

WELLS-BARKERVILLE
CULTURE AND RECREATION CENTRE

BUSINESS PLAN

September 30, 2020



About This Document

Wells-Barkerville Culture and Recreation Centre is located at 4386 Mildred Ave., Wells, BC, V0K 2R0, Canada.

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Select photos provided by Island Mountain Arts Society (www.support-imarts.com), Wells Historical Society (www.wellshistoricalsociety.ca), Mary Matheson (www.marymathesonphotography.com), and Barkerville Historic Town and Park (www.barkerville.ca).

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1 Introduction

The Wells-Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre (WBCRC) is located on a beautiful greenspace in the heart of the small town of Wells, British Columbia. Over the years, this location has supported a wide range of uses including learning, arts, recreation, professional services, and public works. The facility is considered a valuable community amenity that should be maintained for future generations.

In an effort to address health, safety and energy deficiencies in the facility and move towards a self-sustaining operational model, the District of Wells aims to:

1. secure funding (e.g., grants, partnerships) to upgrade and renovate the facility to ensure it meets health and safety regulations and is energy efficient;
2. identify new economic development opportunities to maximize the use of the facility and generate additional revenues to cover operating costs; and
3. improve the facility, over time, so that it meets the growing needs of the users and the communities it serves.

This Business Plan outlines the current uses of the WBCRC, the required upgrades and renovations needed to meet its year-round demand, and suggests opportunities for new revenue streams. This plan is an evolving document and should, if funding is secured, be amended to capture user and stakeholder input, identify gaps in how the WBCRC is serving users, and include a financial analysis of any new revenue-generating opportunities.

Wells-Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre and grounds



2 Vision

When the WBCRC property was first developed in the 1940s, the vision was for it to be a community facility. However, throughout the proceeding decades, it was primarily used as a school. This vision was revisited by the District of Wells in 2003 when they purchased the building. They wanted to move away from it being primarily regarded as a school and towards being recognized as a multi-purpose cultural, recreation, and learning centre. Although the facility had long been used for non-school purposes prior to 2003 (e.g., events), exploring new opportunities to rent and lease spaces to community groups became more of a focus.

The current vision for the WBCRC is:

"The Wells-Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre is a vibrant cultural community facility that supports life-long learning, arts, tourism, inclusivity, and recreational activities by preserving our built environment for future generations and supporting economic recovery and well-being."

In light of COVID-19 and its impact on small rural communities, such as Wells, it is critical to retain existing infrastructure, focus on attracting and retaining residents and businesses, and to grow tourism and other industries as the town recovers from the pandemic. It is also important to find ways to support the wellbeing of residents and improve accessibility to the facility for all.

Through partnerships, new funding, program expansion and innovative projects, the District of Wells also hopes to find new ways to cover the operating costs of the facility and contribute towards future upgrades.

This vision considers the residents of Wells and area, local businesses, and the following partners, organizations, and stakeholders (in alphabetical order):

- Barkerville Gold Mines Ltd.
- Barkerville Historic Town and Park
- District of Wells
- Funding Partners (public, private and non-profit)
- Indigenous Communities including Lhtako Dené Nation
- Island Mountain Arts Society
- School District 28 (Quesnel)
- Sunset Theatre Society
- Wells-Barkerville Community Forest
- Wells and Area Community Association
- Wells and Area Trails Society
- Wells and District Chamber of Commerce
- Wells Barkerville Parent Advisory Committee
- Wells Historical Society
- Wells Snowmobile Club

3 Background

About Wells

Situated at 1,200 metres elevation, Wells is a charming mountain town with a rich history of mining, arts, and adventure. It is the gateway community to Barkerville Historic Town and Park (located 10 minutes southeast of Wells) and Bowron Lake Provincial Park (25 minutes northeast). Wells has a year-round population of approximately 220 residents which generally doubles in summer with artisans, second-home owners, and seasonal employees. Within a 40 km radius of the town centre, the population is approximately 300. The closest major urban centres are Quesnel (one-hour drive west) and Prince George (2.5-hour drive northwest).

Following the closure of the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine in 1967, the community of Wells successfully transitioned to a tourism-driven, peak-summer economy. Known as a place of arts, culture and natural splendour, this picturesque town is a world-class recreation area and a retreat for artists. Wells has an abundance of character and it continues to embody the gold-fever vitality that once invigorated the area.



Tourism

Between May and September, Wells sees more than 60,000 tourists pass through on their way to Barkerville Historic Town and Park. Many visitors and school groups stay or camp overnight in Wells, exploring its arts and recreation offerings. During the summer, visitors enjoy galleries and live performances as part of their visit to the area. In winter, visitors to Wells enjoy its world-class cross-country ski trails, snowmobiling, alpine skiing at nearby Troll Mountain Ski Resort, and artistic and study retreats.

Tourism is seen as a major growth industry for Wells and the community supports focusing resources towards developing links between front country and backcountry tourism, resource stewardship, marketing, and integration of natural and cultural tourism products (District of Wells, 2010). Growth in this sector also supports the attraction and retention of new Wells businesses and residents.

Mining

Originally a company town, Wells was managed by Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine. Fred M. Wells, for whom the town was named, discovered the first notable hard rock deposits in the area. The townsite was designed by Ed Richardson, who later went on to plan such notable places as the British Properties and Park Royal in West Vancouver. The WBCRC sits on a large piece of land that was (and remains) zoned for institutional use (e.g., community use, parks, recreation) and is surrounded by residential areas. It was envisioned that this space would support a variety of community services and recreational spaces.

At its peak in the 1930s, the town of Wells supported 4,500 people. However, in the early 1960s, as mineral deposits were depleted, employment opportunities at the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mining Company started to dwindle. When the mine closed in 1967, many businesses closed or moved. With limited employment options, the population of Wells declined rapidly.

