



Elk Valley
Economic Initiative

EVEI Strategic Plan

“Bridging Covid to Recovery and Enhanced
Investment Readiness”

Priorities for May 2021 to December 2022



Introduction

This strategic plan was prepared based on the following inputs:

- Orientation with EVEI coordinator
- Background document review:
 - EVEI Terms of Reference (2019)
 - EVEI Strategic Plans (2014, 2017 & 2019)
 - Elk Valley Investment Readiness Assessment (2020)
- Development of an online survey with guidance of EVEI coordinator and EVEI committee chair. Four members completed all questions, a fifth respondent completed a portion of the survey.
- Strategic Planning session with EVEI Committee on April 7, 2021
- Preparation of draft strategic plan for EVEI Committee review
- Preparation of final strategic plan based on EVEI Committee feedback.

EVEI Foundation Statements

The EVEI Foundation Statements originated in the 2017 Strategic Plan and were carried through to the 2019 Strategic Plan. The 2021 strategic planning process resulted in investment preparedness being added as a new strategic area of focus and workforce attraction being removed as it is not currently a strategic priority during this Covid-19 recovery cycle. The EVEI Committee also expressed a desire to review the strategic objectives below during the term of this plan with a view to updating them if/as necessary.

Purpose

- To collaboratively develop regional economic development projects and initiatives in the Elk Valley towards the improvement of the region's economy

Guiding Principle

- "Think Elk Valley"

Strategic Objectives

- Expand opportunities for existing businesses, attract new ones, and diversity the types of businesses
- Increase the number of permanent, full-time residents who support our local economy
- Act as a liaison on behalf of the Elk Valley to promote economic development

Strategic Areas of Focus

1. Investment preparedness (new)
2. Business retention and expansion
3. Business and investment attraction
4. Community promotion and marketing
5. Building organizational strength



Themes identified in survey and orientation

1. EVEI issues and opportunities

- Committee turnover and need for stronger on-boarding process
- Limited organizational capacity
- Coordinator not well resourced to respond to investors
- Clear shared understanding of EVEI's purpose and mission
- Optimizing the role and deliverables of the one-year Elk Valley Economic Recovery Advisor position beginning July 2021
- Working together in a coordinated approach while recognizing and respecting differences
- Clear shared understanding of the economic development activities that are well suited to be carried out at the corridor level
- Desire to be more public facing, i.e., communicating and reporting back to the region on economic development matters
- Enhanced online presence that could include:
 - investment readiness information (profiles) for each community
 - investment opportunities
 - Elk Valley job search
 - “one stop hub” for investors

2. Elk Valley economic development priorities and opportunities

- Valley-wide data collection and aggregation
- Produce “top-view” regulatory roadmap for investing and doing business in the Elk Valley
- Update BRE reports for all three communities using a common methodology
- Investment attraction planning
- Increase overall economic development-related news feed in the Elk Valley – curating content that showcases all the corridor has to offer and local business success stories
- Elk Valley economic development plan
- Elk Valley economic development officer
- Improve follow-up with investors
- Workforce attraction and staff housing
- Industrial/commercial land marketing - lands inventory
- Address gaps in business succession planning as part of covid-response/recovery efforts
- Continue building and supporting relationships, reconciliation and collaboration with Tobacco Plains and the Ktunaxa Nation

3. Additional wish list items

- Market EVEI at events locally and provincially
- Municipalities add a one-stop economic development/investment landing page to their websites, including updated community data and profiles; these links would then be added to a more public facing EVEI website
- Replace the role filled by Imagine Kootenay



Strategic Goals and Action Plans

1. Focus Area: Investment Preparedness (NEW)

Goal: Complete market research & data collection to increase investment preparedness

Action	Who	Timing
Develop replicable “plug and play” templates for data collection in support of Elk Valley community profiles, BRE study, reporting costs of doing business, and community profiles.	Economic Recovery Advisor	Complete by June 2022
Prepare Elk Valley Investment profile (utilizing <i>Doing it Different</i> profile as appropriate) and individual community profiles	Economic Recovery Advisor	Complete by June 2022
Research other collaborative regional economic development models and how they are supporting investment preparedness at a regional level; engage findings from related RDI research project when available	EVEI Coordinator & Economic Recovery Advisor	Complete by December 2021
Keep up to date with investment preparedness best practices via Basin Economic Development Practitioners Network (EDPN) and southern Alberta/Crowsnest economic development contacts.	Interested EVEI members self-identify	On-going
Take steps to strategically engage realtors on EVEI’s mission and economic development in the Elk Valley, identifying opportunities for coordinated information-sharing and cooperation.	EVEI subgroup TBD	Include on agenda at summer or fall 2021 EVEI meeting.

