



*Working with communities, First Nations, local government and businesses to build a stronger North by investing in economic development in central and northern British Columbia, Canada*

## March 2014 - Newsletter

Northern Development > Building a Stronger North Newsletter > [March 2014](#)

### Millions of dollars in new grant funding available to central and northern B.C. in 2014

Northern Development has increased its annual grant allowance, and upped funding limits through its Economic Development Capacity Building, Grant Writing and Community Halls and Recreation Facilities programs

More money for economic development projects will be available than ever before from Northern Development in 2014.

In February, the Trust's board of directors unanimously supported a decision to increase the annual grant allocation to 7% from 5%, meaning that a total of \$11.4 million in grants will be available to local governments, First Nations and non-profits throughout the region in

2014.

The decision applies to projects funded out of the Trust's Cross Regional, Pine Beetle and Regional Development accounts, which account for 100% of the projects that Northern Development approves for funding.

The 2% increase in annual grant funding is a result of the Board's decision to maximize the amount of dollars available to grassroots, community-led projects throughout central and northern B.C.

Since inception in 2005, the annual return on investment for the Trust's \$185 million capital base has averaged 7.5%, while its maximum annual grant allowance has remained at 5%.

That return has meant that, while the Trust has disbursed millions of dollars in funding each year, its capital base has also grown to more than \$200 million to keep track with inflation and ensure a long term sustainable trust for northern communities.

As a result, Northern Development is now able to grant out a maximum of 7% of its capital base per year and continue to remain financially sustainable for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the increase in annual grant funding, the board of directors also approved several funding program changes in February that will mean that yet more dollars will be available to communities in 2014.

- Annual funding to local governments from the Economic Development Capacity Building program has been increased to \$50,000 from \$35,000
- Annual funding to local governments and First Nations to support locally based grant writers has been increased to \$8,000 from \$7,500
- The percentage of community hall and recreation facility projects the

Trust will fund has been increased to 50% from 33% to a limit of \$30,000

"The increase in annual grant funding allows us to support more economic development projects than ever before, while at the same time ensuring that the Trust remains a sustainable organization for years to come"

**Evan Saugstad**

Chair,

Northern Development Initiative Trust

### Quick facts

- In 2013, Northern Development approved \$6.1 million in funding for 222 economic development projects
- In 2013, the board approved more than 99% of the applications submitted to the Trust
- Approximately 72% of the Trust's funding approvals go into communities with less than 5,000 people
- Since inception, the Trust has approved \$118 million in funding to 1,327 projects throughout central and northern B.C.
- Northern Development provides grant and loan funding to municipalities, regional districts, First Nations and non profit organizations
- The Trust manages 13 distinct funding programs and a host of capacity building services that provide crucial support to 49 local governments and 88 First Nations communities in an area that encompasses 75% of B.C.

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Housing cost comparisons in British Columbia

Northern Development researched and helped create the infographic to show housing cost comparisons throughout B.C.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA'S HOUSING COST COMPARISON

Location	Average House Price	Average Monthly Mortgage Payment (for a first-time home buyer)
B.C.	\$568,419	\$2,596
Canada	\$389,119	\$1,776
East Vancouver	\$867,200	\$3,958
Victoria	\$477,792	\$2,181
Fort St. John	\$373,648	\$1,705
Kelowna	\$360,000	\$1,643
Fort Nelson	\$316,880	\$1,446
Prince George	\$259,962	\$1,187
Smithers	\$254,853	\$1,163
Terrace	\$251,477	\$1,148
Northern B.C.	\$243,665	\$1,112
Kitimat	\$238,411	\$1,088
100 Mile House	\$238,189	\$1,087
Williams Lake	\$232,301	\$1,060
Vanderhoof	\$219,221	\$1,001
Quesnel	\$204,483	\$933
Prince Rupert	\$192,379	\$878
Fort St. James	\$174,531	\$797
Houston	\$166,547	\$760
Mackenzie	\$153,032	\$698
Burns Lake	\$129,728	\$592



## Did You Know?

The average monthly rent for a two bedroom apartment in Prince George is:

# \$750

compared with \$1,255 in Vancouver.

That, on average, you would save

# \$68 a month

if you owned a house in Prince George rather than rented a 2 bedroom apartment in Vancouver?

