

TUMBLER RIDGE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN STRATEGIES FOR RESILIENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) would like to acknowledge and thank the Council and staff of the District of Tumbler Ridge. A special thank you goes to Councillor Mike Caisley, who served as Council Liaison for the project. Councillor Caisley championed and supported the Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan from its inception to its completion. Special thanks also to Barry Elliott, Chief Administrative Officer, who helped make everything happen.

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Most of all, we would like to acknowledge and thank the people of Tumbler Ridge who took the time to talk with us about their vision for the future. Your commitment to the community is a significant asset for the future of Tumbler Ridge.

The CDI is proud to have had a long history of involvement in Tumbler Ridge and wish you every success for the future.

Marleen Morris, Clare Mochrie, Greg Halseth, and Phil Mullins
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To learn more, visit www.refbc.com.



ACCESSING THIS REPORT

This project report may be accessed through the Community Development Institute's website at: <http://unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects>. The project report may also be accessed at the Tumbler Ridge Public Library.

Project Reports

1. **Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan: Strategies for Resilience:** Executive Summary
2. **Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan: Strategies for Resilience:** Community Profile
3. **Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan: Strategies for Resilience:** A Framework for Action

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Tumbler Ridge was established in 1984 to service the nearby coal mines. Since then, the community has evolved from a single resource-based economy to an increasingly adaptive and diverse community. The nature of its establishment, and the fact that Tumbler Ridge is still a relatively new and small-sized community, means it is still vulnerable to fluctuations in the price of coal, which influences the operational decisions of the community's largest employers. The most recent downturn in coal prices in early 2014 reinforces the need to advance a focus on economic diversification and firmly establish Tumbler Ridge as a modern and self-reliant community in a beautiful setting. The Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan reflects a proactive and determined resolve to ensure that the community continues on the path to achieving this vision.

The Tumbler Ridge Sustainability Plan consists of two main parts:

1. ***Community Profile*** – provides a statistical snapshot of the population, labour force, businesses, and industry of Tumbler Ridge;
2. ***Framework for Action*** – consists of a set of goals, strategies, and tactics developed by the community members of Tumbler Ridge.

The strategies and tactics that make up the ***Framework for Action*** were derived from a large number of conversations and group discussions held in the community over the course of 22 months between January 2013 and October 2014. They outline the actions that could be taken – and must be taken – in order to build on the community's assets and make Tumbler Ridge the community residents want it to be. Work on some of the actions has already started. Others will require preparation, coordination, and leadership to get underway.

ECONOMY	
<i>Goal: A stable economy that draws strength from a mix of different sectors and supports local businesses, jobs, and services for the community</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
<p>Develop a comprehensive tourism strategy that involves building local capacity, products, and services around outdoor recreation assets in the region – and strategically marketing these products and services to the regional population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together – the District, the business community, and local organizations – in order to maximize the economic potential of established community events such as the Grizfest and Emperor’s Challenge, including, for example, activities such as a local art and artisan’s fair, food fairs, specialized markets for related goods, guided hikes, and dinosaur discovery walks.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the success of Grizfest and the Emperor’s Challenge, establish a new winter sports/recreation festival/event.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and diversify the supply of accommodation, restaurant, and other tourist services, focusing first on lower cost, flexible options such as B&Bs and guest rooms that also provide a source of revenue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an assessment of signage in town and make improvements to ensure visitors to the community are able to locate key sites and services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore tourism opportunities associated with local First Nations history and artifacts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groom some of the backcountry sledding and cross-country ski trails in order to provide safe and appropriate experiences for a broad range of skill levels.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for developing tourism attractions in connection with outdoor recreational amenities, i.e. zip line, BMX track, sledding huts, downhill/cross country ski facility.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek information from other communities that have developed their recreation assets to learn from their experiences; consider a ‘visiting exchange’ with these communities, i.e. Valemount, McBride, and Revelstoke.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space in the Visitor Information Centre for local tourism-related services to have a presence and sell their services (i.e. winter and summer guiding services, jet-boat tours, helicopter tours).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space in the Visitor Information Centre for local artists and artisans to display and sell their creations. Hire local artists and artisans to design branded Tumbler Ridge merchandise.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance local camping facilities and explore the potential of a high-end RV park.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop accessible trails in close proximity to the town to make it possible for seniors, families with young children, and those with mobility challenges to enjoy an outdoor experience.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use computer, smart phone, and Internet-based technology to allow visitors and those planning a visit to access information about the experiences available (i.e. maps, photos, and videos of the trails, accommodations, and services available).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the street appeal of the downtown core and the entrance to the community through erecting banners and seasonal street plantings (e.g. flowers in summer, trees with lights in winter).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential of upgrading the airstrip and associated facilities and attracting a carrier to enable air travel to and from Tumbler Ridge.
<p>Capitalize on economic opportunities related to Tumbler Ridge's designation as a Global Geopark.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the existing Museum, Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, and track sites as the basis for developing a range of tourist products and services to make these assets accessible and appealing to families and people of all ages.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance directional signage in the community to the Museum and Dinosaur Discover Gallery.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance signage and the appearance of the front entrance to the Museum and Dinosaur Gallery.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the work undertaken by the Tumbler Ridge Aspiring Geopark to establish partnerships both regionally and internationally and to attract tourists and investment to the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the work undertaken by the Tumbler Ridge Aspiring Geopark/Museum Foundation to establish Tumbler Ridge as a hub for both academic research and employment in connection with the area's

