



DISTRICT OF INVERMERE
2024-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN



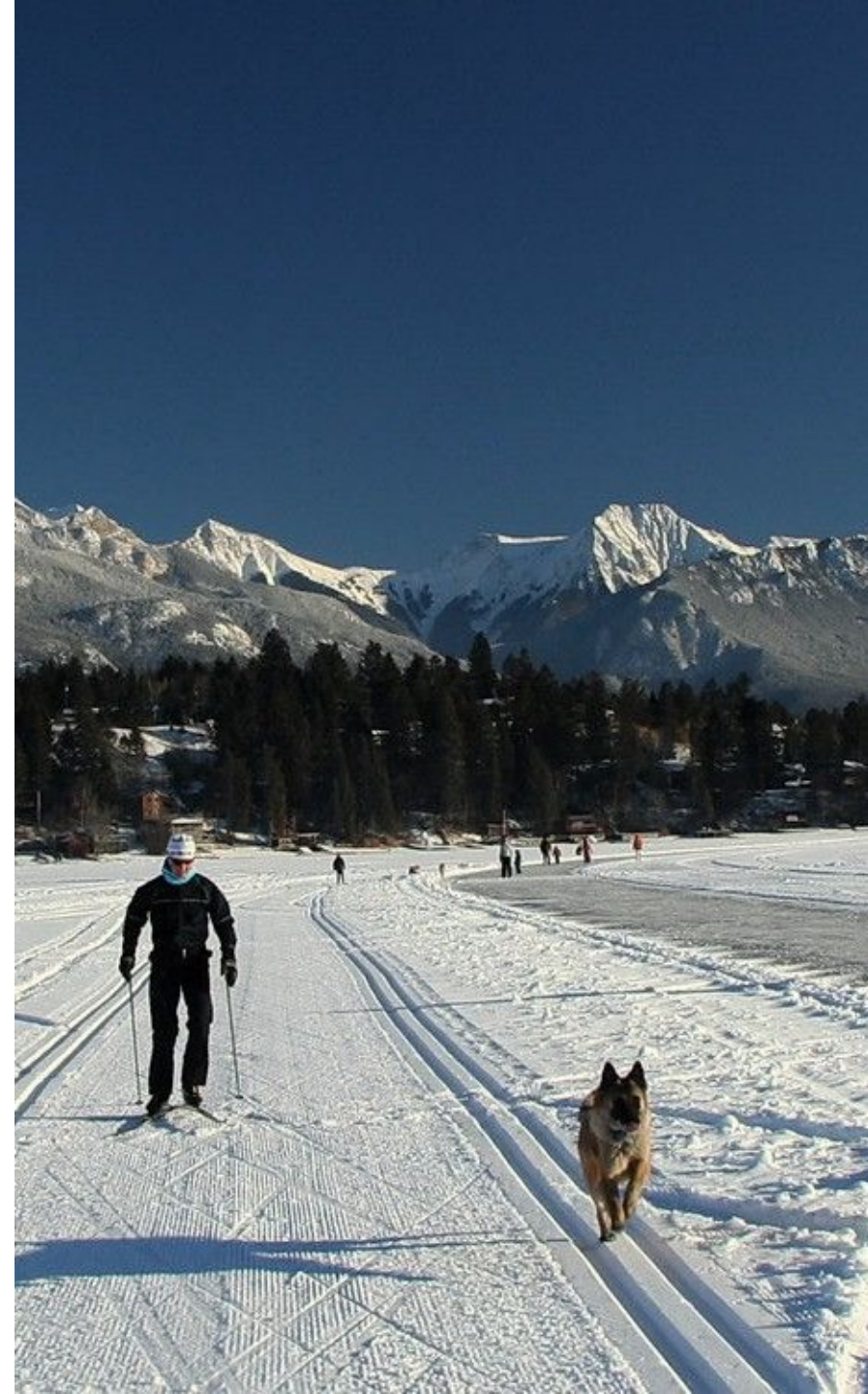
MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is my privilege to present the District of Invermere's *2024-2026 Strategic Plan*. The *Strategic Plan* sets out five themes to guide the District's use of resources for the remainder of Council's current term:

- > Infrastructure
- > Growth
- > Economy
- > Community
- > Organization

Council's specific priorities are identified under each theme. The themes and priorities were developed by Council, supported by the Chief Administrative Officer, senior management and staff, at a facilitated, two-part planning session in May 2023.

