

HOPE BC DEVELOPMENT PLAN INCLUDES NEW SERVICED LAND

In early January, Hope Council approved a new economic development strategy aimed to take advantage of its natural assets and to diversify its economy. A new economic development organization will mobilize local leadership to make needed changes to the downtown core, the hiking trail system and other outdoor attractions. The changes will be marketed to encourage overnight and longer stays. Another key component will be to take existing flat lands west of the Hope Downtown area to service and actively market them.

Hope has some distinct competitive advantages that we think will appeal to several types of businesses. We are at the hub of three major highways; the Hope -Princeton (hwy 3), the Coquihalla (hwy 5), and the Trans Canada (hwy 1). According to a 2008 land use analysis, we have 229 acres suitable for industrial use of varying types. As communities west of Hope exhaust existing industrial and commercial space, we will provide a lower cost alternative. Transportation service companies and light manufacturing seem to be a natural fit.

The Lion's Gate economic strategy study commissioned by Council last June recognizes that we have work to do to fulfill this promise. The study calls for improving the business climate, improving land and infrastructure services, aggressive marketing of opportunities as well as systematic pre-development planning for special projects. These include a truck centre, a conference facility, post secondary education services, as well as alternative energy opportunities. Such projects build on an already incredible quality of life deriving from low cost/ high quality housing and excellent schools and recreational facilities within one of the most accessible and beautiful outdoor activity areas in British Columbia.

With respect to business climate, we intend to create a new guide to investing in Hope, new benchmarks for development fees, and try to lower development approval times and mill rates. We will also investigate the feasibility of "green" building policies to incentivize new building development. A site location assistance program with an updated industrial property database will be a priority for the new economic development officer.

Early efforts will see the updating of the industrial property database as well as preparing a site location assistance program to expedite all property enquiries. A marketing program will increase awareness of, and absorption of Hope industrial and commercial properties. \$150,000 has been allocated in 2010 to create the independent economic development commission and it is hoped to augment that to a total of \$310,000.

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