

4. LIVING WELL



GOAL: *Foster safe, healthy communities that support a high quality of life for all.*

The residents of the PRRD face significant challenges in health and are particularly vulnerable to increasing threats associated with a changing climate, such as wildfires, droughts, floods and geohazards. The PRRD plays an increasingly important role in coordinating regional efforts and advocating for public health, emergency management and preparedness within the region.

The PRRD falls within the northeast health service area under the jurisdiction of the Northern Health Authority (Northern Health). The health authority covers over 605,000 square kilometres, making it the largest geographic health region in the province, serving municipalities and rural and remote communities across the area.

Northern Health has a Healthy Communities team that works with the PRRD, communities and community organizations in the PRRD and others to influence conditions – like transportation, food systems, neighbourhood design and housing – that promote wellbeing. They support this through facilitation, building relationships and funding programs.

1. Collaborate for safe, healthy and active communities across the PRRD.

- a) Support Northern Health in expanding regional health promotion programs and advancing a proactive recruitment program to increase medical services in the PRRD.
- b) Support the RCMP in raising awareness for crime watch and prevention programs.
- c) Work with School Districts 59 and 60 to recognize and support school facilities as valuable neighbourhood resources that can support community activities and initiatives.
- d) Continue working with the PRRD Regional Accessibility Committee to improve the accessibility of public spaces.
- e) Collaborate with regional partners to ensure public spaces and events are consistent with changing demographics and community needs.
- f) Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit and member municipalities to create a Regional Transportation Master Plan that considers active transportation.
- g) Support Northern Health and regional agricultural producers in enhancing local food security programs and initiatives.

2. Enhance regional emergency management.

- a) Support emergency planning and networking of response services in the PRRD and inter-regionally (Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, Fraser-Fort George Regional District) and with neighbouring counties and municipal districts in Alberta (Municipal District of Greenview, County of Grande Prairie No. 1, Saddle Hills County, Clear Hills County, Northern Lights County).
- b) Work with regional partners to prepare regional risk assessments for all potential hazards as required by the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.
- c) Work with member municipalities, First Nations and residents to prepare enhanced emergency management plans that address all four phases of emergency management (preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery) that are informed by regional risk assessments as required by the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.
- d) Develop a PRRD business continuity plan to ensure the PRRD's continued function and provision of essential services during an emergency as required by the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.

- e) Prioritize the strengthening of regional fire safety through the recruitment, training and retention of qualified fire inspectors and investigators.
- f) Advocate to the Office of the Fire Commissioner to ensure regional considerations are taken into account when developing provincial fire safety standards, mutual aid agreements and best practices.
- g) Explore opportunities to support the development of new or existing fire departments in rural settlement centres.
- h) Explore opportunities for new or enhanced mutual aid agreements with Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, Fraser-Fort George Regional District, the Municipal District of Greenview, County of Grande Prairie No. 1, Saddle Hills County, Clear Hills County and Northern Lights County in Alberta.
- d) Work with Northern Health and PRRD member municipalities to support accessible and affordable long-term care facilities.
- e) Consider working with PRRD member municipalities, non-profit housing providers, other housing and development partners and residents to develop a Regional Housing Plan.
- f) Collaborate with Northern Health and community groups to coordinate and deliver more accessible and affordable services for rural and senior residents to age in place.
- g) Advocate for increased provincial resources to support individuals experiencing homelessness, including increased mental health and substance use supports.
- h) Coordinate with Northern Health and BC Housing to identify opportunities to expand existing mental health and substance use supports in the PRRD.

3. Enhance community wellbeing.

- a) Support economic opportunities that attract and retain young families.
- b) Encourage new housing to provide accessibility features.
- c) Collaborate with PRRD member municipalities to enhance housing diversity and ensure the availability of accessible and affordable housing.
- i) Advocate to the province, North Central Local Government Association and Union of BC Municipalities for action on mental health and substance use and the need for additional supports in the PRRD.
- j) Support and encourage community arts, culture and heritage programs, and community events and celebrations.

