



District of New Hazelton & Village of Hazelton

Economic Development Strategic Plan



2024 - 2026

Prepared by:



Regional District of
Kitimat-Stikine

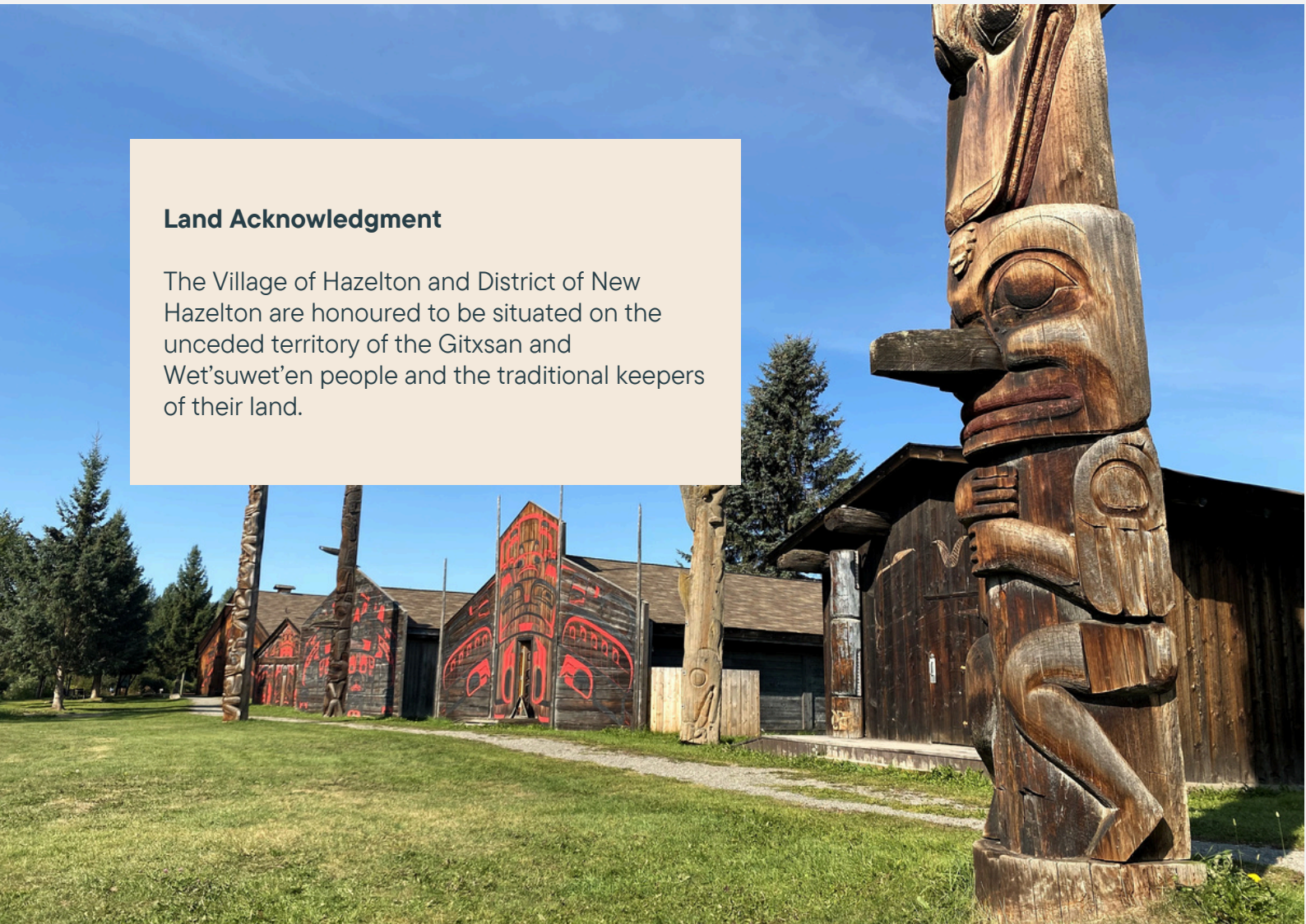
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Introduction

Land Acknowledgment

The Village of Hazelton and District of New Hazelton are honoured to be situated on the unceded territory of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en people and the traditional keepers of their land.

