



Elk Valley  
Economic Initiative

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**Elk Valley Economic Initiative**

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## Elk Valley Economic Development Officer

### WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

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A community driven process where communities identify and initiate their own solutions to economic, social, and environmental issues to build healthy, economically viable communities. Economic Development contains principles and goals based on a grassroots approach to development where communities choose deliberate actions to influence the local economy and improve the quality of life for its residents.

*Source: Community Economic Development for the Local Economic Development Officer by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development*

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE ELK VALLEY

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Before the Elk Valley region can effectively implement Economic Development (ED) processes, the Elk Valley must commit to long-term support of economic development processes. This means all Elk Valley Economic Initiative (EVEI) voting members, including municipal councils, must be prepared to invest in ED to make positive changes in the region.

There should be active communication with all three councils and municipal staff. The Elk Valley Economic Developer Officer (EDO) should provide quarterly updates to each mayor and council. In addition, the EDO should attend the EVEI's bimonthly meetings to provide updates on work and collaborate with the EVEI Coordinator and Chair to prepare, review, and distribute

meeting agendas and meeting minutes. Quarterly one on one meetings with each EVEI voting member should also be held to ensure equal cooperation between all partners.

The EVEI operates in a “hybrid” model of local economic development service delivery as defined by Selkirk Innovates. The economic development service is delivered through an agreement between eight agencies, including local government. Advisory is broad, encompassing a range of organizations, including local government. Decision making power is conducted by representatives from the 8 voting members on the EVEI board.

## **EVEI COMMITTEE VOTING MEMBERS**

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- 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 (*vacant*)
- One representative from Teck (*vacant*)

## **PROPOSED ROLES OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER IN THE ELK VALLEY**

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- Create a coordinated and unified approach to economic development in the Elk Valley.
- Build organizational strength to identify and apply for economic development funding opportunities, leveraging funds to accomplish larger projects.
- Assist municipalities by providing practical insights and usable information for planning and work.
- Create a hub for data and information sharing on housing, employee recruitment and retention in the Elk Valley.
- Build community economic recovery and resilience. Economic diversification, small business supports, and sustainable development are all critical to reducing vulnerabilities in economic recovery from natural disasters and emergencies.

- Streamline municipal regulatory and approvals processes to reduce uncertainty, increase transparency, and facilitate economic development in alignment with identified community and corridor priorities.

Specific work examples that the Elk Valley EDO could do are listed below, divided into five economic development categories. This work has been sourced through EVEI business retention and expansion reports, the EVEI Housing Report, and the RDI 2020 Investment Readiness Assessment: Elk Valley Corridor.

- **Workforce Attraction:**
  - Actively recruit workforce from outside of the geographic area through collaboration with the three Chambers of Commerce.
  - Promote and support employment programs. The EVEI should create a webpage listing employment program and host an education session for the three chambers of commerce in the Elk Valley to ensure they have the knowledge to help support local businesses in applying for employment program grants.
- **Local Business Support:**
  - Development of an Elk Valley wide business list.
  - Support Intercommunity businesses in the Elk Valley.
  - Work with municipalities to create a similar structure for business licenses in all three communities.
- **Housing:**
  - Provide housing society support. Bridge the communication gap between housing societies and housing partners. Increase collaboration with societies and create a more unified approach to housing. Coordinate the housing need assessments to feature localized data, include local nonprofits, and create the ability to scale up to Elk Valley housing data. Quantify the “shadow population” in the Elk Valley to obtain accurate housing demand numbers.
  - Create a regional approach to developer incentives and bylaw amendments to stimulate the building of workforce, rental, and affordable housing. Take the lead and work with large employers who require workforce housing and ensure the demand for this type of housing in the Elk Valley is communicated to developers. Review bylaws with municipalities to identify incentives to increase variety of housing in the Elk Valley.
  - Work with municipalities to identify land for housing projects, develop available land for housing, and coordinate possible land provisions for supportive and affordable

housing. Review land zoning to increase density and multi-unit family housing throughout the Elk Valley. Ensure there is a regional and collaborative approach to this work to avoid duplicate efforts.

- **Business Retention and Expansion**

- Provide assistance with identifying and securing new sites for businesses in collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce and municipalities.
- Assist businesses with exploring financing options.
- Continue to support and encourage effective succession planning within the local business community in collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce.
- Strengthen communication with communities and individual businesses.
- Provide business planning and management / leadership training for micro-businesses in collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce and improve availability of business skills training.

- **Investment Readiness & Attraction\***

- Continue to seek opportunities to collaborate effectively develop and cohesive presence as a corridor that is “open for business” while acknowledging and respecting the differences in municipal visions, goals, and regulatory frameworks.
- Increased awareness of designated contacts for local economic development inquiries within and between Elk Valley communities.

*\*These job descriptions have been sourced from the RDI 2020 Investment Readiness Assessment: Elk Valley Corridor: <https://sc.arcabc.ca/islandora/object/sc%3A5427>*

## COST

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\$85,000 a year equitably split between the three municipalities by population size.

The below cost calculation does not include the approximate \$18,000 a year received by the EVEI through the Intercommunity Business License Agreement.