Minimum down payment a first-time buyer would need for the average house in Prince George:

## \$13,000



Minimum down payment a first-time buyer would need for the average house in East Vancouver:

## \$43,000



## Where is the cheapest place to buy a home in Northern B.C.?

### Burns Lake

Average selling price **\$129,728.**

Average monthly mortgage payment for a first-time buyer with 5% down **\$592.**

## Where is the most expensive place to buy a home in Northern B.C.?

### Fort St. John

The average selling price is **\$373,648.**

The average monthly mortgage payment for a first-time buyer with 5% down is **\$1,705.**



There were **4,891** property sales worth \$1.2 billion in Northern B.C. in 2013

More properties were sold in Prince George last year than any other city in northern B.C.

Approximately 1,291 properties worth \$314 million were sold in Prince George in 2013.



## Did You Know?

The monthly mortgage payment for 1 house in East Vancouver...



...is the equivalent of 6 houses in Burns Lake?



**IN-FOCUS:**

# KITIMAT

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Realtors in the coastal town of 9,000 can't sell property fast enough amid an industrial development boom.

**26.7%**

Average increase in assessed value for a house in Kitimat in 2013 (the highest increase in B.C.)



Trust approves 60 projects in the first two months of the year

\$2.5 million in funding approved so far this year for dozens of grassroots, community-led projects throughout central and northern B.C.

Northern Development's board of directors has approved nearly \$2.5 million in funding for projects throughout central and northern B.C. in the first two months of 2014.

At the end of February, some 60 unique economic development and capacity building projects had been approved for funding, including:

- \$250,000 for a new and improved Chetwynd visitor centre;
- \$250,000 for a recreation centre and arena upgrade in Mackenzie;
- \$250,000 for upgrades at Prince Rupert Airport;
- \$250,000 for the development of the Port of Haida Gwaii at Port Clements; and
- \$169,565 for downtown revitalization in the Village of Telkwa

The increase in funding approvals in 2014 is in part due to the Trust's move to combine the regional funding accounts in 2013 to maximize grant outflows in each of Northern Development's four service areas – the Northwest, Northeast, Cariboo-Chilcotin Lillooet and Prince George regions.

For example, in 2013, approximately \$1.2 million in funding was submitted and approved for the Prince George region, compared with only \$134,000 in 2012, representing an 800% increase in funding approvals in one year.

Meantime, funding approvals in the Northeast more than doubled in 2013 to \$740,817 compared with \$304,782 in 2012.

The Northwest region also witnessed a significant increase in funding approvals in 2013 to \$762,605 from \$533,059, while funding approvals in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Lillooet region held steady at \$504,957 in 2013 compared with \$504,977 in 2012.

The combined accounts and increase in funding approvals has been good news for small communities throughout the Trust's service area – approximately 72% of Northern Development's funding approvals go into



communities with less than 5,000 people.

"The steady increase in funding approvals in 2013 and 2014 is a direct result of improved performance of our investment returns, which is how we deliver on our mandate to build a stronger north"

**Evan Saugstad**

Chair,

Northern Development Initiative Trust

"2014 promises to be an exciting year as we continue to support projects through central and northern B.C. that drive job creation and revenue growth for our communities."

"The \$250,000 funding will really make a difference," said District of Chetwynd Mayor Merlin Nichols. "We are very excited to start planning with the Chamber on the new relocated, renovated visitor centre in our community."

City of Prince Rupert Mayor Jack Mussallem and City Council, along with the Prince Rupert Airport Authority and our residents, appreciate very much the funding from Northern Development Initiative Trust. "This funding provides opportunity and growth of facilities at the fastest growing port in North America, and trade and commerce across Western Canada and mid-western United States of America," stated Mayor Mussallem.

"The Recreation Center is the heart of our community. As a winter community with a significant snowfall, this center provides an indoor space for many recreational and healthy activities," said District of Mackenzie Mayor Stephanie Killam. "The Northern Development grant will allow us host more events and offer more services at the Recreation Center, which is important for the quality of life and economy in our community."

“The Village of Port Clements is very appreciative of Northern Development’s grant for our ‘Port of Haida Gwaii’ project. Their support is another example of the Trust meeting the needs of northern B. C. and stimulating economic growth in our area,” said Village of Port Clements Mayor Wally Cheer.

“The Village of Telkwa welcomes private investment. Our municipal building has a large unused space and council decided to kick start the investment process by providing three commercial retail rental spaces in our Hankin Corner building,” said Village of Telkwa Mayor Carman Graf. “With the financial help from Northern Development we can lead this revitalization and make this rental space available. Council and staff wish to thank Northern Development for their help and financial support.”