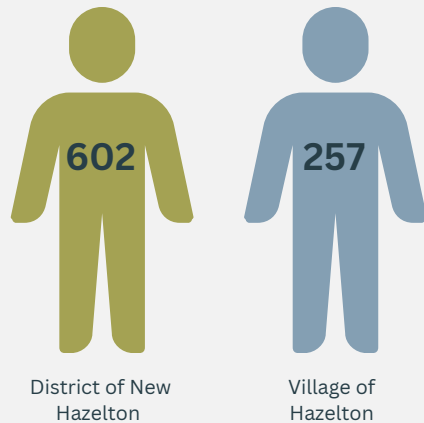


Executive Summary

In late 2022, the Village of Hazelton and District of New Hazelton began efforts to create an Economic Development Strategic plan. Economic Development initiatives for both municipalities are managed by the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS). Prior to the development of this plan, Economic Development initiatives have followed the regional plan by the RDKS. While these initiatives have fostered meaningful growth in the Hazeltons, Councils expressed interest in an independent plan, meeting the unique needs of the Hazeltons and supporting the people who call it home.

Economic Overview

Population & Demographic

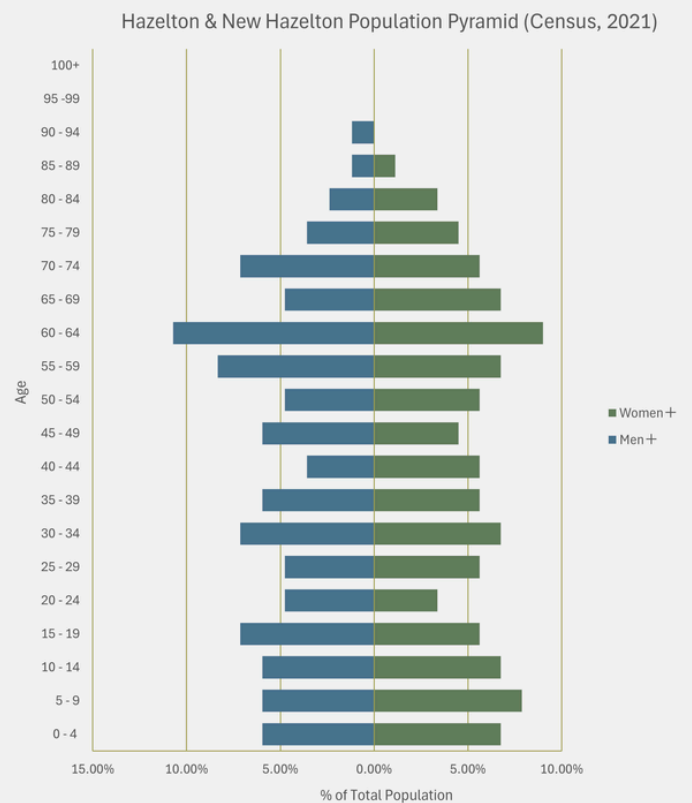


Population

There is a total population of 859 people residing within the District of New Hazelton, and Village of Hazelton municipal boundaries (Census, 2021)

