

# City of Quesnel Economic Development Transition Strategy Report -FINAL

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Presented to:

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 THE BACKGROUND TO THE PLAN

This report has been prepared to identify long term economic development direction and actions that reflect Quesnel’s vision for future prosperity, in accordance with broader community development goals. The City’s Economic Development Department focuses on activities that support business retention and expansion, resident, visitor, and business attraction, workforce development and attraction, and occasional sector specific projects. This Plan builds on those services by targeting initiatives aimed at economic diversification and community well-being.

## 1.2 THE APPROACH IN PREPARING THE STRATEGY

The project comprised three phases, research and analysis, stakeholder engagement and plan development. A Baseline Report with demographic, economic base and sector data and trends was completed for the City in May, 2018. The engagement program included key informant interviews, in-person meetings and sector focus groups. In the final phase, a planning workshop was held with elected officials, City staff, and select business leaders to frame up plan content, and provide clear direction for the final report deliverables.

## 1.3 THE CURRENT SITUATION IN QUESNEL

Quesnel has a resource-based economy, which in 2016, 38% of the workforce was employed in goods production (e.g. forestry, mining, manufacturing), compared to 18.8% for the province. Historically, this economic base served the community well—it provided jobs and above-average incomes that underly community quality of life and wellbeing. Moreover, that base has prevailed in the midst of downsizings and closures that have caused major dislocation and distress for many communities in this province. Although services contribute approximately three out of five jobs in Quesnel, the high-growth job generators of the future, such as professional, scientific and technical, are under-represented when compared to the province.

In this context, the economic challenge facing Quesnel is one of adjustment and transition. There are inevitable and unavoidable disruptions coming to the long-term regional timber supply and manufacturing base. Yet there is no reason why this base cannot continue to be foundational well into the future; after all, many of the resources are still here. The transition to more knowledge-led activities will be equally important, however, as those services will be the job generators of the future. The shared link between successful adjustment and transition will be the community’s ability to create a climate of innovation, entrepreneurship and skills development.

## 2 STRATEGY OVERVIEW

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### 2.1 OVERVIEW

Key elements of the planning process involved reviewing the City's vision and mission. In the City of Quesnel all departments follow the vision and mission laid down for the Corporation. This vision and mission were reviewed to set the discussion for the strategic goals. Strategic goals were laid down to specifically guide the Economic Development Transition Strategy. Finally, strategic themes were identified to help organize the 15 strategic initiatives. These are laid out in the remainder of this section.

### 2.2 VISION

"A naturally vibrant, accessible, and innovative Community"

### 2.3 MISSION

"The City of Quesnel delivers responsive, dynamic, and cost effective public services and programs which serve as the foundation for a resilient and accessible community that retains and attracts residents, visitors, and investment."

### 2.4 GOALS

The economic development transition strategy is focused on achieving five strategic goals including:

1. Attract and retain a diverse and growing population through the provision of local services, amenities, and a strong sense of place.
2. Diversify the economic base by creating a positive business climate and encouraging innovation.
3. Develop Quesnel as a destination for visitors with improved infrastructure, hosting capacity, and marketing.
4. Quesnel's brand is based in nature and this should infuse and inspire all activities undertaken in the strategy.
5. Strengthen partnerships with First Nations through economic diversification and collaboration on strategic project development.

### 2.5 SETTING PRIORITIES

In considering the importance of specific initiatives it is important to understand the economic development office time commitment, economic development project and supporting cash

costs<sup>1</sup>, and overall return to the community from each initiative. This helps inform the strategic priorities that the City will consider moving forward. These are summarized in Table 1 below and provide a high-level overview of the resourcing and benefits.

Table 1: Resource Allocation and Benefit Matrix

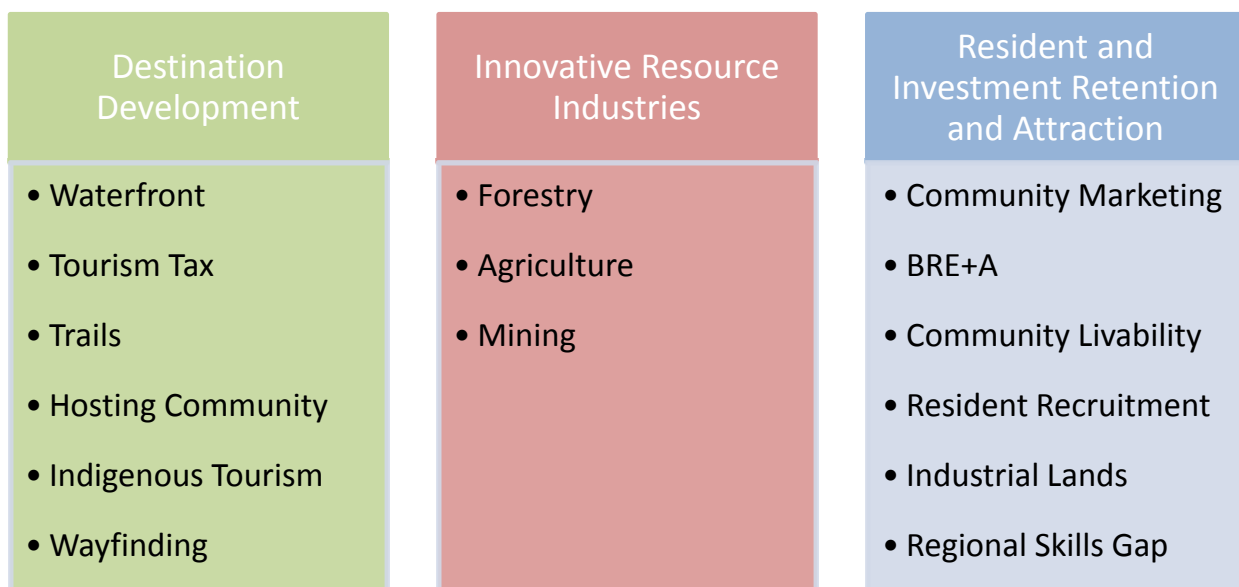
EDO Time commitment	Minor	Moderate	Major
Cash costs	\$ Low	\$\$ Moderate	\$\$\$ high
Return to community	↑ Low	↑↑ Moderate	↑↑↑ High

