



Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy for the Columbia Valley

Final Report

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Introduction and Situational Analysis





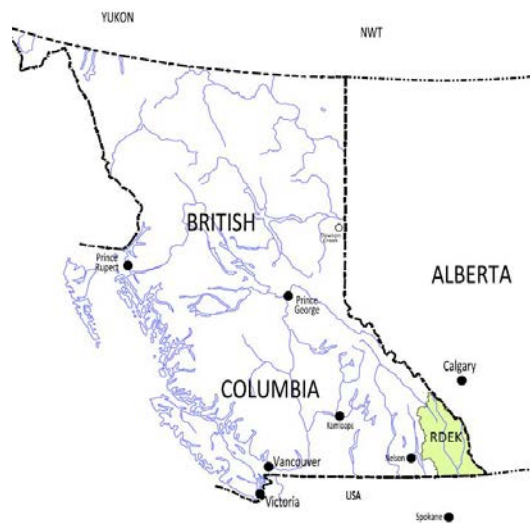
1 Introduction

The Columbia Valley is located in South Eastern British Columbia on the border of Alberta. The Columbia Valley is part of the Regional District of East Kootenay (as seen in Figure 1) and includes the Municipalities of Canal Flats, Invermere, and Radium Hot Springs as well as Electoral Area 'F' (which includes the unincorporated communities of Columbia Lake, Dutch Creek, Fairmont, Panorama, Rushmere, and Windermere) and Electoral Area 'G' (which includes the unincorporated communities of Spillimacheen, Brisco, Wilmer, Edgewater, Dry Gulch, and Juniper Heights).¹ The Columbia Valley is approximately three hours driving distance from Calgary (depending on the location within the Valley).

In an effort to increase the permanent resident population of the area, political leadership throughout the communities of the Columbia Valley have come together to create a Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy for the Columbia Valley. The primary objective of this Strategy is to develop a comprehensive plan that increases Columbia Valley's skilled work force, local school enrollment, and grows the local economy.

Please note that the study area of this report is referred to as the “Columbia Valley”. This name, however, should be treated as a working name and may be updated as a result of ongoing regional branding work by the Columbia Valley Brand & Marketing Steering Committee.

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF EAST KOOTENAY (RDEK ON MAP)



Source: Regional District of East Kootenay, “Regional Profile”, Issue No. 7, November 2014, pg. 2

1.1 Research Methodology

The Strategy combined research and analysis of initiatives and context in the Columbia Valley with extensive consultation and engagement of seasonal and permanent residents, local businesses and community leaders, and political leadership. These research and consultation efforts provided a foundation from which to create informed strategic goals for the Columbia Valley with resulting actions.

The detailed components of the methodology for the project include:

- **Project Launch** - Project initiation, work plan, outreach consultation plan, and confirmation of report outline
- **Research and Engagement** – Situational analysis research, an online survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews

¹ Housing Strategies Inc., “Columbia Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment Update, Final Report”, June 2013



- **Strategic Directions & Action Planning** – Evaluations of thematic areas, SWOT Assessment, strategic goals, and action planning
- **Project Conclusion** – Finalizing the Strategy and final presentation to the project steering committee

From this perspective, the Strategy provides:

- A solid and factual foundation of research and analysis to base future marketing efforts
- Clear, concise, and practical recommendations that will help to attract and retain full-time residents
- Insights into opportunities that will diversify and strengthen the regional economy
- Grounding in community stakeholder ideas and perspectives

2 Situational Analysis

2.1 The Case for Resident Attraction and Retention

Resident attraction and retention is an issue that communities across Canada are grappling with. Often discussed in terms of the attraction and retention of “talent” (largely characterized as skilled labour), communities are experiencing a variety of rapid demographic and economic changes that are altering the way their local economies operate. These changes include:²

- Low birth rates and aging populations
- Increased mobility of talent based on lifestyle preferences and entrepreneurial opportunities (most especially for the millennial generation)
- The increasing role of innovation, creativity, and knowledge-based employment
- The widespread use of new technologies that give people an ability to work from any geographic location and still tap into a global client basis
- Increased urbanization that is positioning cities as magnets for people due to changing economic, cultural, and lifestyle preferences

These changes have contributed to a migration of talent to certain hubs of activity, often located in large urban centres. The result of this migration has led to a “hollowing out” of many communities as younger generations leave the community to pursue education or employment opportunities elsewhere. These youth often do not return to their home communities, creating a gap in talent that limits local business growth, a healthy tax base, and the opportunity to create new jobs. Communities within the province of British Columbia face many of these challenges.³

In order to stem the tide of outmigration, much discussion and research has been created to understand what drives talent to leave or stay in certain areas. Best practice themes that have emerged from this research include:⁴

² Tendensor, “Tools and Strategies for Innovative Talent Attraction and Retention – A Handbook on Talent Attraction Management for Cities and Regions”, January 2014

³ In partnership between the Federal Government of Canada, the Government of BC, the BC Jobs Plan, the Fraser Basin Council, and the BC Rural Network, “Project Comeback: Creating vibrant rural communities by retaining and attracting a young adult population”, December 2012-November 2014

⁴ Ibid



- **Having a strong place-based reputation** – strong reputations and positive overall place branding are important in peaking the interest of talent (especially for quality of life migrants)
- **Having a critical mass of enticing employers and job opportunities** – places that can demonstrate they have a variety of good employers and job opportunities are seeing success in talent attraction and retention as talent actively seeks new challenges and does not stay in one job for long
- **Demonstrating being a “liveable community”** – above and beyond employment opportunities, talent is always looking for communities that can demonstrate they have good quality of place, such as a vibrant cultural scene, opportunities to participate in the social life of the community, and a pleasant physical environment
- **Having good housing options** – access to well-suited housing that comes in a variety of forms (such as short-term living, apartments, and housing)
- **Being accessible to the world** – talent in this day and age lives a relatively mobile life, expecting easy transportation access to the outside world in order to go on trips, participate in national and international networking events and conferences, and be able to tap into creative impulses that go beyond any one community
- **Having a safe, healthy, and clean local environment** – talent tends to be drawn to places where health, safety, and sustainability are priorities and avoid those places where crime, congestion, and environmental problems are obvious
- **Delivering exceptional public services** – talent can be a demanding target group, expecting high quality in the available public services such as schools, day-care, and local infrastructure
- **Having an open social climate** – an open, inclusive, and tolerant climate attracts talent to become part of a community. This atmosphere also acts as a foundation for creativity and innovation, two elements that are also important factors in attracting and retaining talent
- **Having opportunities for co-creation of the community** – talent wants to take part in local debate and community development, wants to be heard, and be co-creators of services that help shape the future of the community
- **Having an “X Factor”** – attracting and retaining people to a community often has a less measurable “hidden” factor that connects people to a place on a personal level that makes them want to live there (such as having attended school there, a family or friend connection, and attending a cultural or professional event)
- **Peripheral link to a major centre** – communities that lie on the edge or in close proximity to a major centre often provide affordable accommodation with access to the job opportunities and diversity of a major centre that is a magnet for growth

2.2 Resident Attraction and Retention in the Columbia Valley

A number of initiatives and reports have been completed in the Columbia Valley with implications for resident attraction and retention in the region. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Regional District of East Kootenay Regional Sustainability Strategy (2014)
- The Columbia Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment Update (2013)
- The Regional District of East Kootenay Regional Profile – Issue #7 (2014)



- The District of Invermere Growth Strategy (2005)
- The District of Invermere Official Community Plan Update (2015)
- The District of Invermere Community Enhancement Plan (2008)
- The District of Invermere Parking Strategy (2013)
- The Village of Canal Flats Official Community Plan (2005)
- The Village of Canal Flats 20 Year Capital Plan (2014)
- The Village of Canal Flats Update to Strategic Plan 2013-2014 (2013)
- Columbia Valley Broadband Corporation Strategic Plan (2016)

Important themes emerging from this work that supports efforts to attract and retain more residents in the Columbia Valley include:

- Focusing on “smart growth” to encourage developments that enhance quality of life, protect the environment, and use tax revenues wisely. Smart Growth emphasizes intensification (both infill and denser development), wise use of infrastructure, a focus on pedestrian transportation, maintenance of natural and green spaces, and thriving, closer-knit communities
- Identifying the need to minimize community impacts from an influx of growth, especially as it relates to putting controls in place to minimize the disruption that a seasonal influx of people brings to the region
- Prioritizing a well-balanced mixture of housing types, including higher density housing and affordable housing suitable for young families, young professionals, and seniors. Integrating this housing stock into existing neighbourhoods is an important element here to accommodate for the needs of both permanent and seasonal residents and to ensure vibrancy in communities throughout the year
- Understanding the effects of taxation policy in communities throughout the region and how that can help or hinder efforts to bring new residents to the area
- Understanding the important role that well-functioning public services and infrastructure play in attracting and retaining skilled labour to the region
- Highlighting policies that encourage local employment and diversification of the regional economy (e.g. job training, developing light industry) to keep jobs in the communities and to minimize the economic impacts during the “shoulder season” when tourists are not visiting the region
- Prioritizing policies that encourage having an attractive and vibrant downtown through the use of urban design features that helps a community keep its natural and small town feel
- Recognizing the importance of having good health facilities and schools in the region as well as good access to transportation networks (such as rail and airports)
- Recognizing the importance of tourism to the regional economy and identifying ways to support the development of new tourism events and businesses that respects the unique needs of permanent residents and seasonal residents
- Identifying and supporting flexible work practices that will provide infrastructure, programming and amenities to lengthen the stay of seasonal residents and encourage remote work activity
- First impressions, wayfinding and curb appeal including improved property standards particularly along major thoroughfares and common signage to reinforce community connectedness

In addition, the individual communities of the Columbia Valley have been working on a number of collaborative initiatives and service delivery that is likely to play an important role in creating a regional approach to resident attraction and retention, including:

- Shared recreation infrastructure to service the region



- Construction of the Greenway Trail along the west side of Lake Windermere
- Establishing a Visitor Information Centre to promote tourism assets in the area
- Fire, Safety, and Emergency Services are being reviewed and implemented on a regional basis
- The adoption of a regional approach by the College of the Rockies (located in Invermere) to service the Columbia Valley

In summary, the constituent communities of the Columbia Valley have been explicitly working to improve their local value propositions, for current and prospective residents, for over a decade. During this period, enhancing community amenities and basic infrastructure have been a point of emphasis. Despite these efforts, communities in the Columbia Valley are still faced with considerable challenges tied to population aging, seasonable employment, industrial decline, and a lack of affordable housing. The following section provides evidence to better understand these challenges. This information is useful to substantiate or refute potential action items to emerge from this study's consultation findings.

2.3 Demographic and Labour Force Profile

2.3.1 Population Profile

The permanent resident population of the Columbia Valley is approximately 8,500 residents. This number increases to more than 20,000 people in the summer months as seasonal residents (often with second homes/cottages/cabins in the area)⁵ return to the area. While not as high a peak, the population also surges in the main winter months due to the presence of very strong downhill skiing and other winter activities. As a result, more than 55% of the Columbia Valley's yearly population are part-time seasonal residents, highlighting the important role they play in the regional economy.^{6 7}

Population projections for the region forecast an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.9% between 2011 and 2030.⁸ Within this growth forecast, certain age cohorts are expected to increase at faster rates than others – most notably the population of “empty-nesters” (aged 55-64 years old) and seniors (aged 65 years old and up). While older cohorts are expected to increase, forecasts suggest that the region will see a relative decline in the region's younger cohorts of children, youth, and adults under the age of 45.⁹

These population forecasts highlight important economic implications for communities within the Columbia Valley. Older cohorts moving into the region at a faster pace are more likely to have established careers, higher incomes, and existing equity in the housing market. With the relative share of younger cohorts decreasing, the region may begin to experience labour shortages that prevent the regional economy from capitalizing on economic opportunities. Also, younger cohorts moving to the region are more likely to be

⁵ It is important to note the difference between a part-time seasonal resident and a tourist. Part-time seasonal residents are often invested in the Columbia Valley in some way, whether through ownership of a home or property or some kind of emotional investment, versus tourists who come to the region for a visit and to have a nice time, often for shorter periods.

⁶ Regional District of East Kootenay, “Columbia Valley Community Priorities Plan”, May 2013

⁷ While the first point of contact a person may have in the Columbia Valley is as a tourist, each tourist falls into one of the five target market segments included in later sections of this report. The goal of this Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy is not necessarily to attract more tourists to the Columbia Valley but rather to turn these five target markets into residents of the Columbia Valley whether or not they first visit the area as a tourist.

⁸ Ibid, Housing Strategies Inc., pg. 10

⁹ Prepared by Urban Systems Ltd. for the District of Invermere, “Imagine: District of Invermere – Official Community Plan”, 2014-2015 Update, May 2015



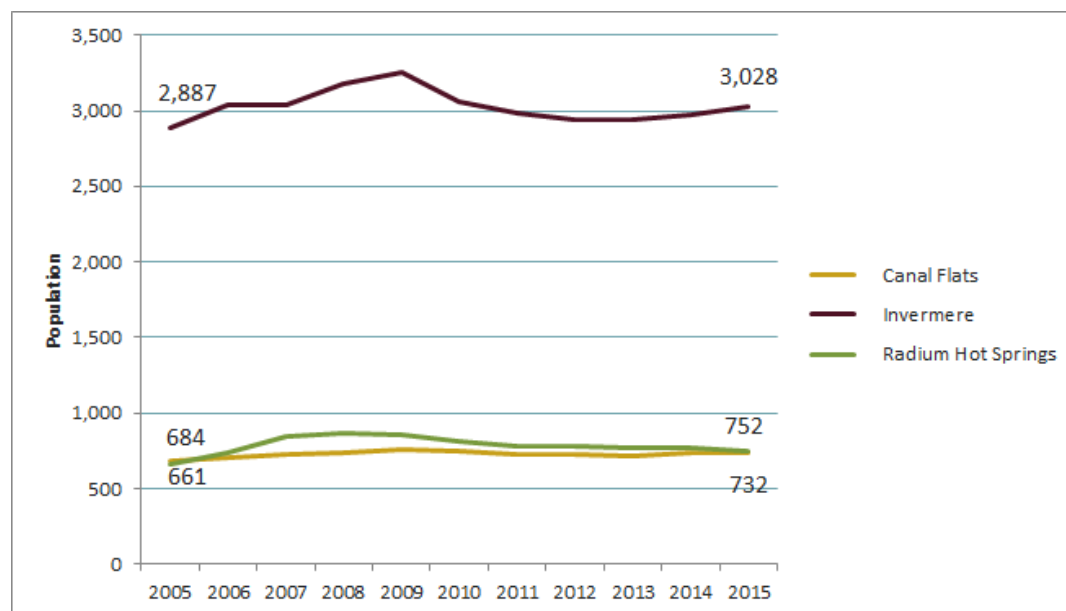
starting their careers, entering the housing market for the first time, and/or in need of higher levels of support¹⁰, each of which has important implications on the provision of services within the region.

In terms of community sizes, the District of Invermere is the largest community in the Columbia Valley with roughly 3,028 residents in 2015 (as seen in Figure 2). The Village of Radium Hot Springs is the second largest community with 752 residents, followed by the Village of Canal Flats with 732 residents.

Growth projections for the region suggest that the population for these three communities will increase slightly over the next 15-20 years:¹¹

- Invermere – increasing to a total population of 3,503 to 4,065
- Radium Hot Springs – increasing to a total population of 920 to 1,905
- Canal Flats – increasing to a total population of 775 to 850

FIGURE 2: 10 YEAR POPULATION TRENDS FOR SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN THE COLUMBIA VALLEY



Source: Demographic Analysis Section, BC Stats. Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Service Government of British Columbia, revised Jan 2015

Historical growth rates for communities in the Columbia Valley can be characterized as “rapid” relative to the Canadian national average (with the exception of Invermere which saw a decline of 1.6% in its population between 2006 and 2011).¹² This rapid growth throughout the Columbia Valley has the potential to place pressure on the region’s infrastructure and support services such as housing affordability and availability issues. As mentioned previously, these increases in population throughout the Columbia Valley are predominantly in the older age cohorts (aged 55 and above), with relative declines in the younger cohorts (under 44 years old) (seen in Figure 3).

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid, Housing Strategies Inc.

¹² Ibid



FIGURE 3: POPULATION TRENDS BY COMMUNITY, COLUMBIA VALLEY, 1996-2011

Community or Area	Observed Population Trends
Invermere (1996-2011)	Experienced a net decline in the population under the age 44 (i.e. families with children and young adults) and a net increase in the population 55 and over (especially empty nesters ages 55-64 and seniors ages 75+)
Radium (1996-2011)	Experienced a net decline in the population ages 25-44 and 0-19 (i.e. families with children) and a net increase in the population 55 and over (especially empty nesters ages 55-64 and seniors ages 75+)
Canal Flats (2006-2011)	Experienced a net increase in the population ages 45-54 (older adults), 55-64 (empty-nesters), and seniors (ages 65-74), no net growth in the older seniors age groups (75+) and a net decline among the 5-44 age cohorts (i.e. families with children). There was also an increase in the number of infants (ages 0-4), which may indicate older adults starting families or increasing family size among young families.
East Kootenay – Area F (2001-2011)	Experienced a net decline in the population under the age of 54 (i.e. families with children and young adults) and a net increase in the population 55 and over (especially empty nesters ages 55-64 and seniors ages 75+).
East Kootenay – Area G (2001-2011)	Experienced a net decline in the population under the age 44 (i.e. families with children and young adults) and a net increase in the population 45 and over (especially empty nesters ages 55-64 and seniors ages 75+).

Source: Housing Strategies Inc., “Columbia Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment Update, Final Report”, June 2013

2.3.2 Regional Housing Trends

The majority of homes throughout the Columbia Valley are single-family dwellings that are owned (as opposed to rented). That being said, housing diversity in the region is improving with new construction of various higher-density housing options (e.g. duplexes, townhouses and strata condominiums).¹³ Rental rates, however, have been declining in most areas of the Columbia Valley, including Invermere, Canal Flats, East Kootenay – Area F and East Kootenay – Area G (rental rates have been increasing in Radium only). While the diversification of housing is a very important trend to note in ensuring that housing availability and affordability remains open to a wide cross-section of people, the declining availability of rental properties means that it is more difficult for lower income residents to find a place to live that meets their budget and life circumstances.

Seasonal homeownership and recreational property investment both play an important role in the housing market of the Columbia Valley, with significant portions of the region’s housing owned by residents that do not live in the area full-time. Growth in this seasonal/recreational market is largely attributed to the wealth and prosperity of the Baby Boomer generation and the wealth generated by Alberta’s oil and gas industries.¹⁴ These seasonal and recreational owners, however, do not necessarily move into the community to become full-time residents, with some waiting for retirement before moving into the area while others may be looking for long or short-term investment opportunities with no intention of ever moving into the area.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid



As a result of all of these factors (among others), the Columbia Valley faces a number of pressing housing challenges that must be addressed, including:

- Housing affordability
- Housing adequacy (i.e. homes in need of major repairs)
- Housing accessibility
- Overcrowding
- An aging population and the anticipated need for additional seniors' housing
- Further loss of rental housing for those who have not yet entered the housing market

The global economic downturn of 2008 and 2009 led to steep declines in the number of housing dwelling permits issued in the Columbia Valley. The number of dwelling permits issued in the region peaked before 2008, dropped steeply afterwards, and has only experienced low to moderate levels of growth since the decline. This low growth is likely attributable to a number of factors including:

- Continued economic hardships that the Canadian oil and gas sector is facing in 2015 and 2016 has generally lowered disposable incomes
- High Canadian Dollar coupled with a weak housing market in the United States drove acquisition of second-home markets in southern jurisdictions (most particularly Palm Springs and Phoenix)
- Regional air connections to places like Comox, Victoria, and Kelowna has diversified the Canadian location offerings to seasonal property buyers
- Improvements to the TransCanada highway from Highway #93 to Golden/Revelstoke and investments in ski operations and golf courses in this corridor and hiking in the national park have created new competition for the Columbia Valley

2.3.3 Labour Force Profile

The industries that employ the most people in the Columbia Valley are (as seen in Figure 4):

- Construction – 665 people employed (16% of total employment)
- Accommodation and Food Services – 495 people employed (12% of total employment)
- Retail Trade – 445 people employed (11% of total employment)
- Health Care and Social Assistance – 330 people employed (8% of total employment)
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation – 310 people employed (7% of total employment)

With the exception of health care and social assistance, these top industries speak loudly to the fact that the economy of the Columbia Valley relies heavily on tourism for its success. This becomes even more clear when comparing the proportions working in these industries in the Columbia Valley against the provincial proportions of total employment.



