
PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

Annual Report

2025

August 2026





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Introduction and Overview

This document is an annual PRRD Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) monitoring report and is intended to provide a snapshot of growth and development in the PRRD, while also communicating important trends and findings on progress towards meeting RGS policy goals.

Adopted in May 2025, the RGS is intended to help the PRRD better understand and prepare for the potential changes that can be expected over the next 20 years. These changes include a growing population, new service demands, the regional economy and a changing climate.

Section 452 of the *Local Government Act* requires a regional district to measure its progress towards the RGS through a monitoring and evaluation program. Performance indicators selected for the RGS will allow the PRRD to monitor its implementation and progress towards the vision articulated by the community.

A set of indicators was developed as part of the RGS based on the nine RGS goal areas. Data for all the indicators are available freely from trusted sources (including internal regional district processes) and with data refresh cycles of at least every two years. To maximize their effectiveness, the selected indicators were reviewed based on the following criteria:

- **Relevant:** Is the indicator clear and easily understood by a wide audience without requiring specialized knowledge?
- **Comprehensive:** Does the indicator offer a well-rounded view of various aspects of the target policy goal?
- **Verifiable:** Is the indicator derived from established methods, with accessible and checkable data?
- **Timely:** Is the data updated regularly, enabling the detection of changes over time?
- **Data-driven:** Is the data being used of the highest quality and directly related to the parameter being measured?

The RGS indicators outlined in this report include:

- Population growth
- Housing Starts
- Unemployment Rate
- Total change to Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) area
- Regional Drought Conditions
- Community Safety
- Physicians per capita
- Road Safety
- Waste Diversion Rates
- Particulate Matter

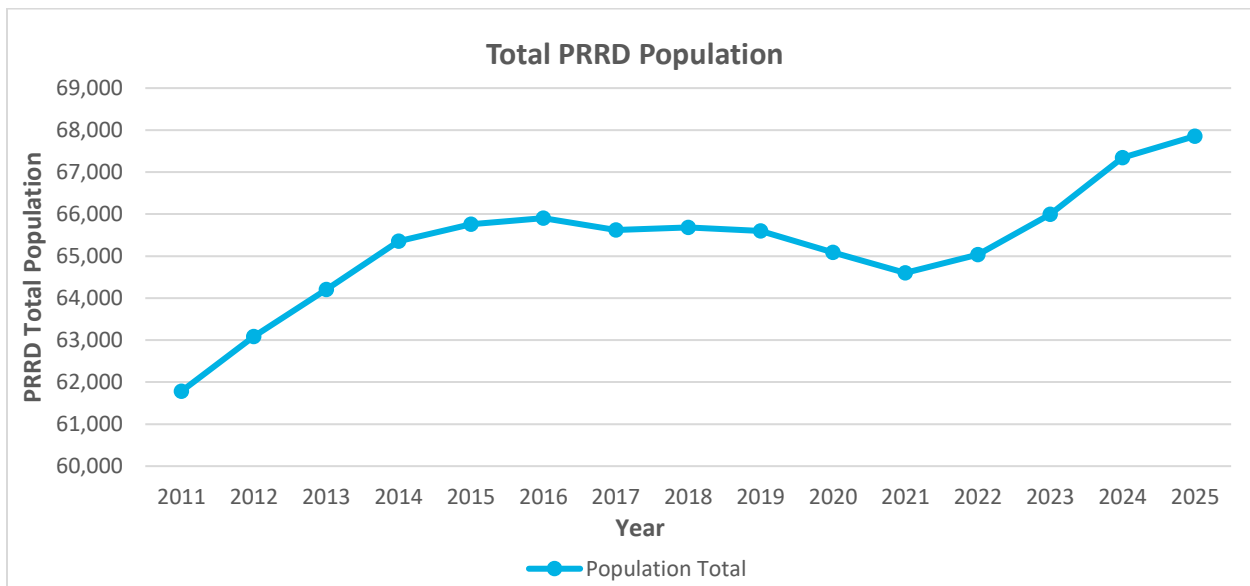
- Completed Regional Risk Assessments
- Agreements and Protocols

This report is supported by an Excel data tracking and monitoring tool that was developed for RGS monitoring.

Population

Changing trends in regional population are key indicators of regional change, as they help to highlight where growth or decline is occurring. For the purposes of this monitoring report, this indicator aims to measure the total and percentage change in annual population estimates / projections using five-year age cohorts.

Data Source: BC Stats total sub-provincial population estimates.



As illustrated, population growth continues to grow since 2021 in the PRRD, with a population growth of 515 recorded since the previous year (2024).

