



NOVEMBER  
2020

# CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## C-PROSPERITY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Castlegar, Castlegar & District Chamber of Commerce, and Regional District of Central Kootenay (Areas I and J) have partnered to create a long-term Economic Development Strategy focused on job creation. The Strategy will guide efforts to attract new investment, and support and grow existing businesses.

The strategy development process has included review of existing documentation, extensive quantitative industry sector data analysis, and completion of 50 key stakeholder interviews, two workshops, two community surveys, and an Economic Development Summit. Summary materials for this work are available independent of this document.

The result is a holistic Strategy that embraces both pragmatic initiatives that will elevate the economic development agenda, and achieve transformative results. INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT leads in the Strategy. Forestry – including next generation forestry innovation – has priority development emphasis given its very significant economic contribution. There is potential to develop an even more robust forestry “economic cluster” – like Silicon Valley - that accelerates economic growth in all of its moving parts. Support for Tech/Creative Industries/Professional Services and Tourism sector development represent diversification that strengthens our resiliency.

Think of economic development as a chair. The cornerstone leg of the chair encompasses key economic sectors, and intent to accelerate their growth via direct industry interaction and collaboration. The opposite leg represents a growing element of the BC and local economy: footloose digital nomads, remote workers, creators, and entrepreneurs. In this context, HOUSING INNOVATION that offers new affordability pathways becomes economic development in its own right in a province that struggles with housing affordability. COMMUNITY AMENITY is a key reason people choose the community they live in.



A set of key ENABLERS has been identified that are catalysts for accelerated sector growth, including recreation amenity, a vibrant downtown, advanced broadband, and enhanced airport services. Castlegar & District’s central location in the West Kootenay, location at the mid-point between major BC and Alberta urban centres with affordability challenges, and deep community appreciation of vivid geography and outdoor recreation options means Castlegar & District can effectively compete for amenity migrant hearts and souls. And these two worlds converge in industry sectors like technology and professional services, where a primary export sector like forestry can create value-added exports and high quality jobs via a broader, supporting business ecosystem.

Castlegar & District is not an economic island. It exists in a West Kootenay that remain less discovered despite its considerable economic and lifestyle features. Investors, visitors, new residents, and spouses and partners of new residents, may choose one location of residence, but municipal boundaries are largely irrelevant in day to day living. Proximity to key inputs to production, access to workforce, transportation access, business costs, and the nature of lifestyle of amenity are what matters. There’s a sum greater than the parts to be achieved in the building of new bridges across West Kootenay organizations, communities, and economies.

Economic Development Strategy is ultimately about business that has the conditions to be successful, and lives that are well-lived. Quality job creation and retention lies at the heart, sustained by a compelling community that dares to achieve the ambitious. So why not have an audacious big idea or two in this Strategy....

It’s the dawn of a new time for Castlegar & District. New ways forward raise the bar on Castlegar & District’s ability to achieve the exceptional.

# OUR VISION...OUR STRATEGY

## Castlegar & District: Forest Innovation Powerhouse. Home to Independent Enterprising Superheroes

Castlegar & District is an economic and services hub building new ways forward as a forestry innovator with global reach. Pursuit of imaginative housing options, visible creativity, a vibrant downtown, regional collaboration, lighter environmental footprint, technology adoption, and entrepreneurial enablement are the heart of our elevated enterprise and living. Inspired active outdoor adventure and our investment in lifestyle living will nurture a community rooted in deep social connection.

Castlegar & District – Make It Your Business

## WHY CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT MATTERS

The more differentiated the value proposition, the stronger the ability to attract key industry and talent.

- Significant and growing forestry exporters (3).
- Centrality - 70% of West Kootenay population is closer to Castlegar than other communities of size in Region.
- Competitive business costs.
- Affordable housing/cost of living.
- Elevated outdoor experiences.

An economy is like a bucket. Into the bucket comes dollars from outside the community (what we export that people buy). Out of the bucket leaks resident and business spending outside the community (shopping / education elsewhere, vacation, labour that comes from elsewhere, etc.). We need to keep the bucket as full as possible.

The best return on our investment of time and energy to do this is to focus investment attraction and retention on, and accelerate development of, basic industry (export) that is larger, growing, and competitive. What are these in Castlegar & District? Data says it's: forestry far out front, followed by tourism, professional services, and creative industries. Our economic role is evolving; retail and other hub services are a smaller part of our economy than ten years ago.

Our Economic Development Strategy is target sector development-based, with progress on key enablers that are catalysts for accelerated target sector growth. This approach is more aggressive than many communities that focus on general "open for business" welcome.

## Economic Base Analysis - Top 5s



### BIGGEST INDUSTRIES

- Retail – 853 (13.3%)
- Healthcare – 673 (10.5%)
- Manufacturing (forestry) – 641 (10.1%)
- Accommodation/Food Services – 637 (9.9%)
- Education – 554 (8.6%)



### MOST JOBS BY INDUSTRY

- Restaurants – 560 (8.7%)
- Sawmills – 302 (4.7%)
- Pulp & paper – 297 (4.6%)
- Grocery stores – 162 (2.5%)
- Other heavy and civil engineering construction – 59 (0.92%)



### FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRIES

- Manufacturing (forestry) – 111 (17%)
- Other Services – 84 (27%)
- Accommodation & Food Services – 59 (9%)
- Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services – 56 (26%)
- Ag, forestry, fishing, hunting – 53 (61%)



### MOST COMPETITIVE INDUSTRIES (LQ)

- Pulp and paper - 45
- Forest nurseries/gathering of forest products – 42
- Timber tract operations - 26
- Sawmills – 14
- Other heavy and civil engineering construction – 9.8



### FASTEST DECLINING INDUSTRIES

- Transportation & Warehousing – -36%
- Finance & Insurance – -31%
- Wholesale Trade – -25%
- Utilities – -19%
- Healthcare – -7%



### TOP OCCUPATIONS

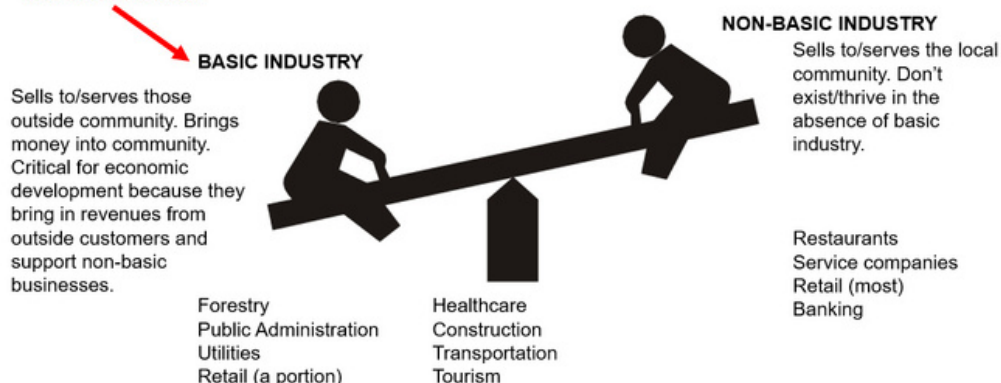
- Retail Salesperson – 196 (3.1%)
- Cashier – 177 (2.8%)
- Transport Truck Drivers – 150 (2.3%)
- Retail and Wholesale Trade Managers – 150 (2.3%)
- Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support – 145 (2.3%)

Concentration of industry relative to other geographies = competitiveness

Stats dated 2018, change dates 2013-2018

## Basic vs Non-Basic Industry

We want to focus our Ec Dev effort on best ROI...which is here.



