



2026 Business Plan South Cariboo Economic Development (1017)

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 South Cariboo Economic Development service was originally established through Bylaw No. 3573 in 2000. In 2004, Bylaw No. 3878 limited the service to Electoral Areas G and L. In 2007, Bylaw No. 4312 added Electoral Area H back into the function.

The service was created to support and promote economic development in the South Cariboo. This service is provided through individual project support with various partner groups and service delivery-based agreements with the District of 100 Mile House and the 100 Mile Development Corporation.

Currently, there is a contribution agreement in place with the 100 Mile Development Corporation to support operation of the Visitor Information Centre (2026-2028) and the South Cariboo Tourism Marketing Strategy (2025-2027), Lone Butte Historical Society to support operation of the roadside tourism and heritage site on Highway 24 (2024-2026), as well as the 100 Mile and District Historical Society to support operation of 108 Mile Heritage Site on Highway 97 (2024 – 2026).

Agreements are also in place to make contributions to the 100 Mile House sani-dump (2025-2027), to support tourism infrastructure and an advertising agreement with the Rotary Club of 100 Mile House (2024-2026) for its mobile stage.

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 G, H, and L 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 for Electoral Areas G, H, and L are responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2026 Goals

1. **Goal:** Update the Make the Move website to include features to attract and land new residents to the region.
Rational: Many employers lack resources to attract, land and retain talent. Engagement with businesses and newcomers has identified a key challenge: newcomers often leave the region after a few years because they struggle to integrate and feel part of the community. This disrupts business continuity and creates a costly cycle of employee retention issues.
Strategy: Work with municipalities and regional employers to develop tools and update the website to help newcomers build connections. Funding includes two grants acquired in 2025 and funds allocated in the function financial plan.

2. **Goal:** Support obtaining grant funding to expand the current succession planning program offered by Community Futures, to encompass the entire Cariboo Region.
Rational: Small and medium-sized businesses are essential to sustaining our regional economy. As many business owners near retirement, they require assistance with succession planning, a key service provided by Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin in the South and Central Cariboo. By supporting and expanding this program, we can help ensure a smooth transition of these businesses to new owners, securing their continued role in strengthening the Cariboo's economic future.
Strategy: Funds have been allocated in the function financial plan to support Community Futures to acquire external grant funding.

3. **Goal:** Review the Municipal and Regional District Tax Program (MRDT).
Rational: Approximately \$1.3 million in MRDT is collected annually and leveraged to approximately \$2.1 million from other sources. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Marketing Association (CCCTMA) has the authority to collect MRDT from regional accommodations for a five-year term. This agreement will require renewal and will be presented to the CRD Board for a resolution of support in early 2027. It is important to understand and have input into priorities and strategies about how the MRDT is spent.
Strategy: Review and prepare an analysis of the past CCCTMA strategies for the board, prior to the renewal request presentation.

4. **Goal:** Continue to encourage the development of a cross-country Ski the Cariboo brand and marketing.

Rational: The 100 Mile Nordic Centre, Bull Mountain, and Hallis Lake have worked hard to build and maintain cross country ski facilities. Developing a regional brand and marketing campaign will showcase the area and encourage winter tourism.

Strategy: Work with the regional cross-country ski organizations to develop and execute a brand and marketing project.

5. **Goal:** Build an online database of tourism assets in the South Cariboo.
Rational: Since the November 2024 South Cariboo Tourism Forum, the South Cariboo Tourism Taskforce (SCTT) has been meeting to develop short and long-term strategies to build the tourism sector.
Strategy: Allocate money and work with the SCTT, the District of 100 Mile House, and the South Cariboo Visitors Centre to implement an online database that meets the sector's needs.

6. **Goal:** Update and expand the Historic Driving Guide & Map.
Rationale: Management and distribution of the driving brochure was transferred to the Economic Development department in 2023 with the objective to expand and support regional heritage tourism.
Strategy: Staff will work with the Heritage Steering Committee to support ongoing updates and expansion of the Historic Driving Guide & Map.

7. **Goal:** Add an insert to the Historic Driving Guide & Map listing events at heritage sites.
Rationale: Many heritage organizations and community groups hold events at their heritage sites. These events offer increased tourism and business opportunities for rural areas.
Strategy: Adding the insert to the Heritage Driving Guide and Map promotes the events and gives people more incentive to visit the sites.

