

REPORT

February 20th, 2025

# Creston Valley & Kootenay Lake Wayfinding Project Update

Prepared by Kootenay Employment Services



Collaboration  
by



Economic  
Action  
Partnership  
Creston Valley &  
Kootenay Lake



KOOTENAY  
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SERVICES

The Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake (CV-KL) Wayfinding Project aims to enhance our area's wayfinding systems, improving visitor experience and strengthening the local tourism sector.

### **Phase 1: Assessment and Community Engagement (2018 - 2020)**

Phase 1 began in 2018 with community and stakeholder engagement, alongside a gap analysis of the current wayfinding system in our area. An inventory of key assets, existing directional and locational signage, online navigational tools, and resources was created. This process revealed significant gaps in our signage system, with many key community assets lacking adequate signage. This posed a barrier to visitors seeking to explore the full range of tourism opportunities in the area. Additionally, the existing signage was inconsistent in design and branding, hindering the process of "placemaking" and failing to reflect the unique identity of our communities.

Following this assessment, a comprehensive **Wayfinding Strategy** was developed, which included targeted recommendations for improvements to enhance the region's wayfinding system.

### **Phase 2: Branding and Design (2022 - 2023)**

Phase 2 focused on the conceptualization and design of a regional wayfinding brand. Guided by the **Wayfinding Steering Committee** and an award-winning and experienced design consultancy firm, Ion Design, this phase brought forward a final design and branding that showcases the best our communities have to offer while highlighting the unique heritage and character of the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake region.

### **Phase 3: Implementation (2024 - Present)**

Phase 3, currently underway, involves the manufacture and installation of new signage, as well as the updating of online wayfinding resources and tools to ensure seamless navigation for visitors.

### **Funding**

Kootenay Employment Services (KES), through the **Economic Action Partnership**, applied for and successfully secured \$1,000,000 in funding from the **Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sports**. This funding will support the completion of Phase 2 and the initiation and execution of Phase 3.

### **Project Deliverables:**

The **CV-KL Wayfinding Project** will deliver the following outcomes:

- Advancement of the local tourism sector in the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake area.
- A positive and significant contribution to the economic growth of our partner communities.
- Enhanced visitor experiences through the application of best practices in wayfinding.

- Addressing deficiencies in the current wayfinding infrastructure.
- A substantial contribution to “placemaking,” showcasing the uniqueness of our communities and helping visitors connect with each community's essence of place.
- Incorporating principles of reconciliation by paying tribute to **yaqan nukiy** culture in the reimagined wayfinding brand.

## Consultant: Ion Design

An RFP was issued to select a consultant for the project, and Ion Design was chosen for their expertise in community consultation and signage design. Ion Design facilitated public engagement and led the design process for the new community signage.

## Consultation

Ion Design hosted five public community engagement sessions, where local stakeholders and the public were invited to provide input on the project design. In addition, the Ministry of Transportation and Transit was consulted at each stage of development to ensure the new signage adhered to ministry standards.

## Indigenous Perspective

Incorporating the cultural heritage of **yaqan nukiy** was a key priority for the project. To honor this, a **yaqan nukiy** artist was contracted to include elements of local history and cultural significance in the wayfinding designs, ensuring the project reflects our community's identity.

## Wayfinding Steering Committee

The Wayfinding Steering Committee, responsible for overseeing the design phase of the project (Phase 2), is comprised of the following stakeholders:

- Town of Creston Planning Department
- Regional District Planning Department
- CV Tourism
- NKLT Tourism
- The **yaqan nukiy** Heritage Society
- Local tourism operators
- Community members

## Design Approval

On **May 30th, 2024**, KES presented the design created by Ion Design, and selected by the Wayfinding Steering Committee, to the **EAP Committee**. The EAP committee officially approved the final design, which marks the transition into Phase 3 of the project.

## Community Reveal

We are excited to reveal the approved sign designs to the community in the coming weeks. We are currently working with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit and Regional Directors to finalize the specific signs to be manufactured.