In 2018, Barkerville Gold Mines Ltd. (BGM) announced that they were going to develop a new underground ramp-access mine—the Cariboo Gold Project—near Wells. BGM is currently completing its environmental assessment. If the mine is approved and built, the estimated number of new employees working at the mine will be between 260 and 460. It is anticipated that some workers will move to Wells (e.g., management positions) and the remaining workers will fly-in/fly-out for shift work. This could increase the population of Wells substantially and the need for services and amenities such as those provided by the WBCRC (e.g., fitness and recreation, meeting spaces, high speed internet). Construction is anticipated to start in 2022 with mining commencing in 2024 and continuing for 16 years.

Barkerville Historic Town and Park





Arts & Culture

Established in 1977, the Island Mountain Arts Society (IMA) is a local arts organization that provides access to arts education, artisan spaces, and experiences. IMA is a leader in the north and has created numerous arts and culture programs and events throughout the area. For 43 years, IMA has encouraged the growth and development of a strong artist community in a place previously only known for mining and logging.

IMA owns and operates two spaces in Wells – IMA Public Gallery and The Nest (artist residence). For several decades, IMA has also used the WBCRC to host workshops, artists in residency, festivals, and events. As the organization continues to expand its programming and support local and regional arts and cultural initiatives, its reliance on the facility grows.

Community Forest

Established in 2014, the Wells-Barkerville Community Forest is a 4,534-hectare forest located adjacent to the community of Wells and next to the WBCRC. The vision of the Wells Community Forest Board is to harvest the forest within the parameters of enhancing recreational infrastructure and tourism. As such, the Forest provides critical viewsapes and valuable recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking and cross-country skiing), combined with logging revenues for the District of Wells (Morgan and Wright, 2020).

Approximately 40 hectares of the Forest has been designated as a Learning Forest for students, locals, and visitors to learn and connect with nature. The community plans to build an interpretative trail (partially constructed as a boardwalk) between the WBCRC and the Learning Forest to support forest education and research programs and to increase the tourism potential between Wells and other visitor attractions, including the Cornish Mountain recreational trail system. In March 2020, the Wells and Area Trails Society received a grant for \$79,190 from the BC Government Community Development Grant Program to support phase one of this three-phase project.

Since the Learning Forest is protected from commercial harvesting and is located at a high elevation compared to most of the other 50 Provincial Community Forests, it has already proven to be an ideal location for academic sampling, research, and mapping studies. Students from the University of British Columbia have a growing interest in using the Forest for future research projects.



Education

The Wells-Barkerville area has been providing education for children since 1871 when the first school was established between Barkerville and Richfield (south of Barkerville). The first school in Wells opened in the late 1930s on the grounds of the current facility. In 1942, Barkerville's school closed and those students were bused to Wells. The existing Wells-Barkerville School building opened around this time.

This new building was a large, modern, light-filled facility that featured a science lab, home economics room, wood-working shop, library, and six classrooms. In 1964, a gymnasium, foyer, and supplemental washrooms were added to the south end of the building. By 1980, all students from kindergarten to grade 10 attended school in Wells, with the older students boarding in Quesnel.

In 2002, School District 28 Quesnel (SD28) announced that they were going to close the Wells-Barkerville School citing low enrollment. Their plan was to bus all students to Quesnel. The people of Wells, recognizing how vital the school was to the health and wellbeing of the community, fought to keep the school in the community. Eventually, an agreement was reached whereby the District of Wells would own and maintain the building as a multi-use cultural facility and SD28 would lease a portion of the building and provide teachers. The school began operating under this new model in April 2003 and operates today on the main floor, leasing three spaces (a classroom, library and an office) for a student body of fifteen students.

School Grounds

The grounds surrounding the facility are comprised of approximately three acres of flat green space that includes a pavilion, field, children's playground, outdoor ice-skating rink, and school greenhouse and garden. The space is currently used for hosting events, such as the ArtsWells Festival, and could be further developed into an urban park with access to the Learning Forest.

4 Economic Impact

The WBCRC was an invaluable community amenity long before the building was purchased by the District of Wells in 2003. Over the decades, the economic and social benefits of the facility, and the services it provides, have been significant.

Since 2003, the operating costs for the building have more than doubled, but revenue has increased at a much slower pace. In recent years, the amount of revenue generated by the users of the facility (leases and fee-for-use) has not covered the annual operating costs of the building. However, there are several opportunities to expand the building's long-term use and explore new and extended leases that could fund the facility's operational costs. Several of the current users have expressed interest in long-term rental guarantees and retrofitting some of the spaces to meet the specific needs of users, e.g., permanent artist studios.

Current Tenants

The following tenants are currently leasing spaces in the WBCRC:

- Island Mountain Arts Society
- Schools and youth groups attending Barkerville's spring and summer programs
- School District 28 (Quesnel)
- Wildflowers Daycare
- Independent artists

The District of Wells also uses the basement workshop space for public works maintenance projects and equipment storage.

Even though 2020 has been an especially challenging year for small rural communities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WBCRC continues to be a critical amenity for several organizations and an important part of their ongoing operations. In fact, several organizations are working on plans to expand their year-round programming which will likely increase their dependency on the facility.

Refer to *Appendix C – Facility Spaces* for more information about current tenants and uses.

Economic Impact

Barkerville Historic Town School Program

Barkerville Historic Town's spring school program (running May through June) is one of the tourist attraction's largest economic generators. They host large groups of youth and school children who visit from communities around BC and stay overnight in the gymnasium of the WBCRC. As the size of these school groups continues to grow, year after year, the demand for this space has increased. Without the facility, Barkerville would not be able to continue their spring program.

The WBCRC also provides indirect benefits to Barkerville. Several staff who work seasonally at the historic town are also employed in the off-season by organizations that depend on the WBCRC (e.g., IMA, SD28). The loss of the use of the WBCRC, and the subsequent impact on the Barkerville School Program, would result in a loss of a seasonal income causing employees to leave the community in search of alternative employment. Additionally, downsizing or cancelling the spring program would impact employee attraction and retention, e.g. university students who are seeking employment from May to August. Without a spring program and delayed recruitment until July, students may look elsewhere for employment. This would have a significant impact not only on the operations of Barkerville Historic Town, but also on many local businesses.

Compounding Barkerville's dependence on the use of the facility is the fact that many of Barkerville's skilled staff send their children to the Wells-Barkerville School. Without access to the school, these employees would likely leave Wells and relocate to another community where they can access schooling for their children and professional employment.

