

Request for Proposals
City of Quesnel
Economic Development Strategy and BRE Program

CLOSING DATE AND TIME:
Friday, April 26, 2024, 3:00 pm

Contact Person:
Amy Reid
Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
250 991 7457
areid@quesnel.ca

1. Purpose

The City of Quesnel is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms to develop an Economic Development Strategy and Business Retention and Expansion Program. Over the past six years, Economic Development staff have worked with other departments and community partners to complete many of the projects and tactics outlined in the previous strategy completed in 2018.

A refreshed Economic Development Strategy will drive the workplan for Economic Development staff over the next five years. It will be informed by consultation with the business community and residents. It will include a review of the goals set out in the previous strategy and may refine, re-draft, or re-commit to some or all of those goals. Unless consultation feedback dictates otherwise, the new Strategy will follow the same three pillars as the previous Strategy: Destination Development, Innovative Resource Industry, and Resident and Business Retention and Attraction.

The consulting firm will also develop and deploy a BRE Program which will inform the Strategy, while also providing Economic Development Staff with a tool that can be used in future to measure success of projects and programs and changing needs or sentiment in the business community.

The selected firm will have experience working with communities in British Columbia, similar in size to Quesnel. The firm will have experience with community economic development, destination development, resource-based economies, business retention and expansion programs, community partnerships, and stakeholder engagement.

2. Submission Details

Submit proposal by email to Amy Reid, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism areid@quesnel.ca. Email subject line should read: **Economic Development Strategy**

The City reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposal for any reason without any further liability to any proponent or to waive irregularities at their own discretion.

Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice to Amy Reid, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism areid@quesnel.ca.

Any interpretation of, additions to, deletions from, or any other corrections to the Proposal document, will be issued as written addenda by the City of Quesnel. It is the sole responsibility of the potential Bidders to check with the City of Quesnel's website, and/or BC Bid to ensure all information has been received prior to submitting a proposal.

3. Inquiries

All inquiries should be made in writing, directed to:

Amy Reid, Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
E-mail: areid@quesnel.ca

4. Negotiations

The award contract is subject to negotiations with the Proponent that offers, in the City's opinion, the best value Proposal. Such negotiations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Changes or refinements in the service requirements or scope of work proposed by the Lead Proponent;
- b) Price – if directly related to a change or refinement in the proposed scope of work proposed by the lead proponent; and
- c) Specific contract details as deemed reasonable for negotiation by the City of Quesnel.

5. Background

- a. The City's previous Economic Development Transition Strategy was completed in 2018. The Strategy identified three pillars with multiple strategies and proposed actions identified under each: Destination Development, Innovative Resource Industries, and Resident and Investment Retention and Attraction Support.
- b. From the previous strategy, progress has been made under each pillar. Working with other City departments and community partners, highlights include:

Destination Development

- i. Implemented actions identified in the Waterfront Plan including development of an RV Park in the former Public Works yard.
- ii. Became a participant in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association MRDT initiative and leveraged these funds for tourism marketing initiatives.
- iii. Successfully accessed grant funding to develop and market trails identified in the 2017 North Cariboo Trails Master Plan.
- iv. Developed hosting infrastructure and support for event hosting, including a successful bid for the 2024 BC Winter Games.
- v. Worked with Lhtako Dene to design and begin implementation of Lhtako Dene Park.
- vi. Implemented community gateway, major and minor park, vehicular, pedestrian and trail wayfinding signage throughout the community.

Innovative Resource Industries

- vii. Hosted two follow up sessions to the 2018 Forestry Think Tank process resulting in multiple actions including an MOU with Finland, development of a training program curriculum, and work to identify Quesnel's risk rating as a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone; advanced the Community Forest to the application stage.
- viii. Completed a business case, and received over \$1 million in funding to build a Food Hub in Quesnel, under operating agreement with Sprout Kitchen Society since opening in 2021.
- ix. Hosted Minerals North in Quesnel in 2023 resulting in an \$80,000 legacy fund which will support new mining training programs in Quesnel.
- x. Continued participation on the Blackwater Mine Community Liaison Committee and relationship building with Osisko Development.