The *2024-2026 Strategic Plan* represents a significant departure from earlier strategic plans created by the municipality. Earlier plans included a set of strategic objectives that spoke, at a high-level, to the importance of community, Invermere's infrastructure needs, a commitment to climate action, and a desire





for exceptional service and communication. The focus of these earlier versions, however, was on specific projects that Council wished to complete, projects of other orders of government that Council wished to influence, and the specific operational works, studies and initiatives identified by and assigned to individual managers.

In their content and layout, these earlier versions served as effective work programs for Council and staff. Their emphasis on specific works and initiatives, however, was not matched by clear strategic direction to guide the District's use of resources to achieve Council's vision and preferred outcomes for the community. In contrast, the *2024-2026 Strategic Plan* provides the direction required, and constitutes the strategic plan that Council desires.

Sincerely,

DISTRICT OF INVERMERE

Al Miller
Mayor



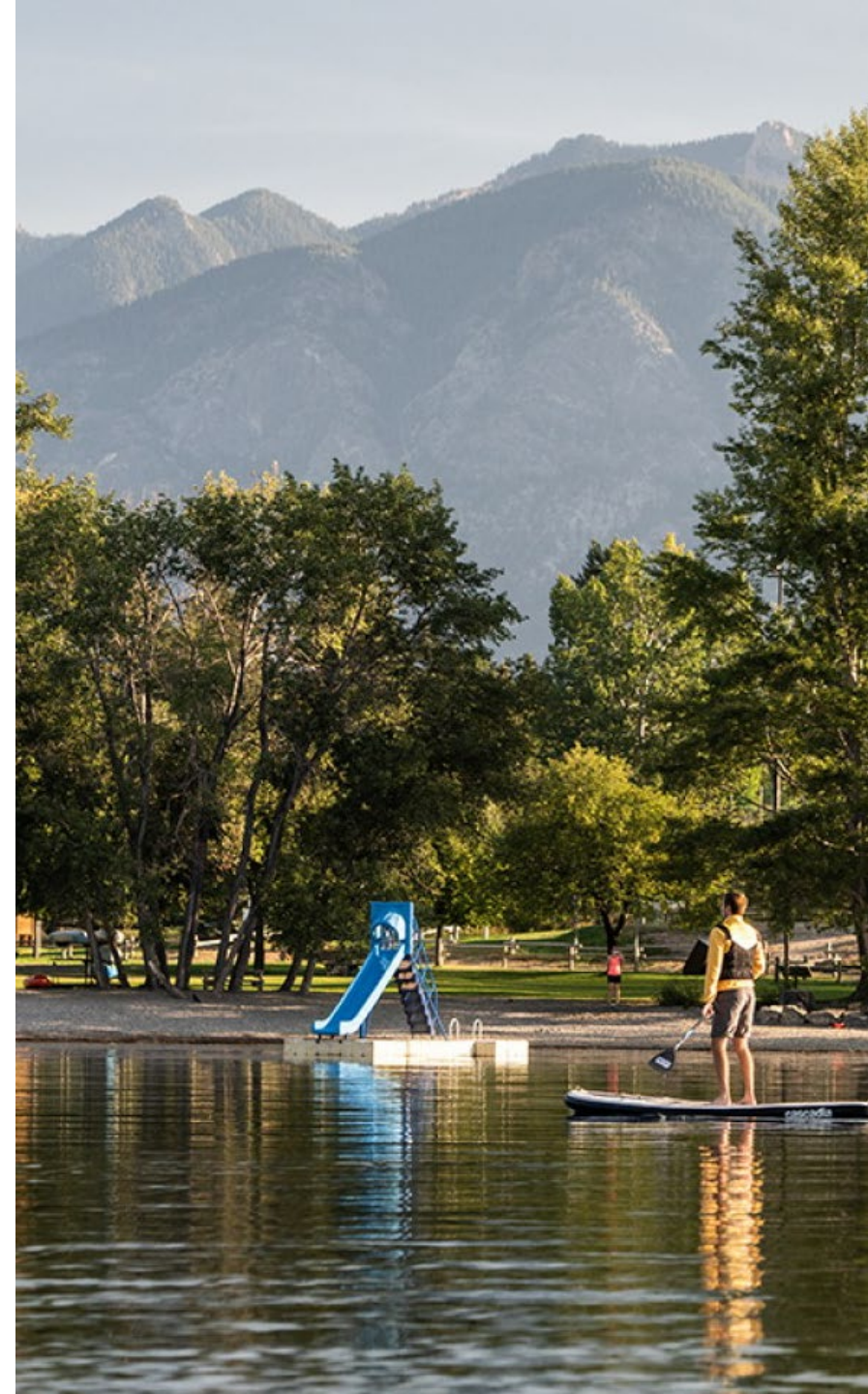


COUNCIL'S TEN-YEAR VISION FOR INVERMERE

Invermere is a thriving, family-friendly community, welcoming to all who call it home and to those who choose to visit. It is a community with a quirky, small-town vibe and unique identity that set it apart from the rest of the Columbia Valley and British Columbia as a whole. It is a community with a vibrant downtown that anchors a year-round, diverse local economy.

A range of housing types and tenures exists in Invermere to provide attainable housing options to families, seniors, and workers. Municipal utilities and other infrastructure systems, including parks, trails, and active transportation networks, are in place and well-maintained to serve the needs of residents and visitors. Strong fiscal management practices ensure that all works and services are both affordable to taxpayers, and resilient in the face of climate change.

Local governance in Invermere benefits from active and engaged citizens who represent a broad range of perspectives. A strong sense of pride in community, coupled with a desire to identify and rally around shared priorities, characterize the community's approach to planning for the future.





INVERMERE AND CLIMATE ACTION

The District of Invermere Council and staff recognize that climate change is a local, regional, and global challenge that is affecting the local community and the Columbia Valley in profound ways. Elevated wildfire risk, extreme weather events, and natural disturbances have become common occurrences, as have warmer winters and hotter, drier summers that stress local ecosystems.

