



# Town of Pincher Creek



INNOVISIONS  
— & ASSOCIATES —

## Community Economic Development Strategy

2021 - 2026  
Summary



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### PROPRIETARY NOTICE

*This Community Economic Development Strategic (CEDs) Plan was prepared by InnoVisions & Associates (InnoVisions) for the Town of Pincher Creek. The professional opinions within this document are based on information and conditions that existed at the time the work was completed during the COVID pandemic. This document relies on the accuracy of existing Town and M.D. documents supplied by the Administration, as well as subjective content gleaned through interviews with individual businesses and community residents. In some instances, InnoVisions could not, and therefore did not, verify information supplied by others. If the information seemed reasonable it has been added to the document. Where possible, every attempt to verify information was made.*

*Neither InnoVisions nor its subcontractors shall be responsible for actions taken by the Town based on the information provided herein.*

*Note: The business cases, working examples and proposals stated within this document are concepts which are used to exemplify a proposed recommendation or activity. They are not, in and of themselves, professional recommendations by InnoVisions. The Town of Pincher Creek is encouraged to conduct its own due diligence prior to engaging any of the businesses mentioned in a case example.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Pincher Creek retained InnoVisions & Associates (the Consultants) to create a community economic development strategy (CEDS) and a strong action plan to capitalize on existing and emerging opportunities of the 21st century. Many of the concepts, ideas and projects in this strategy are not new and have been talked about in the community – for years. This CEDS strives to create a new path to achieve the community’s goals and bring old and new ideas to fruition.

The Town has worked hard to support business sustainability and growth, and much has been achieved. Businesses in the region however, have new and urgent issues to manage, especially as a result of the pandemic. Community support is needed for businesses to continue to provide jobs, goods and services. This CEDS is an opportunity for all community members in Pincher Creek to work together to retain current businesses and attract new ones.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Through focus groups, interviews and surveys, the community told the Consultants what they want the CEDS to achieve. They want it to:

- Attract more families to reside in Pincher Creek;
- Create options for Pincher Creek youth to stay and raise their families;
- Provide more good jobs, housing and education options;
- Encourage more businesses to set up in the area; and
- Increase the number of visitors who will spend their money in and around the town.

This CEDS is a roadmap for how to meet the community’s desired outcomes. It is part of a process that builds upon the assets and benefits within Pincher Creek. The town’s long-term economic success depends on the strength of its businesses and their success in providing goods and services to both residents and visitors.

To gather relevant data, business focus groups and over 50 one-on-one interviews were conducted by the Consultants with businesses, residents and service providers. Surveys were completed in March 2020 and May 2021 to keep abreast of the impact of COVID-19 on the business community with over 200 responses. The town’s Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks and Results (SOARR) were confirmed via stakeholder engagement. The Consultants reviewed all existing foundational documents, studies and reports (where relevant) to ensure that all previous work was considered in this CEDS. Finally, opportunities were grouped into themes. The objectives of the community economic development strategy (CEDS) based on the outcomes of the SOARR are to:

- Retain and attract businesses and residents;
- Revitalize the downtown corridor;
- Add more housing options for residents and workforce;
- Streamline business interaction with the Town;
- Provide more diverse jobs;
- Create opportunities for retiring business owners to sell; and
- Diversify the economy.



When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills – Chinese proverb

 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Findings of the Stakeholder Engagement

A summary report from stakeholder engagement was presented to Council and the community in Nov. 2020. Titled 'What We Heard', it was a summary of the opinions of business owners/managers of what will help or hinder their businesses in the future. Businesses in the Town of Pincher Creek, along with those in the municipalities within the M.D. of Pincher Creek #9, are facing challenges that must be resolved. These challenges include the following seven identified issues:

### 1) Critical housing shortages:

- a. Housing shortages are affecting employee retention and attraction.
- b. Scarcity of housing options right across the housing continuum from social housing to market-based, free enterprise solutions.

### 2) Workforce shortages are looming:

- a. Stagnant and aging population base without population replacement.
- b. A shrinking labour pool, critical staffing shortages, and job skills gaps.