	Fernie	Sparwood	Elkford	RDEK A	RDEK B	Elk Valley
Population (Census 2021)	6,320	4,184	2,749	1,875	2,011	17,139
Population as a percentage of the Elk Valley	37%	24%	16%	11%	12%	100%
Funding Amount	\$31,450.00	\$20,400.00	\$13,600.00	\$9,350.00	\$10,200.00	\$85,000.00
Funding Amount 2023	\$15,725.00	\$10,200.00	\$6,800.00	\$4,675.00	\$5,100.00	\$42,500.00

There are examples of cost being calculated by a split of population and the areas share of total property assessment, or number of Class 6 (business and other) assessed properties in those areas.

The EVEI Coordinator recommends that for municipal budget asks for 2023, a half year cost is calculated, with the funding starting in July 2023.

### **BREAKDOWN (APPROXIMATE)**

Total Yearly Funding: \$103,000

EDO Staff Salary: \$70,000

EVEI Expenses: \$15,000

Reserve Fund (To take on larger regional economic development projects as identified by the EVEI Committee): \$18,000



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDING MODELS

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Economic Development Group	Is the Regional District Involved?	Providing funds?	Funding Model	Total Funding Per year
Nelson & Area Economic Partnership	Yes	Yes	City of Nelson; RDCK E&F - \$100K City of Nelson; \$20K each Areas E&F	\$140,000
Columbia Valley Community Economic Development Partnership	Yes	Yes	Municipal tax bylaw administered by the Regional District. RDEK F & G, District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats and Village of Radium Hot Springs. \$70,000 from tax & \$40,000 in rural dividend. Based on converted value of land and improvements in those areas.	\$110,000
Creston Valley Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership	Yes	Yes	Town of Creston & RDCK A, B, C contribute through tax bylaw based on population	\$120,000
Golden Community Economic Development	Yes	Yes	Partially funded through CSRD and town discretionary funds - pushing towards inclusive directly in taxes	N/A
Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation	Yes	Yes	Formula based on 50% share of population and 50% converted value of land and improvements with service area from 5 municipalities and RDKB A & B	\$225,000
Elk Valley Economic Initiative	No	No	Intercommunity business license agreement	\$18,000

## APPENDIX

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# COLUMBIA VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT BYLAW NO. 2606, 2015

This is a consolidation of the Service Establishment Bylaw and adopted Bylaw amendments. The amendments have been combined with the original Bylaw for convenience only. This consolidation is not a legal document.

March 17, 2015

BYLAW AMENDMENTS				
Bylaw No.	Amend. No./Yr.	Adopted	Short Citing	Description
2667	1/16	Dec 2/16	Columbia Valley Economic Development Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2606, 2015 – Amendment Bylaw No. 1, 2016.	- Section 6 is repealed and replaced

This is a consolidation of the original Bylaw and adopted bylaw amendments. The amendments have been combined with the original Bylaw for convenience only. This consolidation is not a legal document.

## **REGIONAL DISTRICT OF EAST KOOTENAY BYLAW NO. 1386**

A bylaw to establish a service to promote economic development in the Columbia Valley Subregion.

WHEREAS a regional district may, by bylaw, establish and operate a service;

AND WHEREAS the Board of the Regional District of East Kootenay wishes to establish a service to promote economic development in the Columbia Valley Subregion;

AND WHEREAS, in the case of an establishing bylaw for the promotion of economic development, the Board may authorize electoral participating area approval to be given by the electoral area director consenting in writing to the adoption of the bylaw, where the proposed participating area for the service includes all of the electoral area and the service can be established without borrowing;

AND WHEREAS the Director of Electoral Area F and the Director of Electoral Area G have consented, in writing, to adoption of this Bylaw;

AND WHEREAS the Councils of the District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats and Village of Radium Hot Springs have consented on behalf of the electors within the municipal participating areas, to adoption of this Bylaw;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of the Regional District of East Kootenay, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. This Bylaw may be cited as “Regional District of East Kootenay – Columbia Valley Economic Development Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2606, 2015.”
2. The Regional Board hereby establishes a service for the purpose of promoting economic development within Electoral Areas F and G, the District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats and Village of Radium Hot Springs.



3. The boundaries of the service area are the boundaries of Electoral Areas F and G, the District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats and Village of Radium Hot Springs and the service area is known as the “Columbia Valley Economic Development Service Area”.
4. The participants in the service established under Section 2 of this Bylaw are Electoral Areas F and G, the District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats and Village of Radium Hot Springs.
5. The annual costs for providing the service under Section 2 of this Bylaw shall be recovered by one or more of the following:
  - a) requisition of money to be collected by a property value tax;
  - b) fees and charges that may be imposed by separate bylaw;
  - c) revenues raised by other means authorized under the *Local Government Act* or another Act;
  - d) revenues received by way of agreement, enterprise, gift, grant or otherwise.
6. **The annual costs for providing the service under Section 2 of this Bylaw shall be apportioned among the municipal and electoral participating areas on the basis of the number of Class 6 (business and other) assessed properties in those areas.**

BL 2667  
Dec. 2/16

READ A FIRST TIME the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

READ A SECOND TIME the 29<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.

READ A THIRD TIME 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2015.

APPROVED BY THE INSPECTOR OF MUNICIPALITIES the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2015.

ADOPTED the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016.