To provide additional clarity of the role of the City’s economic development department, those actions highlighted in **bold will be undertaken by the Economic development department**. While actions that are not in bold are the primary responsibilities of partner agencies and organizations or other departments within the City. This will be refined over time as the economic development office will revisit the specific actions in each initiative as the work plan for the following year is set.

## 2.6 THE PLAN AT A GLANCE

As illustrated in Figure 1, the Strategy is organized into three themes including: destination development (green); innovative resource industries (red); and, resident, investment retention and attraction (blue).

Figure 1: Economic Development Transition Strategy Themes



<sup>1</sup> Supporting cash costs do not include what the City might invest in infrastructure or other supporting costs through other City departments.

# 3 STRATEGY DETAILS

## 3.1 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1.1 Waterfront

**Objectives:**

- Creating a thriving, linked waterfront area
- Generating greater tourism and visitor initiatives




**Rationale:**

As Highway 97 approaches the Fraser River it turns 90 degrees right to become Front Street and widens into three lanes; two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. In this area, Highway 97 runs adjacent to the Fraser River and several sections are flanked directly by the River and parkland to the west. Other land uses include broad mix of commercial, residential (single and multi-family), and institutional (seniors care, G.R. Baker Memorial Hospital) uses, as well vacant redeployment lots exist throughout. Many buildings along this segment have multiple stories with retail uses at grade and offices or residential uses on upper floors; off-street parking is generally provided throughout this segment. (Urban Systems Ltd. 2016)

With the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) in the process of planning for potentially relocating Highway 97 off of Front Street, the City of Quesnel will have an opportunity to develop the Quesnel waterfront properties at the confluence of the Fraser River, Quesnel River and Baker Creek with the aim of visitor and resident attraction and retention. The change will reduce the through highway traffic in the immediate area allowing the area to be better integrated into the downtown. From an economic development perspective, it will make the area more desirable for retail, commercial and residential activities and allow the City to better link to the existing and expanding trail network along the river and beyond.

**Actions:**

- **Support the Waterfront Development Plan which is now beginning.**
- **As the City plans for the areas future and making infrastructure investments it will be beneficial to see revitalization of the area’s retail, commercial, and residential properties. Begin exploring what the private sector investment that would support this area might look like.**
- **Support other City departments in exploring any revitalization tax exemptions that may facilitate new investment in the area.**
- Continue to lobby and support the province in rerouting the highway.

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
BIAs, NDIT, provincial government, First Nations	1, 2 & 3		\$	↑↑					

### 3.1.2 Tourism Tax

**Objectives:**

- Create a sustainable funding for tourism
- Support coordinated, effective marketing programs







**Rationale:**

The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) is a tax of 2 to 3% on the purchase price of accommodation collected on behalf of municipalities, regional districts and eligible entities. The tax applies to purchases of eligible accommodation, which includes fixed-roof facilities of more than four rooms that currently collect and remit provincial sales tax. Short-term rentals such as Airbnb are now included, but properties of less than four rooms are not. The MRDT is currently collected in 59 communities across BC and is the main source of Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) funding.

The City of Quesnel has been exploring a 3% MRDT and is currently talking to hoteliers to gauge interest for the tax.