#### Quick facts

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- Since inception, the Trust has approved \$118 million in funding to 1,327 projects throughout central and northern B.C.
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## Northern Development board approves \$400,000 in funding for business façade improvements

Twenty communities will receive \$20,000 grants to partner with local businesses to improve the look and feel of commercial areas

Building on the success of last year's Business Façade Improvement program, twenty communities throughout central and northern B.C. have been approved for funding in 2014 to partner with local businesses and spruce up storefronts.

The program, which was launched last year, provides up to \$20,000 annually to municipalities and regional districts throughout the Trust's service area in central and northern B.C.

The funding incents communities to partner with their local businesses to improve the look and feel of their commercial business storefronts.

The Business Façade Improvement program supports visual improvements such as façades, signage, murals, architectural features, siding, lighting and awnings in an effort to enhance economic viability and vibrancy in central and northern B.C. communities.

Northern Development's board of directors, which consists of elected representatives and provincial appointees from across central and northern B.C., in February approved funding for 20 applications to the program.

The communities that will receive up to \$20,000 Business Façade Improvement grants are:

- City of Dawson Creek

## City of Prince George

- City of Quesnel
- City of Williams Lake
- District of 100 Mile House
- District of Chetwynd
- District of Fort St. James
- District of Houston
- District of Wells
- Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- Town of Smithers
- Village of Ashcroft
- Village of Burns Lake
- Village of Lytton
- Village of Masset
- Village of McBride
- Village of Port Clements
- Village of Queen Charlotte
- Village of Telkwa
- Village of Valemount

Funding under the program remains available for municipalities and regional districts that have yet to apply in 2014.



*Deluxe Junk, an antique used furniture and curio shop in Wells, received funding through Northern Development's Business Façade Improvement program in 2013 to give its 1930s-era building a facelift. The photo above shows the before (left) and after. Said owner Rodger Boychuk: "I realize that if not for the grant this exceptional result would not be realized ... it also has stimulated me to do more to bring this building back to its former glory."*

## Quotes

"The fact that we approved applications for the business façade improvement program in 20 communities throughout the region already this year is a testament to the success of this program and the value that it adds to the communities we serve"

**Evan Saugstad**

Chair,

Northern Development Initiative Trust

"We sincerely appreciate our relationship with Northern Development Initiative Trust and thank them for their continued investment in the north. We are extremely pleased that our grant application was successful once again and that we are able to provide this type of assistance to our local businesses," said City of Quesnel Mayor Mary Sjostrom. "I would encourage all eligible property and business owners to take advantage of this opportunity."

"The City of Williams Lake is very appreciative to Northern Development

for continuing to be a significant partner in enabling economic development programs in our community. The Business Façade Improvement Program is a great example of a practical investment that will benefit our commercial sector and the community at large by enhancing the appeal and visibility of local storefronts,” said City of Williams Lake Mayor Kerry Cook.

“Houston is pleased to have received \$20,000 in funding from Northern Development Initiative Trust,” said District of Houston Mayor Bill Holmberg. “A healthy business area plays an important role in the vitality of a community and this funding will assist to accomplish that.”

“The District of Wells is pleased to be the recipient of a Northern Development Business Façade Improvement grant, which will help our local merchants spruce up the looks of their businesses. These improvements make our small town more appealing to the thousands of visitors who pass through each year and it encourages them to stop and spend more time in the community,” said District of Wells Mayor Robin Sharpe.

“Northern Development’s facade improvement program has allowed local businesses to enhance Smithers’ downtown experience, which is among our community’s greatest economic assets. The feedback we received from participating business owners was entirely positive and we are looking forward to building on this program’s success in 2014,” said Town of Smithers Mayor Taylor Bachrach.

“I am very excited to see the Façade Improvement Program through Northern Development take shape in our community. I look forward to seeing not only the beautification of our community, but also the boost it will bring to local business and our downtown area,” said Village of Burns Lake Mayor Luke Strimbold.

“Business retention as important as business attraction. Offering the façade program demonstrates our continuing commitment to our business community and we are very pleased that Northern Development has encouraged this opportunity,” said Village of Queen Charlotte Mayor Carol Kulesha.

“The Village of Telkwa is very excited that we have been awarded \$20,000 through the façade program. This means Telkwa will be able to assist any business that wishes to upgrade their façade and improve the look of our downtown corridor thanks to the Northern Development program,” said Village of Telkwa Mayor Carman Graf.