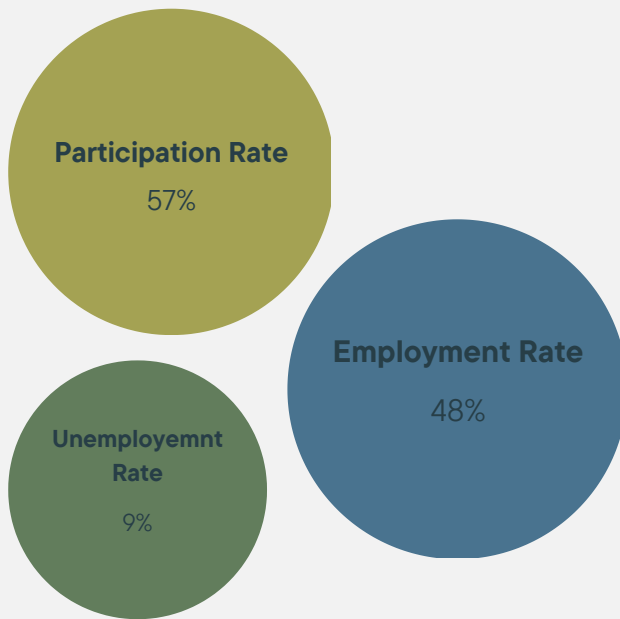
Demographic by Age and Gender

The population pyramid for Hazelton & New Hazelton in 2021 exhibits a roughly symmetrical distribution between males and females across most age groups. There is a noticeable bulge in the age groups from 55 to 74, particularly in the 60-64 age bracket. The 50-54 and 45-49 age groups also have substantial populations, indicating a strong middle-aged cohort that is likely still in the workforce. The population in younger age groups, particularly those under 20, is smaller compared to older age groups. This trend might indicate lower birth rates or young families moving away from the area.



Economic Overview

Labour Force & Housing

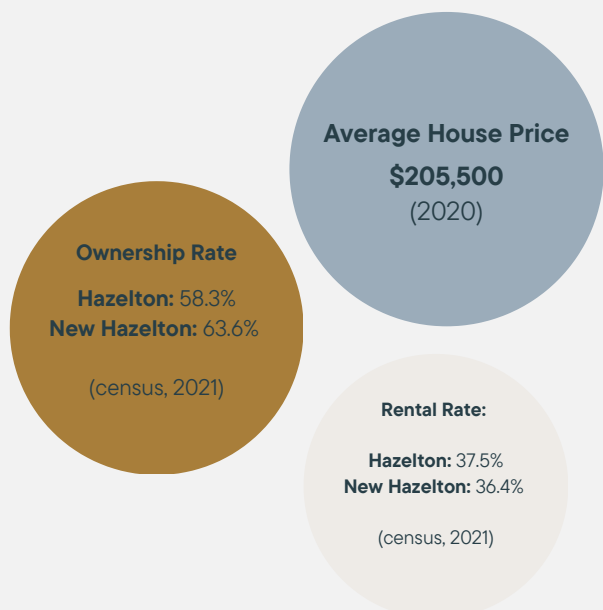


Combined Labour Force Data

(Census, 2021)

Housing Statistics

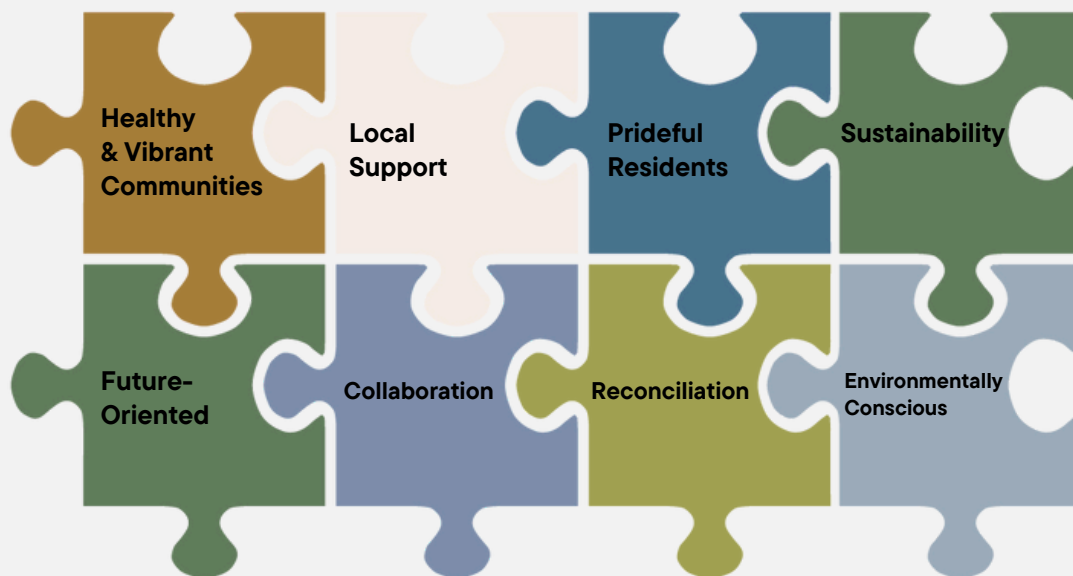
(Census, 2021)



