



# Business Retention and Expansion Project Update

## 2026 Update

# Where we are now

The Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) initiative has provided the City with direct, on-the-ground insight into the needs of Courtenay and the region's business community.

Over the past two + years, this work has translated business feedback into targeted actions, programming, and strategic insight.

However, economic conditions have shifted significantly since this work began highlighting the need for ongoing, real-time business intelligence to support informed decision-making.



# Your Delivery Partner

The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce is a nationally accredited, non-partisan organization representing over 400 businesses across the region.

With strong engagement through events, programming, and direct business outreach, the Chamber maintains trusted relationships that enable candid, real-time insight into local business conditions.

**2025: 38 events, 1400+ attendees, 8 sold-out, 87% capacity average**

As an arms-length partner, the Chamber translates business insight into informed action.



Develop and implement a comprehensive Business Retention and Expansion program in collaboration with Courtenay and Comox municipalities.

Gather insights through consultations, community polls, and engagement with business leaders.

**2024-2026**

Foster economic growth by addressing current business community needs, and positioning The Comox Valley as a desirable place to bring business.

Implement an action plan based on data analysis, responding to business community needs, with regular reporting to funding partners until 2026.

# Project Delivery

## Business Intelligence

- Surveys, workshops, business walks
- Ongoing real-time feedback through engagement

## Issue Identification

- Workforce, housing, safety, regulatory barriers
- Data translated into actionable insights

## Targeted Programming

- Monthly education aligned with identified needs
- Topics: marketing, AI, workforce, funding

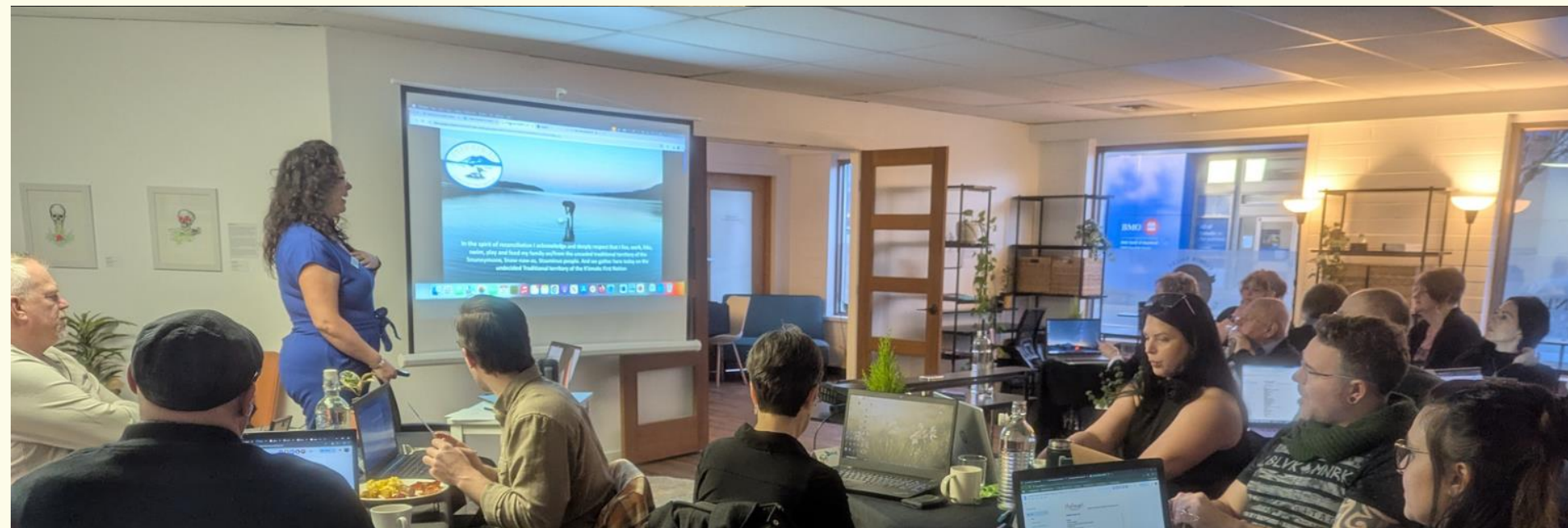
## Relationship Building

- 38 events, 1400+ attendees
- High participation and repeat engagement

**Providing a trusted, arms-length bridge between business and government to support dialogue, collaboration, and informed decision-making.**