“The Business Façade Improvement Program will be a great boost to our local businesses,” said District of 100 Mile House Mayor Mitch Campsall. “An appealing streetscape will attract customers to retail and commercial areas of town. We are excited about this cooperative venture because façade improvements will enhance economic development in 100 Mile House.”

“The District of Chetwynd is excited about participating in the Businesses Façade Funding Program that is offered through Northern Development Initiative Trust for improvements in our community. We are very happy with the partnerships to follow with the businesses in our community,” said District of Chetwynd Mayor Merlin Nichols.

“The Village of Port Clements would like to thank Northern Development for their approval in funding for the Business Façade Improvement program. This creative funding is a ladder to help our community reach higher for making our town a better place to live and grow,” said Village of Port Clements Mayor Wally Cheer.

“Prince George has leveraged Northern Development’s \$20,000 façade program by partnering with the Downtown Business Improvement

Association, which matched the funding,” said City of Prince George Mayor Shari Green. “We are already seeing a much-improved look to this vital part of our city, just in time to welcome the nation in 2015 for the Canada Winter Games.”

"The city is very thrilled about this opportunity to assist Dawson Creek's downtown businesses with their efforts to upgrade their store fronts," said City of Dawson Creek Mayor Dale Bumstead. "This funding just may provide a kick start for those businesses that may have already been thinking it's time for a change."

“Northern Development Initiative Trust has provided Fort Nelson/Northern Rockies and other northern communities with a variety of programs and funding opportunities. We cannot thank Northern Development enough for their continued support in our community and we look forward to seeing the benefits of the Business Façade Improvement Program,” said Northern Rockies Regional Municipality Mayor Bill Streeper.

"The businesses of Fort St. James have the potential to benefit greatly from the business facade improvement program funded through Northern Development Initiative Trust. This program helps our community to build on the success of our downtown revitalization efforts and makes our community a more attractive and inviting place to shop, live, work and play. Not only is it a boost to business owners, it provides a long-term visible impact to our town," said District of Fort St. James Mayor Rob MacDougall.

"The Business Façade Improvement Program provides a key incentive to local businesses to enhance the appearance of Lytton's downtown core. It greatly assists us in our Downtown Revitalization Program," said Village of Lytton Mayor Jessa Lightfoot.



“The Business Façade Improvement Program offered through Northern Development Initiative Trust will provide wonderful new opportunities for our downtown businesses to economically improve and update their storefronts. The flexibility of the program makes it accessible for any size of business and any budget. We are excited to watch our downtown become more inviting to residents and visitors alike,” said Village of Ashcroft Mayor Andy Anderson.

“Local business is a key part of small communities like Masset and the Business Façade Improvement program is a great way to support local businesses who want to show pride in their community,” said Village of Masset Mayor Andrew Merilees

"This is a great program for residents and visitors alike, but it also sends an important message to building owners. That they are valued and that their role as landlords and businesses owners in a commercial district is a key part of our success as a community," said Village of Valemount Mayor Andru McCracken

“The Business Façade Program is a great opportunity for businesses to enhance their facades through financial partnering. It improves the appearance of the town and helps businesses promote their goods and services," said Village of McBride Mayor Mike Frazier

#### Quick Facts

- In 2013, a dozen communities were approved for \$20,000 grants under the Business Façade Improvement program
- Municipalities and regional districts that applied to the program were required to develop and submit their business façade improvement plan/guidelines to Northern Development prior to approval
- Those guidelines provide direction to local business owners about the eligibility criteria to obtain the business façade improvement grant
- Annual funding of \$20,000 is available to each municipality and

## regional district in Northern Development's service area

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A Q&A with Initiatives Prince George CEO Heather Oland about her organization's vision and success in B.C.'s northern capital



*"We have invested \$1.1 million toward entrepreneurs for economic growth"*

Prince George is the largest city in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. Typically known as B.C.'s northern capital, the city has a population of nearly 80,000 people and serves a region of about 326,000 people. The Prince George economy has experienced an average of 4.7% growth annually since 2010, which is nearly double the growth of the British Columbia economy during the same period (2.4%). Initiatives Prince George (IPG) is the municipally owned economic

development corporation for the City of Prince George. IPG's vision is for Prince George to be a growing vibrant city supported by a diverse and sustainable regional resource economy. We recently connected with IPG CEO Heather Oland to learn more about how her organization is working to build a stronger economy in Prince George.