GOAL 1: Community Building

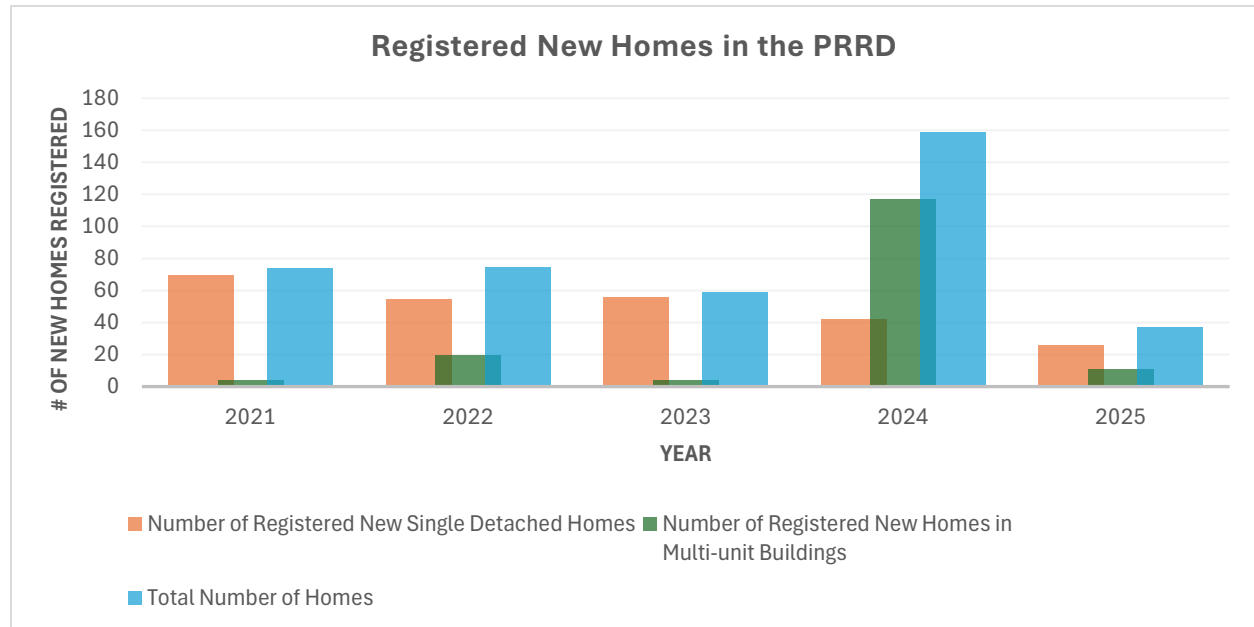


RGS Goal: Support compact and complete urban communities, maintain rural character and offer choice and affordability in housing.

HOUSING STARTS

Tracking the total number and type of dwelling units beginning construction each year in the PRRD, with a focus on multi-family starts, helps to provide insight into shorter-term trends in relation to the growth of PRRD communities and housing availability for PRRD residents.

Data Source: BC Housing (Monthly New Homes Registry Reports).



Development activity in the PRRD decreased in 2025 from a total of 159 new homes in 2024 to 37 in 2025. This includes 26 registered new single detached homes and 11 registered new homes in multi-unit buildings.

GOAL 2: Economic Strength

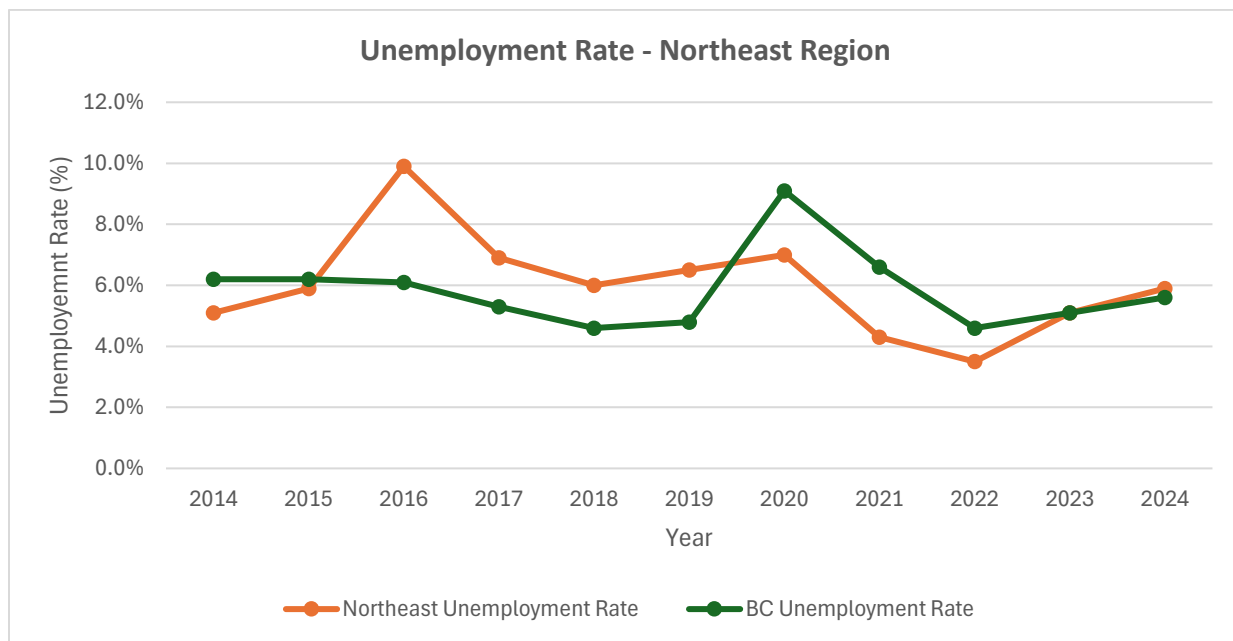


RGS Goal: Encourage a diverse, resilient and prosperous economy that builds on regional strengths.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

This indicator tracks annual employment rate as a percentage of the total labour force and helps us to understand how PRRD employment strength tracks in relation to provincial averages.

Data Source: Work BC Regional Profile (Northeast) average annual unemployment rate.



The regional unemployment rate has continued to increase by a marginal amount since 2023, reaching 5.9% in 2024. This is slightly higher than the provincial unemployment rate of 5.6%. At time of publication data for 2025 was not available.

