



building communities together

2024 Business Plan Central Cariboo Recreation and Leisure Services (1553)

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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 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) is in place that establishes service levels and taxation subsidy targets.

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 \$15 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 recreation function also includes the Esler Sports Complex, which has slo-pitch (2022-2026), soccer (2022-2026), and minor fastball (2023-2026) fields under use and occupancy agreements with local associations. These groups also receive field maintenance funding through contribution agreements (2022-2024) on an annual basis to complement the work of volunteers and their own financial resources. An occupancy agreement was also established with the local disc golf club (2022-2026) for development of a new course at the complex in 2023. 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 (2022-2024), Williams Lake Cycling Club (2022-2024) and 150 Mile Greenbelt, Heritage, and Trails Society (2022-2024) 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

2024 Goals

- 1. Goal:** Proceed with detailed designs for heat recovery project to capture energy from the ice plant compressors to the domestic pool water at the recreation complex.

Rationale: The innovative heat recovery system will reduce energy use for heating domestic water in the change rooms by capturing lost heat from the arena. Included in this project is an upgrade to air handler units at or near life expectancy should funding allow. Grant funding has been obtained from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Strategy: Matching capital funding is identified in the financial plan for this project, which will be led by the facility operator. Regional District Community Works Funding is allocated to support the energy efficiency components of these projects.

- 2. Goal:** Develop design options for an upgrade to the Gibraltar Room.
Rationale: Improvements to the multi-purpose Gibraltar Room would support its use for event hosting and performances. Current sound and lighting systems do not meet the expectations of many rental users.
Strategy: Design options will be determined by the facility manager with support from consulting services as necessary. Once preferred options are confirmed they will be included in the capital plan for 2025.
- 3. Goal:** Upgrade the remaining lights to LED at the complex.
Rationale: Upgrading the lighting system will reduce energy use and maintenance costs.
Strategy: Project will be implemented by the facility operator and is included in the function capital plan with an allocation of Cariboo Regional District Community Works Funds.
- 4. Goal:** Support development of the disc golf course at the Esler Sports Complex.
Rationale: Disc golf is a growing sport and easily available for participants of all ages and skill levels. The Regional District entered into a use and occupancy agreement with the Cariboo Disc Golf Club in 2022 for land at the sports complex to begin course design and development.
Strategy: Course development and management will be undertaken by the Cariboo Disc Golf Club and supported by funds identified in the Central Cariboo Recreation budget as well as other grant funding to the highest extent possible.
- 5. Goal:** Resurface the pickleball and tennis courts at Kiwanas Park.
Rationale: The existing playing surface coating has deteriorated and requires re-application and line marking.
Strategy: Funding to support the resurfacing is included in the financial plan as a contribution to the City that recognizes these central assets serve the broader subregional recreation area.
- 6. Goal:** Develop partnership programs for seniors with the Senior's Centre, assisted living facilities and First Nation elders' groups.
Rationale: Working cooperatively with these external organizations will provide more opportunities and help increase participation of seniors in healthy social activities.
Strategy: Connections and programs will be developed by facility staff at the memorial complex.
- 7. Goal:** Support an upgrade to the Westsyde Trail Network.
Rationale: The Williams Lake and area trail network is provincially and internationally recognized for its quality and diversity of riding opportunities.
Strategy: Project will be developed by the Williams Lake Cycling Club and supported by funds identified in the Central Cariboo Recreation budget as well as other grant funding to the highest extent possible.

- 8.** **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 Central Cariboo Recreation function and managed directly by the community groups in consultation with Regional District and City staff.
- 9.** **Goal:** Complete the wheelchair accessible low mobility trail located at the Esler Sports Complex.
Rationale: The Regional District has embraced the universal access outdoor recreation concept and has completed 25 wheelchair accessible wilderness trail projects across the region. This trail location is a larger project than most and will complete a full circuit around the sports complex. Trail development under the same project scope is also planned for the 108 Greenbelt and for Pioneer Park on Dragon Lake.
Strategy: The Region has been approved for a federal provincial infrastructure grant to support this project and identified matching funding as required in the sub-regional recreation financial plans. Project management consulting services will be retained for delivery of construction.
- 10.** **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 in 2024 include updating aquatic and fitness equipment. Funding is included in the capital plan to support these works.
- 11.** **Goal:** Increase outdoor recreation opportunities in all recreational green spaces with grooming of trails, cross country ski trails and snowshoe trails.
Rationale: Due to COVID restrictions, there has been a significant increase in demand for outdoor recreation and the park spaces beside the complex provides an excellent opportunity to develop activities.
Strategy: Recreation complex staff will work with user groups like the Williams Lake Cycling Club, Williams Lake Wanderers, WL Nordic Cross Country Ski Club and like groups or partners to develop outdoor opportunities.