# Targeted Education in Action

- SEO Optimisation
- AI (Efficiencies; For NPOs; Integration)
- Cybersecurity
- Video Marketing
- Social Media Mavericks Panel
- HR (Harnessing Human Energy; Managing Time; Grants for Recruitment; Worksafe BC; Women in Business Report.)
- Managing Time



# Building Relationships

## ◆ Signature Events

- Economic Outlook Breakfast
- Awards Gala
- Employer Symposium

High-density networking: decision-makers, employers, leaders

## ◆ Business After Business

(monthly rotating hosts)

- Core networking series
- Builds peer-to-peer connections
- Showcases local businesses

## ◆ Sector / Issue-Based Events

- Development Sector Discussion
- Homelessness Plan Discussion
- Living Wage Luncheon
- Equity in the Workplace Lunch

## ◆ Bites & Insights (dual purpose)

- Education + networking
- Creates structured relationship-building

Brings businesses together around shared challenges



# Making Connections

# Workforce Support



**EXCEL**  
CAREER COLLEGE

**AI IN AQUACULTURE\***  
17-Week Funded Program  
No previous aquaculture experience is required

\*Conditions may apply

BC SALMON FARMERS

The advertisement features a split image: the top half shows a man in a blue cap and vest sitting on a wooden pier overlooking a body of water with a sunset in the background; the bottom half shows several salmon swimming underwater. Logos for the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Province of British Columbia, and BC Salmon Farmers are visible at the bottom.



Canada  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

**EXCEL**  
CAREER COLLEGE

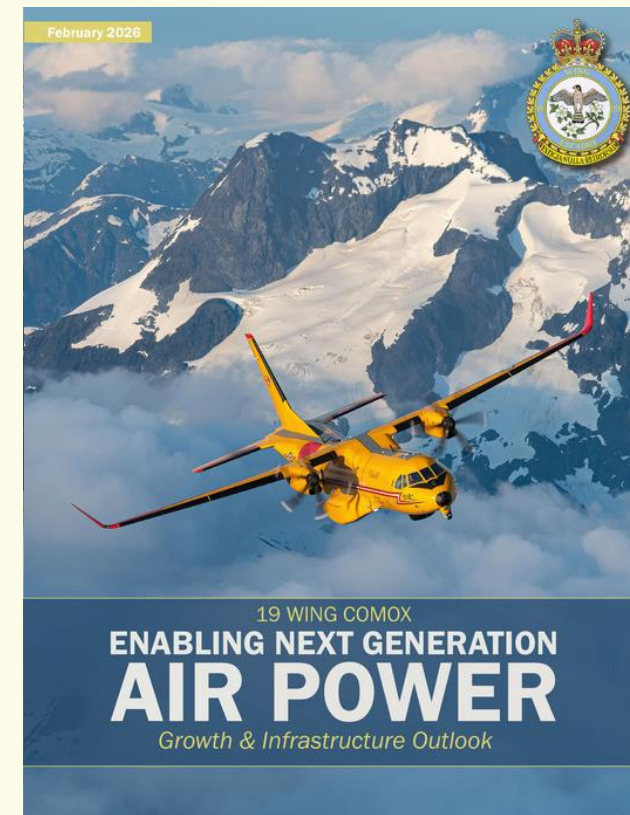
**Launch Your Insurance Career**  
Fully Government Funded\*

6 Months | Practicum Included

Level 1 Licence Exam Prep | Only 17 Seats | **Apply Now!**

\*Canadian Citizens, PR, Refugees only.

The advertisement features a man with a beard and a dark suit standing with his arms crossed against a green background. Logos for Canada, British Columbia, and EXCEL Career College are at the top.