Values

A Bigger Picture

The strategic plan for Hazelton and New Hazelton is grounded in a set of core values identified through thoughtful conversations with our Councils, reflecting our shared vision for the future.



At the heart of our initiatives is the commitment to fostering **healthy and vibrant communities** where wellness and vitality are prioritized. We celebrate **community pride**, recognizing and elevating the unique identity and achievements of our communities. Embracing **sustainability** and **environmental consciousness**, our actions are designed to safeguard natural resources, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. Our approach to **reconciliation** acknowledges past injustices and seeks to build bridges through meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities. We remain **future-oriented**, continually adapting to emerging challenges and opportunities. Moreover, our commitment to **supporting local** endeavors emphasizes the importance of nurturing local businesses and talent. Central to all these values is **collaboration**, which enables us to weave these principles into the fabric of our community's development, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive growth.

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission

“Empower and support Hazelton and New Hazelton's economic environment through strategic initiatives that nurture local businesses, attract and develop a skilled workforce, promote tourism, and foster a diversified economic base to improve community well-being and economic stability today.”

Vision

“Transform Hazelton and New Hazelton into dynamic, prosperous communities where the local economy thrives on innovation and diversity, residents enjoy high standards of living, and visitors are drawn to our unique cultural and natural treasures, setting a benchmark for rural economic development.”

SWOTS Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats

A multi-dimensional review of Hazelton and New Hazelton’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats was completed. The results are demonstrated below.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
INTERNAL	<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Cohesion: Strong ties within the community can facilitate grassroots initiatives and enhance public support for local projects. • Geographic Location: Located near natural resources and tourist attractions, offering potential for eco-tourism and resource-based industries. • Existing Small Business Network: A network of small businesses provides a foundation to build upon, with potential for creating a supportive ecosystem for new startups. • Historical and Cultural Attractions: Unique historical and cultural sites that can be leveraged to attract tourism and educational opportunities. 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Limitations: Potential lack of existing infrastructure to support rapid economic expansion, particularly in tourism and tech-focused industries. • Limited Workforce Skills: Skills gap in the local labor force may hinder business development and attraction of new industries. • Economic Dependency: Over-reliance on specific sectors, making the economy vulnerable to sector-specific downturns. • Resource Constraints: Limited financial resources and human capital can restrict the scope and scale of development projects.
EXTERNAL	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging Markets and Industries: Opportunity to diversify into sectors like technology and clean energy, which could provide long-term economic stability. • Sustainability Initiatives: Potential to develop projects focusing on sustainability, attracting eco-conscious investments and grants. 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Fluctuations: Vulnerability to broader economic downturns which can affect funding and investment in new initiatives. • Competition from Neighboring Regions: Other regions may offer more attractive incentives or be more established tourist destinations, drawing away potential visitors and investors. • Climate Change Impacts: Potential negative impacts on local agriculture and tourism, particularly in eco-sensitive areas. • Outmigration of Youth: Young residents may move to urban centers for better opportunities, draining the local talent pool and reducing the workforce. • Economic Dependence on Few Industries: High dependence on a limited number of industries can lead to economic vulnerability if those industries falter.

