

FINAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Campbell River & North Island Labour Market Project

Regional & Sector Talent Challenges & Solutions

WHERE TALENT MEETS OPPORTUNITY

Campbell River & North Island Labour Market
Partnership Project

HEALTHCARE



AQUACULTURE



TOURISM



FORESTRY



Submitted by:
Human Capital Strategies

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Submitted to:
The City of Campbell River and its partners,
the Regional District of Mount Waddington
& the Strathcona Regional District



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge we are visitors on the traditional territories of the many First Nations in the Mount Waddington and Strathcona Regional districts. We wish to recognize each of these communities as well as other First Nations and Indigenous peoples living in these territories.

On November 1, 2022, the City of Campbell River, Regional District of Mount Waddington and Strathcona Regional District launched a Labour Market Partnership to conduct a labour market study of Campbell River and the North Island and to prepare a strategy to address priority needs.

Over the course of this project, labour market challenges remain a pressing, ongoing concern in urban and rural and remote communities in Campbell River and Vancouver Island North, where the economic landscape is shifting rapidly due to factors such as policy and regulatory changes, evolving economic drivers and global events. This is placing additional pressure on regional labour markets and impacting businesses.

This Project aimed to update existing data, to improve the understanding of labour market issues, trends and opportunities and to support the development of action plans. We retained Human Capital Strategies (HCS) to undertake comprehensive secondary and primary research, a robust engagement process and the development of a Labour Market Report and a set of recommendations for solutions to be acted upon to address the region's talent challenges.

This report is a summary of the project findings and recommendations for action and implementation of talent solutions. Over the course of the last 12 months over 750 individuals and organizations have participated in the research and engagement.

We would like to recognize and thank all these community members for their contribution to this work and the talent solutions we subsequently implement. We would also like to recognize and thank the Project Steering Committee and the Healthcare Subcommittee, both created to oversee and provide invaluable input on the project. Members of both groups are listed at the end of this report.

We hope that this report, when its recommendations are implemented, will indeed bring life to our project slogan: "Where Talent Meets Opportunity!"

Sincerely,

Rose Klukas, Director, Economic Development & Indigenous Relations, City of Campbell River

Jackie Challis, Economic Development Officer, Regional District of Mount Waddington

Renée LaBoucane, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Strathcona Regional District



This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

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WHERE TALENT MEETS OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

This is an executive summary of the full, longer final report of this project.

The City of Campbell River partnered with the Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW), and the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) for a Labour Market Partnership project. Funding for this project is being provided by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, through WorkBC's Community and Employer Partnerships fund. The project partners are also contributing funds towards the project.

The economic landscape of both Campbell River, the SRD and the RDMW (the "Partners") is changing rapidly due to policy and regulatory changes, evolving economic drivers, shifting public values, and global events like the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional forest and aquaculture industries are particularly affected (with spin-off impacts on other regional sectors, such as health and wellness, and tourism), making attraction and retention efforts difficult.

In response, the Partners worked to develop a labour market study to update existing data, improve stakeholder understanding of the issues, and help create action plans. The Partners have formed this Labour Market Partnership because:

- The regions' economies are linked;
- Recent events have impacted industries in both regions.
- The regions have been similarly impacted by recent developments.
- The regions' communities can work together to explore opportunities and strategies to diversify our economies.

The Partners retained Human Capital Strategies (HCS) to implement the project terms of reference and work plan. A Steering Committee was convened for this project and its members represent diverse industries, different levels of government, organizations and interests. They have actively participated in the project, guided decision-making, and facilitated cross-community collaboration. A Healthcare Subcommittee was also created to provide insights and recommendations to the project consultant regarding talent challenges and solutions in this key sector.

Objectives & Scope

The objectives for this project include improving understanding of regional labour markets (including immediate needs and issues) so that resources can be directed to the right areas to facilitate growth and development; assisting with the development of

strategies to deal with regional labour market issues and improve recruitment and retention. Objective was understanding challenges and opportunities of the North Island in the 4 main sectors, (i.e., aquaculture, forestry, healthcare and tourism) improve understanding, develop action plans, make market more inclusive and encouraging economic diversification.

A Healthcare Toolkit was initially a project objective, however, based on sector input, the project was amended to exclude this.

Key main activities of the project were:

1. Conducting research and compile data to obtain a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Campbell River's, SRD's and RDMW's labour markets, particularly the regional aquaculture, forestry, tourism, and health and wellness sectors.
2. Completing a labour market study, including production of a report with information that will be useful for advancing recovery and resiliency plans, strategizing ways to make labour markets more inclusive, and encouraging economic diversification in Campbell River, SRD and RDMW. The report and research findings will be used to update existing data, improve stakeholder understanding of the issues, and help develop action plans.
3. Holding a Campbell River and North Island Medical and Healthcare Career Expo to promote the sharing of information and best practices and facilitate networking among healthcare stakeholders, employers, recruiters, First Nations, jobseekers, governments and community leaders on attracting and recruiting and retaining healthcare talent.

This labour market report will contribute to a greater understanding of challenges and opportunities facing Campbell River, SRD and RDMW's labour markets, particularly the regional aquaculture, forestry, tourism, and health and wellness sectors.

This is a complex project in which study area for this Labour Market Partnership project encompasses a wide geographic area; it includes both rural and urban areas. It included engagement with individuals from 37 Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities throughout the study area, as well as consultations with a diversity of Indigenous organizations, employers, employees and jobseekers, industry groups and all levels of governments.

The next section clearly lays out the project activities, namely, secondary research, primary research and engagement.



2 PROJECT RESEARCH + ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This project and its findings and recommendations are based on a rich and comprehensive base of research and engagement involving the participation of approximately 750 individuals and organizations, almost totally located in the study regions.

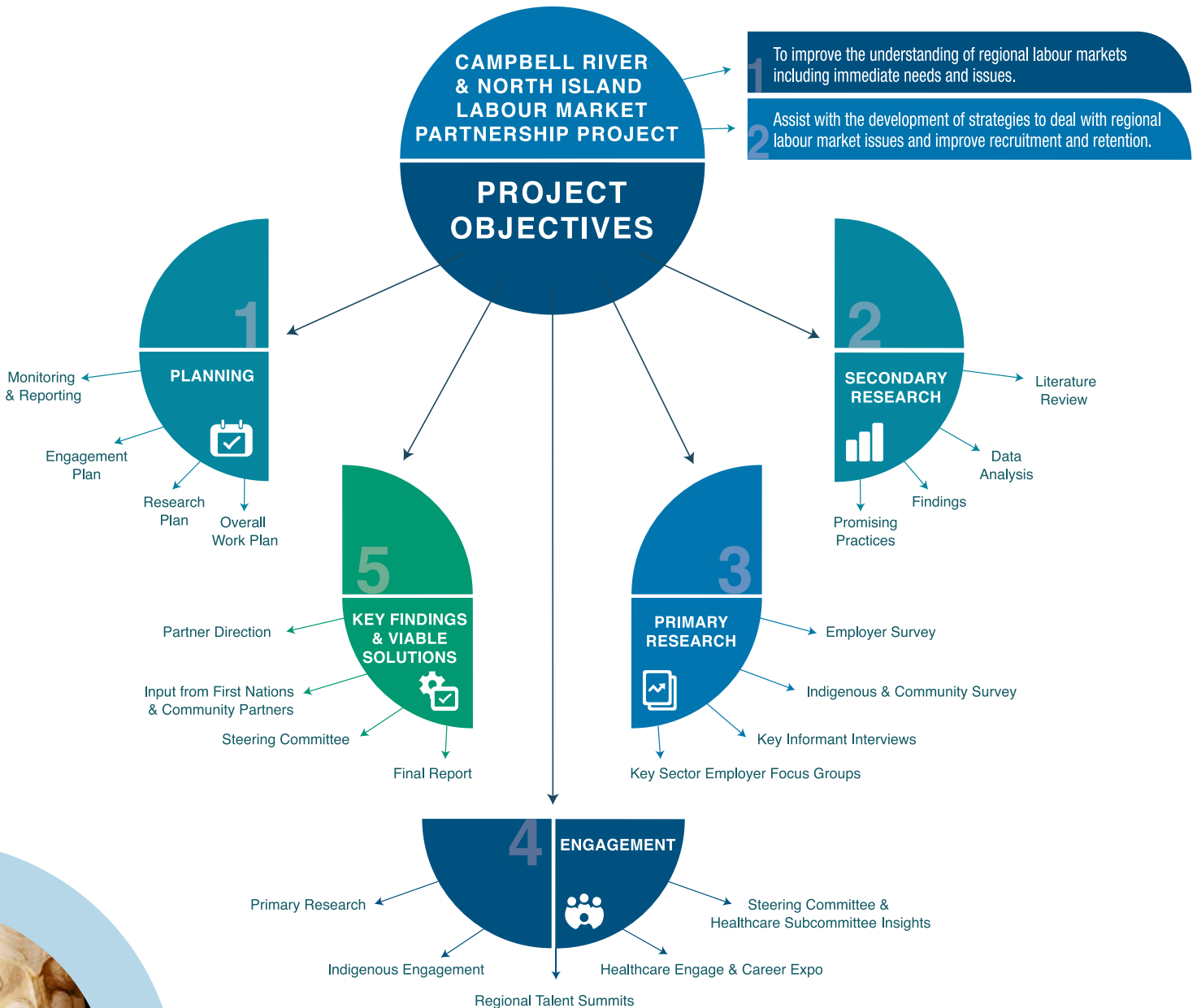
Each part of the “workforce development ecosystem” was extensively engaged with and many engagement discussions were designed to combine representatives of the parts to encourage a collaborative and integrative approach to talent solutions.

Each part of the research methodology informed the next part, starting with a comprehensive scan and

analysis of existing literature and data. The visual below illustrates the specific research and engagement steps.

Secondary Research

A comprehensive secondary research approach identified key research questions and topics for use in the development of a survey instrument for an online survey of employers, employees and jobseekers and community members, including Indigenous individuals and organizations. It also culminated in an extensive annotated bibliography available in the longer version of this report.





PROJECT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Online Survey

Invitations to complete the survey were emailed to employers and business and industry umbrella groups, First Nations and Indigenous organizations, employees and job seekers. An online questionnaire focused on workforce-related challenges, best practices and potential solutions, and was open from March 24, 2023 through May 12, 2023. Respondents included the following:

- 97 (29%) in the “employers / self-employed” category.
- 178 (54%) in the “employees / jobseekers” category.
- 56 (17%) in the “a community member – not an employer or employee/jobseeker – with a keen interest in workforce attraction” category.
- This included 29 employers or self-employed who identified as Indigenous and 27 employees or jobseekers who identified as Indigenous.