FIGURE 4 : EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY FOR THE COLUMBIA VALLEY AND PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2011

Industry	Columbia Valley*		British Columbia	
	Employed Labour	% of Total	Employed Labour	% of Total
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	95	2%	52,195	2%
21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	95	2%	23,445	1%
22 Utilities	0	0%	12,920	1%
23 Construction	665	16%	165,340	8%
31-33 Manufacturing	220	5%	139,700	6%
41 Wholesale trade	20	0%	86,590	4%
44-45 Retail trade	445	11%	250,135	12%
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	50	1%	112,795	5%
51 Information and cultural industries	20	0%	57,565	3%
52 Finance and insurance	90	2%	89,155	4%
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	205	5%	52,840	2%
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	240	6%	171,275	8%
55 Management of companies and enterprises	0	0%	2,360	0%
56 Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	255	6%	90,810	4%
61 Educational services	195	5%	161,265	7%
62 Health care and social assistance	330	8%	240,275	11%
71 Arts, entertainment and recreation	310	7%	51,465	2%
72 Accommodation and food services	495	12%	165,960	8%
81 Other services (except public administration)	280	7%	106,765	5%
91 Public administration	160	4%	138,610	6%
Total	4,170		2,171,465	

Source: Statistics Canada. Industry North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2007 (425), Class of Worker for the Employed Labour Force Aged 15 Years 2011 National Household Survey, 99-012-X2011034, adapted by MDB Insight 2016

*Note. Columbia Valley figures are a sum the Municipalities of Canal Flats, Invermere, and Radium Hot Springs as well as Electoral Area 'F' and Electoral Area 'G'

The occupations that employ the most people in the Columbia Valley are (as seen in Figure 5):

- Sales and Service Occupations – 915 people employed (20% of total)
- Trades, Transport, and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations – 865 people employed (19% of total)
- Business, Finance, and Administration Occupations – 825 people employed (18% of total)



- Management Occupations – 685 people employed (15% of total)

FIGURE 5: EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION FOR THE COLUMBIA VALLEY AND PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2011

Occupation	Columbia Valley*		British Columbia	
	Employed Labour	% of Total	Employed Labour	% of Total
0 Management occupations	685	15%	256,095	12%
1 Business, finance and administration occupations	825	18%	352,090	16%
2 Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	200	4%	147,120	7%
3 Health occupations	100	2%	143,540	7%
4 Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	305	7%	255,760	12%
5 Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	15	0%	72,325	3%
6 Sales and service occupations	915	20%	515,625	24%
7 Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	865	19%	309,790	14%
8 Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	305	7%	50,075	2%
9 Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	140	3%	69,055	3%
Total	4,515		2,171,470	

Source: Statistics Canada. Occupation - National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2011 (691). Class of Worker for the Employed Labour Force Aged 15 Years 2011 National Household Survey, 99-012-X2011051, adapted by MDB Insight 2016

*Note. Columbia Valley figures are a sum the Municipalities of Canal Flats, Invermere, and Radium Hot Springs as well as Electoral Area 'F' and Electoral Area 'G'



2.3.4 Local and Regional Job Demand and Labour Supply

The internet has become the most popular channel through which employers advertise jobs and communicate with job applicants. This has created the opportunity to collect and analyze information about job openings and active job seekers. By tying this information to a place or region, it is now possible to understand what is happening within a local labour market. We now have details about the jobs being offered in a place and the availability of labour to fill those jobs.

This section focuses on those jobs advertised in the Columbia Valley during 2015. It also identifies the availability of workers to support the Columbia Valley's labour market. For complete results on the demand and supply findings, please see Appendix C.

Regional Labour Demand (2015) Results

- Job postings for the Columbia Valley during 2015 were primarily tied to sales and services occupations and health occupations. Cooks, retail sales associates, and registered nurses accounted for a large proportion of these job postings.
- Of those jobs advertised in the Columbia Valley during 2015, 15% required a university education while over 25% required a college diploma or apprenticeship training. The remaining jobs required on-the-job training or some occupational specific training. This speaks to the relatively low caliber or quality of these available jobs.
- The Interior Health Authority and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce posted the greatest number of jobs during this period.

Regional Labour Supply (2015) Results

- With respect to those individuals who are actively seeking new employment in the region, there is a relative depth of labour tied to sales and services occupations, trades, and transport and equipment occupations. Also notable is the number of individuals with management backgrounds. This may reflect the talents of newcomers to the region who are struggling to find quality employment.
- With respect to education levels, over 40% of available job seekers have a College Diploma or Certification. Approximately 15% of job seekers have a university degree while the remainder have a high school or some post-secondary education.
- With respect to experience level, over 40% consider themselves as mid-level staff while a further 26% consider themselves as senior level staff. Just over 10% of regional job seekers consider themselves junior or entry level. This speaks to the age of the region's labour force.

2.3.5 Business Profile

As seen in Figure 6, the industries with the highest concentration/specialization based on the number of businesses in the Columbia Valley are:

- Real estate and rental and leasing – 270 businesses (17% of the total)
- Construction – 269 businesses (17% of the total)
- Professional, scientific and technical services – 129 businesses (8% of the total)
- Retail Trade – 119 businesses (8% of the total)
- Accommodation and food services – 112 businesses (7% of the total)



Similarly to the labour force profile, these top industries speak to the fact that the economy of the Columbia Valley relies heavily on tourism for its success.

FIGURE 6: COLUMBIA VALLEY BUSINESS COUNTS AND COMPARATIVE PROVINCIAL BUSINESS COMPOSITION, 2015

Industry by NAICS	Columbia Valley		British Columbia
	Total # of businesses	% of total	% of total
11 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	67	4%	4%
21 - Mining and oil and gas extraction	12	1%	1%
22 - Utilities	8	1%	0%
23 - Construction	269	17%	11%
31-33 - Manufacturing	35	2%	2%
41 - Wholesale trade	22	1%	3%
44-45 - Retail trade	119	8%	6%
48-49 - Transportation and warehousing	36	2%	5%
51 - Information and cultural industries	9	1%	1%
52 - Finance and insurance	46	3%	5%
53 - Real estate and rental and leasing	270	17%	17%
54 - Professional, scientific and technical services	129	8%	12%
55 - Management of companies and enterprises	22	1%	2%
56 - Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	76	5%	4%
61 - Educational services	7	0%	1%
62 - Health care and social assistance	55	4%	6%
71 - Arts, entertainment and recreation	34	2%	2%
72 - Accommodation and food services	112	7%	3%
81 - Other services (except public administration)	97	6%	6%
91 - Public administration	6	0%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada. December 2015. Business Patterns. Adapted by MDB Insight, 2016.

*Note. Columbia Valley figures are a sum the Municipalities of Canal Flats, Invermere, and Radium Hot Springs as well as Electoral Area 'F' and Electoral Area 'G'

An aerial photograph of a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a large, dark blue lake curves around a peninsula. The peninsula is densely packed with residential houses, many with dark roofs, and is surrounded by green trees. To the left of the peninsula, a sandy beach meets the water. Beyond the lake, a vast expanse of green forest covers the hillsides. In the background, a range of rugged mountains stretches across the horizon, with several peaks covered in snow under a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent olive-green banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Community Engagement' in white.

Community Engagement



3 Community Engagement Findings

A number of consultation activities were used to engage with local and regional stakeholders to help inform the recommendations in this report. These consultation activities incorporated perspectives from permanent and seasonal residents, local and regional businesses, and political leadership from municipalities throughout the Columbia Valley.

More than 1,000 people participated in the consultation activities.

Four main outreach activities were used during consultations:

- **Stakeholder Interviews** – A total of 10 telephone and in-person interviews were conducted. These interviews averaged 20-30 minutes in length and were structured with open-ended questions to generate discussion on the current strengths and challenges associated with living and doing business in the Columbia Valley, as well as identifying the opportunities and priorities that leadership in the Columbia Valley should consider in attracting and retaining more residents.
- **Online Survey** – A total of 707 responses were generated through the online survey, asking permanent and seasonal residents about their experiences living, working, and/or visiting the Columbia Valley. The online survey asked respondents to identify how desirable a place the Columbia Valley is to live, what they consider the biggest attractions in the area, what elements are keeping residents living in the area and what is driving them to move or preventing them from moving to the area (for seasonal residents in particular), and priority areas of focus for the Columbia Valley to improve its chances of attracting and retaining residents.
- **Columbia Valley Focus Groups** – Two focus group sessions were hosted within the Columbia Valley, one open to the general public and the other for political/community leadership within the area. Each focus group was roughly two hours in length and asked questions to determine the current strengths and challenges associated with living and doing business in the Columbia Valley, the area's largest attraction, and opportunities and priorities that leadership in the Columbia Valley should consider in attracting and retaining more residents.
- **Seasonal Residents Focus Group** – Over 200 of Columbia Valley's seasonal residents attended a three-hour focus group hosted in Calgary to discuss a series of questions to determine the current strengths and challenges associated with being a seasonal resident in the Columbia Valley, as well as the top opportunities and priorities that leadership in the Columbia Valley should consider in attracting and retaining more residents.

A summary of all consultation findings is presented in this section.

Note. The comments and observations presented in this section are drawn directly from community engagement participants and do not reflect the thoughts or opinions of anyone except those that participated in the consultation activities.



3.1 Focus Groups

On January 26th and 27th MDB Insight held three focus groups targeting different segments of the population, one with local leaders, one with local residents and one with Calgary-region residents with a second home in Columbia Valley. The central theme that emerged from all three focus groups was the need for enhanced economic development opportunities. The Valley residents and Calgary residents were asked the same set of questions, while the local leaders had their own set. For the complete results from the focus groups, please refer to Appendix A.

3.1.1 Leaders Focus Group

On January 26th, 12 Columbia Valley political leaders (i.e. municipal Councillors) participated in the Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy focus group. From the information gathered, economic development emerged as a common priority action. One table discussed the need for an autonomous Regional Economic Development Office. The other table highlighted the need for a Valley-wide Economic Development Coordinator which would focus on both tourism and non-tourism opportunities. Other actions discussed included developing a common marketing and communication plan for the Columbia Valley and a Valley-wide recreation concierge who would manage a community event calendar.

3.1.2 Columbia Valley Residents Focus Groups

Economic Development

Following the leaders focus group, 70 Columbia Valley residents, making up seven tables, contributed ideas to the Strategy's focus group. Participants were asked to discuss one opportunity and develop actions necessary to achieve it. Similar to the political leaders' focus group, local residents highlighted opportunities and actions related to economic development. One table discussed the opportunity of establishing a Valley-wide economic development strategy. This strategy would be achieved with four actions: a unified tourism brand; establishing a business incubator; better access to broadband services; and celebrating successes within the community. Another table highlighted the need for an Economic Development Office, which would promote the Columbia Valley's assets and offer mentorship and other business related services.

Affordability and Seniors

A related opportunity was the creation of affordable housing to sustain employment. Proposed actions included developing public transit, allowing second suits in the home throughout the Columbia Valley, and possibly creating a community coalition, transforming the Valley into a single municipal area and tax base through a referendum. Other opportunities discussed included attracting retirees through enhancing healthcare and assisted living services, offering more arts and culture events, and maximizing CBT funds within the Columbia Valley.



3.1.3 Calgary Residents Focus Group

The next day, over 220 Calgary-region residents with homes in the Columbia Valley, making up 23 tables, gathered to participate in the Strategy's focus group. Opportunities and actions proposed from Calgary residents echo those uncovered from the local residents' focus group, highlighting economic development and developing a senior's hub with enhanced healthcare services

Tourism and Non-tourism Based Economic Development

Economic development opportunities through both tourism and non-tourism means emerged as a significant discussion topic throughout the 23 tables. Proposed tourism-related opportunities and actions discussed included: increased marketing, increasing the number of events and facilities available as well as examining eco-tourism options and destination wedding possibilities along with enhanced transportation services (i.e. buses, taxis and ride-hailing services).

Non-tourism related opportunities discussed included attracting higher quality jobs and enhanced opportunities for existing professions in the Valley, including trades people. Possible actions include the creation of an Economic Development Office as a one-stop-shop for both residents and part-timers that have business questions and identify business related gaps and opportunities. Lack of internet access was discussed as a barrier for attracting and retaining residents as well as limiting business opportunities. One table identified the opportunity of enhanced internet access by providing land to service providers.

Retirees Hub

Another theme identified was marketing the Columbia Valley as a hub for retirees. Actions discussed included the development of a recreation facility focused on those aged 55+. One table introduced the idea of looking to other communities, which have oriented themselves towards attracting retirees to understand best practices, mentioning Sun City, Arizona as an example. Another table discussed the option of increasing assisted living facilities in the area as well as home-services such as Handy-buses or meals-on-wheels.

Medical Services

One table discussed developing senior related medical care as an economic development opportunity for attracting higher-skilled jobs to the area including physiotherapists and orthopedic surgeons.

Other opportunities

A message that generated a crowd reaction/applause on several occasions during the presentation of findings at the Calgary Focus Group Session was the feeling of a two-tier environment between full-time and part-time residents. It is hard to say how prevalent this feeling is, however, strengthened engagement and communications between all residents as well as reviewing the two-tier price structures (for tourists and permanent residents) to access amenities and tourism assets should be considered in light of the lack of inclusiveness or feelings by some of not being as welcome or appreciated in the community.

Other opportunities and actions highlighted include increased branding of the area as a year-round recreation community, hiring a professional planner to develop an over-arching community planning effort, and changing zoning requirements to facilitate co-op housing and enhancing aging-in-place developments.



3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

During the early information gathering phase of the Residential Attraction and Retention Strategy targeted one on one interviews were conducted with 10 Columbia Valley community leaders and stakeholders to get a deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities for residential attraction and retention. Respondents clearly articulated the need to support economic growth and the negative impacts of community and government related services associated with the recent declining full-time population base. The Columbia Valley's community leaders and stakeholder groups were asked the same questions allowing for open-ended discussion to capture additional thoughts and ideas. Common themes that emerged from the one on one interviews are:

Tourism Development and Economic Diversification

Respondents identified the need for the Columbia Valley to be proactive in attracting both people and investment. The success in attracting people is clearly correlated with attraction and availability of jobs that will be achieved through both strengthening and marketing of the Columbia Valleys tourism / quality of life assets, particularly in the shoulder seasons. Equally important is fostering economic development and industry diversification. Value-added industry such as secondary processing of wood products, food as well as capitalizing on the arts, culture and creative industry are a few of the growth opportunities identified by community leaders.

Working Together – Collaboration is critical

Many community leaders advocated for a greater collaborative approach to fulfill the potential of the Columbia Valley as destination for both tourists and full-time residents. A 'we are better together' attitude is emerging amongst business and community leaders and is directly evidenced by the recently formed Columbia Valley Brand & Marketing Steering Committee composed largely of local tourism industry stakeholders.

Beyond tourism, it must also be recognized that the Columbia Valley, by virtue of the geographic proximity of its communities, shares a labour pool, provides diversity in price, living accommodations, and quality of life, and is critical business growth in the region. Inter-municipal cooperation is critical to providing infrastructure that will support the needs of the Columbia Valley population base and to projecting an appealing destination for new residents.

Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship

Community leaders in the Columbia Valley expressed a need for all levels of government to be more proactive in positioning the Columbia Valley for growth. The Columbia Valley cannot be complacent. The competition for long-term residents and business investment is fierce across Canada not unlike the competition for tourist's dollars. Communities of the Columbia Valley must be investment ready or people and businesses will choose to go elsewhere.

Much of the appeal of the Columbia Valley rests with its natural beauty. The economy and the environment cannot be treated as being mutually exclusive. Growth is critical for economic and community vitality. Environmental stewardship must be balanced with economic growth or the current



reductions of the full-time population will continue result in spiraling reductions of community and government services.

Affordable housing and entry market strategies

Like many tourism destinations the availability of affordable housing and the opportunity for seasonal workers to transition to full-time residents are limited. Many seasonal workers and skilled trades want to stay in the Columbia Valley for the long-term but are limited in their opportunities to fulfil that aspiration. Similarly, the availability of campgrounds and lower cost accommodation that may create an appetite for long-term residents is limited and may also be important to the attraction of younger, working-age families.

3.2.1 Key Observations

From the information gathered from the three focus groups, economic development opportunities, health and wellness opportunities, and the creation of a senior's hub could be explored further through a variety of actions. Each focus group discussed the need for an Economic Development Office as an opportunity to enhance employment opportunities in the Columbia Valley.

Many focus group tables discussed the need for increased strategic thinking throughout the Columbia Valley and increased connections between communities through enhanced marketing of the area. One action discussed in all three focus groups was the creation of public transit between and within communities, which would enhance economic possibilities as well as the accessibility of amenities and offerings within the Valley. Accessibility and service delivery are key considerations when examining future opportunities for municipal and economic growth.

3.3 Online Survey

It is very clear from the survey that both seasonal and permanent residents think the Columbia Valley is a desirable place to live. Reflecting this finding is the fact that almost all seasonal and permanent residents that responded to the survey feel somewhat or very connected to the area. The main reasons for this strong connection are because of family history in the region, being involved in community events, the friendliness and inclusiveness of people in the community (identified mainly by permanent residents), and because of a connection to the natural environment and scenery.

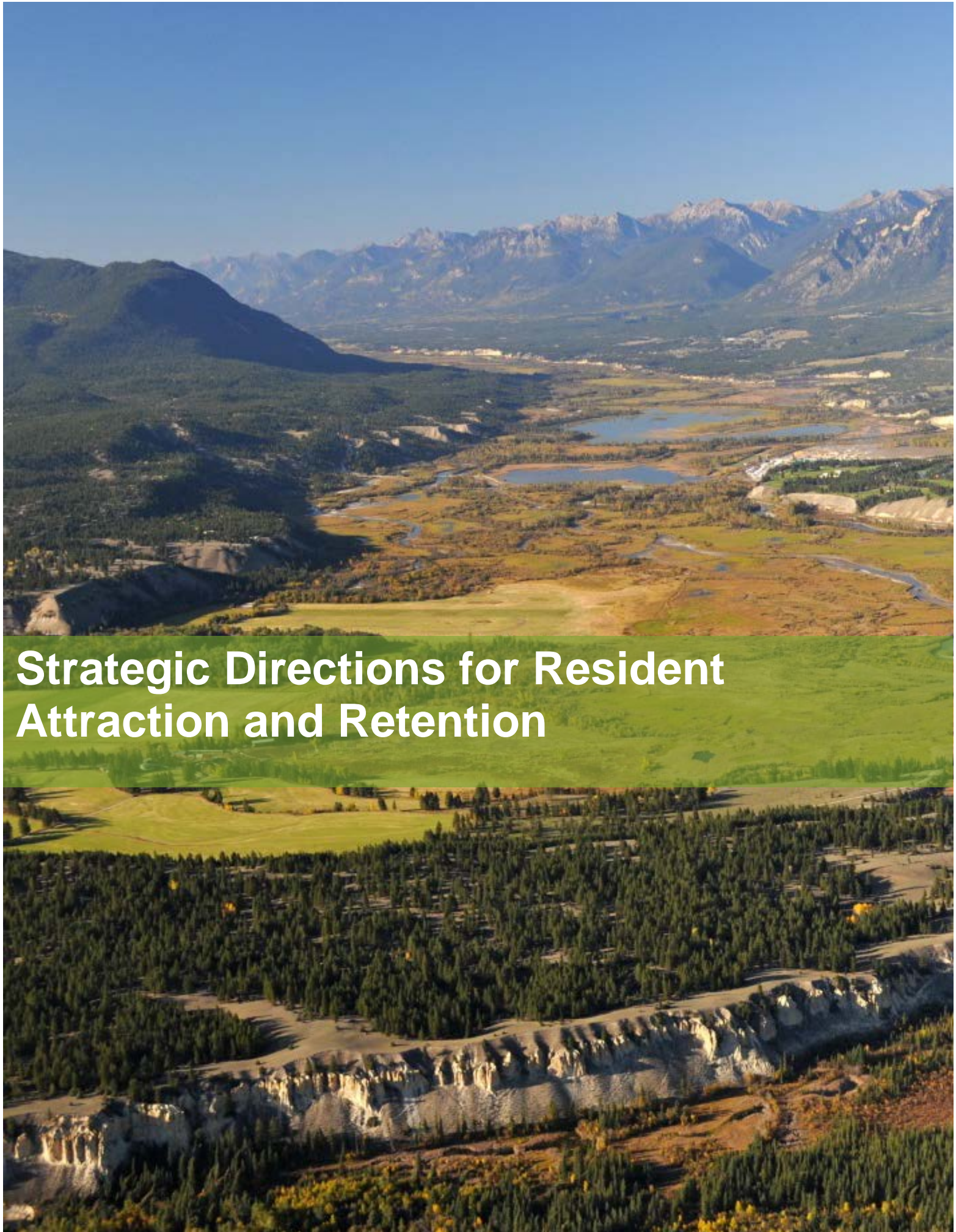
A result of this strong connection is that the majority of permanent residents identified that they plan to be living in the Columbia Valley for the rest of their lives. A large majority of seasonal residents also identified that they would consider living in the area on a permanent or full-time basis. For seasonal residents, the biggest changes they would need to see to encourage them to become permanent residents are a better job market and better job opportunities (especially white collar, professional jobs), more diversity in the types of businesses and better operating hours (e.g. restaurants, hardware stores, retail), and a need to be retired. The biggest barriers for seasonal residents that indicated they would not consider living in the Columbia Valley on a full-time basis is a lack of employment opportunities and jobs, the need for a better climate (i.e. that is not always overcast), a preference to be located in a larger and busier community that is not as quiet (especially in the winter months), and the distance from family.



