


# Powering

➤ possibility

 Learn more at [fortstjohn.ca/100-street](https://fortstjohn.ca/100-street)

*Investing  
in our  
Downtown*







*Vibrant.  
Energetic.  
Ambitious.*



# Welcome

*See what's possible.*

## Fueling business growth in northern BC.

The Peace River Region is progressing rapidly, and at its centre lies the City of Fort St. John. Economic activity has been spurring the growth of the region for years, and with low business tax rates and economic incentives for development, the opportunities just keep growing.



**\$8.9 billion**

in energy exports from the Northeast in 2019



**300,000**

tourists per year



**20,000**

wells drilled — some of North America's largest gas fields



**80%**

of BC grain production



**38%**

of BC hydroelectric power is provided by the North Peace area

# Get to know

Fort St. John

## We're young and ambitious

In Fort St. John, we love to play. The great outdoors, festivals, and 304 sunny days per year have our residents living life to its fullest. We take full advantage of our four distinct seasons with long summer days by the lake and crisp, bluebird winters perfect for hitting the ski trails. A robust local arts economy sustained by our passionate residents means there's always an opportunity for enriching entertainment.



**34**

Median age, compared to 41.6 in Canada



**5.9%**

Increase in population from 2016 to 2021 – 21,465 people and growing



**69.2%**

Employment rate in Fort St John



**6.4%**

Unemployment rate in Northeast BC (August 2023)



**\$106,000**

Median household income – seventh highest in Canada and second highest in BC



**16.2%**

Identify as visible minorities

(source: Statistics Canada, 2021)





# Where we work

## *Top industries*

Built on oil and gas, mining operations, forestry, and agriculture, Fort St. John is the backbone of stable employment, including fast-growing opportunities in the service and retail trades.

- 1. Construction**
- 2. Retail trade**
- 3. Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction**

(source: Statistics Canada, 2021)

Major Employers



# How we train

## *A skilled, hard-working population*

**7,865**

Residents that have obtained a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

**2**

Postsecondary institutions.



**6**

Training services available in first aid and safety, commercial driver training, industry/workforce training, and business development.

## **Northern Opportunities**

This program provides Northeastern BC with an essential supply of skilled workers, adding to the economic stability of the region.



# Getting here

Daily flights to major cities, a robust highway network, rail and port access makes Fort St. John effortlessly accessible from 96 international destinations—and closer to Asia Pacific markets than BC's lower mainland.

Bulk, container, and liquid rail service is available through CN—North America's only transcontinental railway.



## Under two hours by plane

- Vancouver
- Calgary



## Connected by major highways

- Highway 97
- Highway 29



## Established rail connections

- 120 rail hours to Prince Rupert
- 117 rail hours to Vancouver



## Near maritime shipping routes

- Kitimat
- Prince Rupert
- Stewart





*You can feel  
the energy  
building.*











# First Nations

## Development

The Peace River Region is on Treaty 8 Territory, stretching over 800,000 km<sup>2</sup> and home to:

- West Moberly First Nations
- Saulteau First Nations
- Prophet River First Nation
- Halfway River First Nation
- Doig River First Nation
- Fort Nelson First Nation
- Blueberry River First Nation
- McLeod Lake Indian Band

The Treaty 8 Tribal Association represents member and non-member First Nations in northeastern BC and has its office in Fort St. John.

Its mission is to achieve sustainable, shared economic prosperity and create strong proud communities that preserve cultural heritage, and protect Treaty 8 Rights and interests.

## Resources for a sustainable future

### **NORTHEAST ABORIGINAL BUSINESS CENTRE**

Headquartered in Fort St. John, this valuable resource is dedicated to the financial independence of all Indigenous persons in the Peace River Region.

### **TREATY 8 FIRST NATIONS LABOUR MARKET HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY**

This 2015 skills and employment assessment with five Treaty 8 First Nations communities and community-specific human resources strategy matches skills training with current and future labour market needs.

### **NAACHE COMMONS DEVELOPMENT**

Located within the municipality of Fort St. John is Gat Tah Kwâ, an Urban Reserve created by Doig River First Nation. The priority development is “Naache Commons”, 8 acres of land located directly south of Ma Murray Elementary School on 116 Street and 105 Avenue.