Focus Groups

In April 2023, 7 focus groups were held in Port McNeill and Campbell River in the aquaculture, forestry, healthcare and tourism sectors in the study regions, involving the participation of almost 80 industry stakeholders and First Nations. The methodology was based on a qualitative approach to exploring workforce challenges and opportunities, specifically attraction, recruitment, retention, and training and development with the regions.

Key Informant Interviews

After the survey and focus groups, the project research included 43 interviews conducted with key representatives of 8 sectors in May through June 2023 to probe into key challenges and potential solutions:

- Five industry sectors (Aquaculture, Forest, Healthcare, Tourism and other sectors).
- Municipal, Provincial and Federal public servants/ ministries.
- First Nations and other Indigenous organizations.
- Education, Training and Employment service providers.

Talent Summits

Regional Talent Summits were held in Campbell River and Port Hardy on October 17th, 2023, and provided useful input on potential solutions from almost 70 people/organizations. Each Summit sector panel of four representatives and a moderator involved insightful presentations on talent solutions and led to much interaction among panelists and Summit participants. Also, the project results on possible talent solutions were presented and participants provided input there and after via a Talent Solution comment/rating form. Outputs from the Summits are included in the Findings section of this report.

Medical and Healthcare Career Expo

A virtual Campbell River and North Island Medical and Healthcare Career Expo was held on November 22nd, 2023 of this year, involving over 70 participants. Findings from the Expo are included later in this report.

Indigenous Engagement

Research and engagement involving several Indigenous organizations and individuals is reflected in a separate section of this report and in the report’s Findings.

“Employers emphasized the importance of employer branding to attract new talent, particularly local youth, and called for a more targeted approach to educate and attract them.”

~Focus group participant

3 FINDINGS: WHAT WE HEARD & FOUND



The findings of this project are based on extensive secondary research, primary research and other engagement outlined in the previous section.

The research began with detailed scanning and analysis of existing literature and data on labour market and related issues for this geographic area. Some studies were included from other locations (both on and off Vancouver Island) where it was felt they could add value. An extensive annotated bibliography is included in the longer version of this report.

Overall

Unexpected events like a pandemic, changing economic conditions like a recession or a boom and new government policies such as the BC government's *StrongerBC: Future Ready Action Plan* can impact the relevance and effectiveness of strategies that have been based on information that has become out of date. Information about the economies and labour market needs to be kept up to date and systems and resources should be in place to ensure this.

Information on current and future labour market trends shows that the demand for labour will continue to exceed supply across occupations, industries and geographic areas. This historically unusual condition in the labour market means that attracting workers has become very competitive requiring increasing amounts of positive action. It must also be recognized that information on current and future labour market trends shows that the demand for labour will continue to exceed supply and will be competing with other regions for the same human resources.

Many strategies and examples of best practices have

been put forward on how to attract healthcare talent. These include:

- Helping students and Indigenous people obtain the training they need to pursue meaningful careers in high-demand jobs.
- Expanding business partnerships with and among First Nations must continue to increase healthcare talent in the regions - we heard that while some have been created, they have not been effectively implemented.
- First Nations are developing a growing presence in the economy of the region, often in fields like tourism and aquaculture that are central to this report.
- Employers need to continue to pursue respectful and effective relations with Indigenous nations - government to government, business to business, employer to employee and person to person - for the mutual advantage of all who live in the region.

Some issues are especially complex because many organizations and levels of government must be involved.

Housing, childcare and community services are three such key areas to be addressed to increase talent availability and retention. These services must be available, accessible and competitive with other regions both to attract and to retain population.

Solutions are needed which are specific, region/sector targeted, action-oriented and within the realm of influence by regional/local governments and industry.

“Homes & community amenities must be available & competitive with other regions both to attract & to retain population.”



FINDINGS: WHAT WE HEARD & FOUND

Employment & Workforce Barriers

Analysis of relevant literature and primary research identified key talent barriers listed below:

Skills shortages continue in significant numbers across both high-skilled and lower-skilled positions due to the following factors:

1. Employees expect more than employers are providing regarding wages, flexible working hours, working conditions and locations.
2. Sufficient local training is not available forcing people to leave their community for training.
3. Employers in some sectors lack connections to secondary schools and find it difficult to provide industry career information to students and teachers.
4. Lack of transportation to, from and within the area limits access to training and jobs.
5. Lack of electronic connectivity deters workers, hampers business and impacts business talent recruitment and growth.
6. Future of aquaculture and forestry decreases workers' attraction to these sectors.
7. The lack of suitable and affordable housing discourages migration from outside the region.

Implications for Talent Strategies

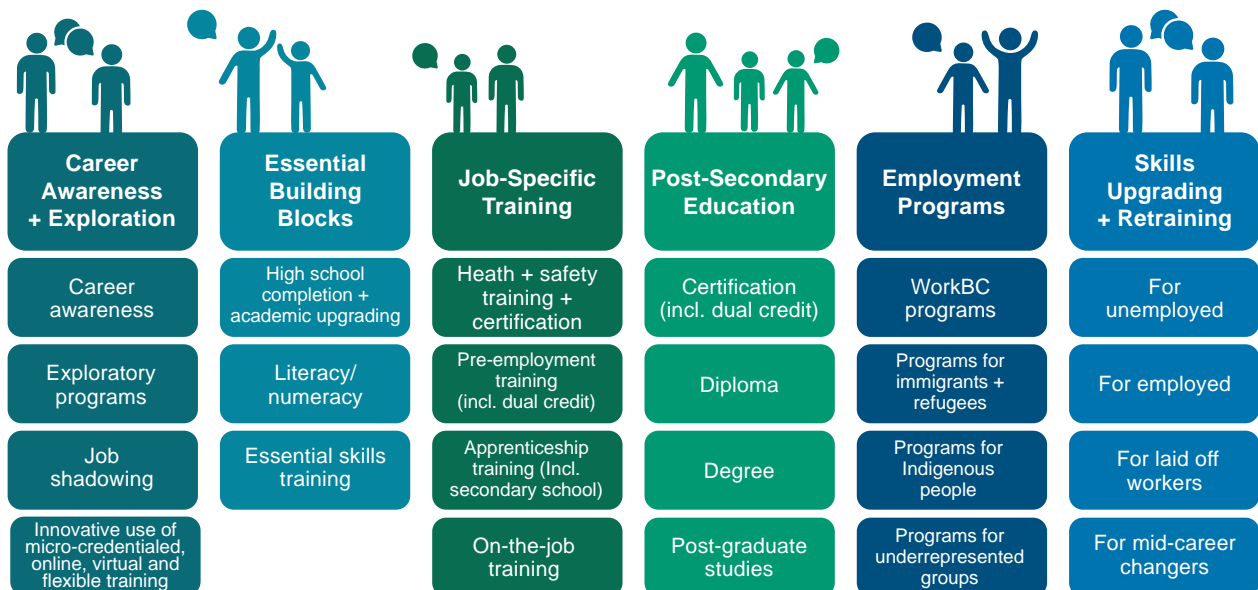
From the research and engagement, some general themes emerged. These included an emphasis around the need for better communication with governments, with educational institutions, with potential workers, and with students and those outside the area.

Improving the overall economic and social environment is also important. This includes transportation, electronic connectivity, housing and childcare. These themes were enforced by our primary research. See Best Practices and Lessons Learned later in this section. [Page 16.](#)

It will be important for education, training and employment program providers to work closely with employers and industry groups, employees and jobseekers, First Nations and other communities and private and public funders to offer a responsive and work-based array of programs in the regions in coordinated, collaborative and results-oriented ways. This will need to include innovative use of online, micro-credentials, community-based, sector specific, culturally sensitive and flexible models for skills and employment development.

This diagram provides a high level view of the key categories of education, post-secondary education & training & employment programs and services available in the Vancouver Island | Coast region from the organizations listed above.

Education | Post-Secondary Education | Training | Employment Programs | Services



Nurturing a Regional Workforce Development Ecosystem

A key finding in the Project research and engagement is the importance of key players in the region working together in a collaborative and coordinated way. One of our broad and important recommendations for addressing talent priorities is to consider nurturing a true and really effective 'workforce development ecosystem.'

A workforce development ecosystem, in the context of this Project, is a regional structure that encompasses entities from within the region and beyond, who each attempt to create value for their organizations, clients and the region (in this case, workforce development outcomes). Within this ecosystem, the entities work toward individual and collective goals with interdependencies and complementarities among themselves.

Key to this ecosystem are: 1) major providers of programs and services (e.g., NIEFS, North Island College, North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society, WorkBC, etc.); and 2) organizations with community and regional mandates for jointly planning workforce development programs (e.g., Campbell River Learning Council, Vancouver Island North Training & Attraction Society, etc.).



“Collaboration is a requirement –What might be the main problem with the current workforce development ecosystem? In a word: isolation. For example, there may be an unhealthy separation between those who educate and train individuals and those who hire them. There are gaps between government agencies that fund various training programs and those being trained. Too often, the ecosystem participants may operate in silos depending on their roles. Business groups gather to discuss business, policymakers talk to other policymakers, and educators gather with educators. This isolation leads to slow adaptation of company programs, harming both individuals and employers.”

(The ABCs of a Thriving Workforce Development Ecosystem. Deloitte. August 28, 2023. <https://action.deloitte.com/insight>)



AQUACULTURE SECTOR

Aquaculture is important to the economy of the North Island, including but definitely not restricted to First Nations. Many First Nations are already key players in aquaculture and can contribute through their own businesses and by working with partners, as well as through employment of their members.

According to the sector, salmon farming operations today only occur with the full permission of the Rights Holder First Nation – 100% of BC farmed salmon is raising in partnership with local First Nations. Some First Nations and other groups have concerns about open fish farming’s environmental impact on communities.

Recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) is already used extensively, but not exclusively in salmon farming. There is still some question as to whether it can replace 100% of salmon farming while maintaining the current or increased production volumes for economic growth on Vancouver Island.

Mariculture (the collection and/or growth of water-based plants) offers many positive possibilities. Growing and/ or harvesting seaweed as an export, a food source and for other uses can enhance prospects for the economy and employment.

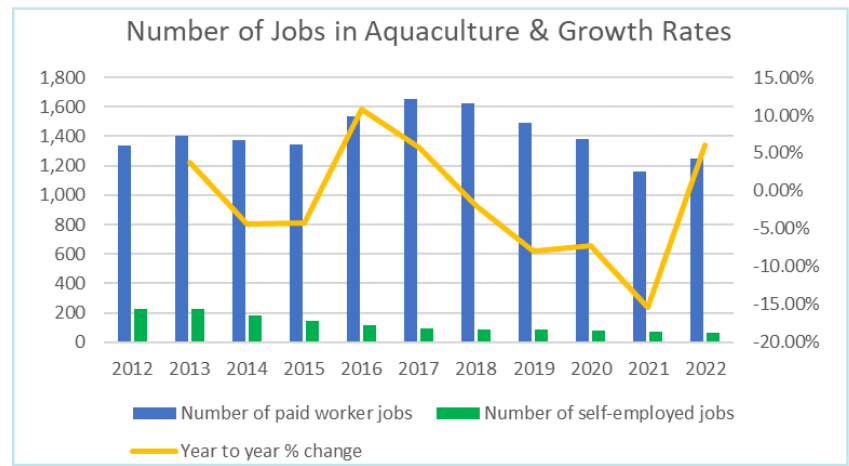
Growth in the aquaculture sector will depend upon which new strategies are chosen and how they are implemented.