Strong action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is required to protect Invermere and the nature that surrounds it from future climate-related extremes. Concerted efforts are needed, as well, to bolster the resiliency of the District's infrastructure, urban-rural interface areas, and ecosystems, and to help Invermere and the Columbia Valley adapt to unavoidable climate impacts that are already being experienced, and that will intensify in the coming decades.

The imperative to curb greenhouse gas emissions, reduce the community's footprint and build resiliency is a lens through which the District of Invermere, under Council's leadership, will assess all issues that come before it. Climate action and environmental protection will help to inform all of the District's current choices and actions.





COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The District of Invermere's priorities, identified by District Council, reflect the key outcomes Council wishes to achieve for the community, and the strategic areas where Council intends to focus its energy and resources. These priorities are organized under five broad themes:

- > Infrastructure
- > Growth*
- > Economy
- > Community
- > Organization

* Includes Housing

Council has also identified three priority areas of highest importance for the 2025-2027 period:

- > First Nations Relations and Collaboration
- > Lake Health
- > Land

District staff, under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, will bring forward proposed work plan actions for the organization to take in support of Council's priorities. Over the term of the *Strategic Plan*, the lists of actions will expand in response to needs and opportunities.





INFRASTRUCTURE

Council recognizes that Invermere, similar to communities across Canada, faces some significant challenges related to existing municipal infrastructure systems that require regular maintenance and upgrading. Demand for new works and systems is also on the rise, fueled by a combination of factors including anticipated growth and development, changing interests and needs, and increases in the number and stringency of regulatory requirements imposed by other orders of government.

The District has undertaken a range of studies in recent years to understand the infrastructure needs of key neighbourhoods (Athalmer is one example), and of the community as a whole. The District is also upgrading its asset management plans and accompanying management software system to ensure that existing utilities, roads and trails, parks, and facilities remain available and accessible to residents, businesses, and visitors.

The funding required to meet the community's infrastructure needs will be substantial. Council will address funding needs through the development of thoughtful and comprehensive financial plans that optimize the use of different funding sources, build capital reserves, assign costs equitably across beneficiaries, and manage financial impacts on taxpayers. The community's current and future infrastructure needs will be important to address in ways that are fair to all stakeholders and sensitive to the community's ability to pay.



INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Ensure Adequate Funding for Infrastructure Needs

The District will develop a balanced, equitable and comprehensive strategy to prioritize and fund all water, sewer, transportation, active transportation, parks and recreation, facility, and other infrastructure works to meet the current and future needs of the community.

Maintain Existing Assets

The District will update its inventory of existing infrastructure and non-financial capital assets, upgrade its asset management software, and revise its *Asset Management Plan*, as required, to ensure that existing works, facilities, and other assets are well-maintained and in-service for as long as is deemed practicable.

Establish Long-Term Water Security

The District, in collaboration with the Regional District of East Kootenay, local First Nations,* and the Province of British Columbia, will undertake the studies required, and will pursue the licenses and infrastructure funding necessary, to secure long-term water supply.

* Shuswap Band, Ktunaxa Nation and Akisqnuq Nation.





INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Address Immediate- and Long-Term Transportation Needs

The District will work to meet the vision of a comprehensive transportation network that is safe, accessible, connected, and sustainable. This includes a focus on infrastructure that supports active transportation such as bike lanes, e-bike storage, bike racks, and narrower, traffic-calmed streets at key pedestrian crossings.

While regional transit remains a longer-term goal, near-term efforts will emphasize local mobility improvements consistent with the goals of the Resort Development Strategy.

Ensure Sufficient Utilities Capacity for Current and Future Needs

The District will investigate and, if necessary, address potential capacity challenges related to the municipality's waste water treatment plant and collection system, and the water treatment plant and distribution infrastructure.





GROWTH

In recent years, the District of Invermere's population has been growing at a rate twice that of British Columbia as a whole. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years as more people move to Invermere to enjoy the community's high quality of life, small-town vibe, access to nature and outdoor recreation, economic opportunities, and several other features. Growth adds to the diversity of the municipality and local economy, builds the District's assessment base, adds to the overall vibrancy of the community, and brings many other benefits. For these and other reasons, Council embraces growth.

Council recognizes, however, that growth can also create some challenges for the community or add to the challenges the community is already facing. The impact of growth on housing affordability in the Invermere is a particularly important challenge to understand and address. Council will work to understand and address housing needs through proactive community planning and innovative municipal approaches.



