their growth and expansion. Moreover, finally, there may be a need for additional programming, such as business accelerators/incubators. These programs typically provide physical or virtual centers to stimulate business growth for a particular stage of business or industry, usually with a combination of education, mentorship, and sometimes flexible, shared employment space centers.

Strategy	Action Steps	Early Deliverables	Lead / Partnership	Goal Deadline
4. Engage with clusters to inform and action needs	**4.1** Engage local cluster stakeholders during the 2020 Zoning Bylaw Update process - To identify space needs, work with Community Planning team to engage with local industry, developers, and realtors as a next step for the Zoning Bylaw Update - Create a report outlining cluster needs to inform Community Planning and real estate developers	Sector-specific considerations to inform Bylaw updates	Community Planning, Economic Development and Cluster Stakeholders	Mid -2020
	4.2 Interested clusters convene to prioritize particular talent/workforce access and development considerations, and then decide next steps, such as collaborating with education/training providers.	Summary of talent/workforce challenges facing each cluster	Each cluster working group with the help of an organization with workforce interests	Mid of 2021
	4.3 Use the cluster mapping exercise to identify supply chain gaps and work with clusters to develop tactics to target suitable companies.	Summary of supply chain gaps with accompanying tactics for prospecting	Each cluster Association with Economic Development	End of 2021
	4.4 Identify supporting infrastructure gaps/opportunities with cluster stakeholders with consideration of supporting plans including MASt, SVAP, and CCAP.	Summary of infrastructure gaps/opportunities by cluster	Economic Development, Partners, Cluster Stakeholders	Early-2021
	4.5 Select the single most pressing workforce challenge facing interested clusters and prospective partners to work with.	TBD	Economic Development, Partners, Cluster Stakeholders	End of 2021

STRATEGY 5: SHARING and CLUSTER NETWORKING

An early way to test the viability of and enthusiasm for the formalization of clusters is to convene a kick-off cluster event. One or more such events are recommended initially, to which all target clusters are invited. The event(s) would take a form most preferable to the founding businesses. Economic Development would canvas cluster businesses to choose a topic for these events. These events would also serve as a kick-off to ongoing networking among cluster businesses. They should also aim to bring regional and national industry organizations to the table.

Cluster networking is a long-term engagement strategy. It can take various forms of which several workshop participants described as "creating a cluster ecosystem". It is about forums/meetings/scheduled networking events. It can be industry-specific or broad in reach. It is also about elevating cluster recognition in the local Chamber, before civic organizations and government. Most importantly, it is about recognizing 'power members' who can become spokespersons for clusters and serve as mentors to other cluster members.

In several discussions, the value of bringing more promotional events to the community, e.g. trade shows, tourism events, was raised. Once a cluster organization is formed, and an internal event is successful as part of this strategy, each cluster will be in better shape to move forward with external events.

Strategy	Action Steps		Early Deliverables	Lead / Partnership	Goal Deadline
7. **Convene initial cluster kick-off events**	7.1	Plan for and deliver event(s) to bring cluster members together and provide relevant content informed by Cluster Stakeholders.	Kickoff event(s)	District Economic Development, Partners, Stakeholders	End of 2020
	7.2	Annualize program to include at least one ongoing networking event/activity per year. This may be for specific clusters or a combined event for all clusters.	Annual programs added to the Economic Development calendar at the beginning of each year	District Economic Development, Partners, Stakeholders	Annual

FOUNDATIONAL BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

Once several of the foundational cluster action steps are developed and other ongoing initiatives are completed, the District can review where it can best focus its business and investment attraction efforts to build capacity for these sectors. The following are key best practices in the first two years of developing investment attraction capabilities for a smaller community from the District's perspective, beyond continued stakeholder engagement. Once a vision and stakeholder consensus around business and investment attraction has been achieved, the next major hurdles are resource allocation and organizational restructuring.