Total employment in aquaculture in BC declined in 2020 and 2021 from the peak in the middle of 2010’s – the decline in 2020 was brought on by the loss of economic activities in general due to the pandemic, and the decline in 2021 would most likely be due to the regulatory change. The attached chart to the right shows the level and change in the number of jobs in aquaculture in BC. To see the importance of aquaculture in the study area, it is noted that farmed finfish accounts for almost 90% of all aquaculture production, and direct employment in salmon farms in the study area account for almost half of all finfish production jobs in BC.

Especially in the Strathcona Regional District, aquaculture job openings will be weak. However, with a responsible transition plan supported by all levels of government and industry, aquaculture can continue to be an innovative, growing sector providing stable employment on North Island.

Potential solutions emerging from the engagement and existing literature include the following:

1. Meaningfully engage with First Nations, governments and stakeholders on future opportunities in the aquaculture sector.
2. Work with provincial and federal governments to educate the public on the economic benefits of aquaculture and dispel myths surrounding the industry.
3. Collaborate on a socio-economic impact assessment study.
4. Language and public perception - aquaculture vs. seafood sector - create more clarity and public education on the topic.
5. Develop and support public education about the sector.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0489-01 Labour statistics consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA), by job category and industry.

“Companies report Indigenous engagement and employment will only grow. One observed that Indigenous recruitment & employment practices need to be flexible and reflect an awareness of Indigenous communities & culture.”



FOREST SECTOR

This sector faces challenges in building a sustainable and competitive industry especially when other international sources of forest products have less environmental regulation, different tree stand types, private lands, etc.

In addition to the on-going issues such as timber supply – mostly due to Mountain Pine beetle epidemic and record wildfire seasons in recent years – and access to the U.S. market, the *Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* will now directly influence forestry activities in territories throughout most of BC.

First Nations have a significant role to play in forestry. Employers should be expanding their efforts in working with them to provide a workforce and jobs as needed. Ecosystem based management at the landscape level and Indigenous cultural factors (e.g., modified trees) should be taken into account.

Employment in forestry and logging is likely to continue to contract with openings only coming from replacement needs.

Potential solutions identified include the following:

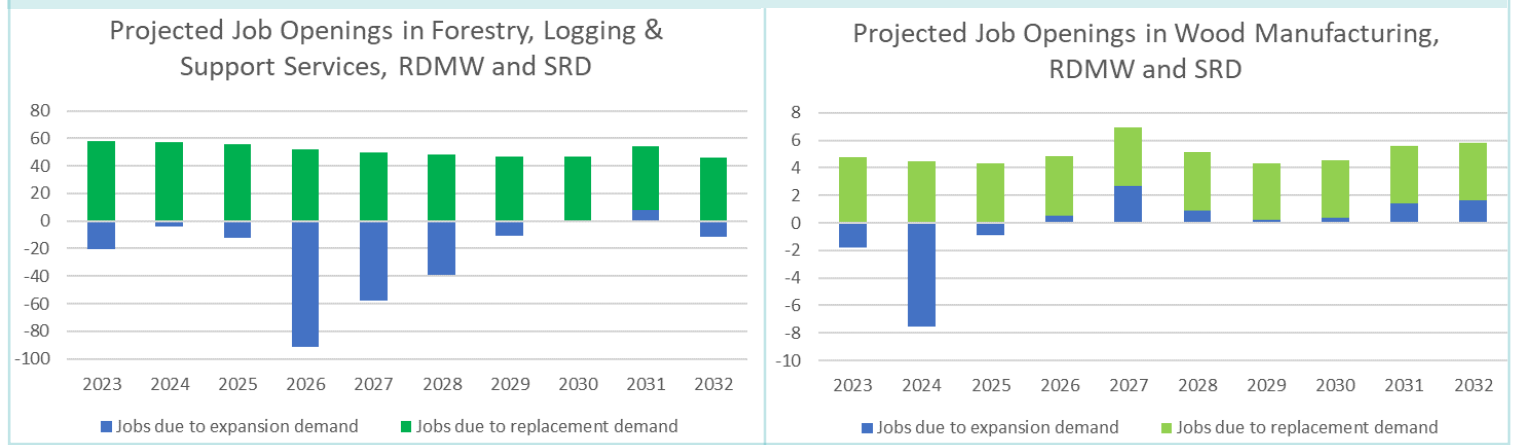
1. Ensure industry, community and First Nation directly influence public policy development.
2. Industry and stakeholders working together to improve the industry image among students, jobseekers and communities and create and use a positive narrative and workforce-related marketing initiative.
3. Promote industry careers to local populations first, then to those in other regions.
4. Pursue an effectively functioning North Island forestry sector workforce ecosystem.
5. Work to expand industry and community forestry business and employment through meaningful collaboration with First Nations, including through DRIPA and provincial permitting measures.
6. Use a recruiting approach which attract and retain family units in vicinity/region of operations.
7. Develop and implement inclusive attraction and recruitment practices, including focusing on high school and post-secondary education graduates, women and Indigenous people.
8. Develop a clear sector growth transition strategy with governments.
9. Collaborate with all levels of government and First Nations groups on career, employment and training.
10. Review industry solutions with industry experts and select for the most effective.

There were also many youth-related strategies suggested:

- Allocate more funding for internships, co-op, career awareness and forestry curriculum for youth and K-12.
- Expand the industry-based Fundamentals in Forestry Program within & outside the region.
- Change the negative image of the Industry at the K-12 level through changes in the provincial curriculum.
- Create more industry/K-12 partnerships.
- Offer more forestry-related training through school districts.
- Provide more mentorship opportunities for local youth, graduates, new hires, First Nations, and immigrants.
- Offer and expand various types of summer employment and training programs.

Forestry has a great story to tell, it's not always out there ... forestry industry can play a part in climate change; responsibility in everything we do today. Employees can be proud of the sustainability ... get that story out to youth, into schools.

The two charts below depict potential job openings in the study area for the two forestry subsectors.



Source: HCS; BC Labour Market Outlook, 2022 Edition.

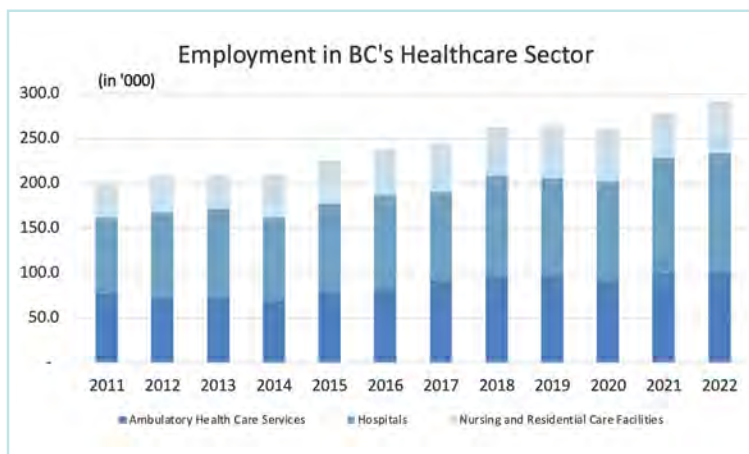


HEALTHCARE SECTOR

The healthcare sector is important not only in its own right, but also because there is a major deterrent to population and workforce growth and retention in communities where it is not sufficiently available.

Due to the crucial importance of the healthcare sector and its vital role in the regions, a special subcommittee of experts and knowledgeable people in healthcare was created. It informed and advised Human Capital Strategies throughout the Project, helping to design practical and productive ways to fulfill the staffing needs in healthcare and medical services.

Employment in the healthcare sector in BC has experienced steady growth between 2011 and 2022, with a dip in 2020 due to the labour shortage during the onset of the pandemic.



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (unpublished data).
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Statistics Canada. Produced by BC Stats.

In the Vancouver Island / Coast Development Region, all three sub-sectors in healthcare services gained employment over the past ten years – ambulatory health care services gaining about 2,200 jobs, hospitals gaining 5,700 jobs, and nursing and residential care gaining 500 jobs.

Like the other sectors covered in this report, the health care sector must attract and retain sufficient staff if it is to continue to function. An assured, reliable, dependable supply of health care and the personnel to deliver it is essential if any community or region is to be able to find and keep the people who work in all other sectors and even retain in the community those who are retired and no longer working. The availability or lack of medical services is a key consideration when people and families are deciding where to live or whether to move.

Shortages of healthcare personnel have been a long-standing problem throughout BC and not just on the North Island, which must compete with all other areas for these valuable resources. As noted above, the BC government is now taking measures to increase healthcare staff such as adding to the supply of training seats and making it easier to get foreign credentials recognized. This report considers how SRD and RDMW can build on and benefit from these and other measures.

Some of the key areas for action from the research and engagement include the following:

- Especially in rural and remote communities, healthcare talent acquisition and retention are very limited by housing, childcare, transportation, working conditions and other factors.
- All parts of the sector are growing in employment including Indigenous healthcare; some of this is pent-up demand from before and during COVID. Indigenous and non-Indigenous healthcare systems need to continue to work together to the extent possible to build a bigger talent pool rather than compete with one another for talent.
- More flexible education and training is needed to increase access to youth and workers in remote and rural areas.
- In addition to some of the shorter term programs or tactics that seem to be helping, longer-

“Especially in rural and remote communities, healthcare talent acquisition and retention are very limited by housing, childcare, transportation, working conditions and other factors.”

