

# **Shopping and Commuting Patterns in Prince Rupert, B.C.**

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

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The University of Northern British Columbia's Rural and Small Town Studies Program works with residents, service providers, voluntary organizations, business organizations, and decision makers to identify factors that contribute to the changing social and economic nature of rural and small town places in British Columbia. This study focuses upon three key aspects of local economies including changing residential and employment patterns, changing shopping patterns, and economic leakage. In particular, this research explores shopping and commuting patterns in the Northwest region of B.C. with a specific focus upon Kitimat, Prince Rupert, and Terrace.

Over the past thirty years, transportation infrastructure has been greatly improved in northern B.C. With these improvements, and an increase in alternative media and communication methods, the rural and small town retail landscape is changing. Consumers are choosing to shop in other communities (out-shopping) where they perceive the shopping may be better or they use alternative methods, such as the Internet, to purchase goods. This 'extra-community' commuting for shopping results in economic leakage where wages earned in one town may be spent on goods and services in another town. Studies have shown that the availability of goods and services, perceptions about local shopping services, and community satisfaction are important in shopping behaviours.

This report provides information to help residents, businesses, service providers, and policy makers of each community adjust to changing circumstances. This research is funded by the Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies. The work was carried out under the direction of Greg Halseth of the Geography Program at the University of Northern British Columbia.

## AVAILABILITY

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Copies of all community reports were distributed within participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>).

Copies of the larger Shopping and Commuting Patterns in the Northwest Region, B.C.: Final Report are available in a number of locations. In Prince Rupert, copies were deposited with the City of Prince Rupert and the public library. At the University of Northern British Columbia, copies have been deposited at the Weller Library or can be accessed under "Printable Research Publications" on Greg Halseth's website: <http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>.

For further information about this report or other available reports on services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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During the spring of 2003, our research team visited Prince Rupert to conduct a series of focus groups which identified a range of important topics associated with tracking shopping and commuting patterns. The results of these interviews informed our random household survey, which was sent out later in the summer. In order to carry out our research, a great deal of assistance was needed. First and foremost, we would like to sincerely thank and recognize all residents and business representatives who took the time to participate in our focus groups or to complete the questionnaire. The response to the questionnaire demonstrates the importance of this issue to residents and the community. We also extend our thanks to all of the people who helped recruit focus group participants.

We wish to thank the business representatives and government staff for their help with local logistics. Many thanks to Northwest Community College for providing us with the space to conduct our focus groups, as well as Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District for the use of office space and photocopying services, and to Barb Lyotier of the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce for her recruiting efforts.

Finally, we thank Nora King for her assistance in conducting the focus groups and Kelly Giesbrecht for her many hours of data entry and processing.

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## GLOSSARY

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***In-shopping***: Degree to which residents purchase goods and services locally.

***Out-shopping***: Degree to which residents purchase goods and services out-of-town.

***Extra-community commuting***: The opportunity to reside in one place and commute to another for employment or shopping.

***Hamlets***: These places have limited services like gasoline service stations and eating and drinking establishments.

***Minimum convenience centre***: These places have all the services available in hamlets, as well as a hardware store, drug store, a bank, and two other convenience functions, such as a variety store.

***Full convenience centre***: These places have all the services available in minimum convenience centres, as well as a laundry or dry cleaning, jewelry, appliances or furniture, clothing, lumber, building materials, shores and garden supplies, and a hotel or motel.

***Partial shopping centre***: These places have all the services available in full convenience centres, as well as some specialty goods and services like camera stores, florists, radio, TV stores, and women's accessories.

***Complete shopping centre***: These places have all the services available in partial shopping centres, as well as additional specialty goods and services.

***Secondary wholesale-retail centre***: These places have all the services available in complete shopping centres, as well as **less than** 32 different kinds of function services in conjunction with different types of wholesaling activities. Wholesale activities include automotive supplies, bulk oil, chemicals, paint, dry goods, apparel, electrical goods, groceries, hardware, industrial, farm machinery, plumbing, heating / air conditioning, professional, service equipment, paper, tobacco, beer, drugs, lumber, and construction material.

***Primary wholesale-retail centre***: These places have all the services available in secondary wholesale-retail centres, as well as **more than** 32 different kinds of function services in conjunction with 14 different types of wholesaling activities.

***Metropolitan retail centre***: This centre offers the widest range of services.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION – PRINCE RUPERT, B.C.**

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Located on traditional Tsimshian First Nations territory, Prince Rupert is situated on Kaien Island, near the mouth of the Skeena River in northwest British Columbia. Incorporated in 1910, the city was originally established as the western terminus for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. In later years, after the construction of the CNR docks, the export of fish and timber became the economic foundation of the city. Pulp mill production began in Prince Rupert in the early 1950s with B.C. Cellulose, which later added a kraft paper mill in the late 1960s.