- 12. Goal:** Review the field maintenance funding contribution agreements with groups at the Esler Sports Complex.
Rationale: The three-year agreements will expire at the end of 2024 and will require renewal or amendment to continue.
Strategy: Agreements will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no changes to the existing terms and conditions. If amendments are contemplated the agreements will be brought forward to the Central Cariboo Joint Committee for consideration.
- 13. Goal:** Contribute to the Halloween fireworks celebrations at 150 Mile and Wildwood.
Rationale: The recreation budget supports the community celebration event in Williams Lake, and it is appropriate that this support also be extended to rural communities within the sub-regional recreation area.
Strategy: A proportional funding allocation is included in the community projects envelope of the recreation financial plan.

2025 Goals

- 1 Goal:** Complete construction of the heat recovery project from the ice plant compressors to the domestic pool water at the recreation complex.
Rationale: Detailed designs and equipment procurement for the project will be completed in 2024; however, construction will occur in 2025 to avoid interrupting the ice season.
Strategy: Grant funding has been obtained from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program for this project, which will be led by the facility operator. Matching capital funding is identified in the financial plan and Regional District Community Works Funding is allocated to support the energy efficiency components of these projects.
- 2. Goal:** Make improvements and upgrades to the Gibraltar Room.
Rationale: Design and equipment options for this project will be completed in 2024. Improvements to the multi-purpose Gibraltar Room would support its use for event hosting and performances. Current sound and lighting systems do not meet the expectations of many rental users. Purchasing of a new fridge and ice machine will happen in Spring 2024.
Strategy: Implementation will be managed by memorial complex staff with support from consulting services as necessary. Funding for the improvements is included in the facility capital plan.
- 3. Goal:** Consider a feasibility study for a multipurpose turf and indoor courts building.
Rationale: Discussions of the desire for an indoor fieldhouse have been ongoing for many years. The concept is recognized as a valuable addition of recreation

infrastructure for the community providing multiuse and winter season opportunities. These types of facilities can be one of the most cost-effective assets to build and to operate when compared to other indoor recreation centres.

Strategy: Funding for a feasibility study to determine concept design, location, operating plan, and cost estimate will be included in the function capital plan.

4. Goal: Upgrade trails and jumps at the Boitano Bike Park

Rationale: Regular annual maintenance of the trails and jumps will ensure the popular bike park is functional; however, an investment to rebuild certain areas every few years will keep the park fresh and interesting and encourage more use.

Strategy: Funding to support the upgrade is included in the financial plan as a contribution to the City that recognizes these central assets serve the broader subregional recreation area. The project will be undertaken in consultation with the Williams Lake Cycling Club.

2028 Goal

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: This major capital goal is subject to acquiring substantial grant funding from external sources. An engineered design and conceptual cost estimate has been completed. The significant cost of this work will also require a transfer from capital reserves in addition to grant funding.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2024 requisition is increased by 8% from 2023 requisition amounting to \$261,118 for a total taxation of \$3,525,101. This increase is required to support the significant increases in the annual operating subsidy for the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex and contributions to capital reserves.

A 4% increase is included in 2025-2028 of the five-year financial plan to account for inflationary increases in annual operational costs and delivery of priority capital projects. This taxation increase is combined with major capital investments in energy efficiency, which should reduce operating costs and help absorb additional expenses.

The 2023 requisition was increased by 2% from the 2022 requisition.

The operational costs to the function increased 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 cost has increased at 1.75 percent per year over the term; starting at \$1,947,773 in 2019 to \$2,087,738 in 2023. A renewal agreement for another five-year term is currently in development and will be included in the financial plan for 2024 -2028.

All revenue generated at the Recreation Complex is retained by the City under the terms of the management agreement to directly offset operating expenses. There was a significant increase in revenue due to the upgraded aquatic centre, which opened in 2017 and these revenues do off set approximately 50% of the increased operating cost; however, the remaining cost increase continues to be covered by a higher taxation subsidy.

The five-year capital plan for the function has varied annual investments amounting to \$1.62 million over the five-year plan. This includes capital spending at the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex and the Esler Sports Complex, but does not include the sports field road access project which is subject to acquiring substantial grant funding to proceed.