# Economic advantages

A magnet for the energy sector and bursting with new development, investors love Fort St. John for its honest business tax rates, diverse development opportunities for development, and wealth of resources.

## Manageable tax rates for your business



### MUNICIPAL

Business tax rate  
(dollars of tax per  
\$1,000 taxable value,  
2023): **\$15.07**



### PROVINCIAL

General corporate  
income tax: **12%**  
Small business corporate  
income tax: **2%**

In 2020, Fort St. John had the ninth-lowest municipal tax revenues compared to other northern BC communities. (source: Province of BC)

## Affordable development permits, approved quickly



### BUILDING PERMITS

**30 days avg.**, \$5 per  
\$1,000 of construction  
value (\$500,000 maximum)

### DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

**1-3 month average**



### NEW CONSTRUCTION, OCP, AND ZONING AMENDMENTS

**3-6 months**, from \$1500

## A network of business resources



Pacific Economic  
Development Canada

Développement économique  
Canada pour le Pacifique

Canada





Let us  
help your  
bottom line





Current

# investment opportunities





# Get in on the ground floor.

Fort St. John is committed to economic growth and diversity. Recent private investments and opportunities include:

## **Parkwood**

- A 600-acre mixed-use master-planned community.

## **Surerus Industrial Park**

- A 90-acre industrial subdivision with easy highway access.

## **The Landing**

- Multi-phase retail development anchored by a 126,000 sq. ft. (11,706 sq. m.) Canadian Tire store.

## **The Station**

- A 207-acre residential and commercial subdivision fronting the Alaska Highway.

## **Site C**

- Generating station on the Peace River to provide clean electricity for over 100 years.
- Scheduled for service in 2025.

## **LNG – NEBC**

- Will supply natural gas for the recently announced LNG Canada facility in Kitimat, among others.
- 40-year export licenses for extended, long-term growth.

## City Projects

### **Downtown Revitalization**

- Inspired by the growth of the City.
- The 100 Street Corridor project will replace underground infrastructure along the street and improve above-ground spaces.
- Initiatives in the full Downtown Action Plan will ensure the social, economic, and cultural heart of the community thrive.

### **New RCMP Detachment**

- Replaced the 35-year-old previous detachment.
- Modern, net-zero building featuring mass timber construction.
- 145 kW photovoltaic system.

### **Centennial Park Festival Plaza**

- Open-air concept with a 300-person capacity.
- Designed to meet the needs of the City's expanding arts, culture and music scene.
- Locally designed art features.

For additional opportunities, reach out to the City of Fort St. John Economic Development Department at [economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca) or 250-787-8150.

# ➤ Thriving local business

## *Homesteader Health Foods*

### How it started

Trish and Steve Brousson were always interested in healthy living, so when a small health food business came up for sale in Fort St. John in 1989, they leapt at the opportunity. The health food store has grown to four locations in BC and Alberta, bringing wholesome food and supplements to those communities.

### Health on the rise

In the beginning, Homesteader Health Foods relied on an older clientele for its business, but the demographic has changed in the last few years. “There’s a lot of interest in healthy living within Fort St. John,” said Trish Brousson, co-owner of Homesteader Health Foods. Now, the already-thriving independent health food store is seeing more and more of its clientele coming from younger, more permanent members of the community.

### A community bands together

There are many benefits to being a local business owner in a tight-knit community. For the Broussons, the spirit of Fort St. John really shone after, in 1998, a fire tragically burned their store down. It only took five days for the community to come together and help set up the store in a new location, where it remained for the next 15 years.

### Room to grow for independent businesses

Affordable rents, reasonable taxes, and a strong community are part of what makes Fort St. John a great choice for local business. “A big advantage is, you get to know your customers,” Trish shares. That relationship makes it fun to go to work, and means your customers are also your friends. “It makes going to work so much better,” she said. “You can go to Vancouver or Edmonton to go shopping, but most people do want some social contact and also to know they are supporting their community.”

*“Living in a smaller community, there’s always so much more.”*

- Trish Brousson, co-owner, Homesteader Health Foods







The image is a vertical composition of two photographs. The left half shows a person in a dark shirt and a bright yellow safety vest, holding a laptop. The background is a server room with racks of equipment and glowing green lights. The right half shows the same person wearing an orange hard hat and a brown leather work glove, working on a large electrical control panel with many buttons and switches. The background is a bright, sunlit area. The word "Dimen's" is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image, overlapping both photos.