In 2019, through the spring program, the WBCRC provided affordable accommodation for 58 school groups (2,300 participants) which resulted in the following economic impact:

- \$20,000 in direct revenue to Barkerville Historic Town (800 hours of employment); and
- \$60,000 in direct revenue to Barkerville and Wells businesses that provide food, accommodation, and entertainment services for school groups.

Barkerville also employs artists who provide arts and culture experiences for their guests. These artists reside in Wells and continue working on their craft in either home-based or rented studio spaces such as those offered at the WBCRC.

Island Mountain Arts Society

The Island Mountain Arts Society (IMA) has been running art workshops and growing the arts community in Wells for 43 years and supports and attracts artists from near and far. According to the 2016 Canadian Census, 22% of Wells residents were employed in arts and culture. In 2019, IMA spent \$17,000 marketing and communicating its events and programs around BC. This is an invaluable marketing opportunity for Wells and both directly and indirectly impacts return visitation and resident attraction.

Photos courtesy of Mary Matheson





IMA programs and events that depend on the WBCRC include:

- *ArtsWells Festival* – This festival is the largest celebration of music and art in the Cariboo region and has been hosted in Wells and Barkerville for 17 years. In 2010, it was voted one of the top 10 music festivals in Canada by CBC. In 2019, 2,200 attendees spent more than \$850,000 in the community, with 60% of attendees spending at least three nights in the area. The WBCRC is integral to the success of the festival, serving as a venue for artists and festival programming, and the food hall for attendees. The festival also employs several local residents, contributing \$160,000 in wages in 2019 into the local economy.
- *Toni Onley Artist Project* – Participating artists from across Canada spend nine days in Wells working in IMA studios under the mentorship of senior artists. Each year, IMA leases spaces in the WBCRC.
- *Harp Cello School* – IMA's Harp Cello School has been running programs in Wells for 34 years. Each year, participants from across Canada and the US are invited to stay and study in Wells, attending several classes and events in the WBCRC.
- *Artist Residencies* – In 2019, IMA hosted 17 year-round arts, music and cultural programs, and hosted 15 artist residencies, many of whom had their studios in the WBCRC.

Small Businesses

Several small businesses rent and lease space in the WBCRC seasonally and year-round. With few spaces large enough in Wells for a commercial business (e.g. a daycare), the facility offers an incredible opportunity for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Additionally, with access to high speed internet, free parking and meeting spaces, the WBCRC is well-positioned to support local professionals who work remotely. This is incredibly important in a community, like Wells, where there is no available cellular service.

5 Facility Upgrades and Renovations

About the Property

The second floor and basement of the building are mostly flex space areas used for activities and programs such as adult learning, workshops, fitness, recreation, artist studios, meetings, office spaces, and childcare. On the main floor, two rooms and an office have been primarily used by the Wells-Barkerville School. The commercial kitchen and an additional classroom are available as rental spaces, with the gymnasium and stage often used for large events, performances, and visiting school groups. The grounds surrounding the building include open green spaces, sports fields, playground equipment, an ice rink, a cross country ski track, a pavilion, a greenhouse, and ground-level parking for approximately 10 vehicles. Refer to *Appendix A* and *Appendix B* for floor plans and a site plan.

As operating costs for the building steadily rose, the District of Wells (following its acquisition of the building in 2003) invested in a series of upgrades to enable the building to operate more efficiently. They installed a new geothermal heat pump and added insulation to the walls and attic to off-set heating costs. They also replaced the boilers with a new state-of-the-art system that is powered by propane rather than oil.

In June 2019, the District of Wells retained Pinchin Ltd. to complete a facility condition assessment of the WBCRC to identify required upgrades. Their assessment included structural, mechanical, electrical, and hazardous building material reviews. The Pinchin Report provides an excellent road map for the District of Wells in ensuring that the building meets current health and safety codes. Included in the recommendations were: replace the roof membrane, upgrade ventilation to meet ASHRAE 62.1 standards¹, and upgrade the fire alarm system.

As the WBCRC continues to age, it is less able to meet the growing needs of the community or current energy, health and safety standards. With the proposed upgrades and renovations, the community of Wells hopes to retain this valuable piece of infrastructure and maximize revenue generating opportunities for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility. The upgrades to the building also align with the District of Well's Official Community Plan that aims 'to minimize Green House Gas Emissions and prepare the community of Wells for Climate Change' (District of Wells, 2010).

Upgrades & Renovations

Upgrades and renovations have been categorized into four areas of focus. The required work within each of these areas of focus has been further prioritized into three phases. These phases can be completed as one large project or a series of smaller projects as resources allow. Refer to *Appendix D – Upgrades and Renovations* for details.

¹ https://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/standards/ashrae-62-1-2019?product_id=2088533

The timeline between each phase is yet to be confirmed, but will likely range from 1-5 years depending on the cost and regulatory standards associated with each project.

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

As the facility was constructed in the 1940s—with additions in 1960s—many materials and techniques used are now out-dated and have been replaced by more energy-efficient alternatives. By updating several of the building’s materials and systems, the facility will significantly reduce its heating costs and start to meet the District’s OCP policy of minimizing greenhouse gas emissions (District of Wells, 2010). For example, by sealing the building envelope (i.e., installing a new roof membrane, exterior insulation, and cladding) this will reduce heat loss resulting in reductions in fossil fuel consumption.

Three objectives have been identified for energy efficiency upgrades:

1. increase the integrity of the building envelop to reduce heat loss;
2. decrease electrical consumption; and
3. replace some electrical/propane systems with alternative renewable energy sources.

Accessibility Upgrades

The objective of these upgrades is to increase accessibility to and around the building for people with disabilities (e.g., wheelchairs), including retrofitting a washroom.

Health and Safety Upgrades

The objective of these upgrades is to update building materials and systems to address the health and safety issues.

Recreation and Green Space Upgrades

The objective of these upgrades is to improve the quality and safety of outdoor recreation infrastructure and the design and function of green spaces for residents to enjoy and to attract new visitors to Wells.