8. **Goal:** Initiate a Regional Heritage Plaque Program.
Rationale: Provide an opportunity for heritage community groups to recognize significant heritage sites within the region. The CRD Community Heritage Register is a planning tool that provides formal recognition for historic places.
Strategy: Plaques will be made available to community organizations who wish to recognize a site with a heritage plaque.

9. **Goal:** Work with the Fishing Highway Tourism Association to develop a three-year contribution agreement to encourage tourism along the Highway 24 tourism corridor.
Rational: Highway 24 houses a tourism cluster of resorts and fishing opportunities that attract and benefit both tourists and residents. The CRD has similar agreements in place with other rural community groups to encourage economic activity.

Strategy: Staff will work with the Fishing Highway Tourism Association to develop and execute a three-year agreement.

10. **Goal:** Sponsor conferences and events in the South Cariboo.
Rationale: Conferences and events draw visitors to the South Cariboo and encourage economic development in the area.
Strategy: The resources necessary to provide limited sponsorship to conferences and events is included in the function financial plan.
11. **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 has 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.
12. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the Lone Butte Historical Society to support operation of the roadside tourism and heritage site on Highway 24.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
13. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the 100 Mile and District Historical Society to support operation of the 108 Heritage Site on Highway 97.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
14. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the Rotary Club of 100 Mile House for its mobile stage.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.

2027 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: Research circular economy practices and strategies and identify businesses and organizations in the Cariboo that are already implementing them. This will enable the CRD to access provincial and federal funding to develop a comprehensive strategy for growing the regional circular economy.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition remains unchanged from the 2025 requisition at \$63,750 and this level is maintained through the five-year financial plan.

Significant Issues & Trends

Due to increased competition for Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) funding in 2025, many projects are receiving only partial funding. Notably, marketing grants are not being approved, no matter the strength of the application.

The 2024 South Cariboo Tourism Forum successfully connected stakeholders, who have, in 2025, formed a taskforce. This group is focused on collaborative efforts to improve the regional tourism landscape for all businesses.

Regional employers report increasing difficulty in attracting skilled labour, and an even greater challenge in retaining it.

Volunteer burnout continues to be an issue as organizations face a lack of participation and an aging volunteer base. Consequently, non-profit organizations are rethinking their structures and seeking financial support from all levels of government.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory of the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing to work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

- Goal:** Measure the economic impact of events held in the South Cariboo.
- Not Completed. No organizations or events came forward in 2025.

- Goal:** Encourage the development of a cross-country ski Cariboo brand and marketing.
- In progress. Buy is slow due to overrun volunteers.
- Goal:** Create a South Cariboo tourism working group.
- Completed. Following the South Cariboo Tourism Forum, volunteers came forward to form the group and have met regularly in 2025.
- Goal:** Investigate the development of a circular economy in the Cariboo.
- In progress. Research and an inventory list started.
- Goal:** Investigate the idea of a pilot project heritage tour.
- Not completed.
- Goal:** Work with the Fishing Highway Tourism Association to develop a three-year contribution agreement to encourage tourism along the Highway 24 tourism corridor.
- In progress. The organization is interested but no agreement has been met to date.
- Goal:** Continue to encourage partnerships for economic development projects and activities.
- Completed. Attended Tsq̓sceñ First Nation's food sovereignty workshop and attended the Regional Indigenous Tourism Roundtable. Both the Regional Advisory Committees for the Roots to Grow & Rural Workforce Retention and Expansion Project have members from organizations in the South Cariboo.
- Goal:** Sponsor conferences and events in the South Cariboo.
- Completed. Sponsored the 50th year celebration of 108 Heritage site.
- Goal:** Market the economic development landing pages 'Make the Move' to attract new residents in key labour sectors.
- Completed. Marketed through regional engagement sessions focused on getting employer buy in to use the site for recruitment and retention purposes.
- Goal:** Support the Explore Cariboo marketing tactics and explore developing a multi-year contribution agreement.
- Completed. Supported the 2025 Explore Cariboo marketing tactics. Suggested and shared a multi-year agreement but no traction.
- Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with 100 Mile Development Corporation to support operation of the Visitor Information Centre.
- Completed. A new agreement was reached.

Other Accomplishments

To support attraction and retention of the regional workforce, we successfully secured a \$271,200 grant from the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program. The project, Rural Workforce Retention and Expansion, has helped build connections with First Nations Communities, municipalities, businesses, and organizations across the region as they all find challenges attracting, and particularly retaining, skilled labour. These funds will support major updates to the Make the Move platform which is receiving increased traction due to the engagement required for the project.

