



## **2024 Business Plan Planning Services (1005)**

*Nigel Whitehead, Manager of Planning 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***

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### **Department/Function Services Overview**

The Planning Services Department is involved with two divisions of planning: current and long-range planning.

Current planning involves responding to inquiries for zoning information; Official Community Plan designations; information respecting Agricultural Land Reserve status, policies and applications; information regarding subdivision and development of private lands; Crown land referrals; and database maintenance. Current planning also involves applications to amend Official Community Plans and/or zoning/rural land use bylaws, applications for temporary use permits, development permits, development variance permits and applications under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.

Long-range planning consists of the preparation, implementation, amendment and administration of land use policies to guide future growth and development. Generally, long-range planning pertains to the Official Community Plans (OCP). Long range planning also involves special planning projects that might include neighbourhood plans, land use policy development, housing needs assessments, and agricultural planning.

Statutory Authority for Planning Services was originally provided to the Regional District by way of a Supplementary Letters Patent No. 5 in 1969.

All Electoral Area Directors are responsible for the governance of this service.

## **Significant Issues & Trends**

The Planning Services Department was short-staffed from August 2022 to September 2023. It has been a challenge to fully achieve all business unit goals, with a primary focus on processing development applications and meeting client expectations, at the expense of moving forward on some long-range initiatives. Overall, our current outlook for staff capacity in 2024 is optimistic, and this business plan reflects that optimism. Combined with the decrease in planning applications (most likely a result of increasing interest rates), staff anticipate 2024 to be a prospective year to regain focus on long-range planning projects and continuous improvement of department processes.

Regulations at the Provincial level continue to complicate our development approval procedures. The Agricultural Land Commission continues to tighten and adjust its interpretation of provincial regulation, leading to increased complexity when reviewing and approving development proposals on properties within the ALR. Conversations continue with our northern counterparts on this issue and we anticipate the likely need for political agitation in 2024 to help bring action to resolve the impacts that in our view is an unnecessary extension of ALR jurisdiction into ancillary residential development activities.

