

Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Economic Development Assessment, Strategies and Actions
December 2019

(Update to the 2012 Report)



Photograph: Seton Lake

Prepared For: Northern Economic Development Initiative Committee of the
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Prepared By: Suzanne Denbak, Cadence Strategies
604-905-9678
sdenbak@cadencestrategies.com

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The Northern Economic Development and Initiatives Committee (“NEDIC,” “the Committee”) is a Standing Committee of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Board, appointed by the SLRD Board Chair to consider and report to the Board from time to time or whenever desired by the Board and as often as the interests of the Regional District may require, on all matters referred to it or coming within its purview, and to make recommendations to the Board regarding such matters.

Committee Purpose:

To develop and recommend strategies and implement plans, as per the Committee Terms of Reference and financial plan, that support and enhance sub-regional economic development opportunities and initiatives in the northern areas of the SLRD (Electoral Areas A and B and the District of Lillooet), in accordance with the SLRD’s established strategic plans, policies and legislative mandate.

Committee Roles:

- To explore, discuss, develop and promote strategies and actions for sustainable
- sub-regional economic development in alignment with existing strategic plans.
- To provide advice and support to the SLRD Board on sustainable sub-regional
- economic development and renewal initiatives.
- To participate in economic development and renewal activities deemed
- necessary by the Committee.
- To liaise with the Regional District, the District of Lillooet and other community stakeholder groups regarding sub-regional economic development initiatives including, but not limited to:
 - Development and implementation of an economic development strategy;
 - Research and analysis of existing economic development conditions on key topic areas that may include, but are not restricted to, key sectors including tourism and agricultural development;
 - Development and hosting of local economic forums with an emphasis on attracting business, investors and joint venture partners;
 - Support and assistance with joint economic development fund raising and project development; and
 - Development of initiatives to promote and market the northern SLRD region to investors, tourists, businesses, potential residents and the local communities.

The Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (Northern SLRD) lies within the traditional territories of the St’at’imc and Lil’Wat Nations. The findings and recommendations of this report are not intended to derogate or in any way impede the rights of these Nations or the course of any Government to Government discussions that are underway. Rather, it is the express desire of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the Northern SLRD Economic Development Committee to build relationships and to work in partnership with both its own residents and business owners and with neighbouring Indigenous communities on opportunities that will prove mutually beneficial for all.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Acknowledgements.....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
The Context for Economic Development	5
External Trends and Considerations	5
The Global and Domestic Economy	5
The Rise of Tourism.....	7
Key Highlights	8
The Decline of Forestry.....	9
The Uncertainty of Mining.....	9
The Housing Crisis – Real Estate Values.....	11
Demographics – Millennials and Seniors	14
Trends within the Northern SLRD	17
Local Priorities.....	17
Census Data Trends	17
Real Estate Values	18
Industry Highlights	19
Priority Opportunities, Strategies and Actions	28
Enabling Strategies/Actions	30
1.0 Collaboration and Partnerships.....	30
2.0 Access.....	32
3.0 Broadband/Connectivity	33
4.0 Aesthetics	34
5.0 Amenity Development	35
Contributing Strategies/Actions.....	36
6.0 Tourism – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet	37
7.0 Agriculture – Actively Pursue – Area B, District of Lillooet.....	39
8.0 Health Care	40
9.0 Amenity Migrants – Actively Pursue – Area A, B, District of Lillooet	41
10.0 Mining – Support and Maintain – Area A, District of Lillooet.....	42
11.0 Forestry – Support and Maintain – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet	42
12.0 Energy – Support and Maintain – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet	43
Moving Forward	44

Executive Summary

The Northern SLRD and its communities have many economic opportunities before them as well as several challenges. The collective ability of residents and business owners to prosper and achieve a sustainable and resilient local economy will require leadership from the private and public sector as well as extensive collaboration across and within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The following report updates the economic assessment, strategy and action plan for the Northern SLRD originally published in 2012. It is not intended to reiterate this earlier document but rather at the request of stakeholders has been written to provide greater focus and clarity on priority strategies and actions in the belief that fewer 'high value' strategies and actions will generate the necessary traction to move forward.

There have been many changes in the seven years since the first report was commissioned. The current context for economic development is assessed and priority strategies and actions within it identified. Detailed strategies and actions are found below. In summary there is general agreement throughout the Northern SLRD communities that tourism and agriculture offer the greatest immediate potential for sustainable growth that will be respectful of the environment and of community values. The development of anchor experiences such as a St'at'imc Cultural Centre as a place for community celebration of St'at'imc culture as well as for cultural sharing with non-Indigenous residents and visitors is viewed by many as a catalyst project that would create both an economic engine for tourism growth (longer visitors stays and greater visitor spending), an important community amenity and a vital platform for education and for building understanding.

The vibrant agricultural sector would greatly benefit from additional experiences to create a culinary destination leveraging the success to date of Fort Berens as this anchor attraction. A cold storage/food processing facility that potentially incorporates a commercial kitchen is considered a priority. Programs to engage the next generation in farming and agriculture and provide mentoring are considered high priority and could be offered from a 'food hub'.

Continued support for forestry and the maximization of locally retained benefits associated with energy (BC Hydro activity) and mining/mineral exploration sector are also considered important opportunities. The growth of all economic sectors is however challenged by access limitations. Improved road access is considered imperative throughout the Northern SLRD. As well, improved telecommunications connectivity is considered vital – some areas of the Northern SLRD are still not serviced and others suffer from inadequate bandwidth that does not meet the expectations of today's traveller or potential amenity migrant.

It is also important to note that the ability of Northern SLRD communities to advance their economic objectives will be greatly enhanced through collaboration – with each other, with the individual St'at'imc communities and the St'at'imc Nation collectively through the St'at'imc Nation Government, Tribal Councils and other established Development Corporations. Structures to formalize this economic collaboration should be further discussed alongside the findings and recommendations of this report. While effort was made to engage broadly, this report should ideally be used as a discussion paper that can serve as the basis for further dialogue with residents, with business owners and with local, regional and St'at'imc community and Nation government representatives.

The Context for Economic Development

External Trends and Considerations

The pursuit of community economic development in the Northern SLRD begins with an understanding of the context within which opportunity arises. Economic development in the Northern SLRD does not occur in isolation of events and conditions both near and far. External trends considered relevant to understanding of economic development opportunities and challenges are considered below:

The Global and Domestic Economy

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in their July, 2019 Global Economic Economic reported that global growth remains subdued. Global growth is forecast at 3.2 percent in 2019, picking up to 3.5 percent in 2020. In the IMF's opinion, 2019 gross domestic product reports together with generally softening inflation, point to weaker-than-anticipated global activity. (Source: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2019/07/18/WEOupdateJuly2019>)

The Conference Board of Canada produced the following forecast in its Winter 2020 Canadian Outlook Economic Forecast report (Source: <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/economics/canadian/can-otlk?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>):

- Real GDP in Canada is forecast to expand by 1.8 per cent in 2020 and 1.9 per cent in 2021. This is up slightly from 2019's 1.7 per cent gain.
- Canada's trade sector will continue to be challenged by weak global growth.
- Business investment has been dismal over the past few years but prospects for energy investment are looking much more promising, thanks to improvements in energy takeaway capacity. The outlook for the non-energy side remains moderate.
- Canada's economy will be supported by strong labour markets and modest growth in consumer spending.
- While most provincial governments are expected to maintain a high degree of spending restraint as they work to balance their books, at the federal level the newly re-elected Liberal government is expected to increase spending and reduce taxes.
- With global economic conditions stabilizing, the Conference Board believes the Bank of Canada will make no changes to interest rates in 2020.

TD Bank's economic forecast (Source: <https://economics.td.com/provincial-economic-forecast>) for Canada, notes the following:

- Every province is on track to record an expansion in 2019. Performances this year are likely to range from a low of 0.6% in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan to a high of 2.7% in PEI.
- Growth disparities linger. Momentum in B.C and Central Canada remains solid, while the Prairies continue to be hobbled by an uncertain global and commodity price backdrop. The Alberta and Saskatchewan economies are expected to make up some modest ground over the next few years.
- Quebec's economy has continued to grow, underpinned by solid domestic conditions. However, a mix of capacity constraints and external headwinds should set the stage for a downshift to more sustainable growth moving forward. Similarly, despite mounting external challenges, Ontario has been showing its resilience, supported by strong

demographics and strengthening housing activity. Continued steady, trend-like growth is anticipated for this province over the forecast period.

- In the west, Alberta’s economy remains sluggish. Fiscal restraint warrants a cautious outlook, but the easing of curtailment limits and the expectation of increased takeaway capacity in 2021 suggest that the worst is over. Likewise, in Saskatchewan, economic fortunes are expected to improve, but only modestly, as the province continues to deal with negative interprovincial migration, a tepid commodity outlook and ongoing challenges in the agricultural sector. Manitoba is also facing another subdued year as firming housing activity is offset by a cool down in major project work.
- British Columbia’s economic prospects remain constructive in light of a bounce-back in its housing market, a surge in non-residential investment, including LNG, and buoyant labour markets.
- In the Atlantic Provinces, growth performances should be mixed. Activity is likely to be strong in PEI, buoyed by a sharply rising population, while reasonably firm growth is forecast in Nova Scotia. Elsewhere, Newfoundland & Labrador will receive a boost from construction activity and oil production, and New Brunswick’s economy is facing cross-currents of strengthening housing markets but subdued business activity.

Here in British Columbia, the economic analysis offered by TD Bank notes that B.C.’s economy continues to show resilience. The recently released Provincial Economic Accounts showcased a nation-leading 2.6% pace of expansion in 2018. Real GDP gains are estimated to have downshifted to 1.8% in 2019 – a still solid outturn in light of housing market weakness that carried over into the early part of 2019. Booming non-residential investment and a buoyant services sector are expected to be instrumental in continued growth in B.C.

