

Village of **BURNS LAKE**  
2015

**ANNUAL**

**REPORT**

### Downtown Revitalization Phase 2b



The Downtown Revitalization Project has been ongoing for many years. The first phase included the upgrades to the curbs and sidewalks in the downtown core along Highway 16. Phase 2 included the creation of a parking lot in the shell brownfield site, and the creation of a town square between the New Leaf Cafe and the Post Office. Because there was an delay in purchasing the land from Shell, the Village wasn't able to begin Phase 2a (the parking lot portion) until 2015. Fortunately, with the use of grant funding, there is now a very attractive RV Parking Lot and green space in the downtown core. This improves the availability of parking for the surrounding businesses and encourages RV tourists traveling through with a convenient place to stop and enjoy Burns Lake. Phase 2b has not yet begun, as this portion of the project would be considerably more expensive, however, staff are continually seeking funding.

Also, the improvements involve the use of the Mohawk brownfield site, which would require remediation and approval from provincial agencies before work could begin.



### 8th Avenue Repaving

Unfortunately, all of the funding applications that the Village submitted for the repaving of 8th Avenue were unsuccessful in 2015. These applications included the replacement of underground piping, upgrading the substrate support for the asphalt, and the installation of sidewalks. Staff will continue to seek funding for these projects. However, in the meantime, a new repaving strategy has been adopted that allocates Gas Tax Funding, received every year from the provincial government, towards smaller repaving projects that will address the worst areas of municipal streets, and allocate more funding toward pot hole repair. While this solution is not ideal, it works within the available funding to keep Village streets functional. It is hoped that, as new provincial and federal funding sources become available, the Village will be able to complete more comprehensive repair projects.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

The Village of Burns Lake will invest in new and existing infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner and will ensure core needs of Citizens are met.



### Long-Term Funding

In an effort to ensure that all of the Village assets are managed responsibly, the Village sought in 2015 to create a financial plan that would identify funding sources for the replacement of assets over time. This plan will help staff in creating funding applications, borrowing bylaws, and annual funding allocations. By finding the most suitable funding source for each type of expense, the Village will be in the best spot to maximize the funding that it can get from other agencies, as well as use municipal tax dollars to their greatest potential.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Village of Burns Lake will work with other local agencies to strengthen the local economy, grow our existing businesses and increase our economic diversity.

## Business Retention and Expansion



A big focus for Council over recent years has been attracting new businesses to Burns Lake as well as ensuring those that are already established are in the best place to thrive moving forward. To this end, Council ramped up their engagement with businesses, completing three business walks where Council and staff tour local businesses and discuss opportunities and threats, and engaging with the Burns Lake and District Chamber of Commerce board during the 2016 budget planning season. The Village also continued their support of business through the Love Burns Lake program that provides advertising and promotion for local businesses. By the way, visit that website at [www.loveburnslake.com](http://www.loveburnslake.com)! Finally, the Village has been working with NDIIT to implement the facade improvement program that has allowed many businesses in the downtown core to improve the appearance of their storefronts. All of these have given more tools to local businesses to help them succeed in the years to come.

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW



The Official Community Plan is the overarching document that informs all of the land use, zoning, structural, and functional decisions that the Village makes. It has not been updated since 2008, and is in need of review. To that end, the Village has partnered with the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako to redo the plan and bring it up to date. It is suspected that the plan will be complete by the end of 2016.

## PARTNERSHIPS



With the possibility of new Liquefied Natural Gas pipelines coming to our region, the Village is seeking partnerships with the incoming corporations to access funding for local initiatives, to ensure that the local workforce gets the most benefit from the associated employment opportunities, and to maximize the benefit that the community receives from those projects. To that end, staff have been monitoring the projects and keeping close contact with each proponent. One of these partnerships resulted in new funding for the Baker Airport Resurfacing Project, which has helped to ensure that the airport stays functional and can provide emergency services to our residents. Additionally, the Village has completed the Economic Development Strategic Plan which helps to confirm collaborative rolls with local governments, agencies and First Nations groups.