Resource Allocation: Successful investment attraction requires a sustained effort over time. This means that there must be a sustained commitment of resources; team members, who are able to prospect for opportunities, engage with businesses and investors, nurture leads and ultimately manage the projects that result. The following best practice investment strategies assume 1-1.5 full-time resources devoted to the advancement of the Investment Attraction Strategy. Outside consultants can perform investment Attraction functions, but it is important to recognize that the ultimate responsibility for managing a relationship with a new business or investor will rest with the jurisdiction. Sufficient resources must be in place to ensure that, even in the absence of an active marketing campaign, inquiries, leads, opportunities, and projects can be managed effectively.

Organizational Structure: The organizational structure will affect the ability of the District to carry out the various tactics identified in support of enhanced investment readiness and investment attraction. The District needs to review what/if changes in the organizational structure, functional responsibilities, and staff responsibilities will have to be made, and what the implications are for current partnerships and stakeholder relationships. Aside from ensuring that adequate resources are in place to carry out the action plan, the organization should also reflect the target industry sectors. This industry alignment should be reflected in the functions and responsibilities that are assigned to individuals or departments within the organization. For smaller communities with emerging clusters, cross-functional responsibilities are often most successful instead of separating out business attraction efforts. Increasingly, communities blend business attraction with export/trade assistance, entrepreneurship assistance and workforce development to focus on growing all aspects of industries and communities.

The weighting or importance attributed to business and investment attraction in the context of District priorities will inform the tactics and action steps. Timelines can be extended or advanced depending upon priority-setting and available resources. The plan is intended to

identify the foundational building blocks of an effective and sustainable sector-specific investment attraction strategy. The steps are presented sequentially and define the successive actions recommended to achieve success. There needs to be a clear consensus on the vision for investment attraction internally within the District and other community stakeholders, for example before stakeholders can be engaged in that vision. Embedded in the plan are opportunities to re-evaluate and re-adjust the tactics based on successes and challenges encountered during the initial strategy years.

Priority Area 2 - Foundational Investment Strategies	
1. Strategy Development	- To what extent will the District focus on business and investment attraction? - What proportion of the organization's resources will be allocated to business and investment attraction? - How will opportunities be pursued, tracked, and nurtured? - What is the budget for sector specific action items? - What does success look like for Year 1? - Ensure that all stakeholders / partners are aligned on the goals, objectives and priority actions for the strategy. - Ensure also, that they are willing to commit the necessary resources to execute the strategy. - Align the District's strategy with provincial and national goals - Create a policy statement summarizing the relationship between the mandate of the agency, the investment-related goals and the national development goals.
2. Resource and Capacity Build	- Build the team, and continue to develop the team's capacity to pursue business and investment attraction - Build the team: - Allocate internal resources and engage external partners. - Create and define the roles and responsibilities for an investment Attraction "Task Team". - Define the rules of engagement. - How will referrals be managed? - How will information be shared? - What does success for the Task Team look like? - Options for developing team capacity include: - Capacity development in-house through training and skill development;

	▪ Engagement of Lead generation Specialists to carry out initial research, prospecting and lead qualification; and • Engagement of market representatives to participate in specific trade shows or relevant industry events.

3. Investment Readying	• Enhance business and investment attraction Readiness
	   o Ensure that the District website is ready for target businesses and investors.
	   o Continue to use tools such as CRM platforms to manage information relating to business retention interviews, investor inquiries, and investment opportunities.
	   o Develop a site visit strategy.
	   o Engage provincial and Federal partners to tell the Squamish story.
	   o Engage businesses and the wider community in the vision and the messaging for investment attraction.
	   o Provide training to partners in lead management and nurturing.