The biggest attractions of the Columbia Valley that were identified were related to the areas' outdoor beauty and resources, most especially the outdoor and four season recreation activities (such as golfing, skiing, hot pools, trails, and biking), the lakes (especially Lake Windermere), the beautiful natural environment, the mountains (especially Panorama Mountain), and the outdoor scenery. This is especially reflected in the way that seasonal residents refer to their residence in the Columbia Valley as the "Cabin" or the "Lake".

Both seasonal and permanent residents ranked the natural environment (i.e. trails, parks, outdoor experiences), a sense of community (i.e. a sense of belonging or an emotional connection), a variety of social and recreation opportunities (i.e. sports, clubs, and classes), health and security, and good employment opportunities as the top five characteristics that they see as already contributing to the attraction and retention of residents to the Columbia Valley (though each group ranked the characteristics differently).

When asked about the top three areas for leaders in the Columbia Valley to prioritize in order to attract and retain more residents to the region, both seasonal and permanent residents identified good employment opportunities as the top priority. Seasonal residents identified the natural environment and the sense of community as the next top priorities, and permanent residents identified the cost of living and housing availability as the next top priorities.



Strategic Directions for Resident Attraction and Retention



4 Strategic Directions for Resident Attraction and Retention

Following the completion of the engagement activities as described above, the consulting team analyzed the results to identify a comprehensive list of potential resident attraction and retention themes. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis – the search for themes that are important to the underlying research objective. In this case, the research objective was identifying challenges and opportunities for the Columbia Valley from the perspective of resident attraction and retention. The process of analysis involved the identification of themes through careful review and consideration of the data. This is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis. By grouping common themes together, the consulting team distilled the research by theme, which then formed the basis of this report's Strategic Goals and Actions. It is important to understand that this is a holistic process whereby the results of the consultation activities, both qualitative¹⁵ and quantitative¹⁶, are considered together. Qualitative data allows for a nuanced understanding of the subject matter as it provides context to the results. Quantitative data, on the other hand, is measurable, but may be misinterpreted without the insights of supporting qualitative research. Therefore, the consulting team relied on both forms of data to inform the findings and subsequent goals and supporting actions.

4.1 SWOT Assessment

Strategic planning is often informed by a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment. The assessment outlines competitive conditions that affect the economic and broader community development potential of a community. The power of a SWOT is that it summarizes conditions unique to the Columbia Valley that will directly impact the strategies and actions that may be taken to attract and retain residents.

A SWOT Defined

For the purposes of this report a SWOT is characterized in the following terms.

- **Strengths** (Positive, Internal): Positive attributes or assets currently present in Columbia Valley by comparison to neighbouring regions or the Province
- **Weaknesses** (Negative, Internal): Local issues or characteristics that limit the current or future growth of the Columbia Valley
- **Opportunities** (Positive, Internal and External): Areas where the Columbia Valley and its partners can capitalize on current trends and investment opportunities
- **Threats** (Negative, External): Trends that threaten Columbia Valley current or future prospects in the context of resident attraction or retention.

¹⁵ The goal of qualitative research is an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Qualitative research investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when. Qualitative data is information which does not present itself in numerical form and is descriptive, appearing mostly in conversational or narrative form.

¹⁶ Quantitative research gathers empirical data in numerical form. Quantitative researchers ask specific, narrow questions and collect a sample of numerical data from participants to answer the question. This research attempts to generate results that can be representative of a larger population. A typical quantitative research question would be, "what is your age?"



FIGURE 7: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT) ASSESSMENT

Strengths

- Range and depth of local recreational assets, amenities, and events
- Natural landscape and built community heritage; warmer weather
- Windermere Lake
- Strong volunteer networks
- Provincial and regional support for tourism
- Active and supportive business community
- Receptive and supportive community leadership
- Culture and community feeling; safe, peaceful
- Positioned for growth
- Proximity to major urban centres; good access via major road ways
- Slower pace of life and work
- Considered a highly desirable place to live
- Spirit of cooperation, including collaboration between municipalities
- Strong local food culture; food based businesses, farmers market, and opportunity for value added business

Weaknesses

- Aging population and lack of young workers
- Lack of significant post-secondary presence
- Slow transition to knowledge based industries
- Lack of centralized communications
- Lack of consistent brand and key messages
- Individual municipalities lack of organizational capacity to support economic growth
- Lack of day care options
- Lack of affordable housing
- Over-dependance on seasonal employment
- A relatively small labour market with the perception of few quality employment opportunities
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Limited health services
- Limited winter time activities
- Inadequate leveraging of the networks of people who already know the area and love it (i.e. not actively being in the marketplace)
- Residents attitudes towards newcomers

Opportunities

- Strengthening regional coordination and collaboration; establish an economic development office to support and grow/ diversify economy
- Help residents and prospective residents find local jobs
- Create a regional recreation coordinator position; "the cruise director"; develop / promote four season activities
- Increasing broader awareness of Valley, marketing & promotion; develop a regional approach and consistent brand
- Growing tourism by leveraging natural and community assets
- Managing and supporting volunteer networks
- Centralizing communications and updating materials
- Improved Internet service
- Increased post-secondary presence
- Increased supports for small or single operator businesses
- Enhanced local health care services; cultivate a specialist offering; attract and retain healthy seniors
- Increase lake access
- Focus on beautification; keep things clean
- Diversify the price points for visitors' accommodations
- Regional transportation / transit system
- Walkability - Westside Legacy Trail

Threats

- Out-migration of youth and young workers
- Financial constraints at the municipal and provincial level
- Limited financial flexibility to respond to challenges
- Changing sense of place
- Waning regional or provincial support for tourism and economic development
- Industrial decline; major employer closures
- Perceived high relative costs of goods and services
- Insufficient commitment to environmental stewardship
- Changing value of Canadian currency relative to US currency
- Sustained drop of oil prices and weakened Alberta economy
- Lack of cellular service
- Closures of Hwy. 93
- Climate change and serious weather events (e.g. wind, fire, floods, mud slides)
- Potential clash between tourism needs and permanent resident needs (e.g. business hours, noise violations)



4.2 A Vision for Resident Attraction and Retention

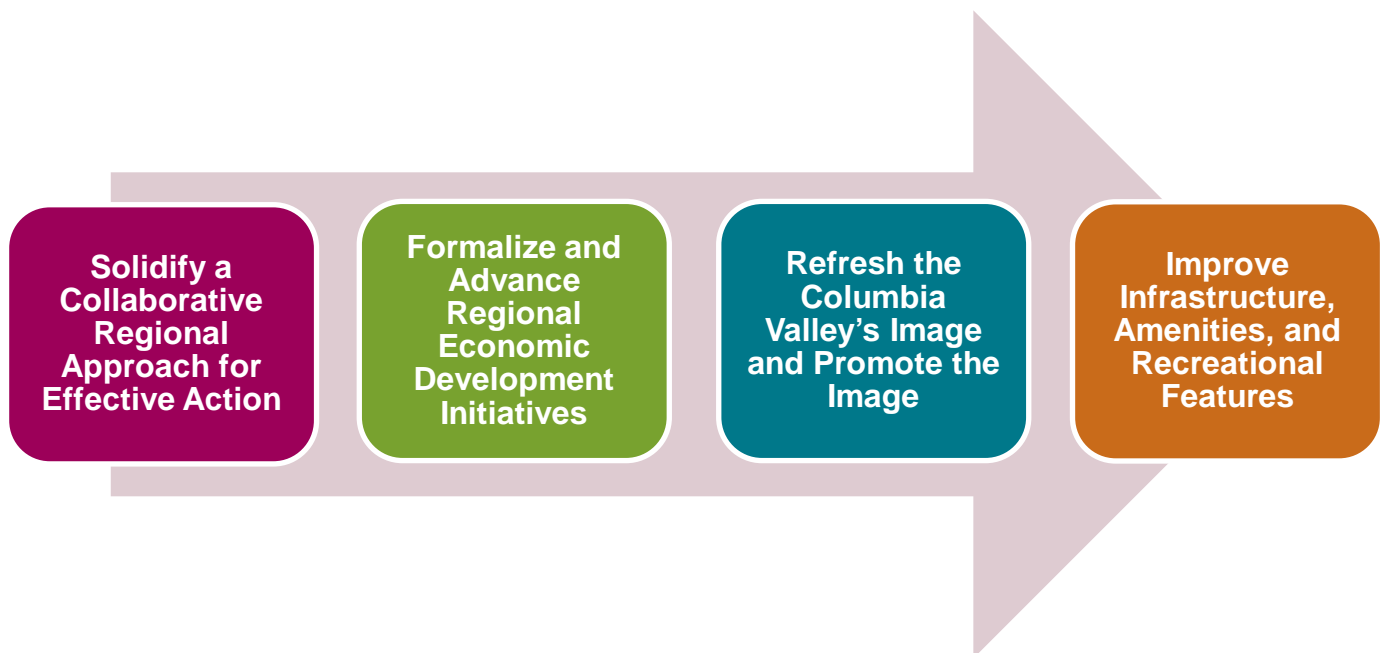
The Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy is intended to guide the direction of local and regional policy-makers over the next three years. This Strategy recognizes the importance of effective regional leadership and collaborative action to achieve the desired future state or vision for the Columbia Valley. The following vision statement reflects the input from over 1,000 project contributors.

The Columbia Valley is an area of choice for people living within 500km's. It is known for its beautiful natural landscapes, diverse business and job opportunities, and a welcoming atmosphere.

4.3 Critical Path Strategic Goals

There is a critical path that the Columbia Valley partners should take to ensure the best chances of successfully attracting and retaining residents.

FIGURE 8: CRITICAL PATH STRATEGIC GOALS





Goal “A”: Solidify a Collaborative Regional Approach for Effective Action

Integrated regional approaches to marketing and promotion or economic development help to avoid the traditional problem of creating winners and losers. Instead, regional approaches focus on identifying shared goals and objectives. Once identified, shared strengths or resources are leveraged to achieve meaningful outcomes for the entire region. By pooling resources each partnering jurisdiction can “punch” higher than its individual weight. There is a resulting multiplier benefit from this approach. Not only is the outcome of this collective action greater than individual action, collaborative approaches also reduce the potential for overlapping or duplicate efforts. When combined with economies of scale, this approach yields increased efficiencies to reduce costs and maximize desired results.

In the context of the Columbia Valley, committing to a regional approach will be fundamental to optimize resources and community capacity. With the exception of more recent initiatives, which have embraced a regional philosophy, past marketing and community promotion initiatives to emerge from individual communities within the Valley, have been characterized as fragmented and largely ineffective. Moving forward with this Strategy and its Action Plan demands a collaborative approach.

Goal “B”: Formalize and Advance Regional Economic Development Initiatives to Diversify the Economy and Create Quality Local Jobs

The availability of quality, skilled, employment opportunities in the Columbia Valley is directly tied to the types of businesses in the area. Without successful, competitive, local businesses the prospect of quality job creation is limited. Quite simply, economic prosperity is driven by the success of local businesses, big or small. From the perspective of community development, however, it is not good enough to simply encourage job growth. The quality of jobs is far more important than the number of jobs. Across Canada, communities struggle to find a balance between maintaining low commercial and industrial vacancy rates while ensuring tenants are providing quality jobs. Those communities fixated on filling every store front to give the appearance of a “healthy downtown” may quickly regret their single-minded focus once every store front is filled and employment opportunities are low paying, low skilled positions. Instead, those communities which take the long view and commit to a deliberate strategy of targeted business support, and recruitment, are better served. The most successful economic programs pin point those types of businesses which will complement existing employers while providing quality employment.

An evidence-based regional economic development program, guided by a long-term economic development strategy, is recommended to determine those target businesses, which should be recruited to, or supported, in the Columbia Valley. In sum, shoring up the regional economy through focused economic development activities is fundamental to ensuring long term community vitality.

Goal “C”: Refresh the Columbia Valley’s Image as an Attractive Place for People to Work, Settle, and Stay and Promote the Image

While conducting the research for this Strategy, a series of consistent perceptions were voiced about the Columbia Valley. The beautiful natural landscape combined with particular quality of life attributes make the Columbia Valley an attractive place for people to want to live, work, and play. These attractive features, however, are somewhat offset by the Columbia Valley’s lack of quality employment opportunities, limited telecommunications infrastructure, and relatively high cost of living. Despite these



countervailing perceptions, the Columbia Valley is in an enviable position. It benefits from a series of world class attractions, which make it an attractive place to live.

Looking ahead, to effectively control the image and promise of the Columbia Valley as a wonderful place to live, work, and play, it is crucial to first assemble the evidence (most of which is contained in this document). With this evidence, a compelling narrative can be developed around: “who are we, what we offer, and what we do not offer, etc.” This is sometimes called a community’s unique value proposition or selling proposition. In this light, the Columbia Valley, using a regional approach, should work to control and manage its image based on those facts which speak to the identified target market segments (below). It is paramount to ensure the consistency of messaging and branding for all partnering organizations, businesses, and individual champions and promoters to use. Simply put, everyone needs to be working from the same “play book” or the messaging will become diluted and less effective.

Goal “D”: Improve the Columbia Valley’s Infrastructure, Amenities, and Recreational Features

At one extreme product development can be defined as embracing all elements with which the visitor to a destination comes into contact. This includes infrastructure (e.g. roads, internet, boat launches, etc.) the service personnel, places of lodging, attractions and activities, facilities, and amenities. At the more focused level, product development can be defined as comprising only those attractions, activities, and facilities that are specifically provided for the visitor. This Strategy defines product development as the process by which the resources of a destination are shaped to meet the requirements of residents and visitors alike. This covers everything from man-made facilities or attractions, to activities requiring varying levels of physical input, and organized events such as festivals or concerts. While messaging and promotion is critical to “getting people to come for a visit – at least once”, it is the quality of the product which will define their experience. It is the quality of the product which will determine if someone returns or if they settle and stay. For this reason, for the Columbia Valley to increase its attractiveness, it must enhance its infrastructure to support businesses, offer four season activities, and stay beautiful. This needs to happen within each of the communities of the Columbia Valley, as well as the region as a whole.

4.4 Target Market Segments

Market segment profiles for five target markets are included in this section. These target markets segments are recommended to be the focus for resident attraction and retention initiatives in the Columbia Valley. It is important to note that while the first point of contact a person may have in the Columbia Valley is as a tourist, each tourist falls into one of the following five categories when they make their decision to move somewhere. Therefore, the goal of this Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy is not necessarily to attract more tourists (because that is the goal of other organizations), but rather to turn these five target markets into residents of the Columbia Valley.

The five target market segments are:

- Nomadic Entrepreneurs / Flex Workers
- Current Seasonal Workers



- Recent Retirees
- Local entrepreneurs and independent businesses
- Skilled Trades & Professionals

It is important to recognize that any successful resident attraction and retention efforts and target audience messaging will need to work closely and in partnership with the New Columbia Regional Destination Marketing Organizations.

FIGURE 9: NOMADIC ENTREPRENEURS / FLEX WORKERS TARGET MARKET

Persona / Target Market	Description – Who are they	Rationale – Why are they a Target	How to reach them
Nomadic Entrepreneurs / Flex Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Part-time property owners that wish to lengthen their stay in the Columbia Valley and have flexibility to work remotely ■ Are typically middle to senior management with a high degree of autonomy ■ May have children that wish to remain in the Columbia Valley during peak tourism periods for programming ■ Includes new Canadians/immigrants and the opportunity for them to attract more people from the same culture to the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lengthen stay opportunities will provide more local market expenditures in the and fewer unoccupied residential units contributing to increased community vitality ■ Opportunities to transition to more permanent residents due to local awareness and considerations for future retirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Websites and social media ■ Word of mouth ■ Specialty news publications focused on the sector ■ Trade shows, conferences, and association meetings
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be an independent professional running your business from the Columbia Valley while living in a beautiful home and experiencing a high quality of life at a reasonable cost ■ Live in the mountains, by the lake, and close to nature and be active in every season ■ Enjoy a family-friendly small community where neighbours know each other ■ Live in a community that allows you to be free from the rush of the city with all the amenities 		



FIGURE 10: CURRENT SEASONAL WORKERS TARGET MARKET

Persona / Target Market	Description – Who are they	Rationale – Why are they a Target	How to reach them
Current Seasonal Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who have located in the Columbia Valley for seasonal work (often in the tourism industry) and are interested in living permanently in the area from a lifestyle perspective They are typically young people still defining their career opportunities and may be recent graduates with skills Includes new Canadians/immigrants and the opportunity for them to attract more people from the same culture to the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier to transition this group into permanent residents due to their familiarity with the area and identification to the quality of life characteristics This group is easily identifiable as they reside in the Columbia Valley. National or global connections can be used to identify and target for visitation and future migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word of mouth Universities and colleges Local business community (real estate community, tourism attractions, and accommodations) Social media campaigns using interactive media, networking, email, and website postings
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be an independent professional running your business from the Columbia Valley while living in a beautiful home and experiencing a high quality of life at a reasonable cost Live in the mountains, by the lake, and close to nature and be active in every season Contribute to a region that has a strong reputation in tourism and growing opportunities for new business Live in a community that allows you to be free from the rush of the city with all the amenities 		

FIGURE 11: RECENT RETIREE TARGET MARKET

Persona / Target Market	Description – Who are they	Rationale – Why are they a Target	How to reach them
Recent Retirees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-time property owners looking to spend more time or to potentially relocate permanently Prospective purchasers of vacation properties that value Columbia Valley's offerings and smaller town/rural atmosphere Are still active in their community Typically have higher income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are already in the Columbia Valley and in many cases are looking to give back to the community they live in May be mentors, part time business owners, or looking for flexible work opportunities Already invested or looking to invest for lifestyle reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National publications such as <i>Zoomer</i> and <i>50Plus</i> Urban centre newspapers and publications in Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton Email distribution lists and websites (i.e. community alumni, tourism sites, rating sites like Trip Advisor)
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel welcome as a newcomer and explore all the ways to be involved in community life Live in a beautiful home and experience a high quality of life available at a reasonable cost Live in the mountains, by the lake, and close to nature and be active in every season Enjoy a family-friendly small community where neighbours know each other 		



FIGURE 12: LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS AND INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES TARGET MARKET

Persona / Target Market	Description – Who are they	Rationale – Why are they a Target	How to reach them
Local Entrepreneurs and Independent Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people raised in the Columbia Valley that are part of the school system and that often leave for post-secondary education Young people who regularly migrate to and from the area for family and community connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group can bring new business offerings, and new perspective to as they gain experiences outside of the area and abroad Home grown entrepreneurs have greater flexibility where they work due to internet age Through career and family development phases of life, there is a natural propensity for young people to return to where they grew up due to family and community connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word of mouth Universities and colleges Local business community (real estate, attractions, accommodations) Social media campaigns using interactive media, networking, email, and website postings
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live in the mountains, by the lake, and close to nature and be active in every season Live close to family and friends while being an independent professional living in an affordable home and experiencing a high quality of life at a reasonable cost Live in a community that allows you to be free from the rush of the city with all the amenities 		