Strategic Areas

The following strategic areas and goals were identified by Councilors. These strategic areas are based on lived experience, statistical data, and previously identified strategic priorities from municipal strategic plans, highlighting the overarching areas with potential for growth through economic improvement initiatives.

1	Local Business & Organizational Support	Help existing businesses and community organizations thrive by strengthening competitiveness and sustainability.
2	Tourism Promotion	Increase tourism in Hazelton and New Hazelton by positioning our communities as premier tourism destinations.
3	Labour Force	Build a skilled, versatile, and satisfied workforce to meet the current and future needs of the economy.
4	Diversified Tax Base	Diversify the economic base to create stable and sustainable revenue streams.

Note: This strategic plan aims to create a framework that not only addresses immediate economic challenges but also sets the groundwork for long-term prosperity in Hazelton and New Hazelton.



Local Business & Organizational Support

The strategic area of Local Business & Organizational Support is dedicated to fostering a robust environment for Hazelton and New Hazelton's businesses and organizations, enhancing their competitiveness, and ensuring their long-term sustainability. This strategy aims to empower local entities through resources, networking, and financial support, creating a thriving economic landscape that benefits the entire community.

Local Business & Organizational Support

Objectives

- **Enhance Business Growth:** Accelerate the expansion and development of local businesses to increase economic vitality and community resilience.
- **Strengthen Support Networks:** Build and reinforce networks that foster collaboration and mutual support among businesses and community organizations.
- **Expand Access to Resources:** Provide businesses with easier access to financial resources, training, and mentorship programs.

Expected Outcomes

- **Business Growth:** Increased number of startups and expansion of existing businesses due to enhanced support and resource availability.
- **Economic Resilience:** Greater adaptability and resilience among local businesses, helping them withstand economic downturns.
- **Community Involvement:** Engagement from the local community in supporting and sustaining the business ecosystem.

Evaluation Metrics

- **Business Survival Rates:** Monitor the survival and growth rates of businesses
- **Participation in Events:** Track attendance and active participation in networking events and training workshops.
- **Feedback from Businesses:** Conduct regular surveys to gather feedback from businesses on the effectiveness of the support structures in place.

This strategic area is vital for the economic health of Hazelton and New Hazelton, ensuring that local businesses not only survive but thrive, contributing to the overall prosperity and vibrancy of the community.

Local Business & Organizational Support

Key Initiatives

To ensure the successful realization of our strategic objectives, the following implementation plan details specific actions associated with each key initiative, designed to strengthen and grow Hazelton and New Hazelton's local business environment.

	Key Initiatives	Goal	Action Items
1.	Local Business Network	Strengthen connections between local businesses to facilitate mutual support, collaboration, and collective growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize networking events to foster connections across various sectors.
2.	Marketing Support	Enhance the visibility and market reach of local businesses through targeted marketing strategies and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide workshops for digital marketing and social media management. Organize marketing events, such as a trade show to promote marketing efforts. Promote local businesses through multiple platforms, notably the local Newspaper and Business Directory. Facilitate the Business Façade Improvement Program to enable storefront businesses to enhance their exterior attractiveness.
3.	Resource Sharing	Optimize the utilization of local business resources through cooperative sharing initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a digital platform for businesses to list and access shared resources, including administrative services and logistics support. Provide access to a Community Grant Writer to leverage available funding opportunities.



Tourism Promotion

The strategic area of Tourism Promotion focuses on enhancing the visibility and attractiveness of Hazelton and New Hazelton as premier tourism destinations. This strategy aims to leverage the unique cultural, historical, and natural assets of the region to attract more visitors and increase tourism revenue.