**Actions:**

- **Continue to work with the hoteliers to build support for the MRDT.**
- **If a majority of hoteliers and rooms can be committed, continue with implementation of the City’s plan to apply for the MRDT.**
- **Establish staff support to implement the MRDT strategy.**
- **Explore a Destination Management Fund (DMF) if the MRDT does not proceed or if a broader set of properties is desired. DMFs are in place in Vancouver, Merritt and Port Alberni and are the predominant DMO funding model in Alberta. They differ from the MRDT in that they are strictly voluntary. The DMFs in Port Alberni and Merritt are in lieu of the MRDT (although both communities are re-examining MRDT applications). A DMF in Quesnel would serve to bring in smaller properties who could benefit from more effective marketing but who are not subject to the MRDT. This would include smaller B&Bs, vacation properties and short-term rentals.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
DBC, Ministry of Finance, CCCTA, hoteliers	1 & 4		\$	↑↑					



### 3.1.3 Trails

#### Objectives:

- Coordinated, inter-regional trail planning
- Pursue consistent trail standards and branding
- Ensure development of at least one new iconic trail
- Increase visitors to community and area

#### Rationale:







Trails are a critical piece of public infrastructure with many benefits for both residents and visitors. They generate health benefits by encouraging an active lifestyle, serve as an alternative mode of transportation, and provide linkages between and within communities and areas of natural and cultural interest. Trails are inexpensive to use and readily accessible to most.

The City has recently completed a North Cariboo Trails Inventory and Master Plan. Recognizing the value of motorized and non-motorized trails for both residents and visitors, the Plan included the inventory and mapping of the existing trails, trail uses, trail conditions, trail ownership, and trail maintenance responsibility in the region, and, of course, recommendations for trails that could be marketed to visitors. “Destination trails” and marketing programs were also identified. It was noted that Quesnel had an unparalleled history and terrain available to create epic trail experiences for all users, including relatively famous Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail, the old Cariboo Wagon Road, and the telegraph trails.

The challenges to trail development are imposing, as coordinated planning, funding, stewardship and conflict resolution often result in sub-optimal outcomes for trail potential.

#### Actions:

- **Work with the CRD and key partners such as the Cariboo Mountain Biking Consortium to support an inter-regional trail planning process. In particular, seek out opportunities to integrate Quesnel’s trail development into a Clinton-Quesnel trails network.**
- **Support implementation of recommendations made in the Master Plan.**
- **Quesnel Tourism working with CCCTA to promote new trail experiences.**
- **Increase engagement with the provincial government in support of BC’s Trails Strategy.**
- **Encourage product and experience development on trails by promoting business opportunities for guided experiences, rentals and other services.**
- **Develop and promote new opportunities for e-bike use and infrastructure.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
CRD, CMBC, BC Parks, RSTBC, Trails BC, First Nations, CCCTA, local trail groups	1,3 & 5		\$\$	↑					



### 3.1.4 Hosting Community

#### Objectives:

- Become home to a provincially significant festival or event
- Increase the number of events
- Increased festival and event attendance by visitors and increased occupancy rates







#### Rationale:

Quesnel already has a roster of festivals with Billy Barker Days, the Quesnel Rodeo, Agriculture Fair and Exhibition, Festival of the Performing Arts and the Annual Pow Wow. As with most communities, these falls into the 'home-grown' category, although Billy Barker Days and Skyfest also serves as a 'tourist-tempter'. What the community needs is a 'big-bang' festival that will move the needle on visitor impacts. In addition, the City will be hosting the 2020 Minerals North Conference.

Stakeholders feel a greater emphasis on destination-oriented festivals and events would draw more visitors and diversify the available products while complementing the outdoor recreation strengths of the North Cariboo. Festivals and events are an effective way to diversify the region's visitor markets and seasons. However, they are not easily planned or delivered and require financial and volunteer resources. To support these efforts, the City recently hired an event coordinator who is focused on expanding and stabilizing one or two annual festivals with good potential or creating a new festival for drawing in more visitors. This initiative would be implemented by the events coordinator and potentially the MDRT staff position.

#### Actions:

- Host a festivals and events planning session to share ideas and best practices and identify opportunities for expanding the festival and event roster in Quesnel.
- Research current attendance and attendee profiles. Investigate Destination BC event tracking framework: [Survey Procedures for Festivals, Events and Permanent Attractions](#) in an effort to develop better awareness of existing event attendance.
- **Implement the hosting precinct which is supported by a recent \$570,000 grant.**
- **Support the event coordinator and organizers to improve marketing and especially social media initiatives to increase visitor attendance at existing festivals. In addition to using Destination BC resources such as their [Tourism Business Essentials webinar](#) on social media and online reputation management, and their [Introduction to Online Reputation Management](#) seminar.**
- **Support the development of at least one, new winter festival, starting with a pre-feasibility report outlining objectives, theme(s), activities, cost and potential source of funds.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
DBC, CCCTA, event organizers	1 & 4		\$\$	↑↑					

### 3.1.5 Indigenous Tourism

**Objectives:**




- Diversify intown tourism product
- Highlight indigenous tourism activities
- Increase the number of visitors stopping in Quesnel

**Rationale:**

The Quesnel area is home to a rich Indigenous history with Lhtako Dené Nation, Nazko First Nation, ?Esdilagh First Nation, and Kluskus First Nation in the immediate area. Currently activity is underway in the Quesnel area that will likely lead to new indigenous tourism product. Specifically, the Barkerville Heritage Trust has been awarded \$100,000 to work with the Lhtako Dené Nation, and other Indigenous partners in the region, to design and implement Indigenous tourism with interpretive and cultural activities and programming (FLNRORD. 2018). The Nazko First Nation and ?Esdilagh First Nation are both exploring trail development projects. Finally, the City of Quesnel and Lhtako Dené Nation have secured funding to undertake a pre-feasibility study on a culture centre.