6 Future Opportunities

In line with the vision to create a community-based cultural facility that supports life-long learning, arts, tourism, inclusivity, and recreational activities, the District of Wells has the potential to maximize the use of the facility to better serve the community, consolidate programs and services under one roof (energy efficiencies), and generate incremental revenues. New opportunities are summarized in this section – they should be explored as funding becomes available and in conjunction with current uses.

Where appropriate, applicable provincial, regional, municipal and Indigenous community plans have been identified to demonstrate their alignment with these opportunities.

Grow Recreation, Health & Wellness

The facility is well suited to support a fitness centre, organized indoor and outdoor recreation, large sporting events, and health and wellness services. It is also large enough to accommodate an urban park (or “village green”) concept that is central to the community, promotes wellbeing, and is an attraction for visitors.

- Move the Fitness Centre (temporarily located in the Community Hall) back to the renovated space in the WBCRC.
- Offer programming for year-round indoor youth and family recreation activities.
- Update outdoor playground equipment.
- Update the current outdoor skating rink to include a roof, board replacement, resurfacing and support flexible use in the summer (e.g., pickleball court).
- Explore, plan and develop an urban park for locals and visitors to enjoy. The park may include a forested area, sports grounds, pathways, picnic facilities, sharing circles, viewpoint seating, expanded community garden and greenhouses, mining history equipment/installation, playground equipment, event infrastructure (e.g., stage with power), interpretative signage, art installations, trails into town and to the Learning Forest, washrooms, and parking.
- Expand the existing cross-country ski track to include a snowshoe track.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

BC Ministry for Health –
BC Guiding Framework
for Public Health

District of Wells, Official
Community Plan, Parks &
Recreation Policies

Concept images only



Expand Arts & Culture

Continue to expand the use of the WBCRC for arts and culture and grow Wells as a highly respected and in-demand artist destination. Design spaces within the facility that are purpose-built to meet the specific needs of different artists and programs, e.g. ventilation, lighting, sound insulation, cleaning facilities, and art displays.

- Offer year-round purpose-built artist studios (short and long-term rentals); grow year-round adult learning opportunities taught by visiting artists.
- Create flexible spaces for visiting artists, workshops, and Indigenous and cultural exploration.
- Support outdoor art, culture and music festivals and events, and art installations.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture 2020/21 - 2022/23 Service Plan

BC Arts Council, Strategic Plan 2018-2022

District of Wells, Official Community Plan, Arts & Culture Policies

Develop a Learning Forest

Explore learning and economic development opportunities associated with the new Learning Forest with partners such as the Wells Community Forest, SD28, and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

- Build the new interpretative Learning Forest Trail. In March 2020, the Wells and Area Trails Society received a grant for \$79,190 from the BC Government Community Development Grant Program to support phase one of this three-phase project.
- Partner with UNBC to develop credit-courses and a residency program in the WBCRC for students and staff studying the Learning Forest.
- Explore developing a Neighbourwood², i.e., a community-based tree inventory, monitoring, and stewardship planning program.
- Promote the Learning Forest to visitors of Wells and Barkerville. With sufficient parking and the potential for additional outdoor and indoor amenities, this could become a popular attraction in Wells (i.e. an urban park with additional access to wilderness experiences).
- Consider hosting a Bioblitz³ event to attract scientists for ecological survey and an introduction to the area.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

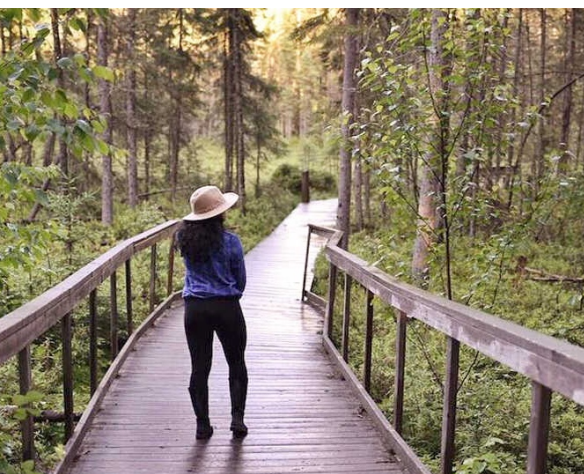
BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development 2020/21 - 2022/23 Service Plan

BC Community Forest Association - Community Forest Program Goals

² <http://neighbourwoods.org/index.html>

³ <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/bioblitz/>

Concept images only



Diversify Learning

The potential benefits gained from leveraging the Learning Forest, a new urban park, and the expansion of arts and culture activities in the WBCRC could be significant and help to diversify learning opportunities for all ages.

- Support the growth of Barkerville Historic Town's spring season school programming and host youth and school groups (e.g., accommodation, programming).
- Open a destination high school that attracts students (and families) from throughout the region, with an emphasis on outdoor learning (e.g., Learning Forest) and adventure learning.
- Build an outdoor education center with nature-based and place-based learning.
- Continue to grow IMA adult arts and culture workshops and residencies.
- Expand pre-school programming, e.g., StrongStart⁴, parenting play groups, and pregnancy outreach.
- Develop Indigenous after-school and summer programming (e.g., traditional crafts) for youth and adults (residents and visitors).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

District of Wells, Official Community Plan, Arts & Culture Policies

BC Ministry of Education - BC's Redesigned Curriculum (ecology and the environment, place-based learning)

⁴ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/support/programs/strongstart-bc>

Concept images only



Offer Professional Services

With an increase in people working remotely, exacerbated by COVID-19, there is an opportunity for Wells to attract professionals in stable, high-paying, knowledge-based jobs without having to build a new economy. These jobs not only benefit the worker's family and lifestyle, but also, in turn, the local economy.

- Offer quiet co-working office spaces with high speed internet
- Provide rentable office and/or meeting spaces

Leverage Partnerships

Strategic partnerships are fundamental to achieving common goals. In a small community, like Wells, partnerships also enable the community to realize initiatives that otherwise would not be feasible.

