



2026 Business Plan Planning Services (1005)

Nigel Whitehead, Manager of Planning Services

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region

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 Supplementary Letters Patent No. 5 in 1969. It is a core service which must be provided.

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

Significant Issues & Trends

Reasonably good progress was made on 2025 long-range planning goals. Some smaller projects continue to see delays due to reduced staff levels. The department will be going into 2026 with one position vacant, but we are optimistic it can be filled early in the year. Success of some workplan goals will be dependent on level of experience and timing of the new hire.

The department will continue to make progress on digitizing and modernizing our application procedures. Implementation of an online application portal has been difficult but should result in a customer friendly option for application submittals. We will continue to make progress in further automating many of our correspondence documents throughout the application process. We are also working with IT and Building Department to further modernize our permitting software.

We continue to progress towards a unified and consolidated zoning bylaw. Public engagement is planned for 2026.

Work continues on developing more complete and comprehensive hazard area information. Increased coordination and formalization of joint procedures and actions with Emergency Program Services Department will be required.

We continue to hear complaints about subdivision timelines and the lack of available land for additional development throughout the region. We are seeing increased interest to infill and develop additional dwellings on existing lots. We are hopeful that continued work on housing needs assessments and their future implementation via OCP amendments will help to identify viable areas for future growth in the region.

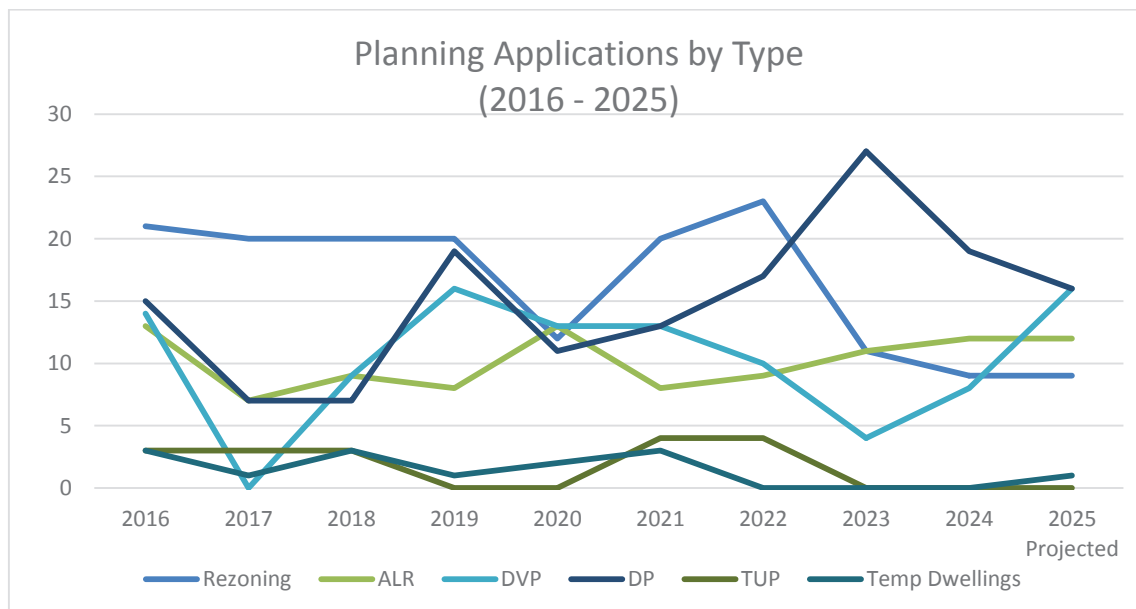
Further development of relationships with Indigenous Nations will be necessary in the area of land use planning. As modern treaties and higher-level land use agreements progress, we need to plant the seeds now for successful, respectful, and collaborative land use planning and development across boundaries throughout the regional district moving forward.

We continue to monitor provincial regulatory changes that could affect the operation of our department, including [Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025](#) and the [Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project](#).

Requirements for soil and fill approvals for ancillary structures within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) continue to pose a development hurdle. Approval timelines have improved, however we still disagree with the necessity of the program in our region. We will continue to support the Board in lobbying efforts with the Province on this matter.

Planning Application Trends

Planning application numbers indicate a slight upward trend from 48 in 2024 to a projected 54 by end of 2025. Application volume tends to shadow prevailing interest rates in the inverse and follows the real estate market generally. Declining interest rates are likely contributing positively to the development market, however global economic hesitation and high construction costs are likely responsible for downward pressure. Given these broader market uncertainties we anticipate a minimal increase in planning applications for 2026.



Public and Stakeholder Engagement Highlights



ADAC Farm Visit – April 16, 2025

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 2025 are listed in the table below.

Planning Services Public & Stakeholder Engagement Highlights - 2025	
Event	Details
Ongoing liaison with Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC)	Monthly Meetings
Quesnel Housing Solutions Table	Quarterly Meetings
Media Information as required regarding CRD land use planning	Interviews as requested
Hwy 97N Xatśūll Corridor Safety Study	Meetings as required
Pembina Pipeline Engagement	Established formal referral process for new development adjacent to pipeline corridor.
CSA/BC Flood Hazard Areas and Land Use Management Guidelines (FHALUMG) Committee	Technical Advisory Committee for development of new provincial guidelines in flood hazard areas.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

Year 2026 - Goals

1. **Goal:** Interlakes OCP Review & Consolidation
Rationale: The Interlakes Area Official Community Plan (OCP) was completed in 2004 and is due for review.
Strategy: We will review and amalgamate the Interlakes OCP into the South Cariboo OCP. Project kickoff will aim for Spring 2026. With ongoing uncertainty in staffing levels, this project will be consultant-driven with strong staff oversight.