Housing activity has been on an upward trajectory after bottoming out in early 2019. The stronger-than-anticipated bounce-back prompted an upgrade to sales and price forecasts in 2020. Homebuilding has been growing quickly, but is poised to slow to more sustainable levels. Existing home prices are forecasted to recover and grow significantly once more in 2020, then stabilize somewhat in 2021:

British Columbia Economic Forecasts			
[Annual average % change, unless otherwise noted]			
	2019	2020	2021
Real GDP	1.8	2.0	2.3
Nominal GDP	4.4	4.2	4.3
Employment	2.7	0.5	0.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.7	4.8	4.8
Housing Starts (000's)	44.6	37.4	36.1
Existing Home Prices	-2.1	8.1	3.3
Home Sales	-1.9	23.9	4.4

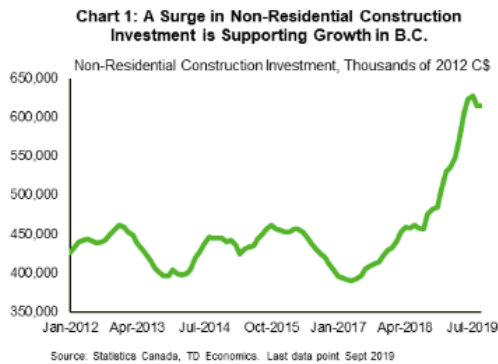
Source: Statistics Canada, CMHC, CREA, Forecast by TD Economics

While getting less attention than housing, non-residential investment has become the biggest growth story in BC. Construction spending and new permits for offices and institutional buildings have surged (Chart below). Oil & gas construction activity is also forging ahead. For instance, work has reportedly begun on the TransMountain and Coastal GasLink pipelines, and construction on LNG Canada is expected to ramp up in 2021-22.

Elsewhere, B.C.'s expansion has been underpinned by a healthy services sector. Large corporations, especially in the high-tech sector, have opened or expanded offices in the Greater Vancouver Area. On a related note, net hiring is expected to gain of 2.7% in 2019. While broad-based, the strength has been led by the professional, scientific and technical services, business support, and public sector industries. Still, the softer trajectory of job growth over the past few months suggests that hiring has begun to return towards a more sustainable pace.

B.C.'s fiscal position stands out as one of the healthiest provincially. The government downgraded its surplus estimate slightly in its second-quarter update, but is still poised to turn in a seventh consecutive year in the black.

Notwithstanding these strengths, the economy faces some headwinds. Struggles in the forestry sector and softening global commodity demand are leaving their mark on manufacturing exports (Chart 2). Meanwhile, retail sales have been hard-pressed to grow, reflecting the lagged impact on durables spending from last year's housing adjustment and caution amid high household debt levels.



The Rise of Tourism

Tourism has been growing rapidly around the world. The World Travel and Tourism Council reports that travel and tourism in 2018 contributed \$8.8 trillion to the global economy and grew faster than the general global economy (3.9% for travel and tourism; 3.2% for global GDP). The sector contributed 10.4% of all global activity and contributed 319 million jobs (1 in 10 jobs globally). Travel and tourism is responsible for one in five of all new jobs created in the world in the last five years. It is the second-fastest growing sector in the world ahead of Healthcare, Information Technology and Financial Services but behind Manufacturing.

Source: <https://www.wttc.org/about/media-centre/press-releases/press-releases/2019/travel-tourism-continues-strong-growth-above-global-gdp/>

Destination Canada reports that 2018 was the best year for Canadian tourism on record, with arrivals reaching 21.13 million, breaking the 21 million mark for the first time ever.

Key Highlights

- 2018 was the best year for Canadian tourism on record, with arrivals reaching 21.13 million, breaking the 21 million mark for the first time ever.
- China, France, and Mexico surpassed the 700K, 600K, and 400K marks, respectively, for annual visitors to Canada for the first time in 2018.
- A record breaking performance in December brought 2018 US arrivals to 14.44 million, the highest level recorded since 2004.

Source: www.destinationcanada.com/en/news/record-breaking-year-canadas-tourism-sector

Here in British Columbia, the tourism industry has likewise experienced phenomenal growth. In 2017, the tourism industry generated \$18.4 billion in revenue – an 8.4% increase over 2016, and a 41.3% increase from 2007. Tourism-related provincial tax revenue was more than \$1.2 billion in 2017, an increase of 5.8% over 2016, and an increase of 40.3% since 2007.

In 2017, tourism exports generated revenue of \$5.4 billion, an increase of 7.1% over 2016. Tourism export revenue was higher than that of the mineral (\$5.3B) and agriculture & fish (\$4.1B) primary resource industries, but lower than that of energy (\$10.9B) and forest products (\$14.1B).

GDP for the provincial economy as a whole grew 4.0% over 2016. The tourism industry contributed \$9.0 billion of value added to the BC economy, as measured through GDP (in 2012 constant dollars). This represents 6.7% growth over 2016 and 32.5% growth since 2007. In 2017, tourism contributed more to GDP than any other primary resource industry (mining:\$4.9B, oil & gas \$3.7B, forestry & logging \$1.8B, and agriculture & fishing \$1.5B).

In 2017, 19,243 tourism-related businesses were in operation in BC, an increase of 0.4% over 2016. In this same year, 137,800 people were employed in tourism-related businesses, a 6.9% increase over 2016. During this time period, the tourism industry paid \$4.9 billion in wages and salaries, up 6.9% from 2016, and up 31.1% since 2007. Source: **Value of Tourism 2017 Snapshot – Destination BC**

Within a strong tourism industry in BC, there are several sectors having notable performance that are relevant to the opportunities for growth in the Northern SLRD.

In October, 2018, Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) released the results of its 3 year Performance Audit. Source: <https://www.indigenoussc.com/corporate/news/indigenous-tourism-bc-shares-record-breaking-tourism-statistics>). The audit noted the following trends:

- 401 Indigenous tourism-related businesses operated in BC in 2016/17 – a 33% increase over 2014
- \$705 million direct gross domestic output was generated by Indigenous businesses in 2016
- 7,400 direct full-time jobs were created by Indigenous tourism businesses in BC

- 7.2 million visitors are expected to engage in Indigenous tourism experiences over the next two years from the top five markets for Indigenous tourism in Canada (Canada, Germany, UK, US and China)
- 36% of travellers surveyed in an ITBC study indicated they had visited Indigenous sites, attractions or events on previous trips to BC
- 89% of tour operators indicated in a recent ITBC survey that they would consider offering or expanding Indigenous experiences as part of their travel packages

Close to home, Whistler has experienced continual growth from both regional and international markets. The resort reports that in 2018 it received 2.7 million unique visitors annually for a total of 5.6 million visitor days. (Source: https://www.whistler.ca/sites/default/files/2018/Oct/related/18226/2018_epi_flatsheet.pdf)

The Decline of Forestry

The forestry industry in British Columbia has experienced a downturn. The Vancouver Sun reported in October 2019 (Source: <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/forestry-crisis-shows-up-with-deepening-decline-in-b-c-s-trade-figures>) that the crisis in British Columbia's forestry sector that saw more than 20 sawmills close or curtail production over the summer and put some 3,000 sawmill employees out of work, at least temporarily, is evident in worsening trade figures for the province. To the end of August, the cascading series of mill closures and production curtailments translated into an 11-per-cent drop in the volume of lumber exports, according to trade figures from B.C. Stats.

By value, the loss appears deeper with the \$3.4 billion in export sales reported by the statistical agency representing a 25-per cent decline from the same eight months of 2018, which is also weighing on B.C.'s prospects for economic growth. The decline in forestry shipments was the biggest reason driving a 5.3-per-cent decline in B.C.'s overall exports to the end of August.

Main factors driving the downturn appear to be structural as sawmills run short of available timber from interior forests affected by the mountain pine beetle. Many communities in BC are still dependent upon forestry as a key contributor to their economic health. This loss of jobs and associated incomes is expected to cause a decline in consumer spending.

While the government of British Columbia could reduce stumpage fees to lower costs for forestry companies, the stumpage system is intended to be market-based and any interference by government would potentially provide justification for the United States to raise its duties on softwood lumber.

The Uncertainty of Mining

A key driver of mining activity is global pricing. In the Northern SLRD and particularly within Area A, global prices for gold, cobalt and copper are important external factors. Over the last five years the price of gold has been trending upward but has not yet returned to its 2011 high.

10 Year Gold Price in USD/oz High: 1889.70 Low: 1050.80 ▲367.80 33.23% Last Close: 1474.60



Tuesday, December 17, 2019

Source: <https://goldprice.org/gold-price-history.html>

Cobalt prices reached their highest point in the last decade in 2018:

Cobalt Price
14.74 USD/lb
17 Dec '19



Source: <http://www.infomine.com/investment/metal-prices/cobalt/10-year/>

Copper prices have remained relatively stable in the last number of years.