### 3) Downtown has little vitality:

- a. High number of downtown vacancies limits investment attraction opportunities.
- b. The Town currently offers no incentives to offset development risks for more live-work-stay-play options.
- c. Limited assortment available of the products and services needed to position Pincher Creek as a tourist destination.

### 4) Baby-boomer business owners are set to retire without apparent replacements:

- a. Business retention and expansion will become more challenging as boomer entrepreneurs retire.
- b. There will be a loss of jobs, products and services needed to retain and attract residents, newcomers (for workforce) and investment.

### 5) Data gaps affect decision-making and service delivery:

- a. Inconsistent data collection, different measurement values and analysis creates data gaps.

- b. Data gaps create misleading or confusing 'pictures' for decision makers and limit predictive outcomes.

### 6) Some Town administrative processes require updating and streamlining to be more effective for business:

- a. Red tape – dated foundational documents and some processes for business interaction with the Town are more complex than they need to be.
- b. Communications – internal and external gaps in messaging create misunderstandings and community/investor credibility challenges.

### 7) The economic reality – the need to build capacity, confidence and economic diversity:

- a. To truly diversify the economy residents of the community must understand the current economic reality, and they must have realistic expectations regarding opportunities. There must be commitment from residents to assist in making changes or little will be accomplished. Administration cannot do it alone.
- b. There seem to be community members who are misguided in their understanding of the process of economic development. Unfounded rumours are creating issues with selling the town as a good place to invest.
- c. NIMBYism is negatively influencing community growth and sustainability. Income, social inequality and limited housing options are contributing to the workforce issues. Without a workforce no business can succeed.

These issues are impeding current businesses and preventing new businesses from choosing Pincher Creek. Resolving these issues will provide the community with more jobs, better jobs, more residents and greater wealth.

Council and Administration have worked hard and accomplished a number of very positive outcomes including but not limited to: the Business Recovery Support Program (BRSP) to support businesses through the pandemic; the wayfinding signs (locally manufactured and installed) throughout the community; the recreation master plan; supportive advocacy of the local doctors in contract negotiations with the province and in support of the new CT scanner; the new Inter-municipal Collaborative Framework (IMCF) in partnership with the M.D.; the new Area Structure

Plan (ASP) designated for future development; the Pincher Creek Child Care Centres; and partnership in the newly minted South Canadian Rockies Tourism Association partnership. However, it seems the community is largely unaware of this economic development progress. It is time for a fresh approach to economic and social development — one that allows for even more achievement by involving citizens that understand the urgent need and will answer the call to action.

## The Goal is to Become Three Interconnected Hubs in a Rural Setting

**For Pincher Creek, the overarching economic development goal of this CEDS is to bring together the people, partnerships and possibilities to become the foremost service and amenities hub for southwest Alberta by 2026. The reasons to do this are to meet the community’s goals by becoming:**

1. A health and wellness hub;
2. A business, service and amenity hub for the region (and beyond); and
3. A transportation corridor and logistics hub.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The ‘town’, the collective of active residents, bright minds, virtuous organizations, special interest groups and dedicated champions, must work with Council and Administration. The execution of a long-term plan to diversify the economy and catapult the community forward must be a collaborative community effort. If it is not done as a collective with concerted effort, Pincher Creek will still be talking about the ‘opportunities’ in ten years instead of benefiting from them.

less capacity and they often lag urban centres in economic, social and health opportunities. However, rural communities when inspired are innovative, entrepreneurial and exhibit underdeveloped potential. An integral part of hubs includes economic development through the lens of the business community, and the inclusion of social development (housing, workforce, education, childcare), health (access to health and wellness services, mental health), environmental conditions (environmental planning and sustainability) and quality of life (recreation and personal growth). Hubs are coordinated partnerships and programs to leverage assets that are the key to current and future economic sustainability.

The conclusions and recommendations of this CEDS are motivated by a new approach to community economic development, one which shifts mindsets, revises systems, rethinks policies and builds on existing assets to advance rural community development. It focuses on ‘what works’. First, retain local businesses and residents before striving to attract new business investment or residents. Do this by building capacity for all businesses to be successful. Then, as the community becomes more investment ready (CIR) work to attract new businesses. Pincher Creek first has to invest in and improve local assets – local entrepreneurs, local institutions, local infrastructure, local partnerships and local systems. With this in mind, this Pincher Creek CEDS focuses on ‘rural development hubs’. Hubs are an approach to doing rural economic development differently.