FIGURE 13: SKILLED TRADES & PROFESSIONALS TARGET MARKET

Persona / Target Market	Description – Who are they	Rationale – Why are they a Target	How to reach them
Skilled Trades & Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People to support existing and targeted sectors including construction/home building, tourism/hospitality, health care/medical service, arts & creative industries, business & professional services, and forestry/wood products) Recent graduates and families typically early in their career who are open to relocation and can be found at nearby post- secondary institutions Includes new Canadians/immigrants and the opportunity for them to attract more people from the same culture to the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled trades and professionals matching labour demand and are critical to business sustainability Often have spouses and families that sustain local services Spouses/partners contribute to the available skill sets People attraction efforts guided by and coordinated with business attraction and retention efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities/colleges Social media campaigns using interactive media, networking, email, and website postings Urban centre publications in Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton Sector news publications
Key Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be an independent professional running your business from the Columbia Valley while living in a beautiful home and experiencing a high quality of life at a reasonable cost Live in the mountains, by the lake, and close to nature and be active in every season Enjoy a family-friendly small community where neighbours know each other Purchase or rent high quality property at a reasonable cost to run your dream business Live in a community that allows you to be free from the rush of the city with all the amenities 		



4.5 Strategic Actions and Implementation Plan

Interpreting the Action Plans

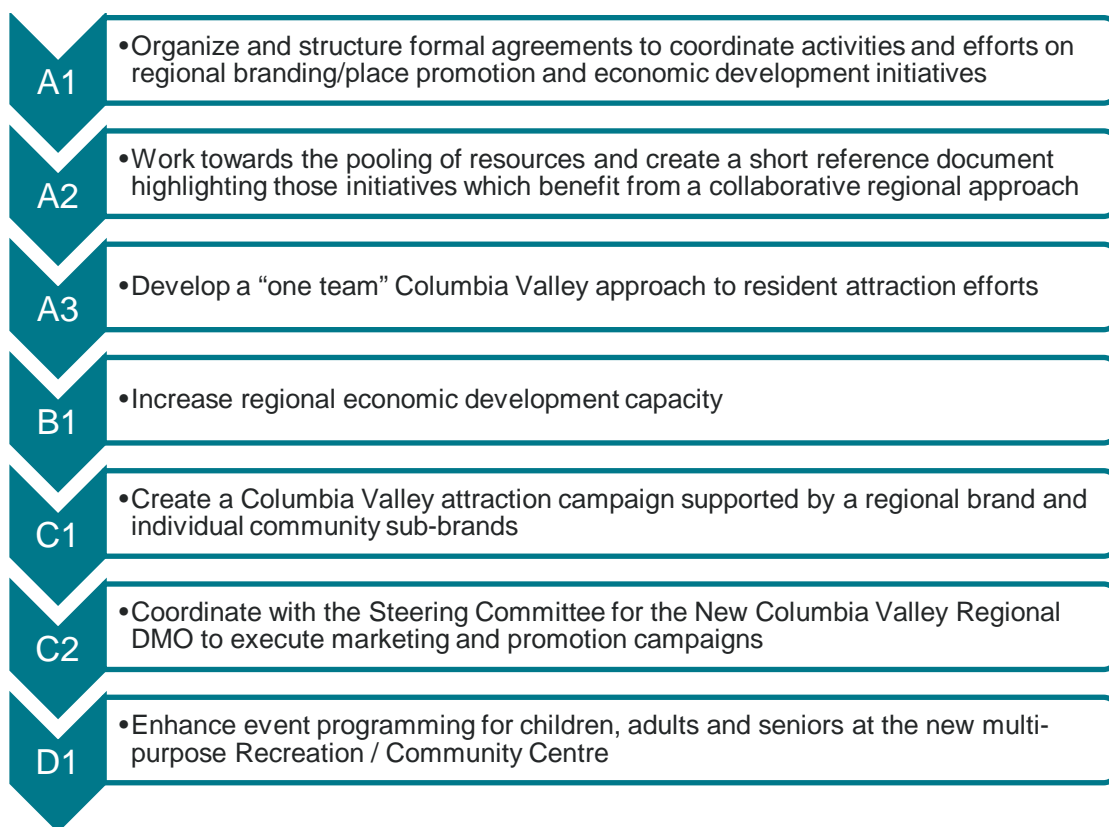
- The action plans are arranged in continuity with the four strategic goals, and specific action items
- These goals are labeled “A,B,C,D” for quick reference for each goal, but does not reflect priority
- The proposed timing assigned to each action item should be understood as follows:
 - **S**hort term – within a year
 - **M**edium term – within 2 years
 - **L**ong term – 3 years

4.5.1 Action Plans

Detailed action plans are presented below for each of the four critical path strategic goals.

With significant engagement and collaboration built in creating the Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy, there is opportunity for political leadership in the Columbia Valley to continue the momentum by prioritizing the short-term actions identified in the following action plans. These short term actions are presented in Figure 14 below.

FIGURE 14: ACTIONS IDENTIFIED AS SHORT-TERM FOR GOALS A-D





Goal “A”: Solidify a Collaborative Regional Approach for Effective Action		
#	Action	Timing
A1	<p>Organize and structure formal agreements to coordinate activities and efforts for organizations working on regional branding/place promotion and economic development initiatives. Formal structures, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be explored to help define how each community and organization within the Columbia Valley can work together to fund the implementation of this Strategy and further economic development work.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: TBD by the Project Steering Committee (due to local resource constraints in the short-term consider a contracted economic development professional/firm)</p>	S
A2	<p>Work towards the pooling of resources wherever possible (local, regional, provincial, and trusts and foundations); create a short reference document highlighting those initiatives which benefit from a collaborative regional approach. Ensure each municipality’s leadership and council is briefed on this document.</p> <p>Then work collectively to develop joint initiatives (share the costs and time).</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Residential Attraction & Retention Steering Committee designate or TBD (consider a contracted economic development professional/firm)</p>	S
A3	<p>Develop a “one team” Columbia Valley approach to resident attraction efforts. Once an opportunity is identified municipal staff should know who to call and who needs to be brought to the table to close the deal. A formalized lead protocol that outlines how investors are handled is an important step.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: TBD through work of the Project Steering Committee</p>	S
A4	<p>Create an annual Youth Social Forum bringing youth from across Columbia Valley together to network and discuss issues they see. Spin-off working groups around entrepreneurship and mentoring as well as networking events could build on the relationships developed during the forum.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: College of the Rockies / Local High School</p>	L

Desired Outcomes of Goal A

- Enhanced municipal and regional collaboration leading to greater access to financial funding resources, more economic investment, and increased profile of the region
- Development of a variety of joint investment initiatives that benefit multiple communities and/or the region as a whole
- Increased engagement and participation by residents in municipal and regional initiatives



Goal “B”: Formalize and Advance Regional Economic Development Initiatives to Diversify the Economy and Create Quality Local Jobs

#	Action	Timing
B1	<p>Increase regional economic development capacity by creating a full time Business Development Office and/or Economic Development Coordinator/Officer position. This position needs to have a funding model and job description developed and could be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and maintaining a vacant land and storefront inventory Working towards a high standard of investment readiness to respond to inquiries and be proactive about generating them Developing the five year regional economic development strategy (mentioned in B2 below) Creating a “one-stop-shop” for business assistance and support <p>Who’s Responsible: TBD (consider a contracted economic development professional / firm)</p>	S
B2	<p>Develop and resource an evidence-based five year regional economic development strategy with a focus on industry development and diversification.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: TBD (consider a contracted economic development professional / firm)</p>	M
B3	<p>Support a “Speakers Bureau” that links local leaders, tradespeople, and professionals to post-secondary and secondary schools for the purpose of in-school presentations that disseminate information on careers and real life stories and experiences about working in the Columbia Valley.</p> <p>Video record these presentations, edit/trim to be used as promotional items about working in the Valley.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce</p>	M
B4	<p>Support regional succession and business planning by informing and promoting strategies and best and promising practices. Establishing and managing an inventory of businesses for sale is an important component of this.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce</p>	L
B5	<p>Initiate a centralized job board that supports identification of in-demand talent and offers a direct support system to link current and future labour supply with employer demand. Utilize this central job board to ensure that the model is fully used by the region’s business community to inform and support “dual career family employment” for families looking to relocate to the region.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development Office</p>	L
B6	<p>Facilitate and support the development of two new networks – a young professionals network and newcomer network. Identify a local champion that will take the lead on bringing together within the Columbia Valley to network, learn, integrate and engage (see www.bostonypa.com as an example of a successful initiative).</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development Office and Invermere Recreation Coordinator</p>	L



Desired Outcomes of Goal B

- Increased economic development capacity leading to more economic diversity, investment, and access to funding resources
- Development of a strong base of new entrepreneurs and businesses (including purchasing of existing businesses) with particular emphasis on youth entrepreneurship
- Increases in the number of year round business establishments operating in the Columbia Valley
- Increased access to employment for job seekers and ease of hiring for employers

Goal “C”: Refresh the Columbia Valley’s Image as an Attractive Place for People to Work, Settle, and Stay		
#	Action	Timing
C1	<p>Create a Columbia Valley attraction campaign supported by a brand that can be adopted by each jurisdiction within the Columbia Valley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use the target market profiles and key messaging to inform this exercise; also leverage the messaging of Workshift Canada to promote seasonal and part-time residents to work in the Columbia Valley (materials located in Appendix D). ■ Work closely with the Steering Committee for the New Columbia Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) to refine and select the core messaging. ■ Define sub-brands for each community in the Columbia Valley highlighting the unique elements of each community. These sub-brands should tie back into the regional brand. <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development office and Columbia Region DMO</p>	S
C2	<p>Coordinate with the Steering Committee for the New Columbia Valley Regional DMO to execute marketing and promotion campaigns. It is crucial to cultivate and maintain a regional approach for these campaigns, while still highlighting the unique offerings in each community.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development office and Columbia Region DMO</p>	S



Goal “C”: Refresh the Columbia Valley’s Image as an Attractive Place for People to Work, Settle, and Stay

#	Action	Timing
C3	<p>Actively work on changing external and internal perceptions about living and working in the Columbia Valley, including topics such as costs of living, property tax rates, costs of construction, and employment opportunities. Writing and distribution of business success stories, videos, and images, online social media and strong website presence are fundamental channels in helping to change these perceptions, while annual or bi-annual forums for both permanent and seasonal residents could help with communications. In the early stages it is as important to share this information locally as it is to share it widely – building a sense of belief in community amongst residents is huge. These initiatives should come from both individual communities and the region as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For external perceptions, the City of Leduc “Build with Us” campaign is a successful example of how a partnership with local land developers and home builders has helped position Leduc as the preferred and affordable option for new homebuyers in the Edmonton region. For internal perceptions, the recent award winning initiative “St Thomas Proud” is a good example of an initiative used to generate excitement and pride in the local community that highlights local community opportunities and assets, and encourages residents to get involved (www.stthomasproud.ca) Gathering testimonials from local entrepreneurs and businesses is an important element of both the external and internal campaigns. These testimonials should identify the regional and community specific elements that make doing business there attractive. <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development office</p>	M
C4	<p>Establish a formalized volunteer recruitment and management program e.g. Friends of the Valley (greeters / social conveners).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus particularly on new and seasonal residents in the Valley as a means of engaging them in community life, including the services that are available to new Canadians. A personal welcome: To support community cohesion and the strengthening of the Valley’s image as a place to live and work, new local residents and workers should have a personal welcome. A volunteer or the coordinator would meet them in person, collect and maintain contact information and provide them with a welcome package that introduces them to regional services. Ongoing communications would be provided to the newcomers, sharing news about community activities, tips on enjoying life in the Columbia Valley etc. <p>Who’s Responsible: Invermere Recreation Coordinator</p>	L

Desired Outcomes of Goal C

- Improved brand recognition of the Columbia Valley and its communities
- Addressing and eliminating negative perceptions about living and working in the Columbia Valley
- Enhanced community pride among residents of the Columbia Valley resulting in more participation and engagement in local and regional initiatives



Goal “D”: Improve the Columbia Valley’s Infrastructure, Amenities, and Recreational Features		
#	Action	Timing
D1	<p>Maximize use of the new multi-purpose Recreation / Community Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide enhanced event programming for children, adults and seniors; investigate feasibility of day care program <p>Who’s Responsible: Invermere Recreation Coordinator</p>	S
D2	<p>Create and resource a Columbia Valley Business Centre for sole proprietors and those seasonal residents who need a work space away from home.</p> <p>Key considerations for the centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be centrally located with ample parking It should provide internet access It should provide printing and photocopying No phone lines are required, if internet access supports voice communications. Investigate the re-purposing of an existing municipal asset Operating hours should include weekends Consider a daily, weekly, and monthly rate <p>Once established, this site should be tied to business mentoring services. Business mentoring should be a key volunteer program facilitated in the Columbia Valley.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce</p>	M
D3	<p>Expand/increase the Columbia Valley Transit service routes and frequency. Improve taxi service and investigate feasibility of ride-hailing and ride sharing services between Calgary and the Columbia Valley.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Regional District of East Kootenay / District of Invermere</p>	M
D4	<p>Host experiential events in shoulder season to lengthen stay of part-time residents. Create product inventory and coordinate promotion activities, particularly during the shoulder seasons.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: TBD based on input of the Project Steering Committee</p>	M
D5	<p>Enhance regional broadband Internet infrastructure; Re-engage TELUS on cellular access on Hwy #93.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Columbia Valley Broadband Corporation</p>	M
D6	<p>Refresh entry signage to the Columbia Valley along with signage for key destinations within each of the communities. Efforts to improve curb appeal and property standards along major thoroughfares should be a priority.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Regional District of East Kootenay and Communities in Areas F & G Planning Departments</p>	M



Goal “D”: Improve the Columbia Valley’s Infrastructure, Amenities, and Recreational Features		
D7	<p>Enhance regional health services and become a destination for medical treatment</p> <p>Consult with Invermere District Hospital Leadership to determine available capacity to support specialized treatment.</p> <p>Alternately, strike a working group to investigate feasibility of establishing private destination healthcare specialist opportunities within the Columbia Valley.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: Future Columbia Valley Economic Development Office / Invermere & District Hospital</p>	L
D8	<p>Improve access to affordable housing in the region. Investigate collaborative solutions with regional partners including collaborative workforce housing.</p> <p>Revisit the findings from for the 2013 Columbia Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment to determine priority setting.</p> <p>Who’s Responsible: BC Housing</p>	L

Desired Outcomes of Goal D

- Increased enrollment at schools and increased demand to live in the Columbia Valley
- Development of a strong base of new entrepreneurs and businesses (including purchasing of existing businesses) with particular emphasis on youth entrepreneurship
- Increased tourism spending in the communities of the Columbia Valley
- Increased diversity of the population in the Columbia Valley

4.5.2 Measuring Performance

Performance measures are tools to determine how well a job has been done using qualitative and quantitative information. The following reasons make it important to track activity and performance:

- Providing public accountability
- Assisting with human resources management and improving performance
- Identifying return on investment and shaping future strategy and business plans

Performance measurement for resident attraction is complex as it is not always easy to quantify outcomes and impacts. More often, funders are requiring results based outcomes, driven in part by the demands on how tax dollars and raised funds are being allocated.

This section offers several logical performance metrics. It is recommended that the Project Steering Committee carefully consider each metric before their application. Questions to consider:

- Is there enough information to consistently inform this metric over time?
- Are there enough resources to consistently monitor the metric?
- Does the metric effectively demonstrate the success or failure of the action?



If any of these questions cannot be answered with a definite “yes” than the Project Steering Committee should consider a different measure.

Recommended Performance Measures

- Resident population counts
- Resident age
- Value of dwellings
- Dwelling Building permits
- Jobs created (i.e. fulltime, part-time, contract, seasonal) due to new businesses and start-ups, business relocation, and existing businesses expanding
- Number of new business start-ups
- Number of businesses expanding (and hiring as a result of expansion)
- Local regional partnerships – number of partnerships, size and mix of partnerships (how many partners are working together and what is the cross mix – education, business, voluntary, etc.), type of partnerships (public, private, voluntary sector, public-private-voluntary, etc.)



5 Conclusion

An overarching trend from the engagement activities is the desire for continued and enhanced collaboration to address the opportunities and challenges facing the communities that make up the Columbia Valley. Identifying, packaging, and securing quality of life amenities and infrastructure recognizing their regional value are critical to the Columbia Valley's future success for resident attraction and retention. In other words, a 'We are all in this together' attitude must prevail recognizing that what is good for Radium is good for Invermere and similarly, what is good for Canal Flats is good for Fairmont and all residents that live in the Columbia Valley, as the distances within the Columbia Valley are easily commutable. While this regional perspective is important, it is also critical that the unique identities and assets within each individual community are celebrated and that any attraction and retention initiatives allow communities to have their own identities highlighted.

In the increasingly competitive world of economic development and tourism, size matters (e.g. population, assessment, amenities, and budget). The more resources and the more amenities within a commutable region such as the Columbia Valley forms a natural geographic region to mount both tourism and residential attraction efforts as well as other economic development initiatives that will be necessary to sustain the future growth and development of the Columbia Valley. While tourism plays an important role in the economy of the Columbia Valley, it is critical that other long term economic development initiatives also be prioritized in order to encourage a diversification in the regional economy leading to more permanent residents, increased school enrollment, and more year-round businesses.

With significant momentum built from the strong community engagement initiatives of this Strategy (of both part-time and permanent residents), the Columbia Valley is well positioned to increase its permanent resident population and to be proactive in its engagement with new or potential residents. In this way, political leaders in the region should consider taking a "permanent resident attraction and retention" lens to their decision making, considering whether decisions or initiatives bring the region closer or further away to their goals of increasing permanent residents.

A scenic landscape photograph of a river flowing through a snowy, forested valley. The sun is bright in the sky, reflecting on the water. The river is surrounded by snow-covered banks and evergreen trees. The background shows distant mountains under a clear blue sky.

Appendices



Appendix A – Focus Group Results

Focus group with Columbia Valley Leaders

On January 26th, MDB insight conducted a focus group with 12 local leaders from Columbia Valley. The participants were asked three questions in regards to the Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy. Below is the information gathered from the focus group.

Q1 - What is the Columbia Valley's biggest attraction (for you)?

Natural Heritage

Beauty

- Nature
- mountains with easy access
- weather
- 360 degree view

Intangible

Lifestyle and recreation*- walkable, safety

Work-life balance

Culture and community feeling

- small town feel
- friendly
- welcoming
- supportive
- look out for each other
- know neighbours
- positive environment

Q2a - What are the major opportunities for the Columbia Valley to make it more attractive for new residents?

Economic

Fill employment gaps

- seasonal employment and year round tourism
- develop a year round economy
- support existing industries and young entrepreneurs
- light industrial and food service development



Community issues and affordability

- Enhanced amenities
- lack of things to do in winter or related to culture/arts
- need rec facility
- better communication of assets
- Legacy trail
- Senior and family friendly housing
- Affordable childcare
- More shopping opportunities i.e. variety stores and expanded hours

Infrastructure

Need broadband access

Services

Education

- need local schools
- post-secondary
- support local colleges (great college town)
- localized training

Transportation

- valley wide transportation
- no greyhound or taxi, barriers (which impact housing and work options)

Health

- valley wide health services
- develop wellness sector (medical tourism)

Q2b - From the list of opportunities, as a group chose two to discuss. For each opportunity identify the specific actions necessary to achieve it. For each action not the organization(s) best positions to lead and support it.

Economic Development through chamber of commerce-- leadership

- Establish an economic development office (local government)
- Develop a funding model (local and provincial government)
- Common support and engagement on strategy
- Execute and communicate



Marketing and communication (develop regional strategy and work together to implement)

- Determine who we are and identity
- Branding of Columbia Valley vs Windermere Valley vs individual communities- Regional
- Common plan for community- college, tourism, what is happening, business opportunities
- Creation connection to our community through language
- Regional DMO

Amenity Development

- Valley wide rec/event coordination center to maximize use and awareness of existing amenities (regional gov)
- Community facility- support project and look up ways to maximise new use space
- Financial support to arts and cultural events as well as equipment and special shoulder season events
- Lake access- enhance motorized and pedestrian access
- Year round 'open for business' atmosphere/strategy and clubs for supporting 'eg winter dining club'
- Financial support for arts and culture
- Build on vibrancy, winter focused, theaters, leveraging community assets, and maximize the use of existing

Expand non-tourism economy

- Knowledge economy, light industry, value added wood manufacturing
- healthcare and government sector- health specializes, ELS, Wellness
- Food manufacturing
- Education- private boarding school, year round college

Q3 - Given limited resources, from the actions identified above please discuss and identify your top three priorities

Economic Development

Economic development coordination

- Valley wide study and non-tourism economic options, work to broaden out economic base. Focus on creation of good paying jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities

Regional Economic Development Office

- which is autonomous

Amenities

Valley wide recreation coordination- RDER. Concierge can book events/dinner calendar of events, keep list of volunteers for events, better utilize existing public and private facilities.