The city's proximity to the Queen Charlotte Islands, Port Edward, and other small places in the Skeena Queen Charlotte Regional District allows it to act as a service centre for that area. This is further solidified by its role as a national harbour. Prince Rupert offers a wide range of services as well as some wholesaling activities. The Rupert Square Shopping Centre opened in 1975 with stores such as the Bay, Reitman's, and the Royal Bank. Today, shopping exists in the city's downtown district and in historic Cow Bay, where the business community has continued to develop with the opening of retail and food businesses in the 1980s, 1990s, and the present. However, with recent population declines, Prince Rupert has experienced a loss of some retail services. These population pressures stemmed from restructuring taking place in industries such as fishing and forestry. During the same time, a number of services were reduced, closed, or regionalized. In recent years, highway improvements have led to increased commuting between Prince Rupert and other communities for multi-purpose trips for employment, shopping, and access to services. With these transportation improvements comes increased mobility and a potential greater likelihood for out-of-town shopping.

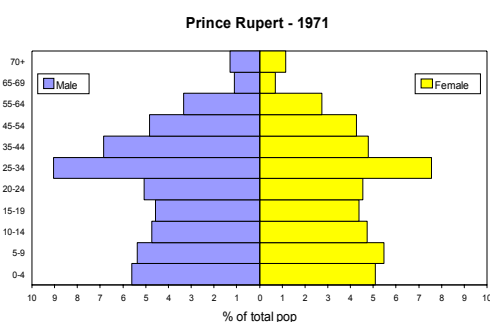


**Downtown Prince Rupert, BC**

## POPULATION PROFILE - PRINCE RUPERT

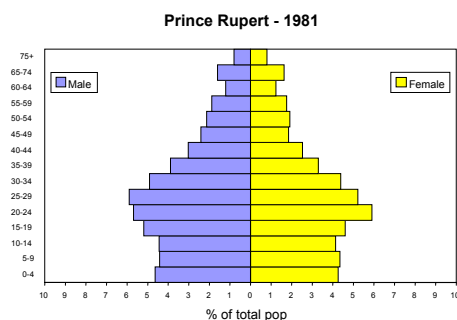
In 1971, the population of Prince Rupert was 15,745. Just over half the population was male. The population was oriented towards young working families. In 1972, the federal Department of Transport declared Prince Rupert a National Harbour. The population grew to 16,195 people in 1981, and continued to grow to 16,625 people in 1991. During each Census period, the small gap between males and females closed and essentially became evenly split. Prince Rupert's population growth was aided by the development of Ridley Island, an export shipping terminal for grain and coal, which opened in 1985. In 2004, cruise ship stops became a common part of the Prince Rupert port scene.

**Population of Prince Rupert - 1971**



Source: Statistics Canada 1971

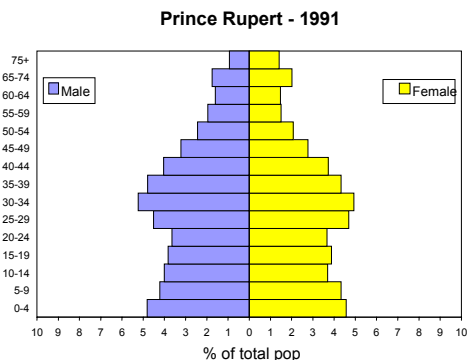
**Population of Prince Rupert - 1981**



Source: Statistics Canada 1981

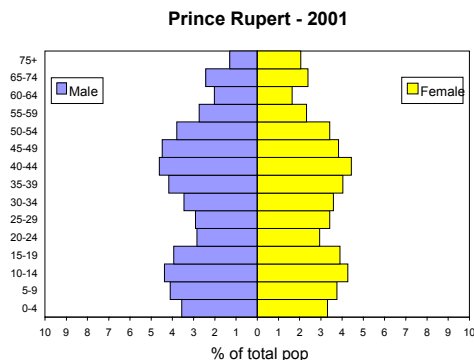
The population of Prince Rupert declined by 12% from 1991 to 2001 to 14,630 people. Jobs were affected by declines in shipments of grain, coal, and lumber through the Port. In turn, these were a result of the downturn of the Asian economy, poor crop conditions, and the 2000 closure of the Quintette mine in Tumbler Ridge. Furthermore, jobs have been impacted by closures at Skeena Cellulose pulp mill and sawmills in the region since 1997. At times, lower fish catches and prices have also impacted shoreworkers as fish plants were not operating at full capacity.

