

QUESNEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSITION STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

The Quesnel Economic Development Transition Strategy 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.

While each initiative is mapped out separately in the Strategy, it is important to remember that many are connected and support each other to deliver the desired outcomes to the City. Specifically, many of the activities support destination development that make the City a more livable community. Retention, Expansion and Attraction, the Regional Skills Gap and Investment Attraction support Innovation Resource Industries. Meanwhile, a more robust agriculture sector and local food culture, supports tourism development and so on.

THE PLAN AT A GLANCE

The Strategy is organized into three themes including: destination development (green); innovative resource industries (red); and, resident, investment retention and attraction (blue). For more detail on the Quesnel Economic Development Development Transition Strategy please see the [full plan](#) located on the City of Quesnel’s website.

Economic Development Transition Strategy Themes

Destination Development	Innovative Resource Industries	Resident and Investment Retention and Attraction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterfront• Tourism Tax• Trails• Hosting Community• Indigenous Tourism• Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forestry• Agriculture• Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Marketing• BRE+A• Community Livability• Resident Recruitment• Industrial Lands• Regional Skills Gap

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Waterfront – focused on developing Quesnel’s water front area with the objective of:

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

Tourism Tax - establish a 3% Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) in the City with the objective to:

- Create sustainable funding for tourism; and,
- Support coordinated, effective marketing programs.

Trails - implement the trails master plan creating new destination trails inside and outside the City with the objective to:

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

Hosting Community – become more active in attracting and hosting a range of sports, arts and culture events in Quesnel with the objective to:

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

Indigenous Tourism - Support the development of specific indigenous tourism product in the City of Quesnel with the objective to:

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

Wayfinding - Wayfinding refers to information systems that guide people and with a new Brand now in place, Quesnel now has several specific tools to upgrade and implement to support marketing efforts with the objective to:

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

INNOVATIVE RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

Forestry - 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. The objectives for the forest sector are:

- 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; and,
- Maximizing local social, ecological and economic benefits of the timber resource.

Agriculture – There are many opportunities to grow and diversify agriculture activities in the Quesnel area that will support economic diversification moving forward, with the objectives including:

- 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; and,
- Increasing producer capacity.

Regional Mining – There are three noticeable mining operations in the Quesnel area and there is potentially more activity in the future. The objectives of this initiative include:

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

RESIDENT AND INVESTMENT RETENTION AND ATTRACTION SUPPORT

Community Marketing – Undertaking a more coordinated marketing effort would help Quesnel achieve its underlying goals of economic development and sustainable population growth with the objectives including:

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

Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction – The on-going support of local business is a key to ensuring sustainable business activities and position for growth. The objectives of this on-going program include:

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

Community Livability – Continuing to build on Quesnel’s vibrant central core and continue to build the infrastructure and assets that will support the attraction of new residents and retention of existing residents with the objectives that include:

- Fostering a vibrant downtown precinct;
- Encouraging new residential development;
- Increasing the variety of housing options for new residents; and,

- Increasing the overall housing stock in Quesnel.

Resident Recruitment – Leveraging its strategic advantages such as affordability, built amenities and nature-based recreation to attract new residents with the key objectives including:

- Fostering population growth; and,
- Pursuing population diversity.

Industrial Lands – There is sizeable area of industrial land available within the City of Quesnel and working to see this land develop will be key to fostering greater economic activity with the key objectives including:

- Ensuring better utilization of industrial land; and,
- Increasing employment to land ratios.

Regional Skills Gap -In the Cariboo, many communities struggle with high unemployment while companies are having difficulty in finding workers with the right skills. There is a need to address the mismatch and come up with plan to move forward with the objectives including:

- Improving the local labour market efficiency; and,
- Improving the local skills profile.