4. Develop Messaging	• Develop and implement a targeted communication strategy, including new marketing collateral and KPIs
	   o Determine how information about progress, opportunities, challenges will be shared:
	   o How will stakeholders and the wider community be engaged to deliver a consistent message about investment opportunities in Squamish?
	   o Determine KPIs in partnership with the Economic Leadership Team
	   o Determine key milestones to update Squamish Council and other stakeholders
	   o Refine the Value proposition and positioning for each target sector:
	     ▪ Engage recent investors for testimonials;
	     ▪ Benchmark performance against competitor regions; and
	     ▪ Define how Squamish differentiates from Metro Vancouver.
	   o Based on findings of Value Chain gap analysis and Business Retention and Expansion interviews:
	     ▪ Build on recruitment zone analysis;
	     ▪ Identify target markets;
	     ▪ Identify target events; and
	     ▪ Create messaging specifically aimed at those target markets.

5. Test and Target	• Establish a group that can identify prospective small and mid-sized firms from outside the District of Squamish region and Canada.

	- Priority target regions should include the United States and Canada, and specifically the Cascadia Corridor. - Incorporate market feedback into recruitment strategy
6. Evaluate and Share	- Measure progress toward stated goals. - Measure impact (jobs retained, jobs created, investment opportunities identified). - Re-evaluate organizational capacity and resources - Share progress. - Seek alignment on stated goals, objectives, and tactics - Facilitate B2B networking. - Engage stakeholders in the delivery of consistent messaging.

Outside the Box: Future Forward Considerations for Investment

This project has been focused on positioning Squamish for near-term investment opportunities that can enhance existing businesses. However, a report of this nature is not complete without raising awareness of long-term prospects. What might Squamish leaders envision for a long-horizon dynamic 'glocal' economy? How might the community think outside the box? Workshop participants mentioned several creative ideas. The list below is included as a starter of ideas worth exploring over the next 3-5 years. Each requires breaking away from today's paradigms. Each requires assessing how Squamish can capitalize on its location halfway between Vancouver and Whistler, both already renowned internationally. In addition, each needs further stakeholder engagement, research and linkages to other ongoing initiatives to be completed in the next months to assess their priority and action steps.

1. Local Industry/Local Users

The five workshops completed as part of this project show much promise for entrepreneurial growth in Squamish. To facilitate that growth, consultants and stakeholders on this project have pointed to the merits of local purchasing managers to look at encouraging local procurement opportunities where trade treaties permit. Contracts with budding local businesses with larger established institutions such as local government, schools, hospitals, and prisons can help strengthen and stabilize small business expansion. In addition, the branding for a Green Economy community will require a broad and comprehensive application of technologies and innovation in the community at all levels, whether it is through green procurement, prioritizing funding for green projects for neighbourhoods / non-profit stakeholders through

community grants or simply supporting existing businesses in finding solutions to 'greening' their business. The District's recently published Community Climate Action Plan provides the critical strategic direction and supporting actions to begin this work. For example, the Green Business Partnership in Sarasota County, FL, is a successful example of a collaborative effort of businesses organizations and county government with a similar objective. It was initiated through a grant awarded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to the County to create an on-site certification assessment to verify the performance of applicant businesses to the Green Business Partnership standards. Certification is valid for three years, after which a recertification process is required. Local businesses are seeing noticeable results due to their participation in the program with energy savings, waste reductions and general resource conservation. Squamish could further this type of public recognition for businesses by working with innovators and entrepreneurs to find local solutions to moving the community towards carbon neutrality while supporting cluster development and within the framework of the Squamish Community Carbon Marketplace.

2.   Talent Worx

Small/mid-size communities in a growth mode invariably experience talent/worker supply bottlenecks. The mainstream workforce may not be suited to the demands of emerging/growth businesses and require retraining. How can a business cluster cope, especially when an incoming venture bids workers away from existing businesses in an already tight labour market? One unique way for Squamish is to more tightly link intern and student project assignments from regional educational institutions to local businesses. Quest University, for example, deploys a unique pedagogic method that fully uses experiential learning from real-world situations. Already, Quest students have completed successful assignments in the Digital Media and Film cluster. Equally, Simon Fraser's School of Communication and Technology has research classes around "design problems" that could be structured to address local questions, and especially involving the indigenous community.