**Population of Prince Rupert - 1991**



Source: Statistics Canada 1991

**Population of Prince Rupert - 2001**



Source: Statistics Canada 2001



Population declines have also stemmed from the concentration of services outside of the region, as well as youth out-migration. In 2001, Prince Rupert appears to have an older family-oriented population. The city also has a growing population of seniors. This will have important implications for planning the delivery of a variety of services, such as retail services, social services, health services, recreational services, and housing.

Within this context, the recently declining population base and nearby shopping opportunities have impacted local retail services. This prompted a recent survey commissioned by the Prince Rupert Economic Development Commission that found significant economic leakage for items such as cars, groceries, and clothes as residents shopped out-of-town in places such as Terrace and Vancouver.

## ISSUES IN SHOPPING, COMMUTING, AND ECONOMIC LEAKAGE

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The vitality of a town's retail sector, including access to a variety of goods and services and the ability to maintain a viable consumer base, is not only a gauge of the economic health of a community, but one that helps to contribute to the quality of life in rural and small town places. Within this context, the retail sector is influenced by shifting patterns of consumption behaviour such as where people live and work, community satisfaction with goods and services, and local socio-demographic characteristics.

The issues of size, location, and accessibility are important when analyzing economic leakage from the retail sector. This leakage of local retail dollars happens as consumers commute to larger regional centres to access a greater variety of goods and services. The regionalization of economic and trade activities, and improvements in transportation, have created the possibility for increased 'extra-community' commuting from rural and small town places. Consumers are also visiting larger centres for multiple reasons, such as for work, leisure, or to access services unavailable in their home communities. This separation can diminish attachment to their local community. As such, community satisfaction and quality of life play an important role in determining one's satisfaction with local retail opportunities.

Consumer behaviour is also influenced by the level of overall satisfaction with local shopping opportunities. In rural and small town retail centres, the number of shopping alternatives can be limited in terms of the actual number of establishments and the selection of goods and services. As well, some prices may be higher compared to urban centres.

Income, age, gender, education levels, and access to transportation may influence who is most likely to engage in out-of-town shopping. Different socio-economic variables can be positively or negatively related to in-shopping. For example, the older a consumer is, the more likely they are to spend a greater proportion of their resources in the local community. Many of these people are likely long-term residents with social and business relationships that affect their shopping patterns. As well, the issue of mobility, or lack of mobility, plays an important role in where the older population shops. Access to income can influence shopping patterns. Individuals with lower incomes and limited transportation options may be more likely to make purchases closer to home in multi-purpose shopping trips. Residents with higher incomes may out-shop more than those with lower incomes. Understanding the socio-economic characteristics of a place, and hence the shopping patterns and behaviours of its members, can permit rural and small town merchants to determine which retail methods are most appropriate.

It is important to develop measures that identify areas of economic leakage within a place. In the summer of 2003, a survey was conducted to explore shopping and commuting patterns in the Northwest region of BC. This report focuses on the shopping and commuting patterns of Prince Rupert residents and compares these patterns to the overall regional results. The study's methodology to explore the shopping and commuting patterns of each community is outlined. The first section briefly describes the historical development of Prince Rupert. The second section examines where people live versus where they purchase goods and services. This is

followed by exploring how the accessibility of goods and services has changed over the past five years. Our study also explores alternative methods of shopping consumers may engage in. As well, consumer satisfaction with business, community, health, and government services is examined. Finally, we identify some challenges and opportunities for the retail sector as well as for community development in Prince Rupert.

## METHODOLOGY

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In the spring of 2003, our research team visited Kitimat, Prince Rupert, and Terrace to conduct focus groups for the shopping and commuting project, as well as to create inventories of the services that exist in each place. The focus groups were conducted with women, seniors, baby-boomers, and business members in these communities and identified a range of important topics associated with shopping. We then conducted a random household survey to further explore issues identified by focus group participants. A total of 987 surveys were sent (230 surveys in Kitimat, 344 surveys in Prince Rupert, and 413 surveys in Terrace) (Table 1).

The household survey included questions on four topic areas. Data were collected on the following items:

- location of where people lived and where people worked,
- shopping patterns for goods and services,
- community satisfaction with goods and services, and
- socio-demographic questions.

As required by UNBC, the methodology and questions for both the focus groups and survey were reviewed and approved by the UNBC Research Ethics Board.