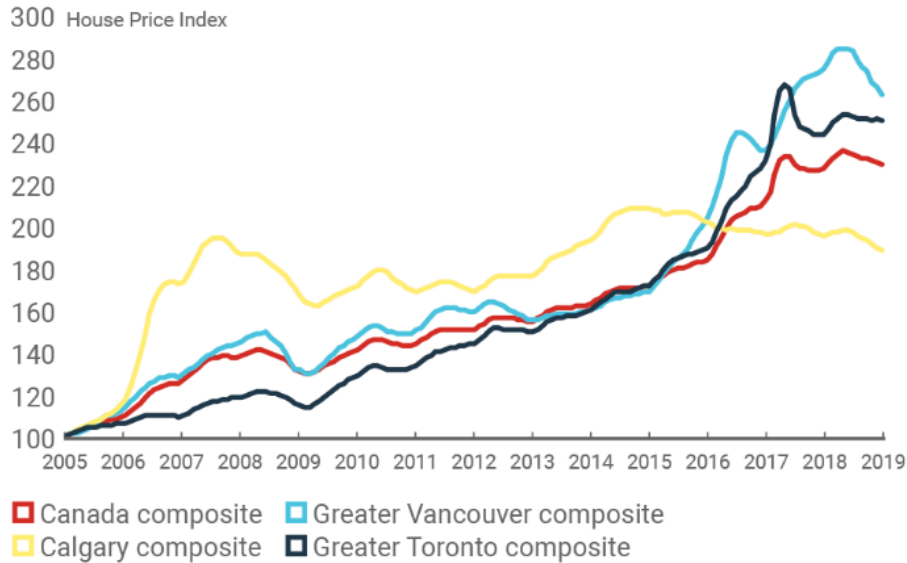
Source: <http://www.infomine.com/investment/metal-prices/copper/10-year/>

Overall, conditions are favourable for continued mining exploration in Area A with support and services being provided to mining companies from businesses and residents throughout the Northern SLRD.

The Housing Crisis – Real Estate Values

Housing prices in British Columbia have been rising steadily and affordable housing has become a government priority. Skyrocketing real estate prices in the Lower Mainland in recent years are notable. Prices in Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton have also risen. While some declines are now occurring in response to efforts to curb speculation and empty homes, affordability is still a significant concern for many residents of BC. At the same time, older couples with an ‘empty nest’ find themselves sitting on significant equity. Downsizing, liquidating this equity and moving to another more affordable community is becoming an integral part of retirement planning.

Canada's housing market cools after a long boom



Note: The House Price Index covers 67% of Canadian resale housing activity. Index uses nominal house prices based on 10-year average of annual sales 2008-2017.

Source: Canadian Real Estate Association, BDC calculations.

Real estate prices in Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton have also generally been rising. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-30/whistler-now-tops-vancouver-as-canada-s-craziest-housing-market> reported in 2018 that Whistler prices had outpaced Vancouver based upon statistics from the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver.

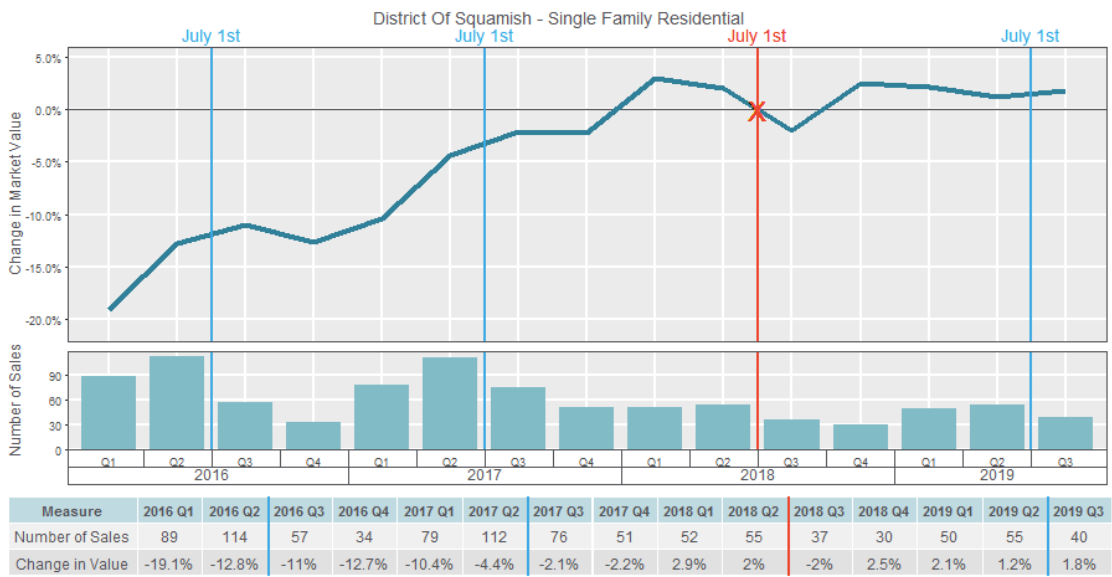
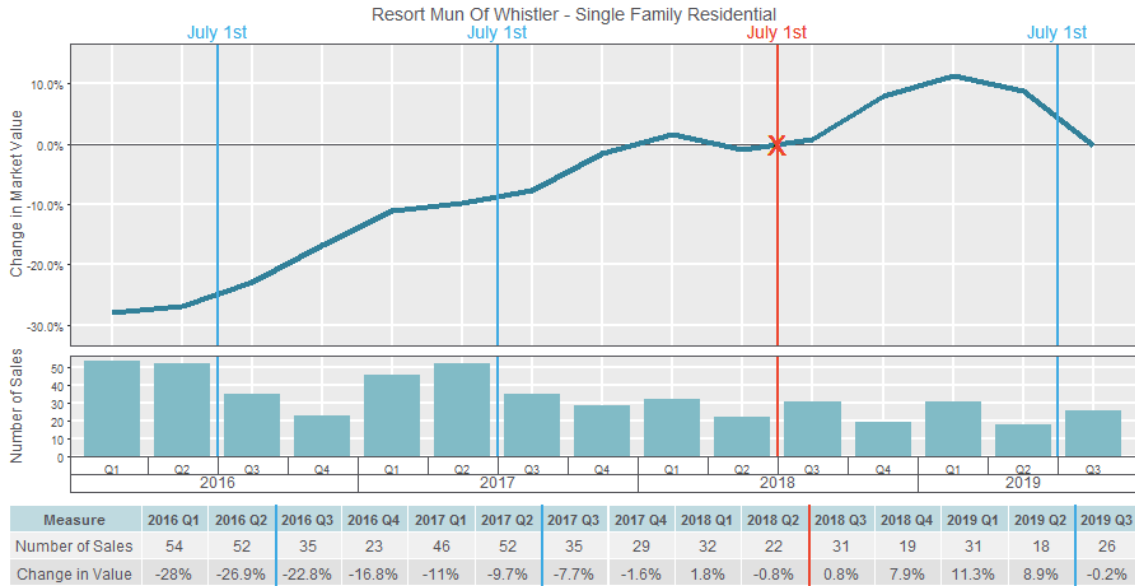
Red-Hot Whistler

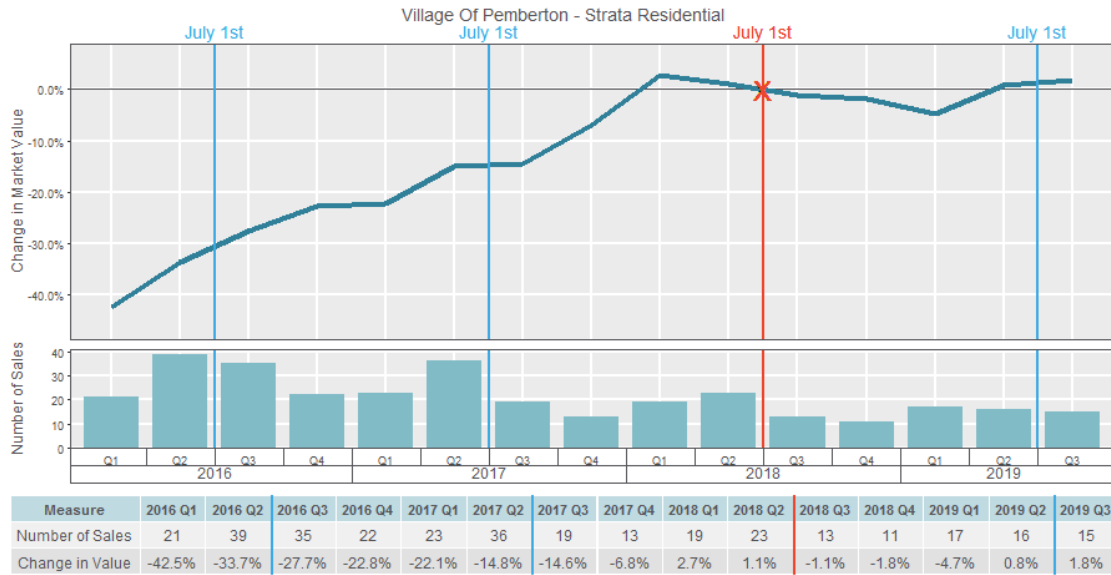
Home prices in the resort town have risen faster than in Vancouver and Toronto