To help support the agriculture sector, we successfully applied to the Investment in Agriculture Foundation BC for \$77,000. The project, Roots to Grow: Building Agriculture Strength in the Cariboo, focuses on attracting skilled workers, connecting workers with agriculture specific training, and connecting producers with food processing facilities to build strength and resilience in the agriculture sector.

In 2025, the Cariboo Regional District administered Northern Development Initiative Trust's Business Façade Improvement program in the Cariboo Region. The program was undersubscribed with \$12,500 of the potential \$20,000 allocation distributed to three projects. One of these projects, located in the South Cariboo, received a grant of \$5,000.



2026 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 Area 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 (2024-2026) and the Community Services and Development Society of Alexis Creek (2024-2026).

Currently, there is a contribution to the McLeese Lake Farmers Market Association (2025-2027) 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.

In 2024, after a considerable refurbishment of the Big Lake Heritage Site, a contribution agreement with the Big Lake Heritage Society (2024 – 2026) was established.

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

2026 Goals

1. **Goal:** Update the Make the Move website to include features to attract and land new residents to the region.
Rational: Many employers lack resources to attract, land and retain talent. Engagement with businesses and newcomers has identified a key challenge: newcomers often leave the region after a few years because they struggle to integrate and feel part of the community. This disrupts business continuity and creates a costly cycle of employee retention issues.
Strategy: Work with municipalities and regional employers to develop tools and update the website to help newcomers build connections. Funding includes two grants acquired in 2025 and funds allocated in the function financial plan.
2. **Goal:** Support obtaining grant funding to expand the current succession planning program offered by Community Futures, to encompass the entire Cariboo Region.
Rational: Small and medium-sized businesses are essential to sustaining our regional economy. As many business owners near retirement, they require assistance with succession planning, a key service provided by Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin in the South and Central Cariboo. By supporting and expanding this program, we can help ensure a smooth transition of these businesses to new owners, securing their continued role in strengthening the Cariboo's economic future.
Strategy: Funds have been allocated in the function financial plan to support Community Futures to acquire external grant funding.
3. **Goal:** Preserve historic tourism attractions in Cedar Point Park.
Rational: The historic flume in Cedar Point Park connects tourists to the historic gold rush. Maintaining this artifact ensures it remains an engaging attraction for years.

Strategy: Budget is allocated to support the Likely Chamber of Commerce's efforts to preserve the flume at Cedar Point Park.

4. **Goal:** Review the Municipal and Regional District Tax Program (MRDT).
Rational: Approximately \$1.3 million in MRDT is collected annually and leveraged to approximately \$2.1 million. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Marketing Association (CCCTMA) has the authority to collect MRDT from regional accommodations for a five-year term. This agreement will require renewal and will be presented to the CRD Board for a resolution of support in early 2027. It is important to understand and have input into priorities and strategies about how the MRDT is spent.
Strategy: Review and prepare an analysis of the past CCCTMA strategies for the board, prior to the renewal request presentation.

5. **Goal:** Continue to encourage the development of a cross-country Ski the Cariboo brand and marketing.
Rational: The 100 Mile Nordic Centre, Bull Mountain, and Hallis Lake have worked hard to build and maintain cross country ski facilities. Developing a regional brand and marketing campaign will showcase the area and encourage winter tourism.
Strategy: Work with the regional cross-country ski organizations to develop and execute a brand and marketing project.

6. **Goal:** Host a Central Cariboo Tourism Forum in partnership with the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake and Area Chamber of Commerce.
Rational: Tourism is the economic driver that steadily supports the Region while resource-based industries fluctuate. Building and maintaining a strong tourism industry will contribute to the long-term health and economic wellness of the region.
Strategy: Work with the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake and Area Chamber of Commerce to host a Central Cariboo Tourism Forum focused on connecting and strengthening the tourism sector.

7. **Goal:** Continue to support the Cariboo Wood Innovation Training Hub (CWITH) initiative.
Rationale: In 2024, the Fraser Basin Council secured a REDIP-FIT grant to hire a project manager to develop structure and programming for CWITH. This project is an ongoing partnership between the City of Williams Lake, UBC's Alex Fraser Research Forest, and local value-added wood manufacturers. With changes in the forest industry, a provincial appetite for sustainable harvest and value-added wood products, the Province of BC has been in strong support of this project. 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: Continue to work with Fraser Basin Council, the City of Williams Lake, the Alex Fraser Research Forest, and the advisor's group to support the CWITH Project Manager and build a sustainable Hub.

