

# Report

Date May 31, 2024

File:

Subject Economic Development Action Plan – What We Heard Report

---

## **PURPOSE**

To review feedback on the engagement conducted to inform the development of the Economic Development Action Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Economic Development Committee's work plan includes an update to North Cowichan's Economic Development Action Plan. Vann Struth Consulting (now Deloitte) was retained through a competitive process to oversee the development of this Action Plan, and an overview of the work plan was provided to the Committee at the February 23, 2024, meeting. In developing the Action Plan, the consultant will consider inputs from regional strategies, federal and provincial programs, local stakeholders, and additional analysis to develop prioritized strategies that consider partnerships, level of impact, implementation timelines, and resources. The Plan is funded through grant funding provided by the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) and Island Coastal Economic Trust.

## **DISCUSSION**

North Cowichan hosted a survey on business development opportunities and challenges on our engagement platform, Connect North Cowichan, and the results will inform the Economic Development Action Plan. Input has been received from the business community, and a summary of these findings is included in the *What We Heard* report (Attachment 1). Input was captured on North Cowichan's business processes and ideas for how to support expansion, and open-ended comments provided input centred on the following themes:

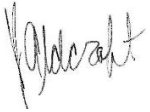
1. Economic diversification and support;
2. Housing and urban development;
3. Environmental sustainability and community engagement; and,
4. Cultural and recreational enhancement.

Additional interviews and focus group sessions will take place through the spring/summer as additional special topic analysis occurs and as additional work is underway to coordinate engagement processes with the Economic Development Cowichan strategy. The draft Action Plan will be presented to the Economic Development Committee in the fall of 2024.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This report has been provided for information purposes only.

Report prepared by:



---

Jennifer Aldcroft  
Climate Change Specialist

Report reviewed by:



---

George Farkas  
General Manager, Planning, Development and  
Community Services

**Approved to be forwarded to Economic Development Committee:**



---

Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

(1) MNC What We Heard report - Economic Development