Tourism Promotion

Objectives

- **Boost Tourist Visits:** Increase the number of visitors and extend their stay duration through targeted marketing and improved tourism experiences.
- **Enhance Tourist Experiences:** Provide high-quality, memorable tourism services and attractions that highlight the unique aspects of Hazelton and New Hazelton.
- **Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Encourage eco-friendly tourism practices that preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

Expected Outcomes

- **Increased Tourism:** Significant growth in the number of visitors and length of stays, contributing to local economic development.
- **Enhanced Visitor Satisfaction:** Improved ratings on tourism satisfaction and increased repeat visits.
- **Environmental and Cultural Preservation:** Strong adherence to sustainable practices, ensuring the long-term viability of tourism in the region.

Evaluation Metrics

- **Visitor Numbers and Revenue:** Track increases in tourism numbers and associated economic impacts.
- **Satisfaction Surveys:** Regularly survey visitors for feedback on attractions, services, and overall experience.
- **Sustainability Indicators:** Monitor the adoption of sustainable practices among local businesses and the condition of natural and cultural sites.

This strategic area is pivotal in transforming Hazelton and New Hazelton into destinations that are not only popular but also responsible stewards of their rich cultural and natural resources.

Tourism Promotion

Key Initiatives

To ensure the successful realization of our strategic objectives, the following implementation plan details specific actions associated with each key initiative, designed to strengthen and grow Hazelton and New Hazelton's tourism industry.

	Key Initiatives	Goal	Action Items
1.	Destination Development	Enhance the overall appeal and functionality of Hazelton and New Hazelton as key tourist destinations instead of a pass-through.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Hazeltons branding and theme. • Development of promotional material. • Enhance existing key attractions, ensuring they are accessible and engaging for a diverse range of visitors. • Work with local stakeholders to identify and create new tourist attractions that capitalize on the region's unique cultural and natural assets. • Implement comprehensive wayfinding and informational signage, and public art throughout tourist areas to improve visitor navigation and satisfaction.
2.	Tourism Infrastructure Development	Enhance the physical infrastructure to support tourism and improve visitor experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a signage strategy • Upgrade trail information and signage in key tourist areas. • Visitor Centre Improvements to increase length of open months, and generate increased tourism revenue.
3.	Sustainable Tourism Initiatives	Promote and implement sustainable practices within the tourism sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnerships with local organizations regarding eco-tours and conservation programs that educate visitors about the local environment and cultural heritage. • Encourage local businesses to adopt green practices by sharing training resources.



Labour Force

The strategic area of Labour Force focuses on enhancing the skills, flexibility, and satisfaction of Hazelton and New Hazelton's workforce to meet the current and future economic needs. This strategy aims to attract, develop, and retain a skilled workforce that is well-aligned with the evolving demands of local industries.

Labour Force Strategy

Objectives

- **Skill Enhancement:** Leverage local resources to upgrade workforce skills in alignment with economic demands, especially among young workers.
- **Workforce Attraction and Retention:** Create a supportive work environment that attracts and retains talent using cost-effective measures, with an emphasis on young professionals.
- **Housing Solutions:** Advocate to senior governments to ensure the availability of affordable and suitable housing options are available to support workforce stability and growth.

Expected Outcomes

- **Enhanced Skills:** A more skilled workforce ready to meet the demands of a modern economy.
- **Increased Employment Rates:** Higher employment and lower turnover rates due to improved job satisfaction and community engagement.
- **Stable Housing Market:** Accessible and affordable housing contributing to workforce stability and economic growth.

Evaluation Metrics

- **Training Participation Rates:** Monitor the uptake and completion rates of local training initiatives, with a specific focus on young participants.
- **Employee Retention Rates:** Evaluate changes in local employment stability as a result of new retention strategies.
- **Housing Availability and Affordability:** Assess the impact of housing initiatives on availability and cost of living for the workforce.