2. Focus Area: Business Retention and Expansion [BRE]

Goal: Update BRE reports for all three Elk Valley communities

Action	Who	Timing
Complete BRE reports for all three communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify businesses requiring succession planning Identify business development needs/challenges 	Economic Recovery Advisor	Complete by June 2022
Build awareness and connections between EVEI and Elk Valley businesses	Economic Recovery Advisor	July 2021 to June 2022



Respond to a business development need/challenge identified by the BRE initiative	EVEI Committee	Identify leading option for a project by Q2 2022
Share Chamber policy & advocacy work findings on local business needs at the EVEI table	Chamber leads	On-going at EVEI meetings

3. Focus Area: Business Investment and Attraction

Goal: Identify opportunities to strengthen initial point of contact and follow up with investors

Action	Who	Timing
Review current processes for initial point of contact and follow up with investors to identify opportunities for improvement.	All	Q4 2022

4. Focus Area: Community Promotion and Marketing

Goal: Enhance EVEI website to include investment profiles, a roadmap to community contacts and key investment information resources

Action	Who	Timing
Design & build-out EVEI's website to house: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elk Valley and community investment profiles BRE reports (when available) Resources for Elk Valley businesses Roadmap of economic development contacts and links to key web pages 	EVEI Coordinator, Economic Recovery Advisor, plus any interested EVEI members	Begin aggregating existing resources in Q3 2021 and develop website as capacity allows. Target June 2022 to complete this phase of development.
Develop strategy for website promotion (with consideration of a social media strategy)	EVEI subgroup TBD	Begin in Q2 2022. Launch new website in Q3 2022
Equip Economic Recovery Advisor to effectively communicate and promote the role of EVEI	EVEI Coordinator	July 2021 on-boarding
Explore opportunities to increase the economic development news feed in the Elk Valley	EVEI Committee	Include on agenda at summer or fall 2021 EVEI meeting



5. Focus Area: Build Organizational Strength/Focus/Capacity

Goal: Assess and clarify EVEI's role, mandate and structure by December 2022

Action	Who	Timing
Determine whether to establish a business advisory group	EVEI Committee	Include on agenda at Q3 2021 EVEI meeting
Continue to consolidate EVEI documents and Committee on-boarding package	Coordinator	On-going to June 2022
Present an annual report to local governments	EVEI Committee	October 2021
Address fundamental role of EVEI going forward (engage RDI research referenced in Focus Area 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess coordinator role Review Terms of Reference and update EVEI mandate if/as needed 	EVEI Committee	Start conversations in Q1 2022
Seek Year 2 funding for Economic Recovery Advisor	EVEI Committee	Begin these efforts in Q1 2022
Optimize and build on the Economic Recovery Advisor role	EVEI Committee	Include time on meeting agendas beginning Q4 2021 to start identifying opportunities

Summary of Key Projects 2021-2022

- Prepare Elk Valley profile and community profiles (with replicable templates)
- Complete updated BRE reports for all three communities (with replicable templates)
- Design and build-out EVEI website to be a public facing economic development resource page for the Elk Valley
- Research other collaborative regional economic development models and address EVEI core mandate/structure for 2023 and beyond
- Secure a second year of funding to continue the Economic (Recovery) Advisor position

Calendar Highlights for 2021-2022

May-June 2021

- Finalize EVEI strategic plan 2021-2022
- Prepare for on-boarding of Economic Recovery Advisor

July-September 2021

- On-boarding of Economic Recovery Advisor



- Commence template development and data collection for BRE and community profiles
- Begin aggregating resources for enhanced EVEI website
- Determine if/when to establish an EVEI business advisory group

October-December 2021

- Present EVEI annual report to local governments
- Identify opportunities and plan for realtor engagement
- Identify opportunities to increase the economic development news feed in the Elk Valley

January-March 2022

- Review collaborative regional economic development models (RDI research). Begin conversations on mandate/role and structure of EVEI going forward, including coordinator role, and updating EVEI Terms of Reference and EVEI Foundation Statements as needed.
- Identify opportunities to optimize and build on the Economic Recovery Advisor role and begin to seek funding to continue the position for a second year

April-June 2022

- Completion of BRE reports
- Identify a project that responds to a need/challenge identified by the BRE initiative
- Completion of Elk Valley profile and community profiles
- Develop promotion strategy for enhanced EVEI website

July-September 2022

- Launch outward-facing EVEI website
- Develop and seek funding for BRE follow-up project
- Complete plan for any restructuring of the EVEI

October-December 2022

- Present EVEI annual report to local governments
- Schedule strategic planning for 2023-2024
- Review current processes for initial point of contact and investor followup



Appendix: EVEI Terms of Reference (2019)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

1.1 The scope of the Elk Valley Economic Initiative is described as follows:

The Elk Valley Economic Initiative has members representing the City of Fernie, the District of Sparwood, the District of Elkford, the Tobacco Plains Indian Band as well as the communities' Chambers of Commerce and industry. We are supported by representatives from the BC Rural Development Division, Community Futures East Kootenay, Imagine Kootenay, Columbia Basin Trust and other economic development organizations.