- Partner with Barkerville Historic Town and Park to support their expanded spring and winter programs.
- Partner with Island Mountain Arts Society, and other local groups, to grow WBCRC as a destination art and culture space. Partner on grant applications for arts and culture, e.g. BC Arts Council Arts Infrastructure Program. Explore long-term leases with the IMA to ensure access to purpose-built spaces.
- In partnership with the Wells Community Forest, develop a 'Learning Forest' outdoor experience that includes building a trail from the school to the forest.
- Partner with UNBC to offer credit courses and student/staff office spaces supported by the Learning Forest.
- Design outdoor-based programs in partnership with the Wells Snowmobile Club, Wells and Area Trails Society, and the Wells Community Forest.
- Explore economic development partnerships with organizations including Community Futures, Cariboo Regional District Economic Development division, and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism.
- Explore local business and industry partnerships and sponsorship agreements, e.g., Barkerville Gold Mine Ltd., West Fraser Forest Products, to support ongoing operational and capital costs of the WBCRC.
- Partner with the Aboriginal Education Centre to support reconciliation and trust building.
- Partner with local makers, artisans and businesses to utilize the commercial kitchen for speciality uses (especially where access to a commercial kitchen is required, e.g. commercially sold consumables).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Province of BC. Welcoming Visitors – Benefiting Locals – Working Together: A strategic framework for Tourism in British Columbia 2019-2021

Destination British Columbia Corporate Strategy 2020-2023

District of Wells, Official Community Plan, Arts & Culture Policies

7 Strategic Approach

The strategic approach to this business plan focuses on completing the upgrades and renovations to the facility, renaming the centre, and exploring new revenue-generating opportunities. This plan should be updated periodically to reflect approved funding, adjusted timelines, and any additional insights about community needs and economic development opportunities.

Goals

1. Create a vibrant, safe, and energy-efficient community asset that is valued and used by local and regional groups for arts, culture, learning, recreation, and other community uses.
2. Support the economic recovery and growth of Wells.
3. Support the health and wellbeing of the residents of Wells and its surrounding communities.
4. Create a space for local businesses to start and grow.
5. Build trusted and lasting relationships between government, industry, non-profits, Indigenous communities, citizens, and local businesses.

Objectives

1. Apply for grants to help fund upgrades and renovations to the WBCRC to meet health, safety, and other regulatory requirements.
2. If funding is approved, start the proposed upgrades and renovations to the WBCRC by October 2021.
3. Continue to engage user groups to identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities for increasing revenue-generating opportunities for the WBCRC.
4. Implement a management model for the ongoing operation and administration of the WBCRC by December 2023.
5. Near the completion of the proposed upgrades and renovations, promote the use of the WBCRC locally and regionally to attract new user groups and revenue-generating opportunities.
6. Aim to increase operational revenues (e.g., fee-for-use and short- and long-term leases) by at least 25% by December 2024.
7. Update this Business Plan annually to reflect new and supplemental information, public input, and realized funding.
8. Complete all upgrades and renovations by December 2024.

Timeline

MILESTONE	DATE
Submit ICIP grant applications	October 2020
Revisit Business Plan	Summer 2021
ICIP grant recipients announced	September 2021
<i>The following dates are contingent on funding:</i>	
Start upgrades and renovations	October 2021
Implement new management model	December 2023
Complete upgrades and renovations	December 2024

Other Considerations

Facility Maintenance

The District of Wells currently uses the basement workshop space for public works maintenance projects and equipment storage. It is anticipated that the District will continue to use this space and provide maintenance oversight for the building. As needed, maintenance would either be performed by the District or contracted to a third party.

Facility Bookings

The District of Wells currently administers bookings for spaces in the building. It is anticipated that the District will continue in this role, or sub-contract this service to a third-party. Balancing the needs of different user groups and maximizing revenue potential are a priority.

Capital Improvements

The District of Wells will continue to oversee capital improvements. Funding for these improvements would most likely be provided through partnerships, grants, and donations.

A New Beginning

The WBCRC has been colloquially referred to as “the school” despite the fact that it provides a greater community function, as described. Coinciding with the growth of the WBCRC as a recognized community-wide amenity, it is proposed that the property be officially renamed. The District of Wells will engage with the community over the winter of 2020/2021 to develop a name that is relevant, meaningful, and inclusive.

Interim Name:

Wells-Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre

Brand Elements

Along with adopting a new name, the District may also develop a brand for the facility that helps to promote the WBCRC locally and regionally. A brand may include a logo, tagline, colour palette, and key messaging and be shared through mediums such as a website, signage, and booking materials.

It is envisioned that a new brand will be:

- inclusive and welcoming;
- current and relevant, yet stand the test of time;
- vibrant and energetic;
- recognizable; and
- easy to use across all marketing and communications mediums.

Developing a Plan

There may be an opportunity for the District of Wells to partner with local organizations, as well as Barkerville Historic Town and Park and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism, to develop a sales and marketing plan designed to attract new business and visitors from around the province.

Justifying the need and scope of this plan will depend on securing funding to upgrade and renovate the facility so that it can meet the needs of a growing user base.

9 Financial Analysis

Funding Opportunities

There are many funding opportunities for the District of Wells and its partners to pursue in support of infrastructure upgrades, operational costs, and specific projects. The funding opportunities listed below represent a sample of grants and opportunities that are applicable to the WBCRC and its partners.

Partnerships & Sponsorships

The District of Wells will continue to explore new partnership opportunities with local industries and business that create mutually beneficial outcomes and benefit the community of Wells.

Arts & Culture

- [BC Arts Council – Arts Infrastructure Program](#). Enables organizations to develop and enhance spaces that support BC’s arts and cultural practitioners, including access to arts and cultural spaces for underserved communities and underrepresented arts and cultural practices; and building capacity to develop, operate and sustain arts and cultural spaces.
- [Canada Council for the Arts – various grant programs](#). Funding for programs that grow the arts and culture, and support Indigenous individuals, groups, Indigenous-led arts organizations, and arts/cultural sector development organizations.
- [Community Gaming Grants – Arts and Culture](#). Supports access and participation in arts and culture activities through policy and program development and funding support.
- [Government of Canada – Canada Cultural Spaces Fund \(CCSF\)](#). Supports the improvement of physical conditions for arts, heritage, culture, and creative innovation. The Fund supports renovation and construction projects, the acquisition of specialized equipment and feasibility studies related to cultural spaces.
- [Government of BC – Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture Program](#). A pilot program to support arts and cultural events, initiatives and engagement by and for local communities. The focus is on communities experiencing hardship, historic oppression or other challenges that would benefit from the power of arts and culture to promote healing, resilience, and connection.