## VILLAGE BRANDING

Council considered doing an exercise that would create a brand to market to those outside the Village. However, it was determined during budget discussions that this project was too expensive to implement and was removed from the work plan.

## SIGNAGE STRATEGY



The Village has to manage a lot of signs. Whether it is wayfinding signs, tourism and information signs, heritage building signs, or just stop signs, there are a lot of signs out there and it can be hard for passers-through to know what's important. In order to make everything that promotes the Village consistent and the signage throughout town look uniform, Council has adopted a signage strategy. This document will reconfigure the look of all Village signs, promotional materials, and documents (including this one, as you may have noticed). It will also direct spending moving forward on the installation of wayfinding signs, heritage plaques, and information on the clan carvings that have been placed downtown. With this unified appearance, residents and tourists will have an easier time finding the services they want in Burns Lake.

### RECYCLING PROGRAMS



In 2015, staff did extensive research on the implementation of a recycling program. Through Multi-Materials BC, opportunities were being created to initialize curbside recycling in the province. Staff went through extensive negotiations with MMBC attempting to make the program more feasible for our small town but, unfortunately, the service providers were unwilling to meet some of the key provisions that were important in keeping costs low for our residents. Fortunately, a local business has taken this initiative on, and our community now has a fully functional recycling depot in town that not only services those in Village Boundaries (as the curbside system would have done) but also services the entire region. For this reason, it is unlikely that a curbside system will be implemented in the near future. Additionally, the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako has issued a cardboard ban in their waste transfer stations, which means that cardboard can no longer be accepted in municipal bins. Look for more information on this change coming soon!

### SUSTAINABILITY

The Village of Burns Lake will provide its citizens with opportunities to reduce their impact on the earth, and demonstrate social & environmental stewardship.

### CARBON OFFSETS

Carbon offsets are ways for commercial and institutional enterprises such as the Village, who need to create carbon emissions as part of normal operations, to give back to the environment. Funds from the purchase of carbon offsets go toward carbon capture and greening initiatives like forest preserves that help fight the accumulation of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Last year the Village researched the possibility of producing these offsets for purchase, but it was found to be unfeasible due to cost. However, Council continues to look for ways that the Village can help make the impact of our operations more sustainable and environmentally friendly, after all, there is no such thing as an electric snow plow yet!



## REC FACILITIES



In 2015, the recreation department strove to track the usage of the facility, survey members, and engage the public to find what programs would be most beneficial to residents and users. This report was brought to Council, and an ongoing effort to find the most effective means of recovering costs is underway. The department also looked into some potential additions to Spirit Square such as a water park and security cameras. These were eliminated during the 2016 budget process. A report was also brought to Council regarding the provision of wireless internet throughout the downtown core and Spirit Square. It was found that this initiative would have been too expensive to implement and was removed from the budget.

## Recreation

The Village of Burns Lake will continue to provide and support valued recreation and cultural opportunities for the community.



To celebrate our town, the recreation department held a number of family events throughout the year offering fun and games to all ages. This included a family friendly winter carnival that had indoor and outdoor fun to brighten the cold winter days! Thanks to all who attended!

## **RDBN COLLABORATION**

Continue to improve collaboration and shared services with the Regional District.

## **RECYCLING COLLABORATION**



As part of the recycling initiative, the Village staff have been working closely with the RDBN to determine the best next steps for recycling. As more materials are removed from landfills, this collaborative effort will help to keep residents informed and to promote comprehensive recycling practices in the region.