■ Whistler ■ Vancouver ■ Toronto



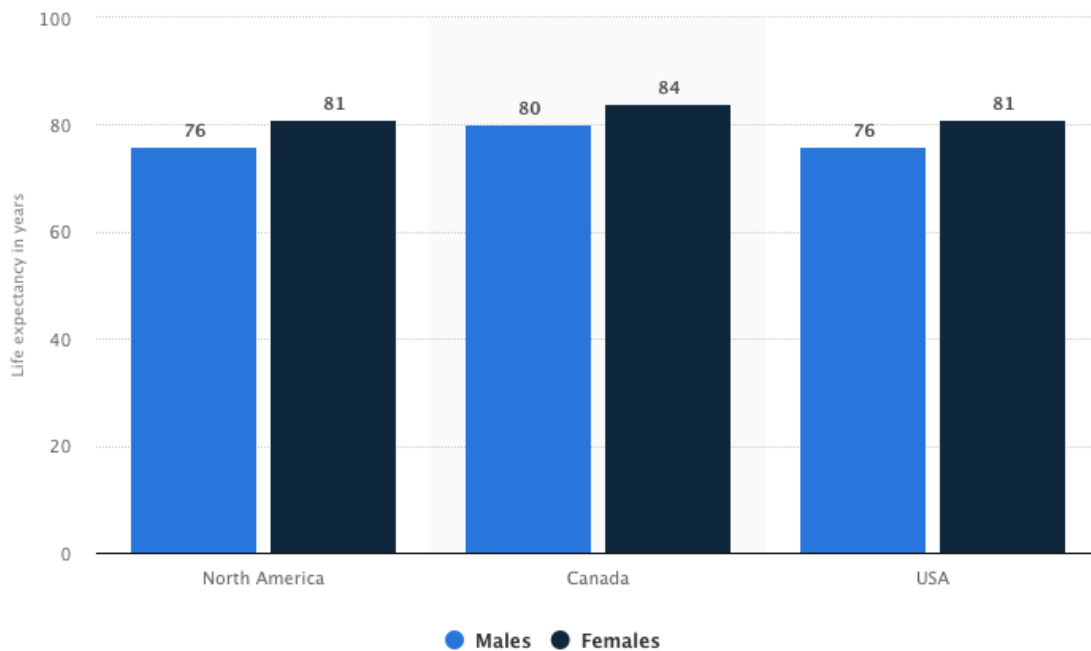
BC Assessments reports the following trends for Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton:





Demographics – Millennials and Seniors

The population of British Columbia continues to age and life expectancies lengthen. The Conference Board of Canada reports that Canadian life expectancy is 81.2 years. <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/Details/Health/life-expectancy.aspx>. While women still tend to live longer than men, the gap between the sexes is only 4 years:

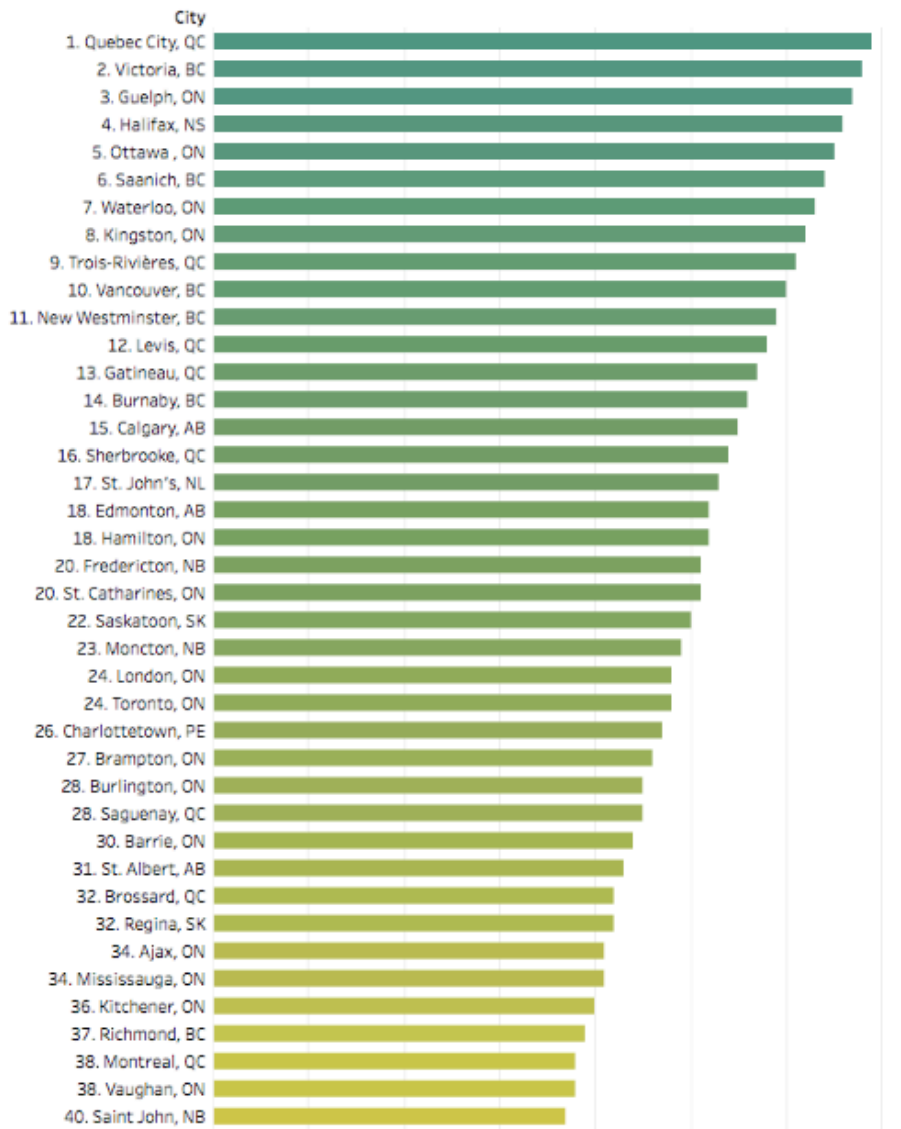


Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/274513/life-expectancy-in-north-america/>

In British Columbia, there are now 1.5 million people over the age 55 years or more (Source: 2016 Census). The Provincial government forecasts that by 2031 there will be 1.3 million people in BC aged 65 years or more (Source: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/health-safety/active-aging>). Many seniors are active, healthy and have time and disposable income. Many have or are considering liquidating the equity in high value real estate markets to 'cash in' and seek a retirement lifestyle elsewhere.

At the same time, Millennials (born 1981 to 1996) are now of an age where they have entered and dominate the workforce. They have started or are starting families. The CBC reports that the average price of a house in Vancouver is four times what a Millennial could safely afford to purchase. Source: June, 2019 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/home-prices-vancouver-twice-what-millennials-can-afford-1.5172388>. Millennials value choice and healthy lifestyles that balance work and play. They seek out experiences and platforms that engage with them, recognize them and treat them as individuals. <https://eclincher.com/blog/what-do-millennials-care-about-its-not-what-you-think/>. The top places in Canada that Millennials are choosing as their hometown include many smaller cities and suburbs and they do not yet appear to be branching out in numbers to smaller more remote communities:

Millennial Hot Spots in 2018



Trends within the Northern SLRD

It is equally important to understand developments within the Northern SLRD since 2012. A synopsis of significant developments is found below:

Local Priorities

Residents of the Northern SLRD have always been passionate about their home – this hasn't changed since 2012. Stakeholders advise that economic development in the Northern SLRD should proceed in a manner that embraces the following priorities and values:

- Respect for all people and all life – this includes the environment and its wealth of biodiversity as well as the sense of place and of community
- Recognition that the Northern SLRD is unceded St'at'imc Lands
- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Accountability

These priorities were also documented in the Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP) and the Regional Growth Strategy. The ISP notes the vision of the SLRD is to create a region comprised of diverse, distinct and liveable communities that share a commitment to:

- Support the well-being of residents, the workforce and visitors
- Protect the region's natural environment and beauty
- Enhance the region's world-class outdoor recreation
- Foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development
- Make decisions that are aligned with the criteria for success and sustainability
- Make decisions that engage local, provincial, federal and First Nation governments and stakeholders and reflect the values of communities

Both the ISP and the RGS outline sustainability objectives:

- Live within the limits imposed by natural systems
- Minimize our dependence on limited, non-renewable resources
- Encourage zero-waste, re-use and recycling
- Minimize disturbance of ecological and physical processes
- Manage land, water and air resources wisely and efficiently
- Recognize and reduce human causes leading to climate change while adapting, as necessary to unavoidable negative impacts of climate change
- Understand the interconnections among Economy, Society and the Environment and apply these considerations systematically in the decision making process
- Work to meet basic human needs, distributing resources and opportunities fairly with an awareness of the needs of future generations

Census Data Trends

Within the Northern SLRD, the following trends for population and age have been documented in the census data:

Population and Age

	Area A	Area B	District of Lillooet	Entire SLRD	British Columbia
Total Population					
2016	187	363	2,275	42,665	4,648,055
2011	224	451	2,321	38,173	4,400,057
Age 0-14	5 (2.7%)	30 (8.2%)	295 (13%)	7,380 (17.3%)	691,390 (14.9%)
Age 14-64	132 (70.6%)	235 (64.4%)	1,440 (63.4%)	30,765 (72%)	3,107,680 (66.8%)
Age 65+	50 (26.7%)	100 (27.4%)	535 (23.6%)	4,525 (10.7%)	848,985 (18.3%)