This strategic area is designed to build a resilient and skilled labour force, equipped with appropriate housing and development opportunities, which will drive economic growth and innovation in Hazelton and New Hazelton, ensuring a prosperous future for the community.

Labour Force Strategy

Key Initiatives

To ensure the successful realization of our strategic objectives, the following implementation plan details specific actions associated with each key initiative, designed to strengthen and grow Hazelton and New Hazelton's labour force.

	Key Initiatives	Goal	Action Items
1.	Local Workforce Solutions	Utilize community resources to offer targeted training adapted to the needs of local businesses and industries, with specific programs aimed at retaining young talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local businesses and educational institutions to identify gaps in skills and promote targeted training programs. Identify partnerships to support businesses who offer compensation packages to include competitive wages, comprehensive health benefits, and family-friendly policies. Support and encourage businesses to utilize university co-op employment placement programs.
2.	Talent Attraction and Retention Initiatives	Promote Hazelton and New Hazelton as preferred locations for talented workers seeking quality employment and lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in regional marketing campaign that highlights the benefits of living and working in Hazelton and New Hazelton. Enhance the work-life balance through local recreational programs and infrastructure. Implement a recognition method for employers who excel in employee satisfaction and retention.
3.	Housing Solutions	Advocate to senior governments to ensure the availability of affordable and suitable housing options are available to support workforce stability and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for local and provincial housing programs and initiatives. Partner, when possible, with local real estate developments, local indigenous leaders, and non-profits to identify and modify underutilized properties for residential use.

A wide-angle photograph of an indoor roller skating rink. The ceiling is made of exposed wooden beams and rafters, with recessed lighting. A person in a white shirt and shorts is skating on the ice. In the background, there are glass walls and a scoreboard showing '2:34'.

Diversified Tax Base

The strategic area of Diversified Tax Base focuses on broadening the economic foundations of Hazelton and New Hazelton to create a more stable and resilient local economy. This strategy aims to attract new industries, support the development of infrastructure and ensure a sustainable revenue stream that supports community growth and development.

Diversified Tax Base

Key Initiatives

To ensure the successful realization of our strategic objectives, the following implementation plan details specific actions associated with each key initiative, designed to diversify Hazelton and New Hazelton's tax base.

	Key Initiatives	Goal	Action Items
1.	Industry Attraction and Support	Attract investment in emerging and sustainable private industries like technology, clean energy, and specialty agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize new and existing promotional materials to attract investment opportunities in identified key industries. • Identify and participate in provincial and regional investment attraction programs. • Target national and regional developers to showcase development opportunities in Hazelton and New Hazelton. • Promote entrepreneurship to youth.
2.	Infrastructure Development	Improve infrastructure to support economic growth and enhance the appeal of Hazelton and New Hazelton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community infrastructure opportunities. • Identify opportunities for existing infrastructure to broaden its function to generate more revenue.

Diversified Tax Base

Objectives

- **Attract New Industries:** Encourage the development of diverse economic sectors to reduce reliance on traditional industries.
- **Sustainable Revenue Growth:** Establish a stable and growing tax base to fund public services and infrastructure.

Expected Outcomes

- **Industry Growth:** Diversification of the local economy with new and sustainable industries establishing operations.
- **Stable Financial Resources:** A broader tax base that provides greater financial stability and capacity to fund public projects.

Evaluation Metrics

- **Business Establishment Rates:** Track the number and type of new businesses establishing in the area.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Evaluate the completion and impact of infrastructure projects on local economic growth.

This strategy is crucial for ensuring the long-term economic health of Hazelton and New Hazelton, creating a diverse and dynamic economic environment that supports sustainable growth and community well-being.

Feedback Mechanism



A Plan for Action

The 2024-2026 timeline was chosen to align with the election period, allowing the plan to compliment current councilor priorities, and a review to occur naturally following the next election period.

Contact us for Further Inquiries



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