# TARGET SECTORS

## -FORESTRY IS THE LEAD-

### FORESTRY

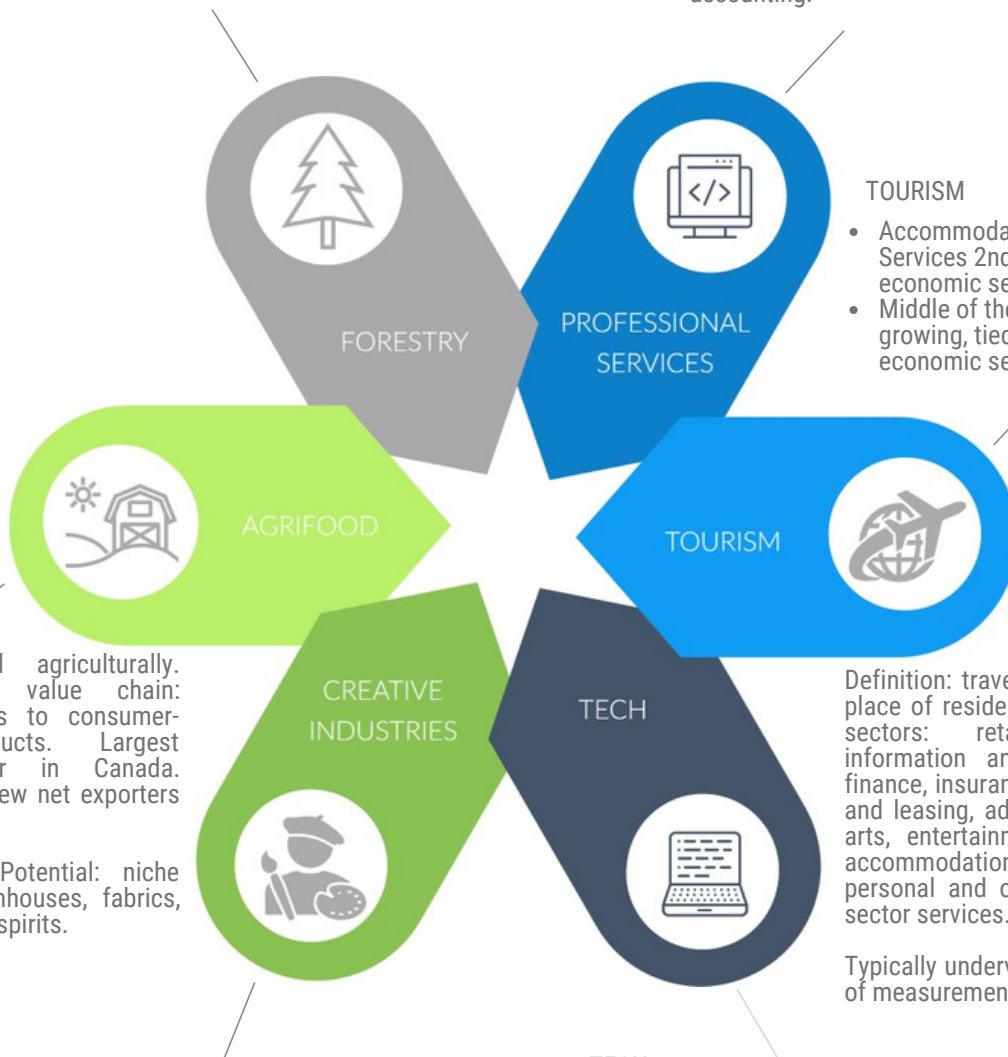
- 3rd biggest industry by # of jobs.
- 50% of all export value in Castlegar & District.
- Fastest growing industry.
- Most competitive industry.
- High wages.
- High economic multiplier (generator of jobs in support industries).

Traditions: Pulp and paper, dimensional lumber  
 Innovation: Mass timber, bio-gas/bio-materials, fibre (e.g. lignin, cellulose nano-fibres, compostable bio-plastics).

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- 9th biggest of 19 sectors.
- 9th fastest growing (11%) between 2013 and 2018.
- 3rd fastest growing between 2011 and 2018 (62%).

Intangible product that a contractor or product vendor sells to help a customer manage a specific part of their business. E.g. law, marketing, accounting.



### AGRIFOOD

Production of food agriculturally. Includes associated value chain: equipment and inputs to consumer-ready food products. Largest manufacturing sector in Canada. Canada to be one of few net exporters of food.

Very small locally. Potential: niche crops, cannabis, greenhouses, fabrics, aquaculture, beverage, spirits.

### CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- 18% job growth 2006-2018 (11% BC minus YVR and Capital Region).

Range of economic activities that generates or exploits knowledge and information: Interactive & Digital Media (video games development, animation and visual effects, social media, interactive marketing and e-learning), Publishing (books, magazines), Music, Independent artists, writers, and performers, Film. Footloose talent-friendly.

### TOURISM

- Accommodation and Food Services 2nd biggest economic sector.
- Middle of the road fastest growing, tied for 9th of 19 economic sectors.

Definition: travel >80 km from usual place of residence. Portion of many sectors: retail, transportation, information and cultural services, finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, administrative services, arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food services, personal and other services, public sector services.

Typically undervalued given difficulty of measurement.

### TECH

### TECH

- minus 45% job growth 2006-2018 (18% BC minus YVR and Capital Region).

Important to target despite negative growth because it enables all sectors, including key export sectors. Rapidly growing global sector. Requires very good broadband and the talent to develop tech solutions to industry challenges. Footloose talent-friendly.

BC strengths: information and communications technology, lifesciences, interactive and digital media, cleantech, engineering services.

# OUR GOALS

Goals are the way we will achieve our Economic Development Strategy. These goals are interconnected, ambitious, and achievable in pursuit of the exceptional.

## 1 GROW FORESTRY AS OUR ECONOMIC DRIVER

Castlegar & District has critical industry mass and innovation intention to become a leading forestry cluster in BC and the world, with a zero-waste vision at its heart. A new advanced manufacturing sector (fibre) is possible. Cluster development has potential to spin off new, innovative products and technologies, and companies. The region has potential to be globally recognized for its industry leadership.

## 2 DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY VIA TECHNOLOGY, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, AND TOURISM

Our Creative and Professional Services industries are growing. Our role as an accommodation & services hub for West Kootenay outdoor experience translates to tourism being our second largest industry sector and 9th biggest export sector. Technology is the great enabler. Though much smaller than the economic impact of forestry, diversification offers a means to nurture "good bets" on future prosperity.

## 3 CONDUCT A BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE) PROGRAM TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH

Research demonstrates that existing businesses create 60-90% of all new economic growth in a community\*. WE are the ones we've been waiting for when it comes to infusion of investment into our community. We will support existing business with an active and adaptable BRE program.

