



*building communities together*

## **2023 Business Plan North Cariboo Economic Development (1026)**

*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.***

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### **Department/Function Services**

The North Cariboo Economic Development function was established through Bylaw No. 2586 in 1992. The purpose of the service is to provide funding support through contributions for economic development activities in the service area, including Electoral Areas A, B, C and I.

This service supports tourism infrastructure, including public outhouses at Bouchie Lake and Milburn Lake west of Quesnel. It also supports a tourism and project-based agreement with the City of Quesnel for the Quesnel Visitor Information Centre (2021-2023) and provides support to the Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee.

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.

Electoral Areas A, B, C and I participate in the service and taxation is based on the assessed value of land and improvements. The maximum requisition is the greater of \$10,000 or \$0.0257/\$1,000 of assessment.

The Directors of Electoral Areas A, B, C and I are responsible for the governance of this service.

### **Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies**

## 2023 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Investigate the development of a circular economy in the Cariboo.  
**Rational:** A circular economy conserves resources, creates jobs, and reduces waste, fostering local resilience while minimizing environmental harm.  
Strategy: Work with the Environmental Services Department at the CRD to tap into provincial/federal funding to create a strategy to build the regional circular economy.
- 2. Goal:** Investigate the idea of a pilot project heritage tour.  
**Rationale:** Heritage societies and community groups identify, maintain and develop heritage sites which attract tourists. Linking heritage sites within a small area (i.e. Likely area, 108 Mile Heritage Site) may offer increased tourism and business opportunities for rural areas.  
**Strategy:** Engage with community groups to determine if there is sufficient interest in undergoing a pilot project. Continue working with the Heritage Steering Committee. Further develop the Cariboo Chilcotin Historic Driving Tour Guide & Map.
- 3. 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 regional stakeholders to allocate funding and execute a unique marketing campaign.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Goal:** Continue to encourage partnerships for economic development projects and activities.  
**Rationale:** Maintaining existing and creating new partnerships is an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver economic development services.

**Strategy:** As projects and strategies are brought forward, appropriate partners, such as senior governments, municipalities, non-profit groups, and First Nations, will be identified.

- 6. Goal:** Sponsor conferences and events in the service area.  
**Rationale:** Conferences and events draw visitors to the North Cariboo and encourage economic development in the area.  
**Strategy:** The resources necessary to provide limited sponsorship to conferences and events are included in the function financial plan.
- 7. Goal:** Monitor and support agritourism.  
**Rationale:** With a growing demand for farm-to-table products and services, and experiential tourism, there is potential for agricultural businesses to diversify their revenue by offering tourism experiences.  
**Strategy:** Engage with ADAC and regional agricultural businesses and support development as requested.
- 8. Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the McLeese Lake Farmers Market hosted at Alexandria.  
**Rationale:** The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2024.  
**Strategy:** The current agreement will be reviewed by CRD staff and renewed if there are no material changes to terms and conditions.
- 9. Goal:** Support the North Cariboo Agriculture Marketing Association's FARMED initiatives.  
**Rationale:** Initiatives include both a printed and online map and inventory encouraging tourism and supporting local businesses.  
**Strategy:** Continue to support the group financially as directed by the board.

### **Overall Financial Impact**

The 2024 requisition remain unchanged from the 2023 requisition of \$40,000 and this level is maintained through a five-year financial plan.

### **Significant Issues & Trends**

As Industry continues to grow in the North Cariboo including forward movement at both Osisko Development's Cariboo Gold Mine and Artimis Gold's Blackwater Mine lack of housing will continue to be an issue. It is also important to continue to make efforts to encourage new employees to invest in and move to communities rather than commute long distances for camp life.

Barkerville Gold Mine, a large-scale employer and operation in the north Cariboo, went into care and maintenance mode in July resulting in laying off more than 80 full time employees and halted business with 12 regional suppliers. Due to the labour climate most were able to find work. As of October of 2024, the mine passed their environmental assessment and plans to start construction in the near future. The construction phase will employ 300 workers and 500 workers will be employed during the operations phase. A 200-person work camp will be built at the project site, which is about the current size of the community of Wells.

The Lhtako Quesnel 2024 BC Winter Games will have a significant economic impact on the region and provides generous opportunities to promote tourism and recruit new residents.

In 2023, due to an oversubscription of the NDI Cariboo-Chilcotin/Lillooet Regional Development account, the Business Façade Improvement Program was suspended by the Regional Advisory Committee, leading to a lack of funding for local small businesses. However, following discussions between Regional EDOs and NDI, the program will resume in 2024.

During the last few years, the Province of BC has focused funding efforts on economic recovery and infrastructure. This is changing and the provincial funding programs are now geared towards bolstering the value-added forest industry, supporting skills training, fostering clean and sustainable development, and advancing technology and innovation.

Low volunteerism in rural areas strains organizations, impacting community services and creating challenges for sustainability and growth.

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 contribution agreement in place with the Quesnel Visitor Information Centre.  
- Carried forward to 2024.

**Goal:** Develop a contribution agreement with Barkerville Heritage Trust to maintain the sites and outhouses for both the Blessings Grave Site and Stanley Cemetery.  
- Not completed. Barkerville has not come forward.

**Goal:** Continue to encourage partnerships for economic development projects and activities.  
- Completed. Hosted Regional Economic Development Roundtables.

**Goal:** Sponsor conferences and events in the service area.  
- Completed. Sponsored Minerals North.

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

- Completed. Worked with the Heritage Steering Committee to distribute and track the Cariboo Chilcotin Historic Driving Tour Guide & Map.

**Goal:** Market the economic development landing pages 'Make the Move' to attract new residents in key labour sectors.

- Completed. Designed and printed bookmarks with QR codes to drive traffic to the Make the Move site. These will be distributed in books for interregional library loans.

**Goal:** Support the Explore Cariboo marketing tactics and explore developing a multi-year contribution agreement.

- Completed. Contributed both financially and strategically to the 2023 water campaign.

**Goal:** Develop an agritourism study.

- Completed. Engaged with stakeholders from across the region as well as CRD planning, ADAC, and the province, to understand opportunities and challenges in the agritourism sector. This engagement highlighted the need for, and inspired the creation of, a Cariboo Chilcotin Guide to Agritourism.

### **Other Accomplishments**

Staff have worked closely with Troll Mountain Resort and Hallis Lake Cross Country Ski Facility to support developing facilities to host the 2024 Lhtako Quesnel Winter Games.

The Economic Development Department has taken on the CRD's Grants for Assistance Programs.