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### **City employee honoured as one of Vancouver Island's Top 20 Under 40**

Two City of Campbell River employees were finalists in this year's Top 20 Under 40 nominations, and one employee has been honoured with the award that recognizes the best young professionals on Vancouver Island.

Amber Zirnhelt, the City's manager of long range planning and sustainability, has been nominated for the award three times, and was among the top 20 of 111 nominations for the 2018 business and community achievement awards. Myriah Foort, the City's award-winning director of finance and chief financial officer, has been twice nominated for Top 20 Under 40 recognition.

A panel of island mayors, councillors and business representatives judge nominations based on professional success and community contributions.

*"Since 2010, Amber has played a key role in establishing the City of Campbell River as a leader in planning and sustainability, earning both national and provincial recognition for our community," says city manager Deborah Sargent. "She also led the City in national recognition for climate leadership and for the City's Energy and Emissions Plan."*

One of Zirnhelt's first major projects for Campbell River was charting a year-long process to develop Campbell River's Sustainable Official Community Plan and several associated plans. The award-winning results incorporated feedback from more than 1,500 community members, and the outreach efforts and principles established through the SOCP set a new standard for long-term planning in Campbell River.

She also championed Campbell River's Youth Action Committee and Youth Engagement Strategy, with guidelines for meaningful engagement that requires City projects and plans seeking public input to achieve at least 10 per cent of public consultation with youth.

*"Amber is a big picture thinker with the ability to identify a community need, develop relationships with key partners, obtain grant funding and implement new services," Sargent adds. "We rely on Amber to help drive city-wide initiatives, like Campbell River's award-winning downtown revitalization plan Refresh Downtown in combination with a program to enhance the look and character of the downtown and provide activity and entertainment to animate the heart of our community throughout the summer."*

Zirnhelt has helped secure more than \$2 million in external grant funding for sustainability and long range planning initiatives. She also developed the project concept plan for an organics composting facility for Campbell River, which, through partnering with the Comox Regional District, was the basis for a successful \$6 million grant award from the Federal Government.

*"I am extremely proud of the work that I do here in Campbell River and it makes such a difference having inspiring leaders and colleagues who continue to push the envelope to make our community innovative and progressive, and a great place for citizens of all walks of life,"* Zirnhelt says.

Zirnhelt is a registered professional planner and sustainability practitioner with more than 13 years of management experience in both local government and non-profit organizations. She is the founder and chair of Ride Like a Girl, a not-for-profit organization that provides mentorship opportunities and bursaries for young mountain-bike athletes. Zirnhelt is also a motivational speaker with the National Esteem Team and an active volunteer with Kid Start, Vancouver Island University Master of Community Planning Program and the Loran Scholar Program.

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