## **RECREATION SERVICE**

This year the Village looked to partner with the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako on recreation services. Discussions are ongoing regarding a joint service that would help fund recreation and the arts in the region. This would help fund things like the expansion of local trails, the Lakeside Multiplex, arts and culture events, and other services. In the mean time, the RDBN has agreed to provide \$40,000 in funding for the replacement of the ice plant at the Tom Forsythe Arena, which will reduce costs at the facility and because of lighter safety regulations, it will allow for 24 hour access to the Multiplex gym. This is in addition to the funding that the RDBN provides annually for the operation of the arena.

## FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

### FIRST NATIONS

Continue to strengthen and improve communication between The Village of Burns Lake and local First Nations.

Strengthening relationships and focusing on collaboration with local First Nations continues to be a priority for Council.

In 2015, staff worked closely with the staff of the local First Nations on public works initiatives, governmental relations, emergency planning and education, recreation, and administrative tasks. The Village also co-hosted a free children's movie at the Beacon Theatre for families over the holidays. In addition, Council and staff have worked tirelessly to finalize the details of the Chinook Community Forest, which is a collaboration between all six local First Nations bands, the Village, and the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako. Unfortunately, due to scheduling difficulty, the Village was not able to complete the annual planning session with the First Nations, or the communications protocol with the Burns Lake Band. However, staff and Council held a variety of different meetings and sessions with the First Nations groups, and continue to find ways of collaborating on important initiatives.

Moving forward, the Village will be working closely with the First Nations groups on projects like the Lakeland hotel rejuvenation, the Rainbow Motel rebuild, and in renewing the public works service agreements held with the Burns Lake Band and Lake Babine Nation.

## **The Village will work to strengthen the local economy, support the growth of our existing businesses and increase our economic diversity.**

- The Village will seek funding to form a task force that will assess impact to Burns Lake and surrounding areas of a reduction in timber supply. If funding is not available, the Village will consider alternative options to form a task force.
  1. The Village is committed to appointing a representative to the taskforce
- The Village will continue implementation of the 2016 - 2018 Economic Development Strategic Plan
  1. Conduct New Business Survey
  2. Improve Village Investment Readiness
  3. Survey Consumer Spending
  4. Select Economic Measures and Establish a Baseline (e.g. number of businesses by type, local employment rates, employment by industry)

## **The Village will maintain and improve municipal infrastructure and services.**

- The Village will continue to pursue funding for the replacement of the water tower, and will undertake necessary preparations to ensure the water tower is replaced before the end of its useful life.
- The Village will continue to repair streets in a fiscally responsible manner.
- The Village will continue to pursue grant funding for major infrastructure projects.
- The Village will review downtown revitalization

priorities for safety, traffic flow, parking and economic development.

## **The Village will manage its revenues and expenses responsibly.**

- The Village will set three year targets for the infrastructure deficit.

## **The Village will provide and support recreation, healthy living and cultural opportunities.**

- The Village will create a Village Recreation Master Plan and use this plan to manage Village investments in recreation and programs that are offered.
- After the master plan has been created and used, the Village will consider a variety subsidization levels for recreation, and the associated growth or decline in programming.
- At the end of 2017, the Village will set a subsidization target for 2018

## **The Village will continue to strengthen relationships and partnerships with Local First Nations**

- The Village will seek out new partnership opportunities with Local First Nations. Partnership opportunities will include municipal service delivery and economic development.



**The Village of Burns Lake will invest in new and existing infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner and will ensure core needs of Citizens are met.**

Active Projects:

- Continue with replacement of the portion of 8th Avenue and Centre St. from the highway to the hospital.
- Complete engineering for upgrade to the Pioneer Way sewage lift station.
- Expand columbarium at the Village cemetery to accommodate future demand.

Future Projects:

- Continue with planning the downtown revitalization Phase 2b. The plan for phase 2b should be updated to reflect the possible closure of part of Gilgan Drive.

Infrastructure Strategy:

- Prepare a report that outlines options that are alternatives to asset replacement that could maintain roads in usable condition. (e.g. surface repair, road abandonment etc) with the goal of repairing infrastructure in 2017.
- Investigate feasibility of a parcel tax that could be levied to fund installation, repair and replacement of sidewalks. Feasibility should evaluate revenue potential, typical costs to replace sidewalk and public attitudes towards such a tax.

