



building communities together

2019 Business Plan Central Cariboo Recreation and Leisure Services (1553)

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Working in partnership with communities, large and small, to make the Cariboo Chilcotin a socially, economically and environmentally desirable region to live, work and play.

Department/Function Services

The Central Cariboo Recreation and Leisure Services function was established in 2007 by Bylaw No. 4226, which merged the functions for Central Cariboo Recreation (Bylaw No. 3894 – 2004) and Central Cariboo Leisure Services (Bylaw No. 3951 – 2004).

The new Recreation and Leisure Services function has a mandate derived directly from the predecessor bylaws, which is to provide the following services:

- (i) swimming pool complex;
- (ii) twin ice arena facility;
- (iii) recreation and cultural programming;
- (iv) trail development and maintenance;
- (v) sports fields, facility development and maintenance.

The facility management and recreation programming components of the service are provided under contract by the City of Williams Lake. A five-year Facility Management Agreement (2019-2023) was entered into in September 2013.

Services are generally provided from the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex in Williams Lake which includes the twin arenas, West Fraser Aquatic Centre and the Gibraltar Room multi-purpose space. Following extensive public consultation, concept planning and a referendum in 2014, the aquatic centre underwent a \$14 million upgrade to expand the pool and fitness areas and add in leisure water features such as a water slide and lazy river. A \$4 million infrastructure grant was successfully obtained to reduce the cost to local taxpayers for the major project.

The sub-regional function also includes the Esler Sports Complex, which has slo-pitch (2017-2021), soccer (2017-2021) and minor fastball (2018-2022) fields under use and occupancy agreements with local associations. These groups also receive field

maintenance funding (2016-2018) on an annual basis to complement the work of volunteers and their own financial resources. Various other community projects, such as neighborhood outdoor rinks, trails or bike parks are also supported on a project-by-project basis.

Annual contribution agreements are also in place with the Scout Island Nature Centre (2017-2019), Williams Lake Cycling Club (2016-2018) and 150 Mile Greenbelt, Heritage and Trails Society (2019-2021) to support operation of extensive trail networks maintained by each group.

Participants in the service include portions of Electoral Areas D, E, and F and the City of Williams Lake. Requisition is by way of a tax rate applied to the assessed value of land and improvements utilizing hospital district assessment. The requisition limit is the greater of \$3,500,000 or a rate of \$1.98 / \$1,000 of assessed value.

The Directors for Electoral Areas D, E, and F and the City of Williams Lake are responsible for the governance of this service, which is provided through the Central Cariboo/City of Williams Lake Joint Committee. The Central Cariboo Joint Committee (CCJC) holds an open, public meeting once per month.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2019 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Construct a new access road into the Esler Sports Complex.
Rationale: Use of the sports complex continues to grow and additional improvements and capital investment will further increase traffic to and from the site in the coming years; however, the current access is a winding, narrow residential route along upper Hodgson Road and is not adequate. Creating a safer, shorter access route directly off Highway 20 was a key component of a development plan completed in 2007.
Strategy: An engineered design is planned for completion in 2017 and construction of the project is subject to securing grant funding. The significant cost of this work may also require a transfer from capital reserves for matching funds.
- 2. Goal:** Develop design and costing for a changeroom addition to Arena 1.
Rationale: With participant growth in many ice user groups, such as minor hockey, as well as new groups now using the facility, including speedskating there is currently not enough dressing room space to adequately meet the demand.
Strategy: Capital funding for design development is approved in the financial plan for this project; however, grants will also be pursued. The project will be led by the facility operator.
- 3. Goal:** Replace the ice plant chillers and compressors
Rationale: The current ice plant equipment is nearing the end of its life cycle and can be upgraded with more efficient, safer equipment. The upgrades will result in

operational cost savings as well as meet Technical Safety BC requirements stemming from the ammonia incident in Fernie BC.

Strategy: Capital funding is allocated in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator. Because the upgrade results in reduced energy use, support from the Regional District Community Works Fund will also be allocated to the project.

4. **Goal:** Replace the doors between the arena and main lobby areas at the Complex.
Rationale: The current doors are becoming a maintenance concern and limit full accessibility to the arena lobby.
Strategy: Capital funding is allocated in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator.
5. **Goal:** Design and construct a new entrance sign and sitting gazebo for the Recreation Complex.
Rationale: A new exterior sign for the facility is appropriate following completion of the West Fraser Aquatic Centre upgrade in 2016-17. It is intended that the form and character of the new sign will match the timber frame style of the sunshade on the west side of the building and also create a useable sitting space near the front of the building.
Strategy: Preliminary designs for the sign and gazebo were completed during construction of the new aquatic centre in 2017 and the project is identified in the capital plan for 2018. There is an opportunity for in-kind contributions of materials to the project, particularly for wood from West Fraser Timber.
6. **Goal:** Continue to improve the accessibility of the Recreation Complex for persons with low mobility.
Rationale: Because of its age, the facility has an interior design that may challenge persons in a wheelchair or with other mobility issues. As a critical public amenity, it is important that the complex meet the needs of as many residents as possible, especially those that may have limited options for recreation.
Strategy: Individual projects for improvements will be identified by patrons and staff and implemented by the facility operator. Funding is included in the capital plan to support these works.
7. **Goal:** Support trail development at the 150 Mile House Greenbelt, mountain bike network and other locations within the sub-regional recreation area.
Rationale: The 150 Mile Greenbelt, Heritage and Trails Society has a management agreement in place with the province for a large area in the community and plans to improve trail connections throughout. The Williams Lake Cycling Club has a management agreement in place with the province for its network across the Williams Lake valley. Trails in other areas continue to be a high priority with recreation groups and the general public.
Strategy: Implementation of the improvements would be funded through the Community Projects budget of the CCRLS function and managed directly by the community groups in consultation with Regional District and City staff.