8. **Goal:** Update and expand the Historic Driving Guide & Map.

Rationale: Management and distribution of the driving brochure was transferred to the Economic Development department in 2023 with the objective to expand and support regional heritage tourism.

Strategy: Staff will work with the Heritage Steering Committee to support ongoing updates and expansion of the Historic Driving Guide & Map.

9. **Goal:** Add an insert to the Historic Driving Guide & Map listing events at heritage sites.
Rationale: Many heritage organizations and community groups hold events at their heritage sites. These events offer increased tourism and business opportunities for rural areas.
Strategy: Adding the insert to the Heritage Driving Guide and Map promotes the events and gives people more incentive to visit the sites.
10. **Goal:** Initiate a Regional Heritage Plaque Program.
Rationale: Provide an opportunity for heritage community groups to recognize significant heritage sites within the region. The CRD Community Heritage Register is a planning tool that provides formal recognition for historic places.
Strategy: Plaques will be made available to community organizations who wish to recognize a site with a heritage plaque.
11. **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.
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.
12. **Goal:** Support development of promotional materials for tourism activities in the Central Cariboo.
Rationale: Promotional materials such as brochures, websites, 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 Horsefly Board of Trade and the Likely Chamber of Commerce, with updates to and advice from Regional District staff.
13. **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.

14. **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.
Strategy: The resources necessary to provide limited sponsorship to conferences and events are included in the function financial plan.
15. **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.
16. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place 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.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
17. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the Community Services and Development Society of Alexis Creek.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.
18. **Goal:** Review the contribution agreement in place with the Big Lake Heritage Society.
Rationale: The current three-year agreement will expire December 31, 2026.
Strategy: The current agreement will be reviewed by staff and renewed if there are no material changes to the terms and conditions.

2027 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: Research circular economy practices and strategies and identify businesses and organizations in the Cariboo that are already implementing them. This will enable the CRD to access provincial and federal funding to develop a comprehensive strategy for growing the regional circular economy.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition remains unchanged from the 2025 requisition of \$100,000 and this level is maintained in the five-year financial plan.

Significant Issues & Trends

Due to increased competition for Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) funding in 2025, many projects are receiving only partial funding. Notably, marketing grants are not approved, no matter the strength of the application.

Regional employers are struggling to attract and retain skilled labour. In response, a cross-sector coalition has formed in the Central Cariboo to address this issue. The group has established action-oriented subgroups focused specifically on labour retention and has identified funding to advance these initiatives.

Volunteer burnout continues to be an issue as organizations face a lack of participation and an aging volunteer base. Consequently, non-profit organizations are rethinking their structures and seeking financial support from all levels of government.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory of the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing to work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

- Goal:** Measure the economic impact of events held in the Central Cariboo.
- Completed. Measured impact of the 2025 Williams Lake Stampede and BC Wildlife Society Conference held in Williams Lake.
- Goal:** Encourage the development of a cross-country ski the Cariboo brand and marketing.
- In progress. Buy is slow due to overrun volunteers.

Goal: Support the Cariboo Wood Innovation Training Hub (CWITH) initiative.

- Completed. Worked with CWITH, City of Williams Lake, Alex Fraser Research Forest, and the Fraser Basin Council to get training programs off the ground.

Goal: Develop landing supports to assist new workers and their families integrate into the community.

- Ongoing. Worked with the Williams Lake and Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Williams Lake and Central Cariboo businesses to create welcome packages for new residents and identified funding to expand this work.

Goal: Investigate the development of a circular economy in the Cariboo.

- In progress. Research and an inventory list started.

Goal: Investigate the idea of a pilot project heritage tour.

- Not completed.

Goal: Support obtaining grant funding to reinvigorate Penstocks at the Bullion Pit historic site near Likely.

- Not completed. The group focused on upgrades to Cedar Point Park.

Goal: Develop new relationships with organizations in the Chilcotin to support tourism opportunities.

- Not completed.

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

- Completed. Horsefly completed maintenance of the trail up to Teapot and Likely worked on trails at Quesnelle Forks.

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

- Completed. Website and brochure updates were executed.

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

- Not completed. No projects were brought forward.

Goal: Sponsor conferences and events in the Central Cariboo.

- Completed. Sponsored the BC Wildlife Society Conference in Williams Lake.

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

- Completed. Marketed through regional engagement sessions focused on getting employer buy in to use the site for recruitment and retention purposes.

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

- Completed. Supported the 2024 Explore Cariboo marketing tactics. Suggested and shared a multi-year agreement but no traction.