Rural communities vary by economic base, demographics and geography. Rural communities often have fewer resources,



# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

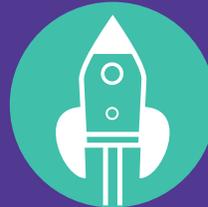
This CEDS, with 30 recommendations, calls for streamlining processes between the Town and its existing business base; reinforcing and building the entrepreneurial capacity that exists; and creating the conditions for increased collaboration and innovation. It seeks to develop partnerships that solve

issues. By focusing on the community's strengths and assets the community can create an ambitious investment in downtown revitalization, a town-wide housing plan, and also attract residents (immigrants and newcomers) to solve the workforce shortages and population decline.



CEDS GOAL #1

**RETAIN AND EXPAND  
BUSINESSES IN THE  
COMMUNITY**



CEDS GOAL #2

**ATTRACT NEW  
INVESTMENT &  
BUSINESSES TO THE  
COMMUNITY**



CEDS GOAL #3

**DEVELOP A REGIONAL  
WORKFORCE**



CEDS GOAL #4

**LEVERAGE EXISTING  
KEY ASSETS FOR A  
DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY**

The following table is the abridged list of core activities.

**Table 6: CEDS goals and action plan summary**

 <b>CEDS GOAL #1</b> <b>RETAIN AND EXPAND BUSINESSES IN THE COMMUNITY</b>	 <b>CEDS GOAL #2</b> <b>ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT &amp; BUSINESSES TO THE COMMUNITY</b>	 <b>CEDS GOAL #3</b> <b>DEVELOP A REGIONAL WORKFORCE</b>	 <b>CEDS GOAL #4</b> <b>LEVERAGE EXISTING KEY ASSETS FOR A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY</b>
<p><b>1.1 Develop a Business Concierge System</b></p> <p>1.1.1 Create a business-friendly culture at the Town Office</p> <p>1.1.2 Actively work to cut the red tape</p> <p>1.1.3 Develop an internal/external marketing plan</p> <p><b>1.2 A Leadership Development and Succession Planning Process</b></p> <p>1.2.1 Strive for continuing organizational excellence through leadership development and include succession planning</p> <p>1.2.2 Restructure the economic development department</p> <p><b>1.3 Develop a Data Strategy</b></p> <p>1.3.1 Increase local capacity to collect more local data</p> <p>1.3.2 Business licenses can be a source of primary data</p> <p>1.3.3 Incorporate NAICS codes</p> <p><b>1.4 Review the BRSP (2021) Outcomes to Move to Phase Three – an Entrepreneur Ecosystem</b></p> <p>1.4.1 Develop a Phase 3 transition plan</p> <p><b>1.5 Conduct a Structured Business Outreach Program</b></p> <p>1.5.1 Set up a Business Visitation/ outreach Program (BVP)</p> <p>1.5.2 Increase awareness of succession planning/ transitioning options for business owners</p>	<p><b>2.1 Develop a 21st Century Town Centre</b></p> <p>2.1.1 Develop a downtown corridor revitalization plan</p> <p>2.1.2 Build up rather than out</p> <p><b>2.2 Incentivize New Development and Investment</b></p> <p>2.2.1 Support an ‘Investment Incentive Bylaw’ to encourage development</p> <p><b>2.3 Develop a Small Business and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem</b></p> <p>2.3.1 Nurture an entrepreneurial ecosystem</p> <p><b>2.4 Establish a ‘Community Investment Marketplace’ – Local Investors, Local Business, Local Solutions</b></p> <p>2.4.1 Partner to develop a ‘Community Investment Market Place’</p> <p><b>2.5 Host an Economic Development and Real Estate Investor Forum</b></p> <p>2.5.1 Host an investor forum to spur innovation in development</p>	<p><b>3.1 Champion a Regional Workforce Initiative</b></p> <p>3.1.1 Host a round-table workforce fact-finding discussion</p> <p><b>3.2 Appoint a Workforce Housing Action Team</b></p> <p>3.2.1 Appoint a Workforce Housing Action Team</p> <p><b>3.3 Develop a Rural Immigration Initiative – Become a ‘Welcoming Community’</b></p> <p>3.3.1 Link this strategy to the ‘Housing Action Plan’</p> <p><b>3.4 Link to Business Investment Options for Newcomers, Immigrants and Indigenous Entrepreneurs</b></p> <p>3.4.1 Partner to coordinate options for immigrant, newcomer and Indigenous entrepreneurs</p> <p><b>3.5 Create a Residential Growth Strategy</b></p> <p>3.5.1 Appoint a Workforce Attraction Action Team</p> <p><b>3.6 Become a Training Centre in the Region</b></p> <p>3.6.1 Leverage academic partnerships for training and jobs skills upgrading</p>	<p><b>4.1 Create a Health and Wellness Hub</b></p> <p>4.1.1 Establish a Health &amp; Wellness Advocacy Action Team; determine when and who will act to Advocate, Champion or Team-up (ACT)</p> <p>4.1.2 Team-up to address staffing and housing shortages</p> <p>4.1.3 Advocate for a regionally supportive funding model</p> <p>4.1.4 Via local practitioners, and through the economic development lens, determine if more services can be provided locally</p> <p><b>4.2 Create a Business, Service and Amenity Hub</b></p> <p>4.2.1 Leverage Pincher Creek’s central location in the region</p> <p>4.2.2 Encourage more B2B and B2C spending in the region</p> <p>4.2.3 ‘Business does better’ in Pincher Creek marketing plan</p> <p><b>4.3 Expand into a Transportation Corridor and Logistics Hub</b></p> <p>4.3.1 Become a centre for regional logistics</p> <p>4.3.2 Complete the airport utilization business case</p> <p><b>4.4 Increase and Improve Community Assets</b></p> <p>4.4.1 Increase and improve community assets</p> <p>4.4.2 Work to increase market-ready tourism products and services</p> <p>4.4.3 Assist in supporting ag. organizations in encouraging innovation</p>