	paleontological assets.
Explore business opportunities that cater to currently untapped. local markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a survey to develop an understanding of the product and service needs of LDLC and international/ethnic communities in town. • Share the survey results to raise awareness in the business community about opportunities to address the product and service needs of LDLC and international/ethnic communities.
Explore opportunities to diversify the District's industrial base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate for an expansion of the Community Forest plot size to enable greater economic benefits from the forest. • Support and work with the Community Forest to explore options for maximizing the economic spin-offs and job creation potential of the forest. • Encourage the development of wind power opportunities in the region. • Explore the potential of expanding and enhancing rail service to meet the needs of industry in Tumbler Ridge.
Develop a plan for revitalizing the downtown and attracting new businesses to town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for attracting new business to town on a temporary basis, as a way of establishing longer term tenants, i.e. pop-up business opportunities, District-owned incubator spaces, trade shows, etc. • Enhance the street appeal of the downtown core and the entrance to the community through erecting banners and seasonal street plantings (e.g. flowers in summer, trees with lights in winter). • Work together locally – and with other levels of government – to encourage and support small business development and local entrepreneurs, particularly women. • Expand the supply of land for commercial development by exploring options for purchasing Crown Land. • Explore opportunities to attract a public institution or other large employer, i.e. call centre, distillery, correctional facility.

EDUCATION	
<i>Goal: A diversity of education, training, and lifelong learning opportunities to equip children and adults with the skills they need to succeed in the future.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Establish education and training opportunities to support the development of a vibrant outdoor tourism recreation industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish course offerings in tourism fundamentals, i.e. service/host management, small business/entrepreneurial skills, marketing, and financial planning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer tourism and hospitality courses locally for frontline staff, i.e. Tourism BC's SuperHost Program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build course offerings in transferrable skills, i.e. project management, supervision, safety, conflict resolution.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link with the UNBC Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management Program for possible graduate student opportunities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities with School District 59 to utilize the Gwillim Lake Pat O'Reilly Outdoor and Environmental Studies Centre for outdoor recreation education and training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to partner with the foreign student program at School District 59 and build course and program offerings in ESL education and outdoor recreation.
Align local training offerings with the needs of local employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with employers to plan and develop course offerings in specific areas (i.e. longwall mining) and to provide relevant transferrable skills (i.e. project management, supervision, safety, conflict resolution).
Extend education and learning opportunities to all members of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize education and learning opportunities available through online learning at the secondary and post-secondary levels.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together organizations in the community to understand needs and explore ways to expand learning opportunities for people with disabilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together organizations in the community to understand needs and explore ways to expand literacy services, especially for adults.
Build partnerships and increase involvement of the broader community, First Nations, business, and industry in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue opportunities for project-based activities involving the Community Forest and the high school, i.e. the development of an interpretative trail.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a pool of apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and project-

planning and delivery of skills and training opportunities.	based learning opportunities for high school students within the community – and build continuity with these placements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to employers in order to match course offerings with what they need – and build a critical mass of students to justify course costs. • Strengthen connections with First Nations elders and increase opportunities for building awareness about traditional land-based activities.
Build education and training to match gaps and opportunities in the local economy/job market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit local residents into trades training (i.e. implement a recruitment campaign; partner with training institutions; encourage high school students, women, and people in career transition to participate).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit local residents into human services careers (e.g. home care worker, Early Childhood Educator).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide local assistance for resume writing, cover letters, job search, skills assessment, etc.