Other Accomplishments

To support attraction and retention of the regional workforce, we successfully secured a \$271,200 grant from the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program. The project, Rural Workforce Retention and Expansion, has helped build connections with First Nations Communities, municipalities, businesses, and organizations across the region as they all find challenges attracting, and particularly retaining, skilled labour. These funds will support major updates to the Make the Move platform which is receiving increased traction due to the engagement required for the project.

To help support the agriculture sector, we successfully applied to the Investment in Agriculture Foundation BC for \$77,000. The project, Roots to Grow: Building Agriculture Strength in the Cariboo, focuses on attracting skilled workers, connecting workers with agriculture specific training, and connecting producers with food processing facilities to build strength and resilience in the agriculture sector.

In 2025, the Cariboo Regional District administered Northern Development Initiative Trust's Business Façade Improvement program in the Cariboo Region. The program was undersubscribed with \$12,500 of the potential \$20,000 allocation distributed to three projects. One of these projects, located in the Central Cariboo, received a grant of \$5,000.



building communities together

2026 Business Plan North Cariboo Economic Development (1026)

Darron Campbell, Manager of Community Services

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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 (2025-2025) and provides support to the Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee.

Currently, there is a contribution to the McLeese Lake Farmers Market Association (2025-2027) 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

2026 Goals

1. **Goal:** Update the Make the Move website to include features to attract and land new residents to the region.
Rational: Many employers lack resources to attract, land and retain talent. Engagement with businesses and newcomers has identified a key challenge: newcomers often leave the region after a few years because they struggle to integrate and feel part of the community. This disrupts business continuity and creates a costly cycle of employee retention issues.
Strategy: Work with municipalities and regional employers to develop tools and update the website to help newcomers build connections. Funding includes two grants acquired in 2025 and funds allocated in the function financial plan.

2. **Goal:** Support obtaining grant funding to expand the current succession planning program offered by Community Futures, to encompass the entire Cariboo Region.
Rational: Small and medium-sized businesses are essential to sustaining our regional economy. As many business owners near retirement, they require assistance with succession planning, a key service provided by Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin in the South and Central Cariboo. By supporting and expanding this program, we can help ensure a smooth transition of these businesses to new owners, securing their continued role in strengthening the Cariboo's economic future.
Strategy: Funds have been allocated in the function financial plan to support Community Futures to acquire external grant funding.

3. **Goal:** Review the Municipal and Regional District Tax Program (MRDT).
Rational: Approximately \$1.3 million in MRDT is collected annually and leveraged to approximately \$2.1 million. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Marketing Association (CCCTMA) has the authority to collect MRDT from regional accommodations for a five-year term. This agreement will require renewal and will be presented to the CRD Board for a resolution of support in early 2027. It is important to understand and have input into priorities and strategies about how the MRDT is spent.
Strategy: Review and prepare an analysis of the past CCCTMA strategies for the board, prior to the renewal request presentation.

4. **Goal:** Continue to encourage development of a cross-country ski the Cariboo brand and marketing.
Rational: The 100 Mile Nordic Centre, Bull Mountain, and Hallis Lake have worked hard to build and maintain cross country ski facilities. Developing a regional brand and marketing campaign will showcase the area and encourage winter tourism.
Strategy: Work with the regional cross-country ski organizations to develop and execute a brand and marketing project.

5. **Goal:** Work with the North Cariboo Tourism Taskforce to identify and execute projects that support subregion tourism.
Rational: Tourism is the economic driver that steadily supports the region while resource-based industries fluctuate. Building and maintaining a strong tourism sector will contribute to the long-term health and economic wellness of the region. The North Cariboo Tourism Forum will bring stakeholders together to identify subregional tourism needs to help support the sector.
Strategy: Support a North Cariboo Tourism Taskforce to identify and execute subregional projects that will have a positive impact and will strengthen the tourism sector. Funding is allocated in the function financial plan for this project.
6. **Goal:** Develop a pilot agritourism tour in the North Cariboo.
Rational: Agritourism is growing in the North Cariboo, providing a positive impact on both the tourism and agriculture sectors. A pilot tour of agritourism sites will raise their profile and offer valuable insights for operators interested in developing their own.
Strategy: Work with agriculture organizations in the North Cariboo to develop a pilot agritourism tour. Funding is allocated in the function financial plan for this project.
7. **Goal:** Update and expand the Historic Driving Guide & Map.
Rationale: Management and distribution of the driving brochure was transferred to the Economic Development department in 2023 with the objective to expand and support regional heritage tourism.
Strategy: Staff will work with the Heritage Steering Committee to support ongoing updates and expansion of the Historic Driving Guide & Map.
8. **Goal:** Add an insert to the Historic Driving Guide & Map listing events at heritage sites.
Rationale: Many heritage organizations and community groups hold events at their heritage sites. These events offer increased tourism and business opportunities for rural areas.
Strategy: Adding the insert to the Heritage Driving Guide and Map promotes the events and gives people more incentive to visit the sites.
9. **Goal:** Initiate a Regional Heritage Plaque Program.
Rationale: Provide an opportunity for heritage community groups to recognize significant heritage sites within the region. The CRD Community Heritage Register is a planning tool that provides formal recognition for historic places.
Strategy: Plaques will be made available to community organizations who wish to recognize a site with a heritage plaque.
10. **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.