February 2026

19 WING COMOX  
**ENABLING NEXT GENERATION AIR POWER**  
Growth & Infrastructure Outlook

The advertisement shows a yellow and red twin-engine turboprop aircraft flying over a snowy mountain range. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police crest is in the top right corner.

# Building Real-Time Economic Intelligence



## QUALITY OF LIFE PROFILE

Find out what makes our community special by locating the amenities and attractions that matter.

[find out more](#)



## LOGISTICS ADVANTAGES

Explore the multimodal networks that move goods and services and connect us to the world.

[find out more](#)



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Access key indicators and gain insights into our economy, residents, workforce, livability and more.

[find out more](#)



## MARKET ADVANTAGES

Leverage data on local consumers, dwellings, and businesses to find the customers you need.

[find out more](#)



## WORKFORCE ADVANTAGES

Good help can be hard to find but look no further because the workforce you need is right here.

[find out more](#)



## TALENT PIPELINE ADVANTAGES



## SEARCH PROPERTIES

# Why This Matters for Council and the Region

## For Decision-Making

- Access to current, reliable data
- Supports evidence-based policy and planning

## For Economic Development

- Strengthens business attraction and investment readiness
- Positions the Comox Valley competitively

## For Ongoing Insight

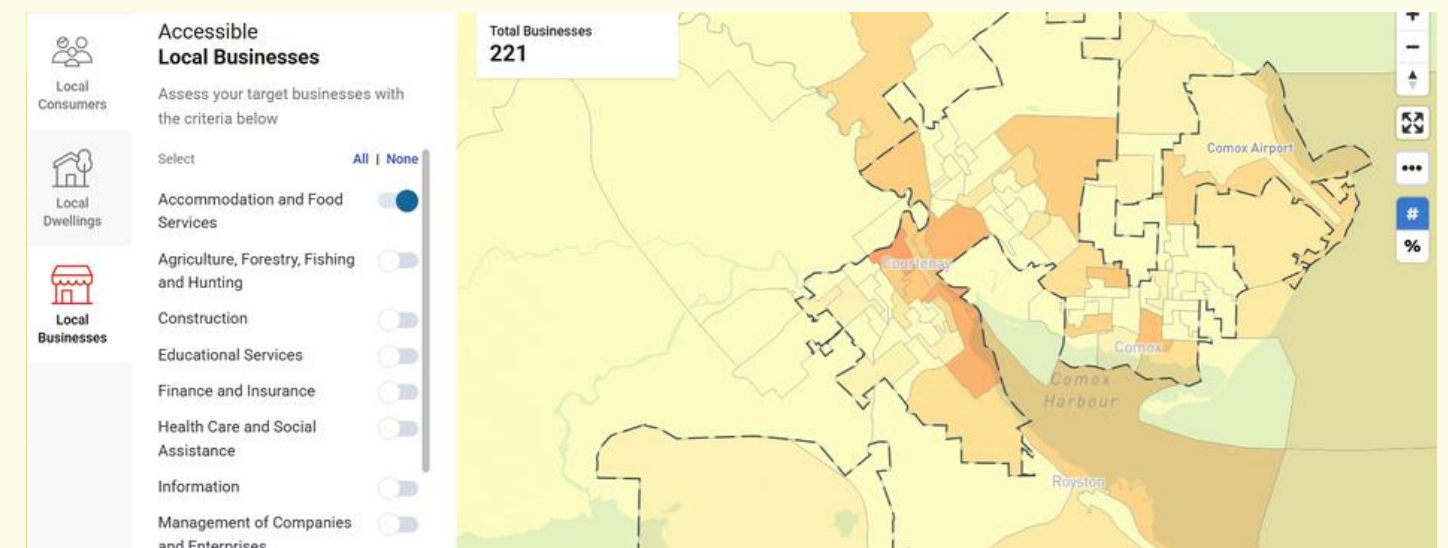
- Enables continuous analysis (not point-in-time data)
- Supports thought leadership and community reporting