Education Grants

- [ArtStarts in Schools](#). Provides innovative arts programs for young people, practical resources for teachers and artists, and leadership in advocacy for arts in education.
- [Community Gaming Grants – Parent Advisory Council Grants](#). Supports the enhancement of extracurricular opportunities for K-12 students in British Columbia.

- [Farm to School BC](#). Provides healthy, local and sustainable food for schools and provides students with hands-on learning opportunities that develop food literacy, and strengthens the local food system and enhances school and community connectedness.
- [HCTF Education – GO Grants](#). GO Grants provide field trip grants for British Columbia K-12 classes and schools to help get students outdoors to learn about B.C.'s fish, wildlife, habitats, and biodiversity. GO Grants cover transportation, project materials and/or program fees to support student learning and connecting in nature.

Green Spaces & Recreation

- [Canada Communities in Bloom – Scotts Canada Gro Grants](#). Helps communities to develop sustainable gardens and greenspaces.
- [Community Gaming Grants – Sport](#). Provides opportunities for all people to participate in organized, competitive physical activities. (e.g., soccer, swimming, hockey).
- [TD Bank – Friends of the Environment Foundation Grant](#). Supports a wide range of environmental initiatives, with a primary focus on environmental education and green space programs. Eligible projects include schoolyard greening, park revitalization, community gardens, park programming, and citizen science initiatives.
- [Tree Canada – Community Tree Grants](#). This program offers grants and technical and logistical support encouraging the spread of “green infrastructure” in communities. This includes supporting local greening projects as well as developing and rolling out urban forest best management practices and innovative urban design solutions.

Project & Infrastructure Grants

- [Community Gaming Grants - Capital Project Grants](#). Supports the completion of inclusive, accessible capital projects that meet community-identified needs and priorities.
- [Four Rivers Coop – Community Support Fund](#). Provides larger one-time donations to registered charities, non-profit organizations, and community groups that rely on fundraising in order to operate their programs, complete projects or improve facilities, programs and/or services.
- [Government of BC – Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program](#). Supports economic resilience, tourism, heritage, and urban and rural economic development projects in communities impacted by COVID-19.
- [Government of Canada – Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program](#). There are two streams (Community, Culture and Recreation, and Rural and Northern Communities) for infrastructure projects that create economic growth, sustain well-paying jobs, build inclusive communities, and support a low-carbon, green economy.
- [Northern Development Initiative Trust \(NDIT\) – funding streams include: Community Places, Cultural Infrastructure, and Economic Infrastructure](#). NDIT offers a range of funding programs suited to a diverse set of economic development priorities in central and northern British Columbia.

Fundraising

Fundraising for specific projects can be a valuable means of raising funds, however, securing funding for the annual operation of the building should be pursued from other sources, e.g. grants, taxes, Community Forest revenues, fee for use, etc.

Fee for Use

Fee for use includes one-time use (e.g. booking a meeting room, using a field for a sporting event) and short-term and long-term leases (e.g. leasing a space for a week, a month, a season or a year). Although the WBCRC is one of several large spaces that can be used for one-off bookings (e.g., events and festivals), the goal is to maximize recurring revenues through short and long-term leases to cover all operational costs.

To support the health and wellbeing of Well's residents, the District of Wells will continue to offer a local's discount for some services and spaces in the facility.

3-Year Financial Plan

Due to COVID-19 and the anticipated long-term recovery from the pandemic, financials for 2020 and 2021 have not been included in this three-year financial plan. The District of Wells hopes to return to revenues generated in 2019 and increase those revenues over three years, i.e., 2022-2024.

EXPENSES	2019	2022	2023	2024	
	(estimated \$)	(projected \$)	(projected \$)	(projected \$)	
Propane	9,902	10,000	10,300	10,609	3% annual increase
Electricity	14,436	12,000	10,000	10,300	3% annual increase
Fitness Centre	-	250	250	250	
Safety/Security	2,584	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Custodian/Caretaker	-	6,240	8,320	8,320	
General Repairs	4,819	7,000	7,000	7,000	
Snow Removal (roof)	-	3,000	3,250	3,300	
Total	31,741	40,490	41,120	41,779	

REVENUES	2019	2022	2023	2024	
	(estimated \$)	(projected \$)	(projected \$)	(projected \$)	
Leases	17,100	18,810	20,691	21,726	
Visiting Schools/Groups	4,010	4,500	4,950	5,445	
Short Term Rentals	-	1,500	2,000	2,500	
New Revenue Sources	-	10,000	20,000	20,000	
Fitness Centre	-	1,600	2,500	3,200	
Miscellaneous	300	500	500	500	
Total	21,410	36,910	50,641	53,371	