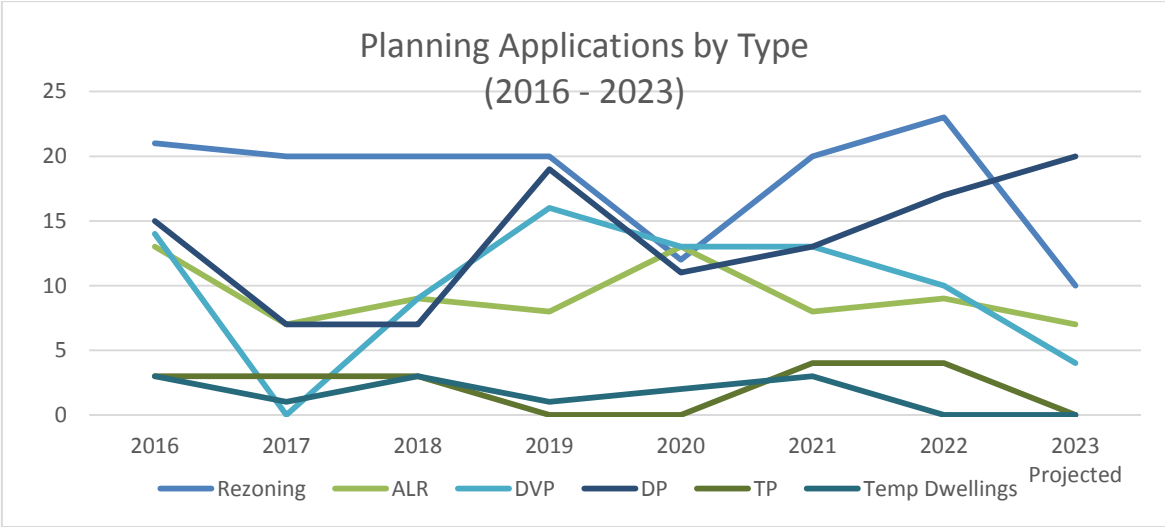
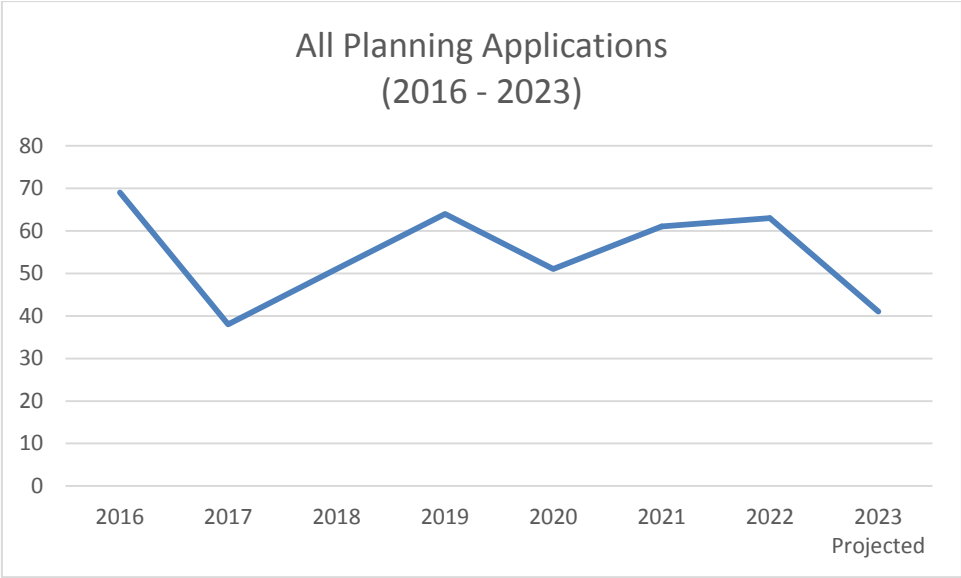
Work continues on streamlining and modernizing department procedures and will ultimately result in a much more automated application process, where applicants will have the option to fully submit application documents digitally through a user-friendly online interface. We are anticipating a launch of online application submissions in 2024. This is labour-intensive work that takes coordination and effort from all Planning staff, Building staff, and IT staff.

Climate change impacts and resulting policy development to safely regulate development in potentially hazardous areas continues to put resourcing pressure on the department. The CRD is a vast region that is susceptible to more frequent and intense weather events and disasters. This remains an ongoing and evolving priority for at minimum the next decade. Planning staff will continue to collaborate with Emergency Programs and Building Services Departments in developing proactive procedures and policies with respect to mitigating development risk in areas potentially subject to natural hazards.

## **Planning Application Trends**

Planning applications have trended downward from 63 in 2022 to a projected 41 at end of 2023. One exception is the continued trend of increased Development Permits. This is likely due to a combination of the South Cariboo and Lac La Hache OCP implementation in 2019, as well as continued starts on development projects which were planned and financed prior to the recent increases in interest rates.

Staff anticipate planning applications to remain steady or see a continued decrease in 2024. As discussed in the section above, this will allow some additional time for staff to focus on long-range planning and continuous improvement activities.



## Public and Stakeholder Engagement Highlights



**CRD Planners visit UBC Alex Fraser Research Station – Fox Mountain.**

Effective engagement is a necessary component of good land use planning. It also puts a face to the organization and helps build trust with our residents and agency partners. Public and stakeholder engagement highlights from 2023 are listed in the table below.

Planning Services Public & Stakeholder Engagement Highlights - 2023	
Event	Details
Ongoing liaison with Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC)	Monthly Meetings
Semi-annual updates with Interior Health Healthy Built Environment (HBE) Team	Semi-annually
Cariboo Cattlemen’s AGM – Presentation of Agricultural Area Plan	February 16, 2023
Media Information as required regarding archaeological sites and CRD land use planning	Spring/Summer 2023
ALC Research Project – conducted by Matt Henderson, UNBC Student	Ongoing 2023 & 2024
Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Plan Public Hearing	July 12, 2023
Guest Lecture at UNBC School of Environmental Planning	September 21, 2023
Tour of UBC Research Station – Fox Mountain, Williams Lake	October 12, 2023

## Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

### Year 2023 - Goals

- Goal:** Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Development

**Rationale:** Ongoing landslide activity continues in the region. Regulating development in potentially hazardous areas helps to protect the broader public interest and corporate liability of the CRD. This is a strategic planning priority and will likely become a requirement under the future implementation of the *Emergency Management Act*.

