Mayor and Town Council selected the following strategic priorities at our March 2015 retreat. These priorities are initiatives we plan to undertake over the course of our term in office, 2015-2018. Some initiatives are already underway, while others have yet to be introduced to the community. We recognize that not all of the initiatives will reach completion within the four-year timeframe. We also anticipate that the relative importance or timing of the initiatives within this list will change over time in response to unforeseen funding or other emerging opportunities. Council is currently working with Town staff to determine phasing and timelines for each priority in this list.

Document Key

- Economic strategy
- Socio-cultural strategy
- Environmental strategy
- Infrastructure strategy
Infrastructure projects

**Expand our Airport Terminal**  
*(Funding application pending)*
Pending funds from the federal and provincial governments, Council will complete a major expansion of the Smithers Regional Airport terminal. We have applied for $4 million and the total project is currently budgeted at $6 million. The project scope includes a larger hold room, expanded security and baggage claim areas, additional washrooms, new office space and a new heating and cooling system that incorporates renewable energy.

**Build a new Cultural Centre**

The recent Table Talks demonstrated strong community interest in having community, arts and culture functions combined in a multi-purpose facility. Council’s intention is that a new cultural centre could include uses such as the library, museum, gallery and visitor centre (or some sub-set of these) with the specific list of uses and the location of the facility to be determined through public and stakeholder consultation. A key feature would be communal space that brings people together to enrich our community. While Council is open to synergies with physical recreation initiatives driven by other organizations, this project does not include a physical recreation component.

**Redevelop the Chandler Park fields**  
*(Funding secured; project underway)*

The past Council prioritized the improvement of the Chandler Park soccer fields. The Regional District of Bulkley Nechako has committed $250,000 to the project, and the current Council has established a Chandler Park Field Redevelopment Advisory Committee and awarded a contract for the design phase of this project.

**Develop greenways (people-focused transportation corridors)**

Council is motivated to encourage and facilitate active transportation, including walking and bicycling, within our community. Greenways are people-focused transportation corridors characterized by enhanced landscaping and infrastructure improvements. They could involve either the construction of new, multi-use pathways (e.g. Fulton Walkway) or improvements to existing Town streets. The goal of the initiative will be to develop greenways connecting Smithers’ major residential areas with our downtown core.
**Enhance public space at Bovill Square**
Maximizing the potential of Bovill Square as public space means reviewing current use and implementing improvements such as seating and signage. Some of this work has been completed, and other aspects are underway.

**Improve connections between our downtown and “front country” tourism assets**
Many high-quality outdoor recreation assets exist within a short distance of our downtown, including the Bluff trails, Lake Kathlyn, the Bulkley River, and the Perimeter Trail. As our Table Talks showed, access to these amenities is highly valued by residents. They are also key tourism assets. Council will seek to improve the connections between these amenities and our downtown through improvements to infrastructure and way finding (signage).

---

**Plans and task forces**

**Implement Asset Management Planning**
*(Funding application pending)*
Ensuring high quality service delivery for future generations means adequate investment in the maintenance and replacement of our Town’s infrastructure. To assess the current status of our assets and determine what levels of investment are required, Council will complete an Asset Management Planning process with the assistance of outside consultants.

**Complete a plan for Central Park**
With the acquisition of the Kratz family property and the rezoning of Central Park in 2014, the Town now holds a significant civic asset with considerable potential. Council will create a master development plan for Central Park to map out which civic uses should be located on the site, and how issues such as traffic flow, parking, and landscaping should be addressed. Should the best location for a Cultural Centre be determined to be Central Park, this initiative will likely best be undertaken concurrently with that project.
Create an **Affordable Housing Plan** and **implementation strategy**

There is a strong desire in our community to address the shortage of affordable housing options for residents, including those who are homeless. Meeting this challenge means forging partnerships across jurisdictions and seeking innovative approaches that may lie outside the bounds of the traditional role of local government. An important step is creating an Affordable Housing Plan in consultation with residents, social service agencies and other levels of government. Particular attention will be paid to supportive housing and subsidized market rental housing. In the shorter-term, Council will work proactively with the Smithers Action Group Association to identify a location for its supportive housing project.

Create a **Small Business Task Force**

Town Council will create a Small Business Task Force made up of citizens from the local business community and supported by Town staff and members of Council. The goal will be to conduct a thorough review of the Town’s current business development processes and bylaws to ensure they are appropriate, efficient, clearly communicated and equitable, and that they support the objectives in our Official Community Plan.

Create a **Community Food System Task Force**

Bulkley Valley residents have a strong awareness of food security issues and a keen interest in improving opportunities for urban food production. Council will create a task force made up of local residents to identify potential projects for prioritization.

Other projects and initiatives

**Complete a Shared History research project in partnership with the Wet’suwet’en** *(Project underway)*

Town Council will build on our five-year protocol agreement with the Office of the Wet’suwet’en by completing a joint research project currently entitled “Our Shared History,” which will seek to tell the stories of settlers and First Nations in the early days of Smithers. We are currently working on terms of reference for this project, which could involve partnerships with academic institutions.
Facilitate **mixed-use downtown development**

Our current Official Community Plan emphasizes the benefits of mixed commercial-residential development in our downtown. Yet, despite the benefits of such development for the vitality of our downtown, little mixed-use development has taken place. Council intends to revisit the full suite of Town regulations governing downtown development and identify potential policy levers that can be used to increase the prevalence of mixed-use projects.

Transform our community’s **energy profile**

Smithers is a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter and currently has targets for reducing of both our corporate (Town of Smithers operations) and community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. Modest progress has already been made through efficiency upgrades in recent years. Council will seek to achieve more significant emissions reductions by investing in renewable energy systems, increasing energy efficiency of current assets, and implementing community energy initiatives in collaboration with residents. This priority is not a stand-alone initiative, but rather a lens Council will bring to all of the Town’s departments, programs and projects.

Implement community **well-being indicators**

How are we doing as a community? The answer depends on whom you ask and what they value. Currently the Town measures only a few indicators of community success: metrics such as building permits, business licenses, or changes in our tax base. The Wellbeing Indicators project will seek to expand this list of indicators to more comprehensively describe the health of our community, including its social, environmental and economic dimensions. This initiative will build on the body of work that exists on Genuine Progress Indicators and the experience of communities around the globe, and could form the basis of an annual community well-being report card.

Pursue innovative **joint-governance opportunities between the Town of Smithers and rural residents**

The Town of Smithers is surrounded by a densely populated rural area. Many rural residents who cannot vote in Town elections have long desired a stronger say in the direction of the Town. Likewise, many Town residents feel they pay for a disproportionate percentage of services that benefit both Town and rural residents alike. Recognizing that significant jurisdictional constraints exist, Council will seek opportunities to build collaborative, equitable governance models that address these issues.

Continually improve **citizen engagement**

Over the past four years, Town Council has significantly increased its focus on citizen engagement. This includes our “Let’s Talk” town hall forums, use of online surveys, social media, and most recently our “Table Talk” focus groups. Council will seek to continually improve our approach to Citizen Engagement and include it as a component of all major Town initiatives.