GROWTH

PRIORITIES

Engage the Community in Long-Range Planning

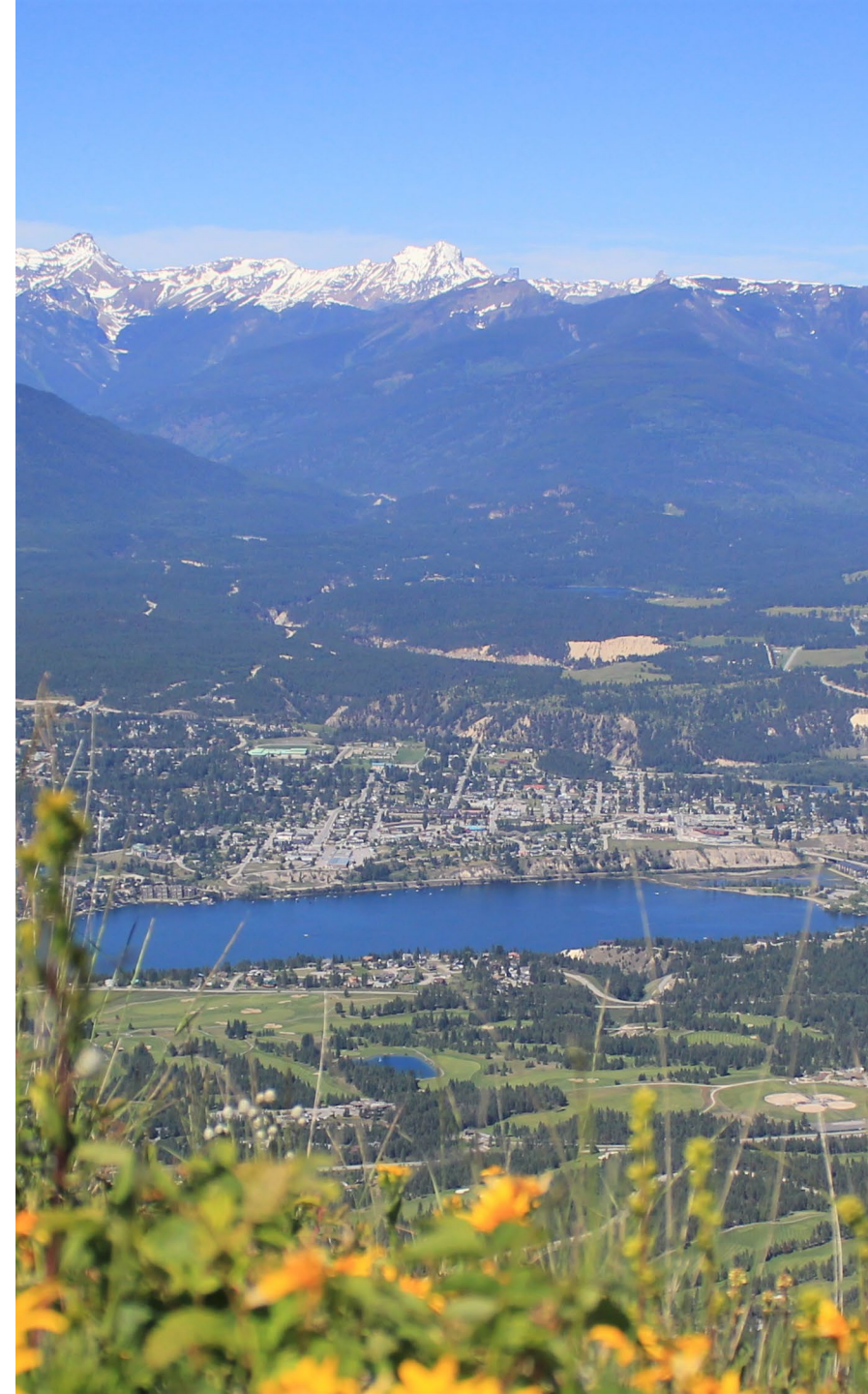
The District will create a new *Official Community Plan*, through an inclusive community-based process, to identify future growth expectations, and understand and develop policies to address growth-related land use, housing, infrastructure, environmental, social, and other expected impacts.

Enhance the Supply of Attainable Housing

The District will identify and pursue innovative approaches to enhance the supply of purpose-built rental housing, affordable ownership units, housing for staff, resident restricted units, and a diversity of other housing types and tenures that are attainable to families, workers, seniors, and others.

Identify Roles for the District

The District will identify potential regulatory, financial, advocacy, development, and other roles for the municipality to pursue in addressing the community's attainable housing needs.