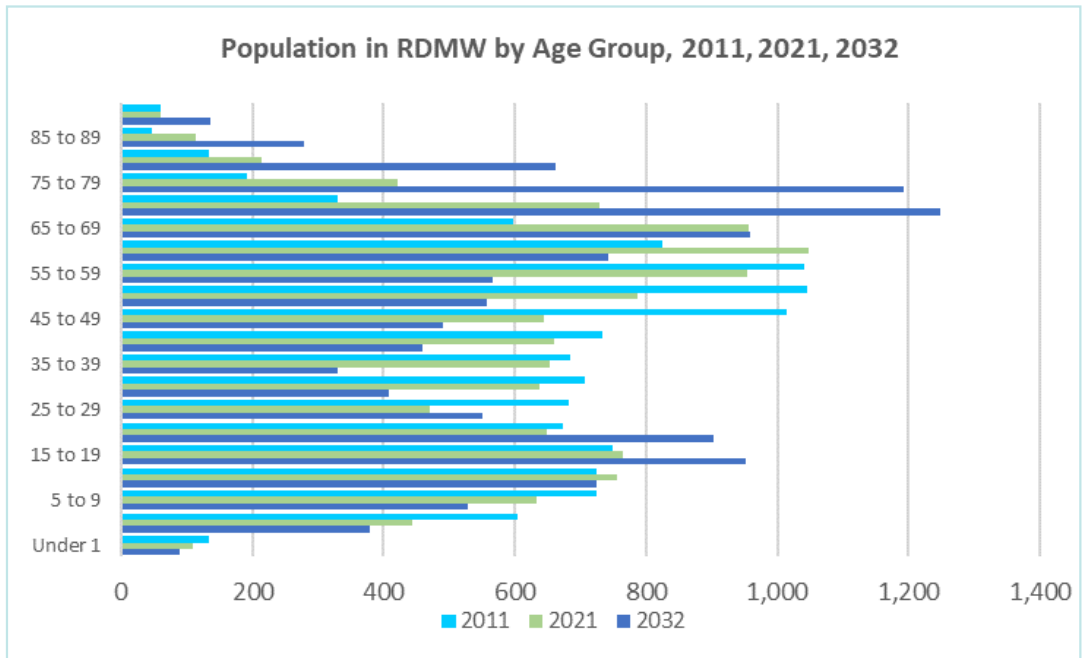
term and structural solutions need to be built through innovation, collaboration and additional resources.

- A lot of information on resources for healthcare attraction, recruitment and retention (e.g., Campbell River Division of Family Practice and others) already exists and tools or pathways need to be created to facilitate users' awareness and navigation of these.

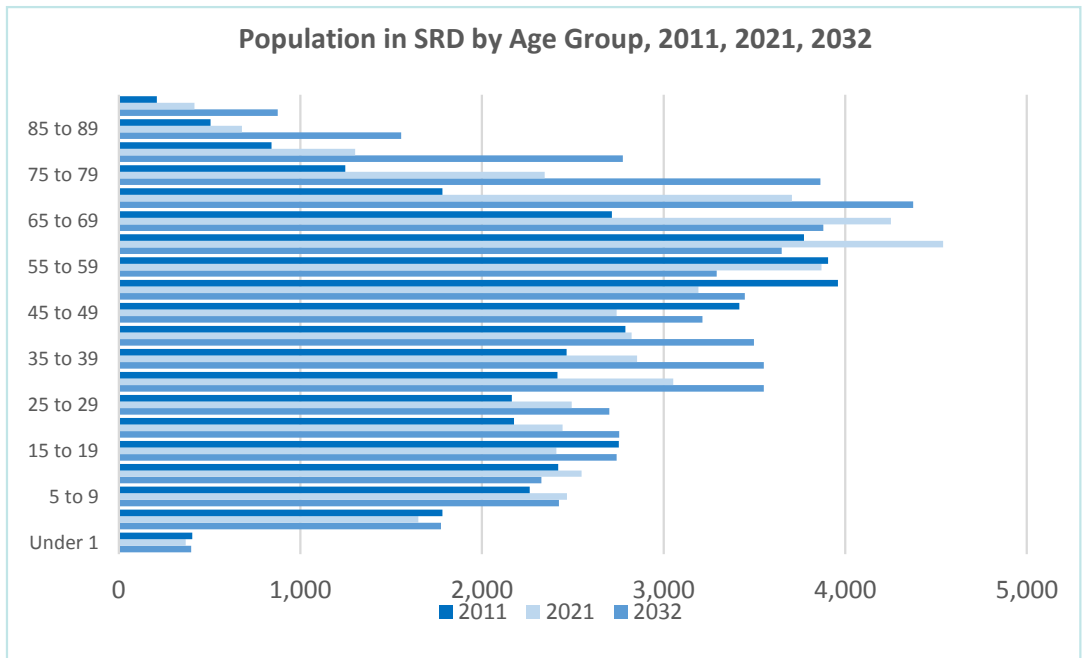
The *Health Professions and Occupations Act*, also called Bill 36 replaces the *Health Professions Act*, and its primary objectives are to prioritize protection of the public and to facilitate good governance by regulators.

Under this act, professional regulatory bodies will have the advancement of the best interests of the public as their first and most important purpose. Since shortages of medical personnel especially in smaller communities are a major concern of British Columbians at this time, we can expect to see measures that will increase the supply of such personnel. Easier, faster and less costly pathways for internationally trained professionals to be able to practice in BC will be possible. The Province has already taken steps through its *StrongerBC – Future Ready Action Plan* with respect to nurses, an increase in the number of training spaces for doctors, etc.

The driving force for demand of healthcare services in the study area, just as in the rest of BC, is population growth, especially the aging population. The two charts attached here depict the population of different age cohorts over time – past, current, and the foreseeable future.



Source: BC Stats.



CAMPBELL RIVER & NORTH ISLAND MEDICAL & HEALTHCARE CAREER EXPO

On November 22, 2023, seventy-two healthcare practitioners, recruiters, jobseekers and stakeholders came together for four hours of dialogue and information sharing at this virtual event.

There are people who would have not considered this region, that are now investigating and inquiring, therefore we feel the overall purpose was met. Furthermore, the one international attendee also found it very useful, therefore, helping to unlock those markets would be an asset.

The platform worked well, and the content was very well received. In terms of structure, it is recommended to have some sessions run concurrently to avoid the risk of attendees opting completely out as one session may not be of direct interest to them.

We believe there is merit and value in continuing with this type of recruiting and retention effort. The marketing was challenging and therefore it is recommend having a dedicated marketing person for future events. Direct contact with schools did not prove fruitful during this event, yet the students that were at the event found it incredibly beneficial.

Details from a post-Expo survey are included in the longer version of the final report.

Our Findings:

1. Some attendees reached out as they were excited and eager to get contact information for the panelists (e.g., an attendee in Nanaimo reached out to one panelist's employees in Port Hardy during the Expo asking about opportunities.)
2. We heard that more opportunities to recruit could emerge from the U.S. as some hospital regions will be consolidating. Also, our physician remuneration structure is historically more closely matched to the U.S. model.
3. International candidates are interested in getting good, permanent positions, so additional efforts could be considered. (i.e., Provincial Nominee Program, the federal International Mobility Program, etc.)
4. People can and do engage on an online event like this forum which worked well for both recruiting as well as retention as we received excellent feedback from both job seekers as well as employed professionals.
5. There are people who would consider relocating to this region and join the healthcare sector.

“My biggest highlight from Career Expo was the opportunity to engage directly with professionals in the healthcare field and learn about diverse healthcare roles, and gain insights into the current trends and advancements truly invaluable.”

“Networking with like-minded individuals and discovering various career paths within healthcare was both inspiring and informative, reinforcing my passion and commitment to pursuing a career in this field.”

“Hearing about the enormous opportunities in the healthcare sector in those places and the advantages of working up north.”



TOURISM SECTOR

Tourism's seasonality makes it difficult for this labour-intensive sector to attract staff, especially from outside the area and locations can be remote for the unique products that Indigenous tourism can offer.

Also, tourism has the not always justified reputation of paying low wages. However, a significant number of job vacancies exist and we expect the number to grow.

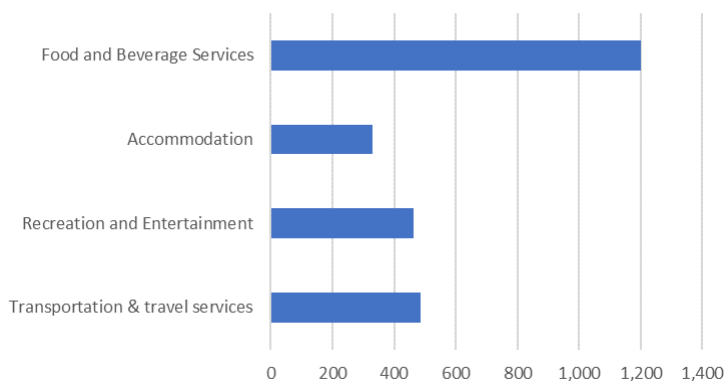
Opportunities for advancement and better pay in this sector need to be better known. Secondary research and engagement yielded the following potential solutions:

1. Work with industry and North Island College to develop a Tourism excellence program.
2. Work with the sector, First Nations and communities to create a North Island Tourism Champion role.
3. Improve housing policies to increase housing availability.
4. Partner with winter operators to create year-around tourism employment.
5. Position the region as a unique destination/marketing campaign.
6. Align the BC Employer Training Grant for use with tourism operations, activities and demands and increase employer options for on-the-job and inhouse training (i.e., some operators are not eligible).
7. Attract Indigenous workers and co-create and promote Indigenous tourism products and services.
8. Recruit international workers with unique skillsets and participate in international hiring campaigns and expand international student hiring.
9. Promote hiring and developing local talent first, starting with youth and K-12 & post secondary education graduates.
10. Provide and expand opportunities for tourism business ownership and tourism entrepreneurship training.
11. Educate teachers and youth on tourism careers and earning potential.
12. Action transportation subsector's collaboration with BC Transit and others.
13. Advocate for tax incentives and other incentives for relocation for new hires (i.e., as in healthcare which has a BC Physician Recruitment Incentive).
14. Use more digital marketing for talent and global talent search, including leveraging go2HR (a tourism HR agency) expertise and capacity.

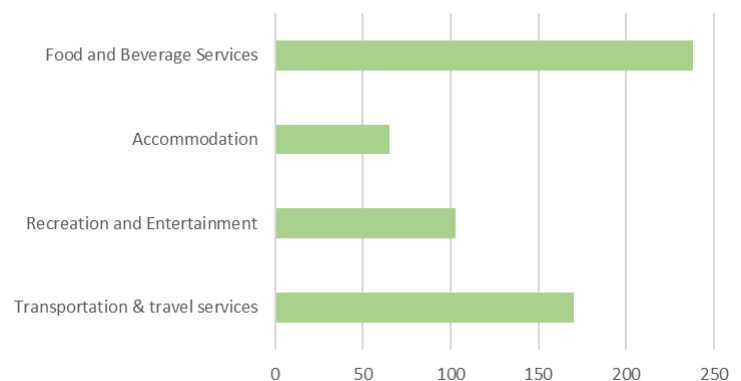
Employers pointed out that the tourism & hospitality sector require a specific mindset & skills set that includes multitasking, interpersonal communication, & change management skills. These skills are critical for effective hiring & cultural fit.