HOUSING	
Goal: Quality housing suited to the needs of the community, including permanent, temporary, and fly-in/fly-out residents.	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Ensure the range of housing options in Tumbler Ridge meets the needs of residents in terms of design, cost, and tenure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a housing inventory to identify the age, design, condition, and tenure arrangements for existing housing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a community profile to identify current and future housing needs, and identify priorities, including seniors, workforce, and acreage housing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research best practices for housing location and design.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive housing plan that draws on best practices to address the housing supply gaps identified by the inventory and needs assessment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a range of programs and services that will allow seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible as they age (e.g. home maintenance, home cleaning and laundry, yard care, snow shoveling, grocery delivery, transportation services).
Enhance the existing housing stock in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone and bring parcels to market to accommodate housing needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage renovations that prolong the economic life of the housing stock (e.g. provide incentives, promote renovations for energy efficiency, etc.).
Reduce property development and purchase risk in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage renovations that enable seniors to “age-in-place”.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance investor confidence through mechanisms to mitigate or share development risk (e.g. partnerships with lenders and developers; bring potential investors to community, etc.).
Improve Tumbler Ridge neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop commercial storage for recreational and industrial vehicles.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce parking regulations that prohibit large vehicles being parking in residential neighbourhoods.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance neighbourhood park space and play areas.

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES	
<i>Goal: A comprehensive range of services and programming to support a healthy and vibrant community.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Ensure access to medical and support services that meet the needs of the population in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Northern Health Authority, industrial employers, and non-profit service providers to identify the medical and support service needs in the community, considering the community's demographic and employment profile.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan for medical and support service delivery that ensures primary health care and other services needed are available locally, and access to services outside the community is timely and responsive.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for partnership with industrial employers to recruit and retain allied medical professionals (e.g. physiotherapists, occupational therapists, paramedics, drug and alcohol counsellors) needed by workers in order to reduce travel costs and downtime for industry and enhance local access for other residents.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop flexible service plans that will enable service providers to remain in the community even during an industry slow-down so that recruitment and retention is not a cyclical issue.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community non-profit volunteer organizations in providing services that enhance the continuum of care and services available in the community (e.g. local respite and home care services.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the use of technology to deliver medical and counselling services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and enhance emergency and non-emergency transportation services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a community needs assessment for disability services.
Make childcare available that supports the needs of families and workers in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the capacity to flex the number of childcare spaces to accommodate variable community demand that emerges as a result of economic upswings and downturns.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and retain more Early Childhood Educators (ECE) – and support the ECE certifications of local residents already working in this field.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of obtaining an exemption under the Child Care Regulations that would allow for additional hours in care to accommodate parents working 12-hour shifts.

SPORTS & RECREATION	
Goal: <i>Infrastructure, services, and supports to enable people's involvement in sports and recreation activities.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Improve information and enhance promotion and communications about sports and recreation programs, services, and events available in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together community groups and District of Tumbler Ridge staff involved in sports and recreation programming to share information about what they offer.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a process to regularly gather and update information on available sports and recreation programs, services, and events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about sports and recreation programs, services, and events to residents, using multiple channels (i.e. website, bulletin boards, school newsletters).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a process by which people who are new to the community receive information about available recreation and sports programs, services, and events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a single 'hub' for information on sports and recreation programs and events in the community.
Make available facilities that support recreation and sport programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a space 'needs' survey of groups involved in sports and recreation programming to identify the types of space they require.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a space 'availability' inventory, including traditional and non-traditional spaces (i.e. churches, Royal Canadian Legion, Hartford Court), to identify options and match groups to appropriate spaces.
Make available recreation and sports programs and services that respond to the needs and preferences of Tumbler Ridge residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a survey of residents to determine sports and recreation priorities and interests, as well as identify potential volunteer instructors or program leaders.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide programs, services, and events that align with the interests identified, with particular attention to programming for all ages and abilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure scheduling of sports and recreation activities and events considers work and shift hours and residents who do not live in Tumbler Ridge full-time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with major employers that would engage their workers in sports and recreation activities.

ARTS & CULTURE	
<i>Goal: A vibrant arts and culture community and a range of services to support people's involvement.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Improve information and enhance promotion and communications about arts and culture programs, services, and events available in Tumbler Ridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together individuals, community groups and District of Tumbler Ridge staff involved in arts and culture to share information about what they offer.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen connections with First Nations and other cultural groups in the community to build awareness and develop inclusive programming in the arts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a process to regularly gather and update information on available arts and culture programs, services, and events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about arts and culture programs, services and events to residents, using multiple channels (i.e. website, bulletin boards, newsletters).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a brochure that would serve as a guide to artists and artisans in the community who wish to sell their creations and make this guide available to tourists and residents.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities for artists and artisans to market their creations at community events and through central locations, such as the Visitor Information Centre.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a process by which people who are new to the community receive information about available arts and culture programs, services, and events.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a single 'hub' for information on arts and culture programs, services, and events in the community.
Make available facilities that support arts and culture programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a space 'needs' survey of groups involved in arts and culture programming to identify the types of space they require (i.e. performance, practice, teaching, display space).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a space 'availability' inventory, including traditional and non-traditional spaces (i.e. churches, Royal Canadian Legion, Hartford Court, Visitor Information Centre), to identify options and match groups to appropriate spaces.
Make available arts and culture programs and services that respond to the needs and preferences of Tumbler Ridge residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a survey of residents to determine arts and culture priorities and interests, as well as identify potential volunteer instructors or program leaders.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide programs, services, and events that align with the interests identified, with particular attention to programming for all ages and abilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure scheduling of arts and culture activities and events considers work and shift hours and residents who do not live in Tumbler Ridge full-time.