Src: The Ohio State University (2002), North Dakota Department of Commerce (2001); University of Illinois (2004)

## 4 INNOVATE HOUSING TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT/WORKFORCE

Workforce attraction and retention. Digital nomads, creators, and entrepreneurs seeking affordability. Millennials, Gen Z, and those aging in place seeking options that don't exist. More disposable income. Freedom. In a province that struggles with housing affordability, housing innovation equals direct economic development impact. Castlegar & District has an affordability value proposition. This value proposition will be deepened in our seeking of new market solutions via policy enablement and expanded construction options.

## 5 ENABLE INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

A focused set of enabling initiatives have been identified that accelerate industry sector development and are fundamental to economic development progress: regional collaboration, specific community amenity development, enhanced airport service levels, advanced broadband, streamlined development approvals, downtown vibrancy, and a sustained investment and resident attraction marketing program.

## 6 ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING MODEL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development programs are a long-term return on investment in job creation and retention. We will develop, implement, and sustain a collaborative model that reflects investment, tourism, and human activity that is more borderless, and that sets us apart in achievement. Strategy elements will become integral parts of the business plans for many organizations, including local government.

# CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

## TOURISM SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

infrastructure, investment attraction, product development, marketing

## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Advanced Broadband gigabit fibre/5G

## HOUSING INNOVATION

mixed use, secondary suites, downtown, laneway houses, work-live, density/lot coverage

## TECH SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

map ecosystem link to forestry

## Streamlined Development Approval Process

### software, DCC review, market-friendly development standards, development guide

software, DCC review, market-friendly development standards, development guide



Economic Hub

Forest Innovation Powerhouse

Home to Independently Enterprising Superheroes



We are an Innovator



Airport Service Enhancement  
RNP logistics hub

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

import replacement link to forestry attraction- marketing independent entrepreneur ecosystem

# FORESTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Enabling "The Big Three" Forest Cluster Development Innovation Pathways Enablement

## Regional Collaboration

land, industrial/tourism marketing, housing innovation,

## Marketing

Innovative Forestry Technology Cluster initiative, Technology Access Centre (advanced manufacturing/materials), Applied Research & Innovation Centre

Selkirk College

## Downtown Vibrancy

bigger, mixed use, lower parking standards, Open Streets, temporary uses, creative expressions, manufacturing permitted, street infrastructure enhancement

## Community Amenity Development

Recreation Complex hiking trails (gravel) indoor swimming pool camping indoor fieldhouse fitness centre

Resident Attraction Strategy

## CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

attraction- marketing independent entrepreneur ecosystem



# SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

## FORESTRY

### Goal 1

- Economic development implementation should include creation of more detailed sector development strategies for each target sector as an initial activity. Forestry sector dialogue with industry partners was more extensive than other target sectors during development of the Strategy, yielding a more robust sector development strategy foundation.

### Objective 1 - Enable Growth of Big 3 Forestry Manufacturers in Castlegar & District: Mercer Celgar, Kalesnikoff, Interfor

#### INITIATIVE 1

Establish a forestry sector Industry Working Group (led by industry but including local/provincial government) to improve connections between forestry manufacturers, identify strategic priorities for the industry, and identify shared issues and opportunities such as:



- Utility and infrastructure requirements and forecasting of future needs.
- Streamlined grading of logs to meet the different needs of manufacturers.
- Reducing transportation costs.
- Optimizing resource management for long-term sustainable supply of fibre.
- Input/output relationships that can be developed within the region for more profitable operations and movement toward zero waste.
- Talent development and recruitment, including partnership with Selkirk College to create a “pipeline” of talent, and support of diversification and value-added initiatives/cluster development.
- Public relations and education products to help key region stakeholders and decision makers/key provincial and national decision makers and policy makers/the public understand the modern forestry sector, stewardship of natural resources, and career opportunities.
- Enabling of innovation pathways: Mass Timber, Fibre Innovation (new advanced manufacturing sub-sector development opportunity), Energy Generation.
- Exploration of procurement opportunities for Castlegar & District businesses.
- Regular communications pipeline with provincial government/other enabling organizations to harmonize advocacy for strategic objectives/enabling requirements.
- Job fairs/trade shows featuring skills and knowledge required in the sector, delivered locally to schools and colleges. Virtual job fair for marketing of career opportunities and the community in more distant areas.
- Showcase local products in public buildings and spaces where possible to demonstrate pride in local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Regular community events and open houses to engage local communities and local businesses, and demonstrate new developments and benefits to the region.
- Explore mass timber potential to address local-and-beyond housing innovation opportunity.

# SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

## FORESTRY

### Goal 1

#### Objective 1 - Enable Growth of Big 3 Forestry Manufacturers in Castlegar & District: Mercer Celgar, Kalesnikoff, Interfor

##### INITIATIVE 2

Create education / ambassador opportunities so that the Region's municipal leaders and residents can advocate for specific policy and other adjustments that enable a better bottom line and innovation pathway for the sector.

#### Objective 2 - Enable Forest Sector Cluster Development

##### INITIATIVE 1

On an ongoing basis, work through business licenses, survey and interview work, and/or data collection web portal to develop a visual Castlegar & District forestry ecosystem and value chain that shows companies and organizations, and how products and services relate to each other.

##### INITIATIVE 2

Identify new / alternative revenue streams for forestry businesses.

##### INITIATIVE 3

Identify vertical and horizontal value chain diversification opportunities within the forestry sector.

##### INITIATIVE 4

Study waste and by-products from forestry processes that could be input for innovative new products.

##### INITIATIVE 5

Conduct investment attraction program to attract opportunity investments and enterprises.

#### Objective 3 - Create Tax Incentives/Deferred Taxation Program for Location in / Improvements / Expansions in "Forestry Enterprise Zones."

#### Objective 4 - Explore Potential to Work with Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation on a Region-Based Industry Brand Framework That Builds the Entire Valley's Reputation as Technologically Innovative in Traditional Primary Industries.

#### Objective 5 - Conduct an Ongoing Business Retention and Expansion Program that includes Forestry-Related Businesses to Identify Issues that Require Action with Individual Firms and to Generate Insights that may Require a Regional Response.