**Actions:**

- **Support moving forward on the Lhtako Dené Nation cultural centre pre-feasibility study.**
- **Explore with Lhtako Dené Nation, Nazko First Nation, ?Esdilagh First Nation, and Kluskus First Nation their interest in developing specific tourism product in Quesnel.**
- **Support any funding application that may be required to investigate or study the feasibility of a desirable project.**
- **Ensure coordination with the City planning and development departments to support any physical site development or building construction in Quesnel.**

Partners	Priority: Medium				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lhtako Dené Nation, Nazko First Nation, Kluskus First Nation, ?Esdilagh First Nation, CCCTA, event organizer, Indigenous Tourism BC	3 & 5		\$\$	↑					

### 3.1.6 Wayfinding

**Objectives:**

- Visitors find Quesnel an easy place to find and navigate
- Wayfinding supports investment attraction





**Rationale:**

Wayfinding refers to information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space. As people become more reliant on technological aids to navigate and architectural environments become more complicated, people need visual cues such as maps, directions, and symbols to help guide them to their destinations.

As mentioned in Community Marketing Initiative above, the City has just completed a Branding process and is now in the implementation phase. A key moving forward to successful implementation will be to ensure Wayfinding and placemaking Strategy tools support community Branding and Marketing.

**Action:**

- **Implementing the wayfinding strategy currently in development.**
- **Relocation and refurbishment of the Gold Pan as recommended in the Brand Communication Plan.**
- **Continue to refresh City signage and interpretive signs in accordance with the Brand.**
- **Continue to look for opportunities to incorporate the Brand across the City as infrastructure is updated and replaced, as with the Reid Street project.**

Partners	Priority: Flexible				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
QCOC, BIAs, VC, merchants	1 & 4		\$ \$	↑↑					

## 3.2 INNOVATIVE RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

### 3.2.1 Forestry

#### Objectives:

- Utilizing more fibre, realizing more value, and reducing costs
- Maintaining viability of current industry partners
- Assessing the market demand for future forest products
- Securing investments, expanding the manufacturing hub
- Establishing Interface fire management planning around City
- Maximizing local social, ecological and economic benefits of the timber resource

#### Rationale:

There is a sense of urgency to address the challenges facing the forests, the communities and the future of the forest products manufacturing sector in Quesnel with the industry entering a period of transition. To begin to address this transition, Quesnel hosted the Forestry Think Tank Session on May 2018. The objective was to develop recommendations to support sustainability and vibrancy in the forest sector locally. Specifically, several goals were identified including:






- Ensuring the health of forests for multiple values from wildlife habitat to recreation;
- Protecting the resilience of forests to catastrophic wildfires and forest health epidemics such as Douglas-fir and spruce bark beetle outbreaks;
- Providing future fibre supply to sustain jobs and the community; and,
- Expanding the forest products manufacturing hub to create new products utilizing new and innovative approaches.

To achieve the goals identified at the Forestry Think Tank Sessions, seven strategic initiatives were developed. In addition, Quesnel is in the process of seeking a community forest agreement tenure with the provincial government. The application has proposed three different area options. If successful, the tenure will allow Quesnel to pursue social, ecological, and economic sustainability through local control and management of the local forest resource. It would support local livelihoods, promote community participation, foster long term environmental stewardship and create a better platform for innovation and economic diversification.

#### Action:

- **Support securing funds to hire a coordinator to oversee and coordinate implementation.**
- **Support the development of the seven strategic initiatives that address the objectives identified in the May 2018 Quesnel Forestry Think Tank planning session.**
- Continue a strong political lobby in support of the Community Forest tenure application.
- Engage and educate community partners about the needs and benefits of the community forest tenure, including coordination with community Fire smarting.
- Work with the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) to utilize best practices research for local tenure planning, and also to utilize its extension services for determining governance, community engagement, board conflict, manager and board recruitment, taxation, trail development, First Nations relationships, communications,

funding, strategic planning, policy development, tendering and management agreements, and management planning.

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
Industry, FLNRO, MAE, First Nations, UNBC, CNC, NDIT, FESBC, CCATEC, Work BC, FP Innovations	1 & 2,5		\$\$\$	↑↑↑					

### 3.2.2 Agriculture

#### Objectives:

- Increasing local food production and food security
- Creating a greater share of public sector food purchases by local producers
- Establishing sustainable and innovative food culture
- Increasing producer capacity





#### Rationale:

As part of a wider concern with sustainability issues, Quesnel could benefit through an alternative or at least more diversified food supply chain that included local and organic food used by institutional customers. Institutional food purchases are constrained by the legal public procurement framework that emphasizes price as the primary criteria. Breaking through this complex procurement process is almost impossible for local producers, even though the local market could serve as a springboard for export sales, not to mention the health benefits to clients. The City could leverage its policy and business development tools to bring provincial institutions into a local food supply chain, as well as leverage the influence of the Food Innovation Hub (City of Quesnel. 2018c).