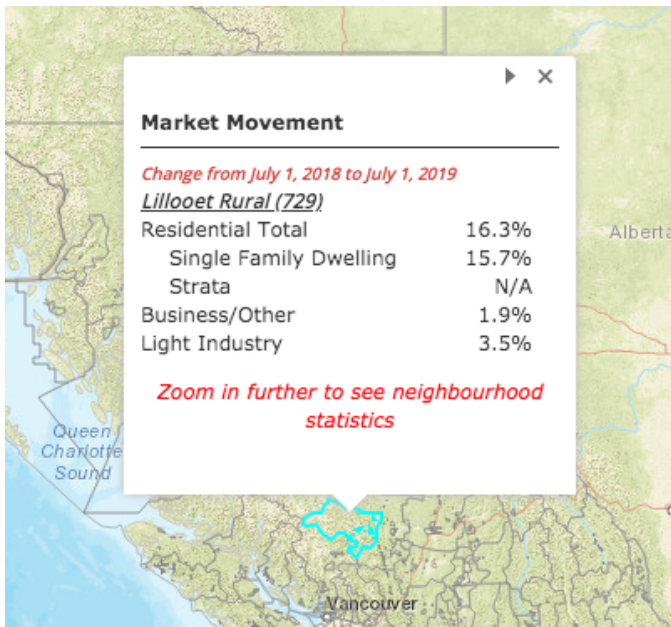
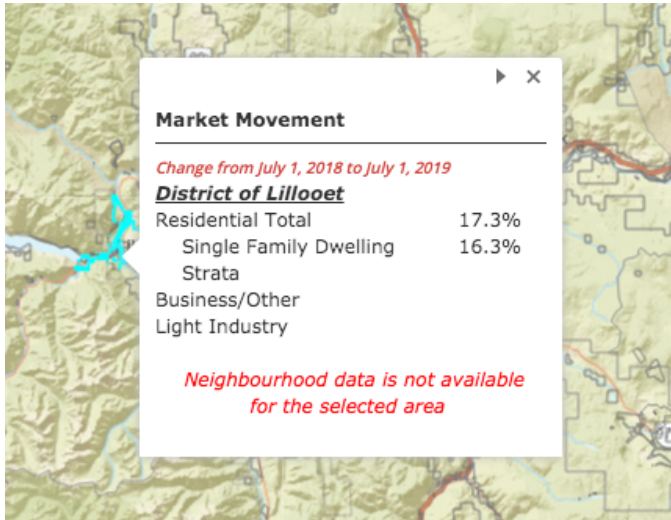
The population of the Northern SLRD (excluding St’at’imc communities) declined from 2011 to 2016. There is a much higher proportion of residents over the age of 65 years than is found elsewhere in the SLRD or in the Province as a whole and this percentage has grown since the 2011 census. For example, in 2011 19% of residents of the District of Lillooet were age 65+ years. This figure is now 23.6%.

The population within the St’at’imc communities exhibits very different trends. More than 1.67 million people in Canada identify themselves as an Aboriginal person. Aboriginal peoples are the fastest growing population in Canada – the population grew 42.5% between 2006 and 2016. They are also the youngest in Canada – about 44% were under the age of 25 in 2016. Source: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013785/1529102490303>. Population trend information for the St’at’imc communities in the Northern SLRD was not available but it was reported anecdotally that trends are consistent with what is being experienced nationally with a large and growing young population.

Real Estate Values

A recent housing needs assessment conducted in Area A concluded that there is a shortfall of rental housing that is impacting the Area’s ability to attract new residents. A similar study is being completed in Area B and should be reviewed for further information when released.

While trend data is not available on the BC Assessment website for the District of Lillooet and entire Northern SLRD, BC Assessment does report the following significant increases in residential values from 2018 to 2019:



Industry Highlights

Tourism

Tourism in the Northern SLRD since 2012 has seen both successes and challenges. Culinary tourism is on the rise with two wineries now operating. Fort Berens continues to win accolades and awards.. There is an active Farmers Market in Lillooet every Friday morning from May to October and a growing number of local farm-based or culinary businesses. Stakeholders report investor interest in the opening of a craft brewery in the area to compliment the organic hops production that is already underway.

The Miyazaki House in Lillooet continues to operate seasonally with limited hours and is home to Wednesday night Music at the Miyazaki through the summer. The Apricot Tsaqwem Festival is produced annually for one weekend in July. A Fall Festival is planned for September 2020. In order to lead tourism marketing and guide tourism development so

that it aligns with community values, Tourism Lillooet has been established as a not-for-profit Society and in 2019, the Board of Directors commissioned and adopted a five-year tourism strategy.

Xwisten Experience Tours continues to operate seasonally however stakeholders expressed concern about the decline of salmon stocks and the impacts this may have on the experience offered at the 'fishing rocks'. Sek'el'was Experience Tours is no longer active with the business model focused on its primary mandate of native plant nurseries and restoration of landscapes and watercourses. The T'it'q'et community own land on Seton Lake as well as five cabins near the beach and an additional cabin across the lake. The cabins have recently become available for alternate uses and the community is exploring nightly rental opportunities.

Area A continues to invest in the development of its visitor experiences with investments made to acquire property in Bralorne that eventually will become, in part, a new home for the Bralorne Pioneer Museum. As well improvements continue to be made to the Haylmore Heritage Site in Gold Bridge and in summer 2019 a guided tour was offered to visitors along with visitor information, free wifi, ice cream sales and artisan products at the Rock Wall Gallery.

The Trails Committee of the Bridge River Valley Community Association (BRVCA) successfully signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lillooet Tribal Council for further trail development for both mountain biking and other uses. The trails found within South Chilcotin Provincial Park remain a 'bucket-list' experience for global mountain bikers. The Economic Development Committee of the BRVCA has actively participated in the Mountain Bike BC sector website and in the Sea to Sky Mountain Bike Consortium. Mountain bike trail use and trail development remains under discussion in Area B and the District of Lillooet.

The private sector is also investing in Area A with new ownership of the Gold Bridge Hotel and the opening of the Bralorne Adventure Lodge. However, the Bralorne Pub and Motel was closed for a significant window of time, limiting the reasons to visit Bralorne and the quality of the visitor experience in both summer and winter (Bralorne is a popular snowmobile destination in winter). Tyax Lodge invested in staff housing and continues to attract international visitors in summer and heli-ski clientele in winter. Tyax Adventures has purchased a large tract of land at the north end of Tyaughton Lake and is in the process of seeking rezoning for tourism related uses.

Visitor access continues to be a challenge with the 'slide' on Highway 99 limiting vehicular weight during the summer of 2018 and eliminating tour bus traffic into Lillooet as a result. Bus traffic has now resumed but the timing of arrival in Lillooet can be challenging with busloads either finding little open or overwhelming the shops and restaurants that are open.

Area A's access is even more limiting. While investment was made by the Province to improve the condition of Road 40 (year round), it still remains a challenging drive and sections have crippling potholes, frequent rockfall and severe ruts. The Hurley Forest Service Road (seasonal access to Area A from Pemberton) is reported by stakeholders to be in its worst condition in the last ten years.

Agriculture

As noted above, there are two wineries now producing in the Northern SLRD. There are a growing number of farms and ranches successfully operating in Area B. The Lillooet Agricultural and Food Society (LAFS) has been established and since 2014, has been working to implement the Agricultural Plan jointly commissioned by the SLRD, the District of Lillooet and the St'at'imc communities. This strategy has the following vision:

"Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Electoral Area B, District of Lillooet and St'at'imc Traditional Territory, best agricultural region in BC, well know for innovation, sustainability, economic strength and food security – a community worth experiencing."

Seven priorities were established in this plan:

1. Enhancing the Agricultural Market Viability of the Region
2. Developing Supportive Policies and Regulations
3. Fostering Collaboration between the St'at'imc and Farming Community
4. Promoting Awareness and Education
5. Supporting Sustainable Agricultural Practices
6. Encouraging Water Conservation and Climate Change Preparedness
7. Creating an Implementation Plan

Each of these priorities is supported by recommended actions. The full Agricultural Plan is available on <https://www.slrld.bc.ca/inside-slrld/reports/slrld-area-b-district-lillooet-statimc-agricultural-plan-part-2-vision-priorities-recommended-actions#overlay-context=>

A greenhouse project is current underway in T'it'q'et through Amlec Organic (the business arm of the T'it'q'et Food Sovereignty Project) and there is interest in taking this project and expanding into agri-tourism as well. Amlec Organic Ltd. was established in 2016 and has a cold storage and dry storage facility and a large commercial dehydrator.

Mining

Avino Silver & Gold Mines reports that it achieved the following key milestones since acquiring the Bralorne Gold Mine in 2014 and closing the mine in December due to the Tailings Storage Facility ("TSF") being at capacity (Source: <https://www.avino.com/news/2017/avino-provides-update-on-bralorne-gold-mine/>):

- Doubled the size of the original Water Treatment Plant ("WTP") from 3.5 litres per second to 7 litres per second in 2015 as the mine water runoff during freshet increased significantly;
- Constructed a new state of the art WTP in 2016 capable of treating 35 litres per second;
- Raised the dam for the TSF by 2.4 metres in 2015;
- Constructed a buttress at the toe of the dam for the TSF in 2016 and received approval to use the TSF in September, 2016;
- An Interim Closure and Reclamation Plan was submitted in 2015 as part of the Amendment to the Mining Permit, which was reviewed by all proponents including the First Nations with extensive discussion and feedback, and is now waiting final consultation with First Nations and approval by MEM and MOE;
- Resources, which were updated in an NI-43-101 report dated October 20, 2016, were incorporated into the proposed internal mine plan;

- An independent consulting engineering firm was engaged in 2016 to review the mill and surface infrastructure to determine the best way to upgrade these facilities, and a plan is now in place that has been accepted by the Company;
- In 2016, Bralorne, North Island College, the BC Government and First Nations completed two educational cohorts to provide basic mining training to 24 members of the St'at'imc First Nations in Lillooet; and
- A Letter of Intent ("LOI") was signed with the First Nations in May of 2017 to work together to form partnerships that will be beneficial to the First Nations, the communities and the Company in the development and operation of the Bralorne Gold Mine.

Avino Mines after announcing a phased approach to move into 'production' has subsequently advised that it will continue its exploration work with no production date on the immediate horizon. In 2019, Avino announced that it had been acquired by Talikser. Talikser has approached the District of Lillooet and begun discussions related to an industrial or commercial place of business in the District to support their activities in Area A.

Mineral exploration particularly in Area A remains quite active with Blackstone Minerals, AMARC all actively in the field. However, these activities have a relatively small economic footprint and none of the companies currently engaged in exploration are able to commit to a timeline for production mining.