**Table 1: Response Rates**

	<b>Northwest Total</b>	<b>Prince Rupert</b>
Total Mailouts	987	344
Total Completed	384	121
Response Rate	39%*	35%

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

\*The response rate yields an error between 3.0 and 5.0%

## SHOPPING PATTERNS IN PRINCE RUPERT

Shopping services play an important role in retaining residents and improving local quality of life in small towns. Satisfaction with one's living situation and location may decrease if access to consumer goods and services is difficult. One way to explore economic leakage in Prince Rupert is to examine where people live versus where they purchase goods and services. This provides a better understanding of demand, and provides an important context when examining the relationship between these services, where they are available, as well as where they are most frequently purchased or obtained. Table 2 lists the percent of Prince Rupert respondents who purchase goods and services in the following places.

**Table 2: Where do you purchase the following goods and services? - % of Prince Rupert Respondents**

Service	Kitimat	Prince Rupert	Terrace	Prince George	Other	N=
<i>Financial/Professional Services</i>						
ATM	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	107
Banking	0.0	98.3	0.0	0.0	1.7	117
Legal Services	0.0	97.9	2.1	0.0	0.0	94
Professionals	0.0	86.3	2.0	1.0	10.8	102
Travel Agency	1.0	87.8	3.1	1.0	7.1	98
<i>Clothing</i>						
Children's clothes	0.0	81.4	5.7	4.3	8.6	70
Men's clothing	0.9	62.3	5.7	4.7	26.4	106
Women's clothing	0.0	59.4	4.0	5.0	31.7	101
Shoe stores	0.0	59.1	9.6	4.3	27.0	115
<i>Automotive, Appliances, &amp; Equipment</i>						
Automotive	0.9	69.8	24.5	1.9	2.8	106
Camera Store	0.0	85.4	4.8	1.9	7.8	103
Construction	0.0	91.2	6.9	0.0	2.0	102
Furniture	0.0	77.8	13.0	0.9	8.3	108
Hardware	0.0	83.0	14.3	0.0	2.7	112
Home furnishings	0.0	77.1	12.8	0.9	9.2	109
Lawn & garden	0.0	84.2	14.9	0.0	1.0	101
Major appliances	0.0	81.6	7.8	1.0	9.7	103
Motor vehicles	0.0	50.5	23.7	1.0	24.7	101
Radio/T.V. store	0.0	79.4	7.5	0.9	12.2	107
<i>Convenience &amp; Specialty</i>						
Books	0.0	71.0	10.3	1.9	16.8	107
Convenience goods	0.0	97.5	1.7	0.0	0.0	121
Drug store	0.0	94.9	3.4	0.0	1.7	118
Dry cleaners	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	98
Florists	0.0	99.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	104
Gas station	0.0	96.4	1.8	0.0	1.8	112
Groceries	0.0	99.2	0.0	0.0	0.8	120
Hairdresser	0.9	96.5	0.9	0.0	1.7	116
Music store	0.0	67.0	7.4	3.2	22.3	94
Paper/art supplies	0.0	78.4	8.2	4.1	9.6	97
Specialty food	0.0	89.1	6.9	0.0	4.0	101

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Overall, there appears to be a relationship between the frequency in which goods and services are purchased and out-of-town shopping. Financial and professional services, as well as frequently needed convenience goods and groceries, were largely purchased in town. Items more likely to be purchased out-of-town by Prince Rupert respondents include clothing, shoes, and motor vehicles. Such purchases are made less frequently and respondents purchase these goods in larger centres, including Terrace, Prince George, Vancouver, and Victoria. Such larger centres draw upon a greater market area and are able to provide a wider selection of products and choice of stores for specialized goods and services.

### **How Shopping Services Changed Over the Last 5 Years**

Commuting for services, such as health care or government offices, can lead to multi-purpose trips that may include shopping, and subsequently, may lead to economic leakage. Therefore, the health of the retail sector will also be impacted by the accessibility and availability of a range of services. Prince Rupert respondents were asked to rate whether a range of professional and retail services became easier or more difficult to access in their local community over the past five years (Table 3).