The two charts below show employment opportunities can be found in every subsector of the industry.

Estimated Employment in Tourism Subsectors in SRD, 2021



Estimated Employment in Tourism Subsectors in RDMW, 2021



Source: HCS based on BC Tourism and Hospitality Labour Market Information (LMI) Research Project.

BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED

Part of the secondary research for this project included a scan of best practices and lessons learned in other communities, jurisdictions and projects. Recommendations from this are summarized below. Dedicated human resources (economic development officers, community ambassadors, etc.) will be needed to implement them. Here are some ideas for good practice from the secondary research.

- Better disseminate the advantages of the region.
- Working with the BC and Canadian governments on regulatory and policy issues impacting forest and aquaculture sectors.
- Build greater communication between training institutions including high schools and employers.
- Build greater communication with government organizations, crown corporations and other bodies that influence the housing supply and other community services.
- Improve the availability of healthcare.
- Improve internet connectivity.
- Promote the career paths that are available to those who work in tourism, health care, etc.
- Provide relevant local training through sector-specific, flexible, virtual and micro-credential delivery.

Existing research strongly supports these findings. One specific study by HCS¹ notes that remoteness and the cost of moving deters incoming workers while a sense of community, appropriate facilities and infrastructure and opportunities to engage with people in their field (possibly by upskilling locals) attracts and retains them.

OTHER LESSONS LEARNED

- Leverage the talent of remote workers and those operating in the gig economy.
- Help develop connections among remote workers and those in similar occupations.
- Publicize co-working spaces like coffee shops.
- Outline advantages to families like schools, childcare, short commutes.
- Work on generating and advertising affordable housing, high speed internet connectivity and community safety.
- Announce amenities like restaurants, microbreweries and outdoor recreation on websites and elsewhere.
- Offer extras like weekend visits, financial and business advice and a dedicated ambassador to seek out and support new workers.
- Additional practices endorsed by earlier research and specifically applicable to employers include:
 - Hire students, co-ops and interns who often choose to stay on.
 - Offer flexible working arrangements for the days, hours and location of work.
 - Express appreciation to and recognition of employees.

A detailed analysis of talent best practices and lessons learned is appended to the long version of this report.



¹ Human Capital Strategies. Literature Review & Summary: Home-Based Knowledge Worker Attraction Campaign Project. Prepared for Regional District of Mount Waddington. March 9, 2021





4 INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT ON TALENT ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

We acknowledge we are visitors on the traditional territories of the many First Nations in the Mount Waddington and Strathcona Regional districts. We wish to recognize each of these communities as well as other First Nations and Indigenous peoples living in these territories.

The importance of having a comprehensive Indigenous engagement plan from the beginning of this project translated to the commitment to honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Encouraging innovative solutions for communications and engagement is a necessity and best practice for successful community trust and fulsome participation by key leaders.

First Nations are growing exponentially and the need for robust datasets reflecting their point of view in research is critical with data sovereignty. A focus on urban and remote communities at macro and micro levels is vital for a truly reflective and substantive core data results.

The project consultant engaged with almost 40 First Nations and Indigenous organizations in implementation of a project Indigenous engagement plan; including 16 First Nations, 8 Tribal Councils, a Treaty Nation and several other entities in the project regions. Key to implementing this Plan was retaining a capable Indigenous partner in James Delorme, former Chief of Klahoose First Nation and a trained person with Cultural Safety and Humility.

Indigenous engagement during this project included the following:

- Online Survey: 56 employers, self-employed individuals, employees and jobseekers self-identified as Indigenous – 17% of 331 survey respondents.
- Sector focus groups: 14 Indigenous organizations participated in the 7 focus groups in Port McNeill and Campbell River.
- Key informant interviews: 10 interviews were conducted with representatives of Indigenous organizations and who self-identified as Indigenous.
- Regional Talent Summits: 14 Indigenous organizations participated in two Summits in Campbell River and Port Hardy – each Summit included a traditional welcome and acknowledgement by Indigenous leaders and Elders.
- Direct communication: Direct emails and telephone calls were made to over 40 First Nation and Indigenous organizations to invite them to participate in engagement and research and to contact the consultant with any questions or input on talent challenges and solutions.
- A virtual Medical and Healthcare Career Expo included a traditional welcome by an Indigenous moderator and an Indigenous Healthcare panel on attraction and recruitment which was totally composed of and moderated by Indigenous people.
- The consultant engaged with several Indigenous representatives at two RDMW North Island Regional Economic Forums in Port McNeill on April 5-6 and November 14-15 of this year.

What we heard from Indigenous individuals and organizations on talent issues and potential solutions is reflected in the Findings and Recommendations sections of this report.



When Indigenous employees or jobseekers were asked “The most important reasons for attraction and recruitment difficulties”, the top reasons were:

- *Inadequate technical skills*
- *Lack of affordable housing*
- *Lack of adequate childcare*

The top reasons they cited for retention challenges were:

- *Inadequate transportation*
- *Culture or social reasons*
- *Health and/or addiction issues*
- *Inadequate English skills*

5

CAMPBELL RIVER & NORTH ISLAND 10-YEAR EMPLOYMENT & JOB OPENINGS FORECAST



Estimated Employment by Sector in the Study Area & Projected 10-Year Job Openings

This summary presents estimated employment by sector in the study regions in 2022 and the projected 10-year job openings. The results from a 10-year projection of job openings show the challenge and opportunities the communities in the regions will face.

- The **aquaculture** sector already experienced substantial job loss in 2022 in the study region, especially Strathcona Regional District, due to public policy and regulatory changes regarding salmon farming. Moving forward, annual employment growth rates and the resulting 10-year projection of job openings are somewhat depressed in the absence of regulatory certainty. However, if the mariculture sector develops quickly with technology and innovations, it can bring in more employment opportunities.
- **Forestry and logging**, as well as related support services, have experienced a long-term decline in coastal communities. In the near future, the sector may still experience more contraction due to public policies and regulatory changes. Job openings are expected to come almost entirely from replacement needs.
- Two sectors in this analysis – **healthcare and tourism** – are major employers in the regions. However, they both face acute and on-going talent shortages. Population growth is expected to create new jobs, along with projected job openings to fill positions left by workers leaving the workforce (due to retirement, disability, or other reasons).

The summary table presented on [page 20](#) is organized by each region (City of Campbell River, Strathcona

Regional District, and Regional District of Mount Waddington) and sector, estimates of employment of a sector in 2022 are listed first, followed by a projected total job openings for the four sectors over the period from 2022 to 2032:

- For **aquaculture and forestry**, employment in the study areas in 2022 has been derived using production data, which will show the locations of production throughout the study area. Headquarter jobs in the City of Campbell River cannot be estimated using this approach. However, we estimate that salmon farming related employment in the Campbell River/Sayward/Discovery Islands area based on information from the BC Salmon Farmers Association. It should be noted that this number for Campbell River/Sayward/Discovery Islands represents “direct” jobs in salmon farming in this area, which include all “front-end” salmon farming operations including not only on-farm grow-out activities, but also broodstock farms, hatcheries, smolt farms and primary processing of farm-raised salmon.
- For **healthcare sub-sectors**, we have derived our estimated employment in 2022 by applying a particular study area’s share of employment from the Vancouver Island/Coast Development Region total from 2021 Census.
- For **tourism** employment estimates in 2022, we relied on information from a recent sectoral labour market study, along with applying a particular study area’s share of employment from the Vancouver Island/Coast Development Region total from 2021 Census.

Population growth is expected to create new jobs, along with projected job openings to fill positions left by workers leaving the workforce (due to retirement, disability, or other reasons).



10-YEAR EMPLOYMENT & JOB OPENINGS FORECAST

To project employment by sector and by occupation for the next 10 years, the methodology is generally to apply growth rates for sectors that are applicable to the Vancouver Island/Coast Region. This is assuming that employment growth rates applicable to the sectors in the Study Area are similar to the general macro economic conditions in Vancouver Island/Coast Region.

In an ideal world, when there is a job opening available and someone looking for work fills that position, the labour market is in perfect balance. In reality, this is rarely the case. In a tight labour market, it may take much longer than usual to fill a position. Other reasons, such as workers changing from one job to another, changing from one company to another, also contribute to the availability of job openings that is not captured in the BC Labour Market Outlook model.²

A key part of this 10-year projection of employment is to factor in the reality that to varying degrees, the study area and four sectors already have job vacancies or unfilled positions.

The reasoning is that we know there will be job openings in an industry due to changes in economic conditions and the needs to replace those who have left the workforce. However, if the observed job vacancies and the time required to fill vacancies is substantial, we know there is unmet labour demand that will need to be addressed.

In the summary table on the next page, in addition to the 2022 employment estimates discussed earlier, we present our projects of total job openings for the same from 2023 to 2032. In the last column, we present a range of values that represent additional

job openings to fill over the 10-year period based on scenario analysis.

Detailed explanation of how the employment estimates were derived and the assumptions used to project employment growth in the 10-year period is presented in the long version of this report.

To conduct a scenario analysis, we reviewed data from Statistics Canada's Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) – which provides comprehensive data on job vacancies and offered wages by industrial sector and detailed occupation for Canada and the provinces, territories and economic regions. We reviewed data for the four broad sectors under analysis in different time frames to determine our assumptions for scenario analysis. For the purposes of scenario analysis, we present potential additional vacancies to fill based on job vacancy rates observed in the recent past:

- The first scenario is based on the average job vacancy rates for sectors for the whole province in the most recent past – six quarters from the first quarter in 2022 to the second quarter of 2023.
- The second scenario is based on the highest job vacancy rates observed for sectors for the whole province – for most industries it was the second quarter in 2022.
- The third scenario is based on the five-year average job vacancy rates for sectors for the whole province prior to the pandemic – five-year average from 2015 to 2019.

In the summary table that follows, the last column contains the range of lowest to highest job opening numbers in each row.

² [Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. BC Labour Market Outlook: 2022 Edition. Retrieved at: https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSFS0005-000146#:~:text=British%20Columbians%20can%20expect%20a,year%20for%20the%20forecast%20period](https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023PSFS0005-000146#:~:text=British%20Columbians%20can%20expect%20a,year%20for%20the%20forecast%20period)

“In an ideal world, when there is a job opening available and someone looking for work fills that position, the labour market is in perfect balance.”



10-YEAR EMPLOYMENT & JOB FORECAST

Estimated Employment in 2022 in the Study Area for Four Sectors and Projected 10-Year Total Job Openings

(Strathcona Regional District & Regional District of Mount Waddington Combined)

Sector	Est. Employment 2022	10-Year Total Job openings	Scenario Analysis - range of additional job
AQUACULTURE	1,053	362	205 > 403
RDMW	411	141	80 > 157
SRD	642	221	125 > 245
CofCR	595	205	116 > 227
FORESTRY	2,459	306	333 > 1,411
RDMW	701	91	89 > 397
SRD	1,758	215	244 > 1,014
HEALTHCARE	3,327	1,646	381 > 794
RDMW	472	233	54 > 113
SRD	2,855	1,413	327 > 681
CofCR	2,294	1,135	263 > 547
TOURISM	3,249	1,441	917 > 3,530
RDMW	613	272	173 > 666
SRD	2,636	1,169	744 > 2,864
CofCR	1,915	850	541 > 2,081

Notes:

- SRD includes City of Campbell River and as such the combined total for the sector is the sum of the value for RDMW and SRD only.
- While using vacancy rate by industry data that applies to "animal production and aquaculture" for scenario analysis results in additional jobs to fill over the period between 2022 and 2032, it is not clear to what extent the observed vacancy rates apply to aquaculture operations in the study area – animal production subsector is substantially larger than aquaculture, and as such the vacancy rates may not be applicable to aquaculture at all. We further note that there was substantial job loss in 2022 in SRD because of the closure of salmon farms along Discovery Passage, which would have resulted in excess supply of workers.

Source: HCS analysis of and extrapolations from: *BC Labour Market Outlook: 2022 edition*, Ministry of Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills; Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey* (unpublished data); Statistics Canada, *Job Vacancy and Wage Survey*, various quarters, 2022 and 2023.

When you're making decisions, reach out to the First Nation's elected leadership, to understand full scope of how that Nation works & feels about/sees what you're doing ... that will benefit your decision making & how you're moving forward & will make it better/easier in the future.

~A summit participant

6 REGIONAL TALENT SUMMITS

The Project Partners believed it would be useful to have a meeting of all interested parties in both the north part of the region and the south part. These “Summits” were intended to have the project consultant present draft solutions and recommendations for feedback as a last step before completing the project final report. There was a solid turnout at both Summits in Campbell River and Port Hardy on October 17th of this year. Participants appeared well-engaged throughout each event and almost all stayed to the end. Both Summits were opened with a traditional welcome and land acknowledgement by First Nations representatives: In Campbell River, June Johnson, Elder, Wei Wai Kai First Nation; and in Port Hardy, Hereditary Chief David Knox, Kwakiulth First Nations.

The keynote speaker, Todd Hirsch, provided a thought-provoking presentation, “The Drivers of Disruption: Navigating the Uncertain Economy of 2024.” This evoked an engaging Q & A discussion and foundation for the rest of the Summit.

Todd Hirsch on “How industries in the regions can navigate these volatile, unpredictable, complex disrupters”:

1. *Know who you are (what you're good at, bad at, etc. (can everyone articulate the same story?)*
2. *Relationships - how to pivot and reinvent (be a successful adaptor).... Build relational trust; How to trust your team (relational trust); trust your competitors (tie life rafts together) and trust clients*
3. *Be prepared for anything - scenario planning (company, industry, region)*
4. *Show Up! Don't have to knock it out of the park ... show up with kindness*

Each sector panel of four representatives and a moderator involved insightful presentations on talent solutions and led to much interaction among panelists and with Summit participants. There were many potential solutions identified by panelists and generated through discussion with the audience at both Summits. Thank you to Mary Ruth Snyder (Campbell River & District Chamber of Commerce) and Chris Callanan (NIEFS) for doing a great job of moderating the Summit panels in Campbell River and Port Hardy, respectively. Thank you also to the eight panelists who each did a great job at the Summits:

Panel In Campbell River: Tina Gonsky, Grieg Seafood; Rosalee MacKinnon, Western Forest Products; Tanille Johnston, First Nations Health Authority; and, Stephen Gabrysh, Campbell River Adventure Tours Group.

Panel In Port Hardy: Jorawar Brah, K'awat'si Economic Development Corporation; Eric Dutcyvich, Lemare Lake Logging; Lesly Deuchar, Island Health; and, Donna Gault, Café Guido.

Examples of panelist comments on the four sectors:

- “Huge opportunity to be creative and find new ways to do things...innovate to get people into the industry. Finfish is year-round but faces political uncertainty and public opinion. Myths and untruths...folks don't understand the opportunity.”
- “Forestry has a great story to tell, it's not always out there. The forestry industry can play a part in climate change; responsibility in everything we do today. Employees can be proud of the sustainability...get that story out to youth, into schools. Shifting the narrative and getting that message out - It's not an industry on the decline, as everyone is saying.”
- “Accessing local training and education; encourage and invite more local training for forestry and across the board. Not everyone can go to large urban centres for training....look at micro-credentialing.”
- “Collaboration is huge; nations are small and in really remote places; don't need a full time person doing just one job... need six different hats, so partnering nation to nation and/or with the other Health Authorities.”
- “Pointing out how a vibrant and strong tourism economy can be a solution for all the different industries....a great experience may mean visitors return as employees, encourage friends to come as employees.”
- “Education and training: realign education calendar to align with tourism calendar.”

Each Summit ended with inviting participants to complete a Talent Solutions comment/rating form. From completed Talent Solutions forms, key themes included:

- Consulting on and streamlining government policies and regulation which impact key sectors.
- Housing – local government regulation/bylaws - flexibility; rentals; short-term housing.
- Partnerships with and inclusion of First Nations.
- Connecting with youth, K-12 curriculum, visits to industry, etc.
- Supporting existing digital connectivity initiatives.
- Year-round job opportunities and support.
- Bolder, sustained community attraction strategies.
- Sectors and communities working together on common needs and solutions.
- Transportation to better connect communities and improve mobility and commuting.
- Attracting young professionals.

Both sector-specific and cross-cutting solutions were identified at and after the Summits and this is reflected in the Findings section of this report.

IN YOUR WORDS ...



“Employers surveyed indicated that the most helpful assets for attraction and retention of talent are affordable housing and childcare, followed by health service providers and available cellular coverage.



Among the employers we surveyed, the top 3 reasons they indicated for having attraction/recruitment challenges were: inadequate technical skills; a lack of affordable housing; and a lack of adequate childcare.



Surveyed employers identified women, youth and Indigenous people as the labour force groups they most recruit from; persons with disabilities, older workers and newcomers were the talent least frequently tapped into.

When asked what policies or programs would most likely attract people to relocate to the region, the resounding most cited response by employers was to do with affordable housing.

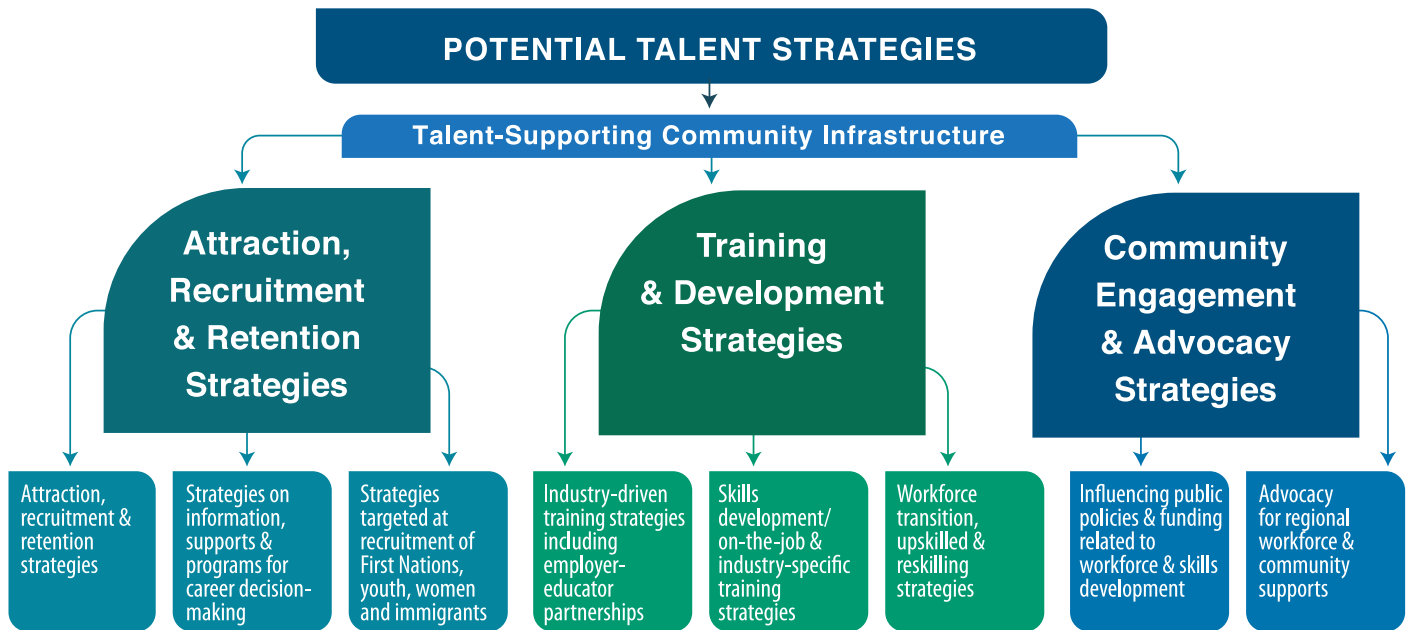


In addition, the second-most frequent comment related to community matters: Addressing the homeless and addiction situation downtown, increasing community safety, having more parks and a thriving shopping district, and holding more community events.



Indigenous relations - work with band administration to notify of employment and training opportunities. They are often remote so we're focusing on bringing the training to them.”

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION



Employers, First Nations, public, private and non-profit service providers (K-12, post-secondary, WorkBC, etc.), etc. each deliver programs and services in all of the above categories of strategies. These entities can work together to coordinate and integrate efforts to produce synergy.

The regions studied in this project represent a unique economic and social system that contributes to the prosperity of the province. It is a vibrant diverse community where traditional ways of life and modern work intersect. The research showed that in these regions, people view their jobs and services not just as tasks, but as a critical part of building local communities that support individuals, families and neighbourhoods. To ensure continued growth and prosperity in the regions, it is critical to address identified workforce challenges and opportunities holistically. This requires an integrated strategy that incorporates key aspects such as people and wellness, housing, community, transportation, education, technology, health, and childcare.

Overall, there are three levels of opportunities for action indicated by the primary research and engagement and complemented by the secondary research, regardless of sector or geographic area.

- A. The first level are community and provincial infrastructure, namely, affordable housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation and community capacity and assets.
- B. The second level are sector-specific solutions for more and more effective workforce strategies, programs, services, supports and financial resource.
- C. The third level are broader cross-sector options for solutions which will benefit employers and others in various sectors and regions.

A) Strategies for Regional and Community Talent-Supporting Infrastructure

Our conclusion by the end of the research and engagement for this project regarding these “big” issues which impact talent attraction, recruitment, retention, skill development, etc. is that a combination of financial and other resources, working together well and regional and local attractiveness are needed.

As one focus group participant stated, “we need to rewrite our story” – we need to position the regions and communities as a uniquely attractive destinations in which to live, work and play – for employers and workers, for youth and students, for families

and retired persons, for Indigenous and disadvantaged people and for others.

Many communities and many sectors in BC are experiencing the same talent challenges. One way for regions and communities of the North Island to compete for talent is communicating far and wide what they offer the potential resident, worker, professional, etc. - “how do we stand out from others?”

In order to address shortcomings in North Island’s regional and community infrastructure (business, physical, social, etc.), a priority action should be for regional and community governments and all those with an interest to design and deliver targeted campaign to cover careers, education and training, housing, regional industries, types of employment, unique lifestyle, nature, benefits working and living in the region. This needs to include: a targeted TV campaign; social media campaign; videos/interviews/ success stories; engage influencers and target populations.

A collaborative regional and community infrastructure strategy should focus on some of the following potential actions:

- Affordable and available housing, including a local rental program, reducing local government costs of building, changing local bylaws around short term rentals and secondary suites, etc.
- Supports/incentive for improving local community assets and attractiveness.
- Flexible, affordable and (when necessary) subsidized childcare and childcare capacity, including co-locating childcare with high schools and near large employers/sectors.
- Responsive, flexible transportation links and strategies, including additional public transit, be links (for commuting and moving) between communities in the regions, a dedicated transportation company, incentives for rideshares and volunteer transportation, etc.
- Expanded, easier to navigate local healthcare and social services, including a strategy to address mental health and addiction on the North Island.
- Digital connectivity, including mobile phone service in remote areas, and other technology including becoming a hub for AI-related enterprise and work.

B)

Sector-Specific Talent Strategies

The tables below outlines the key recommendations related to talent needs by priority sector. The subsequent table on page 26 focuses on recommended actions for all sectors.

Sector	Talent Area	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION SOLUTIONS
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AQUACULTURE 	Recruitment & Retention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the aquaculture sector in partnership with First Nations, governments and communities. Enhance the positive engagement with First Nations and local communities, supporting ongoing dialogue and partnership to enhance collaboration. Promote the sector's importance in food production to support interest in career and business opportunities. Conduct a talent supply analysis for future growth and diversification.
	Training & Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate transferable skills training for sector workers to support adaptation to technological and market changes. Support the development and delivery of local training programs, including community well-being and employability programs. Build sector and First Nations training partnerships with local schools and colleges.
	Policy & Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to advocate for policy changes benefiting the aquaculture sector and aquaculture-based communities.



FORESTRY 	Recruitment & Retention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create an online BC-wide attraction campaign to attract families to the region by highlighting the region's forestry jobs, career prospects, and lifestyle advantages. Develop forestry career progression paths and provide information to workers and job candidates. Continue to implement diverse and inclusive recruitment initiatives, focusing on local First Nations, youth, women, immigrants and mature workers.
	Training & Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with governments and post-secondary to provide forestry-specific scholarships, bursaries and grants. Work with employers and Skilled Trades BC to expand forestry apprenticeships, internships, summer jobs, and mentorships. Communicate a wide range of forestry careers to target audiences (see above) Create and disseminate a forestry-specific career map(s). Leverage existing workforce development ecosystem to upskill and reskill workforce through government and employer funded programs. Form partnerships with local First Nations to attract & recruit Indigenous youth & jobseekers.
	Youth Talent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Form partnerships with local, regional, provincial and national educational institutions for targeted recruitment and education programs and curricula. Integrate forestry curriculum into the K-12 and PSE systems and update it regularly. Organize forestry tours. Expand the industry-based Fundamentals in Forestry Program within and outside the region.
	Policy & Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for making the Canada Summer Jobs program more flexible to meet the needs of forestry businesses and operations.

“Twenty-eight percent of employers surveyed indicated that they expected to see employment increase by 10% or more over the next 5 years.”



Sector-Specific Talent Strategies

The tables below outlines the key recommendations related to talent needs by priority sector. The subsequent table on page 26 focuses on recommended actions for all sectors.

Sector	Talent Area	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION SOLUTIONS
HEALTHCARE 	Recruitment & Retention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize and conduct annual job fairs focusing on increasing networking capacity for connecting recruiters and job/career-seekers. 2. Leverage policy and programs to tailor the Provincial Nominee Program and federal immigration programs to attract and recruit more internationally trained healthcare workers to the region and sector. 3. Work with sector employers and post-secondary institutions to leverage the talent of international students in the region. 4. Promote healthcare sector as a career for Indigenous youth. 5. Expand local healthcare/medical training including on-the-job learning opportunities.
	Training & Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Collaborate to attract and retain quality healthcare educators. 7. Offer more and more flexible training for healthcare occupations. 8. Offer upgrading and training for internationally trained healthcare workers.
	Housing & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Provide sustainable housing and flexible childcare (scheduling, location, etc.) solutions for healthcare workers in the communities.
	Policy & Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Advocate for the Government of Canada to improve credential recognition of internationally trained medical professionals/healthcare workers.
TOURISM 	Recruitment & Retention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish the region's tourism brand as a year-round destination. 2. Collaborate with local communities for recruitment, both seasonal and year-round. 3. Develop and promote more year-round employment opportunities, including part-time, full-time, remote, and hybrid. 4. Attract First Nations to co-create and promote Indigenous tourism products and services in the region and beyond. 5. Leverage go2hr resources and capacity to provide more digital marketing of talent and global talent search by the sector. 6. Bring international workers and attract global talent with a focus on high demand skills and customers' needs.
	Training & Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Establish a regional tourism training centre with North Island College and others. 8. Advocate for and leverage for more suitable government grants for training and other skills development. 9. Provide more on-the-job training leading to certification and career advancement to increase workers' and candidates' interest in tourism careers. 10. Engage regional tourism owners in training development and delivery, including working with go2HR on this.
	Housing & Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Work with sector and regional governments to develop innovative and flexible housing solutions for local and seasonal workers including temporary hotel/site options, work and live options, etc. 12. Create new housing initiatives and leverage existing opportunities and capacities in the sector (temp hotel/site accommodation, work and live options, others).
	Policy & Advocacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Create a 'Tourism Champion' role in the sector and region. 14. Advocate for making the Canada Summer Jobs Program more flexible to meet sector's needs.

Pointing out how a vibrant and strong tourism economy can be a solution for all the different industries... a great experience may mean visitors return as employees, encourage friends to come as employees... and the services that pop up around them (restaurants etc.) also serve residents ... helps everyone.

~A summit participant



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION



Cross-Sector Talent Strategies

The table below shows the seven priority areas and recommendations tailored to address specific workforce challenges within the regions, ranging from attraction and retention, targeted skills and career development, and utilization of local and global talent to community development and infrastructure improvements.

SEVEN PRIORITY AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Cross-Sector)							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Region-specific Attraction & Retention	Youth, K-12, PSE Industry-Related Initiatives	Sector-specific Skills & Career Development	Utilization of Diverse Talent Pools	Informed Career & Employment decision-making	Housing & Community Infrastructure	Advocacy & Influencing for Workforce Support	
1	Develop an easy to navigate online platform to showcase jobs, regional highlights and resources for new residents. Include success stories tailored to target audiences.	Develop K-12 sector-specific curricula driven by industry to engage local youth.	Provide more flexible & local training opportunities and programs on North Island to provide a variety of skill-building options within communities.	Leverage existing & advocate for more incentives for employers to tap into under-represented talent including Indigenous people, career changers, mature workers, newcomers, women, etc.	Develop sector-specific career & job information materials, including adapting the 2023 BC Labour Market Outlook (BCLMO) data for North Island employer & sector use.	Diversify housing supply, regulate short-term rentals, address secondary suites, & improve affordable housing near bus routes.	Provide incentives & seed funding for First Nations/ public/private talent partnerships including community-based & flexible training.
2	Update branding for each sector to attract talent. For example, tourism is a year-round sector.	Expand internship, co-op, and apprenticeship programs that allow students and graduates to gain practical experience.	Build more opportunities for cross-sector training to support workforce mobility & enhance employability in the regions.	Increase awareness about & facilitate recruitment & retention of new immigrants, international students & temporary workers. Provide tailored internships, job placements, apprenticeships, & contract work for such talent.	Disseminate career information online, in communities, schools, public spaces, transportation hubs. Use latest BCLMO data on Top Jobs in the region now & over the next 10 years.	Develop a collaborative North Island childcare strategy to leverage more resources for childcare spaces in the region including co-locating spaces and schools and spaces & large employment hubs.	Leverage existing & advocate for additional funds to First Nations to support their forestry capacity growth and support workforce development in this context.
3	Industry to work with government to repurpose an existing program to offer relocation and retention incentives in high-demand sectors.	Expand & promote summer job opportunities across all sectors for hiring students and graduates. Offer these opportunities to facilitate career exploration & decision-making.	Promote & offer more skilled trades apprenticeship opportunities, including apprenticeships in secondary school & for those working in trades and uncertified.	More sector collaboration with First Nations employers & other stakeholders to increase economic & employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the region.	Develop a North Island Career Map to show career opportunities in high-demand occupations & show pathways with training & related jobs.	Continue with existing initiatives on digital connectivity, including enhanced mobile phone service in remote areas. Establish North Island as an AI hub for businesses & young professionals.	Work with the Province to tailor the Provincial Nominee Program for the North Island to meet high demand needs in the health & wellness sector, hospitality & others.
4	Offer more employer workplace flexibility (e.g., hours schedule, length of day, less days, outside of regular hours) for employees.	Create more mentorship opportunities within each sector. Promote mentorship opportunities for K-12 and PSE students and graduates.	Work with employers and PSE to create more non-trades, apprenticeship-like training models for operator, technician, technologist and service positions.	Create and offer remote & flexible work options to attract a wider range of talent, including caregivers & those in remote areas.	Organize and host cross-sector & sector-specific job & career fairs and networking events, partnering with regional employment services.	Enhance transportation assets within & between North Island communities, including implementing ride shares, volunteer transportation, & a dedicated 24-7 transport company.	Promote the goal of an integrated & interdependent 'workforce ecosystem' requiring collaboration & coordination among sectors, First Nations, other governments, K-12, PSE & employment services to maximize synergy & effectiveness.
5	Introduce Local Talent Recognition programs & awards for exceptional local talent to enhance attraction, boost morale, and foster loyalty.	Introduce Career Discovery Programs in collaboration with regional employers. Organize 'challenges' where students solve real-world industry problems.	"Leverage more funding for post-secondary institutions to work with employers & sectors in the use of micro-credentials & flexible, short-term training.	Equip employers and HR teams with training to value workforce diversity, especially among Indigenous, immigrant, female & persons with disabilities talent.	Organize joint workshops with industry leaders & industry speakers in schools for practical career insights and awareness/interest building.	Develop a North Island digital 'catalogue' of community assets to promote attraction & good quality of life through community events, & cultural & outdoor activities.	Develop a guide for North Island employers on workforce development funding programs & promote for tax incentives for companies training students and young professionals.
6	Offer career support for spouses to attract couples and families & to enhance the region's appeal for family relocation.	Expand dual credit programs with work experience & education sectors with high demand.	Utilize technology to offer mobile training units & virtual platforms for specialized sector-specific training across regions.	Work with sectors & regional groups to develop a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) of the regional workforce & implications for action	Offer sector-specific job development services to address unique industry needs and trends.	Increase regional collaboration to expand access to & advocate for more mental health & addiction services & resources, especially in remote areas.	Offer small business mentorship & small business setup programs to boost entrepreneurship in the region.