Education

Look for education options to bring here long term or ways to retain current residents who are leaving for education opportunities. Skilled trades, educated jobs, coops, opportunities for students and ELS (foreign students who can work to fill skill gap and have potential for them to choose Columbia valley to live)

Focus group with Columbia Valley residents

Following the focus group with Community leaders, MDB insight conducted a focus group with 70 local residents from Columbia Valley. The participants were asked four questions in regards to the Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy. Below is the information gathered from the focus group.

Q1 - What is the Columbia Valley's Biggest attraction (for you)?

Economic

Room for growth

Business ownership possible- entrepreneurial, high speed internet

Columbia Basin Trust- Support community development

Community issues and affordability

Affordable house buying

Services

Great education

Healthcare- exceptional and everyone has a doctor

Natural Heritage

Climate

Access to nature

- lake
- mountain
- environment
- clean water
- easily accessible green space
- walkable
- hot springs

Entertainment

- have big city amenities and outdoor activities



- art and culture offerings
- events- real farmers market, car show

Intangible

Community feeling

- similar community values
- small size- community needs to stop growing
- smaller house and properties
- peaceful
- not crowded
- quite
- well served
- mix of people and energy
- tight knit
- strive to meet others needs
- great spirit

Lifestyle

- safe
 - little crime, don't lock door
- laid back
- collaborative environment

Other

Proximity to big city but not too far

Lots of fundraising initiatives for residents in needs- food banks, hospice, summit youth centre

Q2 - What is the Columbia Valley's greatest barrier to attracting new residents?

Economic

Cost of development

Employment

- lack of living wage jobs
- not enough/ perception of not having jobs
- middle class job loss
- lack of work/career opportunities
- boom and busts



Community issues and affordability

Whole community minded

Fragmented community borders- lower partnership between communities

Community not self-sufficient

Youth families do not have access to day care

Affordable housing and real estate- seniors

Cost of living is high i.e. food, gas and the lack of natural gas

Provincial sales tax-- too close to Alberta and perception of higher taxes

Lack daycare

Entertainment

Less facilities i.e. no mountain theater or other amenities

Lack of shopping i.e. no commercial centre and highlevel of outside commercial ownership in the downtown

Seasonality issues related to activities

Lack of youth person culture- nightlife and culture

Infrastructure

Lack of broadband- not accessible for business community

Services

With population base, have a lot of schools- Higher education and spectrum of education

Promoting retirement to increase population for services- lack of services

Transit

- not greyhound
- lack of transportation for activities
- no internal transit system

Healthcare

- perception that access to medical facilities is weak
- no high level hospital or specialist facilities

Other

Lack of knowledge of what is here

Degradation of environment

Little exposure to other parts of province

Underutilized space along the highway



Q3 - What is the Columbia Valley's greatest barrier to retaining current residents?

Economic

Employment

- lack of sustainable employment diversity of jobs
- lack of small industry
- seasonal/ need for year round employment
- inflexibility of employers outside the valley to support distance employment
- Living wages year round- 30% income spent on housing
- no decent wages for skilled workers
- cannot move up in career

Community issues and affordability

Cost of living- transportation, hydro, vehicle, Gas price

Housing availability and costs

Ownership of both commercial land, residential

Affordable housing- for young families

Dark houses- fluctuation of seasonal people

Entertainment

Lack of new amenities/shops/events

- summer restaurants/businesses close
- need a theater
- move out due to boredom
- winter season dullness and driving on highways
- hard to find partner- small number of young singles
- activities- more around the year and adventure based
- Lack of funding for arts- lack of spectrum

Services

Lack of day care

Lack of services to support facilities

Access to transportation

Schooling i.e. leave for post-secondary

Healthcare

- lack of complete facility



- no surgeon at hospital for elderly

Seniors related issues

Accessible housing

Healthcare

Facilities and activities

Retirement not affordable

Cannot age in place

Other

Capacity of the lake both public and private

Move to be closer to family

Poor internet connection

Lack of long term planning/vision/trust

Loss of community

Lack of cross- community partnerships

What is one opportunity for Columbia Valley to make it more attractive for new residents?

Economic Development opportunities and actions

Strategy and office for economic development

- Careers and jobs, senior services
- Promotion strategy for the valley to promote assets
- Business mentorship
- Build social economies- to keep the community together
- Establish a business park, access to information on jobs

Economic development strategy- valley wide

- Unified tourism branding- who: branding and marketing steering committee
- Business incubatory- who: Chamber or Employment Centre, or College
- Better broadband service- who: local government
- Celebrating our success- who: local government and chamber

Affordability opportunities and actions

Affordable housing for young families and elderly



- Attract expertise for development, analysis, build
- Define the need
- Explore co-op housing models
- Land- inventory and database

Affordable housing to sustain employment

- Community coalition for counsels- one municipal area and tax base—referendum
- By-laws to support second suits in home throughout the Columbia valley
- Light industry
- Transportation

Service opportunities and actions

Cooperatives of services

- Transportation, agriculture, child care, food, homecare, therapy, education cultural events

Centre for unique sector- i.e. wellness

- Valley collaboration and buy in
- Identification of components and present inventory of assets
- Advocacy and leadership

Senior opportunities and actions

Attracting retirees

- Healthcare
- Assisted living
- Retirement developments
- More arts and culture events
- Proper community profile
- Public transit
- Maximize CBT money
- More medical specialist/ incentives for progressive private medicine

Miscellaneous opportunities

Economic

Employment - fill the gaps in lab techs

Attracting entrepreneurs

Centre for unique industry/ specializations- Wellness Valley!



Remote and independent employment
Agriculture- farmers market, buy local campaign, permaculture

Infrastructure

Public transportation programs

Servicing

Fully functioning hospital
Diverse post-secondary education- environmental and outdoor education

Community feeling and affordability

Signage for the valley- Welcome, positive signage at entrance
Naming of the valley
Too many small communities
Affordable daycare
Greater range of housing options

Entertainment

Create a space where people can gather- town square
Town council having street parties
Arts and culture centre

Seniors

Seniors strategy (linked to attracting retirees)
Marketing to baby boomers

Other

Zoning along highway corridor- not attractive at the moment
Valley needs to be promoted as one voice- promotion
Develop a radio or online link
Location to get ideas on the area for tourism
No one-stop shopping area
Marketing strategy to attract families and industry
Wellness strategy (Centre for something unique- i.e. wellness)



Focus Group results for Calgary residents with second homes in the Columbia Valley

On January 27th, MDB insight conducted a focus group with over 220 Calgary residents with second homes in the Columbia Valley. The participants were asked four different questions in relationship to the Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy. Below is the information gathered from the focus group.

Q1 - What is the Columbia Valley's Biggest attraction (for you)?

Natural Heritage

- lakes and related activities and sports (summer and winter),
- mountain and related activities
- scenery,
- atmosphere
- clean air
- Westside Legacy Trail
- hot pool
- easily accessible
- close to tourist attractions
- wildlife
- unspoiled area
- golf

Intangible

Lifestyle

- less stress than Calgary
- slower
- down home feeling
- quiet
- peaceful

Community feeling

- small town
- history
- low crime
- vibrant community
- people
- family oriented
- different than Calgary
- sense of community



- experiences rather than material stuff
- nice place to live year round

Cultural heritage

- art and culture
- art gallery
- arts and craft stores
- art walk
- cultural opportunities
- local musicians
- volunteer organizations'

Amenities

- Kicking Horse Coffee
- restaurants
- Fairmont Resort
- variety and grocery stores
- fresh food
- nice shops

Events/Festivals

- car show
- real farmers markets
- movies in the park
- New year's eve
- social activities
- Winvalley market

Services

- Hospital
- Schools

Other

- different provincial taxation
- weather
- proximity to Calgary- Calgary's play ground
- affordable- good value on property
- house purchased to rent and retirement opportunities
- accessible- Airport access, good highways
- access to southern BC/US
- introduce grandchildren to area



- great weekend getaway compared to interior of BC

Q2 - What is the Columbia Valley's greatest barrier to attracting new residents?

Economic

Taxation

- property tax high without sewer or garbage pick up
- Provincial Sales Tax
- taxation without representation
- penalty for non-residents property tax

Employment

- lack of non-season employment and business opportunities
- cyclical- summer vs winter months
- lack of jobs- mill closing,
- lack of quality and sustainable opportunities
- lack of opportunities for engineers/higher level jobs
- lack of recognition of out of province accreditation
- hard to find people to work here

Community issues and affordability

Unclear who to talk to a Municipality, province, town, county

Grungy look

Lack of variety of goods/produce/ food/ drinking water in Windermere

Affordable housing

High cost of living- electricity, gas prices, *Heating costs high

Cost of park pass

Entertainment

- basic and not enough
- lack of vibrancy in downtown
- difference between what residents want vs what part timers want (residents want businesses to close at 5 vs part-timers arrive ready for fun)
- theater closed
- need more activities than rec
- nowhere to go with a group
- limited access to social or rec activities in winter
- inside rec opportunities (community centres)
- lack of established paths (bike/walk) around lake



- limited lake front access

Non-resident issues

Local's attitudes towards outside people

Charities- non -resident taxes can prohibit donations to local charities

Non-voting rights for non-residents

Infrastructure

Improve infrastructure related to sewers and water

Lack of infrastructure for professionals to relocated to valley-

- how hard is it to join the community,
- internet availability and high cost
- lack of infrastructure for high-tech industries
- limited technology

Lack of transportation between communities and within

- lack of critical mass needed

Services

Difficulties finding trades peoples

Education

- post-secondary
- options for special needs children
- access

Medical

- lack of services for aging population
- lack of specialized healthcare/full service hospital
- hospital needs more facilities
- lack of access
- aging in place issues

Other services

- proper marina
- high golf fee
- lack of parking at Kinsmen and James Chabot Park
- changing water levels
- power prices outside the valley
- high cost of electricity
- insurance transfers
- local services are not fair to part-time residents



Other

Fishing bureaucracy for non-residents that will become residents, current non-resident fee

RDEK stringent on improving properties

Fragmentation of area with no unified policy between communities

Four way stop at Radium

Safety concerns-

- Highway 93 speed limit
- need new by-law to clean up rural area

Q3 - What is the Columbia Valley's greatest barrier to retaining current residents?

Economic

Lack of tax breaks for business (small) owners

Employment/Jobs

- limited variety
- no other industries
- time frame for tourism jobs
- what is the core business in the area (pick one and embrace it—tourism or forestry)
- companies closing
- low wages
- lack of meaningful opportunities
- inability to build career
- lack of decent paying jobs
- commercial business facilities
- low wages

Community issues and affordability

Xenophobia

Future allowed lake usage

Highway traffic

Local's attitudes towards outside people

High costs of living i.e. cost of grocery and gas

Affordable housing

Crime

- transient population higher risk of crime
- local drug trade out of control



Entertainment

- Need for downtown Invermere revitalization
- social activities
- lack of theatre
- more cultural events
- create more vibrancy
- seasonal hours
- lack of winter cultural events
- better programming for younger kids and seniors (organizations)
- lack of bike paths in valley
- Jumbo resort delayed development
- more winter facilities
- not enough facilities for older population

Non-resident issues

Feelings of valley-time vs Calgary time

High tax increase

Estate laws

Taxes go down once you become permanent resident

Penalizing part-time residents for property taxes when services not used

Expensive place to live- lack of living wage

More inviting

Service

Post-secondary education

- need to leave the valley
- lack of facilities
- special needs
- lack of training opportunities
- long distance bussing

Lack of public transportation

- within and between communities
- car dependent
- no taxi or public transit (hard for older population)

Healthcare

- medical issues
- low levels and capacity
- poor emergency response



- aging population not well serviced

Infrastructure

Internet access

Water supply

Other

Local planning and governance- a perception they are working against outsiders i.e. building permits

Opportunities are not there

Clarity on who to talk to at the province/municipal level

Two tier system of residents and part-timers should end

Remoteness

Commercial flights/airport

Poor radio/cell signal

Q4 - What is one opportunity for Columbia Valley to make it more attractive for new residents?

Economic development opportunities and actions

Quality of jobs- good business opportunities and better developed business opportunities

- Decrease cost of living/real estate to entice people to re-locate more easily (by provincial and regional government)
- Better priced internet access to accommodate consulting work/home businesses
 - Need internet and fiber optic
 - (by Private, RDEK)
- Move away from tourism based industries and diversity to other industries
- High tech manufacturing, high tech industries, non-polluting industries
- Encourage trades people to relocate to the Valley (province and municipal gov)
 - Develop an umbrella website or another means for residents to easily find trades people

Improve technology infrastructure

- Improve wireless service- need agreement with councils, tax dollars to fund, fiber optics cables, cell towers (could provide land to service providers)
- Incentive for building high-tech business/education centre (By RDEK and Councils)



Create a one-stop shop where people who are considering relocating to the Valley could come and discuss opportunities

- Economic Development Office
- Chamber of Commerce
- Identify gaps in terms of businesses

Jobs/professions

- Pharmacists, surgeons, agriculture (organic market)
- B.C. Hydro- engineers and technical jobs
- Winery- too cold, like Kicking
- Pot- growing and government regulated
- Entice big engineering firms to set up here with tax breaks (give incentives similar to Bantrel to build big buildings)

Incentives for investors

- Establish investment incentives and cooperatives for new businesses that would be ecologically respectful
- Respect current residents, land and beauty of the area and respect part-timers
- Look to a model of solar power fields or wind power
- Improve infrastructure, business, and construction

Tourism related opportunities and actions

Tourism

- Build a unique tourism program through the College—draws on faculty and students. Eco tourism based with more green projects
- More marketing and larger scale events- attract media attention and higher caliber people attends
- Have a consultant you can sit with to business plan to open a new business that knows about applicable grants, funding, investors to assist with breaking the barriers to opening a new business in the Valley.

Hotel/conference centre and the Valley as a wedding destination

- Make use of the airport in Fairmont
- Develop bus service
- Need a car rental/limo service
- Hotel facilities
- Leverage what people know

Jumbo resort- increase employment opportunities

- Need a strong local leader to work with the private company and public for the good of the valley
- Create solid backing from provincial and federal governments—lobbyists



- Financial support and investments—international and national companies

Promote area for tourism

- Advertising
- Develop an RV lot for camping
- More sustained marketing and advertising for Invermere and the Valley- multiple municipalities focusing on this incentive
- Canada Day fireworks/winterfest/ 4 season attractions

Healthcare related opportunities and actions

Improve health services

- Surgical hospital
- Expansion of overall healthcare system- more ambulances, senior services and expanded facilities
- Could Invermere become a hub/teaching hospital

State of the art Geriatric Facility

- Unique multi-use indoor facility, adult focused, with programming in arts, recreation, and theater
- Fundraise (i.e. Westside trail)
- Survey- what should be included and find a comparable facility
- Committee with community participation

Expand Health care services

- A large portion of the population is 55+ so there should be a stronger focus on applicable services
- Increase assisted living facilities (controlled by an Economic Developer)
- Attract doctors and create a medical destination i.e. hip/knee replacements, physiotherapists, medical administrators (controlled by Interior Health).
 - This will expand services as well as create jobs
- Introduce home services such as Handi-buses and meals-on-wheels for shutins (controlled by Ministry of Health)

Seniors related opportunities and actions

Seniors destination (50+)

- incorporate satellite of UBC
- Work with developer invested in Seniors Care
- Work with a university to provide proactive opportunities
- Ability to provide high speed internet hub

Attract Baby Boomers



- Marketing to this demographic
- Chamber of Commerce should be active
- Joint Ventures with private enterprise and government
- Centralized sport and multi-use rec. complex supported by Invermere and province

A more diverse and broad economy

- Make Valley a centre for Senior care and a hub for retirees
- Investigate and choose a consultant to visit the places that have already made their region attractive to retirees (i.e. Sun City)
- Work with BC government and private sector for a joint venture P3
- Allow private health care

Other opportunities and actions

Market the valley

- Lifestyle (amenities); feel at home; get involved with curling, bowling with local residents
- Restaurants
- Infrastructure enhancements- making highway between Radium and Invermere look better
- Mix permanent residents with temporary residents with activities on a continuum—build up permanent residents
- Breakdown/ reduce taxes for Alberta residents to entice to invest in the valley
- Fix fishing issues

Improve integration of native residents with locals/permanent residents

- Website, newsletter, email, Facebook
- Direct mail info
- Person responsible for getting info out regarding events, activities, sports to help new residents feel connected and build social connections
- Hire a social/communication/event planner

Branding of the area

- “what do you want to be when you grow up?”
- Retirement community demographic- better walking, fitness activities (i.e. pool) and healthcare options
- Recreational community- year round, playground promotion)
- Young family targeting- education (satellite campus)

Reduce cost of living

- Reduce business taxes (by local and regional governments)
- Request provincial grants i.e. development and infrastructure (by provincial government)



Open Valley to new urban planning concepts

- Change zoning requirements to all intentional communities (co-housing, agrihoods, age in place)
- RDEK and the province need to be open to change
- Infrastructure upgrade including water quality, communication
- Open design competition for concept community- this would attract architectural schools and firms which would generate media involvement which get the public interest and in turn attract new residents and services (i.e. medial)

Develop overall community planning effort

- Hire a professional planner for each community (by municipal government and provincial government)
- Adopt a key or primary industry (military base, training facilities, colleges)
- Resolve Crown Land issues

Attract more residents

- Advertise in Calgary and the US
- Encourage Calgary to buy local
- All property owners should have voting rights (including Albertans)
- Work to break down Albertan-Valley Barriers

No big city feeling

- Indicated that a number of participants have stopped work on business opportunities in the Valley due to lack of infrastructure (solar or wind power) and feeling of unwelcome-ness
- Investment incentives not government subsidies
- Strong direct for regulations for an economical and respectful variety of amenities and infrastructure so that current residents feel understood

Miscellaneous

Economic

Jobs and business- employment opportunities, businesses close for the season

Tax breaks for eco-friendly homes

Communication of jobs and events

Secure source of funding for province and federal government

Entrepreneurial opportunities

More trades

Infrastructure

Infrastructure upgrades and taxes



Municipalities should lobby for a pipeline to improve Calgary and the Valley

Better internet service

Develop intercommunication infrastructure

Servicing

Bring in natural gas

Improve septic tank

Improve water quality

Post-secondary education- college or university, online opportunities, satellite campus (i.e. UBC)

Major health care centre- maternity services, way to bring in more jobs

Lack of public transit, air access, and rail

Better transit

Community feeling and affordability

Work on lifestyle variety

More entertainment during the year

Lower taxes for Alberta residents

Affordability

Community building i.e. greenhouse project

Gathering place

Affordable housing

Affordable seniors' facilities

Develop local social network

Entertainment

Opening entertainment opportunities/social events- volunteer opportunities to promote sense of community

No outdoor activities in the winter

First class recreation centre with swimming, squash courts, ect

Culture centre/fitness centre, indoor rec facility focused on adults

Casino

Dinner theater

Jumbo (tied to creation of a jumbo resort)

Grow upon the art gallery concept- what is out niche



Natural Heritage

- Improve lakefront access
- More boating law enforcement
- Additional boat ramps
- Take best asset (the lake) and capitalize
- Better boat access
- Biking and hiking trail in the valley- expand opportunities, market

Other

- More benefits for seniors
- Create more lakefront properties and relocate the West Rail Line
- Preferred pricing for locals- golfing and gas
- Connect highway 40 to Canal Flats
- Open Valley to the public (camping)
- Develop a marketing strategy (national and international) to bring in industry, tourists, new residents to the valley, advertise to all province
- Brand the valley
- Booth at Calgary Home and Garden Show
- Look to what other centres have done to be successful
- Expand airport
- Market as retirement area
- BC stores that handle wine
- Demographics- how do you get retirees to live full time? Do you want to be a retirement valley or a place where people live and work?