Resident and Investment Retention & Attraction

- xi. Re-developed a relocation guide, City brochure, visitor guide, trail map, other print materials and a new Tourism Quesnel website to support visitor and resident attraction.
 - xii. Facilitated a Business Support Team through the first year of the pandemic to ensure local businesses were accessing any supports that were available to them.
 - xiii. Completed a Workforce Strategy in response to business needs identified coming out of the pandemic. Implementation is currently underway with recently accessed grant funding.
 - xiv. Developed numerous marketing campaigns to draw attention to Quesnel as a place to live, work, and visit.
 - xv. Expanded the Healthcare Recruitment and Retention program, by managing a short-stay apartment for new healthcare professionals entering the community and providing new financial supports to locums providing coverage in Quesnel.
 - xvi. Developed a land opportunity tool on the City website.
 - xvii. Participated in the Regional Labour Market work completed by the Cariboo Regional District and resulting marketing tactics to draw workforce to the region.
- c. Economic Development Resources. Two staff directly support Economic Development, the Manager of Economic Development & Tourism and the Economic Development Coordinator. Forestry initiatives are directed to the City's Forestry Initiatives Manager.
- d. Demographics. The City of Quesnel has approximately 10,000 residents within city limits and an additional 13,000 in the surrounding area. The Province of British Columbia predicts slow growth for the community in the future.
- e. Local economy. Quesnel continues to be one of the most forestry dependent communities in British Columbia. Mining, agriculture and tourism are seen as areas of opportunity. The City of Quesnel, Northern Health, and School District are all within the top 10 employers for the community. Three business improvement area associations work to keep three distinct retail areas vibrant.
- f. Location. Quesnel is located in the central interior of British Columbia, and is the most northern community in the Cariboo Regional District. Quesnel is on British Columbia's main north-south artery, Highway 97, and 120 km south of Highway 16 which connects the coast at Prince Rupert with Edmonton, through Prince George. With Highway 97 passing through Quesnel's downtown core, the city is a common stopping point for travellers on this north-south route. Rail line travels through the community, supporting industry, and tourism via the Rocky Mountaineer.
- g. Quality of Life. When business owners are asked why they chose to locate their business in Quesnel, they most commonly respond that they already lived here and enjoyed the lifestyle. Quesnel residents enjoy numerous parks and trails within and surrounding the city. Amenities include: a recreation centre with pool, an indoor turf soccer pitch, numerous ball diamonds, tennis and pickleball courts,

curling centre and two arenas. Downhill and cross-country skiing are available nearby.

6. Specifications for Consultant

a. Scope of Work

- i. Baseline Report – Update the Baseline Report previously completed in 2018 to reflect current statistics and more recent work completed by the City of Quesnel. The previous Baseline Report is linked in section 12 of this RFP.
- ii. Business Retention and Expansion Program
 1. BRE Survey development to understand business needs which may be addressed in the Economic Development Strategy, by existing programs, or by connecting the business with external resources; Survey development should be done in such a way that the same survey questions may be used again in future to measure changing needs, and impacts of economic development initiatives and programs.
 2. BRE Survey deployment in person or by phone, reaching a sample of Quesnel businesses representing the following sectors, at minimum:
 - a. Forestry and logging
 - b. Support activities for forestry
 - c. Support activities for agriculture
 - d. Mining and mining support
 - e. Manufacturing
 - f. Construction including specialty trades
 - g. Retail
 - h. Transportation and warehousing
 - i. Finance, insurance, real estate, and other professional services
 - j. Health care
 - k. Arts, entertainment and recreation
 - l. Accommodation and food services
 - m. Other
 3. Summary report of survey results, recommendations for any immediate follow up, and a copy of the survey template for future use by the City of Quesnel.
- iii. Consultation – This will include, *at minimum*:
 1. Meeting 3 - 5 times with the Project Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is currently under development but will include sectoral representation and at least one member of Council. The Advisory Committee will be in place by the project start date and will be dissolved at the end of the project.
 2. BRE Survey as described above. Additional consultation with the business community may be recommended by the Proponent and should be clearly outlined in the Proposal.

3. Any additional engagement with the broader community is not required but is encouraged and should use letsconnectquesnel.ca.
- iv. Based on the consultation feedback, BRE Survey results and baseline data, develop an Economic Development Strategy for the City of Quesnel which:
 1. Follows the same pillars as the previous strategy;
 2. Defines a set of goals that the strategy will address.
 3. Outlines immediate, short and medium term actions the City of Quesnel can take, focusing on actions that will be led by Economic Development staff and noting where Economic Development staff may play a supporting role;
 4. Provides budget, timeline, and workload estimates for action items;
 5. Provides clear, measurable objectives which can be tracked over the next five-year period.

7. Project Budget

The project budget will not exceed \$70,000 inclusive of consulting costs, travel, and expenses of the consulting team, excluding GST. The City of Quesnel will have a small additional budget for promoting consultation events or engagement opportunities with the community.

Payments will be made periodically through the contract and will be tied to the receipt of deliverables or achieved project milestones.

8. Submission Requirements

All proponents are required to submit the following in their proposal:

- a. Identify company name, lead contact, and key personnel that will work on this project.
- b. Identify the Proponent's understanding of the project and required services.
- c. Summary of the Proponent's background, area(s) of expertise, and that of key personnel who will be assigned to this project; provide an organizational chart that describes the role of each member of the team in completing this project.
- d. Provide at least three examples of past projects similar in scope to this one; include the role of key personnel in this proposal in completing those example projects.
- e. Provide a detailed project plan, including time and resources allocated to the outlined tasks, how and when consultation will occur during the process, how the Advisory Committee will be utilized, key milestones, and any additional products or services that will result from this approach. Also include when and how City staff and/or resources will be utilized.
- f. Detailed project budget, with a breakdown of each task in the project. The budget may include a base cost and any extra costs for additional services.
- g. Provide a minimum of three references.

9. Other Requirements

- a. Insurance
 - i. The proponent shall, at his own expense, provide and maintain to the Municipality until the completion of the contract the following insurance in a form acceptable to the Municipality with an insurer licensed in British Columbia:
 1. Commercial General Liability \$2,000,000.00
 2. Automobile Liability Insurance \$2,000,000.00
 - ii. The proponent shall be responsible for any deductibles or reimbursement clauses within the policy.
- b. Business License
 - i. The successful proponent will be required to obtain a City of Quesnel business license and will be required to provide evidence of same prior to contract signing. (A City of Quesnel business license is not required to submit a proposal).
- c. WorkSafeBC
 - i. The proponent must be registered and remain in good standing, throughout the term of this contract with WorkSafeBC and will be required to provide evidence of same prior to signing a contract with the City of Quesnel.

10. Proposal Evaluation

The following criteria will be considered in the evaluation of proposals:

Assessment Criteria	Description	Score
Project team and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced team members with demonstrated ability to develop and implement BRE programs and Economic Development Strategy documents for communities. Experience working with Advisory Committees and conducting community consultation for projects. Broad knowledge of Economic Development Relevant past project examples are provided with references 	30
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses all aspects of the Scope of Work with a clear, thoughtful approach. Community consultation is well-outlined Requirements of City staff and resources are well-explained and reasonable 	20
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project will be completed within the timeline set out in this RFP 	20

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key milestones occur on a realistic timeframe 	
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project cost is within the set budget • Budget allocation provides good value to the City 	20
Quality of proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is clear and well-organized • Addresses all RFP requirements 	10
Total		100

- Proponents may be shortlisted for interviews based on their submissions as part of the evaluation process.
- Proponents will be notified before references are contacted. References will only be contacted for shortlisted proponents.

11. Anticipated Schedule

- RFP Issued: Monday, April 8, 2024
- Proposals Due: Friday, April 26, 2024
- Interviews Conducted: May 1 - 3, 2024
- Firm Selected: May 6, 2024
- Project Start: May 13, 2024
- Project Completion: No later than December 20, 2024.

12. Additional Resources

The following resources may assist you in developing your proposal:

- www.quesnel.ca
- www.tourismquesnel.ca
- [Economic Development Transition Strategy \(2018\)](#)
- [Economic Transition Strategy Baseline Report \(2018\)](#)
- [Workforce Development Strategy \(2023\)](#)