*Dimen's*

# ➤ Set up for success in Fort St. John

## *Pimm's Production Equipment, Instrumentation, Electrical*

### How it started

This family business was founded in Fort St. John in 1980. Three generations later, the production, instrumentation, and electrical company is still providing for the oil and gas industry from northern BC to western Alberta, but has expanded its services to include telecommunications, IT, computer communication equipment, air compressors, millwrighting, and more.

*"We didn't choose Fort St. John, it chose us."*

- Ted Pimm, General Manager, Pimm's

### Freedom to expand

Since opening in Fort St. John over 40 years ago, Pimm's has never considered relocating. Economically, the city has been a boon for the company, allowing it to grow financially. Geographically, it has been well-positioned to thrive in multiple industries. In 2008, when the oil and gas industry hit a slump, the success that Pimm's had enjoyed over the years allowed it to remain agile and branch out to other industries. The business continues to thrive, serving multiple industries, headquartered in Fort. St. John with a second office in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

### A growing community

Born and raised in Fort St. John, Ted Pimm, general manager of Pimm's, has no plans to leave. "I love it here," said Pimm, who returned to the city. That insight has allowed him to see how the community has changed over the decades. "It feels like it's doubled since I was a kid," he said. "It's grown quite a bit."

### Unlimited potential

The amount of growth that Pimm has witnessed in Fort St. John has led him to believe it is a city with lots of possibilities. With increased developments, a low cost of living compared to major cities, and a young population, he sees lots of room for expansion in a variety of industries.



# ➤ The right choice for a new business

## COBS Bread Bakery

### How it started

Hardik Patel moved to Fort St. John from India in 2013 with plans to continue his education and eventually settle down in Canada. He began thoughts of starting his own business after finishing a diploma in Business Management from Northern Lights College. Already a fan of COBS Bread Bakery, Patel saw the fresh bread franchise as an opportunity to offer something different for the community—with a side of giving. “I was a customer before and always loved their products, and at the end of the day, the best part is, the leftovers are donated to local charities and food banks,” Patel explained. COBS opened in June 2020.

*“We wanted to invest our time, money, and life in Fort St. John, and we wanted to bring something new.”*

- Hardik Patel, Owner/Operator, COBS Bread Bakery

### Economically competitive

Choosing to open the bakery in Fort St. John was as much a financial decision as an emotional one. After conducting market research and looking into the economic advantages of Fort St. John versus other Canadian cities, Patel and his wife decided that not only did their hearts belong in the Peace River Region, but their business did as well, thanks to the city’s affordability. Compared with B.C.’s Okanagan region, for example, Patel found that securing a space would have been difficult due to population and demand. Fort St. John already had reasonable prices, more options, and friendly, helpful landlords.

*“We felt the connection to Fort St. John, and, in market comparisons, we found that the city was more affordable.”*

- Hardik Patel, Owner/Operator, COBS Bread Bakery

### Navigating challenges, together

Giving back to the community was always an important part of Patel’s business model. Patel felt the love returned when navigating the challenges of opening during the pandemic. “The bakery was already being built,” said Patel. “We couldn’t step back, we had to move forward.” Community support was instrumental to the bakery’s success. “We received a great response, with customers visiting every day for our fresh products.” Even as customers patiently followed the pandemic’s safety guidelines—sometimes waiting in -40 degree celsius cold!

## New faces, new opportunities

Over the last nine years, Patel has seen the positive impact of recent development. “I see new customers coming and going every day—more people settling in town for work with their families.” The growing diversity, amount of parks and recreation, and job opportunities in Fort St. John have Patel excited for the future. “It’s going to keep getting better and better and in the long run, the city will be booming.”

*“It’s going to keep getting better and better and in the long run it will be booming.”*

- Hardik Patel, Owner/Operator,  
COBS Bread Bakery







*Fueling business growth in northern BC.*



**For more information, please contact:**

City of Fort St. John Economic Development Department  
250-787-8150  
[economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@fortstjohn.ca)

**[fortstjohn.ca/economic-development](http://fortstjohn.ca/economic-development)**