In addition, the City and its partners from around the region are working on new agriculture investments at the Alex Fraser Park that will improve the facility’s ability to promote and enhance agriculture in the region and to host animal evacuees in the event of future natural disaster.

#### Actions:

- **Business case for the Agriculture Centre/Food Innovation Hub.**
- **Support the work of the Agriculture Development Advisory Committee as needed.**
- **Support CNC in its initiatives to foster agriculture expansion and research.**
- **Continue to support the leveraging of funding for infrastructure upgrades and expansion at Alex Fraser Park.**
- **Assist with the business case for the provincial government co-locating a second agriculture centre manager/extension person in Quesnel to support agriculture and the activities at Alex Fraser Park.**

Partners	Priority: Medium				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
producers, institutions (e.g. hospitals, schools), restaurants, ADAC, AWG, CNC, FARMED, NDIT (Innovation program)	2		\$ \$	↑					

### 3.2.3 Regional Mining

#### Objectives:





- Growing regional mine service centre in Quesnel
- Establishing Quesnel as a preferred domicile for mine workers in the North Cariboo
- Expanding the North Cariboo mine and minerals workforce

#### Rationale:

There are three noticeable mining operations in the Quesnel area. Taseko Mine’s Gibraltar copper mine approximately 84 kilometres from Quesnel with a mine life of 22 years and a workforce of 660. Mount Polley copper-gold mine operated by Imperial Metals Corporation, 212 kilometres from Quesnel and with 350 workers and mine life of 9 years or more. (Jago. nd). Finally, the Barkerville Gold Mine Bonanza Ledge underground gold mine located near Wells is in advanced exploration and has been employing 150 workers which could increase to over 350 if it moves to full-production. In addition, exploration spending has remained robust and placer activity has been steady and noticeable over the years. Collectively this positions the City of Quesnel to capitalize this area of new investment in the region and further expand Quesnel as a mining service centre and key location for mining families.

#### Actions:

- **Refresh the profile of the North Cariboo’s mining services sector.**
- **Use Minerals North (2020) to promote Quesnel as a mining service centre.**
- **Monitor Blackwater mine gold project by participating in Community Liaison Committee, advocate for use of local suppliers.**
- Advocate for a direct Quesnel to the Blackwater mine site road.
- **Support development of a benefits agreement with Barkerville Gold that includes commuting services for Quesnel-based workers, a resident worker attraction program, local housing options.**
- **Support educational institutions and the mining industry on local work force training programs that address future expected shortages in skilled positions.**

Partners	Priority: Flexible				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
Mining companies, UNBC, CNC, QCOC, NDIT, CRD	2 & 5		\$ \$	↑↑					

### 3.3 RESIDENT AND INVESTMENT RETENTION AND ATTRACTION SUPPORT

#### 3.3.1 Community Marketing

**Objectives:**







- Increasing the number of visitors to Quesnel and area
- Attracting new residents to Quesnel

**Rationale:**

The workshop participants highlighted several areas where a more coordinated marketing effort would help Quesnel achieve its underlying goals of economic development and sustainable population growth. Attracting new residents, visitors and businesses, a sharpened, targeted online presence, and a better communication of the community’s assets and advantages were all identified. The City has just finished an extensive branding process and it is now being implemented across all departments and partner organizations. The economic development department will integrate its marketing activities into this initiative.

**Action:**

- **Continue brand implementation with a new City brochure, relocation guide, and annual visitor guide**
- **Develop a marketing plan that aligns with the City’s brand**
- **Continue to develop photography and video assets which can be used across marketing platforms**
- **Continue to add content and functionality to the tourism and corporate websites which supports resident and visitor attraction**
- **Continue to use social media to promote Quesnel**
- **Engage local businesses and organizations to leverage the City’s brand**
- **Act as a brand resource to ensure branding is incorporated in all City initiatives across departments.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
QCOC, BIAs, VC, merchants	3 & 4		\$ \$	↑↑↑					



### 3.3.2 Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction

**Objectives:**

- Ensuring a positive business climate
- Expanding job and tax base
- Fostering greater investment activity







**Rationale:**

Effective economic development requires a strong local business base since they will be the key job generators of the future. Existing local businesses generate the majority of new jobs in a community, and it can be as high as 90% depending on the structure of the economic base (Government of Ontario 2000, Boyles 2014). A variety of programs and activities are implemented as part of a community’s business care platform, but the best practices of the economic development discipline are straightforward, they are Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction (BRE+A). How these activities are carried out can vary greatly from community to community, but generally rely on local resources, expertise and priorities, and range across three categories: Business Retention and Expansion (BRE); Investment and Business Attraction; and, Community Development.