**Strategy:** This is an ongoing project with 2024 activities anticipated to include continued development of public-facing hazard information, refinement of OCP hazard area boundaries, and revised Hazardous Lands Development Permit Guidelines. Anticipated consulting cost is \$100,000, split with the Building Services Department. Staff will pursue Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) – Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation funding for this project. Future work is anticipated to include the development of a Risk Tolerance Policy for Landslide Risk.

Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Review		
Project/Task	Leading Department(s)	Status
LiDAR Studies (Quesnel & Williams Lake Areas)	Emergency Programs/EOC	Complete July 2022
LiDAR Studies - Public Notification	Corporate Admin (FOIPPA Officer), Communications, Planning	Complete August/Sept 2022
Interim Section 56 Reporting Requirements Implemented	Based on LiDAR studies, until mapping refinements can be completed	Procedures implemented January 2023
OCP Hazard Lands Review	Planning & Building	2023 - 2024
Landslide Risk Tolerance Threshold Policy	Planning & Building	Anticipated 2025

- Goal:** Floodplain Mapping & Regulatory Development

**Rationale:** Regulating development in potentially hazardous areas helps to protect the broader public interest and corporate liability of the CRD. This is a strategic planning priority and will likely become a requirement under the future implementation of the *Emergency Management Act*. It appears the provincial government may be undertaking standardized flood mapping throughout the province which would help further implementation of this project.

**Strategy:** Staff are working to develop an online interface to provide the public with access to flood hazard and risk data. Planned work for 2024 includes a review and revision of current flood hazard regulations utilizing the acquired data. The

anticipated consulting cost for this project is \$60,000. Staff *may* pursue Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) – Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaptation funding for this project, depending on analysis of whether this project or the geotechnical mapping project above is more likely to succeed.

CRD Flood Hazard Mapping Progress		
Project/Task	Area	Completion Date
Risk Prioritization Modelling	Thompson River Watershed (i.e. Bridge Creek, Canim River)	March 2019
Base-level mapping	Bridge Creek	April 2020
Risk Prioritization Modelling	Region-wide	Sept 2020
Risk Prioritization – Data Update	Region-wide	June 2021
Base-level mapping	Bridge Creek (update data), Chimney Creek, Fraser River, Cottonwood River, Baker Creek, Horsefly River, Nazko River, Lac La Hache	June 2021
Flood Construction level and Scenario Mapping	Bridge Creek and Little Bridge Creek	Oct 2022
Public Online Interface	Region-wide	2023
Floodplain Regulatory Review & Development	Region-wide	2024

**3. Goal:** Streamline Development Approval Procedures

**Rationale:** Continuous improvement of permitting processes helps to support efficient development and provides good customer service. It also meets provincial directives to improve permitting timelines and increase housing supply.

**Strategy:** Ongoing improvements are expected to continue through 2023 and 2024. Planning and Building Services are working together with the Information Technology (IT) Department to upgrade CityView to permit online, digital building and planning application submissions. Objectives for 2024 include a review and update of the Development Procedures, Guidelines and Fees Bylaw No. 5005, 2016 (including a review of public hearing requirements), completion of electronic application submissions portal, digitization of historical planning applications, and further automation of planning application processes.