**The Village of Burns Lake will work with other local agencies to strengthen the local economy, grow our existing businesses and increase our economic diversity.**

- Continue to implement the Economic Development Plan.
- Assist with implementation of the Regional Bike Tourism Strategy.
- Continue to pursue grants through Northern Development and other funding agencies to support Lakes

district economic development, tourism and recreation projects.

- Engage with Pipeline project proponents and identify regional and local partnership goals to promote the local economy and mitigate impacts from development.
- Update the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws.
- Create Burns Lake sign strategy to promote: recreation, culture, local business and other economic activity.

**The Village of Burns Lake will provide its citizens with opportunities to reduce their impact on the earth, and demonstrate social & environmental stewardship.**

- Examine the implementation of recycling programs in other municipalities.
- Prepare a report that:
  1. Includes results from consultations with First Nations, the Regional District, and citizens of the Village of Burns Lake about the introduction of recycling.
  2. Estimates the start up costs and the one-time and ongoing financial impacts for a recycling program.
  3. Examines alternatives with MMBC with the aim of identifying a feasible model.
  4. Where appropriate, identifies options for implementing a recycling program.
- Encourage the use of recycling cardboard by businesses. The Village and Regional District fund a drop off location for commercial cardboard. The Village will engage with businesses and identify and implement a means of reducing or eliminating the disposal of cardboard in garbage.
- Continue to identify options to

create carbon offsets and reduce our green house emissions

- Continue to strengthen and improve communication between The Village of Burns Lake and local First Nations.
- Continue to expand and improve the protocol with Lake Babine Nation.**
- Continue to expand and improve the protocol with Burns Lake Band.
  - Pending completion of the protocol in 2015
  - Renew service agreements with Burns Lake Band.

**Continue to improve collaboration and shared services with the Regional District.**

- Meet multiple times per year with Regional District Area B and Area E. Continue to explore expand and optimize shared services with Regional Districts such as:
  1. Introduction of recycling.
  2. Expansion of maintained hiking and biking trails.
  3. Recreation services available to all residents in the region.
  4. Planning and development services.
  5. Airport runway replacement.
  6. Emergency preparedness.

**Promote youth collaboration and engagement in municipal affairs.**

- Research potential initiatives to engage youth in municipal affairs.
- Launch a new initiative to engage with youth in municipal affairs.

**The Village of Burns Lake will continue to provide and support valued recreation, healthy living and cultural opportunities for the community.**

- Examine options that would enable the Lakeside Multiplex facility to fund operating costs from revenue.
- Enhance Spirit Square:
  1. Investigate the feasibility

of installing a water park & playground equipment at spirit square pending budget considerations.

2. Solicit feedback on desired improvements to spirit square.
  3. Consider an outdoor rink.
- Enhance the Multiplex:
    1. Update facility usage agreements with external organizations.
    2. Update user agreements and policies.
  - Enhance the Arena & Curling Rink:
    1. Replace the Zamboni.
    2. Consider upgrading the arena to use a freon cooling system that would enable the facility to remain open longer hours or reduce costs for existing hours.
    3. Refurbish the portion of the Arena roof that covers the Zamboni.
    4. Enhance the curling rink, prioritizing the rink wall.

**The Village of Burns Lake will continue to improve the effectiveness of Municipal processes and services**

- Implement alternative methods for engaging the public that produce higher engagement levels for similar or lower effort / cost.
- Explore opportunities for implementing user fees to reduce the tax burden in all municipal operations.
- Implement and sustain an annual planning process with a three year planning horizon. This will encourage alignment with longer-term planning already in place in the Village.
- Explore the potential to expand boundaries of the Village to improve public safety and strengthen management of lands that are important to the Village.