While there are many moving parts to a BRE+A program, managing it effectively generates a better understanding of the business community, identifies the needs of business clients and where/when they need support, forms relationships that lead to additional prosperity, and helps the community become tactical when it comes to investment attraction.

**Actions:**

- **Conduct research on successful BRE programming that can be used to guide the Quesnel process, [explore BC government](#) materials, liaison with province on potential BRE support and explore on-line training from [Economic Developers of Alberta \(EDA\)](#).**
- **Develop a team that can support BRE+A activities.**
- **Build on the initial business walk program conducted in the community earlier by formalizing a tracking system and formal survey to document local business information.**
- **Identify the list of businesses/companies to be surveyed in a six-month BRE pilot that includes visitation and outreach, data collection and aftercare requirements.**
- **Implement EDA’s [Investment Readiness Toolkit](#) to measure Quesnel’s investment readiness.**
- **Continue to support small business through participation in the Love Northern BC program.**
- **Evaluate and launch full program at the end of 2020.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
QCOC, BIAs, NCCF	1 & 2		\$ \$	↑↑					

### 3.3.3 Community Livability

#### Objectives:

- Fostering a vibrant downtown precinct
- Encouraging new residential development
- Increasing the variety of housing options for new residents
- Increasing the overall housing stock in Quesnel

#### Rationale:

Downtown Quesnel has a vibrant central core with more than 100 businesses, numerous civic facilities and quality infrastructure like the Fraser River Footbridge, the centerpiece of the Riverfront Trail system. Several properties are being redeveloped and the City is undertaking a major redevelopment of Reid Street. A new OCP will soon provide a long-term vision for the area while the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MOTI) is moving forward with a new Highway 97 bypass or interconnector. The latter will substantially alter traffic flows, especially along Front Street and Carson Avenue, and create both challenges and opportunities for the downtown. In addition, the City continues to work on air quality, crime reduction and addressing homelessness as part of a holistic approach to foster the community's overall desirability as a place to live.

Creating more infill and mixed uses, including residential development are distinct possibilities. There is plentiful parking for shoppers and visitors but many RVers avoid the downtown because of perceived parking difficulties. Once the bypass is completed, local businesses will have to work harder to attract visitors off the highway and back into downtown. As development proceeds, ensuring a future home for the farmers' market is also a concern.




In addition, the issue of the variety of housing stock type in the community will likely increase in coming years as the City focuses on attracting new residents. The City of Quesnel is also in the midst of a transition among its resident population as the median age continues to rise. Many older residents in the Quesnel area are looking to downsize and looking for more central and smaller housing options, this will also drive demand for a variety of smaller homes and condominium type housing arrangements. These forces should increase demand for housing and create the opportunity for developers to capitalize on the new market.

#### Actions:

- Continue to lobby MOTI for interconnector completion.
- **Work with QDA/BIA to figure out next level of activity that would support downtown development.**
- Identify and promote through the OCP process the need for a central, high-profile market/central gathering area.
- Work with the farmer's market on contingency measures should the existing School District site become unavailable in the future.
- **Support the develop an electric car service strategy. As Canadians turn to electric cars, battery efficiency improves and driving distances grow, intercity travel will become**

normal. Private sector charging stations will boom but there will also be opportunities for broader community involvement. The [BC Climate Action Toolkit](#) has resources to that end.

- **Work towards more market-based housing including:**
  - **Undertake an investigation of vacant land in the City, in particular around the downtown core and explore possibility of redeveloping these sites. Support redevelopment of the School District 28 property downtown to include residential development.**
  - **Support the Development Services in exploring zoning that would encourage new higher density smaller and multi-family units.**
  - **Investigate incentives that may foster developer investment in Quesnel.**
- **Support Barkerville Gold and the Lhtako Dene to develop executive housing in Quesnel.**
- **Support efforts to further develop amenities, playgrounds and bike lanes that foster community spaces and infrastructure for residents.**

Partners	Priority: Medium				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
NDIT, developers, BIAs, Lhtako Dene, Barkerville Gold	3, 4 & 5		\$\$\$	↑↑					

### 3.3.4 Resident Recruitment

#### **Objectives:**

- Fostering population growth
- Pursuing population diversity

#### **Rationale:**

The City of Quesnel is often cited as one of the most affordable cities in Canada. The average house price is half that of metropolitan cities in the country, and the residents of Quesnel enjoy a quality of life characterized by spacious living, magnificent natural beauty, and home ownership (THC and CPDC. 2010).