## Where to Start

**Of the 30 recommendations, the following are priorities to begin execution in the fall of 2021. They are:**

1. Ask the community for help. Find your *Champions*, bring in your *Partners*, create your *Action Teams*. Host a community wide, round-table to present the CEDS strategy and get the volunteers you need.
2. Start the downtown revitalization community engagement sessions and retail analysis ASAP.
3. Champion the Workforce Housing Action Team and get the committee up and running.
4. Work with a third-party resource to develop a workforce housing and 'Welcoming Communities' action plan.
5. Pass the Investment Incentive Bylaw.
6. Streamline processes to reduce red tape issues for business.
7. Develop a staff succession plan and leadership development/mentorship program that will minimize the serious loss of knowledge and experience that will result from senior staff retiring in the next year. Find ways to keep retiring employees engaged as mentors and add knowledge resources to bolster the inevitable gaps.

There is a lot of work to be done for Pincher Creek to meet its potential. It will take engaged citizens, organizations, business owners, and Council and Town staff members all committed to ACT: Advocate, Champion and Team Up.

## Take Action Now

### **ACT: Advocate, Champion and Team Up**

It is important for everyone to know what they can do, and when and how to do it.

The CEDS is not the sole responsibility of the 'Town' (Council and Administration) but of the 'town' (the entire community). By identifying partnerships and community champions that will work together to build capacity, devote resources, time, energy and budget to ACT, the CEDS can overcome existing challenges and capitalize on opportunities.



## 6.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

To capitalize on the opportunities and offset the challenges, the Town of Pincher Creek's Council and Administration have the capacity and resources to **ACT: Advocate, Champion and Team Up**. It is important for everyone to know what they can do and when and how to do it. Council and Administration should continue to recognize the difference between governance (leadership, strategic vision and direction, policy formulation, etc.) versus operations (the actual strategy and tactics created for development and implementation of Council's directives) in how and when they choose to ACT.

### Advocate, Champion, and Team Up (ACT)

The following content provides a number of different projects that will inherently support business, diversify the business mix in the Town, and support the entire trade region.

