



building communities together

2023 Business Plan Central Cariboo and Chilcotin Economic Development (1025)

Darron Campbell, Manager of Community Services

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Central Cariboo and Chilcotin Economic Development function was established through Bylaw No. 5244 in 2019. The purpose of the service is to provide funding support through contributions for economic development activities in the service area, including Electoral Areas D, E, F, J and K.

Prior to the establishment of the Central Cariboo and Chilcotin Economic Development service, there were five separate functions in the Central Cariboo. Each of these functions was created through Electoral Areas bylaws as follows, Area D (No. 3855, 2003), Area E (No. 5235, 2019), Area F (No. 3706, 2002), Area J (No. 5016, 2016) and Area K (No. 5017, 2016). The budgets and business plan goals for these functions have been merged into this plan to encourage cooperation and efficiency.

The new service was created to support and promote economic development in the Central Cariboo and Chilcotin and work in important sectors such as tourism, agriculture, natural resources development and the retention and attraction of businesses and residents. This service is provided through contracts for various economic development initiatives, which currently include Visitor Information Services support agreements with the Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce, the Horsefly Board of Trade, the Likely Chamber of Commerce and the 150 Mile Greenbelt, Trail and Heritage Society (2021-2023) and the Community Services and Development Society of Alexis Creek (2021-2023).

Currently, there is a contribution to the McLeese Lake Farmers Market Association (2022-2024) to support the promotion and operation of the Farmers Market at Alexandria. This contribution is shared between the Central and North Cariboo Economic Development functions.

This function also leads Regional Economic Development Roundtables to share resources, initiatives, strategies, challenges, and best practices and supports the Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee.

Electoral Areas D, E, F, J and K participate in the service and taxation is based on the assessed value of land and improvements. There is no requisition limit for this service.

The Directors of Electoral Areas D, E, F, J and K are responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2023 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Review the Visitor Information Centre agreements with the Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce, Horsefly Board of Trade, Likely Chamber of Commerce and the 150 Mile Greenbelt, Trail and Heritage Society to support tourism and development in the Central Cariboo.

Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire on December 31, 2023.

Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and partner organizations and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
- 2. Goal:** Review the Visitor Information Centre agreement with the Community Services and Development Society of Alexis Creek to support and encourage tourism along highway 20.

Rationale: The current three-year agreement expires December 31, 2023.

Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and the organization and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
- 3. Goal:** Support the development of disc golf courses at the spawning channel in Horsefly and at Chimney Lake.

Rationale: Disc golf is a fast-developing sport. Supporting community groups to build and upgrade courses in the region will encourage tourism and create another outdoor lifestyle amenity to attract and retain residents.

Strategy: Funding is allocated to support communities to develop and upgrade disc golf facilities and provide potential leveraging for external grant opportunities.
- 4. Goal:** Support obtaining grant funding to relocate the historic steam shovel from Quesnel to the Bullion Pit historic site near Likely.

Rationale: The steam shovel is part of the mining history in the Likely area. Building heritage tourism assets has proved to attract regional, national, and international tourists. This addition will add value to the Bullion Pit site.

Strategy: The Bullion Pit site is operated by the Likely Xat'sull Community Forest, which will submit grant applications with support from the Regional District.

- 5. Goal:** Work with rural communities to develop, maintain and improve trails and sites for tourism activity.

Rationale: Rural communities continue to implement tourism strategies, including the development of infrastructure to continue a long-range plan to promote tourism and local economic development. Trails are proving to be a very important natural asset to rural areas that can be developed and promoted. Locations under consideration in 2023 include upgrades to the trail to the Upper Horsefly Falls; the Bullion Pit and Quesnel Forks near Likely, and the Big Lake Heritage Site.

Strategy: Trail projects will be led by various partner groups including but not limited to the Horsefly Board of Trade, Likely Chamber of Commerce and Big Lake Community Association, with updates to and advice from Regional District staff.

- 6. Goal:** Investigate the idea of organized heritage tours.

Rationale: Heritage societies and community groups maintain and develop heritage sites which attract tourists. Linking sites through tours may offer increased tourism and business opportunities, especially in rural areas.

Strategy: Work with historic societies and community groups to determine feasible sites and strategies.

- 7. Goal:** Support development of promotional materials for tourism activities in the Central Cariboo.

Rationale: Promotional materials such as brochures, website, maps, and videos are important tools to reach potential visitors and promote tourism opportunities in the area.

Strategy: Promotional projects will be led by various partner groups including but not limited to the West Chilcotin Tourism Association, Horsefly Board of Trade, and the Likely Chamber of Commerce, with updates to and advice from Regional District staff.

- 8. Goal:** Contribute to site improvements, marketing, and promotions for the Xat'sull Heritage Village.

Rationale: The Xat'sull Heritage Village is an award-winning tourism attraction which provides educational and recreational opportunities for visitors, centered around the culture and heritage of the Xat'sull First Nation. This tourism attraction contributes positively to the local economy by encouraging travelers to visit our region and by providing employment to area First Nations.

Strategy: Projects and initiatives will be led by the Xat'sull First Nation with updates to and advice from Regional District staff.

- 9. Goal:** Invest in capital improvements or marketing and promotional activities at the Bull Mountain Cross Country Ski Area.

Rationale: Ongoing projects to improve trail signage and promote events at Bull Mountain are reasonable opportunities to generate local economic activity. The goal is to

bring out-of-town recreational skiers to the facility. Bull Mountain is a premiere cross-country skiing destination in the Central Cariboo; however, it remains a local “secret” due to limited promotion and signage on the highway. Bull Mountain is managed by volunteers through a non-profit society.

Strategy: Projects will be led by the Williams Lake Cross Country Ski Society with updates to and advice from Regional District staff.