In addition, conditions may be aligning that could create sustained success for the City in attracting new residents. Between 2012 to 2017 the Metro Vancouver region saw a net out-migration of 18,670 people; this loss was 180% larger than the period before. The largest loss was in seniors, who are likely moving to more affordable markets to capitalize on their home values. The 65-plus demographic showed a net out-migration of 2,575, a whopping 344% more people compared to the period before. The other age group, Millennials, the 20-to-34 demographic saw net interprovincial out-migration from Metro Vancouver of 139, while small in number this is significant in that it reverses a large inflow experienced in the previous period. Attracting millennials to a community is typically a win for both the local economy, as well as the birth rate of the region. (Huffpuff. 2018)

The City of Quesnel is already working on a resident recruitment program. In 2017, the City launched its new website. For potential residents, the City website is often the first impression of the community. The new City website offers easy navigation, with “mega-menus”, and “I want to” menu, creating an improved search function. In addition, the City has initiated several amenity upgrades that will provide recreation and cultural opportunities to the local population as well supporting event hosting. Recently the City received funding for new trail development and upgrades to the Quesnel Curling Centre. This follows earlier investments at the West Fraser Recreation Centre and Arena 2. The City is also working on the liveability and accessibility in its downtown area and is undertaking major upgrades and redevelopment on Reid street.

Quesnel has gained considerable experience in targeting and attracting skilled workers through its success in bring doctors to the community. In the fall of 2014, physicians in the City were not accepting new patients, and it was announced that 9 doctors would be leaving the community. To address this issue the City and partners began “The Welcome Practice” in what has become a true community project, a number of resources were employed to reach out to medical professionals who could be encouraged to move to and practice in Quesnel. Support has been established to support both existing and new physicians to help with housing, home maintenance needs, and other community connections. Over the course of one year, 13 new doctors were recruited to Quesnel and two that had moved away had decided to return. This program has become recognized as a best practice across the province. (Government of British Columbia. 2018)

In addition, the coordinator who works on behalf of health care recruitment is also currently working on professional and skilled trades worker recruitment as well. This current expansion is funded through to the end of 2018 and is being supported by a funding grant.

**Actions:**

- **Update community profile:**
  - **The 2016 census data has now all been released can could be incorporated into the profile;**
  - **Work with NDIT, while NDIT no longer does the community profile program, numerous data sets such as payroll costs, federal and provincial taxes, electricity and transmission charges, natural gas charges are predominately universal across northern BC. A partnership to complete these elements would benefit all communities in the NDIT region.**
- **Make a grant submission that will allow the extension of the existing coordinator position and allow it to expand to target increasing resident population. Ideally, the grant would position the City to sustain this activity for the next three to five years.**
- **If the grant is successful, the coordinator position would be retained and new activities could be pursued including:**
  - **Continue to work with the major industry partners to build long-term funding for the initiative.**
  - **Conduct research on specific target markets that will yield the greatest return for the City.**
- **Support the Come Back program in Quesnel being led by the Fraser Basin Council.**
- **CNC/UNBC brings a considerable number of students into Quesnel each year, beginning work with CNC/UNBC and local employers to see graduates placed in the community.**
- **There is currently a shortage of housing for students coming to the community, support an initiative that addresses this issue with CNC.**
- **Promote health services and infrastructure in the community and to new residents.**

Partners	Priority: High				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
NDIT, CNC, UNBC, BIAs, QCOC, CCCTA, NH Red Carpet Program, Seniors Advocacy	3 & 4	⦿	\$\$	↑↑↑	●	●	●	●	●

### 3.3.5 Industrial Lands

#### Objective:

- Ensuring better utilization of industrial land
- Increasing employment to land ratios






#### Rationale:

There is sizeable area of industrial land available within the City of Quesnel. This land could play a strategic role in attracting new basic sector business to the community. At the 2-Mile Industrial site there is a sizeable area of heavy industrial land that is available. In addition, the City owns approximately 600 acres of land at the airport that has the potential to serve a variety of light industrial user types.

The economic development department will lead this initiative but will work in partnership with other City departments who will need to lead specific land assessment components.

#### Actions:

- **For lands at the 2-mile industrial park area, confirm the ownership and explore the intentions of the private landowners.**
- **Connect the marketing activities of these employment lands to the Branding work recently completed by the City.**
- **Develop a detailed digital list of the available employment lands and update this list periodically.**
- Explore the zoning considerations that the City can do on the sites to ensure that flexibility is available so the City can move quickly on interest in a specific sized parcel or area.
- **Create a target list of businesses that may be most interested or suitable for the industrial land.**
- Explore development of specific parcels of land at the airport with investors, promote the opportunity to subdivide parcel to suit.
- Explore the option to build-to-suit and Private-Public Partnerships and tax incentives to create a competitive investment climate that will allow airport related business obtain the facilities they may require at the airport.
- **Visit the target list of businesses periodically and redefine.**
- **Work with the local real estate community and provincial government to promote the availability of the lands.**

Partners	Priority: Medium				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
QCOC, real estate community, LANDCOR, BC Trade and Invest, FLNRORD	1 & 2		\$ \$	↑↑					

### 3.3.6 Regional Skills Gap

**Objective:**

- Improving the local labour market efficiency
- Improving the local skills profile

**Rationale:**




In the Cariboo, many communities struggle with high unemployment while companies are having difficulty in finding workers with the right skills. In Quesnel, service providers and individual’s businesses express concern about the labour gap issues and labour mismatch. Therefore, it is seen as a critical step in supporting regional competitiveness that a comprehensive understanding the labour gaps be developed for the region.