Streamline Development Approval Procedures		
Project/Task	Description	Status
CityView Select Workflow Development & Implementation		2020 - 2021
CityView-LaserFiche Filing Implementation	First step in moving to digital planning files.	Complete 2023
CityView Letters (Planning Dept)	Automated letters development	2024

Digitizing Historical Planning Files		2023 - 2024
CityView Portal Implementation	Electronic Application Submissions	2023 - 2024
Development Procedures Bylaw Update		2024 – 2025
Public Hearing Procedures Review		2024 - 2025
Policy Review - Phase 2	Review & Consolidate Planning Policies	Anticipated 2025
Development Application Fees Review		Anticipated 2025

4. **Goal:** Zoning and Rural Land Use Bylaw Mini-Update (Shipping Containers, Cannabis Sales & Production, Carriage House definitions)  
**Rationale:** Based on Board direction at various meetings, staff will undertake amendments for a small update to portions of the Zoning and Rural Land Use Bylaws.  
**Strategy:** Bylaw amendments will be drafted for Board review. They will be referred to Advisory Planning Commissions for feedback. Subsequent amendments to the zoning and rural land use bylaws will then be undertaken. This project has been delayed slightly due to staff shortages but is progressing well and remains on target for 2024 completion.

Zoning & Rural Land Use Bylaws Mini Update	
Project/Task	Year
Bylaw Research and Drafting, APC Review, First Reading	2023, early 2024
Public Hearings, Amendments & Adoption	2024

5. **Goal:** Official Community Plan (OCP) Housekeeping Amendments  
**Rationale:** This is a relatively small project to allow for ticketing for works undertaken without a Development Permit and will insert the necessary language to permit the consideration of Temporary Use Permits for RV's in all OCP and RLUB areas throughout the district, in accordance with the TUP for seasonal RV Policy. Minor amendments to the South Cariboo OCP will be proposed, as there is some inconsistent language identified since plan adoption in 2019.  
**Strategy:** Develop bylaw amendments and bring forward for Board consideration.
6. **Goal:** North Cariboo/City of Quesnel Housing Needs Assessment  
**Rationale:** Section 585.31(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act* requires a Housing Needs Assessment review every five years. The North Cariboo/City of Quesnel Housing Needs Assessment is due for review by Fall 2024.

**Strategy:** The CRD will partner with City of Quesnel in funding a consultant’s review and update of the Housing Needs Assessment. CRD staff will support development. CRD and City of Quesnel staff will ensure that the revised assessment is created in a replicable manner to ensure that future legislated updates are less onerous and costly. Estimated consulting cost is \$100,000, split with City of Quesnel. The City of Quesnel has applied for grant funding for this project, and final project costs will be shared equally.

7. **Goal:** Archaeological/Cultural Heritage Protection Policy & Procedures  
**Rationale:** In April 2023, the CRD Board received presentations from Xat’sūll First Nation and Williams Lake First Nation regarding the importance of protecting archaeological sites and cultural heritage.  
**Strategy:** The province intends to update the *Heritage Conservation Act* in the Spring 2024 legislative sitting, and so staff will monitor changes and bring proposed next steps to the Board in early 2024. A workplan for the project will be developed accordingly.
  
8. **Goal:** Zoning & Rural Land Use Bylaw Consolidation Project  
**Rationale:** Three zoning bylaws and three rural land use bylaws have caused bureaucratic redundancy in land use regulation in the CRD. Zoning Bylaw consolidation is a leading practice at some regional districts elsewhere in the province. It would allow for common zoning regulation across the region, significantly streamlining customer service and overall bylaw maintenance.  
**Strategy:** This will be a significant, but largely technical exercise, as there will be no intended change to existing permitted uses on properties within the CRD. Staff will work to develop a project workplan and plan for a yet to be announced grant stream expected in 2024. The project is currently budgeted for 2025 in the five-year financial plan. Estimated project cost is \$120,000, plus incidental staff time to manage and support the project.
  
9. **Goal:** Short Term Rental (STR) Regulations  
**Rationale:** The Province plans to implement Short Term Rental (STR) regulations, phased in from late 2023 through 2025.  
**Strategy:** Staff will work with the Board and broader community to develop and implement local regulations as required.

### Overall Financial Impact

The 2023 tax requisition is proposed at a 3.5% increase when compared to the previous year. There is significant specialized work to be completed in 2024 and 2025, and the requisition allows funding for this work. Grant applications will be pursued as reasonably necessary to help limit the impact on future years’ budgets.