Appendix B – Online Survey Findings

An online survey was distributed to both permanent and seasonal residents of the Columbia Valley. The survey was designed to understand the similarities and differences between permanent and seasonal residents along a variety of questions including:

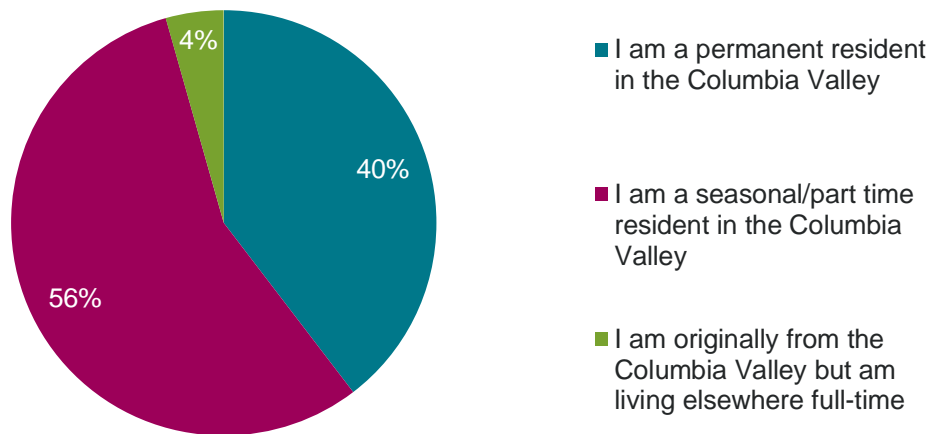
- How desirable the Columbia Valley is as a place to live and what its biggest attractions are
- What is already working well to attract and retain residents and what areas need to be more of a priority
- How long residents have lived in Columbia Valley and how they were first introduced to the area
- Significant factors keeping permanent residents living in the area or factors that are preventing seasonal residents from moving to the area full-time

The survey was open from December 21, 2015 to February 3rd, 2016 and received a total of 707 responses.

A summary of the survey results is presented below.

Note: Throughout the summary analysis below, “N” indicates the number of responses for that specific question. This number will vary by question as survey logic was used that directed respondents to different parts of the survey based on what answers they submitted (e.g. if someone indicated they are a permanent resident, they would skip over the seasonal resident questions to the permanent resident ones).

How would you best describe yourself?

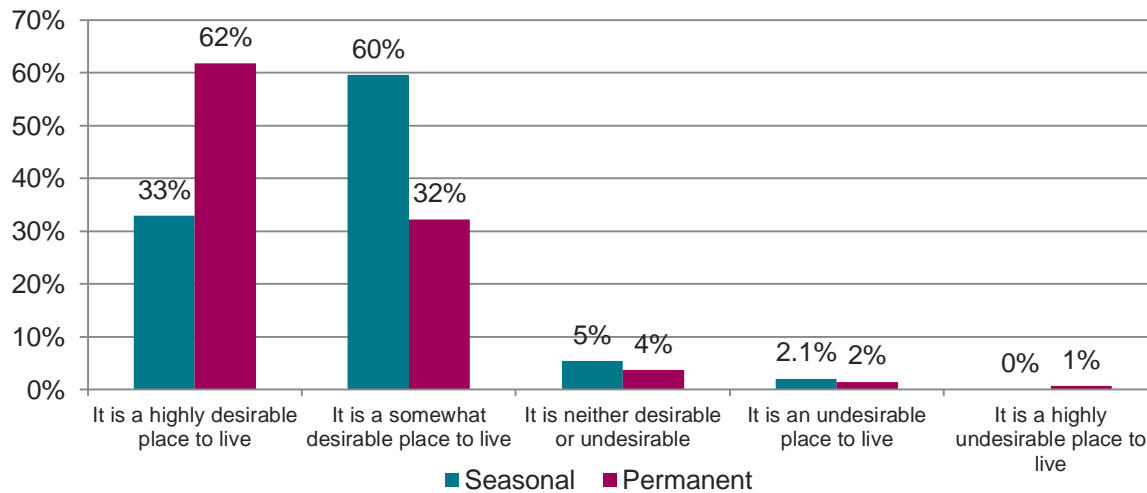


N=700

- Seasonal/part-time residents made up 56% of the total responses to the survey (392 people), while permanent residents made up 40% of total responses (277 people), and those originally from the Columbia Valley but that are living elsewhere full-time made up 4% of total responses (31 people)



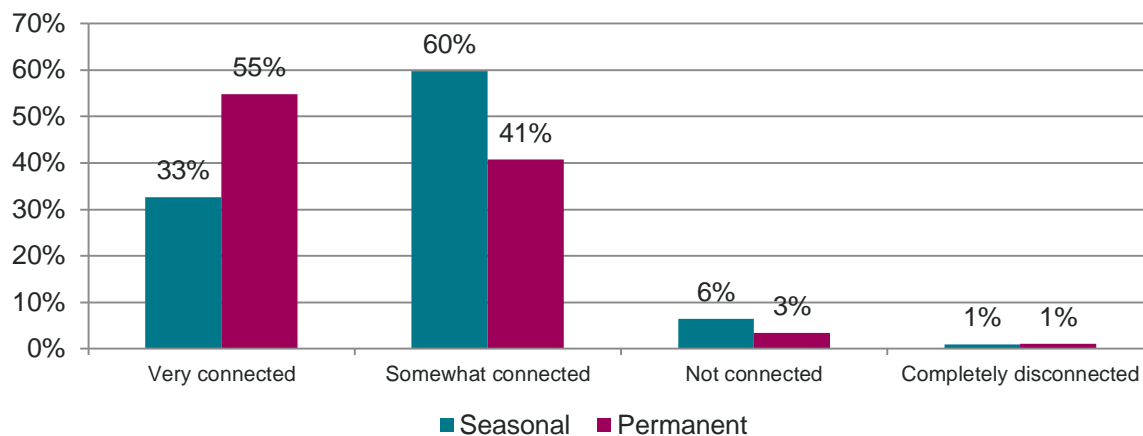
In your opinion, how desirable is it to live in the Columbia Valley?



N = seasonal (386) and permanent (267)

- Almost all seasonal and permanent residents that responded to the survey think the Columbia Valley is either a somewhat or highly desirable place to live
- It is interesting to note that seasonal residents have a much higher response rate to say “it is a somewhat desirable place to live”, whereas permanent residents have a much higher response rate for “it is a highly desirable place to live”

To what degree do you feel connected to the Columbia Valley?



N = seasonal (388) and permanent (263)

- Almost all seasonal and permanent residents that responded to the survey feel somewhat or very connected to the Columbia Valley
- Again, it is interesting to note that seasonal residents largely feel “somewhat connected”, whereas permanent residents feel “very connected”



- Permanent residents feel connected to the region because they have been long-time residents (generations of family living there), they volunteer locally and get involved in community initiatives, people in the community are friendly and inclusive, and because they attend local events and activities.
- Seasonal residents feel connected to the region because they have owned property in the area and have been visiting for a long time (family history), because they visit the area frequently, they have a lot of family and friends in the area, and because of a connection to the natural environment and scenery.

In your opinion, what is the Columbia Valley's single biggest attraction?

- An overwhelming majority of respondents identified that the biggest attractions of the Columbia Valley were related to the areas' outdoor beauty and resources:
 - Outdoor and four season recreation activities, especially golfing, skiing, hot pools, trails, and biking (24% of responses)
 - Lakes, especially Lake Windermere (21% of responses)
 - Beautiful natural environment (15% of responses)
 - Mountains, especially Panorama Mountain (11% of responses)
 - Outdoor scenery (6% of responses)
- Other important attractions include the climate (5% of responses), the relaxed lifestyle (5% of responses), and the small town feel/great sense of community (4% of respondents)



In your opinion, what are the top five characteristics of any great community (please pick your top five)? and Which of the following do you think already contributes to attracting and retaining more residents to the Columbia Valley? (please pick as many as you would like)

Community Characteristics	Top 5 of any great community		What already contributes to attracting and retaining residents?	
	Seasonal	Permanent	Seasonal	Permanent
A Sense of Community (i.e. a sense of belonging or an emotional connection)	68%	77%	56%	65%
The Natural Environment (i.e. trails, parks, outdoor experiences)	73%	62%	92%	91%
Proximity to Friends and Family	43%	27%	x	x
Good Employment Opportunities	46%	66%	10%	18%
Good Education Opportunities	23%	28%	6%	18%
A Variety of Social and Recreation Opportunities (i.e. sports, clubs, and classes)	67%	54%	59%	69%
Arts and Culture (i.e. events, classes, galleries, theatres, and shows)	39%	39%	32%	49%
Environmental Sustainability (i.e. preserving resources in their natural state, reduced carbon footprint, minimized climate change impact)	16%	24%	31%	36%
Governance and Leadership Opportunities	3%	6%	5%	6%
Health and Security	61%	48%	35%	39%
Cost of living	40%	44%	19%	18%
Housing Availability	7%	25%	21%	17%
Public Transportation Options	6%	6%	3%	5%
Population Diversity	5%	8%	6%	11%

N = "top 5" seasonal (382) and permanent (257) & "already contributing" seasonal (374) and permanent (257)

"x" denotes that the community characteristic was not an option for the question

Shaded boxes represent the top rankings

- Interesting to note that when asked what their top five characteristics that make up a great community, both seasonal and permanent residents ranked the same top five, though in slightly different orders
 - Top for seasonal residents is the Natural Environment (i.e. trails, parks, outdoor experiences), a Sense of Community (i.e. a sense of belonging or an emotional connection), a Variety of Social and Recreation Opportunities (i.e. sports, clubs, and classes), Health and Security, and Good Employment Opportunities
 - Top for permanent residents is a Sense of Community (i.e. a sense of belonging or an emotional connection), Good Employment Opportunities, the Natural Environment (i.e.



trails, parks, outdoor experiences), a Variety of Social and Recreation Opportunities (i.e. sports, clubs, and classes), and Health and Security

- Also interesting to note that when asked about the characteristics that already contribute to attracting and retaining more residents to the Columbia Valley, both seasonal and permanent residents ranked the same top five once again, though in slightly different orders

What top three priority areas do you think leadership in the Columbia Valley need to focus on to attract and retain more residents to the area? (Please pick your top three.)

Community Characteristics	Top 3 areas to prioritize	
	Seasonal	Permanent
A Sense of Community (i.e. a sense of belonging or an emotional connection)	34%	21%
The Natural Environment (i.e. trails, parks, outdoor experiences)	35%	16%
Good Employment Opportunities	60%	71%
Good Education Opportunities	18%	17%
A Variety of Social and Recreation Opportunities (i.e. sports, clubs, and classes)	32%	17%
Arts and Culture (i.e. events, classes, galleries, theatres, and shows)	21%	17%
Environmental Sustainability (i.e. preserving resources in their natural state, reduced carbon footprint, minimized climate change impact)	10%	12%
Governance and Leadership Opportunities	6%	8%
Health and Security	29%	22%
Cost of living	27%	44%
Housing Availability	13%	32%
Public Transportation Options	8%	14%
Population Diversity	3%	4%

N = seasonal (375) and permanent (258)

Shaded boxes represent the top rankings

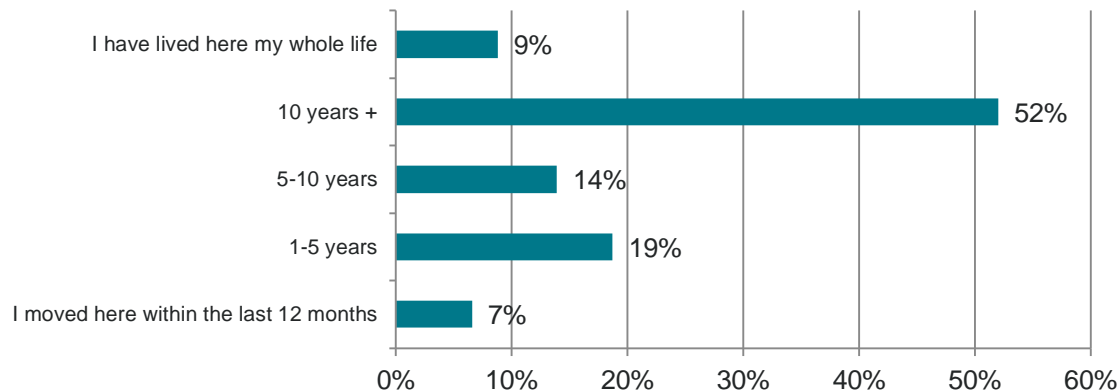
- When asked about the top three areas to prioritize, both seasonal and permanent residents identified good employment opportunities (60% and 71% respectively) as the top priority. Seasonal residents then identified the natural environment (35%) and the sense of community (34%) as the next top priorities, whereas permanent residents identified the cost of living (44%) and housing availability (32%) as the next top priorities.



Permanent Residents

A total of 277 permanent residents responded to the survey.

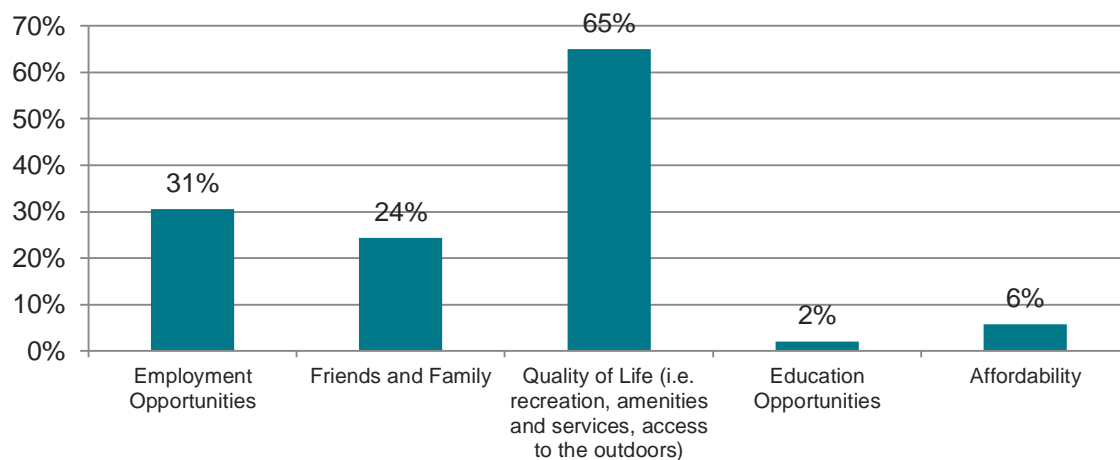
How long have you lived in the Columbia Valley?



N = 273

- Vast majority of those identifying themselves as permanent residents have lived in the Columbia Valley for more than ten years
- Very few respondents have lived in the area their whole life

Why did you move to the Columbia Valley? (please select all that apply)

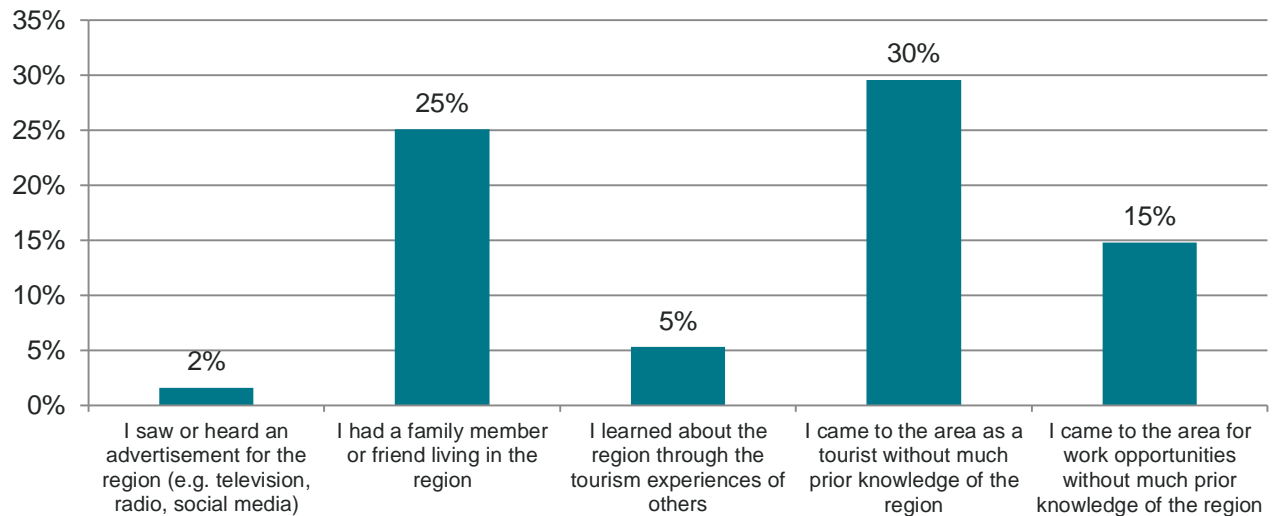


N = 243

- For those that have not lived in the Columbia Valley their whole life, the vast majority of now permanent residents were drawn to the area for the quality of life. Other top responses include employment opportunities and friends and family



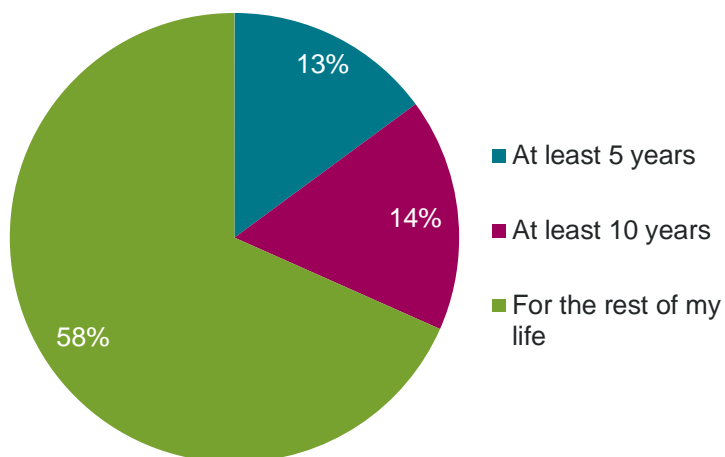
How were you first introduced to the Columbia Valley?



N = 243

- For those that have not lived in the Columbia Valley their whole life, the vast majority of now permanent residents were first introduced to the area by coming to the area as a tourist without much prior knowledge of the region (30%) and because they had a family member or friend living in the region (25%)

How long do you plan to be living in the Columbia Valley?

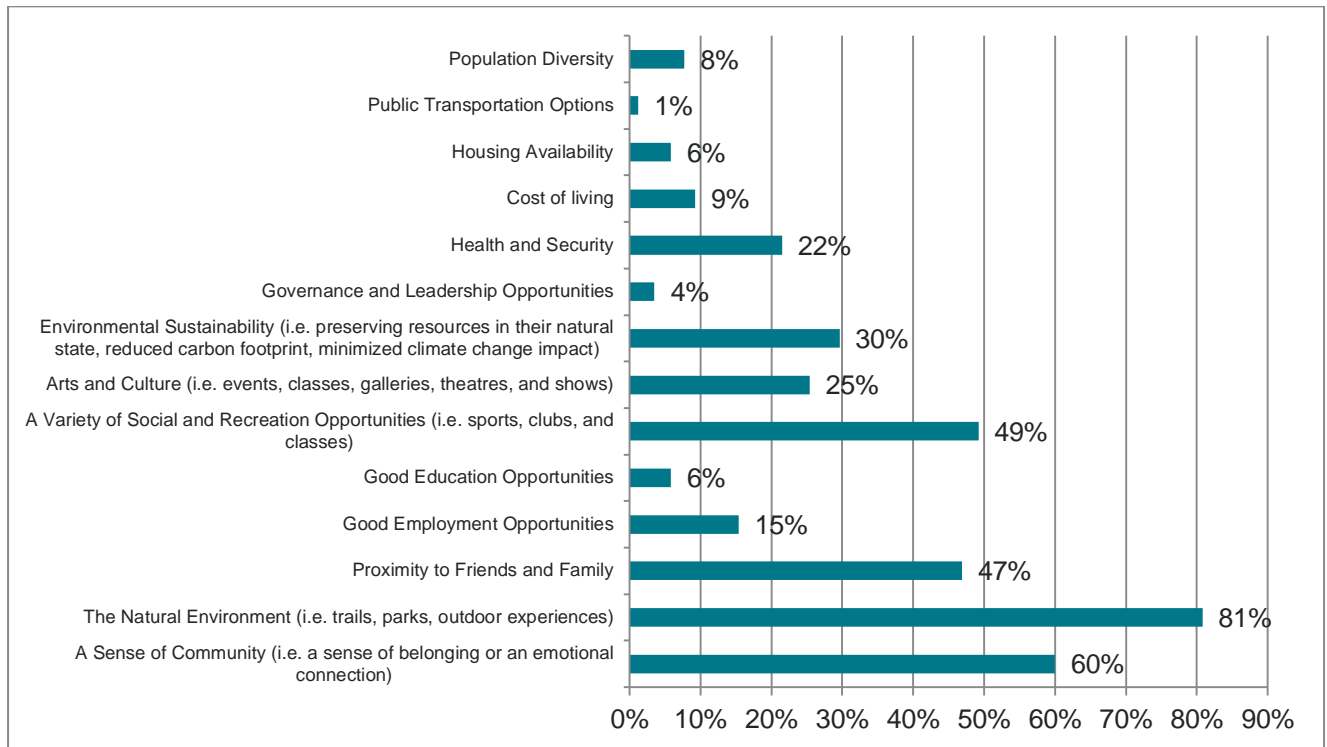


N = 259

- Majority of all permanent residents that responded to the survey plan to be living in the Columbia Valley for the rest of their lives



What are the most significant factors that are keeping you as a full-time/permanent resident of the Columbia Valley? (please select all that apply)



N = 260

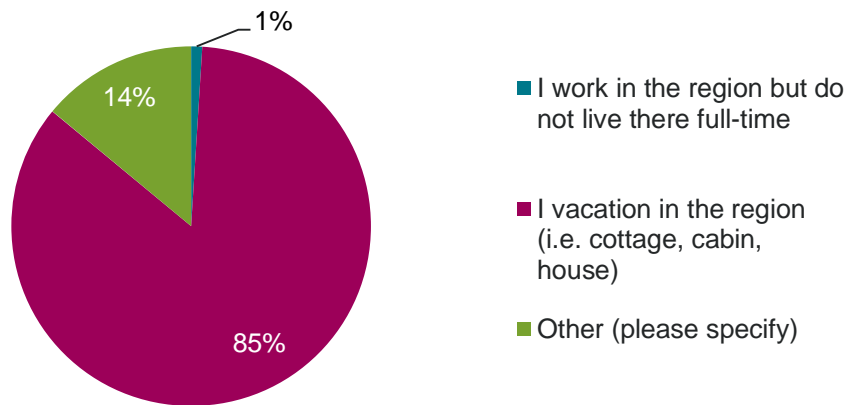
- The most significant factors keeping people as permanent residents are:
 - The Natural Environment (81%)
 - The Sense of Community (60%)
 - The Variety of Social and Recreation Opportunities (49%)
 - Proximity to Friends and Family (47%)



Seasonal Residents

A total of 392 seasonal residents responded to the survey.