The skills gap analysis provides an assessment of current and forecasted labour market trends, opportunities and needs, resulting in an evidence-based plan to positively influence local supply and demand alignment moving forward. This will be a critical step in insuring a key asset required for business retention and expansion are in place and being actively addressed.

The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) will lead this initiative and supported by the Quesnel economic development department to reflect North Cariboo components.

**Action:**

- Leverage funding from Labour Market Partnership or other funding organization to complete the study.
- **Engage key regional partners and business leaders from the North Cariboo.**
- **Support develop a regional steering committee with representation from the North Cariboo to guide the project.**
- **Participate in the skills gap analysis:**
  - **Conduct research on the various key sectors in the Region;**
  - **Develop strategies that have long-term objectives and focus on doable initiatives;**
  - **Ensure sector lead evaluation of the initiatives as doable;**
  - **Ensure resourcing and approaches for implementation are established.**
- Engage the provincial government to support and resource the implementation.

Partners	Priority: Flexible				Timelines				
	Goals	Time	Cost	Return	2018-19	2020	2021	2022	2023
CRD, local government, Cariboo Strong, Work BC, CFDCs, CNC, UNBC, SD 28	2		\$	↑					



## 4 SUMMARY OF GOALS AND STRATEGY

Table 2: Summary of Goals, Resourcing, Benefit By Initiative

Strategy	Priority	Goals					Resources		Return
		1	2	3	4	5	Time	Costs	
<b>Destination Development</b>									
Waterfront	High	■	■	■			○	\$	↑↑
Tourism Tax	High	■			■		○	\$	↑↑
Trails	High	■		■		■	○	\$\$	↑
Hosting Community	High			■	■		○	\$\$	↑↑
Indigenous Tourism	Medium			■		■	○	\$\$	↑
Wayfinding	Flexible	■			■		○	\$\$	↑↑
<b>Innovation Resource Industries</b>									
Forestry	High	■	■			■	○	\$\$\$	↑↑↑
Agriculture	Medium		■				○	\$\$	↑
Regional Mining	Flexible		■			■	○	\$\$	↑↑
<b>Resident, Investment Retention and Attraction</b>									
Community Marketing	High	■		■		■	○	\$\$	↑↑↑
BRE+A	High			■	■		○	\$	↑↑
Community Livability	Medium			■	■	■	○	\$\$\$	↑↑
Resident Recruitment	High			■	■		○	\$\$	↑↑↑
Industrial Lands	Medium	■	■				○	\$\$	↑↑
Regional Skills Gap	Flexible		■				○	\$	↑

## 5 REFERENCES

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AAC	Allowable Annual Cut
ADAC	Agriculture Development Advisory Committee
AWG	Agriculture Working Group
BCBN	BC Bioenergy Network
BCCFA	BC Community Forest Association
BRE+A	Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction
CBT	Columbia Basin Trust
BDC	Business Development Corporation
CASE	Compact, Affordable, Sustainable and Efficient
CAWP	Centre for Advanced Wood Processing
CCATEC	Cariboo-Chilcotin Aboriginal Training and Education Centre
CCCTA	Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation
CNC	College of New Caledonia
CMH	Canadian Mountain Holidays
CMHC	Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CRD	Cariboo Regional District
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DBC	Destination BC
DMF	Destination Management Fund
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
ENV	BC Ministry of Environment
FARMED	North Cariboo Agriculture Marketing Association
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FESBC	Forest Enhancement Society of BC
FLNRORD	BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITBC	Indigenous Tourism BC
MAE	BC Ministry of Advanced Education
MOTI	BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
MRDT	Municipal and Regional District Tax
NDIT	Northern Development Initiatives Trust
NCCF	North Cariboo Community Futures
NH	Northern Health
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
PST	Provincial Sales Tax
QDA	Quesnel Downtown Association
QUESST	Quesnel Unit for Emergency Short Stay Treatment
QCOC	Quesnel Chamber of Commerce
SD 28	School District 28
SIBAC	Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition
TQ	Tourism Quesnel
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia

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## 5.4 FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

### 5.4.1 City Staff

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Jeff Norburn	Director of Community Services
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### 5.4.2 Tourism

Elizabeth Hunter	Museum Manager
Tyler Dinsdale	Big Canyon Rafting
Charlene Lawrence	Events coordinator

### 5.4.3 Agriculture and Ranching

Nicole Pressey,	Regional Aerologist, Ministry of Agriculture
Lynda Atkinson	Sisters Creek Simmentals
Martin Rossmann	Kersley Farmer Institute
Sheri Schweb	Forage Council

### 5.4.4 Chamber of Commerce

Tracy Bond	Achieve Advertising/Baker Creek Enhancement Society (1st vp )
Morgan Ross	College of New Caledonia
Michelle Daniels	M Daniels Consulting (Work BC)
Sonja Jmaeff	Acting Manager, Quesnel Chamber of Commerce
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