**INDUSTRY-IDENTIFIED KEY ENABLERS: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION (WALKABLE CORE, FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT, SPECIALTY SHOPS), REDUCED RED TAPE/STREAMLINED PERMITS AND APPROVALS, HOUSING INNOVATION, ENHANCED TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIVITY (ROAD/RAIL), ENHANCED AIRPORT SERVICES.**

# \$250,000,000

FORESTRY SECTOR AVERAGE  
ANNUAL IMPORT  
OF GOODS & SERVICES  
INTO THE CENTRAL KOOTENAY

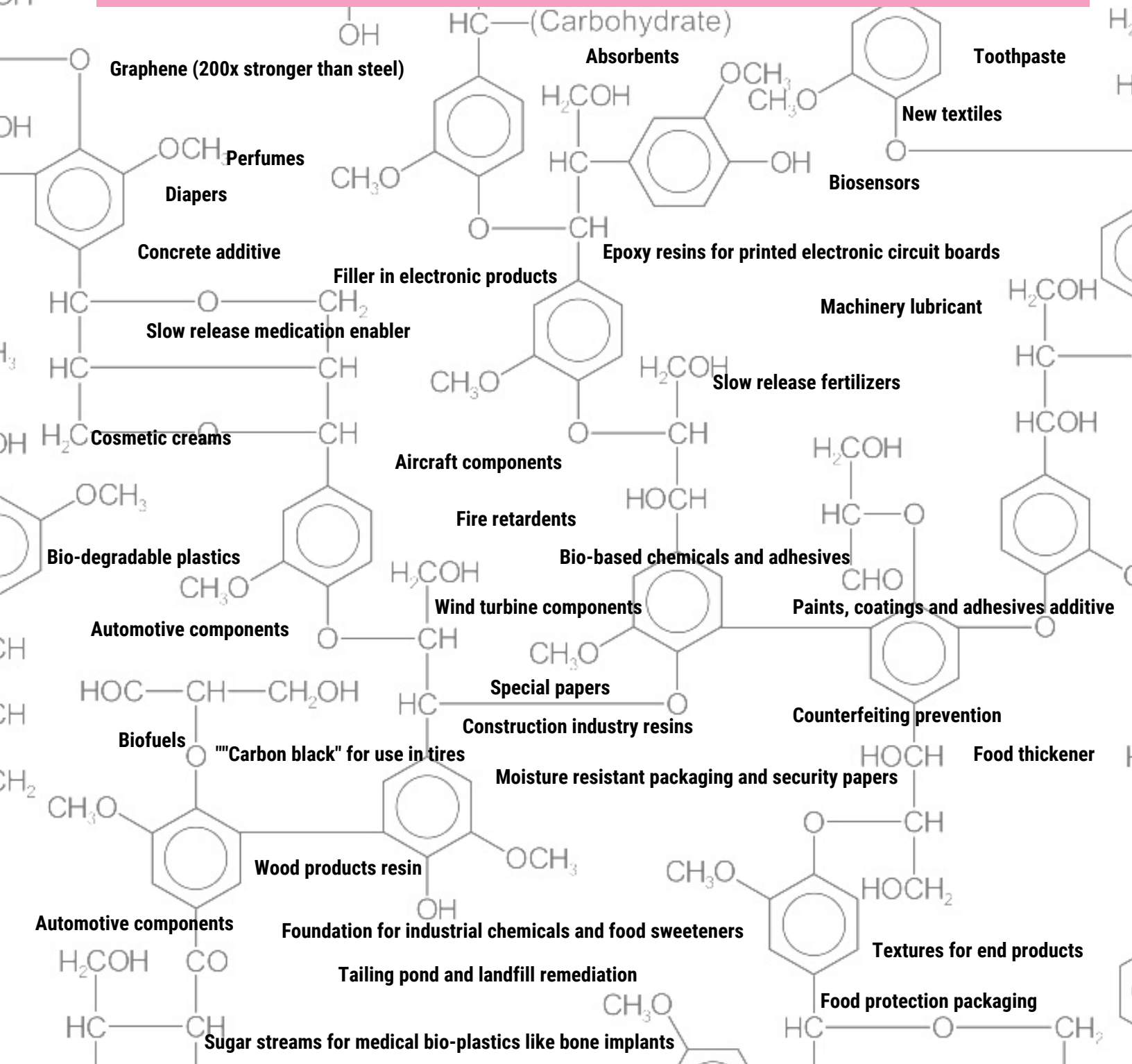
**OPPORTUNITY: LOCAL  
PROCUREMENT**

Src: EMSI, 2019

# ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

## A NEW SECTOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Imagine a world where we move beyond forestry traditions, taking advantage of lignin and nanocellulose fibre - the biggest sources of renewable carbon on the planet and a sustainable alternative to plastic and other fossil-based packaging materials - to produce high value-added products. Local industry has a fibre-producer vision. Though fibre can be transported anywhere, immediate access to fibre enables consideration of new opportunities to locate advanced manufacturing investment in Castlegar & District.



# FORESTRY CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Documenting the Castlegar & District forest industry ecosystem and value chains will help connect dots, opening doors to new business start-up, expansion, and/or procurement opportunities.



# SECTOR DIVERSIFICATION

TECH, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES,  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, TOURISM

Goal 2

## Objective 1 - Enable Growth of the Technology Sector

INITIATIVE 1

On an ongoing basis, work through business licenses, survey and interview work, and/or data collection web portal to develop a visual Castlegar & District technology ecosystem and value chains. Use mapping to identify strengths and opportunities and create a sector development strategy.

INITIATIVE 2

Identify and undertake a flagship sector development project based on ecosystem mapping.

INITIATIVE 3

Identify opportunities specific to the forestry sector.

INITIATIVE 4

Scan for remote digital worker technology/digital literacy training program offerings (workforce and/or entrepreneur development on an ongoing basis) and bring them to the community or advertise their availability to residents.

INITIATIVE 5

Create a sector development working group via a Tech Meet-ups approach.

INITIATIVE 6

Monitor collaborations (e.g. KAST/Selkirk College Applied Research & Innovation Centre tech business retention and expansion project) and support efforts with relevant initiatives.

INITIATIVE 7

Participate in the Intelligent Community Program (<https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/>).

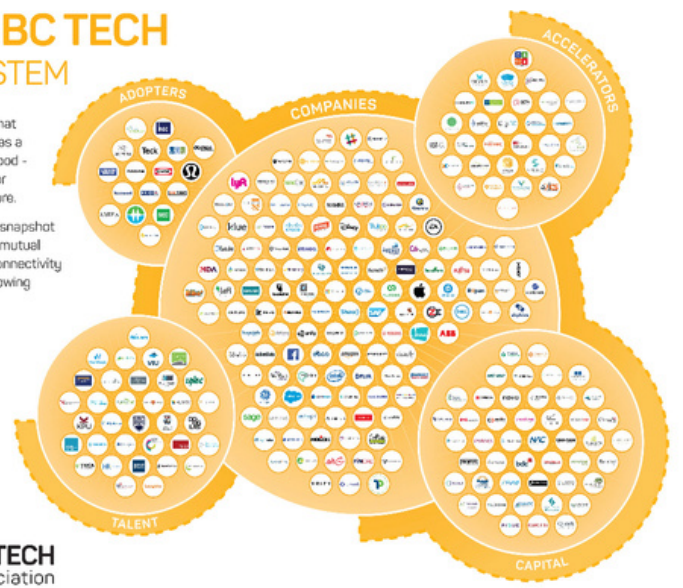


### VISUAL BC TECH ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

### 2020 BC TECH ECOSYSTEM

Our vision is a BC that values technology as a positive force for good - for the economy, for society, for our future.

This infographic - a snapshot in time - shows the mutual reliance and interconnectivity that defines our growing ecosystem.