11. 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.

2027 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: Research circular economy practices and strategies and identify businesses and organizations in the Cariboo that are already implementing them. This will enable the CRD to access provincial and federal funding to develop a comprehensive strategy for growing the regional circular economy.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition remains unchanged from the 2025 requisition of \$40,000 and this level is maintained through a five-year financial plan.

Significant Issues & Trends

Due to increased competition for Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) funding in 2025, many projects are receiving only partial funding. Notably, marketing grants are not being approved, no matter the strength of the application.

Poor enrolment in trades programs offered by the College of New Caledonia demonstrated a disconnect between the institution's marketing efforts and the need of the community. The City of Quesnel and the Quesnel & District Chamber of Commerce, and the Cariboo Regional District came together to connect industry leaders in the business community with representatives from education institutions to ensure training offerings align with regional labour needs.

Regional employers report increasing difficulty in attracting skilled labour, and an even greater challenge in retaining it.

Volunteer burnout continues to be an issue as organizations face a lack of participation and an aging volunteer base. Consequently, non-profit organizations are rethinking their structures and seeking financial support from all levels of government.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory of the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing to work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

Goal: Host a North Cariboo Tourism Forum in partnership with the City of Quesnel.

- In progress. Planning is underway and the event will take place in January 2026.

Goal: Encourage the development of a cross-country ski Cariboo brand and marketing.

- In progress. Buy is slow due to overrun volunteers.

Goal: Measure the economic impact of events held in the North Cariboo.

- Completed. The Quesnel Rodeo submitted both their rodeo and high school rodeo information for impact assessments.

Goal: Investigate the development of a circular economy in the Cariboo.

- In progress. Research and an inventory list started.

Goal: Investigate the idea of a pilot project heritage tour.

- Not completed.

Goal: Support the delivery of an agricultural producers needs assessment.

- Not completed. Matt Henderson did not come forward with his academic project.

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

- Completed. Marketed through regional engagement sessions focused on getting employer buy in to use the site for recruitment and retention purposes.

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

- Completed. Supported the 2025 Explore Cariboo marketing tactics. Suggested and shared a multi-year agreement but it has not been implemented at this time.

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

- Completed. Hosted semiannual Economic Development Roundtable in Barkerville and spent two days engaging with businesses in Wells, Barkerville and Bowron Lakes. Worked with the City of Quesnel on bridging education projects connecting post-secondary educators with labour needs.

Goal: Sponsor conferences and events in the service area.

- Not completed. None were brought forward.

Goal: Support the North Cariboo Agriculture Marketing Association's FARMED initiatives.

- Completed. Supported marketing efforts.

Other Accomplishments

To support attraction and retention of the regional workforce, we successfully secured a \$271,200 grant from the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program. The project, Rural Workforce Retention and Expansion, has helped build connections with First Nations Communities, municipalities, businesses, and organizations across the region as they all find challenges attracting, and particularly retaining, skilled labour. These funds will support major updates to the Make the Move platform which is receiving increased traction due to the engagement required for the project.

To help support the agriculture sector, we successfully applied to the Investment in Agriculture Foundation BC for \$77,000. The project, Roots to Grow: Building Agriculture Strength in the Cariboo, focuses on attracting skilled workers, connecting workers with agriculture specific training, and connecting producers with food processing facilities to build strength and resilience in the agriculture sector.

In 2025, the Cariboo Regional District administered Northern Development Initiative Trust's Business Façade Improvement program in the Cariboo Region. The program was undersubscribed with \$12,500 of the potential \$20,000 allocation distributed to three projects. One of these projects, located in the North Cariboo, received a grant of \$2,500.