LAND & INFRASTRUCTURE	
<i>Goal: Infrastructure and land assets that are safe, well functioning and reliable, and which support economic development, citizen safety, and quality of life.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Establish a sound and robust strategy to ensure the ongoing maintenance of municipal infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a comprehensive maintenance strategy and budget for all aspects of municipal infrastructure to ensure it is operating efficiently and is well maintained. Strengthen partnerships with external utility providers to ensure coordination between maintenance strategies and timelines.
Build the skills and expertise of District staff to support and maintain municipal infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in training and professional development so as to ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate, fix, and maintain municipal infrastructure.
Strengthen existing knowledge and information tools pertaining to District land and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a robust base of information pertaining to District infrastructure – as well as the systems necessary to use this information to support evidence-based decision making on maintenance and replacement.
Ensure an adequate share of benefit from adjacent industrial developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine opportunities to expand District boundaries to encompass adjacent wind, coal, and oil and gas developments.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	
<i>Goal: Residents of all ages that are informed and involved in the civic institutions, organizations, and events that contribute to the sustainability, quality of life and well-being of Tumbler Ridge.</i>	
STRATEGIES	TACTICS
Build capacity and numbers in the volunteer sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstitute the Tumbler Ridge Umbrella Committee as a forum for volunteer organizations to come together, exchange knowledge and share lessons learned, and to mobilize as necessary around community issues.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a survey to determine what types of volunteers are needed and to identify volunteer interests in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider hiring a Volunteer Coordinator who would serve all of the organizations in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer volunteer training to organizations on how to recruit and retain volunteers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider negotiating corporate sponsorship of volunteerism.
Work with youth in the community to build awareness and appreciation of and involvement in the volunteer sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a dialogue with youth in the high school to identify volunteering opportunities that would interest them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and build on successful youth volunteer initiatives, i.e. Grade 5/6 iPad instruction to seniors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish the position of youth council member on District Council.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at allowing volunteering as a means of satisfying work credit requirements in the high school curriculum.
Work together to foster an inclusive community that accepts and welcomes people of all cultures and ethnicities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop cultural awareness education, for example through high school/evening classes at the college and events in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate the cultural traditions and recognize the contributions made by cultural groups in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage First Nations elders in classes at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School and at the Northern Lights College campus, as well as at events in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage cultural groups in District initiatives, such as advisory committees.

MOVING FORWARD...

Demonstrating leadership and a proactive commitment to action/change, the District of Tumbler Ridge undertook the development of a sustainability plan to chart a course for the future of the community. This future imagines Tumbler Ridge as a community that draws its strength and stability from a diverse economic base, and in which people of all ages and cultures are able to live, thrive, and enjoy the stunning environment that surrounds them.

The process to develop the sustainability plan brought together people and organizations from all sectors within the community. Together they identified, and in many cases set in motion, strategies that will make Tumbler Ridge the community they want it to be.

The full implementation of the plan will take time. The key, therefore, will be to:

- Remain focused and committed to the implementation of the plan;
- Continually monitor progress and adjust the plan as necessary to take advantage of new opportunities or address new challenges;
- Celebrate success and recognize those who contribute to making things happen;
- Regularly bring people and organizations together to share information and develop collaborative strategies for moving forward; and,
- Communicate progress and successes within and beyond the community, and share the community's story with other areas that could benefit from Tumbler Ridge's experience.

Tumbler Ridge has already made strong progress toward economic diversification and community resiliency. As the community discovered through this process, it has a wealth of assets upon which to build its future: the people, amenities, and surroundings of Tumbler Ridge. Building on these will enable Tumbler Ridge to achieve a vibrant and sustainable community.

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The Community Development Institute at The University of Northern British Columbia

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC was established in 2004 with a broad mandate in the areas of community, regional, and economic development. Since its inception, the CDI has worked with communities across the northern and central regions of British Columbia to develop and implement strategies for economic diversification and community resilience.

Dedicated to understanding and realizing the potential of BC's non-metropolitan communities in a changing global economy, the CDI works to prepare students and practitioners for leadership roles in community and economic development, and create a body of knowledge, information, and research that will enhance our understanding and our ability to anticipate, and develop strategies for, ongoing transformation. The CDI is committed to working with all communities – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to help them further their community and regional development aspirations.

*Research having an impact,
People making a difference*

www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute