



# 2024 Business Plan – **REVISED for JAN 11, 2024** 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 provincial focus on addressing the housing shortage will place a substantial resource demand on the planning department. All three housing needs assessments (North Cariboo/Quesnel, Central Cariboo/Williams Lake, South Cariboo/District of 100 Mile House) will need to be updated, with subsequent updates needed to the Official Community Plans. In conjunction with significant projects in the workplan including updating and development of natural hazard data and regulations, consolidating OCP’s, consolidating and updating zoning and rural land use bylaws, and general updates due for at least three OCP’s (Interlakes, Williams Lake Fringe, and Quesnel Fringe), we are proposing an additional staff position for the planning service. This position will focus on long-range policy planning and will support current planning as necessary. With the additional staff position, multiple pending business unit goals have been brought forward to be started in 2024 and through 2025, recognizing, that realistically, an additional position will only likely garner 0.5 FTE in 2024.

An immediate impact of Bill 44 is the prohibition of public hearings for residential rezoning applications when consistent with the OCP. Staff are actively working on development procedures bylaw amendments and revising many of our internal procedures and documents. This unanticipated workload has taken the bulk of our long-range planning resources for the remainder of 2023 and will last into early 2024. An additional position will provide capacity to manage unanticipated or unforeseen work assignments.

Historically, the CRD Planning Department has held fewer staff positions than our neighbouring jurisdictions. This has generally balanced out as we have experienced lower growth rates and less complexity in the overall planning context. Over time, however, complexity of all planning work has increased, and growth rates have increased in the Central and South Cariboo over the past census period (2016 - 2021). We are seeing increased growth pressures in the South Cariboo and Williams Lake fringe areas. We are also seeing increased planning pressures due to natural hazard risks and foresee increased long-term planning requirements with the implementation of the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA)*.

Regional District	EA Population	Census Growth Rate (entire region, 2016-2021)	Planners (FTE)*	
CRD	37,559	1.5 <sup>^</sup>	4.0	<sup>^</sup> Note growth rates of 3% to 13% in EA’s G, F, H, I, K, and L.
CSRD	20,000	11	7.0	
TNRD	25,021	8.3	7.0	
RDFFG	15,185	2.6	4.8	
			*Not including clerical support	

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. The labour market appears to be opening slightly, and department staff have been working to build inroads with the UNBC School of Planning and Sustainability to gain closer access to their graduating cohorts. 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.

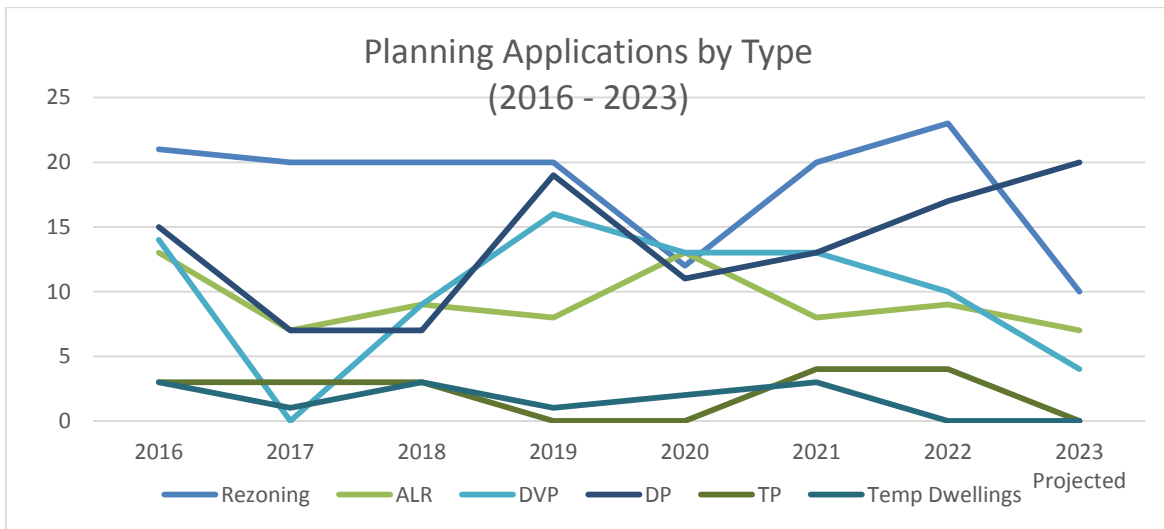
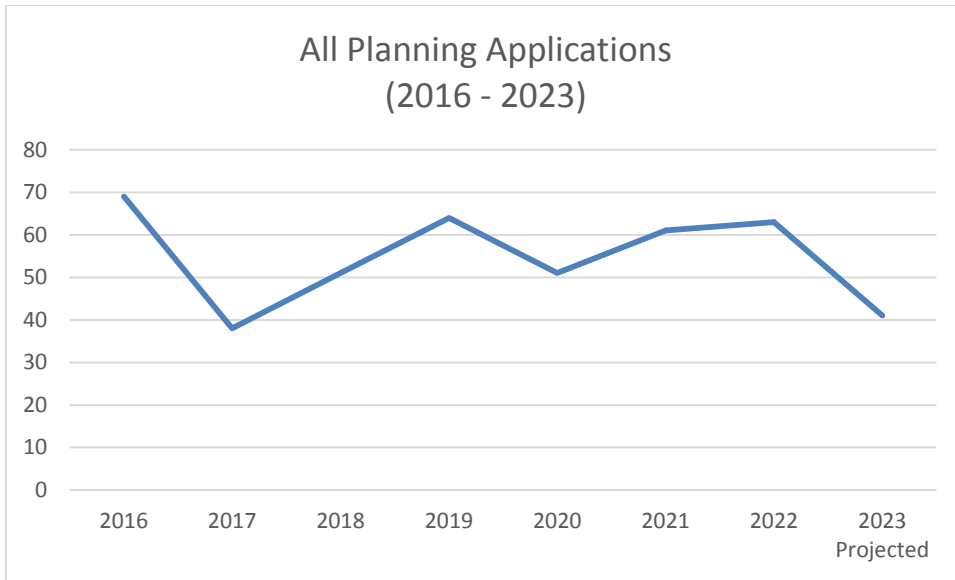
Work continues on streamlining and modernizing department procedures and will ultimately result in a much more automated application process, where applicants will have the option to fully submit application documents digitally through a user-friendly online interface. We are anticipating a launch of 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
UNBC Planning & Engineering Job Fair	November 2, 2023

## Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

### Year 2024 - Goals

- Goal:** Revise and Update Housing Needs Assessments:  
North Cariboo/City of Quesnel Housing Needs Assessment  
Central Cariboo/City of Williams Lake Housing Needs Assessment  
South Cariboo/District of 100 Mile House Housing Needs Assessment

**Rationale:** Royal Assent of Bill 44 requires all local governments to update their Housing Needs Assessments to new provincial standards by Dec 31, 2024.

**Strategy:** The CRD will partner with City of Quesnel, City of Williams Lake, and District of 100 Mile House to review and update the respective Housing Needs Assessments. Provincial guidelines and regulations specifying details are expected in January 2024. A one-time funding allocation from the province will support this work. Due to the specialized nature of the reports, the updates will be contracted with CRD staff and member municipality staff jointly administering and supporting contractors as needed. CRD staff are in discussions with member municipalities to find cost-efficiencies in a potential joint RFP. Current budget to review all three reports is \$150,000, with an additional 50% from municipal members.
- 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 and Disaster 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	2024
Landslide Risk Tolerance Threshold Policy	Planning & Building	2024 - 2025

**3. 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 and Disaster 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. 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	2024
Floodplain Regulatory Review & Development	Region-wide	2024 - 2026

**4. 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 2024 and 2025. Planning and Building Services are working together with Information Technology (IT) Department to upgrade CityView to permit online, digital building and planning application submissions. An unplanned update to the Development Procedures, Guidelines and Fees Bylaw No. 5005, 2016 is currently underway due to Bill 44 prohibitions on public hearings in some cases.

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		2023 - 2024
Policy Review - Phase 2	Review & Consolidate Planning Policies	Anticipated 2025
Development Application Fees Review		Anticipated 2025

5. **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 initially due to staff shortages and now Bill 44 implementation, but 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 - 2024
Public Hearings, Amendments & Adoption	2024



- 6. Goal:** Official Community Plan (OCP) Housekeeping Amendments  
**Rationale:** This is a relatively small project to allow for administrative fines 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.
- 7. Goal:** Archaeological/Cultural Heritage Protection Policy & Procedures  
**Rationale:** In April 2023, the CRD Board received presentations from Xat'sull 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 subsequently. 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 was originally budgeted at \$120,000, but costs have been removed with inclusion of an additional staff position proposed.
- 9. Goal:** Develop OCP Consolidation Workplan  
**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.  
**Strategy:** This will be a multi-year project. Staff will develop a project scope and workplan for Board review in late 2024.
- 10. Goal:** Develop Interlakes OCP Review & Consolidation Workplan  
**Rationale:** The Interlakes Area Official Community Plan (OCP) was completed in 2004 and is due for review.

**Strategy:** In coordination with the OCP Consolidation Workplan (see Goal above), we will review and develop an initial strategy to amalgamate the Interlakes OCP into the South Cariboo OCP. Project kickoff would aim for 2025, where Housing Needs Assessment findings can be integrated into the project.

**11. Goal:** Monitor 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 are expecting statistics from the province in late 2024 and will monitor provincial implementation.

**Overall Financial Impact**

To account for the proposed business plan objectives, the 2024 tax requisition is proposed at a 10% increase, 10 % for 2025, 5% for 2026, 2027, and 2028. A \$327,000 funding allocation will be provided from the province to help local governments undertake and implement the significant planning changes required under new legislation. Utilizing this one-time grant and the accumulated operating surplus have helped buffer the proposed requisition increase.

There is significant specialized and long-range planning work to be completed over the next five years, and the requisition allows for appropriate staffing and funding for this work. Grant applications will be pursued as reasonably possible 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.</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> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.

#### 12. Future 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. Areas likely to be considered are Williams Lake fringe and Quesnel fringe.

#### 13. 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.