Src: BC Tech Association - <https://wearebtech.com/membership/ecosystem-map/>



**KEY ENABLERS: SELKIRK COLLEGE, KAST (E.G. TECH AUDITS), MARKETING (CELEBRATE TECH SUCCESSES), ADVANCED BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING INNOVATION**

# SECTOR DIVERSIFICATION

TECH, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES,  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, TOURISM

Goal 2

## Objective 2 - Enable Growth of Tourism Sector

Tourism mandate can be distinguished in three ways: 1) Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) (e.g. marketing campaign); 2) Economic development tourism-related investment attraction (e.g. hotel), 3) Municipal infrastructure investment, including broader placemaking (e.g. sculptures, Millennium Ponds, Columbia Avenue enhancement). Differentiation is critical to tourism development: visitors will travel further the more unique the attraction is.



### INITIATIVE 1

Introduce destination development (differentiated product experience) as a function of Destination Castlegar.

*Note: product development is not in the MRDT renewal application (2019) nor the West Kootenay / Revelstoke Destination Development Strategy.*

### INITIATIVE 2

Explore potential to apply for 3% MRDT or other funding in light of COVID reduction of occupancy rates and revenue to conduct a product development program.

### INITIATIVE 3

Enhance an already strong Destination Castlegar website with: 1) more distinctive brand, and 2) more differentiated product highlighting.

### INITIATIVE 4

Link City Resident Attraction Strategy to tourism marketing via tourism contact list development and curation (e.g. "subscribe for deals"), City Resident Relocation package creation, and cross-over marketing messaging.

### INITIATIVE 5

Continue City investment in Sculpture Walk as a strongly differentiated event, placemaking, and tourism offering.

### INITIATIVE 6

Collaborate regionally (Discover Nelson, Nelson-Kootenay Lake Tourism, Tourism Rossland, Trail Chamber of Commerce) on marketing and destination development to develop "West Kootenay" awareness for longer-haul geographic markets.

*Note: Columbia Valley is proceeding in this direction, offering insight.*

### INITIATIVE 7

Explore potential for a digital kiosk/product vending initiative (e.g. smrt1.ca) to complement visitor centre service, with long-term potential to reduce visitor service infrastructure costs.

# TOURISM CONNECTORS

## CRITICAL NEED: DEEPER HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Tourism is a lower-wage industry: currently \$15-\$17/hr. At \$17/hr, our \$786 median monthly cost for rental dwellings (Census Canada – 2016) is right at the 30% housing cost as % of income measure of affordability. Housing ownership is out of reach (33%). There are 775 rented dwelling units in Castlegar (78% dwellings owned/22% rented) with almost zero rental vacancy. There is limited ability to grow tourism without the workforce housing base. Housing innovation and enabling policy that creates more rentable housing is critical to ability to sustain and grow the regional tourism industry.

## RECREATIONAL PROPERTY OWNERS: A PATH TO RESIDENCY

There are 417 seasonal dwelling owners in Castlegar & District (Src: Census Canada, 2016). Recreational property owners have their heart in a place of second residence, creating a distinct economic development opportunity to encourage more full-time status or permanent residency: 1) if we understand, via survey work, what factors would lead to more time spent locally, or permanent residency; and 2) if we form relationships, via marketing and communications, that nurture this decision-making process.

Conversion of 50% of recreational property owners to full-time residency in Castlegar & District (@ 2/dwelling) = 3% population growth, greater than the 2.4% population growth of Castlegar & District from 2011 to 2016.

**7%**  
CANADIANS WHO  
SAY A TOURISM VISIT  
WAS THE MAJOR DRIVER  
OF THEIR DECISION  
TO LIVE WHERE THEY DO NOW

Src: Zinc Research, statistically representative poll of 1200 Canadians, 2011.

**TOURISM IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF NEW RESIDENTS. WE NEED TO CONNECT A VISIT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS THAT FACILITATE CONSIDERATION OF A FUTURE MOVE.**

## A BIG IDEA A PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

With adjustments to a service offering/renovation considerations, the Brilliant Cultural Centre - the largest stage/seating capacity in the region with maximum seating of 1100 - offers potential to enhance cultural expression, host larger-scale meeting/convention events, and develop a more sustainable business model (incl. mixed-use housing that could offset capital/operating costs, and City/Regional District joint venture).

**KEY ENABLERS: PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES, DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY**

# SECTOR DIVERSIFICATION

TECH, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES,  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, TOURISM

Goal 2

## Objective 3 - Attract and Retain "Independents"

### INITIATIVE 1

Create an entrepreneurship development and support roadmap and implementation plan, including:

- Creation of a business mentorship group to provide free advisory to entrepreneurs.
- Creation of a micro-investment fund (e.g. "Dragon's Den" pitch-finance approach like Awesome Foundation or City of Prince George (see City/Economic Development/Entrepreneurship page).
- Promotion of Co-op funding opportunity via West Kootenay Boundary Co-op.
- Creation of a quick-start entrepreneurship program (e.g. City of Airdrie, Town of Canmore).
- Development of a youth entrepreneurship program for Grade 11/12 students (e.g. Flagstaff County, AB).
- Marketing that celebrates entrepreneur successes (social media, City website).
- Alignment with external entrepreneurship programs and resources.

### INITIATIVE 2

Review and liberalize home-based business regulation to grow number of home-based businesses (e.g. Canal Flats).

### INITIATIVE 3

Create and implement a Resident Attraction Strategy focused on marketing to major urban centres (Vancouver/Victoria/Calgary).

### INITIATIVE 4

Using sector and labour data, identify specific professional services with significant levels of import purchasing, and target relocation attraction using data/emotive appeal.



BE CREATIVE  
WITH  
RESIDENT  
ATTRACTION  
STRATEGY  
MARKETING  
TO STAND  
OUT FROM  
THE CROWD

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME



40% cheaper housing than the big city

Safe

All the services and amenities

Backcountry freedom

A place Dorothy would love

CASTLEGAR IS YOUR HOME

**KEY ENABLERS: ADVANCED BROADBAND, HOUSING INNOVATION, MARKETING**

# SELKIRK COLLEGE

## A KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CATALYST

Though only 1/10th the export activity of the forestry sector, Educational Services (Selkirk College) is the 3rd largest sector exporter in Castlegar & District given attraction of students. The College adds significant vibrancy to community life. Key opportunities are to align some programming with sector strengths and target sectors, and to ensure good supply of student rental housing.

### Objective 1 - Leverage and Grow Selkirk College

#### INITIATIVE 1

Via industry working groups and an economic development function, explore - on an on-going basis - target sector-specific workforce development opportunities via education program development/offering. Focus on convergence of forestry, technology, and innovation.

#### INITIATIVE 2

Identify pathways to grow the international student base, and retain international students following graduation.

#### Selkirk College: Economically Influential

- 60 programs.
- \$75M annual economic activity.
- 550 FT and PT staff. 2400 FT equivalent students, 9000 community learners, 6 campuses and 2 learning centres.
- Main campus: Castlegar - 1000 on-campus students + 200 local co-ops + 316 staff.
- Enrollment up 13.7% 2012 to 2017, international student count up to 700 from 118 in same period.
- Technology and innovation initiatives: 1) Regional Innovation Chair. \$2M NSERC grant (2018) to support development of an innovative forestry technology cluster, 2) \$2M Build Innovation Enhancement Grant to establish Selkirk Technology Access Centre in Advanced Manufacturing and Materials, 3) Applied Research & Innovation Centre.