GOAL 3: Agriculture and Food

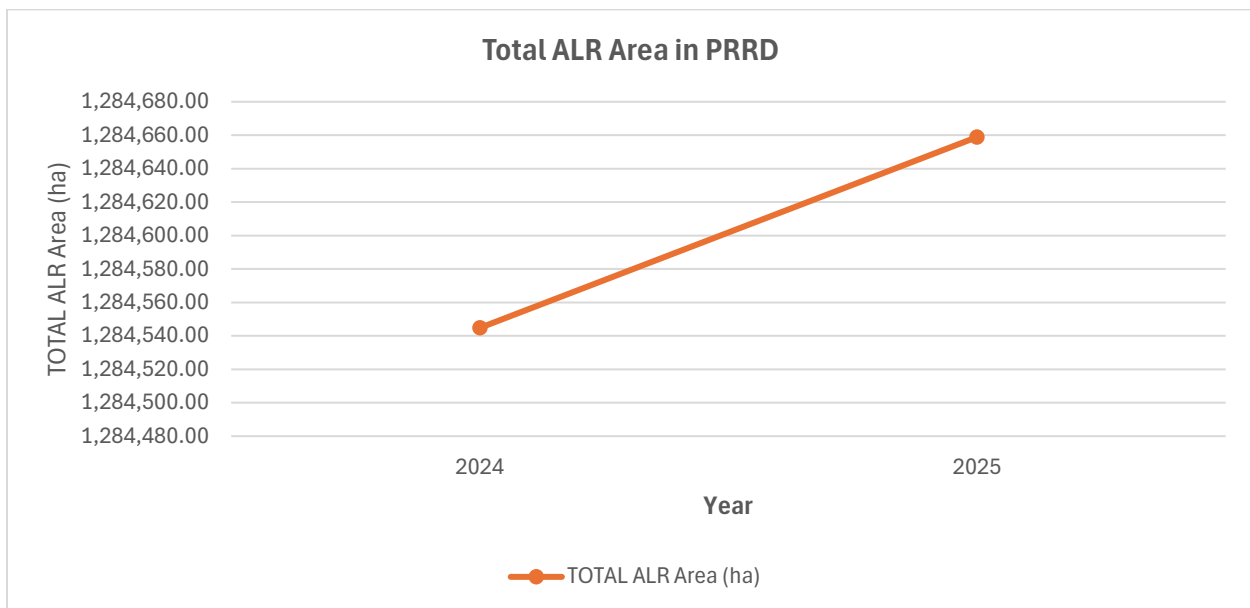


RGS Goal: Support agriculture and protect farmlands in the PRRD.

TOTAL CHANGE TO AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

This indicator tracks lands within the PRRD that have been added or removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) on an annual basis. Changes to this total land area are important to understand to better support local agriculture and related businesses, as well as bolster local resiliency efforts and support regional food security.

Data Source: Annual data available from the Agricultural Land Commission.

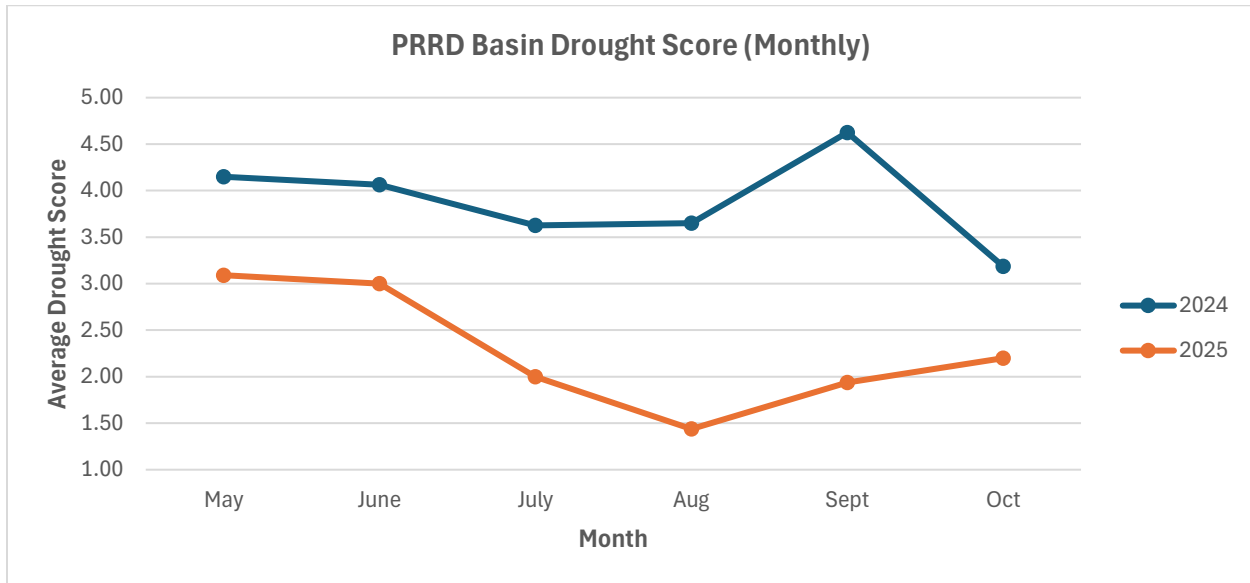


The total area of ALR lands has increased by 114 ha between 2024 and 2025. This trend reflects a continued regional prioritization of supporting and protecting local farmers and farmlands in the PRRD.

REGIONAL DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Regional drought conditions are determined by measuring the provincial Drought Level Index to better understand regional wildfire risk and water security within the PRRD. With the increasing risk of wildfire in the region, this indicator can provide important insight into the risks to wildfires and water and food security in the PRRD.

Data Source: Ministry of Water, Land, and resource Stewardship - BC Drought Information Portal.



The 2025 trendline shows generally lower drought conditions than 2024, with average monthly drought levels index scores ranging from 3.09 to 1.44. While drought conditions were reduced throughout the reporting period, continued risk management is important to address potential wildfire risk and support water and food security in the PRRD.

This indicator is also relevant to **Goal 6: Ecosystem Health**.