3.   High-Performance Buildings – Cost-Efficient Fabrication

Apparent from the 'Green Buildings Workshop,' the local building/construction industry is open to the energy efficiency and zero-carbon goals embodied in provincial and national STEP policies. Workshop participants acknowledge a comparative disadvantage to future growth is the cost of building materials and supplies. Such could be overcome if complementary building equipment and materials suppliers were attracted to town or co-location would allow for shared supply contracts. The local goal would be to make Squamish an industry anchor/hub to the wider region by virtue of the diversity of its presence in building fabrication, supplies and related services. Attracting supply chain companies such as building material suppliers is a key cluster growth strategy.

4.   Grower-Processor Colocation

Discriminating consumers are seeking to know more about where and how their food is both grown and processed. They also want their food to be as fresh as possible. Local stakeholders pointed to a desire for a joint grower-processor complex that would offer growers farm sites for sale or rent in very close proximity to processors. The recently released Squamish Valley Agricultural Plan provides a number of detailed reports that can help assess the feasibility of such an initiative, including a detailed Agricultural Background Report, and a Marketing Opportunities Analysis.

5.   Food and Media Stop Spot

A related vision would be for the agri-food and media sectors to capitalize more on Squamish's mid-point location on the Sea to Sky highway between Vancouver and Whistler. Similar successful initiatives are Vancouver's culturecrawl.ca and vanncommunitylab.com, or ndsm.com in the Netherlands. Squamish could make its mark, especially for international visitors, with an appealing offering of international cuisine using organic produce, coupled with high-tech media experiences. This could align with the Destination BC *Sea-To-Sky Corridor Destination Development Strategy* to develop an Acceleration Fund to support small-scale experience development. Alongside this quality and varied dining experience, the local Digital Media and Film cluster could expand offerings with a variety of interactive media and outdoor theme experiences. Stakeholders even envisioned a fully functioning creative arts, designer and maker space linked to the agri-food, outdoor apparel and outdoor media themes – furthering enjoyment via the community's creative industries.

Appendix: Key Resources and Partnerships

Beyond the activities and resources reviewed in the separate industry profiles, it is worthwhile mentioning some major national and provincial programs and cluster-specific initiatives for potential partnerships. While more formal cluster organizations are being formed, engaging local stakeholders in enriching this list, especially with respect to their individual industries, will be essential. Ultimately, the most valuable relationships are those forged by Squamish industry stakeholders. Engaging with their contacts first can open many doors and assures that networks are industry-led. The below table highlights example recommendations for several key starting points for partnership building.

	Green Economy	Outdoor Recreation
Workforce and Research and Development	• University of British Columbia (UBC) Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS); University's Clean Energy Research Centre (CERC); Centre for Advanced Wood Processing • Simon Fraser University (SFU) New School of Sustainable Energy Engineering • BCIT Centre for Energy System Applications, School of Construction and Environment, SMART	• BCIT, BCIT Soft Shop • Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design • Kwantlen Polytechnic University • CapU Fine and Applied Arts
Incubation, Acceleration, Business Support	• Vancouver Economic Commission - VEC's Tech Deployment Network (TDN • Foresight Cleantech Accelerator Centre • Alacrity's Cleantech Scale-Up Program • Green Municipal Fund • Vancouver BDC Business Centre • BC Innovative Clean Energy Fund • Cascadia Venture Forum	• BC Tech Fund • Vancouver BDC Business Centre • Futurpreneur • Western Canadian Angel Network Program • Cascadia Venture Forum • Canada Media Fund
Networking and Trade	• Western Economic Diversification Canada • BC Bioenergy Network • Passive House Canada • Agri-food Sustainability Initiative • Institute for Sustainable Food Systems • Cleantech Global • BC Trade and Invest • Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) • China Canada Cleantech Innovation Centre	• Western Economic Diversification Canada • Creative BC • Canadian Apparel Federation • Canadian Textile Industry Association • intelliFLEX • Canadian Sporting Goods Association • BC Apparel and Gear Association • BC Trade and Invest