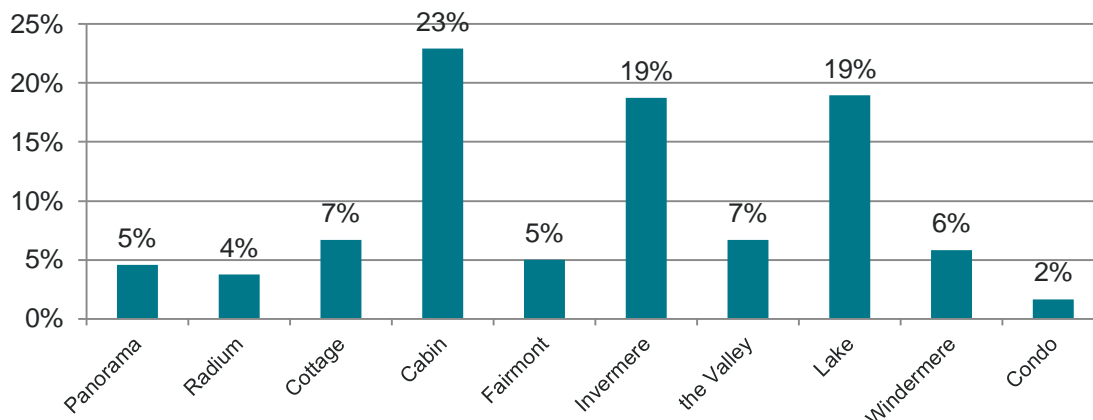
Which of the following statements best describes why you live in the Columbia Valley on a seasonal/part-time basis?



N = 386

- Vast majority of seasonal residents live in the Columbia Valley region on a part-time basis because they vacation in the region
- Interesting to note that many respondents identified that they live in the Columbia Valley “full-time” at various parts of the year, mostly in the summer months

When you refer to the location of your seasonal residence with your friends, what name do you refer to it by? For example, you say “We’re going to (blank) for the weekend”

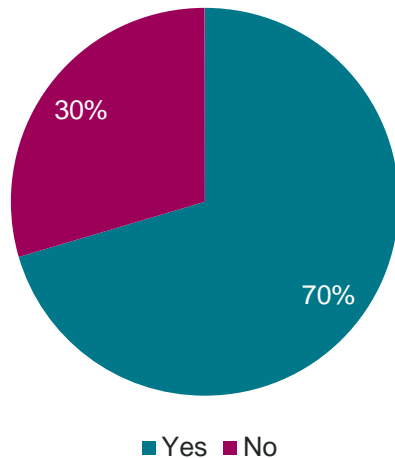


N = 376

- The vast majority of seasonal residents refer to their residence in the Columbia Valley as the “Cabin” (23%), “Invermere” (19%), or the “Lake” (19%)



Would you ever consider living in the Columbia Valley on a full-time/permanent basis?



N = 389

- Vast majority of seasonal residents would consider living in the Columbia Valley on a full-time/permanent basis

What changes would you need to see to motivate you to become a full-time/permanent resident in the Columbia Valley?

- For those answering “yes, they would consider living in Columbia Valley on a full-time basis”, the changes they would need to see in order to potentially become a full-time resident are:
 - A better job market and better job opportunities, especially white collar, professional jobs (18% of responses)
 - More diversity in the types of businesses and better operating hours, e.g. restaurants, hardware stores, retail (9% of responses)
 - Would have to be retired (9% of responses)
 - Better access to health care, hospital services, and access to health specialists (6% of responses)
 - Lower taxes and cost of living (6% of responses)
 - More recreation, entertainment, and event activities (5% of responses)
 - A better economy (4% of responses)
 - Being more welcoming to tourists and seasonal residents, e.g. seeing positive changes in community attitude to seasonal and non-residents (4% of responses)
 - Better infrastructure such as roads, biking paths and trails, better and safer highway access, and cleaning up the forestry service roads (4% of responses)
 - Family ties and a need to relocate the family (4% of responses)



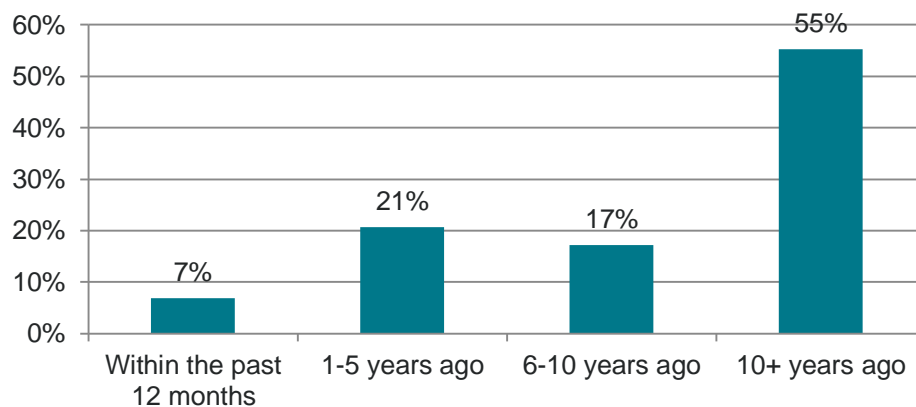
What factors are preventing you from considering living in the Columbia Valley on a full-time/permanent basis?

- For those answering “no, they would not consider living in the Columbia Valley on a full-time basis”, the factors preventing them from considering living in the area full-time are:
 - A lack of employment opportunities and jobs (15% of responses)
 - The need for a better climate, e.g. that is not always overcast (12% of responses)
 - Preference to be located in a larger and busier community that is not as quiet, especially in the winter months (11% of responses)
 - Distance from family (11% of responses)
 - A feeling that the current housing is not suitable for full-time living (9% of responses)
 - A feeling that the area is isolated and too far from transportation hubs such as airports (9% of responses)
 - A need to be able to easily access medical facilities and specialists (8% of responses)
 - High cost of living (7% of responses)
 - Negativity around perceptions by locals of outsiders/non-residents (7% of responses)

Originally from Columbia Valley but are Living Elsewhere Full-Time

A total of 31 people that are originally from the Columbia Valley but that are currently living elsewhere full-time responded to the survey.

When did you stop living full-time in the Columbia Valley?

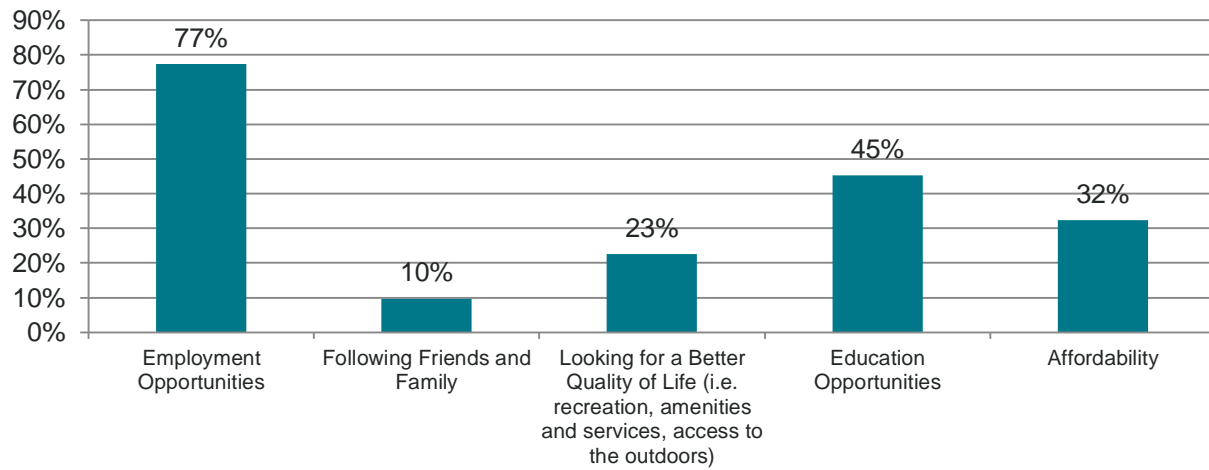


N = 29

- For those survey respondents that answered that they are originally from the Columbia Valley but are currently living elsewhere full-time, the majority indicated that they had left the region more than ten years ago.



What were the top reasons you chose to move away from the Columbia Valley?

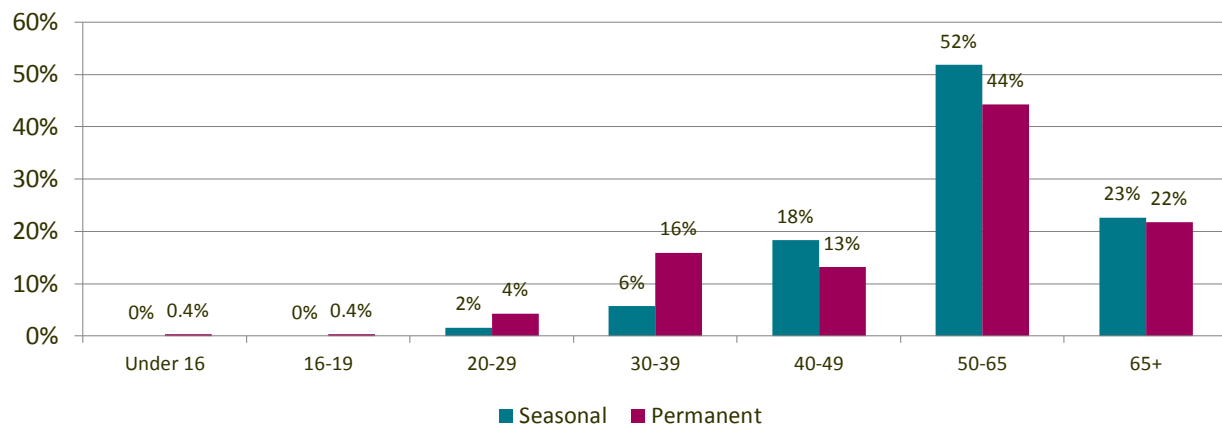


N = 31

- For those that answered that they are originally from the Columbia Valley but are currently living elsewhere full-time, the vast majority indicated they moved away for employment opportunities. Other top reasons include moving for education opportunities and for affordability reasons

Demographic Profiles of Survey Respondents

How old are you?

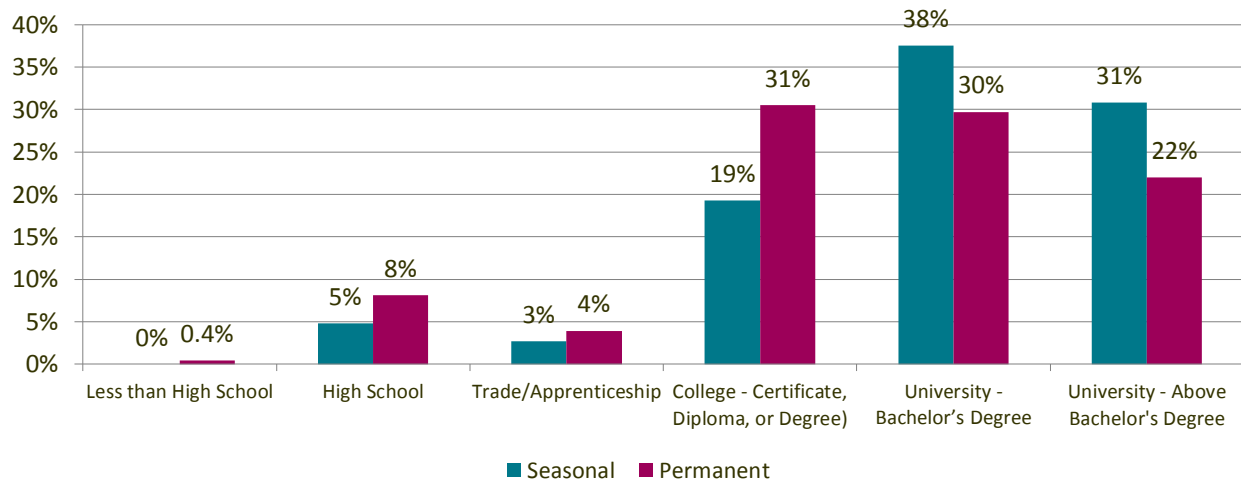


N = seasonal (371) and permanent (258)

- The vast majority of seasonal and permanent residents that responded to the survey were between 50 and 65 years of age (with that age category playing a much larger role for seasonal residents)
- It is interesting to note that higher percentages of younger people between the ages of 20-39 that are permanent residents responded to the survey compared with seasonal residents



What is the highest level of formal education you have achieved?



N = seasonal (373) and permanent (259)

- A higher proportion of seasonal residents identified that they have a university Bachelor's degree or higher compared with permanent residents. A higher proportion of permanent residents identified that they have a college certificate, diploma, or degree as their highest level of education relative to seasonal residents.



Appendix C – Vicinity Jobs Regional Labour Demand and Supply

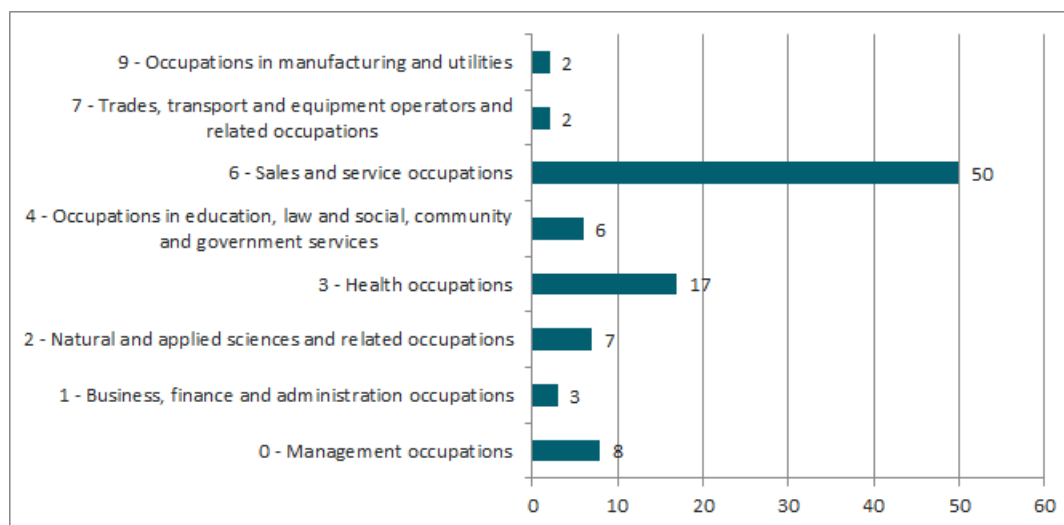
The information presented in this section is generated by Vicinity Jobs Inc. This information should be interpreted in the context of the following caveats.

First, this information reflects a sample of those jobs advertised in the Valley and a sample of job seekers with active resumes within the Valley. Therefore, the absolute number of job postings and jobs seekers identified in this section should not be considered inclusive of the Valley's entire available labour force or job demand. In other words, this is not a comprehensive account of those jobs available in the region. Instead it should be treated as a snapshot to better understand the current labour environment.

Second, the Vicinity Jobs reporting system ties this information to a fixed geographic location based on the information provided in the job posting or a job seeker's resume. Accordingly, jobs are sometimes advertised for larger communities when in fact they are actually located in smaller neighbouring communities. For example, an employer may advertise for a position in Invermere when in fact the position is actually located in Windermere. This can distort some of the results.

Regional Labour Demand (2015)

COLUMBIA VALLEY JOB POSTINGS BY OCCUPATION CATEGORY

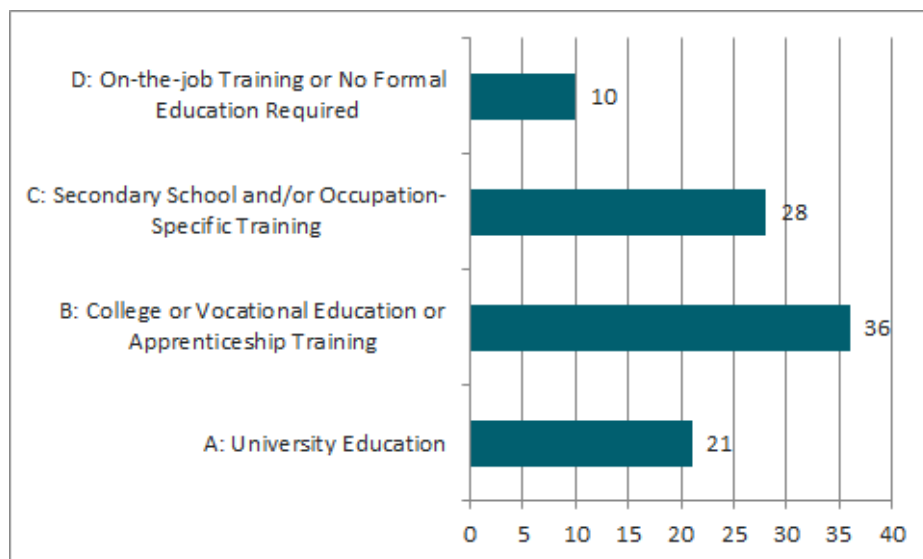


Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

Note. Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.



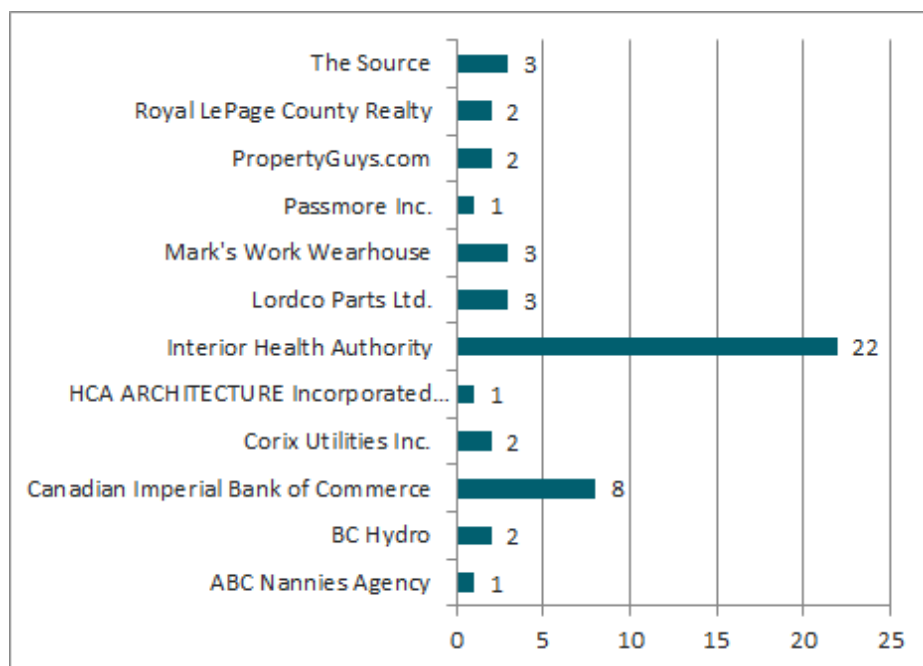
COLUMBIA VALLEY JOB POSTINGS BY EDUCATION REQUIREMENT



Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

Note. Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.