GOAL 4: Living Well

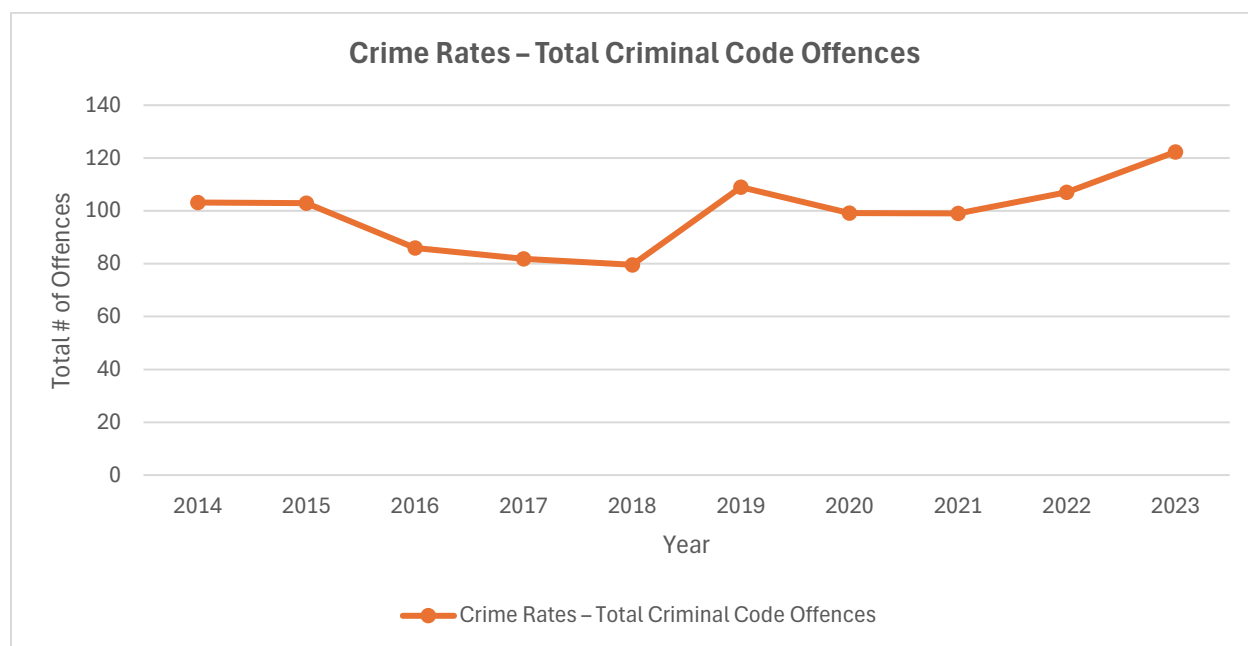


RGS Goal: Foster safe, healthy communities that support a high quality of life for all.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

This indicator tracks annual offense counts (criminal code, violent, property) that have occurred within the PRRD to provide a general snapshot of how safe our communities are.

Data Source: Regional District Crime Trends (annual) - RCMP – Detachment Level.

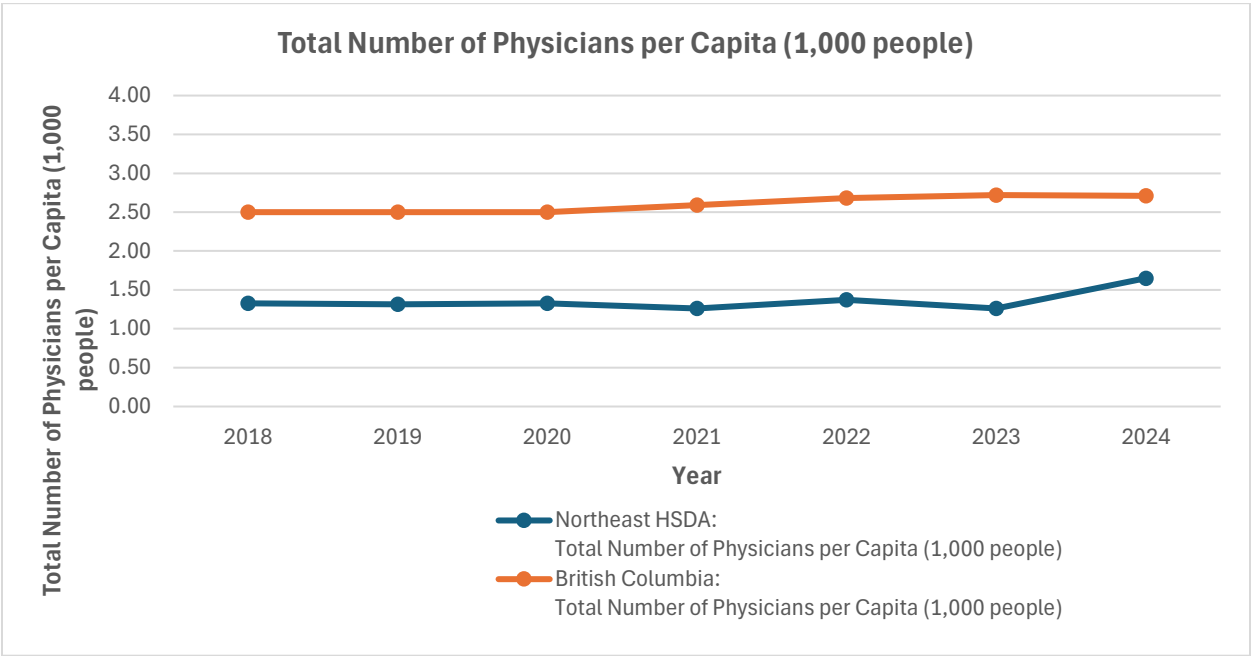


Findings: Annual offense counts continue to marginally increase with 122 criminal code violations recorded in 2023 in the region. At time of publication there were no updated statistics for 2024 or 2025 available.

PHYSICIANS PER CAPITA

This indicator tracks the total number of physicians practicing in the PRRD on a per capita basis (per 1,000 people), which provides insight into how well served PRRD residents are when it comes to health-related issues and requirements for treatment.

Data Sources: Canadian Institute for Health Information - Scott’s Medical Database metadata with verification by Northern Health.

