

Economic Development

STRATEGY



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the original peoples of these lands and waters, specifically the *səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh), *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Squamish), and *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), on whose unceded ancestral lands the District of North Vancouver is located. We value the opportunity to learn, share, and serve our community on these unceded lands.



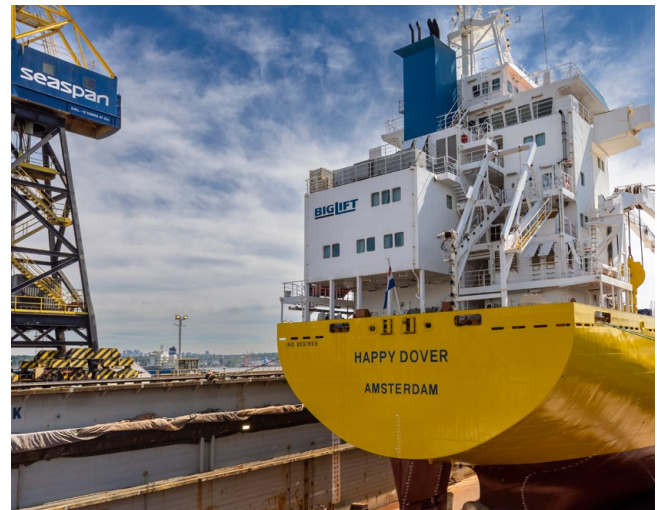
District of North Vancouver Economic Development Strategy

Prepared for the District of North Vancouver by
B&A Studios

In association with
Urban Systems
Lions Gate Consulting
Qatalyst Research Group

Table of Contents

A Blueprint for Economic Development in the District of North Vancouver	04
Four Key Objectives of the EDS	05
Supporting the Community Vision	06
The District's Planning Framework	07
Growing A Diverse and Resilient Economy	08
Reflecting Local Businesses and Employees	09
A Roadmap to Business Prosperity	12
Implementing the Plan	18



The District would like to acknowledge and thank the nearly 350 businesses, economic development partners and staff who contributed their time, views, and invaluable insights into this project. Special recognition goes to the members of the Business Task Force and the District staff working group who, guided by their deep commitment to our community prosperity and well-being, volunteered their expertise and collaborated on the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy. Images used throughout this document are courtesy of: District of North Vancouver, Vancouver North Shore Tourism Association, Seaspan.



A Blueprint for Economic Development in the District of North Vancouver

The Economic Development Strategy (EDS, Strategy) serves as a forward-looking blueprint document to advance the District of North Vancouver's work towards achieving the economic vision and goals defined in the Official Community Plan (OCP) 2030 and the 2021 OCP Action Plan. It is structured around four key Objectives, reflecting the challenges and opportunities faced by District of North Vancouver businesses. These Objectives are supported by ten overarching Initiatives informed by business input, research, and analysis generated and integrated over the course of Strategy development. Twenty-three Actions provide a further roadmap for implementation and monitoring over the 2024-2029 period, at the end of which the EDS is to be reviewed.

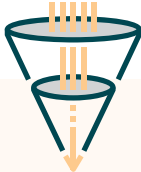
Built on a foundation of research and analysis, and informed by comprehensive input from businesses and economic development partners throughout the study process, the EDS seeks to address challenges faced by local employers and workers and achieve the District's economic vision.

Four Key Objectives of the EDS



Create Employment Space

- Update land use policies and regulations to create additional commercial space
- Update land use policies and regulations to protect and intensify industrial lands
- Explore temporary property tax relief for businesses impacted by rent increases due to redevelopment



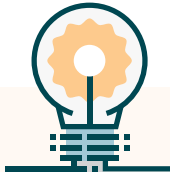
Improve Business Services

- Modernize business licensing regulations and processes to improve and provide efficient services to businesses
- Support opportunities to link local talent to local employment needs
- Increase outreach to the business community



Support Transportation & Housing for Employers

- Facilitate partnerships with local businesses and other partners to tackle employee transportation and housing challenges
- Raise awareness of housing and transportation issues and their impacts on local economic opportunities



Cultivate Great Spaces

- Support community-led business initiatives to create great public spaces
- Support and grow the visitor and film economies



The District's Official Community Plan 2030 highlights the need for a diverse and resilient local economy to meet the long-term service and employment needs of the community. The vision is to be achieved through economic development policies, programs and services that attract, retain and grow businesses and employment opportunities in the District.