Forestry

The Northern SLRD is part of the Cascades Forest District/Lillooet and Merritt Timber Supply Areas. Licensees in the Lillooet Timber Supply Area include Aspen Planers who also operate the veneer plant in Lillooet (product from this plant once peeled is shipped to Savona for plywood processing). Aspen Planers also operate a sawmill in Merritt. Other licensees include Interwest, BC Timber Sales and a non-renewable license to the St'at'imc Nation. The Xaxli'p community operate a Community Forest. Stakeholders advise that the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) quantities that can actually be harvested have been reduced due to pine beetle, forest fires, additional protection of wildlife habitat (spotted owl) and agreements not to harvest that have been made with various St'at'imc communities. In the Yalakom Valley, protests have stopped logging but meetings are being held regularly between First Nations, the license holder and the local environmental society to find a path forward. Other communities such as Tsalalh have requested that forest companies stop harvesting. What remains of the AAC is difficult to access and costly to harvest.

There are several 'value added' wood processing companies in the Lillooet area including a Britewood Sawmill that manufactures beams for house construction and Second Growth Woodcraft which makes specialty doors from Douglas Fir. In previous years, a company (McCabe family) operated a re-manufacturing plant that took what would otherwise be waste wood products and created fingerjoint type material for use in affordable furniture and other products. Also in previous years, The Tsalalh community built pre-fab log cabins but this business is no longer active.

The possibility of a pellet plant in Lillooet has been explored by the St'at'imc collectively and by the T'it'q'et community. However, neither venture has been able to secure investors and proceed. This is in part caused by an inability to secure adequate rail transport through CN Rail. Truck shipping options are prohibitively expensive.

Bridge River 1 and 2

Bridge River Generating Station 1

Key projects:

- Transformers 1 and 2—completed 2017
- Units 1–4—planning currently underway, targeted completion 2026
- Units 1–4 Penstock Internal Recoating, planning currently underway, targeted completion in 2028

Bridge River Generating Station 2

Key projects:

- Units 5&6—underway, targeted completion 2019
- Units 7&8—planning underway, targeted completion 2021
- Concurrent Penstock Internal Recoating projects have started—targeted completion for both penstocks by 2020
- Bridge River units completed by 2028 allowing the LaJoie Dam upgrades to proceed



Bridge River Generating Station 1

Upgrading Bridge 1 Units 1 to 4

Bridge 1 Powerhouse is a four generating-unit, 200 megawatt, generating station built in 1948 that requires upgrading. The station produces enough electricity to power 92,000 homes.

We're in the planning stage to replace the aging equipment.

This will allow us to:

- adjust water flow capability through the powerhouse to reduce the risk of seasonal spills from Terzaghi Dam into the Lower Bridge River, and,
- improve reliability of the generators and restore historical operating capacity.

We'll replace generators, exciters and governors and other related generating equipment and continue to operate within 99 water licence conditions.

Seton Beach Erosion Protection Project



The Seton Beach erosion protection project was completed in December. We replaced an existing log barrier with new logs that are slightly higher in order to protect the grassy picnic area from winter waves. We also added sandy gravel to the beach to help absorb wave energy and rebuilt rip rap areas to further stabilize the shore. New topsoil has been added and grass seed applied. The grass area will fill in as it grows through the spring and early summer.

La Joie Dam

- La Joie Dam upgrade construction was targeted to begin in 2028 with anticipated completion by 2030/31
- Currently reviewing schedule
- These upgrades will require keeping the Downton Reservoir low to enable the work



La Joie Dam

Seton Dam

- Seton Lake Erosion Control Project—completed 2018
- Seton Protection and Control System underway, targeted completion in 2019
- Seton Generator Upgrade planning is currently underway, targeted completion in 2028



Seton Dam

Transmission

- Transformer replacement & line work at the Bridge River Terminal/BR, planning currently underway, targeted completion in 2023
- Transmission line work in the region, preliminary planning work currently underway, targeted completion to be determined
- 6OLO21 re-alignment work—completed 2018

Workforce

- BC Hydro anticipates the workforce (primarily contractors) associated with our current capital plans for Bridge River and Seton to peak at ~125 workers between 2018 and 2021.
- Most of this activity will be concentrated between April and October annually.
- BC Hydro is managing workforce logistics to ensure safety, cost-effectiveness and to minimize impacts to the surrounding communities (e.g., traffic, noise).
- BC Hydro Boat Operator positions posted late 2017. 6 local operators were hired, 2 more on standby. Contracts go to November 30 with a possibility of extension.
- Local contractors Road Runner and Summit Blasting completed the Seton Beach upgrades in fall 2018.
- Co-op and Youth Hire Position(s)
 - In development.
 - Offers professional development opportunities to post-secondary students through BC Hydro's project work

Transportation



Dive crews prepare for underwater repair work on Seton Lake dock, Lillooet. New dock anchors and chains are visible underwater.



Completed dock work includes new lighting.

Within Seton Portage and Tsal'ah, transportation is needed to move workers from hotels and residences to the Bridge River facilities.

Last spring, boat transportation was put in place to support moving workers between Lillooet and our Bridge River facility. In the fall we completed a refurbishment of the Seton Lake dock. We received letters of support from District of Lillooet and T'it'q'et First Nation (Tenants in Common) for dock use and improvements.

Accommodation

2018: (~125 WORKERS)

- Large projects at Bridge River. Most workers had accommodations in Tsal'álh/Seton Portage with some in Lillooet.

2019 (~25 WORKERS)

- Projects at Seton with accommodations needed in Lillooet
- Small number of workers to stay in Tsal'álh/Seton Portage for a project at Bridge River.

2020 (~85 WORKERS)

- Projects at Bridge River, all workers expected to be accommodated in Tsal'álh/Seton Portage.

2021 (~75 WORKERS)

- ~75 workers at Bridge River with accommodations needed in Tsal'álh/Seton Portage.

Priority Opportunities, Strategies and Actions

The update of the 2012 Economic Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan included a review of current trends and developments within and outside the Northern SLRD, consideration of planning reports and strategies as well as a stakeholder engagement process. The following individuals were interviewed: Adele Alexander, General Manager, Tsalalh Development Corporation

Vivian Birch-Jones, Area B Electoral Area Director

Peter Busse, Mayor, District of Lillooet Charles Daley, Chair, Economic Development Committee, BRVCA (Area A), Avino Silver & Gold Mines

Debbie Demare, BRVCA Board of Directors (former Area A Electoral Area Director) Jeremy Denegar, CAO, District of Lillooet

Lynda Flynn, CAO, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Christine Galliazzo, Cultural Heritage Stewardship Officer, Ministry of Forests, Natural Resource Operations

Chief Shelley Leech, T'it'q'et

Lyle Leo, Economic Development Officer, Xaxli'p Development Corporation

Sarah Petnick, Executive Director, Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society

Patricia Westerholm, Communications Coordinator, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Stefan Zeidler, Chair, Tourism Lillooet

The combination of trend and development analysis and the knowledge shared by participants gives rise to two fundamental categories of economic development strategies

for the Northern SLRD – enabling strategies and contributing strategies. Enabling strategies create the conditions for success and are foundational to the ability of the Northern SLRD to achieve its economic development objectives. Contributing strategies specifically trigger desired economic returns in various industry sectors. These enabling and contributing strategies and associated actions are discussed in more detail below and are phased according to the following categorization:

Immediate	Action to be initiated as an immediate priority with measurable results desired within 12 months.
Short-term	Action to be initiated within the next fiscal year (2020/21) with measurable results desired in the next 3 years.
Long-term	Action to be initiated within the next 2-5 years as directed by typical planning cycles and available resources. Measurable results desired within the next 5-10 years.

Enabling Strategies/Actions

The following enabling strategies and actions are recommended:

1.0 Collaboration and Partnerships

The Northern SLRD has limited resources with which to pursue its economic development objectives. While some initiatives may be unique to individual communities, many would be more impactful and would benefit from collaboration and partnership amongst the various organizations currently active in the area.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
<p>1.1 Collaborate to achieve measurable returns in economic development throughout the Northern SLRD</p>	<p>Create a Northern SLRD Economic Development Working Group with SLRD, District and BRVCA staff/contractors participating alongside various St'at'imc communities' Development Corporation representatives to identify and activate specific opportunities and deliver measurable results while various Government to Government forums continue to convene.</p> <p>Confirm a shared vision and values for economic development in the Northern SLRD. Further investigate pros/cons of a shared economic development service.</p> <p>Identify a short-list of priority action items for implementation in the next 12-18 months.</p> <p>Assign tasks and meet regularly to monitor and report on progress and to brainstorm responses to any unanticipated hurdles.</p> <p>Report regularly to elected representatives.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>SLRD/NEDI and as well as St'at'imc Nation and individual community Economic Development organizations</p>
<p>1.2 Create an 'open for business' climate with local and regional government</p>	<p>Review burden of various approval processes with the SLRD and District of Lillooet through the lens of business and development proponents and recommend policies and tools (such as on-line</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>SLRD/ District of Lillooet</p>

	bill payment, digital plan submission etc.) that encourage and welcome businesses and streamline processes for seeking approvals (without compromising community values).		
1.3 Support new and existing small/micro businesses in the Northern SLRD	<p>Establish a small/micro business resource centre in Lillooet to offer guidance, mentoring and navigation services. Address any financing limitations related to business distance from Kamloops banking centre.</p> <p>Investigate opportunity to create an incubator for small and micro businesses in all communities within the Northern SLRD.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/NEDI and St'at'imc Nation organizations
1.4 Continue to consider shared infrastructure service models amongst neighbouring communities	Identify further opportunities for shared water, sewer and other services amongst neighbouring communities in order to most effectively leverage resources and efficiently deliver high quality services.	Long Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet/ St'at'imc Nation and individual St'at'imc communities