**Table 3: Change in Accessibility of Services**  
 Rating: 1=easier; 2=same; 3=more difficult

Service	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
<i>Financial/Professional Services</i>				
ATM	1.65	322	1.71	102
Banking	1.85	362	1.88	110
Legal Services	2.06	249	2.05	73
Professionals	2.00	274	2.04	83
Travel Agency	2.02	303	2.10	87
<i>Clothing</i>				
Children's clothes	2.23	227	2.23	64
Men's clothing	2.25	312	2.38	97
Women's clothing	2.35	315	2.41	88
Shoe stores	2.36	342	2.42	102
<i>Automotive, Appliances, &amp; Equipment</i>				
Automotive	2.00	324	2.15	96
Camera Store	2.11	281	2.03	89
Construction	2.15	300	2.13	87
Furniture	2.48	309	2.40	92
Hardware	2.10	340	2.14	103
Home furnishings	2.18	316	2.31	97
Lawn & garden	2.02	327	2.03	96
Major appliances	2.18	296	2.36	90
Radio/T.V. store	2.23	300	2.23	88
<i>Convenience &amp; Specialty</i>				
Books	2.01	311	2.13	95
Drug store	2.04	356	2.00	105
Dry cleaners	1.97	271	1.96	81
Florists	1.98	304	2.03	94
Gas station	1.87	346	1.90	105
Hairdresser	1.95	349	1.97	106
Music store	2.23	268	2.26	84
Paper/art supplies	2.07	268	2.14	80

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Overall, Northwest respondents (including all respondents from Kitimat, Prince Rupert, and Terrace) indicated that service accessibility has remained generally the same. There were some notable exceptions with ATM and banking services becoming easier to access. Certain larger items and specialty goods, such as furniture, radio/TV equipment, and clothing, were cited as more difficult to access across the region. The Prince Rupert findings generally follow the regional results. The Prince Rupert findings also revealed that home furnishings and major appliances were thought to be more difficult to access in the community.

## Reasons Products/ Services Are Not Purchased Locally

Most Prince Rupert residents shop locally. However, respondents identified a range of reasons why certain goods and services are purchased in other places (Table 4). Respondents were also asked to rate which reason was most important for purchasing products and services out-of-town.

**Table 4: Reasons Products / Services Not Purchased Locally**

Rating on 7 point scale:

1 = most important

4 = neutral

7 = least important

Reason	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
Selection	1.93	263	1.99	86
Price	2.19	265	2.17	88
Quality	2.81	257	2.73	85
Service	3.43	250	3.62	85
Hours of operation	4.95	243	5.00	80
Like to travel out-of-town	4.93	244	5.15	79

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Notably, limited selection, prices, and the quality of services were cited as reasons why shoppers in Prince Rupert, and throughout the Northwest, purchase goods or services in other communities. The implications of the out-of-town multi-purpose shopping trip, whether it be for recreational purposes, price comparison, or to access a wider variety of goods and services, decreases demand for local retail settings and contributes to a cycle that can perpetuate stagnation and decline in the small town retail services.

## Technology

The potential for technology to change the rural and small town landscape permeates all facets of life, including consumer shopping habits. This can have a major impact on the services designed to meet consumers' needs. The advent of cyber-shopping via the Internet, along with other methods of direct home shopping, such as mail and TV ordering, has created another means of out-shopping. As such, respondents were asked to identify if, and how often, they use alternative methods of shopping (Table 5).



**Table 5: Alternative Methods of Shopping**  
 Rating: 1=daily; 2=weekly; 3=monthly; 4=seasonally; 5=rarely

Service	Northwest	User %	Prince Rupert	User %
Catalogue	4.22	89.1	4.25	88.4
Craft sales	4.42	58.9	4.44	62.0
Farmer's market	4.01	63.5	4.34	58.7
Garage sales	4.15	57.8	4.23	60.3
Home parties	4.74	47.7	4.69	43.0
Internet	4.18	57.8	4.23	63.6
Newspapers	4.19	54.9	4.28	52.1
Pawn shops	4.79	32.0	4.79	35.5
Teleshopping	4.87	33.3	4.95	32.2

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Across the Northwest region, at least half of all respondents have at some point used catalogues, craft sales, the Internet, garage sales, farmer's markets, and newspapers as alternative methods of shopping. Overall, findings also indicated that Prince Rupert respondents rarely used alternative methods to purchase goods and services.

## Summary

Shopping services play an important role in local quality of life. Shopping is also a form of recreational and social activity that helps to build community relationships through routine social interaction. As such, shopping services may help to retain and attract residents and support business development. However, satisfaction with shopping services can be influenced by a range of socio-economic factors, transportation changes, and new technology, as well as by the selection, price, and quality of goods and services.

In Prince Rupert, most respondents purchased goods and services locally. However, there were important exceptions, such as clothing, shoes, automobile parts, and vehicles. They were more likely to in-shop for items used or purchased on a more frequent basis, such as financial services and convenience goods. Price, selection, and quality were all listed as important factors in resident's decisions to shop in centres such as Terrace, Vancouver, or Victoria. Out-of-town shopping is not the only way economic leakage can occur. Respondents were also asked how often they used alternative methods for shopping such as the Internet or catalogues. Findings indicate, however, that such alternative methods of shopping were not as yet used frequently. These questions are important because the consequences of spending local dollars in another place, or by other methods, can lead to a decreased local customer base and the decline of retailing in rural and small town places.

## SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

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When consumers are not bound by trade areas, then socio-demographic factors and community satisfaction become more important in explaining the location of shopping patterns. Specifically, out-of-town shopping trips may be facilitated by dissatisfaction with local services or the need to access services outside of the community.

### Business Services

Small businesses provide a range of activities within a place that can enhance local quality of life, as well as its viability and stability. Business members also play a key role in the community through membership or leadership roles in volunteer organizations, as well as through the sponsorship of local events. Respondents were asked to rate whether they were very satisfied with local businesses (Table 6).

**Table 6: Satisfaction of Business Services**

Rating on 5 point scale:

1 = very dissatisfied

3 = neutral

5 = very satisfied

Business Services	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
Accountants/Bookkeeper	3.82	209	3.78	65
ATM	4.11	337	4.10	107
Banks	3.90	366	3.82	115
Clothing Store	2.61	359	2.52	114
Credit Unions	3.92	251	3.90	82
Drug Store	3.75	369	3.67	115
Entertainment	2.95	347	3.15	110
Financial Advice/Services	3.46	277	3.51	82
Gas Station	3.99	359	3.17	111
Grocery Store	3.95	370	3.92	117
Furniture Store	3.02	322	2.56	102
Inter-Community Bus Service	3.35	233	3.68	73
Legal Services	3.51	241	3.49	76
Passenger Rail	2.88	212	3.05	73
Second-Hand Clothing Store	3.51	236	3.22	59
Sit Down/Dining Restaurants	3.21	372	3.74	116
Take-Out/Fast Food	3.17	353	3.35	110
Vegetarian Dining	2.59	144	2.88	43

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Respondents in both Prince Rupert, and throughout the Northwest, were generally neutral with respect to business services. Prince Rupert respondents were the most satisfied with ATMs, banking services, and grocery stores. These services were also used most frequently by

respondents. However, there were some important sources of dissatisfaction, especially with clothing services and vegetarian dining. Prince Rupert respondents also cited their dissatisfaction with furniture store services in the community. In recent years, Prince Rupert has been impacted by business closures stemming from industry restructuring or closures. Gemma Bed Bath and Kitchen Boutique closed in 2000, Kaien Sports closed in 2001, Fountain Tire in 2002, and Universal Clothing closed in 2003. These closures may increase out-of-town trips in search of a wider selection of goods and services. They may also create opportunities for new businesses to develop. The loss of shopping services also affects the social fabric of a community as shopping plays an important role in fostering daily social interaction. This places additional pressures on local businesses to support the community.

### **Health Services**

Health services, including long term residential care, home support, meals-on-wheels, and doctors, have experienced new pressures and demands from a growing seniors' population in Northwest BC. Prince Rupert has experienced a loss of young families and a proportional increase in retirees, as well as residents who are close to retirement. This will have important implications for a range of health and social services. In order to gauge satisfaction with local health services, respondents were asked to rate these services from very dissatisfied to very satisfied (Table 7).

**Table 7: Satisfaction of Health Services**

Rating on 5 point scale:

1 = very dissatisfied

3 = neutral

5 = very satisfied

Health Services	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
<i>General Health Services</i>				
Ambulance Services	3.56	252	3.64	75
Dentist	4.05	356	4.07	111
Emergency Room	3.44	321	3.50	96
Family Doctor	3.98	375	3.97	117
Public Health Nurse	3.85	192	3.85	51
Social Services	2.77	159	2.71	52
Therapy Services	3.02	119	3.00	39
<i>Specialized Health Services</i>				
Chiropractor	3.79	212	3.73	62
Dietician	3.41	163	3.43	53
Homemaking Services	3.18	116	3.19	37
Home Support Services	3.92	143	3.30	44
Long Term Res. Care	2.95	141	2.76	41
Massage Therapist	3.64	163	3.39	44
Meal Programs	3.06	96	3.08	24
Occupational Therapist	3.30	132	3.33	39
Optometrist	3.76	332	3.84	100
Orthodontist	3.43	183	3.35	49
Physiotherapist	3.58	192	3.52	66
Pre/Post Natal	3.56	124	3.55	29
Respiratory Therapist	2.97	78	2.91	23
Respite Care	2.97	93	3.00	25
Speech Therapist	3.06	108	2.79	34