“We need to rewrite our story— we need to position the regions and communities as a uniquely attractive destinations in which to live, work and play – for employers and workers, for youth and students, for families and retired persons, for Indigenous and disadvantaged people and for others.”

~A summit participant



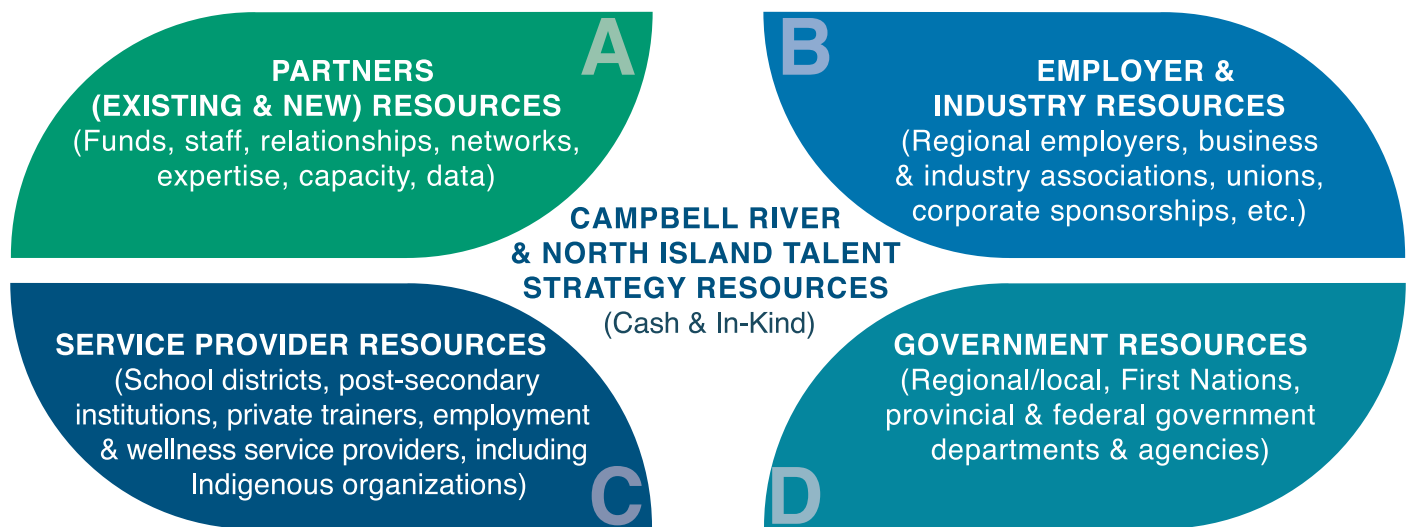
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Sustainability, Funding and Partnership Opportunities

A critical component of these recommendations includes consideration of and planning for the sustainability of all strategies and tactics to be implemented. Some strategies/tactics may be shorter term with immediate results, and others may be more involved and/or need ongoing support beyond the initial implementation.

The eventual plan (developed by the Partners and a Workforce Steering Committee) for resourcing these recommendations should be multi-year and multi-pronged. While some revenue sources may provide a significant portion of the necessary resources, there are several funding sources from which to draw. In principle, cash, in-kind and knowledge resources will be tapped into for recommendation implementation as captured in the chart below.

Priorities for early funding for Recommendation Implementation



An important point should be made when asking funders for resources for these recommendations. While this is a “Made-in-North Island” approach, many priorities and tactics in it will test and demonstrate opportunities for innovation and positive outcomes and will provide models for replication and adaptation in other communities (particularly other rural and remote) and regions across BC and Canada.

Potential Resource Partnerships

Resource partnerships with the Partners and a Workforce Steering Committee could be sought during the implementation of these recommendations, including the following types of organizations and cash and in-kind contributions:

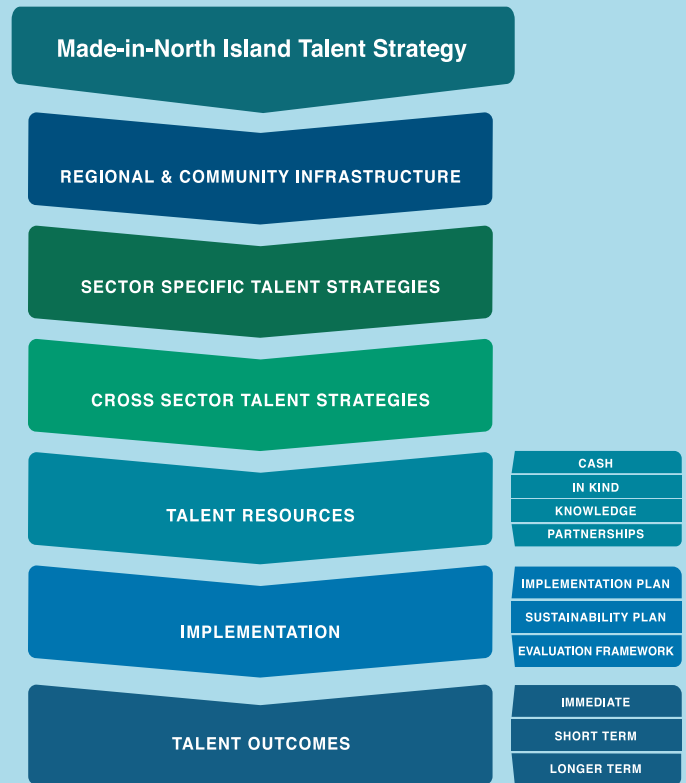
- Employer and industry associations in key sectors
- Chambers of commerce and business improvement associations
- Major public and private sector employers
- Major provincial and regional business groups
- Post-secondary institutions and major employment service providers in the regions
- First Nations and Indigenous organizations, including employment and training entities
- Non-profit organizations which represent disadvantaged and/or underrepresented labour force groups (e.g., immigrants, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S, etc.)
- Labour organizations
- Government agencies and public sector employers such as healthcare authorities and crown corporations
- Media outlets
- Others to be determined

These are presented in more detail in the long version of this report.

8 IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This report's final set of recommendations involves suggestions on how to plan, prepare for and implement the above talent recommendations. It focuses on what the three Partners, along with other organizations which agree to participate, should do next after accepting and distributing this report. We suggest the following general sequenced steps:

1. Distribute this report widely through Partner networks and social media.
2. Partners go through an internal prioritizing of recommendations process.
3. Partners determine the extent to which they will differentiate between the three areas (Campbell River, RDMW and SRD) and the priority sectors (aquaculture, forestry, healthcare and tourism) in implementing any recommendations.
4. Communicate to and engage with stakeholders and First Nations which recommendations the Partners work plan to proceed with implementing.
5. Obtain a response from stakeholders and First Nations who wish to participate in this implementation.
6. Create a representative Steering Committee to help guide and inform the Partners work - possessive on the implementation.
7. With the Committee, further prioritize the list of recommendations for action (immediate, short, medium, long term). Use a lens of biggest impact, most urgent, 'low hanging fruit,' etc.
8. Create an estimate of resources, timelines, and partnerships for the implementation.
9. Obtain preliminary partner and funding commitments necessary for starting the implementation.
10. Develop a detailed Implementation Plan that identifies phasing, timelines, resources, partnerships and roles and responsibilities and specific strategic and tactical methodologies. This Plan should include a Sustainability Plan and an Evaluation Plan regarding resources for and tracking the results of the implementation respectively.
11. Obtain input from the Steering Committee on strategies and tactics.
12. Execute the Implementation Plan in a phased way.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

~ Project Steering Committee

Shannon Baikie, North Island Employment Foundations Society
Jennifer Case, North Island College
Jackie Challis, Regional District of Mount Waddington (after Oct. 31)
Steph Coe, Mt Waddington Learning & Development Society
Pat Corbett-Labatt, Mayor of Port Hardy
Geoff Crawford, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
Lesly Deuchar, Island Health
Jason Downing, Mowi Canada West
Pat English, Regional District of Mount Waddington (before Nov. 1)
Tina Gonsky, Grieg Seafood BC
Megan Hanacek, Pacific West Resource Management
Danielle Hoogland, North Island College
Bridget Horel, Pacifican
Dan Jorgenson, United Steelworkers
Bridget Horel, BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development & Innovation (until Sept 18, 2023)

Renée LaBoucane, Strathcona Regional District
Janet MacDonell, Campbell River Medical Staff Engagement Initiative Society
Sadie Mack, Campbell River and District Division of Family Practice
Hayley McConnell, North and West Island Rural and Remote, Island Health
Donna Merry, North Island College
Diane Naugler, North Island College,
Brad McRae, Western Forest Products
Azalea Milwid, Strathcona Regional District
Mary Ruth Snyder, Campbell River & District Chamber of Commerce
Dana Starritt, City of Campbell River
Dr. Jordyn Vanderveen, Campbell River & District Division of Family Practice
Alex Wilson, Kwakiutl First Nation
Rose Klukas, City of Campbell River
Leah Knutson, City of Campbell River

~ Project Healthcare Subcommittee

Sara Campbell, Talent Acquisition, Island Health, (after Oct. 31)
Jackie Challis, Regional District of Mount Waddington (after Oct. 31)
Pat English, Regional District of Mount Waddington (before Nov. 1)
Bridget Horel, BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development & Innovation (until Sept 18, 2023)
Rose Klukas, City of Campbell River
Leah Knutson, City of Campbell River
Janet MacDonell, Campbell River Medical Staff Engagement Initiative Society
Sadie Mack, Campbell River and District Division of Family Practice
Hayley McConnell, North and West Island Rural and Remote, Island Health
Carlie Powell, Talent Acquisition, Island Health (before Nov. 1)
Dana Starritt, City of Campbell River
Dr. Jordyn Vanderveen, Campbell River & District Division of Family Practice (the Division)

TOURISM

FORESTRY

HEALTHCARE

AQUACULTURE