**Built for Both Regional and Local Use**  
**Regional strategy + municipality-specific data views**

# Case Study: Attracting a New Restaurant to the Comox Valley

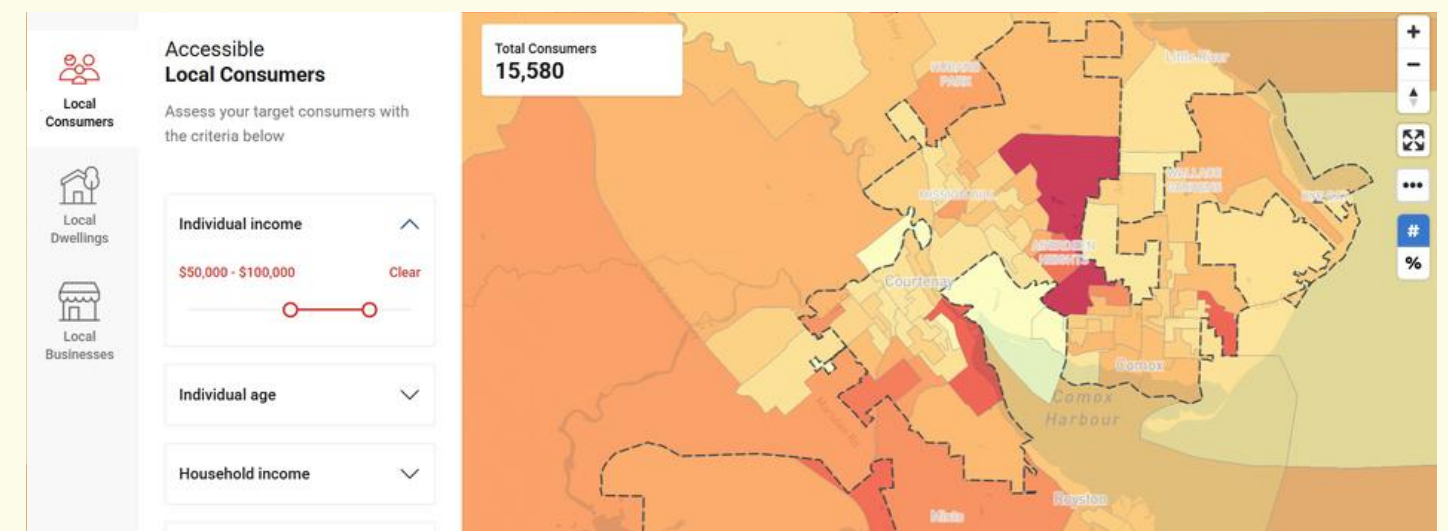
*“Where are similar businesses located?”*

- Cluster vs gap analysis
- Opportunity to co-locate or differentiate



*“Where is the target customer?”*

- Income layers
- Household density
- Household age



# What We're Hearing Today:

Through ongoing, trusted engagement with the business community, we're able to maintain a current understanding of the pressures and opportunities businesses are facing.

That real-time insight is what allows this work to remain relevant, and ensures that decisions are informed by current conditions, not past assumptions.

- Increased cost pressures (insurance, wages, inputs)
- Downtown safety + disorder impacts
- Hiring challenges shifting (not just availability, but affordability/retention)
- AI curiosity turning into adoption pressure or misfires
- Businesses are delaying expansion or investment due to an uncertain climate

# Continuing the Work in 2026

- Ongoing business engagement and real-time insight
- Continued delivery of targeted programming and support
- Activation and use of the economic data platform
- Final project reporting to inform Council decision-making

THE CHAMBER NINE & DINE SOCIAL 2026 



COMOX GOLF CLUB • FRIDAY MAY 1ST • MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS WELCOME  
NETWORK & WIN PRIZES AS YOU GO | BUILD-YOUR-OWN BURGER BAR & AWARDS CEREMONY

EARLY BIRD TICKETS ON SALE NOW  
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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE:  
[events@comoxvalleychamber.com](mailto:events@comoxvalleychamber.com)



1st Place Team

1st Place Individual

**PLUS: \$50,000 Hole-in-1 Prize!**  
Courtesy of TKS Business Consulting (Available at the TKS hole only)



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