Supporting the Community Vision

This Economic Development Strategy (EDS) serves as a forward-looking blueprint document to advance the District of North Vancouver's work towards achieving the economic vision and goals defined in the Official Community Plan (OCP) 2030 and 2021 OCP Action Plan.

Much has changed in the years since adoption of the OCP, with evolving local, regional, and global trends affecting where and how we work, and shifting the trajectory and nature of employment growth within the District and the broader economic region.

The Strategy is a product of comprehensive research, community engagement, and quantitative and qualitative analyses to understand the implications of these changes, along with the challenges and opportunities they present toward achieving a diverse and sustainable economic future.

Based on this updated understanding and through a structured strategic planning process, the EDS identifies a set of initiatives and actions, spread across four key areas of opportunity, all of which are within the municipality's ability to influence and action over the next five years (2024-2029).

The District's Planning Framework

EDS aligns and complements the economic policies and goals of the OCP 2030 and the 2021 OCP Action Plan, as well as those present in other District plans, bylaws, strategies, and policies. It serves as a District wide economic development guide to inform actions and initiatives to be taken by the municipality over the next five years, and to track progress made over the same period. The District's plan and policy framework is illustrated in the figure below. The EDS and its supporting studies are intended to be reviewed and updated on a five-year cycle.





Growing A Diverse and Resilient Economy

The District of North Vancouver has a rich and diverse economic history. From the First Nations communities in the time before other settlers arrived, through the community's economic heritage of sawmilling, shipbuilding, and trade, to its modern mix of industrial and service-based industries, economic activities have shaped and influenced the identity of the District and broader North Shore region.

Since the adoption of OCP 2030, the number of jobs located in the District has increased steadily, spreading across a variety of economic activities and industries, and leading to a growing demand for employment space.

More recently in the wake of the pandemic, local employment figures surged with many District residents reporting, as part of the 2021 Census, that they work from home rather than commute to their usual place of work. While these figures caused the District to surpass its OCP 2030 target of 36,000 local jobs, back to work and hybrid arrangement trends are normalizing this outlier trend, and leading to new opportunities and challenges for both businesses and employees.

Emerging from the disruptions of the pandemic, the outlook for economic growth in the District remains strong across all major employment lands categories. As businesses gradually bring workers back to the office and explore hybrid work opportunities, the total number of jobs tied to employment land in the District is projected to increase by over 11,000 between 2021 and 2051. This equates to a projected need of nearly 4.2 million square feet of additional employment space required over the next 30 years.

As of the 2021 Canadian Census, the District is home to over 88,169 people and accommodates 39,690 jobs, accounting for 3.3% of Metro Vancouver's population and 2.9% of the region's employment.



CREATING COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

To encourage the growth of vibrant and complete communities, the OCP directs most new employment growth to be accommodated in the District's designated Town and Village Centres.

Reflecting Local Businesses and Employees

Community input formed a crucial component in the development of this Strategy, with businesses, economic partners, and residents engaged through the study process to inform the understanding of current challenges and opportunities faced by District employers and workers, and to identify the needs and priorities of the local business community. The engagement process included representation from a range of industries, local businesses, institutions, and community partners with feedback solicited via both an online engagement survey and a series of focused in-person workshops.



Online Survey



A total of 282 valid responses collected over four weeks

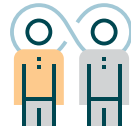


Respondents represented 81% businesses, 16% District residents and 3% other



Small businesses (fewer than 50 employees) represented 90% of business responses

In-Person Workshops



Three in-person workshops held at various locations around the District



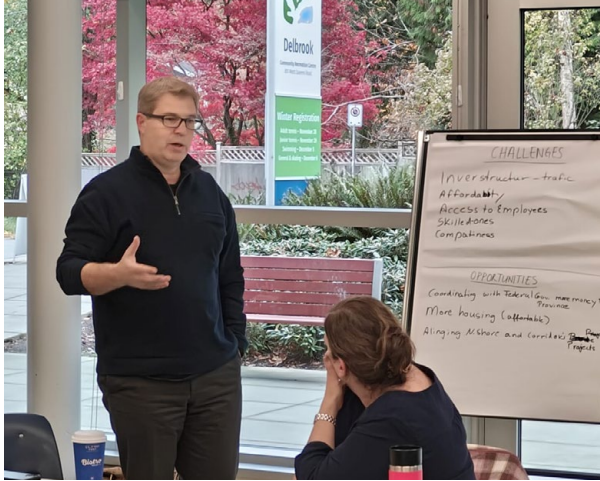
56 participants representing local businesses, and partner organizations



In-depth round table discussion on a range of topics affecting local businesses and the economy



128 challenges and 115 opportunities identified



Business Task Force & Staff Working Group



Strategic guidance was provided by the Business Task Force, comprised of 13 cross-industry local business leaders and economic development partners, and a cross-functional District Staff Working Group, both formed to guide and validate the Strategy deliverables.



