



Agricultural Area Plan - Workplan

Project Summary

The Cariboo Regional District (CRD), a large geographic area located in the Central Interior of British Columbia, encompasses 80,252 square kilometers of land. Incorporated in 1968, the CRD has 12 electoral areas and 4 incorporated municipalities. Municipalities include Quesnel, Williams Lake, 100 Mile House, and Wells. Within the region's boundaries also sit the unceded traditional territories of several First Nations. The region's economy is based on forestry, mining, and agriculture. The Agriculture Sector is mainly characterized by ranching and hay fields with a variety of other smaller scale agriculture activities/food production opportunities. According to 2016 Census of agriculture data, there is a total farmland area of 376,957 hectares in the Cariboo region with 919 farms having an average farm size of 410.2 hectares. The total farm capital for the region was \$1,518,537,112.

Recognizing the importance of the agricultural sector for the region's economy and for preserving the area's rural character, the CRD is applying to the Investment Agriculture Foundation to develop a stand alone, regional wide Agricultural Area Plan. This plan will be a policy framework providing guidance for sustaining, expanding, and strengthening agricultural development throughout the CRD by ensuring effective utilization of sectoral capacity.

The Agricultural Area Plan aims to produce a comprehensive agricultural area planning document that will include an economic focus, consider climate change adaptations, broad land use objectives, and analyze ALR boundaries. This will help in increasing economic diversity of the regional agricultural sector, help inform and guide all regional Official Community Plan (OCP) updates, focus on climate change adaptation to embed resiliency in the agricultural sector, investigate and inform current Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) boundaries, and strengthen the sector by guiding agricultural-related decision making within the CRD.

Plan Development

The development of the Agricultural Area Plan would be contracted to a third party, with some CRD staff support providing necessary expertise. The CRD will consult with numerous land use stakeholders, and take past planning documents into consideration, including but not limited to, current Agricultural Policies, Agriculture Land Use Inventories (ALUIs), and the Agricultural Water Demand Model (AWDM). Consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) will be essential in seeking technical advice and support.

The Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC) Agriculture Sector Strategy Report developed in 2007 provides detailed strategies for agricultural development including baseline information, long-term trends, and best practices to identify development opportunities within the various sub-sectors of agriculture in the region. Based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, the report provides various recommendations that focus on sector sustainability and growth.

The principles outlined in this report can be used as a foundation in the development of an agricultural area plan.

Key focus

- CRD's priority to support agriculture
- Region wide approach
- Stakeholder engagement

There are several interconnected groups and agencies working to support and promote the agricultural sector throughout the Cariboo (and BC as a whole). Stakeholder engagement in the development of the plan will play a key role in creating a document with tangible value and ownership across the sector.

Following are some of the agricultural sector groups actively working in the region: Kersley Farmer's Institute, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, BC Forage Council, FARMED, Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance, Cariboo-Chilcotin Poultry Producers Association, and Farmers' Market Associations. Each of these groups has done extensive work in research, development, and/or marketing of the agricultural sector in the Cariboo.

Further, there is the North Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (NC ADAC), created in 2018 by the CRD, that focuses primarily on economic development support initiatives. In regards to the Agricultural Area Plan, NC ADAC has been gathering information from various Ministries and agencies such as the Quesnel District Land Management, Ministry of Forestry, Social Development and Poverty Reduction's Labour Market Partnership and Ministry of Agriculture Labour Market update to broaden the understanding of the ongoing work, opportunities and challenges in the agriculture sector.

As per NC ADAC, some of the identified issues in the Agriculture Industry include lack of processing facilities in the beef industry, shortage of skilled labour and training, lack of utilizing technology to increase efficiencies and production and lack of connectivity in rural areas to support market development and agritourism. Development of the Agricultural Area Plan will help in identifying opportunities to strengthen the industry, contribute to its long-term sustainability and increase food security in the region.

Agricultural Area Plan Goals

- Protect and enhance the agricultural land base in the CRD.
- Strengthen the local agricultural economy.
- Address current needs of agriculture industry.
- Address environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation.
- Promote awareness and value of local agriculture.
- Promote broad land use objectives.
- Support a region wide ALR boundary study.
- Create an implementation plan.

Steering Committee Oversight / ADAC Expansion to Region Wide

The NC ADAC has been providing an important link between government, the agriculture industry and various supporting agencies and organizations in Quesnel and the surrounding area. The Committee is actively involved in and supports projects aimed at promoting public awareness, diversification, and expansion of the agriculture industry in the region. Results of this group have been positive, and there is good potential to expand the committee's scope to cover the entire region. Upon region-wide expansion, the ADAC will act as the project steering committee and will provide oversight of the project in an advisory capacity.

Consultant Selection Process

The detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) specifying the project's objectives, scope (including all related activities), resources, timelines, deliverables, and available budget will be posted on BC Bid and on the CRD's website. The selection will be based on the qualified consultants with related knowledge and experience in developing region wide Agricultural Area Plans to ensure efficient project management and the best quality outcome.

Project Budget

The Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) is offering the cost-shared funding up to \$40,000 for the Local Government Partnership Program (LGPP), and the remaining 50% of the funding will be contributed by the CRD, resulting in a total project budget of \$80,000. If approved, this project will be budgeted for the year 2022, and the necessary oversight provided by the CRD staff will be outside of the project budget.

Agricultural Area Plan - Proposed Budget 2021-22

Phase One August - December 2021	
ADAC Expansion to Region Wide	\$0
Selection of Consulting Firm	\$0
Total - Phase One	\$0
Phase Two January - September 2022	
Public launch	\$5,000
Background research	\$15,000
Stakeholder engagement	\$22,000
Draft plan	\$26,000
Stakeholder review	\$6,000
Public open house (present draft)	\$3,000
Total - Phase Two	\$77,000
Phase Three August - October 2022	
Final revisions	\$3,000
Board endorsement	\$0
Total - Phase 3	\$3,000
Total	\$80,000

Note: Cost breakdown of project budget is subject to final selection of project consultant.

*The Background research will include, but not be limited to:

- The Agricultural Water Demand Model (AWDM) requiring approximately \$5,000 (as per MAFF).
- The Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) for the outstanding Electoral Areas F, I, J and K.