2. **Goal:** Zoning & Rural Land Use Bylaw Consolidation Project
Rationale: Three zoning bylaws and three rural land use bylaws cause redundancy in land use regulation in the CRD.
Strategy: A background report is anticipated for completion in late 2025. Public engagement will occur in 2026, with movement towards bylaw preparation and Board consideration following.

3. **Goal:** Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard 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 CRD strategic plan priority.
Strategy: This is an ongoing project. Geotechnical hazards review for Williams Lake and Quesnel Fringe will be completed by end of 2025, preparing for revised OCP hazard area boundaries and development permit guidelines in 2026. Future work is anticipated to include the development of a Risk Tolerance Policy for Landslide.

Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Review		
Project/Task	Leading Department(s)	Status
OCP Geotechnical Hazard Lands Review	Planning & Building	Completion late 2025
OCP Geotechnical Development Permit Areas Update	Planning	2026
Landslide Risk Tolerance Threshold Policy	Planning & Building	2026 - 2027

4. **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 plan priority.
Strategy: Development of an online interface to provide the public with access to flood hazard and risk data continues to be delayed due to staff resourcing limitations.

CRD Flood Hazard Mapping Progress		
Project/Task	Area	Completion Date
Public Online Interface Update	Region-wide	Delayed to 2026
Floodplain Regulatory Review & Development	Region-wide	Anticipated 2027

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

Rationale: Continuous improvement of permitting processes helps to support efficient development and provides good customer service.

Strategy: Online permitting portal is nearing completion. Digitizing historical files was delayed. With staffing changes in the file room, we should be able to make progress in 2026. Information Technology Department will lead a transition to CityView Workspace, which is a modern cloud-based version of our permitting software. Future work is anticipated to include a Planning Services policy review and a review of application fees.

Streamline Development Approval Procedures		
Project/Task	Description	Status
Digitizing Historical Planning Files		Delayed to 2026
CityView Portal Implementation	Electronic Application Submissions	Final implementation and testing 2026
CityView Transition to Workspace	Transition of permitting software to most current platform	IT project lead for 2026.
Planning Policy Review - Phase 2	Review & Consolidate Planning Policies	2026 - 2027
Development Application Fees Review		Anticipated 2027

6. **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: This project continues to be delayed, but progress is being made and anticipated for completion in 2026.

Zoning & Rural Land Use Bylaws Mini Update	
Project/Task	Year
Bylaw Research and Drafting,	2023 - 2024

APC Review, First Reading	Delayed to 2026
Public Hearings, Amendments & Adoption	Delayed to 2026

7. **Goal:** Official Community Plan (OCP) Housekeeping Amendments
Rationale: This will allow for administrative fines for works undertaken without a Development Permit.
Strategy: Develop bylaw amendments and bring forward for Board consideration.
8. **Goal:** Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) Boundary Research Project
Rationale: CAO's of neighbouring Regional Districts have committed to develop a preliminary study to justify a review of ALR boundaries for our area of the Province.
Strategy: Undertake research and develop a joint research study in collaboration with RDFFG and RDBN.

Measuring 2025 Performance			
Project/Goal	Target Year	Status	Comments / Work Completed in 2025
Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Review	Ongoing	Ongoing	Consultant review of landslide hazard mapping complete late 2025.
Floodplain Mapping & Regulatory Development	Ongoing	Delayed	Public hazard mapping and document library under development.
Streamline Development Procedures	Ongoing	Ongoing	Development of online submission portal completed 2025.
Zoning and Rural Land Use Bylaw Mini-Update	2025	Underway	- Draft bylaw wording finalized. - Engagement plan completed.
Official Community Plan (OCP) Housekeeping Amendments	2025	Delayed	New target year of 2026.
Zoning & Rural Land Use Bylaw Consolidation	2026	Underway	Consultant review and reporting completed 2025.
Develop Interlakes OCP Review & Consolidation Workplan	2025	Underway	Anticipate workplan completion by end of 2025.

Future Years' Business Planning Goals

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

1. **Future Goal:** Develop OCP Consolidation Workplan
Rationale: Regional planners elsewhere in the province are finding value in harmonizing and consolidating OCPs across their jurisdictions. 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.
2. **Future Goal:** Housing Policy Implementation via OCP Updates
Rationale: Utilize housing needs assessments to identify areas required for future residential housing, at sustainable densities, and amending OCPs accordingly. Areas likely to be considered are Williams Lake Fringe and Quesnel Fringe.
3. **Future Goal:** ALR Exclusion of CRD-owned Properties
Rationale: Multiple CRD-owned properties are within the Agricultural Land Reserve, including recreation properties, fire halls, and transfer stations. Additional permitting requirements are adding to project timelines. Consideration is recommended for a future application to exclude some or all properties from the ALR.
4. **Future Goal:** Coordinate Hazard Planning with Emergency Program Services Department
Rationale: As EDMA regulations are developed and emergency management evolves into further focus on mitigation, preparedness, and recovery, greater integration will be required between land use planning and emergency management planning.