In addition to participating in the survey and in-person workshops, the Business Task Force and Staff Working Group collaborated on developing the Strategy in an options evaluation and prioritization strategic planning workshop.



A Roadmap to Business Prosperity

Through the research and engagement process, four key Objectives for the Economic Development Strategy were identified:

1

Create Employment Space

Update the District's land use policies and regulations to protect employment uses in appropriate locations while enabling and encouraging the creation of new employment space to accommodate future economic growth

2

Improve Business Services

Streamline District business regulations, processes and services and facilitate permitting and licensing for local businesses

3

Support Transportation & Housing for Employers

Explore opportunities to work with businesses and partners to address economic constraints related to housing and transportation

4

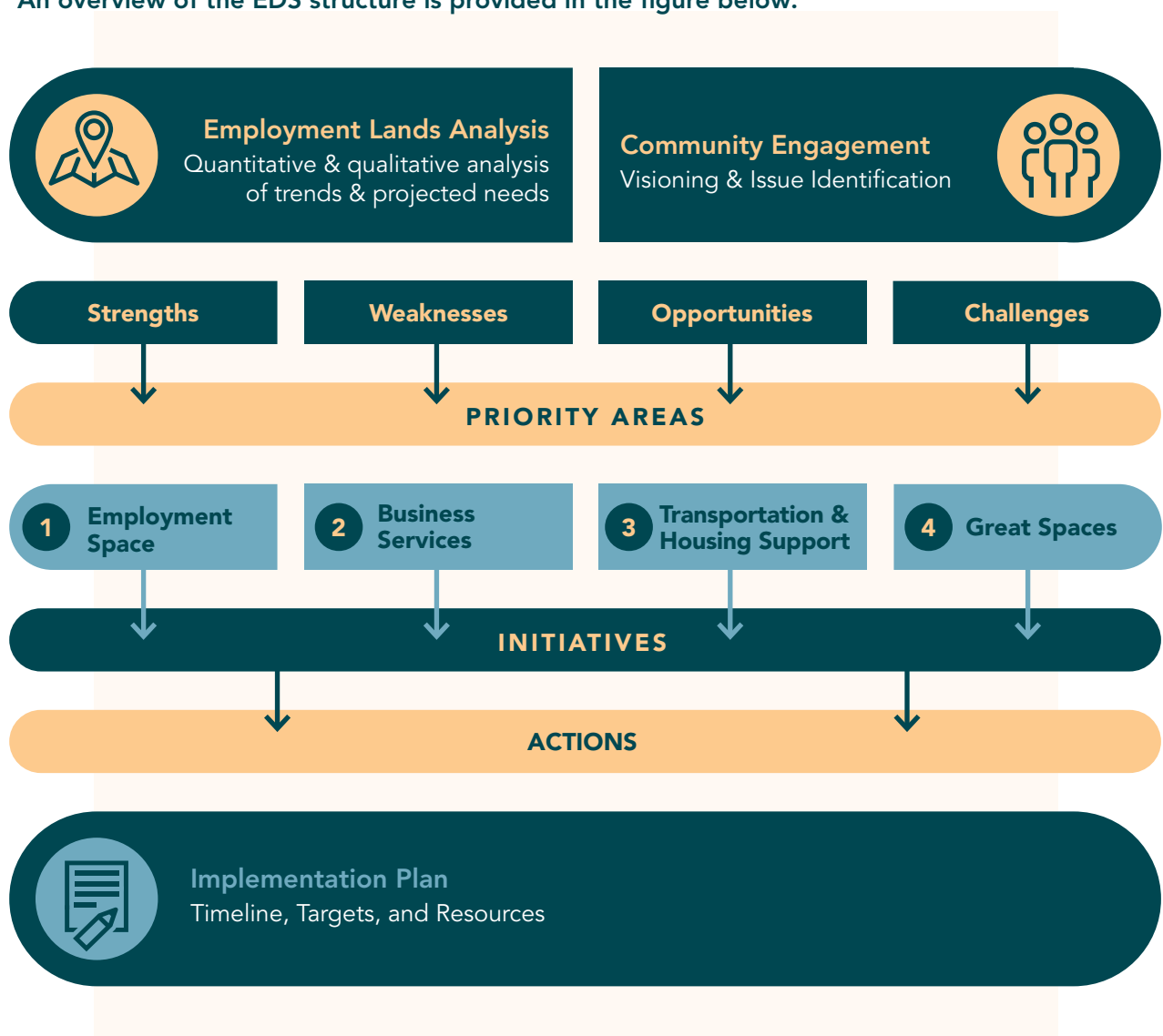
Cultivate Great Spaces

Continue to build on the District's strong sense of place to support local businesses and community level economic opportunities

