



2. ECONOMIC STRENGTH

GOAL: *Encourage a diverse, resilient and prosperous economy that builds on regional strengths.*

A healthy, diverse regional economy is one of the cornerstones of more sustainable, resilient communities. As a region, the PRRD has some economic diversity, with employment generated by multiple sectors. Outside of the oil and gas sector, public sector employment is significant, with government, health and education services clustered in Fort St. John and Dawson Creek. Agriculture is a major contributor, while forestry and tourism are other key sectors. Fort St. John and Dawson Creek are the regional employment centres.

Public consultation carried out through the RGS process identified the local economy as the number one area of importance to the region.

1. Support a diversified regional economy.

- a) Encourage economic development that builds on the strengths and character of PRRD member municipalities and urban and rural communities in the PRRD.
- b) Encourage business retention, expansion and attraction activities with a special focus on region-serving businesses.
- c) Support secondary value-added processing and manufacturing in agricultural and resource sectors where feasible and appropriate.
- d) Collaborate with PRRD member municipalities and regional partners to attract high-tech, knowledge-based industries.
- e) Support the agricultural sector and encourage the development of local food production and processing facilities where practical and feasible.
- f) Support the development of a targeted regional workforce attraction program in collaboration with educational institutions operating in the PRRD.

- g) Explore economic opportunities and collaboration on projects of mutual interest and benefit with First Nations in the PRRD.
- h) Explore the development of a Regional Employment Lands Strategy.
- i) Consider the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy through a collaborative process involving PRRD member municipalities, economic development stakeholders, industry groups and First Nations in the PRRD who may be interested in participating.
- j) Recognize the North Peace Regional Airport as a key driver of the regional economy and advocate for improved service and additional direct flight options.
- k) Direct industrial uses to existing industrial areas.

2. Support and promote tourism and tourism-related activities.

- a) Support regional tourism marketing efforts.
- b) Support and encourage regional recreational tourism initiatives and projects.
- c) Work with PRRD member municipalities and stakeholder groups to continue implementing recommendations from the Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan.

3. Address workforce housing.

- a) Work with the natural resource sector to identify opportunities to minimize the impacts of industry on housing issues.
- b) Advocate for senior government resources to pilot and support new initiatives for workforce housing.