GROWTH

PRIORITIES

Pursue Boundary Expansions to Capture and Better Manage Growth

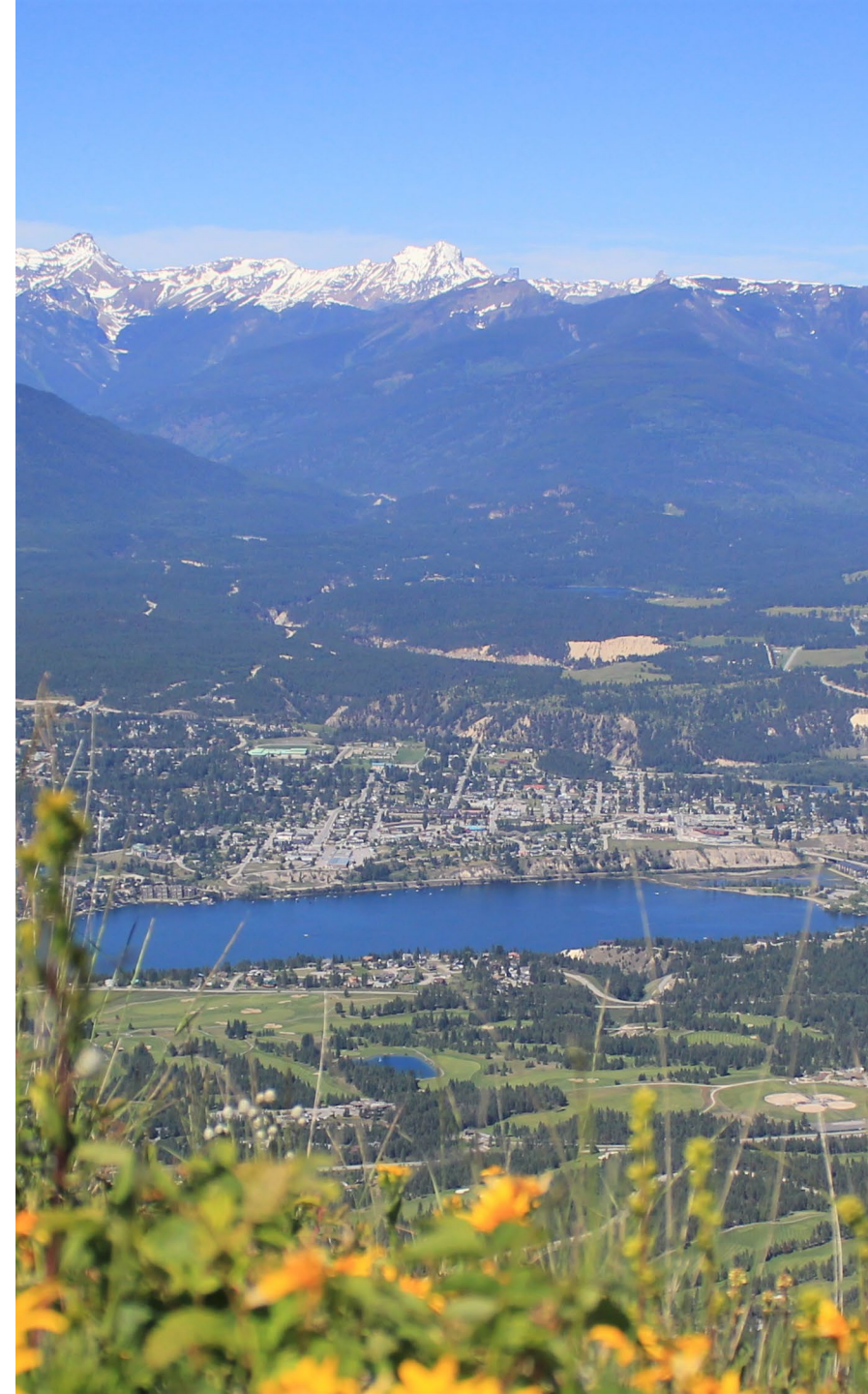
The District will seek support from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to explore the costs and benefits associated with an expansion of the municipality's boundary to incorporate the Crossroads and other lands bordering Invermere which both impact and benefit from Invermere's works and services.

Collaborate in Sub-Regional Service Solutions

The District, in collaboration with the Regional District of East Kootenay and local First Nations, will pursue sub-regional service approaches to address, housing, public transit, active transportation, parks and recreation, and other needs that exist today, or that may be anticipated in the future as a result of continued growth.

Lake Health

The District will collaborate with other jurisdictions to initiate a process to protect the health of Lake Windermere. Council wishes to participate in developing a multi-jurisdictional approach to address carrying capacity concerns, particularly those related to ballast equipped boats. Council has emphasized its willingness to partner in this work, but does not intend for Invermere to lead or fund the process alone.





ECONOMY

The District of Invermere, as the service hub of the Columbia Valley, benefits from a strong and growing regional and local economies, anchored in key economic sectors such as tourism and recreation, and manufacturing. Invermere's employment rate is greater than that of British Columbia as a whole; median incomes of workers are competitive.

Council seeks ways to build on Invermere's existing economic strengths. Council will work with the local business sector, Columbia Valley Community Economic Development (CVCED), local First Nations, and others to understand the community's economic development needs, and the investments that the District of Invermere can make to increase economic prosperity. A robust, year-round economy, resilient in the face of challenges and diverse in nature, is Council's goal.



ECONOMY

PRIORITIES

Foster Economic Diversification

The District will work with CVCED, local businesses and others to make decisions and develop initiatives aimed at supporting Invermere's nascent tech sector, its agrifoods sector, local creative industries, and other growing economic sectors, in addition to the wood products manufacturing and tourism activities that account for much of Invermere's current economic strength.