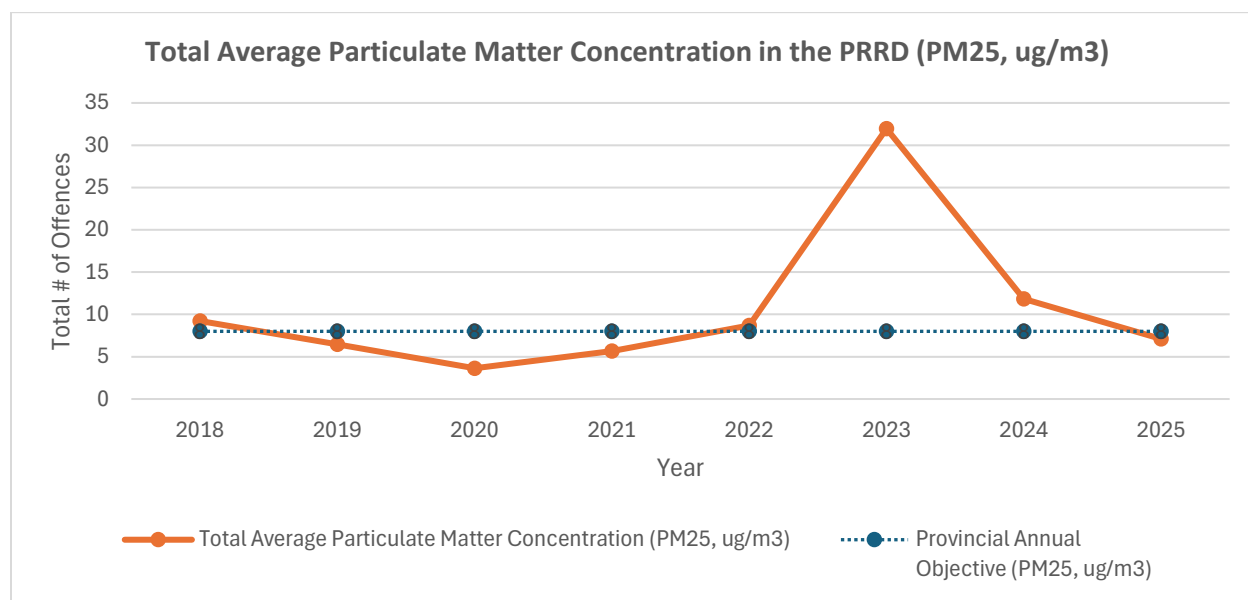


The total number of Physicians per 1,000 PRRD residents remains relatively stable at 1.65 but continues to significantly lag behind the current provincial average of 2.71. This finding highlights a gap in medical service delivery in the region.

PARTICULATE MATTER

This indicator tracks the average particulate matter concentration (PM2.5) across all Provincial Air Quality Stations located within the PRRD. This is important to track as the most common sources of high PP 2.5 concentrations come from wildfire and wood smoke. Please note, this indicator is also applicable to **Goal 8: Climate Resilience**.

Data Source: BC Ministry of Environment: Multi Station Report



Particulate matter concentration decreased in the last two years after a significant spike in 2023 triggered by a record wildfire season and the Donnie Creek wildfire in particular.

GOAL 5: Infrastructure and Services

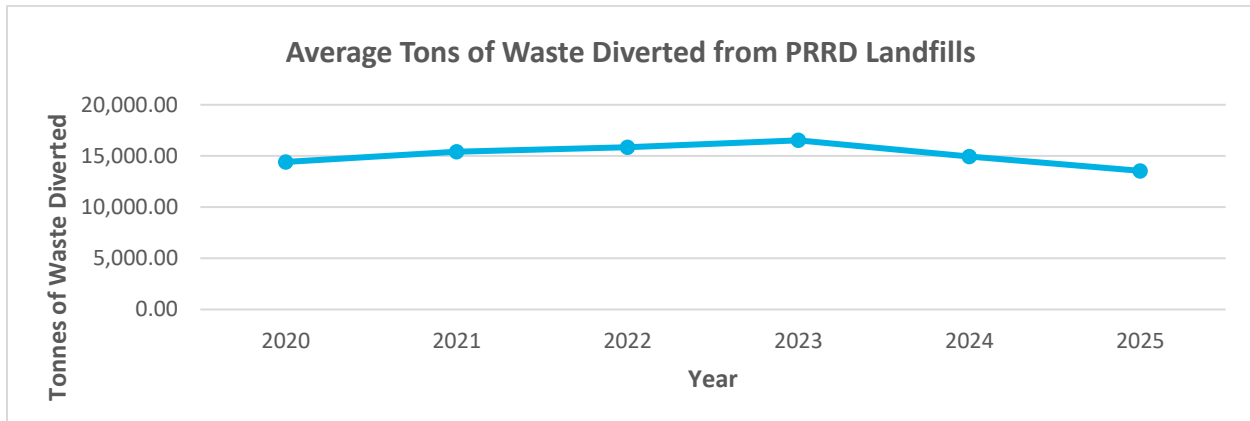


RGS Goal: Collaborate with partners to provide accessible, safe and efficient regional services, including sustainable waste management.

WASTE DIVERSION RATES

This indicator focuses on tracking how many tons of waste are diverted from PRRD landfills on an annual basis. It helps us understand changes in regional diversion rates, which in turn can assist in gauging the success of PRRD waste reduction programs.

Data Source: PRRD Regional Solid Waste Management Plan – internal tracking.



Waste diversion volumes increased from 14,400 tonnes in 2020 to a peak of 16,525 tonnes in 2023, before declining to 13,547 tonnes in 2025. Continued monitoring will help evaluate long-term trends and the effectiveness of the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.