Economic Development Strategy Process and Structure

The four Objectives serve to organize the overall structure of the EDS according to the connective themes, challenges, and opportunities faced by the District of North Vancouver businesses. To address the four Objectives, a total of ten overarching Initiatives were identified through engagement. These Initiatives, in turn, are enabled by twenty-three SMART Actions (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), which are projects and programs that can be implemented by the District to achieve the vision of the EDS. Each of these features was informed by business input, and research and analysis generated and integrated over the course of Strategy development. Details on this research and consultation are contained in the *Economic and Employment Lands Analysis, Summary of Online Survey Results, and Input from Business Workshops* reports available on the project website – *Economic Development Strategy | District of North Vancouver (dnhv.org)*

An overview of the EDS structure is provided in the figure below:





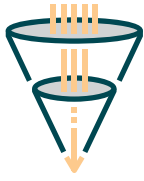
Objective 1: Create Employment Space

The demand for employment space in the District is high and is expected to remain so in the foreseeable future. The District’s employment lands supply is nearly fully utilized while undeveloped employment lands are very limited. The pressure to redevelop traditional employment lands to higher uses is displacing existing businesses and could erode opportunities for future economic growth, if not thoughtfully managed. With limited opportunities to designate additional employment areas, the District will need to protect its existing employment lands and enable creation of new employment space via intensified re-development in appropriate locations.

DID YOU KNOW

Emerging from the pandemic, vacancy rates for office retail, and industrial space in the District have been consistently lower than the Metro Vancouver average and well below healthy market levels, indicating high degree of demand.

Initiative		Actions	
1.1	Update land use policies and regulations to create additional commercial space	1.1.1	Encourage more first floor retail in mixed use developments in Town and Village Centres and along commercial corridors
		1.1.2	Introduce second-storey offices in Transit Oriented Areas and along Frequent Transit Corridors
		1.1.3	Evaluate opportunities to integrate new neighbourhood commercial and services into small-scale multi unit housing (SSMUH) or similar residential areas
1.2	Update industrial land use policies and regulations to protect and intensify industrial lands	1.2.1	Protect strategically located major industrial sites from subdivision and preserve them for trade-related industrial uses
		1.2.2	Optimize light industrial land use policies and incentives to stimulate intensified light industrial (re)development
		1.2.3	Update land use policies and regulations for the use of District owned lands in Maplewood to add employment-intensive uses
1.3	Explore temporary property tax relief for businesses impacted by rent increases due to redevelopment	1.3.1	Monitor the residential/business property tax ratio for meaningful opportunities to reduce business costs
		1.3.2	Investigate utilizing new provincial policy tools, such as Bill 28, to protect business tenants from rent increases due to redevelopment potential



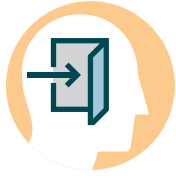
Objective 2: Improve Business Services

While the District remains a desirable location to do business, there is more the municipality can do to strengthen its relationship with and service to the business community. Consultation with local business owners and operators noted systemic difficulties when navigating District regulations and processes. Modernization of these processes and improved customer service were flagged as key priority for many local business owners, with a focus on streamlining and simplifying business-related regulations and providing improved business-facing service and support.

DID YOU KNOW

District businesses contribute nearly 1/3 of municipal property tax revenues and consume few local level services. Maintaining the health and growing the business tax base means more and better services to a growing local population.