The service has projected capital reserve funds of \$1.375 million at the end of 2023 with a planned contribution to reserves of \$300,000. Contributions to capital reserves of \$250,000 per year are planned throughout the financial plan to support future projects and to be used as leverage funds for grant applications.

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 2023 is \$4.93 million.

Significant Issues & Trends

Although the COVID-19 situation had passed for the 2023 season, facility use, rentals and revenues have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. When combined with significant cost increases in utilities, materials and labour, the result is that the operating subsidy target is not expected to be achieved in 2023.

The operating budget also includes the maintenance costs for the Boitanio Park disc golf course as well as the pickleball/tennis courts and adjacent water park. These recreation assets are recognized to be of a broader subregional benefit and are proposed to be allocated under the Central Cariboo Recreation budget to achieve cost sharing between the City and the Regional District.

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 using the

complex regularly. While this has increased revenues by more than 50%, the cost of staffing and utilities has also substantially increased resulting in a rise in operating costs for the aquatic centre.

Counters were installed on the three entrances to the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex in 2013. October 2021 to 2022 increased by 5% to 435,150. This past 12 months saw another increase of 11% for 483,016. It is anticipated these numbers will continue to rise.

In addition to the recent Sam Ketcham Pool upgrade, 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, tasking the City with providing the increased support and being the liaison for volunteer groups managing these public recreation assets.

Another strategic priority for the Central Cariboo Recreation 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. 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: Undertake a heat recovery project from the ice plant compressors to the domestic pool water at the recreation complex.

- Not completed. The project was delayed waiting on grant funding and will be included as a goal in 2024.

Goal: Install photo-voltaic solar panels at the recreation complex.

- Completed. The pool and twin arenas have independent solar arrays with a combined output of 227.5 kilowatts.

Goal: Review the Fees and Charges bylaw for implementation January 2024.

- Completed. A new three-year Fees and Charges schedule was approved in September.

Goal: Continue to work with an indoor turf facility technical committee to develop options for moving the project forward.

- Not completed. No meetings were called by the technical committee for this project. However; a proposal from school district to include a turf field as part of an elementary school rebuild was received.

Goal: Increase outdoor recreation opportunities in all recreational green spaces with grooming of trails, cross country ski trails and snowshoe trails.

- Completed. Covid Funding helped support the purchase of a Snowdog Groomer and snowshoes. Grooming of Boitanio Park and Snowshoe rentals will be additional features to support the snow rails currently used for outdoor winter opportunities.

Goal: Support an upgrade of the Westsyde Trail Network.

- Completed. A full rebuild of an old trail called Bush Invader was achieved.

Goal: Support development of the disc golf course at the Esler Sports Complex.

- Completed. Funding support was provided to the local club for the installation of baskets and tee boxes.

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

- Completed.

Goal: Build a wheelchair accessible low mobility trail at the Esler Sports Complex.

- Partially completed. Trail construction was finished in 2023 with signs, benches, and outhouses to follow and complete the project in 2024.

Goal: Review the recreation services agreement between the Regional District and the City of Williams Lake.

- Planned for completion in December once adjusted subsidy targets are approved in the five-year financial plan.
- Goal:** Continue to improve the accessibility of the Recreation Complex for persons with low mobility.
- Completed. Replaced four pieces of equipment in the Fitness Centre and added a commercial bench; Leg Press on Rails, Lying Down Leg Extension, Pectoral Fly Station, and Seated Chest Trainer.
- Goal:** Contribute to the Halloween fireworks celebrations at 150 Mile and Wildwood.
- Completed. Contribution made to the Wildwood Community Association.

Other Accomplishments

- Partnership with Streets For All on acquiring more bike racks for residents through a Williams Lake Community Forest grant.
- ISPARC – Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council grant for a program in partnership with Williams Lake First Nation after school programs. This program was called “Honor Your Health”.
- New filter media in the leisure pool filters, replacing the sand. The new media filters down to 1 micron (sand is 20 micron) and is self-sterilizing which actually resists bacterial growth and biocoagulation. This filter media was put in the swirl pool filters in 2022. The lap pool filters will be switched over in 2024.
- Added a second Golden Buckle Event – The Golden Buckle Ultra – one day four locations trail challenge.
- Expanded month long June ParticipACTION challenge to the entire region with a HUGE prize option for participants. Williams Lake and Area placed 42nd on the list of most active communities/regions. We received a “ParticipACTION grant to supplement the fitness challenge.
- Successful return of the Indoor Rodeo Event in April