GOAL 6: Ecosystem Health

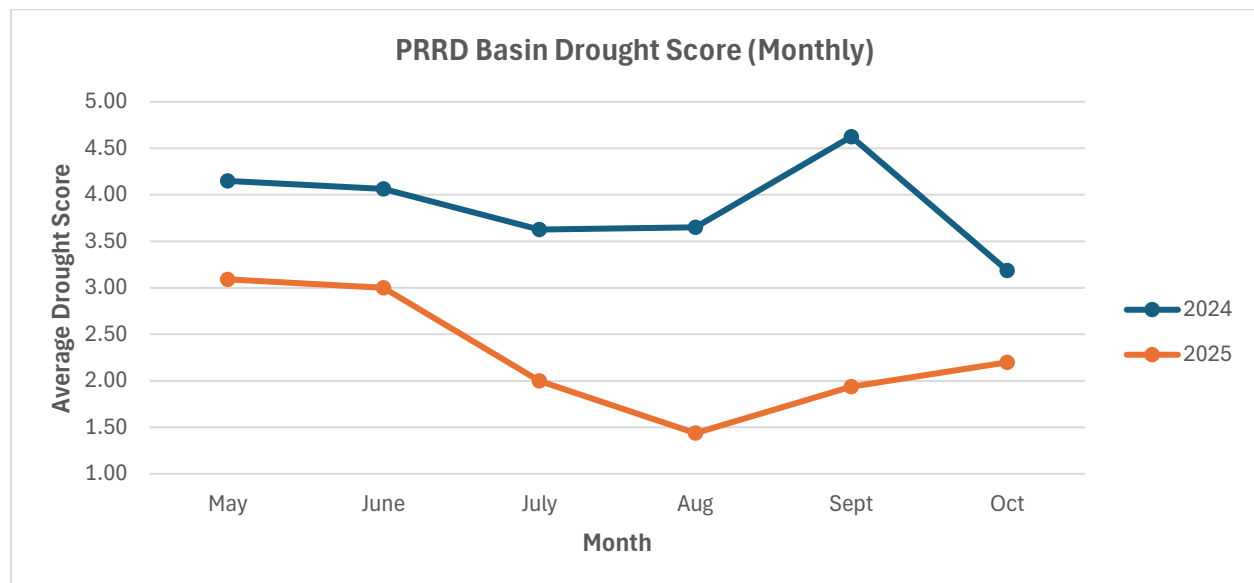


RGS Goal: *Protect the air, water and lands on which we all depend.*

REGIONAL DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Tracking regional drought levels is important for understanding the health the PRRD's diverse and vibrant ecosystems, as the presence of water plays a critical role supporting plant growth, wildfire resiliency, species extinction risk, and water cycling and recharge (among others).

Data Source: Ministry of Water, Land, and resource Stewardship - BC Drought Information Portal.



The 2025 trendline shows generally lower drought conditions than 2024, with average monthly drought levels index scores ranging from 3.09 to 1.44. While drought conditions were reduced throughout the reporting period, continued risk management is important to address potential wildfire risk and support water and food security in the PRRD.

This indicator is also relevant to **Goal 3: Agriculture and Food**.

GOAL 7: Transportation and Mobility

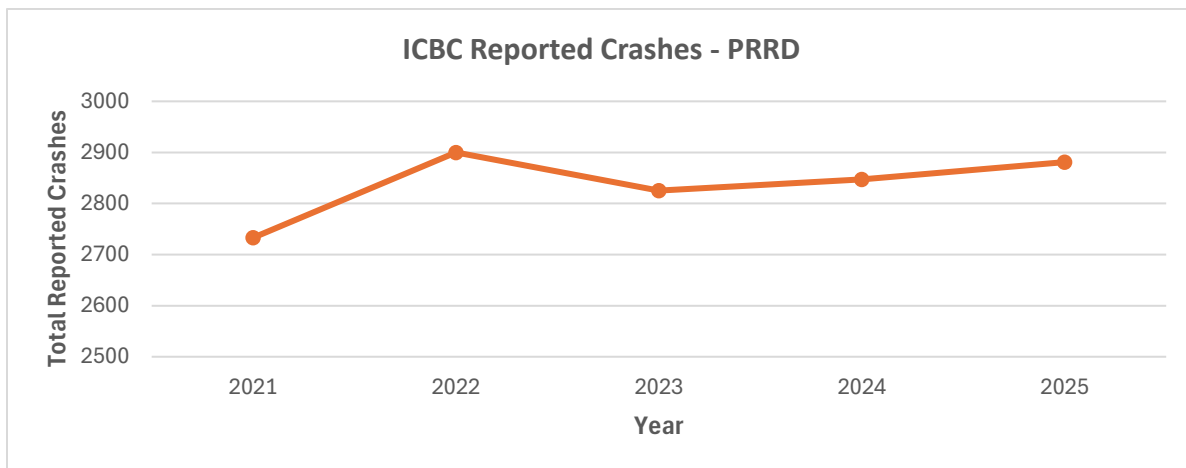


RGS Goal: Provide efficient, sustainable and cost-effective services that contribute to regional wellbeing and health.

ROAD SAFETY

This indicator tracks the total annual number of vehicular accidents occurring on roadways within the PRRD. Understanding and highlighting trends in these occurrences can support initiatives for improving general road safety and planning for future maintenance issues to improve driving conditions.

Data Source: ICBC Reported Crashes - North Central Crash Count.



The total number of crashes reported by ICBC has declined from 2900 accidents in 2022 to 2881 accidents in 2025.