The purpose of the Initiative is to collaboratively pursue regional economic development projects and initiatives in the Elk Valley striving to expand opportunities for existing businesses, attract new ones and diversify existing businesses.

Mandate

2.1 The Mandate of the Committee is to:

- 2.1.1 Represent a balance of community interests.
- 2.1.2 Contribute to the development of the committee goals and principles.
- 2.1.3 Assist in developing and evaluating a variety of options to enhance Economic Development in the Elk Valley.
- 2.1.4 Participate in smaller ad-hoc committees dealing with specific issues or tasks, as required.

Committee Structure

3.1 The committee has eight (8) voting members:

- One representative from the Elkford Chamber of Commerce
- One representative from the Sparwood Chamber of Commerce
- One representative from the Fernie Chamber of Commerce
- One representative from the District of Elkford
- One representative from the District of Sparwood



- One representative from the City of Fernie
- One representative from the Tobacco Plains Band
- One representative from Teck

Each local government representative will be appointed to the Committee by a Council Resolution. Each Chamber of Commerce representative will be appointed to the Committee by a Board resolution.

In addition to mandated Committee members, the following four (4) non-voting members are invited to attend each Committee meeting:

- BC Rural Economic Development Division
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Community Futures East Kootenay
- Imagine Kootenay

Meetings

- 4.1 The Committee will meet a minimum of four (4) times a year on the days and times specified in an annual meeting schedule.
- 4.2 A quorum of 50% of voting members plus one is needed to conduct a meeting of the EVEI.
- 4.3 Decision-making is by 2/3 of voting members, with emphasis on collaborative discussions.
- 4.4 Sub committees may be formed in relation to event planning and will be struck if and when necessary with an accompanying Terms of Reference.

Chair and Vice Chair

- 5.1 The Chair and Secretariat will prepare and distribute agendas and minutes in a timely fashion.
 - 5.1.1 Minutes and corresponding action items will be circulated within a week of a committee meetings.
 - 5.1.2 Meeting committee members will receive the agenda and supporting material a week in advance of a scheduled committee meeting.
 - 5.1.3 As per the contract between EVEI and the 'Secretariat', the 'Secretariat' is responsible for taking minutes. Draft minutes will be approved by the Committee at their next meeting, and then forwarded to respective boards/Councils for information.
- 5.2 Regular communications between meetings is by email or other accepted form of communication.

- 5.3 Annual presentation of financial status of EVEI will be presented by the Secretariat at the first meeting of the calendar year.

Chair and Vice Chair:

- 6.1 The Chair and Vice Chair are elected from amongst the voting membership at the first meeting of each calendar year.
- 6.2 The Committee Chair, and in that person's absence the Vice Chair:
- 6.2.1 Call and preside over meetings.
- 6.2.2 Ensure that proper meeting procedure is followed according to Robert's Rules of Order, that order is maintained, and that votes are accurately counted.
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- 6.2.3 Ensure active participation by all Committee members, prevent individual Committee members from dominating the debate, ensure that discussion and debate focus on the matter at hand, and require respect and courtesy; and;
- 6.2.4 Maintain decorum and civility, which includes not tolerating abusive speech, foul language, nor vocal expressions of approval or disapproval from Committee members or any other persons attending the meetings.
- 6.2.5 Have the authority to expel members of other persons from a meeting if they consider that the person is acting improperly.

Absenteeism:

- 7.1 Members who miss two consecutive meetings may have their membership revoked at the Board's discretion.

Conflict of Interest:

- 8.1 Members must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest. The member involved should excuse themselves from proceedings that relate to the conflict unless explicitly requested to speak, on a majority vote to do so. Any subsequent information provided by the individual will clearly be identified in the minutes as coming from a source perceived to be in conflict of interest.
- 8.2 A Committee member who contravenes the conflict of interest provisions shall be removed from the Committee, unless the contravention was done inadvertently or because of an error in judgement made in good faith.

Member Responsibilities/ Code of Conduct

- 9.1 Members have the responsibility to:



- 9.1.1 To respect that the Chair, unless the Chair appoints otherwise, holds the representational voice for the EVEI;
- 9.1.2 Understand the mandate, tasks and desired outcomes of the Committee;
- 9.1.3 Understand and represent the interests of the Committee;
- 9.1.4 Act on opportunities to communicate positively about the Committee;
- 9.1.5 Support open discussion and debate, and encourage fellow Committee members to voice their insight and opinions;
- 9.1.6 Recognize they may be asked to leave a meeting by the Chair for lack of attendance, or inappropriate or disrespectful conduct;
- 9.1.7 Members will treat every person with dignity, understanding and respect;
- 9.1.8 Demonstrate awareness of their own conduct and consider how their words or action may be perceived as offensive or demeaning;
- 9.1.9 Not engage in behavior that is insulting or abusive.