**Advocate:** In the role of advocate, the Town can leverage their collective voice and resources for various projects. As advocates they can be more effective, expand participation, draw new investment, reach new partners, access provincial and/or federal dollars, etc. For example:

- **First Advocate.** Ask the community for help. Find your Champions, bring in your Partners, create your Action Teams. Host a community-wide, round-table to present the CEDS strategy and get the volunteers you need.
- **Advocate for business.** There is opportunity to support businesses in solving the challenges they face. Information gathered from primary business interviews will often present issues that impact businesses' profitability, affect their ability to expand or to even stay in operation.
  - » **Continue support for businesses post COVID.** Financially support the Business Recovery Support (BRSP) program and Phase 3, the development of a Small Business and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to develop business (long-term) resiliency. Focus on activities to support businesses in workforce, housing and training needs.
  - » **Become pro-business ambassadors.** Business is caught in an economy where the price of oil has led to layoffs in Alberta, small businesses are struggling to stay afloat after COVID.

- » **Host a round table forum on investment opportunities.** Have realtors, developers, bankers and builders discuss innovative options for more housing and options for the downtown corridor revitalization and new development. Explore public-private partnership (P3) options.

- **Advocate for change in healthcare regulations that stifle innovation.**

**Champion:** In the role of 'champion' the Town will lead with strategic direction and provide resources (people, time and budget) to implement projects or processes.

- **Champion infrastructure for business development.** Champion projects that create the conditions for business to invest in the region. More multi-use, multi-purpose building options; shovel ready land; refined, effective bylaw; and reduction of red tape and wait times for development will incentivize developers. Become more community investment ready.
- **Champion a downtown corridor revitalization.** Create a plan that incorporates vibrant placemaking and live-work-stay-play options.
- **Champion a 'Regional Workforce Initiative'.** Critical workforce shortages and skills gaps are affecting businesses. Include more options for workforce housing and learn how to become a 'welcoming community' for newcomers and immigrants.
- **Champion a 'Community Investment Marketplace', where local investors can invest in local businesses, organizations or individual projects.** There is keen interest from locals to invest in personal passions and/or businesses within the region. There is financial and knowledge wealth available to make such investments. Be the conduit.
- **Champion more B2B, B2C regional buyer and supplier networks.** Start with a reverse tradeshow. There are over 450~ businesses in the Town alone. Together with the M.D., there is the ability to increase awareness, interaction and spending between regional consumers and the businesses themselves.
  - » Develop and implement programs to increase more business to business (B2B) and business to consumer (B2C) transactions in the region. Have a regional business directory that lists products and services.

- » There are close to 32,000 consumers in the trade region and over 500 businesses (Town and M.D.), create more awareness and interaction between regional buyers and sellers.

**Team Up:** Town can collaborate with other organizations' projects and processes. There are always more projects than resources. While Administration is working hard to accomplish the current projects set by Council, there is a need to build capacity for other organizations to support economic development projects. Especially get involved with those that support business retention and new investment, or lessen challenges such as businesses' access to employees, profitability and/or markets.

- **Speak with regional organizations about their existing or planned business support programs.** Any organization, whether it is a volunteer group or paid professional social supports, works for the betterment of the community. There is potential for partnership, if not directly with the Town, then at least with each other.
- **Team-up and support organizations that are caught in bureaucracy** that impacts their budget and/or service delivery. The Pincher Creek hospital has the capacity to add services IF the staffing shortages are resolved. Located in Alberta Health Services (AHS) South Zone, the hospital is the 2nd busiest in the region, however, it does have two OR's that are underutilized. Through the Health and Wellness Action Team determine if there are opportunities for service provision and revenue generation that could stay local.
  - » Explore how the Town could support the hospital, and/or expand involvement in their endeavours to attract and retain more skilled healthcare workers, and lobby the provincial government to provide access to satellite training facilities and/or incentivize nurses, training within the region. Connect volunteers with a passion for education to increase political pull and ensure that the community supports the goal.
- **Collaborate on regional tourism projects and initiatives.**
  - » Clearly define the purpose and roles of regional organizations and institutions. Understand who is working on what and how the outcome will benefit the Pincher Creek Region. Recognize and support regional

partnership roles. Support the new DMO's initiatives, regional marketing campaigns and training programs to 'grow' more tourism operators and expand tourism visitor experiences.