GOAL 8: Climate Resilience

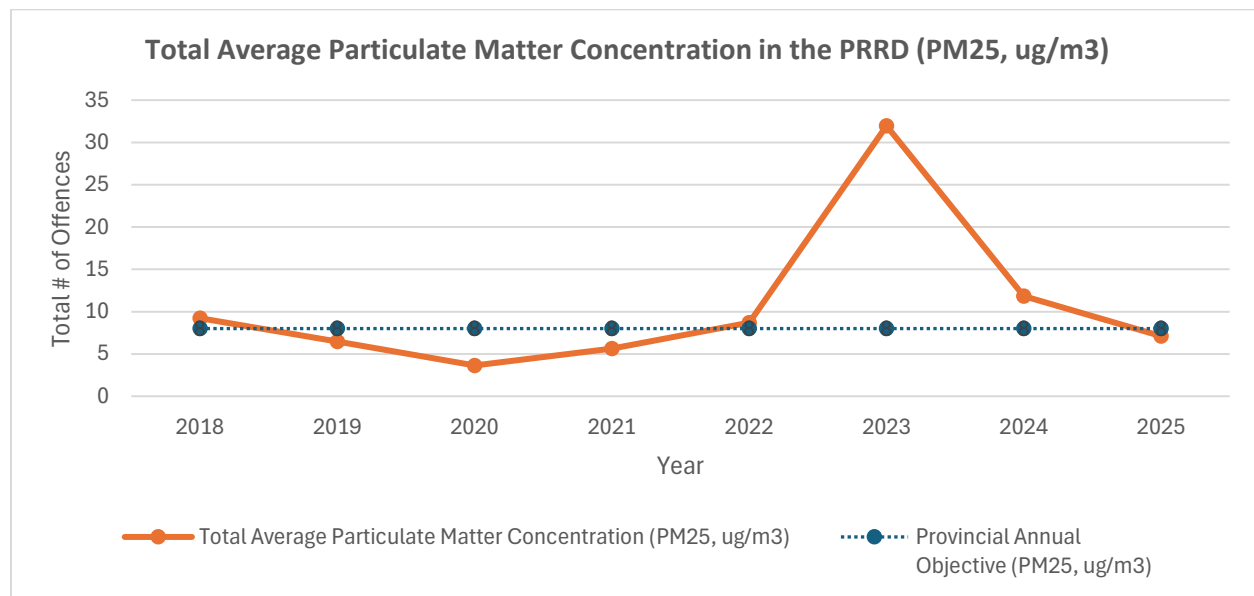


RGS Goal: Adapt and ensure the PRRD is prepared for a changing climate.

PARTICULATE MATTER

This indicator tracks the average particulate matter concentration (PM_{2.5}) across all Provincial Air Quality Stations located within the PRRD. This is important to track as the most common sources of high PP 2.5 concentrations come from wildfire and wood smoke. Please note, this indicator is also applicable to **Goal 4: Living Well**.

Data Source: BC Ministry of Environment: Multi Station Report

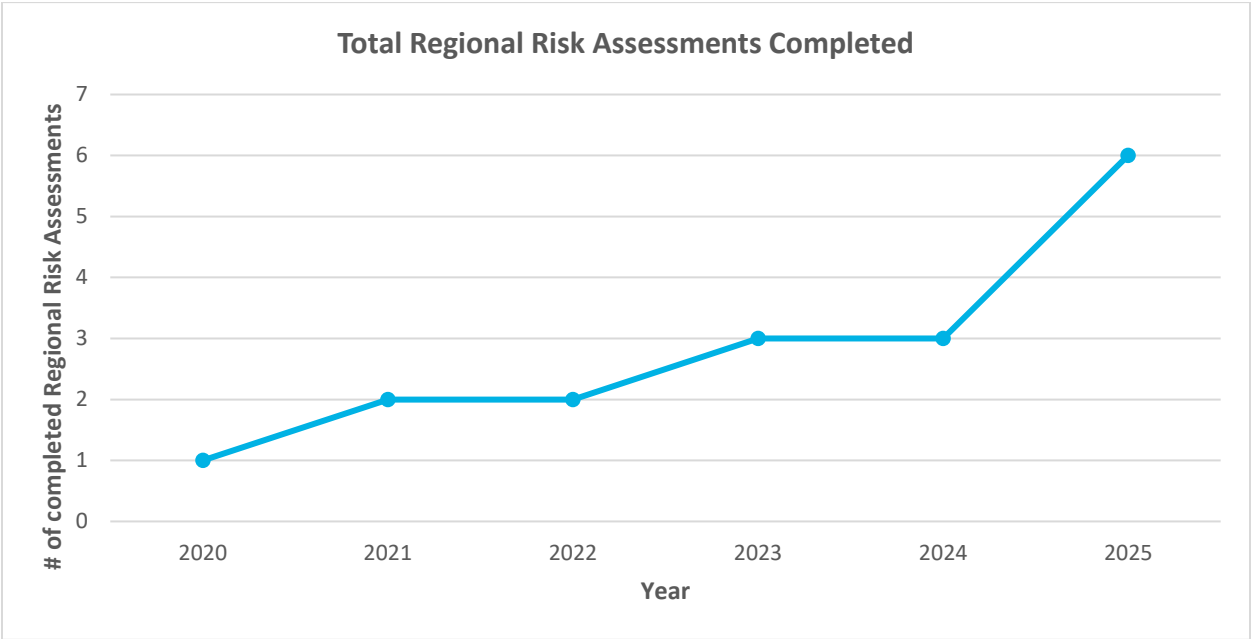


Particulate matter concentration decreased in the last two years after a significant spike in 2023 triggered by a record wildfire season and the Donnie Creek wildfire in particular.

COMPLETED REGIONAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

This indicator helps track emergency preparedness in the region through completion or work under the new provincial Emergency and Disaster Management Act (Regional risk assessments, enhanced emergency management plans, PRRD business continuity plan).

Data Source: PRRD and PRRD member municipalities.



The total number of completed regional risk assessments are gradually increasing in step with requirements under the new provincial *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*.