2020 Goals

- Goal:** Repave the back parking lot at the Recreation Complex.

Rationale: The current pavement is deteriorating in general and quite badly in some areas as a result of the heavy traffic from pool upgrade construction.

Strategy: Capital funding is allocated in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator.
- Goal:** Upgrade the arena lighting system to LED

Rationale: LED technology has improved significantly in recent years and now delivers reliable good-quality arena lighting at a fraction of the energy use of fluorescent lighting. Longer lasting bulbs should also help reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

Strategy: Capital funding is allocated in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator. Because the upgrade results in reduced energy use, Regional District Community Works Fund is allocated for the project.

2021 Goal

- Goal:** Replace the roof over the Gibraltar Room.

Rationale: The current roof has exceeded its effective lifespan and has significant potential to become a maintenance concern. This is the last section of roof at the Complex that has not been converted to torch-on membrane.

Strategy: Capital funding is allocated in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator. If the project results in an improvement in insulation for the building envelope and reduced energy use, then Regional District Community Works Funding may also be accessed for support.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2019 requisition is increased by 1% from the 2018 requisition amounting to total taxation of \$3,137,239 with an increase of \$31,061. A 1% increase is included in each year of the five-year financial plan to account for higher operational costs and to account for several major capital projects.

There was no taxation increase in 2018; however, the 2015 requisition was increased by 44% from the 2014 requisition amounting to \$943,553. The increase was required to undertake the pool upgrade project.

The operational costs to the function are projected to increase significantly in 2019 due to additional staff and higher utility costs for the new West Fraser Aquatic Centre as well as new regulatory requirements for the ammonia ice plant. These updated subsidy cost targets are reflected in the five-year Facility Management Agreement with the City of Williams Lake. The taxation subsidy paid to the City for operational costs increases at 1.75 percent per year over the term; starting at \$1,947,773 in 2019 to \$2,087,738 in 2023.

All revenue generated at the Recreation Complex is retained by the City under the terms of the management agreement.

There is also projected to be a significant increase in revenue in 2019 and forward due to the upgraded aquatic centre and these revenues do off set approximately 50% of the increased operating cost; however, the remaining cost increase is covered by a higher taxation subsidy. It is expected that costs may be reduced with more staff experience operating the new pool mechanical systems, but this reduction will be modest compared to the overall initial cost increase.

The five-year capital plan for the function has varied annual investments amounting to \$2.8 million over the five-year plan. This includes capital spending at the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex and the Esler Sports Complex. This relatively high figure reflects the aging mechanical equipment and structural components at the Memorial Complex.

The service has projected capital reserve funds of \$627,738 at the end of 2018. There are planned draws from reserves of \$100,000 in 2019 and again 2020 to support major capital projects. Contributions to capital reserves of \$100,000 per year are planned in 2021-2023 for a total of \$300,000 over the five-year plan.

All outstanding debt for the recreation function was paid off in 2016 and new borrowing for the pool upgrade project was undertaken in 2017. The total amount borrowed for the pool upgrade is \$6.5 million and is scheduled to be paid off in 2037. Remaining debt projected at the end of 2018 is \$6,258,097.

Significant Issues & Trends

The newly upgraded West Fraser Aquatic Centre opened in December 2017 following more than six years of public consultation, design and construction. The new leisure pools and fitness spaces have attracted many more patrons than were previously regularly using the complex. While this has increased revenues by more than 50%, the cost of staffing and utilities has also substantially increased resulting in rise in operating costs for the aquatic centre. It is expected that through time the operating cost may be reduced once staff become more familiar with the mechanical and electrical systems; however, revenues may also be reduced once the 'visit the new pool' period passes.

Another unexpected influence in 2018 was an ice plant ammonia leak incident in Fernie, BC that led to more stringent regulations from Technical Safety BC. This also resulted in an increased operating cost for the complex for more staff hours and training. A major capital investment in 2018 to replace the ice plant with a low-pressure ammonia system should help off-set some of these operating costs going forward.