	-10,331	-3,580	9,521	11,592	
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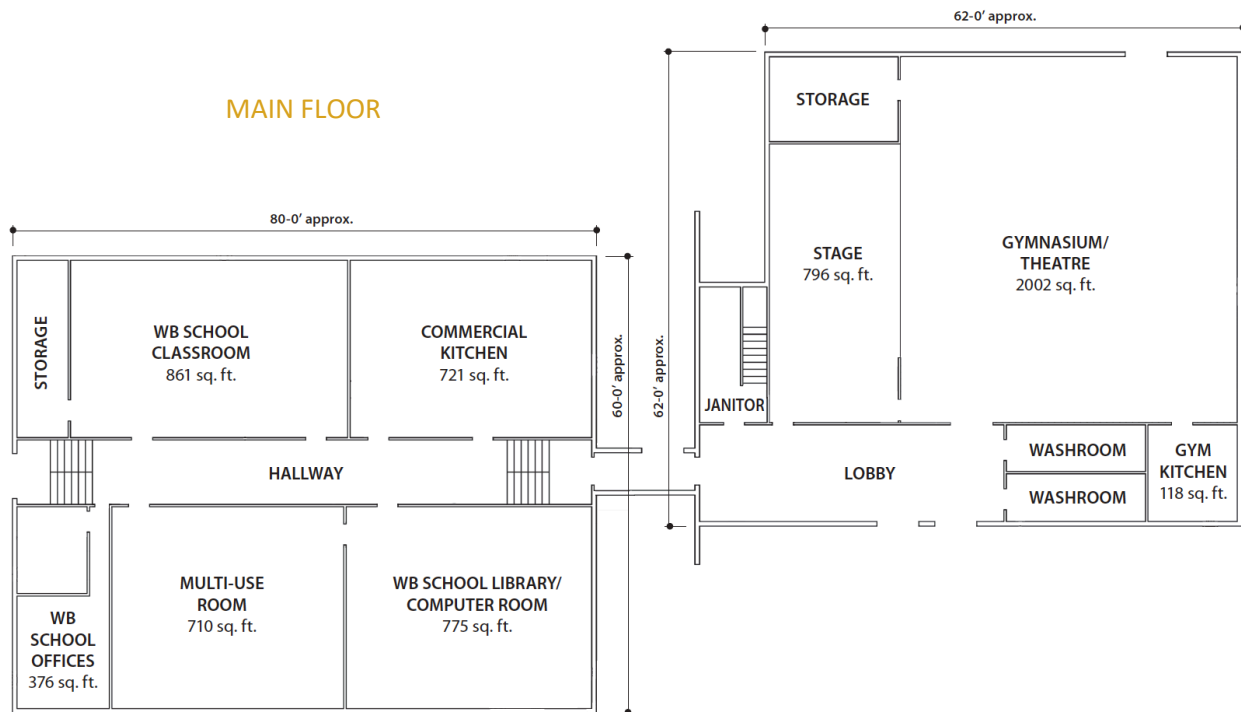
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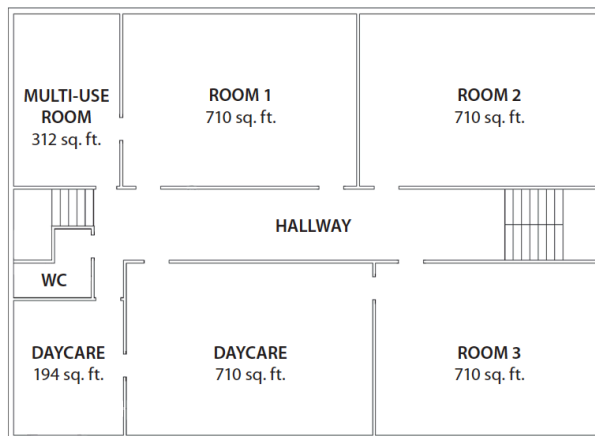
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11 Appendices

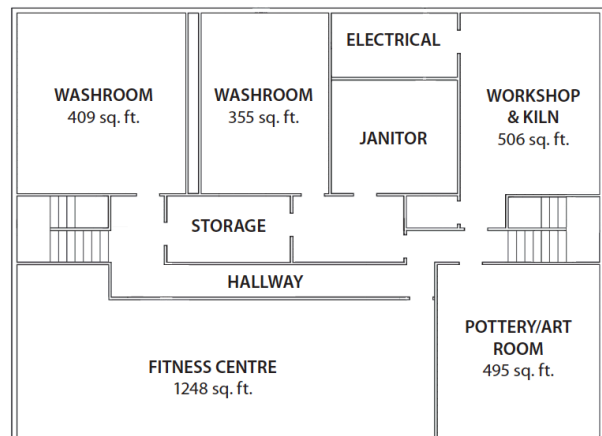
Appendix A: WBCRC Floor Plans



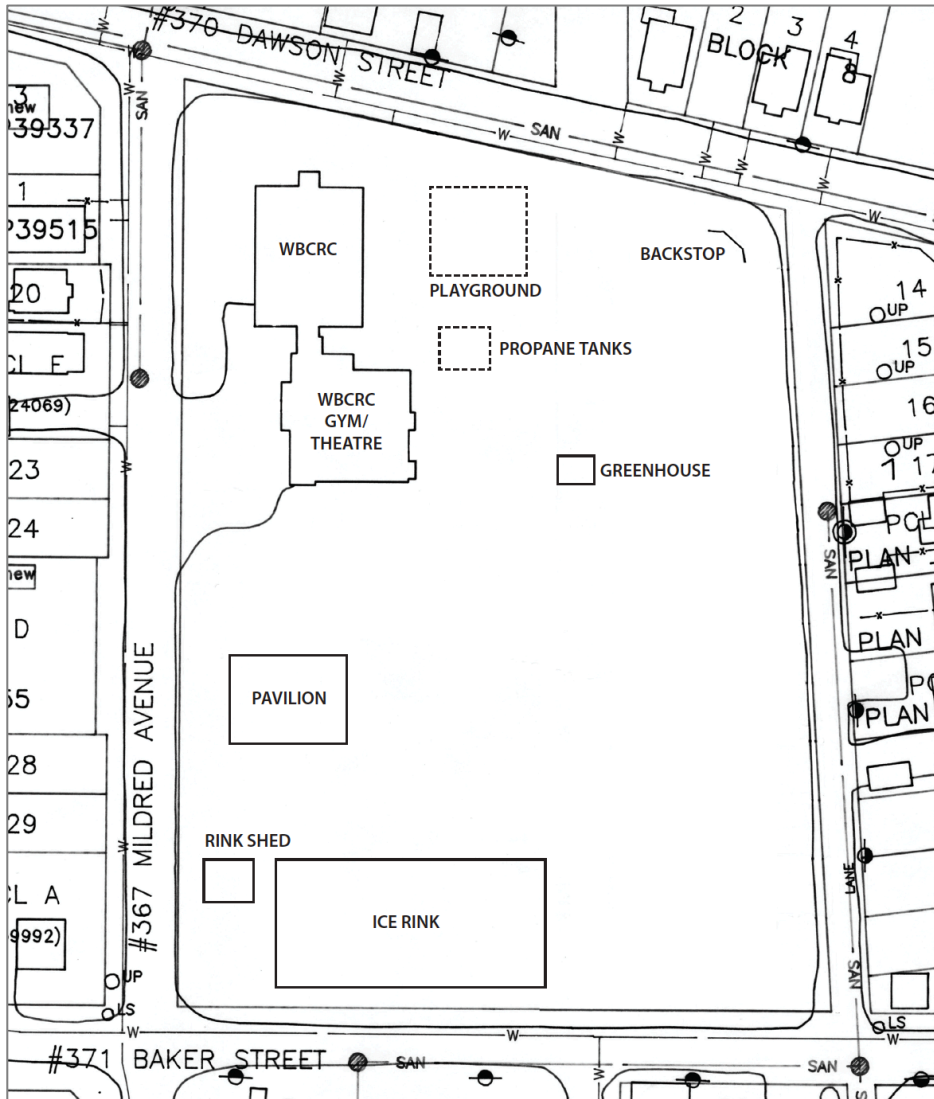
SECOND FLOOR



BASEMENT



Appendix B: WBCRC Site Plan



Appendix C – Facility Spaces

Table 1 – Facility Spaces: Type of Use and Tenants

	SPACE	SQ. FT.*	TYPE OF USE	CURRENT AND PAST TENANTS	FUTURE REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES
MAIN	Gymnasium + Stage + Kitchen + Storage	3142	School group accommodations, indoor organization sports, concerts, theatre performances; speaker series, festival activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Mountain Arts Society Barkerville Historic Town and Park WB School Community groups and individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand arts and culture programming Explore fee for use for SD28 Expand recreational programming
	Multi-Use Room (main floor)	710	Youth education programming, community arts events and classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Mountain Arts Society WB School 	Expand use to include health and wellness classes (e.g., yoga), toddler and youth programming, adult learning; senior activities
	WB School Classroom	861	Classroom (Elementary)		
	WB School Library / Computer Room	775	Library with reading area and computers	School District 28 (lease)	Expand lease to include additional spaces
	WB School Office	376	Secure staff office		
	Commercial Kitchen	721	Private events, community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island Mountain Arts Society WB School Private use (e.g., makers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent out for cooking classes and catering events Rent out to festivals and events
2ND FLOOR	Daycare (2 rooms + washrooms)	904	Private daycare and washrooms	Wildflowers Daycare (lease)	Long-term lease; ensure the location of the daycare is symbiotic with how the other spaces are used
	Rooms 1-3	710 each	Two rooms are currently used by resident Barkerville artists. Spaces often used for adult art programs and resident artists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private (short-term rentals) Island Mountain Arts Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coworking office space with access to high speed Internet Multi-use flex spaces
	Multi-Use Room (2 nd floor)	312	Formerly used as an office by a regional outreach worker.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-use flex space Meeting rentals (invest in boardroom furniture)
BASEMENT	Fitness Centre	350	Formerly used as a municipal-funded community fitness centre.	District of Wells	Fitness Centre to be relocated from the Community Centre back to this purpose-build space
	Workshop & Kiln	506	Building maintenance workspace and artisan equipment storage (pottery kiln)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District of Wells Island Mountain Arts Society 	Ensure fee for use for non-District groups
	Pottery / Art Room	495	Formerly used for pottery and art classes.	Island Mountain Arts Society	Refurbish and continued to be used for pottery and art classes

*Square footage of each space is approximate.

Appendix D – Upgrades and Renovations

Table 2 – WBCRC Upgrades and Renovations

AREA OF FOCUS	PHASE 1 PROJECTS	ESTIMATE \$	PHASE 2 PROJECTS	ESTIMATE \$	PHASE 3 PROJECTS	ESTIMATE \$
Energy Efficiency Upgrades Objectives: a) increase the integrity of the building envelop to reduce heat loss b) decrease electrical consumption c) replace some electrical/propane systems with alternative renewable energy sources	• Roof	170,000	• Energy efficient lighting	75,000	• Thermal blinds	35,000
	• Exterior insulation, cladding and window repairs	450,000				
Accessibility Upgrades Objective: To increase accessibility to and around the building for people with disabilities.	• Minor upgrades to the west (gym) entrance exterior including ramp	2,000	• Design work for a lift that accesses the gym level, the main floor and the upper floor	25,000	• Remodel upstairs bathroom to make 90% handicapped accessible.	15,000
	• Remodel current Boys Washroom to by Unisex Handicapped Washroom	10,000	• Remodel current Girls washroom as a Unisex public washroom	10,000	• Install a lift that accesses the gym level, the main floor and the upper floor	75,000
					• Rebuild steps at north entrance way	6,000
Health and Safety Upgrades Objective: To update building materials and systems to address the health and safety concerns identified in the hazardous assessment.	• Ventilation upgrades to second floor, gym and other areas to meet ASHRAE 62.1 standards, and minor plumbing upgrades	200,000	• Fire system replacement	75,000	• Repainting interior of school to abate original lead paint – Part 2	150,000
	• Electrical Service upgrades	30,000	• Repainting interior of school to abate original lead paint – Part 1	100,000	• Remodel basement washrooms and underground infrastructure	75,000
	• Minor cement patching at north entrance	1,000	• Plumbing and heating upgrades	75,000		
Recreation and Green Space Upgrades Objective: To improve the quality and safety of outdoor recreation infrastructure and the design and function of green spaces for residents to enjoy and to attract new visitors to Wells.	• Upgrade playground equipment	85,000	• Boards on ice skating rink	3,000	• Roof over skating rink	250,000
			• Resurfacing skating rink	50,000	• Greenspace enhancement, drainage, greenery, trees	50,000
			• Basement renovations to reopen fitness centre (larger and improved egress)	50,000		
	TOTAL PHASE 1:	\$948,000	TOTAL PHASE 2:	\$463,000	TOTAL PHASE 3:	\$656,000
					TOTAL ALL PHASES:	2,067,000