We could connect hundreds of students and 10 km of on-campus pathways to greater Castlegar, while constructing a tourism attraction - the longest suspension bridge or urban gondola in Canada (220 metres), while creating a heartbeat for a more vibrant downtown.



Many academic institutions have technology parks where academia and industry converge in applied activity. With 27 acres and one of two largest remaining big block land holdings in the City of Castlegar, a mixed-use residential/technology park could accelerate forestry and technology sector development, create a new revenue stream for the College, and enable addition to rental housing supply.

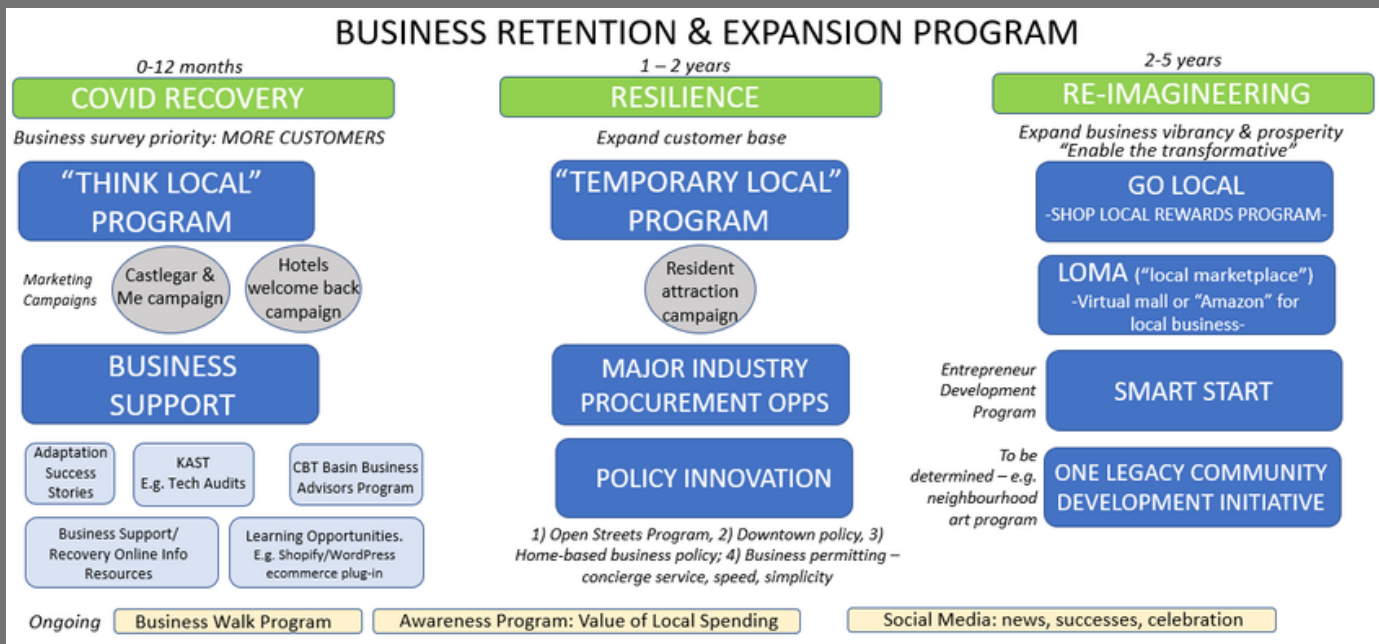
**2 BIG IDEAS**  
**WE COULD**  
**PEDESTRIAN-CONNECT THE**  
**CAMPUS TO DOWNTOWN**  
**WE COULD**  
**ENABLE A TECHNOLOGY PARK**

# BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION PROGRAM Goal 3

An active and adaptable Business Retention & Expansion Program has been designed in the context of immediate-term COVID-19 recovery, building into bigger picture, longer term implications and opportunities for growth of existing local businesses.

## INITIATIVE 1

Conduct an annual and ongoing Business Retention & Expansion Program. Shorter-term elements of the program should be adjusted annually as conditions and near term need change, with longer-term elements reviewed and adjusted if required every 2-3 years.



**60-90%**  
**% OF NEW ECONOMIC GROWTH IN A COMMUNITY  
 CREATED BY EXISTING BUSINESSES**  
**...WHY BRE MATTERS**

Src: Source: The Ohio State University (2002), North Dakota Department of Commerce (2001); University of Illinois (2004)

# HOUSING INNOVATION

## Goal 4

- Workforce attraction and retention. Digital nomads, creators, and entrepreneurs seeking affordability. Millennials, Gen Z, and those aging in place seeking options that don't exist. More disposable income. Freedom. In a province that struggles with housing affordability, housing innovation=direct economic development impact. Castlegar & District has an affordability value proposition. This value proposition can be deepened in our seeking of new market solutions via policy enablement and expanded construction options.

### Objective 1 - Be a Housing Policy and Marketing Catalyst

#### INITIATIVE 1

Complete a Housing Strategy, OCP, and Zoning Bylaw that incorporate comprehensive housing innovation policy.

#### INITIATIVE 2

Attract innovative housing developers and builders.

#### INITIATIVE 3

Explore contractor attraction, modular, and building systems opportunities to offer competitive home pricing, including a role for local forestry companies and Selkirk College.



Based on existing Castlegar & District OCP/Zoning Bylaw comparative to leading BC housing innovation, Castlegar & District has room to:

1) Increase site coverage by 20%+, 2) Increase # units/lot by one-third, 3) Reduce lot sizes, 4) Maintain no minimum house size, 5) Permit mixed use on same-floor, 6) Permit carriage houses, 7) Maintain allowance for 1 secondary suite/lot, 8) Reduce/eliminate parking standard for non-residential element of mixed-use, 9) Permit up to 4-plexes in R1, 10) Reduce the number of land uses to reduce developer risk/enable more options in each land use zone, 11) Create more permitted/less discretionary uses to reduce risk for developers/builders, 12) Create Minor and Major home-based business policy to remove most small enterprise from regulation /permitting: enable greater than one employee, >25% space use, removal of permitted business list and replace with policy that focuses on impact, removal of off-site parking requirement, larger sign size.

## OPPORTUNITIES

MIXED USE/BIGGER/DENSER DOWNTOWN

LOWER PARKING STANDARDS

DENSITY/LOT COVERAGE

HOME-BASED BUSINESS

SECONDARY SUITES

WORK-LIVE BUILDINGS

SMALLER LOTS / DWELLING SIZE

MIXED USE

CARRIAGE HOUSES

MORE PERMITTED LAND USES

ADAPTIVE HOUSING

AGRIHOODS/ECO-VILLAGE

# ENABLE INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

## Goal 5

### Objective 1 - Collaborate Regionally on Economic Development Initiatives

#### INITIATIVE 1

Contact organizations within each of five thematic areas and lead respective workshops to scope what collaboration might look like, and develop strategic and tactical plans if there's a go-forward desire.

