

March 16, 2023

## WHERE TALENT MEETS OPPORTUNITY

### Campbell River and North Island labour market partnership project

The City of Campbell River (the City), Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW) and Strathcona Regional District (SRD) have launched a Labour Market Partnership project that looks to conduct a labour market study of Campbell River and the North Island and to prepare a strategy to address priority needs.

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.

To help address these concerns, the City, RDMW, and SRD formed a Labour Market Partnership to conduct a joint labour market study of Campbell River and Vancouver Island North. This project aims to update existing data, improve understanding of labour market issues, trends and opportunities and support the development of action plans.

*“Growth, collaboration and cultivating a healthy and safe community are three of Council’s five strategic priorities for our term in office,” says City of Campbell River Mayor, Kermit Dahl. “The labour market partnership supports all of these priorities and is a vital investment in the physical, mental and economic health of our communities. By working together, we can get the data needed to inform our decisions and help us thrive.”*

Activities will include producing an updated labour market report and undertaking several initiatives to attract healthcare professionals. Key focus areas will be the regional health and wellness, aquaculture, forest and tourism sectors. Given the acute shortages and challenges for healthcare in the region, this sector will involve some unique deliverables such as an online healthcare job fair and an online health recruitment and retention best practices toolkit. A steering committee of regional representatives from diverse industries, governments and organizations will help guide the overall project and facilitate cross-community collaboration.

*“The Labour Market study that is now underway will provide very useful information that can be applied to our ongoing resident attraction program,” emphasized Andrew Hory, Chairman, Regional District of Mount Waddington Chairman. “In particular, the recruitment tools that will be developed to target health care workers will be a valuable addition to the efforts of Vancouver Island Health to fill vacancies throughout the sector. The challenges of the labour market are not unique to our region and we need to deploy the most efficient tools available in order to compete successfully for talents that are in universal demand.”*

We formed this partnership because:

- Our economies are linked;
- Recent events have impacted industries in all three areas;
- Our regions are experiencing similar challenges with workforce retention and attraction; and,
- We can work together to explore opportunities and strategies to diversify our economies.

*“Our communities are all stronger when we work together. This project will provide valuable information and data for Campbell River and the entire north island. All of our communities can benefit from collaborative workforce development and attraction initiatives to recruit talent to the area” said Mark Baker, SRD Board Chair.*

A highly qualified consulting company, Human Capital Strategies (HCS), with a team of professional experts, has been hired through a competitive process. It has started its work involving comprehensive secondary and primary research, a robust engagement process and the development of a Labour Market Report and a Strategic Workforce Strategy.

The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia are providing funding support of \$250,000 through the Community and Employer Partnerships fund. Additional project costs will be covered by the City, the RDMW and the SRD.

As well as developing strategies for attraction and recruiting, training, career development and retention in key focus sectors and other parts of the economy, this partnership will involve looking into those non-HR factors that can seriously impact worker availability and wellness, such as affordable housing, transportation, childcare, health and social services, etc.

The project will require and involve extensive engagement of individuals and organizations throughout the areas in scope. HCS will be starting outreach any day to ensure as many citizens and organizations as possible have input into the outcomes of this project. In the meantime, if you have any questions or want to enquire about opportunities for input, contact Kerry Jothen, HCS, at [kjothen@humancapitalstrategies.ca](mailto:kjothen@humancapitalstrategies.ca) or (250) 213-9231.

For more information, visit the project webpage at [ecdev.campbellriver.ca/articles/labour-market-partnership](http://ecdev.campbellriver.ca/articles/labour-market-partnership). This project is expected to be completed by January 31, 2024.

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