2.0 Access

The ability of the Northern SLRD communities to achieve their economic development objectives is reported by stakeholders to be significantly impaired by poor access. At best, stakeholders feel that roads in the area are poorly maintained and frequently unsafe and at worst, these roads are closed (seasonally or due to specific events) or have weight restrictions limiting or completely prohibiting vehicular traffic. While improvements have been made in past years both to Highway 99, Highway 12 and to Road 40 between Lillooet and the Bridge River Valley, and work continues to address the 'slide' area along Highway 99, road access is still perceived to be a significant hurdle to economic growth and prosperity.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
<p>2.1 – Establish Northern SLRD Transportation Advocacy Committee and hold regularly scheduled meetings with MoT District Manager and MoFLNRO</p>	<p>Meet with Ministry of Transportation staff to review upcoming capital and maintenance plans and provide input to recurring problem areas.</p> <p>Meet with Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations staff to review condition of Hurley Forest Service Road and provide input to 2020 operating and maintenance plans.</p> <p>Meet with CN Rail to secure additional track time for the Kaoham Shuttle service and enhance frequency and reliability (staffing needed). Continue to advocate for passenger rail service from Vancouver to Lillooet and beyond</p> <p>Develop a Northern SLRD Access issues and opportunities briefing note for use during 2020 UBCM discussions with Minister of Transportation and with Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and secure support of entire SLRD Board to lobby for investment in improved access throughout the Northern SLRD.</p> <p>Meet with Minister of</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>SLRD/ NEDI</p>

	Transportation and Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations at UBCM and work to secure commitment and funding for actionable next steps.		
--	---	--	--

3.0 Broadband/Connectivity

The ability of the Northern SLRD communities to attract new residents with ‘portable’ businesses or careers is directly linked to the ability of these individuals to ‘connect’ and conduct their business and personal activities. As well, active seniors also rely on connectivity to stay in touch with friends and family. While improvements in connectivity have been made in the past, the level of expectation of these business owners and remote employees has also been increasing exponentially. In order to compete with the many other attractive options these individuals and families have for a home base, the Northern SLRD must offer market-leading connectivity for rural communities.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
3.1 Improve broadband width (speed/ capacity) within all core Northern SLRD communities	Meet with service providers such as Radio Lillooet, Minto Communications, Telus, Lyttonet, or others to discuss plans and opportunities to enhance infrastructure.	Short Term	SLRD/NEDI
3.2 Improve connectivity in more remote residential areas beyond core communities	<p>Meet with local service providers such Minto Communications in the Bridge River Valley to understand opportunities to enhance service.</p> <p>Investigate grant opportunities available to support necessary capital investments.</p> <p>Review operational model to seek ways to relieve burden placed on a small not-for-profit organization with one staff person Minto Communication that currently undertakes the majority of telecommunications services for residents and businesses in Area A.</p> <p>Discuss opportunities for improved connectivity in partnership with BC Hydro as they undertake their capital plans and have equipment/labour in the field.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/ NEDI/BRVCA Economic Development Committee

4.0 Aesthetics

First impressions are important for economic development whether it is in business attraction, resident attraction or the growth of the tourism economy. Stakeholders are concerned about the lack of downtown beautification in Lillooet and the empty storefronts. Elsewhere in the Northern SLRD there is a general sense of tiredness bordering at times on neglect. While polished and perfect would not be true to the sense of place found throughout the Northern SLRD, there is general agreement amongst stakeholders that aesthetic improvements are required to position the area competitively as an option for resident and business attraction.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
4.1 Improve aesthetics and sense of arrival of communities in the Northern SLRD	<p>Secure resources to invest in soft landscaping of downtown Lillooet and support the work of the Beautification Committee.</p> <p>Investigate additional funding and public/private partnerships for façade improvements.</p> <p>Review opportunity for property tax relief for owners investing in property improvements.</p> <p>Review landfill charges and community/business partnerships to make clean up more affordable.</p> <p>Investigate periodic large item pick-up and removal services and consider cost-sharing models between public and private sector and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet
4.2 Enhance pedestrian friendly nature of communities in the Northern SLRD	<p>Review traffic calming measures through Lillooet.</p> <p>Consider landscaped centre median or other design modifications through downtown Lillooet and incorporate in longer term capital planning.</p>	Long Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet
4.3 Enhance viewsapes from downtown areas	Identify view corridors and signature viewsapes.	Short Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet

	Ensure policy, zoning and capital planning within local and regional government preserves and enhances these views.		
4.4 Improve signage throughout Northern SLRD communities	<p>Prepare a signage inventory of existing interpretive and wayfinding signs.</p> <p>Establish a Northern SLRD Signage Improvement Committee to identify priority signage needs.</p> <p>Secure resources to implement recommended signage improvements.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/NEDI

5.0 Amenity Development

Resident amenities are vital to attracting new residents and businesses and to differentiating a community from its competition. The Northern SLRD is surrounded by exceptional nature and outdoor recreation opportunities but so too are many small communities in British Columbia. Providing amenities that enable enjoyment of these experiences will assist in ‘closing the deal’ with those who have placed the Northern SLRD on their shortlist of relocation options.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
5.1 Create a network of trails centred around each community in the Northern SLRD	<p>Support the continued production of the Lillooet Hiking Guide. Develop a trails strategy for the Northern SLRD that identifies areas where trails would be appropriate and nature of trail use (walking, hiking, mountain biking, motorized etc.). Ensure trails directly or indirectly begin/end in commercial centres to encourage economic activity around trail use.</p> <p>Support the efforts of the BRVCA Trails Committee as they work together with the St’at’imc Nation under the mountain bike trails development Memorandum of Understanding.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet (working with local Trails Societies/ Committees)
5.2 Improve access to key outdoor recreation areas	Identify appropriate routes/locations and improve access to riverfronts and lakes including	Long Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet

	incorporation of walking trails from downtown Lillooet and Gold Bridge. (e.g. Lions Trail in Lillooet)		
5.3 Continue to support local community organizations offering arts, culture and heritage experiences, festivals and events and/or providing other important local services	<p>Continue to support Miyazaki House, Haylmore Heritage Site, Bralorne Pioneer Museum, Lillooet Historical Society, Lillooet Farmers Market, and other arts/culture organizations/events in their role as important stewards of community character and sense of place.</p> <p>Support the work of other community groups such as the Lillooet Naturalist Society, Lillooet Invasive Species, Hospice Society etc. as important contributors to community services.</p>	Immediate	SLRD/ District of Lillooet
5.4 Invest in recreational amenities in Lillooet	Review existing recreation centre in Lillooet and consider opportunities to work in partnership with others to improve the facility and the amenities it offers residents.	Short Term	District of Lillooet/ SLRD
5.5 Enable and support residential development opportunities in/around Lillooet	<p>Incorporate opportunity for residential development in appropriate locations in update to Lillooet Official Community Plan.</p> <p>Plan for and invest in capacity for water, sewer and other services in anticipation of residential development.</p>	Short Term	District of Lillooet

Contributing Strategies/Actions

The following priority opportunities will contribute to economic development in the Northern SLRD. Three opportunities have been identified for ‘active pursuit’ as they are believed to offer the highest potential return while remaining in alignment with community values (tourism, agriculture, health care and amenity migration). Three further opportunities have been identified for ‘monitoring and support’ because of their historic and/or potential contribution to the economy of the Northern SLRD. These areas (forestry, mining and energy) while significant will largely be triggered by events/interests outside of the Northern SLRD. However given that their benefits and impacts in the area can be influenced and managed, it is important to also consider strategies and actions in these sectors.

6.0 Tourism – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet

The sustainable growth of the tourism economy is considered a high priority for all areas of the Northern SLRD. While it is critical to all communities, residents and stakeholders that this growth be respectful of the health of the environment, community values and the sense of community place, tourism is perceived to be an opportunity that can be immediately activated.

The following contributing strategies and actions are recommended for tourism:

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
<p>6.1 Create an anchor experience and compelling reason for visitors to stop and stay multi-nights in Lillooet and surrounding communities.</p>	<p>Support efforts of the St'at'imc communities to design, construct and operate a Cultural Centre that in addition to its community mandate offers visitors an introduction to the culture and history of the St'at'imc people and serves as a launch point for further immersive and authentic Indigenous cultural experiences as well as other market-ready visitor experiences in the Northern SLRD.</p> <p>Secure resources to develop a business plan/ pre-feasibility review of a St'at'imc Cultural Centre that serves both as a community hub for the celebration of St'at'imc culture as well as an interactive and compelling visitor experience that becomes the anchor draw and reason to stop in Lillooet.</p> <p>Consider opportunity to also relocate or include a satellite Visitor Information Centre including tour and accommodation booking desk.</p> <p>Explore opportunities where appropriate to further incorporate post-contact history of the Northern SLRD, Jade Walk (Chinese, Japanese, Gold Rush, Railroad etc.).</p> <p>Consider opportunities to continue to enhance culinary and agri-tourism offerings and build around Fort Berens as a culinary anchor attraction.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>St'at'imc Nation with support from District of Lillooet and SLRD/NEDI</p>