Stakeholder consultation during Strategy development indicates desire for regional collaboration on:

- 1) Industrial land availability/development (including potential for joint venture): City of Trail/Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation, Regional District of Central Kootenay.
- 2) Industrial investment attraction marketing: City of Trail/Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation.
- 3) Housing innovation/affordability: City of Trail, City of Nelson, City of Rossland, Regional District of Central Kootenay.
- 4) Advanced broadband infrastructure development (gigabit/5G) - City of Trail, City of Nelson, City of Rossland, Regional District of Central Kootenay, Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation.
- 5) Tourism destination development and marketing: Destination Castlegar, Arrow Slokan Tourism Association (Slocan Valley – Nakusp), Tourism Rossland, Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism (Nelson – Kootenay Lake north, Kootenay Lake East Shore), South Kootenay Tourism Group (Trail).

### Objective 2 - Develop Community Amenity to Attract and Retain Workforce/Enhance Quality of Life for Residents

#### INITIATIVE 1

Conduct a statistically-representative survey of Castlegar & District population to determine desired community amenity investments.

#### INITIATIVE 2

Support municipal efforts to seek grant funding for amenity investments.

*An economic development survey in 2020 (100 respondents) indicated, in order, the following community amenity investment priorities: 1.Hiking trails (gravel), 2.Indoor swimming pool, 3.Camping, 4.Indoor fieldhouse, 5.Fitness centre. The Recreation Complex has been previously determined to be in need of repair and investment in additional amenities (i.e. expanded fitness centre, second arena, pool).*

### Objective 3 - Enhance Airport Service Levels

#### INITIATIVE 1

Support municipal efforts to enhance service levels, including grant funding submissions, RNP-related initiative, asset re-investment process, and airline interaction re service existence and service levels.

**A BIG IDEA: WHAT IF THE AIRPORT WAS MORE...WITH MORE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT AS A TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS HUB.**

# ENABLE INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

## Goal 5

### Objective 4 - Implement Advanced Broadband (Gigabit/5G) Solutions that Work Toward 100% Coverage.

#### INITIATIVE 1

Identify priority last-mile advanced broadband projects for Areas I and J. Pursue grant opportunities with "shovel ready" priority projects.

#### INITIATIVE 2

Complete Infrastructure Master Planning to understand what's required at what cost with access to the CBBC GIS system, including indicative design capability to illustrate where fibre to the home is feasible vs wireless from a cost perspective.

#### INITIATIVE 2A

Intervene in the broadband infrastructure/service market where incumbent service is deficient.

*Note: the TELUS Custom Footprint' program will consider underserved areas, providing a cost back to the local government to enable TELUS investment. If there is no incumbent interest, the municipality must intervene in the market. This process was initiated via RDCK, RDEK, RDKB, and CSRD via a Terms of Reference for a Southeastern Connectivity Committee that would collaborate - with critical mass - to begin fundraising and business planning. This Terms of Reference is required to be approved by each Board.*

#### INITIATIVE 3

Consider a "downtown enterprise zone" with advanced broadband fibre installed to each property to take advantage of the convergence of density and tech/creative/professional services hub location.

#### INITIATIVE 4

Be an ongoing advocate for incumbent infrastructure enhancement to enable Gigabit/5G service to every premises.

### Objective 5 - Streamline Development Approvals Process

#### INITIATIVE 1

Complete a comparative review of a comprehensive business cost package, including taxation, utility rates, direct cost charges, and development permit fees. Establish and maintain a competitive advantage in the West Kootenay, and compared to major BC metro regions.

#### INITIATIVE 2

Review development standards to explore ways to reduce development costs and asset management re-investment requirements.

#### INITIATIVE 3

Form a partnership with Streetscape Technologies to co-develop a municipal planning approval software solution (at lower cost) using existing development community software (<https://www.streetscapeplus.com/>).

#### INITIATIVE 4

Create a user-friendly, electronic Development Guide to make it easier to understand the planning approval process.

#### INITIATIVE 5

Support the City asset re-investment program that ensures long-term, competitive business costs.

# ENABLE INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Goal 5

## Objective 5 - Streamline Development Approvals Process

### INITIATIVE 6

NAICS code the business license database to better align it with sector analysis data.

### INITIATIVE 7

Review, and streamline where applicable, planning approval intake forms and timeframe to be as quick and transparent as possible.

## Objective 6 - Enable Downtown Vibrancy

### INITIATIVE 1



*In our downtown lies our soul – the heartbeat of commerce, the centre of our “busy” ...where we connect to people and place ...where we find inspiration in our most distinctive architecture and creativity of humanity on display ... where visitors form their most memorable impression.*

Advocate for holistic planning policy in a Downtown Plan, OCP, and Zoning Bylaw that works toward a bigger, better, and more vibrant downtown: bigger - with mixed-use to the east of the current core, mixed use permitted incl. residential on second floor, lower/no non-residential parking standards to incentivize redevelopment, permanent open streets program, temporary uses enabled (e.g. pop-up buildings, food trucks), manufacturing permitted (e.g. brew pub, food crafter), street infrastructure enhancement, creative expressions.

**OPPORTUNITIES: 1) A CREATIVE HUB TO COLLABORATE, CREATE, AND SHOWCASE ART, 2) A MIXED USE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUILDING**

## Objective 7 - Conduct Sustained Investment / Resident Attraction Marketing Program, Including Alignment with Tourism Marketing

### INITIATIVE 1

Update a short-form, target sector and value-prop focused electronic Investment Guide.

### INITIATIVE 2

Create electronic Sector Profiles for each of forestry, tech, creative industries/professional services.

**5 PLACEMAKING  
ANCHORS**

**SCULPTURE WALK  
MILLENNIUM PONDS**

**ENHANCED COLUMBIA  
AVENUE**

**VIBRANT DOWNTOWN**

**SELKIRK BRIDGE/GONDOLA**

# ENABLE INDUSTRY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Goal 5

## Objective 7 - Conduct Sustained Investment / Resident Attraction Marketing Program, Including Alignment with Tourism Marketing

### INITIATIVE 3

Create a new personality-based, differentiated (value proposition, visual, text) creative campaign for each of investment attraction, and resident attraction strategy.

### INITIATIVE 4

Refresh Business section of City website to focus on Investment Attraction (vision, target sectors, value proposition, site location data, opportunities highlights, strategic initiatives, news, success stories).

*Note: an Investment Attraction focus would complement Chamber focus on Business Retention & Expansion initiatives, and Destination Castlegar focus on tourism marketing.*

### INITIATIVE 5

Create video (the stickiest form of marketing content) starting with a refresh of an umbrella investment attraction video (90 seconds), then video for each target sector (30 seconds).

### INITIATIVE 6

Create five business success stories per year for City website/social media posting. Focus on target sectors.

# A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION / FUNDING MODEL

Goal 6

### INITIATIVE 1

Develop an organizational model that includes the City of Castlegar, Regional District of Central Kootenay, industry, and the Castlegar & District Chamber of Commerce at the core.

