



November 24, 2014 Report to City Council

This report summarizes the status of Council priorities assigned to the Economic Development Manager through the 2012 – 2016 Corporate Strategic Plan. This plan was adopted at the outset of Council’s term and updated earlier in 2014.

The first section of this report addresses the items in the highest priorities section of the plan. In some instances, one than one objective, initiative and task were assigned under a particular goal. Where that is the case, the goal statement is not repeated.

Goal 1: A Responsible, Livable & Environmentally Sustainable Community

Objective 1.3 Promote Sustainable Environmental Practices

Initiative 1.3.1 Facilitate Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites

Task Industrial Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw as Incentive to Address Brownfield Issues

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Council ultimately decided not to adopt a new Bylaw in part because original Industrial Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw did not produce results
- EDM took part in FCM ‘Brownfield Boot Camp’ to acquire more information about brownfield issues and opportunities

Objective 1.3 Promote Sustainable Environmental Practices

Initiative 1.3.5 District Energy System Development

Tasks Pursue Funding; Finalize Designs; Negotiate Partnerships; Sign Contracts

Status as at November 17, 2014

- \$1.9 million in grants and \$4.3 million in low-interest loans secured
- In negotiation with VIHA/Island Health (largest single consumer) about price for heat
- 1 party has expressed interest in leveraging district energy with their next generation wood biomass proposal
- *Note: RFP should be issued early in 2015: Council will need to decide if it wants a private sector partner or municipally owned utility*

Goal 2: An Engaged, Inclusive, Healthy and Socially Sustainable Community

Objective 2.2 Ensure High Quality of Life through Promotion of Active Living

Initiative 2.2.3 Draft & Implement Trails & Bikeways Network Masterplan

Tasks Develop Mapping, Brochures & Signage; Support Trail Development Projects especially Interconnectivity

Status as at November 17, 2014

- ACRD has draft (July 2014) trails master plan
- *Note1: Rogers Creek Ravine Trails project was not advanced by ICET to Stage 2 so another source of financing will be needed*
- *Note 2: advertising of trails somewhat limited by fact that many are on or cross private lands*

Objective 2.5 Maintain & Grow Social Capital By Supporting Volunteer Initiatives

Initiative 2.5.1 Increase Profitability of McLean Mill

Task Marketing Plan for McLean Mill

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Some progress made in 2014 with initiatives to increase revenue for heritage attractions however much more needs to be done
- *Note: 2007 strategic plan needs to be updated*

Goal 3: A Vibrant, Prosperous & Economically Sustainable Community

Objective 3.1 Ensure the Development of the Waterfront

Initiative 3.1.1 Develop Plywood Site for Industrial & Public Access Use

Tasks RFP for Lot A of Former Alply Site; Semi-Annual Meeting with WFP re Covenant

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Council leased Lots A & B to Port Authority for marine industrial development (with Canadian Alberni Engineering) in 2014
- Last request of WFP to abandon covenant was made approximately 2 & ½ years ago

Objective 3.1 Ensure the Development of the Waterfront

Initiative 3.1.3 Support Port Authority Initiative to Expand Operations & Obtain Asia-Pacific Gateway Designation

Tasks As Required

Status as at November 17, 2014

- In weekly contact with Port Authority to offer support and get updated
- Applied for Invest Canada Community Initiatives funding to get Port Alberni Trans-shipment Hub material translated into Asian languages for foreign investment purposes

Objective 3.2 Encourage Business Retention and Development

Initiative 3.2.1 Uptown Revitalization Including Tax Exemption Opportunities

Task Commercial Revitalization Tax Incentive Bylaw for Uptown Area

Task Uptown Anchor Tenant for former 'Zellers' Property

Task Encourage Further Development of Rotary Arts District

Status as at November 17, 2014

- New Uptown Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw was adopted in late 2013
- In regular contact with Coulson Group (who now own former Zellers building) and Uchucklesaht Tribe (who now own former Rusty Anchor/Somass Hotel)
- *Note: Internet infrastructure (NEPTUNE Canada and recent Telus) provides opportunity*

Goal 4: A Creative and Culturally Sustainable Community

Objective 4.2 Promote Port Alberni as a Destination to Live and Visit

Initiative 4.2.1 Undertake Community Marketing and Promotion

Task Develop and Implement a Community Marketing Plan

Task Review Way-Finding Signage

Task Investigate Promotional Signage Opportunities

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Have advertised Vancouver Island's Most Affordable Community in many mediums
- Uptown Merchants developed and installed some signage
- *Note 1: Given high cost of advertising in traditional mediums, Economic Development office has invested in Heart of Vancouver Island Facebook page*

- *Note 2: Rebranding of community and/or makeover of entrances would help to address image issues*

Objective 4.2 Promote Port Alberni as a Destination to Live and Visit

Initiative 4.2.2 Increase Community Educational Opportunities

Task Liaise with Educational Institutions in Pursuit of New Programs

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Hosting commercial fishing (processing side) 'workshop' Jan 27 & 28 to identify training gaps in industry; intent is to explore opportunity to offer courses
- Promoting NIC as site for transferable skills training needed by forest, fishing, marine & energy sectors
- MOU in place with Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences
- *Note: health sector training/employment initiatives in progress should continue to be pursued*

Goal 5: Service Excellence

Objective 5.1 Promote Civic Leadership Through the Setting of Priorities

Initiative 5.1.4 Participate with ACRD and PAPA on Regional Transportation Committee

Task: Lobby Senior Government for new Alberni Valley Connector Road

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Transportation Committee lobbied Minister at UBCM (Presentation was considered one of best by provincial government staff)
- EDM is providing 'secretariat/research' assistance to Committee and assisting business case for several transportation infrastructure upgrades (Connector Rd, airport, PATH, Ring Road, PAPA berths)

This next section of this report addresses the status of items in the Corporate Strategic Plan second tier of priorities assigned to the Economic Development Manager. In this section only the initiative is identified prior to the update. The goal and objective statements are omitted in the interests of brevity.

1.1.3 Investigate Additional East Bypass Ring Road

Status as at November 17, 2014

- As per 5.1.4 above

2.5.2 Work with Volunteer Groups to Promote Heritage Attractions

Status as at November 17, 2014

- As per 2.5.1 above

3.1.2 Increase Public Access to the Waterfront

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Director of Parks, Recreation & Heritage has developed Lot C as beach and secured short term lease on former Esso bulk fuel site

3.1.4 Promote Development of West Side of Somass River/Alberni Inlet

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Tseshaht developing land use plan for southwest side of River
- Island Timberlands have stated no interest in selling or developing west side of Inlet

3.2.3 Increase Employment Opportunities in the Community

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Assisting employers' recruitment efforts as requested
- Working to 'land' two next-generation wood biomass companies here (~25 jobs each)
- Working to secure airport improvements (would add 10 - 15 jobs to Coulson Group and secure ~ 25 jobs there now) as well as attract others

3.2.4 Explore Development of Unused (Private Sector) Industrial Lands

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Have directed or made inquiries to owners (as recently as last week)

4.2.3 Innovative Redevelopment of Argyle Street

Status as at November 17, 2014

- No recent efforts

4.2.4 Promote Development of Seniors Oriented Housing & Facilities

Status as at November 17, 2014

- Have met regularly with potential developers and realtors to promote need, key development sites and explore opportunities

Additional initiatives have been completed or started during this Council term. They have been reported on in previous Council meetings and have often been covered by the media. As such, and again in the interest of brevity, they are not listed here.



Pat Deakin, Economic Development Manager