<p>6.2 Effectively market the remarkable visitor experiences that are already here in the Northern SLRD</p>	<p>Support the efforts of Tourism Lillooet to implement priority actions within their 2019-2023 five-year strategy.</p> <p>Continue to support the efforts of the Bridge River Valley Community Association – Economic Development Committee in tourism promotion activities (Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Cooperative, Mountain Bike BC membership, Visitor Guide, website and social channel management etc.)</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>SLRD/ District of Lillooet</p>
<p>6.3 Define and promote touring routes that incorporate the Northern SLRD (Note: inclusion of Area A will be contingent on Access Enabling Strategies/Actions noted above specifically related to Road 40 and the Hurley Forest Service Road).</p>	<p>Revisit recommended touring routes documented in 2014 that incorporate the Northern SLRD and create 2-3 itineraries featuring market-ready experiences for visitors.</p> <p>Work with Tourism Lillooet, BRVCA and other potential partners (Hope, Cascades & Canyons, Lytton, Fraser Valley/Experience the Fraser, Scenic 7, Farm Circle Tours, Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism BC etc.) to create a marketing campaign featuring routes.</p> <p>Monitor campaign success. Refine and repeat, expanding and adjusting as needed.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>SLRD/ District of Lillooet support for efforts of Tourism Lillooet and BRVCA Economic Development Committee</p>
<p>6.4 Become each other's best ambassador</p>	<p>Ensure Visitor Centre in Lillooet and Visitor Info Booth in Gold Bridge are knowledgeable of experiences throughout the Northern SLRD and are encouraging travel throughout the region e.g. pre-summer season familiarization trip for staff</p> <p>Develop and launch front-line staff training program for all businesses (available on-line) and incentivize all employers and their staff to participate and learn about the experiences available in the Northern SLRD.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>SLRD/ District of Lillooet support for efforts of Lillooet Visitor Centre and BRVCA Economic Development Committee</p>

	Work with St'at'imc communities, elders and leadership to develop an Introduction to the St'at'imc Nation and culture and build cultural sensitivity and awareness amongst local residents, front-line staff and service/experience providers.		
6.5 Invest in new reasons for visitors to explore the Northern SLRD	<p>Encourage Tourism Lillooet and BRVCA to work together and collaborate on various festivals and events in the Northern SLRD.</p> <p>Create an integrated festivals and events strategy for the Northern SLRD that provides new reasons for visitors to experience the area. Leverage festivals and events in surrounding communities such as Pemberton, Whistler.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/ District of Lillooet support for efforts of Tourism Lillooet and BRVCA Economic Development Committee

7.0 Agriculture – Actively Pursue – Area B, District of Lillooet

The agriculture and agri-tourism sector in Lillooet and Area B has been flourishing in recent years through the dedicated efforts of individual business owners as well as the efforts of the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society (LAFS) as described above. In order to continue this success it will be important to celebrate and showcase these products and experiences.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
7.1 Continue to support work of LAFS as it works to implement the Agricultural Plan.	<p>Provide financial resources when possible to support the work of LAFS.</p> <p>Support grant applications made by LAFS to other funding bodies.</p> <p>Promote local products/Buy Local programs.</p> <p>Support weekly Farmers Market and other events that showcase local farms, farm and artisanal products, wineries etc.</p> <p>Review District and Regional policies and processes related to agricultural land and business application and build a supportive</p>	Immediate	SLRD/St'at'imc/ District of Lillooet

	policy framework that encourages expansion of this sector by private investors and is no more restrictive than the regulations of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).		
7.2 Invest in a cold storage/food processing facility and commercial kitchen	Engage with food producers and develop 'needs' analysis for food processing and cold storage. Undertake a feasibility analysis and costing. Secure funding.	Short Term	LAFS with support from SLRD/St'at'imc/District of Lillooet
7.3 Support St'at'imc Food Sovereignty initiatives	Build understanding of Amlec business model and identify ways to support St'at'imc objectives related to food sovereignty.	Immediate	SLRD/ St'at'imc Nation Government
7.4 Invest in programs that engage youth in agriculture and offering mentoring and training.	Discuss mentoring opportunities with current farmers/food producers. Discuss post-secondary opportunities with TRU and/or other institutions. Review opportunities for youth summer employment grants and direct funds to youth mentoring in agricultural businesses.	Immediate	LAFS with support from the SLRD/NEDI

8.0 Health Care

The health care sector in the Northern SLRD, centred in Lillooet is also an important contributor to the local economy. Health care services are also important considerations for amenity migrants. Lillooet current offers a hospital and health care facility with 24-hour emergency and lab services. The St'at'imc Outreach Health Services (SOHS) works collaboratively with Northern St'at'imc communities, partners in health, and other agencies to plan, communicate, advocate and deliver shared professional health care services.

Mountain View Lodge is attached to the hospital and offers 22 beds/long-term resident care. As the resident population in the Northern SLRD ages, there is opportunity to grow the health care/health services sector of the economy through various initiatives including aging-in-place, enhanced preventative health care services etc.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
-----------------------------	----------------	---------------	-------------

<p>8.1 Advocate for and attract increased public and private sector investment in health services based in Lillooet with remote outreach throughout the Northern SLRD.</p>	<p>Develop an inventory of current health services and identify opportunities to enhance offerings through public and private sector investment.</p> <p>Advocate for additional health services based in Lillooet through Interior Health.</p> <p>Consider need for an ‘aging in place’ strategy within the Northern SLRD to identify and address current hurdles to senior wishing to stay in place.</p> <p>Include wellness activities within tourism promotion to support existing private sector service providers.</p> <p>Launch a private-sector business attraction campaign targeted to health and wellness service providers to add further depth and density to current offerings.</p>	<p>Short Term</p>	<p>SLRD/ NEDI/District of Lillooet/SOHS</p>
---	--	--------------------------	--

9.0 Amenity Migrants – Actively Pursue – Area A, B, District of Lillooet

The cost of housing particularly in the Lower Mainland has triggered an assessment of options by many couples and young families seeking to enter the market as well as by seniors seeking to benefit from their accrued equity and liquidate and relocate. Many communities throughout British Columbia are actively targeting these migrants. While the trend data indicates that the majority of Millennials are still locating in urban and suburban areas, those that are already in the SLRD communities of Squamish, Whistler and Pemberton are potential relocation targets as they have already ‘bought in’ to the region and its amenities. Kamloops, Ashcroft, Cache Creek... Active seniors with some familiarity of the area are also believed to be potential relocation candidates as the weather, medical facilities and general affordability of Lillooet in particular are believed to be competitive relative to other options they may have.

As well as the enabling strategies identified above, additional actions can be taken to build awareness and differentiate the Northern SLRD as a preferred relocation option:

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
9.1 Build	Invest in tourism promotion as	Immediate	SLRD/

awareness of the Northern SLRD communities as a relocation option in target audiences.	<p>noted above as amenity migrants are often visitors first.</p> <p>Clearly define unique competitive advantage and target audience with larger group of Millennials and retiring Active Seniors.</p> <p>Develop and launch promotional campaigns targeting qualified prospective residents using impactful messaging and strategic delivery channels.</p>		District of Lillooet support for efforts of Tourism Lillooet and BRVCA Economic Development Committee
---	--	--	--

10.0 Mining – Support and Maintain – Area A, District of Lillooet

The Northern SLRD and Area A in particular has a long history of mining that has and continues to contribute to the economy of the area. As a service centre, the businesses in Lillooet and Area B are also beneficiaries of this activity. The successful growth of the industry in the Northern SLRD will in large part be tied to the success of exploration efforts currently underway and on global demand and pricing for minerals.

While these triggering variables cannot be controlled by organizations or individuals in the Northern SLRD, it is possible to consider economic strategies and actions that work to keep the maximum benefit and positive economic impact within the communities of the Northern SLRD.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
10.1 – Build relationships with companies actively exploring for minerals in the Northern SLRD	Convene and host an annual relationship building forum to share plans and priorities and to build understanding of the various phases of minerals exploration and discuss ways in which labour and purchasing requirements can be met locally and in keeping with community values as well as business imperatives.	Short Term	SLRD/NEDI and BRVCA Economic Committee

11.0 Forestry – Support and Maintain – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet

The forestry industry in the Northern SLRD is still an important economic contributor and while the industry faces challenges of declining supply and increasing harvesting costs, the sector should continue to be supported.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
11.1 Attract value-added wood products manufacturing	<p>Review opportunity for re-opening of a wood products re-manufacturing facility and pursue private investment.</p> <p>Create a policy and approval framework within local and regional government that supports growth of existing businesses creating value-added wood products.</p> <p>Meet with industry stakeholders and work collaboratively to identify additional value-added products that could be made in the Northern SLRD from veneer or other wood products.</p> <p>Review opportunity for wood pellet plant.</p>	Short Term	SLRD/NEDI /District of Lillooet/ St'at'imc Nation organizations

12.0 Energy – Support and Maintain – Area A, Area B, District of Lillooet

The energy sector, and in particular the activities of BC Hydro have and will continue to have significant impacts on the Northern SLRD. While much of the planning for upcoming capital investments by BC Hydro is conducted internally, like mining there is potential to maximize the positive economic benefits that are retained locally and to limit economic leakage outside of the Northern SLRD. The St'at'imc Nation has its own agreements and relationship with BC Hydro and the strategies below are not intended to undermine these agreements and benefits. However, the opportunities and impacts on communities such as Gold Bridge, Bralorne and Lillooet in particular must be addressed as well.

Strategy Description	Actions	Timing	Lead
12.1 Strengthen relationship with BC Hydro to influence planning and nature/location of purchasing and labour	Form a Northern SLRD Energy sub-committee and meet regularly with representatives from BC Hydro to understand their evolving plans and purchasing needs and brainstorm ways to create beneficial local economic activity.	Immediate	SLRD/NEDI working with District of Lillooet staff and BRVCA contractors

Moving Forward

This update to the Northern SLRD Economic Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan occurred in a condensed timeframe at the end of 2019. While efforts were made to contact a broad range of stakeholders, it will be important to continue to solicit additional feedback and input. Ideally, this report can be used as a platform for a Northern SLRD Community Economic Forum that includes the St'at'imc Nation, representatives from the various St'at'imc communities and their economic development agencies as well as staff and elected officials in Area A, Area B of the SLRD and the District of Lillooet.