- 10. Goal:** Sponsor conferences and events in the Central Cariboo.
Rationale: Conferences and events draw visitors to the Central Cariboo and encourage economic development in the electoral areas. The Williams Lake and District Credit Union is hosting their regional AGM and has approach the CRD about a contribution.
Strategy: The resources necessary to provide limited sponsorship to conferences and events is included in the function financial plan.
- 11. Goal:** Market the economic development landing pages ‘Make the Move’ to attract new residents in key labour sectors.
Rationale: To help fill labour gaps in key sectors the Cariboo Regional District has developed webpages to provide regional information including resources, education, lifestyle, and opportunities. A marketing campaign is necessary to engage and drive potential new residents to the site.
Strategy: Work with the regional stakeholders to allocate funding and execute a unique marketing campaign.
- 12. Goal:** Support the Explore Cariboo marketing tactics and explore developing a multi-year contribution agreement.
Rationale: Now entering its fifth year, the Explore Cariboo marketing campaign has built momentum and proved to be a strong marketing tactic. It includes a website, social media posts, media influencers, published content, and advertising. Developing a multi-year agreement provides ongoing support and allows for long term planning.
Strategy: Provide both financial and strategic support to the project ensuring communities, attractions, and businesses from throughout the region are included resulting in enhanced increased tourism. Work with stakeholders to develop a multi year agreement.
- 13. Goal:** Support the Regional Wood Innovation Training Hub initiative.
Rationale: With changes in the forest industry, a provincial appetite for sustainable harvest and value-added wood products, and international recognition for log and timber frame home building, a diverse group of stakeholders has come together to form an initiative focused on sustainable wood-based education and training. This initiative will support regional small and medium sized businesses by building a skilled employment base, and drawing regional, national, and international participants to the region.
Strategy: Work with the advisors group to help direct efforts and identify funding.
- 14. Goal:** Develop an agritourism study.

Rationale: The Cariboo is home to diverse large to small scale agricultural businesses. With a growing demand for farm-to-table products and services and experiential tourism, there is potential for these businesses to diversify their revenue by offering agritourism experiences. This will result in a stronger regional tourism sector and economy.

Strategy: Engage with ADAC and regional agricultural businesses via survey, interview and/or in person to develop a document containing inventory and opportunities within the sector.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2023 requisition remains unchanged from the 2022 requisition of \$100,000 and this level is maintained in the five-year financial plan.

Significant Issues & Trends

Covid-19 has significantly impacted the ability for organizations to host events and tournaments throughout the region but with decreased restrictions, 2022 saw the return of many events including the Williams Lake Stampede. This has resulted in increased tourism. Labour shortages across key sectors continues to impact regional businesses and employers are searching for solutions to stand out to attracted skilled workers.

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: Support the development of disc golf courses in the Central Cariboo.

- Request deferred to 2023.

Goal: Support site improvements to Big Lake Heritage Site.

- Completed. With assistance the Big Lake Community Association secured a Northern Development Initiative Trust grant to upgrade the heritage site, including structural improvements to historic buildings and enhanced gathering space and pathways to increase safe use and accessibility.

Goal: Support obtaining grant funding for restoration of the Bullion Pit penstocks.

- Request deferred to 2024.

Goal: Work with rural communities to develop, maintain and improve trails and sites for tourism activity.

- Completed. Trail work at Lower Moffat Falls, the Bullion Pit, and Quesnel Fork was completed.

Goal: Continue to encourage partnerships for economic development projects and activities.

- Completed. Joined the Steering Committee for T̓ilhqot̓in National Government's Economic Development Strategy and attended the West Chilcotin Tourism Association's AGM to learn about economic development opportunities west of the Fraser River.

Goal: Support development of promotional materials for tourism activities in the Central Cariboo.

- Completed. Supported community organizations to produce brochures, maps and updates to websites for Horsefly & Likely and contributed towards Central Cariboo tourism maps for the Tourism Discovery Centre.

Goal: Support the All-Nations Pow Wow event held in Williams Lake.

- Deferred to 2024.

Goal: Support site improvement initiatives for event-hosting space for the Horsefly Community.

- Completed. Contributed to upgrades to outdoor event hosting space.

Goal: Contribute to site improvements, marketing, and promotions for the Xat'sull Heritage Village.

- Not Completed. No projects were brought forward.

Goal: Invest in capital improvements or marketing and promotional activities at the Bull Mountain Cross Country Ski Area.

- Completed. Supported new tourism signage for the facility.

Goal: Sponsor conferences and events in the Central Cariboo.

- Not Completed. No events were brought forward.

Goal: Coordinate the roundtable session of the Economic Development Officers within the region.

- Completed. Hosted meetings via teams and in person in Quesnel and 100 Mile House.

Goal: Monitor and market new economic development landing pages 'Make the Move.'

- Completed. Administered an online marketing campaign that revealed key market demographics.

Goal: Support the Explore Cariboo marketing tactics.

- Completed. Contributed to joint marketing efforts.

Goal: Support the Regional Wood Innovation Training Hub initiative.

- Completed. Worked with key stakeholders and a facilitator to develop terms of reference, a business plan, and funding applications.

Goal: Review the Species at Risk Act for potential impacts to the regional economy.

- Completed. Reviewed the annual report.

Other Accomplishments

Cultural heritage continues to draw visitors to the area. In 2022 there has been a drive to build and connect these experiences. To support this trend, the CRD worked with Big Lake Community Association to secure grant funding from Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) to update and improve their heritage site. This includes structural upgrades to all heritage buildings, accessible pathways, and improved gathering space.

The CRD continues to offer the NDIT Business Facade Improvement Grant for the seventh year. In 2022, this support allowed the 150 Mile Store to refresh and update their business with new siding and Gavin Lake Forest Education Society to refresh the façade on one of their cabins.