Initiative		Actions	
2.1	Modernize business licensing regulations and processes to improve and provide efficient services to businesses	2.1.1	Review and streamline the Business License Bylaw, including associated classifications and fees
		2.1.2	Establish a 1-stop business concierge service to assist businesses with navigating licensing and permitting processes at the District
		2.1.3	Initiate an integrated online permitting and licensing portal for businesses in the District as part of DNV+
		2.1.4	Work with North Shore municipalities and First Nations communities to expand inter-municipal license categories to enable single-licensing for more mobile businesses
2.2	Support opportunities to link local talent to local employment needs	2.2.1	Explore opportunities for the District to partner with industry, educational institutions, and partners to increase access between local talent and jobs
2.3	Increase outreach to the business community	2.3.1	Expand communication channels and broker access to District engagement opportunities, data, research and government programs for business
		2.3.2	Formalize the Business Task Force and its strategic advisory mandate over the life of the Economic Development Strategy



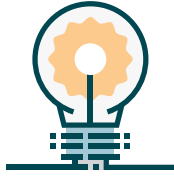
Objective 3: Support Transportation & Housing For Employers

The efficient movement of goods and people is a critical element for many businesses located on the North Shore. By nature of its physical geography, regional infrastructure, and high desirability as a place to live, work and visit, the District faces well-documented constraints on both its housing supply and transportation network. These challenges impact the whole community and turnkey solutions are far reaching in terms of both time and the District’s direct area of influence. Advocacy and significant efforts to bring rapid transit to the North Shore continue via the North Shore Connect partnership and with other partners. Meanwhile, the impact on business operations has become severe, with the lack of employee housing and reliable access to work affecting the local labour supply and, by extension, threatening the operational viability for many North Vancouver employers. Proactive partnerships are required between the District, other levels of government and local employers working to implement employee housing and access to work solutions that are within each other’s respective jurisdiction and ability to implement.

DID YOU KNOW

70% of engagement survey respondents identified transportation and housing solutions as a key area of focus to foster a strong local economy.

Initiative		Actions	
3.1	Facilitate partnerships with local businesses and other partners to tackle employee transportation and housing challenges	3.1.1	Work with local employers to explore shared North Vancouver industrial waterfront business transportation solutions
		3.1.2	Support research for improved transit services and parking demand management within key employment areas and business clusters
		3.1.3	Support local employers in exploring potential of worker housing solutions
3.2	Raise awareness of housing and transportation issues and their impacts on local economic opportunities	3.2.1	Continue to raise awareness of the need for affordable, diverse housing options for workers



Objective 4: Cultivate Great Spaces

The local mix of natural amenities and keen sense of place are frequently cited as one of the District's key competitive advantages. Many residents and businesses choose to locate on the North Shore because they feel its mix of community and nature strongly represents their values and identity. These same elements also support a vibrant visitor economy in the District. As it grows, the District aims to capitalize on these strengths by creating vibrant public spaces through thoughtful design and activation with business and community partners.

DID YOU KNOW

The District's many diverse businesses and local amenities contribute to the vibrancy of the Town and Village Centres while offering a range of goods and services to a growing population.

Initiative		Actions	
4.1	Support community-led business initiatives to cultivate vibrant public spaces	4.1.1	Establish a Business Initiative Startup resource to build community capacity and sustainability in activation of public spaces
		4.1.2	Conduct a needs assessment and delivery model review for the programming of District public spaces in the Town and Village Centres
4.2	Support and grow the visitor and film economies	4.2.1	Promote the role of the visitor economy and support the addition of hotel room capacity in the District
		4.2.2	Promote the benefits of attracting and facilitating film production in the District





Implementing the Plan

Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy is guided by an Implementation Plan which prioritizes the EDS Actions and estimates the timing and resources required for successful implementation. The priorities have been developed in collaboration with the business community and the timing and resourcing estimates have been developed with guidance from District staff.