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Across the Northwest, the general pattern indicates that respondents were satisfied with dentist and family doctor services. Overall, satisfaction levels with general health services in Prince Rupert were high. However, Prince Rupert respondents were dissatisfied with long-term respite care, social services, speech therapy, and respiratory therapy. It is important to note that some of these services also received dissatisfactory scores across the Northwest region. Despite Prince Rupert Regional Hospital losing six beds, and some ambulance and emergency room services, the satisfaction ratings for these services were similar to the Northwest region as a whole. The Prince Rupert health care sector faces challenges with nursing shortages and service and funding cutbacks. The closure health and social services has important implications for economic leakage. With service closures, residents may shop during out-of-town trips to access these health and social services. An increase in out-of-town trips for a variety of purposes may lead to community dissatisfaction and even out-migration.

## Community Services

Community services are an important local foundation, especially during times of economic and social stress. Recreational amenities and support can also enhance the quality of life of the population and special interest groups such as seniors and youth. Such services provide an opportunity for engagement and interaction to build community development relationships. Respondents rated their satisfaction levels with the following community services (Table 8).

**Table 8: Satisfaction with Community Services**

1 = very dissatisfied

3 = neutral

5 = very satisfied

Community Services	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
<i>Community Support</i>				
Adult Education Services	3.16	263	3.31	89
Animal Welfare/Services	3.64	274	3.78	92
Counseling Services	3.12	187	2.98	56
Public Transportation	3.58	297	3.75	93
Senior Services	3.42	172	3.52	46
Support Groups	3.35	156	3.22	51
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<i>Community Recreation</i>				
Bowling	3.35	263	3.67	75
Golf Course	4.11	265	4.04	81
Movie Theatre	3.16	339	3.61	109
Municipal Parks	3.61	358	3.45	110
Museum/Archives	3.62	325	3.98	111
Public Library	4.01	359	3.88	113
Indoor Recreation Facilities	3.72	336	3.99	110
Outdoor Recreation Facilities	3.65	329	3.50	107
Recreation Programs	3.67	310	3.61	97
Stage Theatre	3.71	256	3.96	84
Swimming Pool	3.90	338	4.10	107

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Northwest respondents indicated they were generally satisfied with community services. The results also indicated higher satisfaction rates with public library services, counseling and support group services, and municipal parks. These are positive findings as recreational activities and facilities have been positively associated with community satisfaction, and therefore, play an important role in attracting and retaining residents and businesses. Prince Rupert respondents were more satisfied with community recreation services such as the swimming pool, the golf course, indoor recreational facilities, and the museum when compared with respondents across the region. In 2002, the Museum of Northern British Columbia was nominated as a finalist for a top tourist attraction by Attractions Canada.

## Provincial Services

Prince Rupert has faced some closures and downsizing of provincial services over the past few years. We asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with provincial services in their community (Table 9).

**Table 9: Satisfaction with Provincial Services**

Rating on 5 point scale:

1 = very dissatisfied

3 = neutral

5 = very satisfied

Provincial Services	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
Court Services	2.77	209	3.21	63
Elementary Education	2.92	264	3.43	80
Secondary Education	2.88	256	3.43	80
Post Secondary Education	2.77	255	2.99	79
Employment and Benefits Centre	2.73	197	2.82	62
Liquor Store	3.90	327	3.84	103
Ministry of Forests	2.88	208	3.07	59
Ministry of Highways	2.56	263	2.84	74
Skills and Labour	2.70	203	2.67	61
Social Worker	2.79	161	2.82	51
WCB Assistant	2.56	205	2.71	59

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Across the Northwest, respondents were generally dissatisfied with cuts to services by the Ministry of Children and Family and the Ministry of Highways. Compared to the region, Prince Rupert respondents were generally more satisfied with provincial services. However, some dissatisfaction was expressed over cutbacks, transferring of services to adjacent communities, and closures of services. For example, dissatisfaction has been expressed through the media after the Ministry of Forests withdrew services at Diana Lake and the Butze Rapids trail. As well, the North Coast Community Skills Centre announced its closure in 2001. This was shortly followed by plans to close the provincial Assessment Office, with services transferred to Terrace.

## Federal Services

Prince Rupert has a range of federal government services accessible to the community. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following federal services (Table 10).

