

# 2021 Annual Report

Lower Columbia  
**Initiatives**  
Economic  
Development

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# A Message from the Board Chair

The past year has been a continuation of the challenges we faced in 2020. In our personal and professional lives, we all continue to adapt to the obstacles that will continue for the foreseeable future.

The LCIC has not been immune to these conditions and we are extremely fortunate to have an Administration Team and a Board of Directors that are well equipped to operate under these new conditions. Our Team has not only successfully adapted to the current operational and economic realities, but we have been proactive in identifying issues and opportunities as they present themselves.

While the Lower Columbia is fortunate to have a robust economy and resource base with endless possibilities, our Board and Administration Team recognizes that now more than ever, the need to proactively pursue economic growth is vital to sustain and grow the standard of living for our residents.

Economic Development is best understood as an investment in future returns. So, while it is difficult to measure immediate effectiveness, the groundwork performed by the LCIC and Metal Tech Alley has highlighted the Lower Columbia region to a global audience of investors and entrepreneurs. This investment of resources will help move our economy forward which will benefit all our area communities.

Best regards,

Dino Dorazio  
Board Chair



# A Message from the Directors

In 2021, the LCIC adopted a new management structure, instead of a single Executive Director managing all projects and operations, the LCIC is now managed by two Co-Directors, each with a separate portfolio. The LCIC Director, Rebecca Richards, is responsible for managing day-to-day operations, investment readiness projects and participating in regional initiatives. The Metal Tech Alley Director, Jacomien Van Tonder, manages all related projects and runs the ongoing investment attraction marketing campaign for the region via the Metal Tech Alley brand. Dividing up management responsibilities between these two portfolios allows each Director to focus on priorities relevant to their areas of expertise and provides clarity to external parties on whom they should speak to regarding different projects.

Some highlights of 2021 include significant events that have raised the profile of both Metal Tech Alley and the Lower Columbia region to the global stage. We hosted our first Industrial Circular Economy (ICE) Conference in June which was a huge success that brought together attendees and key local industry speakers/presenters. Our Metal Tech Alley Director presented at the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) in September. LCIC began its Supply Chain Research & Resiliency project and participated in regional initiatives to bring benefits to the Lower Columbia region in a variety of ways.

Looking ahead in 2022 we are excited to build on the accomplishments of 2021! Metal Tech Alley will focus on developing a battery eco-system in the region and explore new opportunities for circular business development. The LCIC will work on creation of an industrial and commercial land inventory complete with a GIS web-map integration.

Jacomien and Rebecca are committed to supporting community growth and creating a regional economy where business can flourish. We see huge potential for the Lower Columbia!

Rebecca & Jacomien

The image shows two handwritten signatures in dark ink. The signature on the left is 'Rebecca Richards' and the signature on the right is 'Jacomien Van Tonder'. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

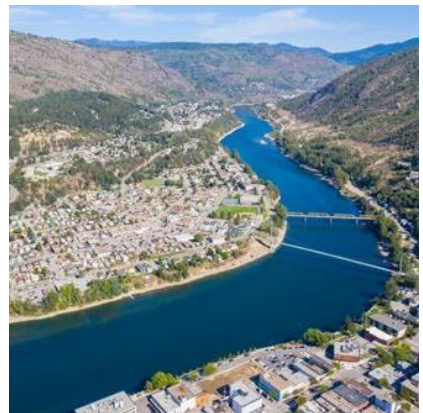
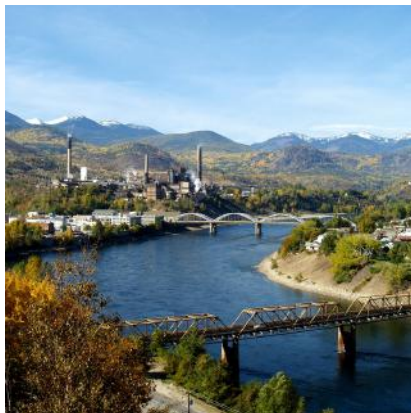
# ABOUT THE LCIC

## Our Purpose

To improve the well-being and quality of life for Lower Columbia residents and help shape the region's economic sustainability.

## Our Mission

- Market the Lower Columbia's strengths and economic assets to the global community
- Identify and promote opportunities for investment in the Lower Columbia
- Support Circular Economy adoption and innovation in the Lower Columbia
- Identify and advocate for removing barriers to economic growth.
- Identify and work to fill gaps in the regional economy
- Support existing industry to achieve sustainable growth and resiliency.

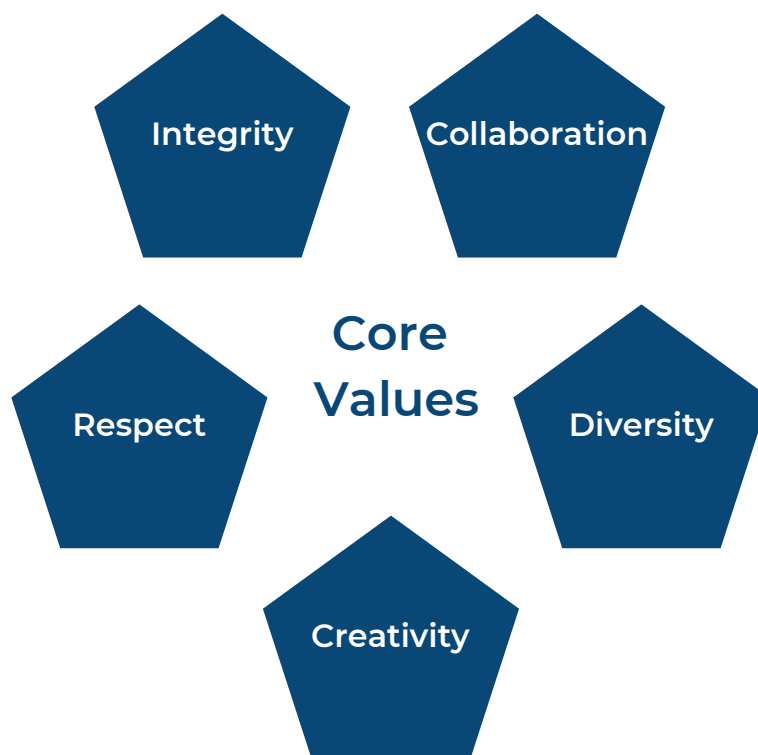


*The LCIC serves the communities of Rossland, Warfield, Trail, Montrose, Fruitvale and Area A&B*

# GOALS & VALUES

## Our Goals

- Become a self-sustaining organization by seeking growth opportunities and practicing fiscal responsibility
- Support every company in the Lower Columbia to implement circular economy practices making the region a model for others. This will be done through promotion, education and encouraging profit generation through adaptation
- The Metal Tech Alley brand is directly responsible for attracting new companies to the region by promoting specific opportunities for industrial diversification
- Take measurable steps to address three major barriers to economic growth in the region: transportation, connectivity and land availability



# SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## → Industrial Circular Economy (ICE) Conference 2021

This virtual event was hosted by metal tech alley in June of 2021. It brought attendees from all over North America and around the world to the Lower Columbia to hear key local industry players present on circular innovation happening in the area. The next ICE conference is planned for 2023.

## → World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2021

Metal Tech Alley Director, Jacomien Van Tonder, presented at the world circular economy forum and two of its side events. She was the only rural representative from North America. The total audience was over 9000 people from, 160 countries. The Lower Columbia region and the innovative companies located here are recognized world wide, establishing the region as a leader in circular economy.

## → Supply Chain Research & Resiliency Project

This project examined local industrial supply chains in-depth to determine material flows and investigated barriers affecting these supply chains. The resulting knowledge has helped to develop the current initiatives aimed at improving logistics for local companies and established benchmarks from which to measure future growth.

## → Federal Recognition

Metal Tech Alley received recognition in the Federal Government report: "Turning Point, The Expert Panel on Circular Economy in Canada" drafted by The Council of Canadian Academies

## Participation in Economic Resilience Action Plan (ERAP) ←

The LCIC Director participated in regional initiatives such as the Economic Resilience Action Plan (led by Community Futures Greater Trail). The Covid-19 pandemic is a good example of why plans need to be in place to lessen the impact and support recovery during economic disruption. ERAP aims to do just that for environmental and technological disasters, recessions, pandemics, etc.



## Global Green Business Award ←

Metal Tech Alley was awarded Best Eco-Friendly Battery Metal Producer as representative of all the metals producers, recycling, and metallurgical facilities in the area. This award recognizes their work in sustainable business practices and circular economy leadership.

## Participation in BC PNP Program ←

The MTA Director participated in regional initiatives such as the BC Provincial Nominee Program Entrepreneur Pilot for applicants in both Trail and Rossland. The program is designed to attract entrepreneurs to rural communities. Currently there are five applicants at different stages of the process. One of the previous candidates has successfully completed the entire process and is now applying for permanent residency as a provincial nominee.

# INVESTMENT READINESS

## What is Investment Readiness?

Reducing barriers to economic growth, filling gaps in local economy and supporting businesses through project based activities. The goal is to create a regional economy that is ready for investment.

## A New Approach

In 2021, the LCIC developed a new approach to conducting investment readiness activities. This new approach breaks the large topic of investment readiness into specific issues which can be addressed over the course of several years. Rather than tackling several issues at once, this is a systematic process to give each area the required attention and effort. The 4 areas of investment readiness are: value chain, land and capital, human resources, and business services. This approach will be cyclical, revisiting each area on a schedule to measure progress and building on what has been accomplished.

## Four Areas of Investment Readiness

Value Chain

Land and Capital

Human Resources

Business Services

Each year, one area will be researched to develop a deep knowledge of how a particular issue is affecting the Lower Columbia. This also allows our office to establish benchmarks on challenges and opportunities that businesses in the region are facing, from which to measure future progress. Using the knowledge gained through research, appropriate projects and programs can be developed to meet the specific needs of communities and businesses. Taking an approach that incorporates both research and action means that activities are informed by data, and studies are not simply left on shelves.

# INVESTMENT READINESS

## Regional Supply Chain Resiliency

An example of addressing investment readiness addressing regional supply chain resiliency – a choice partly informed by the impacts of COVID-19 on global value chains and local businesses. The research gathered data on supply chains within the West Kootenay and material flows in and out of the region. It also identified opportunities and challenges related to regional supply chains.

The outcome of this research included quantitative data which will be incorporated into a GIS webmap, a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis, and recommendations for action. The full reports are available at: <https://lcic.ca/publications/>



The research was followed by activities which are still in progress. These activities included offering supply chain management support directly to businesses. This is intended to give local businesses the opportunity to develop more resilient supply chain management strategies and address particular problems they face. The LCIC is also working on developing a regional, collaborative effort to tackle larger supply chain barriers such as logistics problems. One such effort is to develop a platform for businesses to share logistics needs and capacity to facilitate higher efficiency of logistics resources across the region.

# INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

## What is investment attraction?

Marketing the Lower Columbia to outside audiences and highlighting the existing economic assets and opportunities for development, especially as they relate to circular economy.

## Investment Attraction in 2021

Metal Tech Alley hosted the Industrial Circular Economy Conference (ICE) in June 2021. This virtual event brought over 500 attendees from all over North America and around the world to the Lower Columbia to hear key local industry players present on circular innovation happening in the area. The next ICE conference is planned for 2023.

After a successful 1st phase, Metal Tech Alley and the LCIC are assisting future entrepreneurs with the 2nd phase of the BC PNP Entrepreneur program and the settlement of new entrepreneurs in our area. This will lead to economic growth in the area and increase local job opportunities.

Director, Jacomien van Tonder represented Metal Tech Alley on the world stage this year at:

- a side event of the World Circular Economy Forum with the focus on Canadian Business Circularity
- the World Circular Economy Forum by invitation from the Federal Government. The discussion was about Circular Economy in Rural and Remote Communities in which Metal Tech Alley represented one of 5 case studies. Metal Tech Alley was the only North American representation and the event had over 9,000 registrations representing 160 counties.
- “A Circular North America” at the World Circular Economy Forum, by invitation from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

# ADVOCACY

## **Our Role In Advocacy**

The LCIC advocacy efforts target improvements and mitigation to regional barriers to economic growth.

## **Connectivity**

Currently, the Lower Columbia is underserved in its access to high speed internet. This stems from both lack of infrastructure and lack of service provision. Infrastructure in most communities is limited to the main “backbone” of fibre optic cable. The availability of fibre optic cable running along the highway does not result in the service provision of high speed internet to businesses and residents. Provision of this service requires the installment of network connections to each street and building which is an expensive and complex project. Furthermore, even when adequate infrastructure is in place to serve consumers, service provision is lacking. The LCIC is working to further understand the problem of service provision and find solutions to improve supply to consumers. We will continue to advocate for more funding for communities to implement “last mile” infrastructure to connect businesses and residents to the existing fibre optic.

## **Waneta Bridge/Border Crossing**

The border crossings in the Lower Columbia pose a well-known, long-time problem. The current Paterson border crossing is burdened with significant drawbacks for residents, businesses and local government. It poses significant safety risks, environmental impacts and is a barrier to business growth and new investment. The LCIC is preparing to undertake a full assessment of the Paterson crossing in comparison to the Waneta crossing to explore the costs and benefits of each. Based on the findings, this will be followed by an advocacy effort to the provincial government for upgrades to the Waneta Bridge and border crossing.

# REGIONAL COLLABORATION

## When and how we work with others

The LCIC works with other economic development agencies locally (within the Lower Columbia) and regionally (across the Columbia Basin). Working with organizations such as Community Futures Greater Trail, Trail and District Chamber of Commerce, Kootenay Career Development Society, and the Skills Centre is important to ensure that the Lower Columbia is receiving a full array of economic development services.



The LCIC also work with regional economic development organizations such as Community Futures Central Kootenay on broad initiatives like the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program. The Director of LCIC is currently the Chair of the RNIP Steering Committee.

These efforts bring the benefits of these programs to the Lower Columbia. The LCIC also participates at broad regional tables such as the Economic Development Practitioners Network which allows us to stay up to date on regional issues and represent Lower Columbia economic concerns.

# LOOKING AHEAD - 2022

## Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation

### Land Asset Inventory

Updating the commercial and industrial land inventory database which will include a digital GIS integration with the metaltechalley website. This update will be followed by land development planning which will specifically look at creative solutions to make use of limited land.

### Border Crossing Comparison

Cost-benefit comparison of Waneta border upgrades to continued use of Paterson border crossing. This will be followed by an advocacy effort that is based on the results of this assessment.

### Logistics and Transportation improvements

Working at the regional level with businesses and other economic development agencies to tackle gaps in transportation and logistics which are common across the region.

## Metal Tech Alley

### Representation

Continue to present about the work and accomplishments of Metal Tech Alley at the provincial, national and international level

### Education

Setting up a training course with Selkirk College on industry based Circular Economy

### Innovation

Setting up the area as a battery ecosystem hub for all of Western Canada

### Studies

Begin a feasibility study for a circular carbon capture project and a traceability study with industry partners – closing the loop of Circular Economy

# CONTRIBUTORS



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Columbia  
Basin **trust**

Canada 

**etsi** BC

Economic Trust of  
the Southern Interior



Regional District of  
**Kootenay Boundary**

CITY OF  
**ROSSLAND**



Village of Warfield



City of Trail



# STAFF & BOARD

## Board Members



Dino Dorazio  
Owner  
Canadian Tire



Dave Diplock  
Principal  
Bear Environmental Ltd



Thompson Hickey  
General Manager  
Teck Metals Trail Operations



Chris Legler  
CEO & Founder  
Axios Growth Consultants



Deanne Stevens  
Instructor, School of Business  
Selkirk College



Michele Cherot  
Retired



Pete Stamper  
CEO  
KC Recycling



Don Thompson  
President & General Manager  
RED Mountain Resort



Brent Anhel  
CEO & Founder  
Ten Four Optics



Dan Ashman  
CEO - President & Dealer Principal  
AM Ford

## Staff



Jacomien van Tonder  
Co-Director



Rebecca Richards  
Co-Director



Jessica Lindon  
Administration

## 2021 Annual Report



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[www.lcic.ca](http://www.lcic.ca)

[www.metaltechalley.com](http://www.metaltechalley.com)



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**metaltechalley**

Trail, British Columbia, CANADA

Timing is everything.

Lower Columbia  
**Initiatives**  
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Development