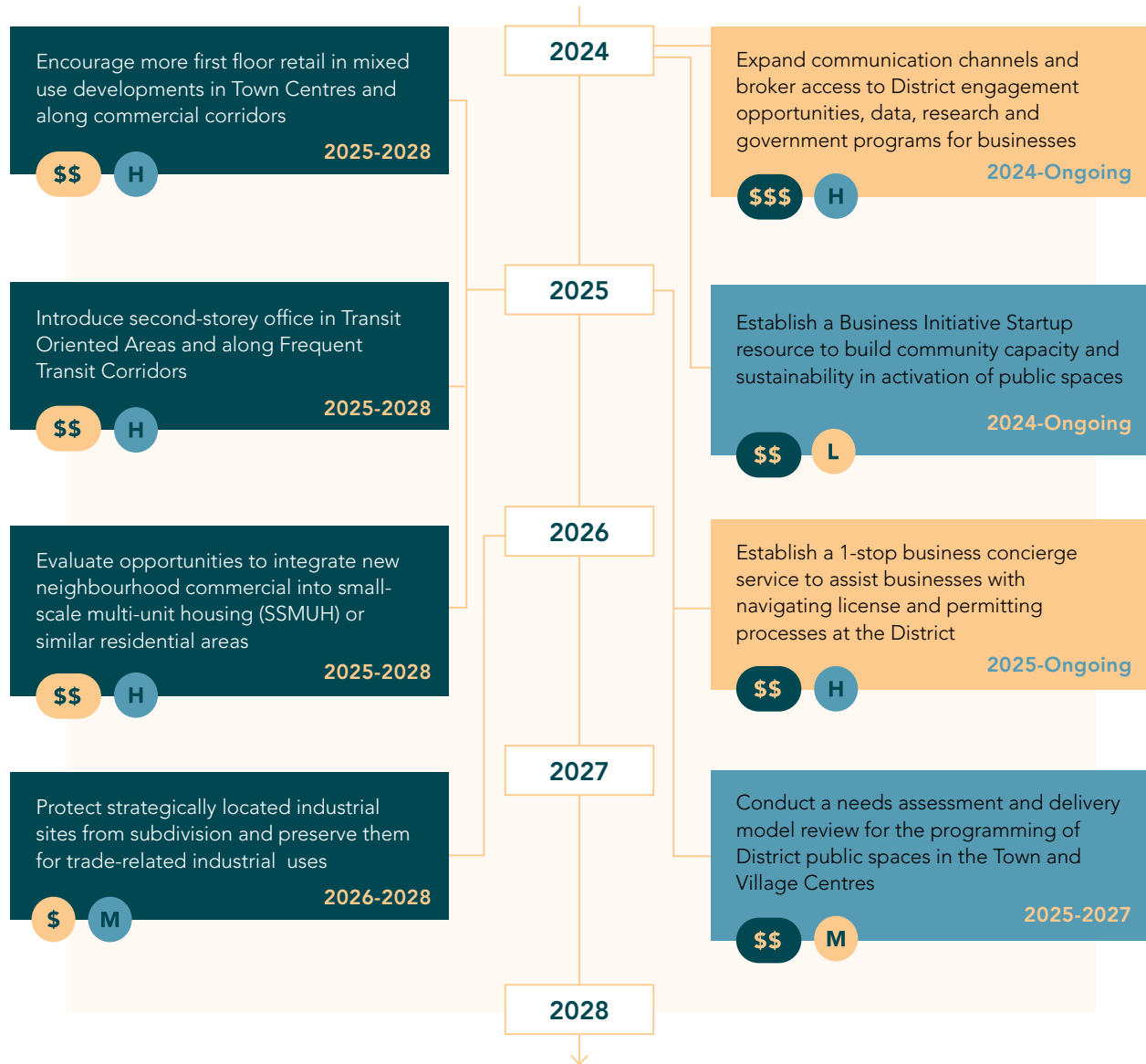
Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy will be led by the District economic development function, in collaboration with other municipal departments, businesses, and partners. Most initiatives will be led and implemented by the District, with business and partner engagement carried out, as the various Initiatives and Actions may require.

A formalized Business Task Force with a strategic advisory mandate from Council could help steer the Economic Development Strategy implementation and provide an invaluable, permanent linkage to the local business tax base and the long-term Council-adopted community vision.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan adheres to the overall directions of the Strategy but is flexible and tactically adaptive to resource availability. Further resource investments are required to implement the Economic Development Strategy and advance the OCP economic vision. A five-year implementation horizon over 2024 to 2029, with annual tracking and monitoring is envisioned. At the end of the five-year period, the Strategy should be reviewed to assess relevancy and appropriateness of its future directions.

The eight highest priority Strategy actions are summarized below, including anticipated timeline, and resourcing needs for implementation. These are to be supplemented by fifteen additional actions, as resources and capacity permit. More details are provided in the Implementation Plan accompanying this Strategy.



Create Employment Space

Improve Business Services

Cultivate Great Spaces

Estimated Budget Requirements

- \$ Less \$50K
- \$\$ \$50K to 150K
- \$\$\$ \$150K +

Estimated Labour Requirements

- L Single FTE, periodically active
- M Multiple FTEs, periodically active or Single FTE, frequently active
- H Multiple FTEs or team, frequently active



355 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, BC
V7N 4N5

604-990-2311

[DNV.org/economic-strategy](https://www.dnv.org/economic-strategy)
@NVanDistrict