→ VISION:

VERNON SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

Vernon is a diverse and welcoming place where we collaborate to build and share a future of meaningful opportunities

GUIDING PRINCIPALS:



BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT – While some elements within the strategy will focus on the attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers, these efforts will be designed to ensure synergy with existing community/regional strategies.



DATA-SUPPORTED - The strategy and subsequent action planning and implementation will be based on systematically gathered and analyzed information.



REGIONAL ORIENTATION - The strategy will, in order to be impactful, ensure to take into consideration and search for alignment and synergies between the LIPC and other community strategies be they those of local governments, the private sector or NGO's



NEWCOMER FOCUSED – The needs and priorities of newcomers will drive the design and implementation of strategies and associated actions.



SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY - The LIPC is well represented by a diverse array of key agencies and individuals, each of whom will need to play a role in implementation if success is to be realized. To this end the strategy has sought to ensure engagement of all key stakeholders not only in the process of planning but in the implementation of actions.



ACTIONABLE - The strategy will provide a reasonable and sufficient foundation from which supportable operational action plans can be developed and executed.

LABOUR MARKET AND INVESTMENT O Economic Overview

- Review of labour and workforce circumstances and prospects
- Assessment of investment opportunities and the climate for incoming investors and entrepreneurs

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- The majority of new population growth in British Columbia is largely the result
- By 2025, an additional 1 million people will be living in British Columbia.
- The proportion of the population that is of working age (ages 15 to 64) within the province is shrinking. The North Okanagan region has an older than average population when compared to the Province and thus labour force/talent challenges going forward are even more significant.
- The current unemployment rate is slightly above the provincial average; the population is older relative to B.C. as a whole; and the labour force participation rate is lower than the provincial participation rate (55.8% vs. 68.5% BC).

CITY OF VERNON CONTEXT

WORKFORCE TALENT/NEEDS C

- Currently there are concerns about an industry wide skills gap brought on by mismatches in B.C.'s service-based industries, which make up three- quarters of the provincial economy.
- On a regular basis industrial and technological change will demand of employees different and more advanced skills. Workers will need to be able to learn and adapt to new job opportunities, innovate, and build businesses that can manage in a totally different economic milieu.
- Within the Thompson-Okanagan the key occupations expected to grow the fastest, in relative terms, over the next ten years include: optometrists, chiropractors and other health diagnosing and treating professionals; nursing; managers in health care; assisting occupations in support of health services; physicians, dentists and veterinarians.

INVESTMENT & ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Three main factors that drive firms/individual entrepreneurs to invest: (1) markets, (2) resources, (3) and efficiency.
- Challenges
- > Limited resources by the community to engage in inbound investment marketing and attraction;
- > Limited domestic investment market:
- > Limited clusters and absence of key sectors of concentration;
- > Heavily dependent on small business and while this might represent an opportunity to scale up, it may also be evidence of a lack of resident technical, managerial and financial capacity to achieve that end:
- > Significant unemployment and low employment participation rate; and
- > Significant numbers of local small businesses are or will be going through major succession in the next five (5) years but many are not prepared for succession.
- City of Vernon Opportunities
 - > Affordable workforce:
 - > Several resident world-class businesses as "models";
 - > Educational/development facilities and capacities;
 - > High quality of life defined by the characteristics of raising a family in a safe community;
- > Approximately 30%-40% commercial vacancy rate in downtown area;
- > Diverse social and cultural make-up representing new business opportunities for both external and internal entrepreneurs; and
- > Substantive number and sophistication of resident business services, advisors and lenders

IMMIGRANT PERCEPTIONS/LENS

- Favourable Elements of the City of Vernon:
 - > Incredible outdoor recreational opportunities
 - > Friendly community
 - > There are good support services
 - > City of Vernon very favourable as a location once immigrants enter Canada
 - > Good access to health care
- Difficult Elements of the City of Vernon:
- > Finding adequate jobs for both parents;
- > Linguistic and cultural adaptations;
- > Affordable housing:
- > Some degree of discrimination; and
- > The recognition of credentials and experiences

VERNON SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES/GOALS

Target and promote immigrant/newcomer engagement in opportunities that enhance economic and investment circumstance locally.

Support newcomers and local citizens at large in their collective cohorts to create a healthy and resilient community.

Ensure Vernon is a welcoming community that supports inclusion and engagement of all newcomers.

Promote and foster enhanced newcomer attraction and retention within the Vernon area.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

economic immigrants - those coming to Canada or Vernon for their skills and education to work in the City and help build the economy;

FAMILY CLASS IMMIGRANTS - those who come to Canada or Vernon join their families; and

REFUGEES - those who come to Canada or Vernon to rebuild their lives.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION PLANS



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – target Economic Immigrants

- Objective 1 Work collaboratively to promote the region as a place for sound investment by newcomers;
- Objective 2 Ensure newcomers are integrated into the local business community;
- Objective 3 Promote ongoing business support for retention of newcomers (investors/ entrepreneurs).



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

- Objective 1 Work Collaboratively to celebrate newcomers' contribution to make Vernon a vibrant community;
- Objective 2 Ensure newcomers feel welcomed and successfully transitioned into the community:
- Objective 3 Strengthen the match between existing newcomer programs with the needs and interests of newcomers.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

- Objective 1 Work Collaboratively to build a multicultural approach to local programs, buildings and services;
- Objective 2 Ensure a better understanding and connection through comprehensive education and citizen awareness of cultural diversity in the region.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – target Family Classification of Immigrants

- Objective 1 Work collaboratively to promote the region as a place to live, work and play;
- Objective2 Work collaboratively to promote and support newcomers via such initiatives as networks of newcomer clubs/organizations;
- Objective 3 Celebrate the multicultural assets (arts, culture and heritage) and resources of the newcomer community.