- » **Seek collaboration in funding.** Capitalize on the new provincial and federal programs that support priorities outlined within the CEDS such as: infrastructure (downtown revitalization); development; aviation and transportation; housing; jobs and skill development; and Indigenous projects.

**See Appendix G, Oversight for Council Appointed Committees provides direction on how to engage community and champions.**

The following are the 30 recommendations found within the body of the main document.

## GOAL #1: RETAIN & EXPAND BUSINESSES IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Develop a Business Concierge service – coordinate a one-window approach within the Town administration that builds relationships with businesses from the first interaction. Strategize on ways to simplify and streamline application processes and reduce wait times. Don't make the businesses run around to various departments to get their needs met.
2. Create an authentic pro-business culture at Town office. Engage all staff in an economic development session on the importance of increasing business within the Town and how the various departments could link to economic development activities.
3. Have the Economic Development Officer act as the Town liaison/project manager/quarter back for the businesses requiring assistance.
4. Restructure the economic development position and department; include considering as needed, non-payroll contractors for communications and events.
5. Foster a pro-business environment by reducing the red tape around each process of interacting with the Town. Provide staff with authority, accountability, encouragement and BUDGET to find innovative ways to improve processes and support businesses.
6. Budget for more external communication processes to

reach different audiences to provide facts, build awareness and stop the rumours.

7. Develop a succession plan and leadership development/mentorship program that will minimize the serious loss of knowledge and experience of the senior staff retiring in the next year. Find ways to keep retiring employees engaged as mentors and add written knowledge resources to bolster the inevitable gaps.
8. Develop a data strategy. Increase the collection of primary data to provide a solid base of information for analysis to ensure that decisions are accurately informed.
9. Revamp the business licenses to capture relevant information about the businesses.
10. Incorporate the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) categorization within the business licensing process.
11. Explore the option of a bridge program to link to the Town's existing Diamond software, create a workaround, or invest in a new system to track NAICS.
12. Conduct a formal business outreach program, track business interviews in a confidential CRM, follow-up on red (closures, exiting the community, etc.) and green flags (expanding, new certification, products, etc.).
13. Review the Business Recovery Support Program (BRSP). Consider timing on when to advance to Phase 3, to the small business and entrepreneur ecosystem program.
14. Encourage small business and an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Designate time and budget to entrepreneur-led economic development activities to offer businesses life-stage training, mentoring, and sector specific programs to build a resilient business community.
15. Conduct a structured business outreach program to gather local business intel to develop programs for business retention and expansion.
16. Provide succession planning opportunities for business owners to sell or transition their businesses to ensure that products and services continue to be available in the community.



## GOAL #2: ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT & BUSINESSES TO THE COMMUNITY

17. Develop a 21st century 'Downtown Revitalization and Vibrancy plan' which is authentically designed and incorporates more multi-use options to live-work-play and stay in the downtown corridor and community neighbourhoods.
18. Incentivize development and investment. Share the risk with developers and business owners to spur new investment and commercial development.
19. Have land and development plans such as an Area Structure Plan approved and in place to allow for more investment and economic development. Incorporate and encourage more 'placemaking' and authentic, architectural and brand themes into all community amenities such as downtown redevelopment, recreational trail systems and way-finding.
20. Develop a small business and entrepreneurial ecosystem which encourages new business starts and business investment spurring an increase in more diverse products and services to attract residents, newcomers to the community and visitors.
21. Establish a local Community Investment Market Place to provide different types of funding/financing options for entrepreneurs.

## GOAL #3: DEVELOP A REGIONAL WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

22. Champion or team-up in a coordinated regional workforce initiative that brings together expert workforce resources for specific projects in workforce training and skills development.
23. Position Pincher Creek to become the most attractive housing location for young families in the region by ensuring a variety of housing options. Appoint a Workforce Housing Action Team. Engage an expert to develop a Housing Action Plan. Liaise with the existing Housing Management Body (HMB), and ensure the focus is on all types of housing. The research is complete, Pincher Creek needs an actionable "who, what, where, when and how" plan to provide more housing options ASAP.

