

8.2. Strengthen and Diversify the Local Economy

Objectives:

- To support the growth and diversification of the local economy.
- To continue Smithers' tradition of being home to many services to the resource industry, entrepreneurs, and employees.
- To recognize the outstanding natural, cultural, and built amenities which not only impact the high quality of lives enjoyed by current residents and visitors, but also attracts new residents to Smithers.

Policies:

1. Create a Community Economic Development Plan that includes engagement with business owners and the broader community. Collaborate with all stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Smithers on this and other economic development initiatives.
2. Review Town bylaws and procedures to ensure a streamlined approval process, open and responsive governance, efficient use of taxation resources, and delivery of services.
3. Support and strengthen tourism initiatives throughout the Town. Tourism opportunities may include exploring Indigenous lead tourism with the Witsuwit'en Nation.
4. Where development proposals are expected to create new jobs, support the construction of employee housing as an auxiliary use.
5. Consult with the local business community, including organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Smithers for feedback on Town plans and policies related to economic development.
6. Identify ways that the Town can best assist with business retention, expansion, and attraction.
7. Support the retention and recruitment of a qualified labour pool by supporting access to appropriate and affordable housing and other necessary support services such as child and senior/elder care.
8. Support auxiliary residential development on lands designed as commercial and light/medium industrial.
9. Encourage home-based business being that it is owner occupied only with the exception of childcare providers and arts/music home-based businesses.
10. Develop 5-year action plan to grow the commercial and industrial tax base that may include revitalization tax exemption programs, streamlining of approval processes, alternative frontage improvements and targeted marketing campaigns.

8.3. Commercial

Objectives:

- To increase commercial density and vibrancy in the downtown core to reinforce the downtown as the heart of the community.
- To encourage commercial development and redevelopment along the Highway 16 corridor.

Policies:

1. Continue to invest in downtown Smithers through ongoing improvements to the streetscape, public spaces, and public amenities. Encourage community-led programming of the downtown and public spaces.
2. Participate in incentive programs to encourage improvements to rear facades (from lane) of all downtown buildings, in particular those buildings along Main Street.
3. High density, mixed commercial land uses are encouraged in the downtown area. Support high density residential as a primary use in the downtown avenues (excluding Main Street).
4. Appropriate Temporary Commercial Uses are supported on lands designated commercial.
5. Support local small scale gaming ventures operated by non-profit organizations and service clubs. Large scale destination casinos or video lottery terminals are not supported.
6. Create simple and clear mobile vendor busking regulations at no cost to the operator to encourage the animation of streets in the downtown core. Ensure the Noise Bylaw is consistent with regulations to promote increased activity in the downtown.
7. Incentivize development and redevelopment along with Highway 16 commercial corridor through the creation of a Highway 16 Revitalization Tax Incentives.

8.4. Industrial

Objective:

- To encourage appropriate airport and industrial development in Smithers.
- Secure adequate industrial lands to ensure capacity for industrial uses and future capacity for any tourism and/or resource-based ventures.