**Table 10: Satisfaction with Federal Services**

Rating on 5 point scale:

1 = very dissatisfied

3 = neutral

5 = very satisfied

Federal Services	Northwest		Prince Rupert	
	Rating	N=	Rating	N=
Employment Insurance	2.89	215	3.00	70
HRDC Office	2.99	172	3.08	63
Port/Harbour Commission	2.97	137	2.85	73
Post Office	3.71	365	3.46	114
RCMP	3.81	350	3.79	112
Revenue Canada	3.07	290	3.12	91

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

Throughout the Northwest region, respondents were generally neutral with respect to federal services. However, respondents were more satisfied with RCMP and post office services. Prince Rupert respondents were generally neutral in their satisfaction with the HRDC office and employment insurance. Some dissatisfaction, however, has been expressed in the media when shoreworkers did not qualify for employment insurance because they had not worked enough hours during an economic downturn. As residents leave the community to access government services in other locations, they may also use the opportunity to access a range of other services, including shopping.

### Reasons for Out-of-Town Trips

Changing local access, improvements to transportation infrastructure, the development of other centres, and socio-economic factors can place pressure on smaller retail markets. Commuting to another city for services and other reasons can lead to out-shopping, thereby contributing to the leakage of local dollars. Respondents were asked to identify reasons for out-of-town trips (Table 11).

**Table 11: What are some of your reasons for out-of-town trips?**

Reason	Northwest	Prince Rupert
	Percent	Percent
Vacation/Entertainment	25.4	25.5
Social	26.4	25.2
Shopping	22.3	23.5
Medical Reasons	12.8	12.6
Business	6.2	6.1
Professional Services	4.6	4.5
Volunteering	1.2	1.3
Other	1.3	1.3
	n=955	n=310

Source: Random Household Survey 2003.

More prominent reasons for out-of-town trips by Northwest respondents included vacation and entertainment, social trips, and shopping. This was followed by respondents who made out-of-town trips for medical reasons, business trips, to access professional services, and volunteering. The pattern among Prince Rupert respondents very closely follows this regional pattern. Again, the findings reinforce the role of non-shopping related trips as potentially contributing to out-of-town shopping opportunities.

### Summary

Out-of-town shopping and economic leakage may occur as residents travel to access a range of services outside of their community. Large distances and low population densities create challenges to maintaining services due to the high delivery costs in rural and small town places. At the same time, federal and provincial governments in Canada have been reducing government expenditures in rural and small town service delivery. In the Northwest region of BC, community services received the highest satisfaction levels, while concerns were expressed about provincial government and business services. In some cases, dissatisfaction with services were associated with downsizing or closures, and while there appeared to be a relationship between dissatisfaction with business services and out-of-town trips (specifically clothing services), there did not appear to be a strong relationship between the dissatisfaction with other services and out-of-town trips. The loss of government services can lead to not just a loss of jobs, but also a loss of skilled residents and leadership in the community.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRINCE RUPERT

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The retail landscape is changing in the Northwest region of British Columbia. With transportation and communication improvements, access to a variety of goods and services outside one's community can have a profound affect on the health of a small town retail centre. Shopping services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses. The success of a retail centre not only helps to keep local dollars in the community, but also provides employment and a form of recreation, as well as facilitating local social interaction. This can be particularly important in rural and small town places, as a range of services can contribute to local quality of life. At present, many services are delivered through cost-effectiveness models, which too often ignore the context of rural and small town places, with the result that services become concentrated in larger centres. Unfortunately, if an exodus of services leads to a decline in the population of a place, this can place additional pressures on the remaining retail and service sectors.

Within this context, we wanted to explore the linkages between commuting and shopping patterns in three northwest communities and identify issues that affect the availability of services. This report identified issues that affect Prince Rupert's local retail economy and looked at comparisons between the community and the Northwest region generally.

Prince Rupert residents face some challenges accessing goods and services in the community. In particular, there is a limited selection of shopping services. In order to access these services, some Prince Rupert shoppers are purchasing items in more distant larger centres such as Terrace, Prince George, and Vancouver. Residents are more likely to shop in larger urban centres for items such as clothing, shoes, and books. Prince Rupert residents also face some challenges in accessing provincial and federal services with the closure or transferring of services to other communities. Fortunately, the city has community services such as the Prince Rupert Career Resource Centre and Hecate Strait Employment Development Society, which provide an opportunity for residents to access employment and training opportunities. With a breadth of educational services (including the new Northwest Community College campus) and with the recent introduction of high speed Internet in 1999, the city has a solid education, training, and communications infrastructure on which to build capacity. Prince Rupert also has a wide range of community and recreation services, which have been positively associated with community satisfaction and the attraction and retention of residents and businesses. As well, with a solid transportation infrastructure in place, including rail, road, sea ports (including development of the new container terminal and the potential LNG terminal), and airport, Prince Rupert is continuing to promote its tourism assets, particularly the cruise ship industry. These assets will go a long way, not just in attracting tourists and economic activity, but also for retaining residents and local businesses.

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