### INITIATIVE 2

Develop a sustainable funding model, including an approach to Columbia Basin Trust to invest in a regional collaboration initiatives portion (industrial land, industrial marketing, housing innovation, broadband, investment attraction) of five-year implementation of this Strategy.

### INITIATIVE 3

Hire an economic development management professional. Create one-year visual work plans. In context of the Strategy, strength in facilitation, and organizational development is required in addition to customary investment retention & attraction skill sets.

### INITIATIVE 4

Economic development manager creates an annual tactical plan to implement against the Economic Development Strategy, including anniversary progress reporting.

Mmmmm...donuts...those round delights that bring you back to more carefree, youthful days that were alive with the eternal sunshine of a mind absorbed by the possibilities. Don't let that be a highlight in a life lived punching a clock and staring at commuter tail lights.

Live like there's no tomorrow in Castlegar. Dust off that penned-up entrepreneurial idea. Live better not just more. Feel like you belong in the group hug we call our people. Be an outdoor recreation action hero. Have the lifestyle dog still wag the business tail. Pick a peach. Visit the beach. Reach for what you dream about. Unleash your full potential.

Life is an adventure. Start a new venture in Castlegar - the future head office capital of the Vancouver / Calgary region.

**CASTLEGAR  
& DISTRICT**

**MAKE IT YOUR  
BUSINESS**



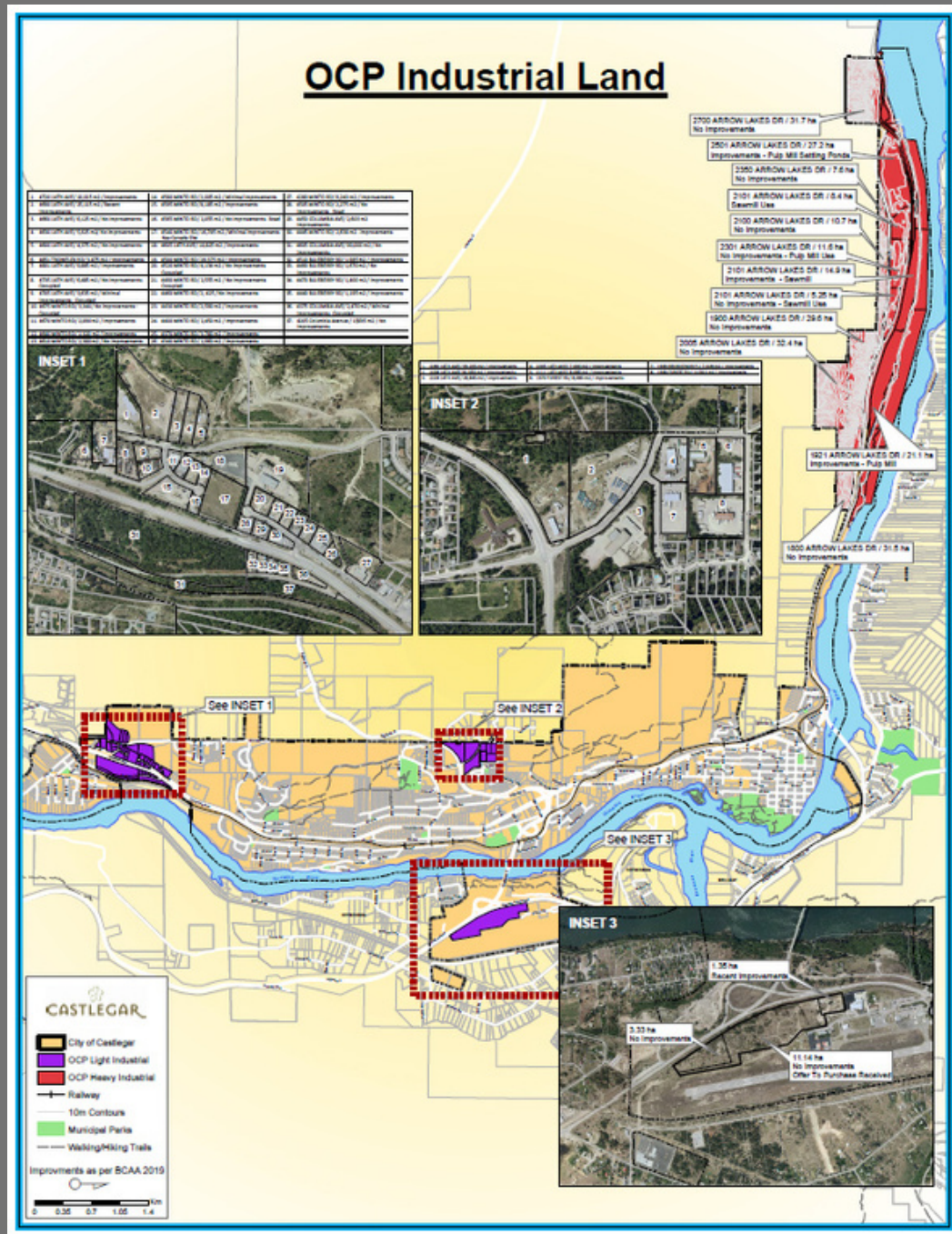
# LAND: A KEY ENABLER

INITIATIVE 1

Develop GIS-based ability (ArcGIS) for investment interests to perform online search of available/underdeveloped industrial lands, including 25 acres at airport.

INITIATIVE 2

Explore potential for long-term additional industrial land supply.



# YEAR 1

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 1 Determine organization/funding model
- 2 Hire Economic Development Manager
- 3 Establish forestry Industry Working Group and create sector development plan
- 4 Refresh City website/business section and investment guide, and create sector profiles (3)
- 5 Create Resident Attraction Strategy and implement modest Year 1 marketing program
- 6 Enable municipal element of forestry innovation pathways (policy advocacy)
- 7 Socialize Economic Development Strategy
- 8 Develop and implement methodology to document tech ecosystem
- 9 Conduct recovery element of business retention & expansion program

**10** Annual qualified business leads

**2** Annual lead conversions to investments

**27%**

Non-residential  
assessment ratio  
*Baseline: 27.1  
rolling 10-yr avge.,  
BC 16.8%*

## PERFORMANCE TARGETS

2025

**35**

Net Promoter Score

*Baseline: 29 (2020  
Community Survey)*

*Housing innovation creates  
deeper affordability*

*More services at BC  
45th percentile*

**50<sup>th</sup> lowest**

BC ranking average house assessed value

*Baseline: 76 (2019) BC - 161 communities*

**74<sup>th</sup> lowest**

BC ranking taxes & charges - representative house

*Baseline: 74 (2019)*

**80**

Business  
licenses/1000  
population

*Baseline: 75 (2019,  
business license  
database)*

*Note: targets are  
City-based given  
quantitative data  
challenge  
on a more  
regional basis*

# OUR INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND BUSINESS RETENTION PROMISE

“

*We will never say  
'NO '. We will always  
ask 'HOW '*

”

# OUR LEGACY

HEROES

PROSPERITY

NEW WAYS FORWARD

THE INCREDIBLE

THE EXCEPTIONAL

PRIDE

AN  
AMBITIOUS  
FUTURE...  
WORKING  
TOGETHER