COLUMBIA VALLEY JOB POSTINGS BY IDENTIFIED EMPLOYER



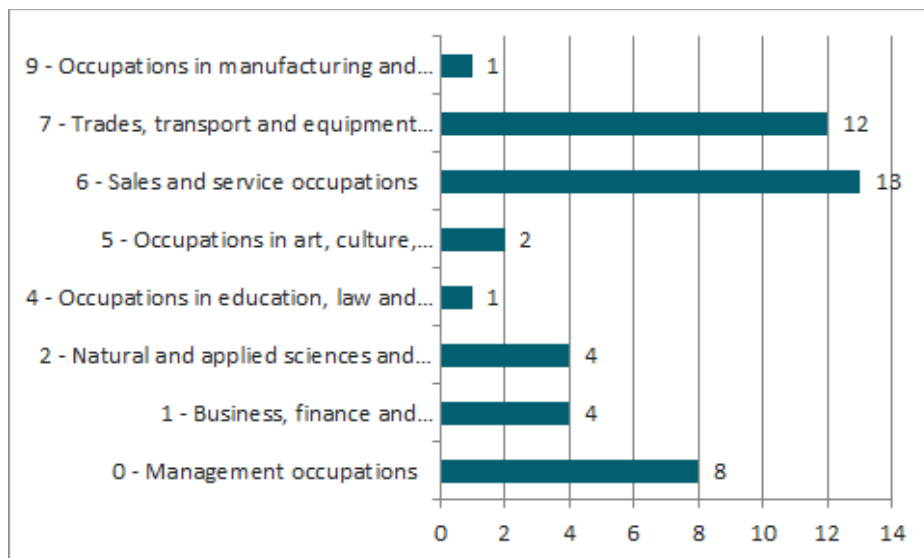
Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

Note. Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.



Regional Labour Supply (2015)

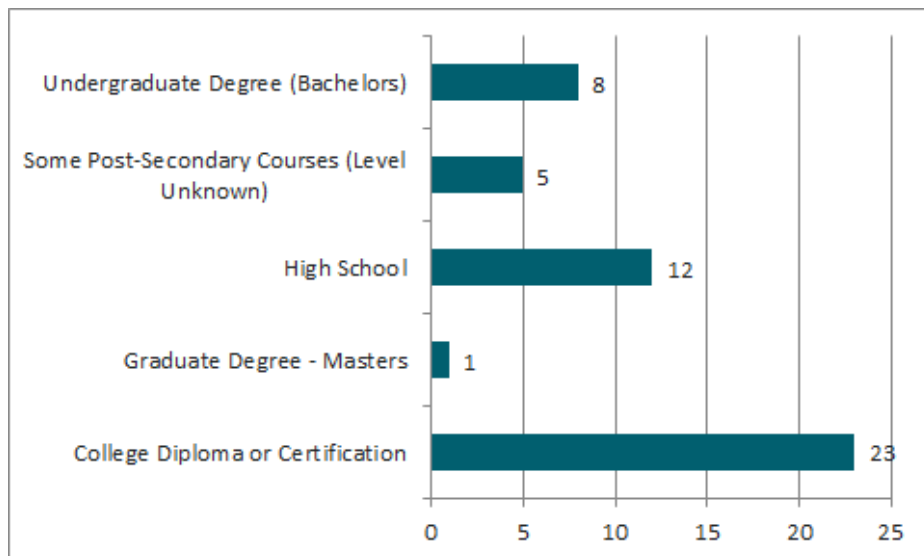
COLUMBIA VALLEY AVAILABLE LABOUR SUPPLY BY OCCUPATION CATEGORY



Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

Note: Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.

COLUMBIA VALLEY AVAILABLE LABOUR SUPPLY BY EDUCATION LEVEL



Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

Note: Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.



COLUMBIA VALLEY AVAILABLE LABOUR SUPPLY BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL



Source: Vicinity Jobs. 2016. BC. Regional Hiring Demand Reporting System. Adapted by MDB Insight 2016.

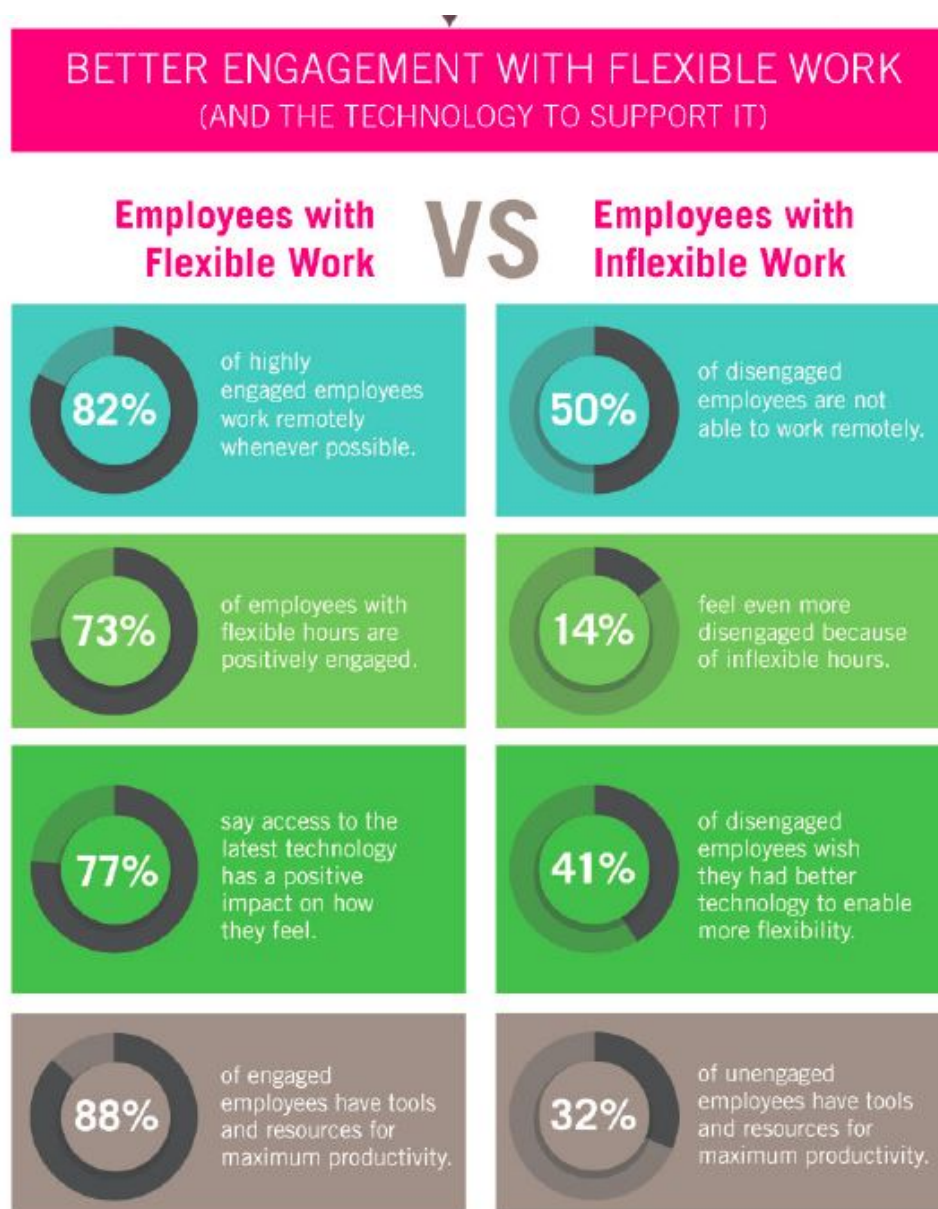
Note. Based on newly published job postings first found between 07/01/2015 AND 12/31/2015 (Location is 'Fairmont Hot Springs' OR Location is 'Invermere' OR Location is 'Radium Hot Springs'). Smaller communities within the Columbia Valley are not reported by the system.



Appendix D – Workshift Materials

Traditional models of work (i.e. working at a desk from 9am-5pm) are being challenged as technology allows for more flexibility in the way work is completed. One group looking at the benefits of this new age of working is Workshift (<http://www.workshiftcanada.com>). Materials that Workshift have developed (such as in the figure below) are important to consider when creating messaging to attract new professionals to the Columbia Valley.

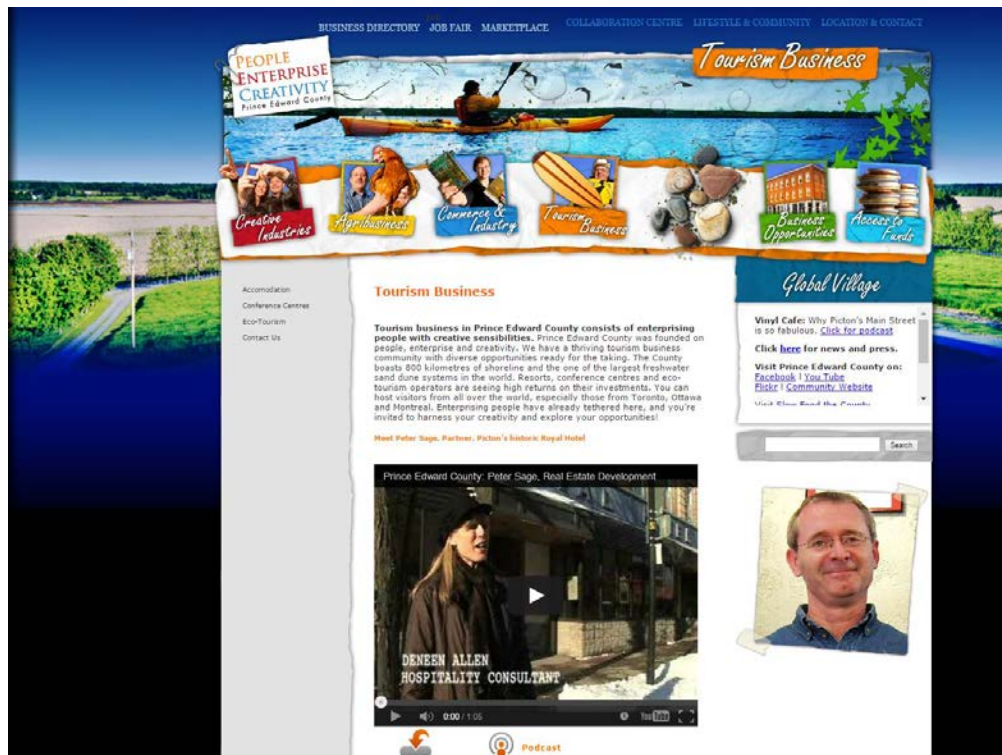
WORKSHIFT - BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE WORK





Appendix E – Branding and Design Examples

Prince Edward County, Ontario – www.buildanewlife.ca





Town of Gravenhurst, Ontario – www.gravenhurst365.ca

GRAVENHURST
Rediscover Your Life In Muskoka

It's All About You | [Contact Us](#)

Search



Gravenhurst365 ▾

Grow Your Business ▾

Expand Your Career ▾

Family & Friends

What's Happening



I *live* here

I *create* here

GRAVENHURST
Rediscover Your Life In Muskoka

It's All About You | [Contact Us](#)

Search



Gravenhurst365 ▾

Grow Your Business ▾

Expand Your Career ▾

Family & Friends

What's Happening



Reconnect With Family And Friends

Get involved and help your loved ones remember that Gravenhurst is where they belong 365 days a year. This town is where their friends and family are, making it the perfect place to raise a family, start a new business, or find support in tough times. No matter where they've gone, or for how long, the whole community is ready to welcome them home.

Send a postcard



Reconnect With Us



Interested in reconnecting with your hometown? Check out one of our social media communities or join our mailing list for the latest & greatest in Gravenhurst.

[READ MORE >](#)

Success Stories

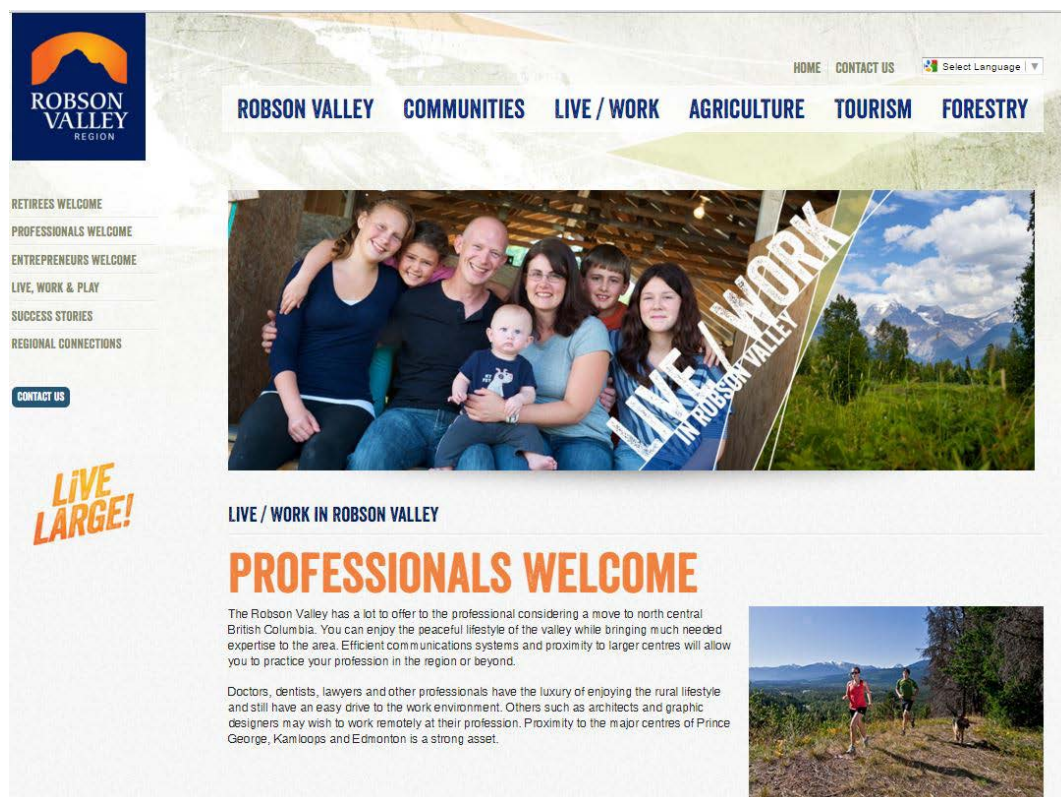
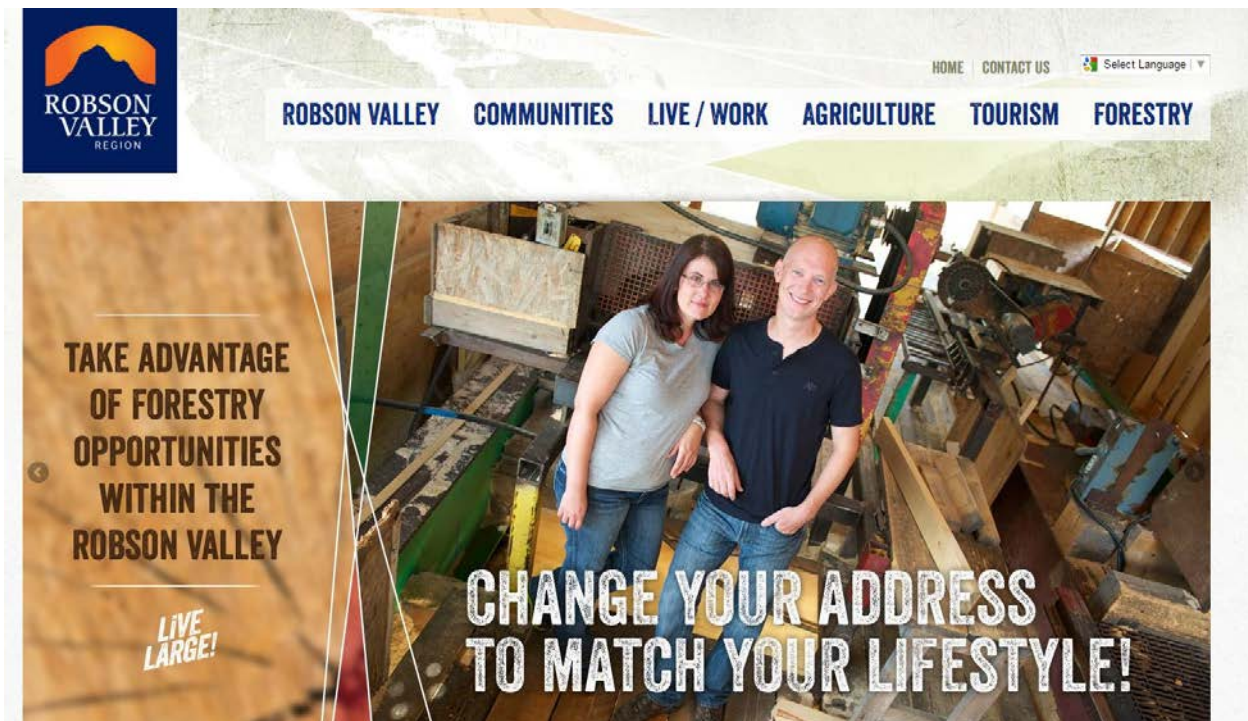


Enjoy a balanced lifestyle without sacrificing your career! Sounds too good to be true? Learn about other former residents that rediscovered what life in Gravenhurst has to offer 365 days a year.

[READ MORE >](#)

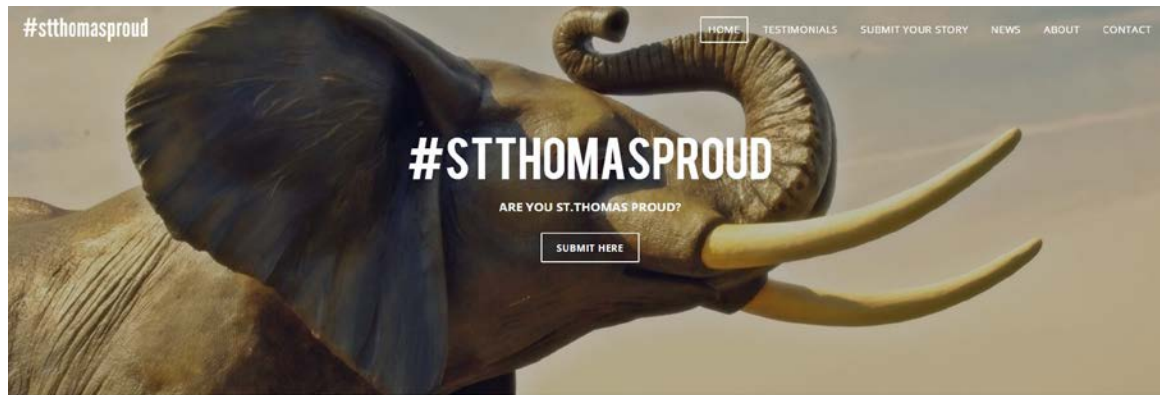


Robson Valley Region, British Columbia – www.discoverrvr.ca



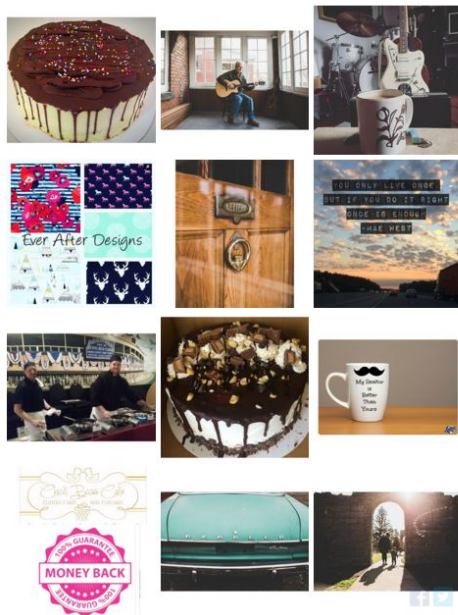


City of St. Thomas, Ontario – www.stthomasproud.ca



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#stthomasproud