The City of Williams Lake and surrounding area was evacuated on July 15, 2017 as a result of wildfires burning nearby. The evacuation lasted 13 days; however the disruption caused by the wildfires and excessive smoke in the area lasted most of the summer. This event had a major impact on program revenues at the Complex as well as limiting activities at other recreation sites such as the Esler Sports Complex and the mountain bike

trail network. The ongoing impacts of the fires can still be felt through the loss of Recreation Complex staff, which did not return after the evacuation, and the direct damage to several trails in the area. With the pool upgrade project complete and other community recovery actions underway, 2018 was a much different year than 2017 and positive trends in the community are apparent.

Counters were installed on the three entrances to the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex in 2013 and recorded 440,000 visitors in the year from September 2017 to September 2018. This was a major increase from the 270,000 visitors the previous year, which experienced low numbers due to the extended closures for the pool upgrade project and the wildfire evacuations in July 2017. Even the 2018 numbers may be lower than the new ongoing average for the facility, given that the pool was still closed for three months of that measurement period.

A pool leak in July 2011 and other ongoing large capital projects at the Sam Ketcham Pool raised the issue of facility lifespan and the value of continuing to complete expensive repairs. A feasibility study completed in 2012 by Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants (PERC), under guidance of a Pool Task Force appointed by the CCJC, identified a range of improvement options for the existing pool and recommended a preferred option, which included construction of additional leisure swim area, water slide, more fitness centre space on a second floor and rebuilding the existing main tank.

In addition to the Sam Ketcham Pool upgrade construction process, other parts of the Recreation Complex continue to receive renovations and improvements; however, the aging structure, utility services and equipment in the facility continue to be a challenge. Increased operating and maintenance costs are to be expected and significant capital investment will be necessary to maintain the Complex in future years.

The continued delivery of an effective and coordinated sub-regional recreation and leisure service is expected to remain a high priority for the public and elected officials. The benefits of developing a recreation service that takes advantage of the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex as an information hub and a centre for activity programming is evident. Integrating public recreation properties, both from the greater Williams Lake area and those within the city itself, makes sense to improve the management, public investment and overall enjoyment of these community assets.

To this end, additional resources have been discussed to potentially be included in the recreation services management agreement with the City of Williams Lake, and tasked with providing the increased support and be the liaison for volunteer groups managing these public recreation assets.

Another strategic priority for the CCRLS function is to continue to provide support for mountain bike trail infrastructure that is appropriate for this popular recreational activity. Mountain biking in the Cariboo provides a considerable benefit to many communities. For local residents, studies consistently indicate that trails provide a venue to participate in an active and healthy lifestyle and increase the desirability of living in the area. In recent surveys conducted in the Cariboo region, mountain bike infrastructure was a prominent priority amongst respondents, who ranked mountain bike trails in the top five

activities they participate in. Ongoing investments in the Central Cariboo trail networks will support continued recreational opportunities as well as ongoing efforts to diversify the regional economy into this fast-growing sector.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory on the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter, and has committed to continuing work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

Goal: Review the Facility Management Agreement for recreation services with the City of Williams Lake.

- Completed. A five-year renewal agreement was signed for 2019-2023.

Goal: Plan and implement public awareness and marketing for maximum utilization of the new aquatic centre.

- Completed. The facility now has two large pools available for the public as a result of the upgrade project and revenues were up by more than 50%.

Goal: Design and construct a new entrance sign and sitting gazebo for the Recreation Complex.

- Goal deferred due to the unexpected significant increase in operating costs for the new pools and the resulting pressure on the 2018 budget. The gazebo will be reconsidered for the 2019 capital plan.

Goal: Upgrade HVAC systems for the lobby and offices at the Recreation Complex to improve energy efficiency.

- Completed with support from Regional District Community Works Funding.

Goal: Replace the roofs over the arena lobby and main lobby areas as well as a remaining section of the pool.

- Completed.

Goal: Expand the opportunities to support recreational sports leagues that utilize school district gyms.

- Completed. Leagues such as volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, climbing basketball and roller derby all benefitted from coordination and registration through the Recreation Complex.

Goal: Continue to improve the accessibility of the Recreation Complex for persons with low mobility.

- Completed. More hand rails were added to the arena bleachers and a larger door was added to the accessible change room in the pool.

Goal: Review the field maintenance support agreements with groups at the Esler Sports Complex and the trails contribution agreement with the 150 Mile Greenbelt, Heritage and Trails Society.

- In progress. The groups at the Esler Sports Complex have been asked to provide a report on the necessity for an increase in their agreement and the agreement for the 150 Mile group was renewed with the same terms.

Goal: Design a new access road into the Esler Sports Complex.

- Completed. The concept design and initial cost estimate has been prepared to support grant applications for the project.

Goal: Support trail development at the 150 Mile House Greenbelt, mountain bike network and other locations within the sub-regional recreation area.

- Completed. A new trail design was completed for the trail network at 150 Mile.

Other Accomplishments

The community hosted Rogers Home Town Hockey in January 2018 for a full weekend of family-oriented events in the downtown area.

Concept design plans and costing was initiated for additional change rooms to be added to Arena 1 at the Recreation Complex.

A major mining rehabilitation technical conference was hosted in the Gibraltar Room.