Enhance the Vibrancy of Downtown Invermere

The District recognizes the importance the downtown core to Invermere's future economic growth and will undertake planning to guide investments aimed at enhancing Downtown Invermere's vibrancy.

Provide Opportunities for Industrial and Commercial Investment

The District will compile an industrial and commercial lands inventory, and develop an industrial and commercial lands strategy, to support efforts aimed at attracting new investment in industrial and commercial activities targeted by CVCED and others.





ECONOMY

PRIORITIES

First Nations Relations and Collaboration

Building on the success of recent joint initiatives, including, for example, the Community Economic Development Initiative with the Shuswap Band, the District will develop enhanced relationships and seek joint development opportunities with local First Nations.

Land

The District will undertake consultation and visioning exercises in 2025 to determine the future use and optimization of key municipally-owned lands, including the Community Hall site, the Parkside Place site, and development lands in Athalmer. This work will complement and inform the update of the District's Official Community Plan (OCP), which will also feature broad community engagement.





COMMUNITY

Invermere is situated at the top of Windermere Lake, served by beautiful beaches, parks, and trails that give residents a strong connection to nature. Its dynamic downtown centre with locally-owned shops and restaurants give Invermere a small town vibe and identity that set the community apart from other parts of the Columbia Valley. A strong sense of pride, coupled with a motivated citizenry, contribute to Invermere's energy and overall optimism.

Council seeks to preserve and build on the qualities that define Invermere as a community. Council will engage residents in visioning and local governance to provide everyone who calls Invermere home the ability to influence decisions that affect them. Council will work with community to create a strong brand that celebrates Invermere's uniqueness.



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Ensure Accessibility

The District will ensure that municipal facilities, parks, beaches, trails, and public gathering places are physically, economically and socially accessible and welcoming to all who seek access.

Provide Opportunities for Engagement

The District will challenge residents and stakeholders, and provide opportunities for residents and stakeholders, to participate in community planning efforts and local government decision-making.

Create Community Vision and Brand

The District will update the Official Community Plan (OCP) to align with the 5-year and 20-year housing needs identified in the Interim Housing Needs Report (2024). This update will include targeted community engagement.





COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Promote Community Gathering Places

The District will enhance and promote Invermere's parks, squares, plazas, and facilities that serve as community gathering places, recognizing the important role such places play in building community.

Facilities

The District will review the operations of the Columbia Valley Centre (CVC) and other key civic facilities to ensure they are delivering strong value and operating efficiently. A service level and cost audit will be undertaken as a first step, with findings compared against similar facilities in other communities. Council's desired outcomes include a clear understanding of service levels, a cost-effective operating model, and opportunities for continuous improvement.





ORGANIZATION

The District of Invermere, as the community's municipal government, is responsible for providing a broad range of services to the community. Council recognizes the importance of ensuring the municipal administration, headed by the Chief Administrative Officer, has the resources it needs to fulfill its responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Council recognizes that the administration must have the people, equipment, systems, and plans in place to excel and meet the needs of the community.

Council relies on the Chief Administrative Officer to run the municipal organization. Council will set clear expectations and will provide the support and oversight required by the Chief Administrative Officer to meet them.



ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES

Improve Communications with the Community

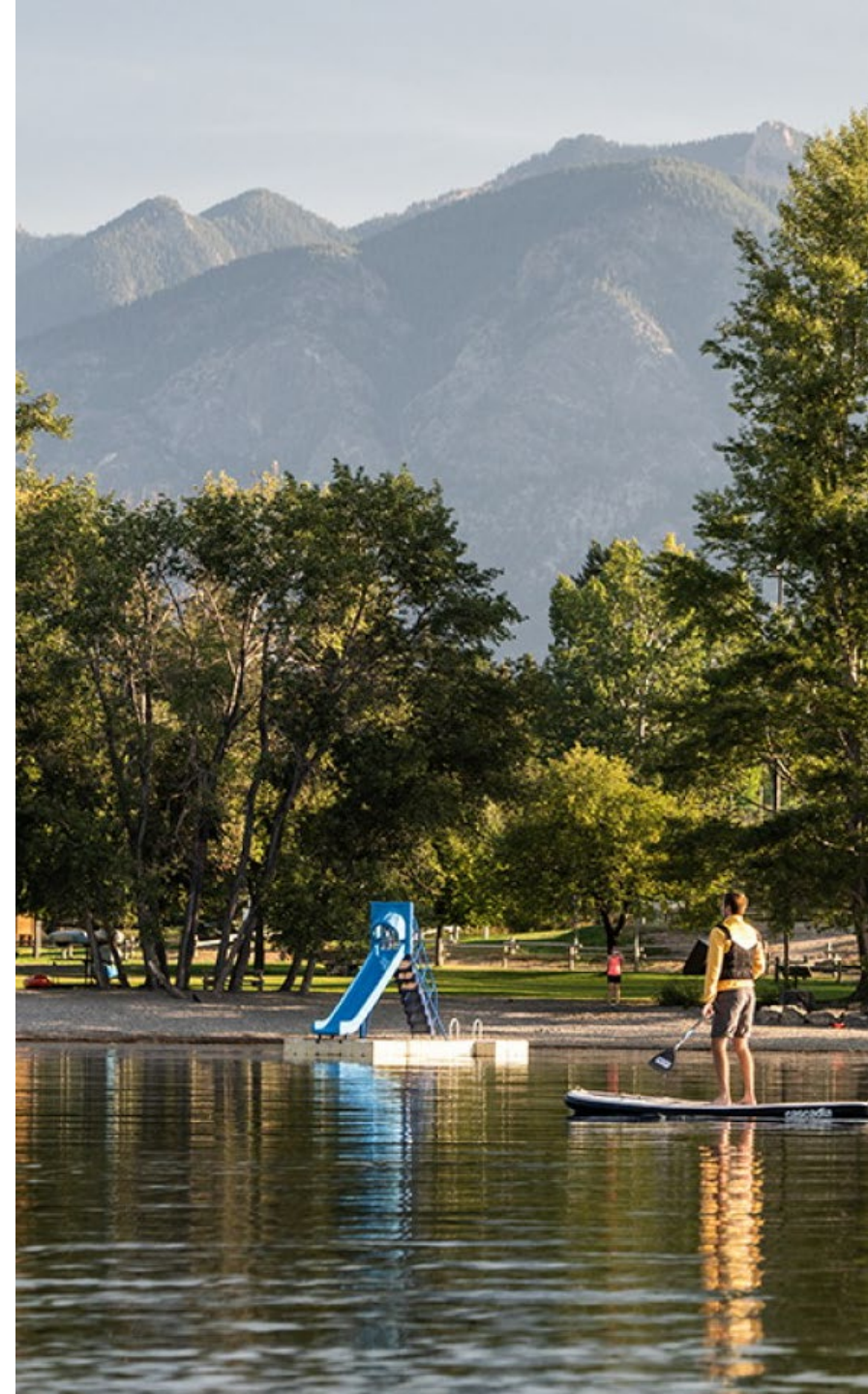
The District will enhance the organization's communications capacity, as necessary, to ensure that information is provided to the community in ways that are proactive, consistent, and timely. Council wishes to ensure, as desired outcomes, that the community is informed and Council is informed of the District's initiatives and progress on the initiatives. In Council's view, communications by the District reflect the organizational culture; improvements to communications will, therefore, required a cultural shift that treats the need to communicate as important. A strengthened policy and process framework on communications may be required to help guide staff on when and how to communicate. Fresh, updated branding for the District was also noted.

Enhance Staff Attraction and Retention Programs

The District will work with staff, outside resources, and others to enhance programs in place, or to create new programs, aimed at attracting staff to Invermere, and retaining existing staff.

Develop Succession and Progression Plans

The District will develop formal staff succession plans and development plans to ensure that key positions in the municipality are not left vacant, and that staff have opportunities to progress through the organization.





ORGANIZATION

PRIORITIES

Ensure Consistent Implementation of Policies and Processes

The District will ensure that policies and processes are current, and are followed consistently by staff in order to provide a high degree of certainty to residents and others who rely on the District.

Enhance Business Planning

The District will ensure that business plans are developed to support all proposed initiatives, and that continuity plans are in place to ensure organizational resiliency.