GOAL 9: Regional Collaboration



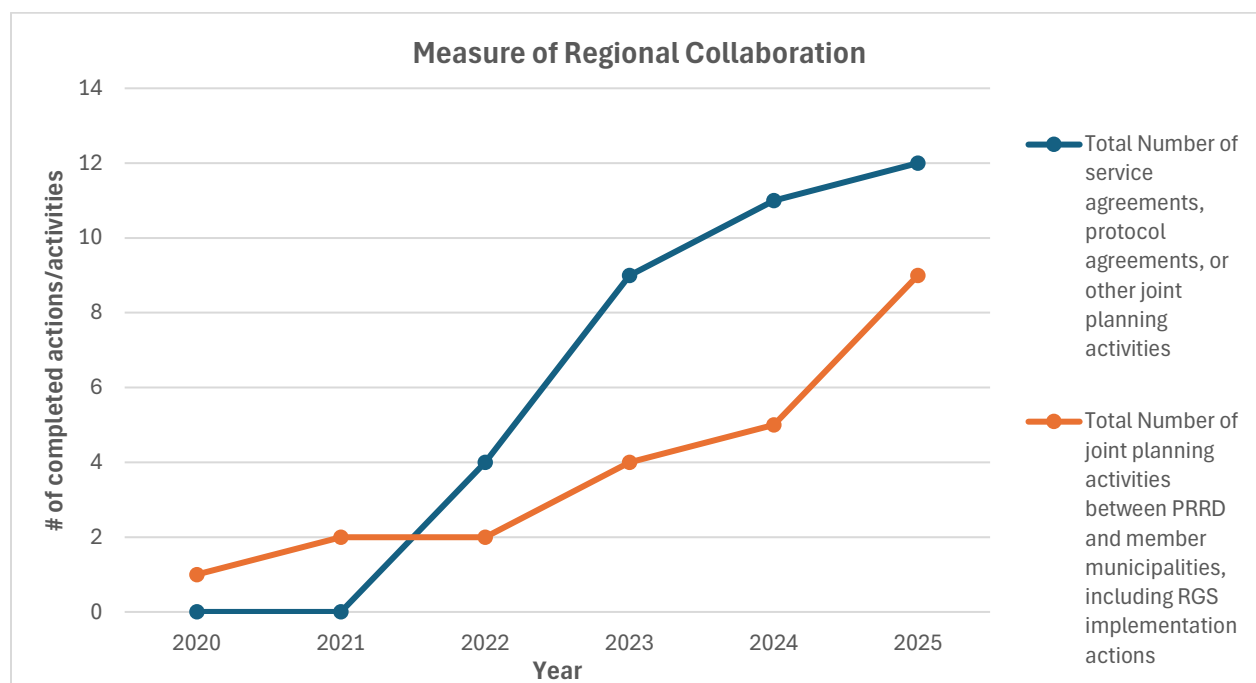
RGS Goal: *Coordinate and collaborate with residents, PRRD member municipalities, rural communities, other levels of government and First Nations to achieve shared goals and address common issues.*

AGREEMENTS AND PROTOCOLS

This indicator is twofold in its area of focus. First, it tracks the total number of service agreements, protocol agreements, or other joint planning activities completed on an annual basis between First Nations in the PRRD and/or the PRRD and member municipalities. Second, it tracks the total number of joint planning activities completed between PRRD and member municipalities on an annual basis, including RGS implementation actions.

Together, this dual indicator acts as a proxy for measuring the current level of ongoing regional collaboration within the PRRD on an annual basis.

Data Source: PRRD internal records and PRRD member municipalities



Some examples of joint planning activities or service agreements include mutual aid agreements between fire departments and the Housing Needs Assessment.

Data Sources

Table: RGS Indicators and Measures

Policy Area/Goal	Indicator	Measure and Rationale	Data Source
Context	Population growth	Total and % change in annual population estimates / projections.	BC Stats (Annual Population Estimates)
1. Community Building 	Housing Starts	Total number and type of dwelling units beginning construction each year in the PRRD, with a focus on multi-family starts. - Helps identify shorter-term development trends. - Can be supplemented by 5-year Housing Needs Reports.	BC Housing (Monthly New Homes Registry Reports)
2. Economic Strength 	Unemployment Rate	Tracks annual employment rate as a % of the total labour force. Helps understand how PRRD employment strength tracks in relation to provincial averages.	BC Labour Force Survey & Work BC Labour Market Statistics (3-month moving average)
3. Agriculture and Food 	Total change to ALR area (ha)	Tracks land that has been added or removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) annually.	Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) mapping (annual)
	Regional Drought Conditions	Regional drought conditions are determined by measuring externally tracked indices to better understand regional wildfire risk and water security. Also applicable under Goal 6: Ecosystem Health and Goal 8: Climate Resilience	BC Drought Portal (provided weekly during core drought season May through October)
4. Living Well 	Community safety	Annual offence counts (criminal code, violent, property).	Regional District Crime Trends (annual)_(RCMP – Detachment Level)

Policy Area/Goal	Indicator	Measure and Rationale	Data Source
	Physicians per capita	Number of physicians and nurse practitioners per 1,000 people.	Canadian Institute for Health Information - Scott's Medical Database metadata
	Particulate Matter	Average particulate matter concentration (PM2.5) across all Provincial Air Quality Stations located within the PRRD.	Northern Health BC Ministry of Environment: Multi Station Report
5. Infrastructure and Services 	Waste Diversion Rates	Average tons of waste diverted from PRRD landfills. Understanding changes in diversion rates can assist in gauging the success of waste reduction programs.	PRRD (Regional Solid Waste Management Plan Tracking)
6. Ecosystem Health 	Regional Drought Conditions	Regional drought conditions are determined by measuring externally tracked indices to better understand regional wildfire risk and water security. Also applicable under Goal 8: Climate Resilience	BC Drought Portal (provided weekly during core drought season May through October)
7. Transportation and Mobility 	Road Safety	Vehicle accidents. Tracked as a proxy for general road safety and maintenance.	ICBC Reported Crashes (North Central - Crash Count)
8. Climate Resilience 	Particulate Matter	Average particulate matter concentration (PM2.5) across all Provincial Air Quality Stations located within the PRRD. Also applicable under Goal 4: Living Well	BC Ministry of Environment: Multi Station Report

Policy Area/Goal	Indicator	Measure and Rationale	Data Source
	Completed Regional Risk Assessments	Helps track emergency preparedness through completion of work under the new provincial <i>Emergency and Disaster Management Act</i> (Regional risk assessments, enhanced emergency management plans, PRRD business continuity plan).	Peace River Regional District (internal) & member municipalities
9. Regional Collaboration 	Measure of Activity	Number of service agreements, protocol agreements, or other joint planning activities between First Nations in the PRRD and/or the PRRD and member municipalities.	PRRD and member municipalities
	Measure of Activity	Number of joint planning activities between PRRD and member municipalities, including RGS implementation actions.	PRRD