Measuring Previous Years' Performance			
Project/Goal	Target Year	Status	Comments / Work Completed in 2023
Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Review	Ongoing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim implementation of reporting requirements (Section 56 <i>Community Charter</i>) for new construction within potential hazard areas.</li> <li>• RFP for updated landslide hazard mapping ETA December 2023</li> <li>• Continued liaison with MOTI and City of Williams Lake regarding Hodgson Road Landslide</li> </ul>
Flood Hazard Mapping	Ongoing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public hazard mapping and document library under development, ETA Dec 2023.</li> </ul>
Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Plan	2021	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Reading - January 13, 2023</li> <li>• ALC Review – April – May 2023</li> <li>• Second Reading – June 2, 2023</li> <li>• Public Hearing – July 12, 2023</li> <li>• Third Reading and Adoption – September 8, 2023</li> </ul>
Improve & Streamline Development Procedures	Ongoing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing tracking of bylaw inconsistencies.</li> <li>• Ongoing automation of planning form letters.</li> <li>• Automated digital filing (Laserfiche-CityView Integration).</li> <li>• Ongoing development of online submission portal.</li> </ul>
Zoning and Rural Land Use Bylaw Mini-Update	2023-2024	On-track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shipping Containers, Cannabis Sales &amp; Production, Carriage House definitions.</li> <li>• Research completed.</li> <li>• Draft bylaw wording completed.</li> </ul>
South Cariboo OCP Implementation Updates	2022	Delayed	Delayed due to staff shortage. Some progress made in 2022. Consolidate with OCP Housekeeping Project in 2024.
Advisory Planning Commission (APC) Training	2023	Complete	Three training sessions held: April 27, May 2, May 17 - 2023

## Future Years' Business Planning Goals

Future business plan goals are provided below to assist the Board in anticipating future projects. Background research and preparation for undertaking these goals will be conducted as time and resources permit. This background research will inform the development of a strategy in prioritizing and completing the goals. Future goals may be further refined or replaced in the lead-up to the following year's business plan.

**1. Goal:** OCP Consolidation Project

**Rationale:** Regional planners elsewhere in the province are finding value in harmonizing and consolidating OCPs across their jurisdictions. For example, much of the regulatory language and broad policy statements are very similar across the CRD's seven OCPs, and between the three RLUBs. Maintaining uniform regulation in relation to best practices or changes in provincial legislation becomes unwieldy when having to simultaneously amend seven bylaws, each with their own public consultation requirements.

Staff recognize the importance of ensuring community identities and development visions remain unique to each area of the region. Staff will carefully assess the results of the Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Planning process, as that may represent a better strategy in supporting the unique identities of individual communities, while housing broader policy that is applicable region-wide under fewer, larger OCPs.

**2. Future Goal:** Interlakes OCP Review

**Rationale:** The Interlakes Area Official Community Plan (OCP) is now the oldest OCP within the region, completed in 2004. Although this OCP is ready for review, it was the last one completed with in-house planning staff and has stood up well to the test of time.

**3. Goal:** Housing Policy Implementation

**Rationale:** Utilize housing needs assessments to identify areas required for future residential housing, at sustainable densities, and amending OCP's accordingly. The province has indicated that this is a priority for local governments. Staff see this project as a cost-effective alternative to full OCP overhauls that allows for identification of lands needed for future residential development.

**4. Future Goal:** Central Cariboo Housing Needs Assessment

**Rationale:** The *Local Government Act* requires Housing Needs Assessments to be reviewed every five years. The Central Cariboo Housing Needs Assessment review is due by April 2026.

**5. Future Goal:** South Cariboo Housing Needs Assessment

**Rationale:** The *Local Government Act* requires Housing Needs Assessments to be reviewed every five years. The South Cariboo Housing Needs Assessment review is due by April 2027.

6. **Future Goal:** Zoning Bylaw Updates – Post-Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Plan.  
**Rationale:** Upon completion of the Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Plan (BMNP) comprehensive zoning bylaw amendments are recommended to align current zoning with the plan’s vision. The plan also recommends Board consideration of implementing an Environmentally Sensitive Protection Development Permit to protect Bouchie & Milburn Lakes from sewerage system impacts.