24. Develop a 'Rural Immigration - Welcoming Community Program'; become known as a welcoming community. Work with subject matter experts on immigration and indigenous relations to enhance efforts to retain and attract newcomers and build capacity to support their smooth integration into the community. Create pathways to be more inclusionary and accepting of the Indigenous population.
25. Create a 'Residential Growth Strategy' with a focus on how to reduce youth migration out of the region. Increase opportunities for youth to return home with a variety of tactics based on job opportunities and housing. Consider lifestyle trends and integrate immigrants and newcomers into the community with the objective of having more young families. Through a 'Workforce Attraction Action Team' consider options to address action items which strive to address the social, mental, and physical well-being of the existing and future population.
26. Become a training centre. In addition to existing training organizations, anchor education systems in the community to stop the out-migration and increase educational opportunities. Promote Pincher Creek as a community of choice for newcomers both as employees or as new business owners/entrepreneurs.

## GOAL #4: LEVERAGE KEY COMMUNITY ASSETS FOR A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

27. Develop the rural hub concept. Strive to build capacity to supply more products and services by providing more health & wellness options; more essential services; more regional movement of goods and services; and more support for agriculture and tourism development.
  - a) *Position as a 'health and wellness hub'.* Leverage Pincher Creek's teaching hospital and ancillary support services to attract more health and wellness practitioners and businesses.
  - b) *Leverage Pincher Creek's central location in the region.* Position as a 'service and amenity hub' by increasing and improving key essential services and community assets to meet regional needs (e.g., housing, skilled workforce, quality health, education, amenities and facilities).

- c) *Position as a transportation corridor and logistics hub.*  
Increase partnerships and project-based activities to promote an increase in the flow of goods and services via roads, rails and runways that feed into the community. Confirm a business case that could leverage the airport to move more products, people, services and investment in the region.
28. Increase and improve community assets that are key to future sustainability and prosperity, and will attract different demographic markets as a result of development of the above mentioned sectors.
29. Link to tourism bodies (e.g., the new DMO [South Canadian Rockies Tourism Association] and/or other tourism organizations). Work and plan collectively and strategically to expand the number and capacity of revenue producing visitor experiences. Work with tourism operators to access affluent tourist markets.
30. Assist in supporting the dissemination of information about new market opportunities in agriculture. Identify and support a champion that encourages local farmers and ranchers to access innovation programs and projects. Recognize that there is a shift taking place in agriculture to new needs in the market for pea proteins and novel (to the area) crops. Pay attention to the aging farmers and ranchers and work with organizations to help them transition their businesses to new owners to keep those farms and ranches prosperous and in the community.

*“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”*

~ WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

This Pincher Creek Community Economic Development Strategy (2021-2026) provides goals and a path to reach them. It provides a strong impetus for action to generate economic investment and growth.

To capitalize on the region’s rich opportunities will require all those involved to not only reframe the problems but also the solutions. This CEDS recognizes it is not the sole responsibility of the Town (Council and Administration) to enact this strategy. It needs the ‘town’, working through partnerships and with champions, to build capacity, devote resources, time, energy and budget to overcome the existing challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

Pincher Creek has a lot of work ahead. The town must quickly begin the many projects that will lead to success in economic development. Here is the priority list:

1. Ask the community for help. Find your *Champions*, bring in your *Partners*, create your *Action Teams*. Host a community-wide, round-table to present the CEDS strategy and get the volunteers you need.
2. Start the downtown revitalization community engagement sessions and retail analysis ASAP.
3. Champion the Workforce Housing Action Team and get the committee up and running.
4. Work with a third-party resource to develop a workforce housing and ‘Welcoming Communities’ action plan.
5. Pass the Investment Incentive Bylaw.
6. Streamline processes to reduce red tape issues for business.
7. Develop a staff succession plan and leadership development/mentorship program that will minimize the serious loss of knowledge and experience the senior staff retiring in the next year. Find ways to keep retiring employees engaged as mentors and add knowledge resources to bolster the inevitable gaps.

Good luck!



# Town of Pincher Creek

## Community Economic Development Strategy

2021 - 2026

INNOVISIONS  
— & ASSOCIATES —