**Q:** Initiatives Prince George (IPG) has a clear vision that states that Prince George is a growing vibrant city supported by a diverse and sustainable regional resource economy. In what way does IPG continually strive to make this vision a reality?

**A:** We strive to make this vision a reality by being knowledgeable about the Prince George economy, adding value to economic drivers of public and private sectors, focusing on Prince George's competitive advantages and understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by Prince George businesses.

**Q:** IPG continues to contribute to growth and economic development in Prince George. What do you think has been your corporation's most valuable achievement to date?

**A:** We are very proud of our 2014 strategic direction, which focuses on facilitating the expansion and diversification of Prince George businesses, while putting Prince George on the map as a choice city for living and investing. We are in the process of designing a robust business retention and expansion program as well as a city-wide recruitment plan – both of which we are very excited about.

**Q:** British Columbia's north is on the precipice of massive industrial development. What are IPG's strategic plans and goals for the coming years to take advantage of this

opportunity for the betterment of the city you serve?

A: IPG's four focus areas are:

- **Business retention and expansion** because we know that the majority of economic growth comes from the businesses that are already investing in our community and are expanding and providing meaningful employment for people.
- **Investment attraction** because diverse economies are strong and resilient. We strategically target investment that is complementary to our existing economic strengths and that can build capacity where there are gaps in the supply chain.
- **Workforce expansion** because over the next decade, more than 50% of all capital investment planned in the province will occur in Northern BC. This means population growth is an essential component of ensuring that economic opportunities are realized in Prince George and the north. Northern BC is home to only 8% of the province's population, so it is critical that the resident population is well educated and trained for workforce opportunities and that new population is attracted to the city and region.
- **Marketing and Promotion** because telling the story of Prince George and the opportunities available in our diverse, growing and beautiful city is fundamental to helping existing business grow, attracting new investment, and growing the population.

Q: In your own words – why do you love Prince George and northern B.C.?

A: I love the pace, I love the space and I love that I can go shopping, go to dinner and the theatre, and also easily escape to the wilderness.

Prince George has given me more opportunities to grow professionally than I would have experienced in a larger city. It has also given me the opportunity to raise a beautiful family, save for our future and, if I choose to, semi-retire before 55!!

Economic Diversification program generates huge value for northern B.C.

Since 2005, Northern Development has provided \$48 million in funding to major capital infrastructure projects

Northern Development Initiative Trust's Economic Diversification Infrastructure program has been one of the most successful and highly utilized funding streams available to communities in central and northern B.C. in the last decade.

Since 2005, the program has provided more than \$48 million in grant and loan funding to 122 distinct projects that support new revenue and job creation throughout the region.

The funding has gone into dozens of communities throughout central and northern B.C., helping to build pools, arenas, cattle auction marts, heritage and cultural centres and support the expansion of airports and marinas.

a major capital investment.

The program specifically targets funding for public multi-use facilities or capital investments that drive revenue and job creation and provide a long-term asset for the community.

**Economic  
Diversification  
Infrastructure**

**WATCH VIDEO** 

Municipalities, regional districts, First Nations bands and registered non-profit organizations are eligible to apply to the program via Northern Development's four regional development accounts.

The Economic Diversification Infrastructure program provides up to \$250,000 in funding for municipalities, regional districts, First Nations and non-profit organizations in Northern Development's service area for projects that significantly strengthen the local economy via

For more information about Economic Diversification Infrastructure funding,

Watch the video above and visit the [Economic Diversification Infrastructure program page](#).

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Welcome to the new Building a Stronger North newsletter



breaking news about the Trust – our funding announcements, program changes and everything else.

In other words, we want Building a Stronger North to be your go to source for the latest news and information about Northern Development and the economic story of our region.

**That's why our content mix will include:**

- A monthly infographic that's presents compelling data about our region in a fun and interesting way – and we want you to share

*"What we wanted to do was get British Columbians hooked on the economic story of our region and share it with the rest of the world"*

Welcome to the first edition of Northern Development's completely re-designed Building a Stronger North newsletter.

Since 2012, we've been sharing stories with you in print and online about the Trust's funding projects and commitment to supporting economic diversification throughout central and northern B.C. While we were proud of the stories we shared, we realized there existed a much greater opportunity to share the wider economic story about the region we loved across a multitude of mediums. Our first goal is to deliver compelling content to your inbox, mobile phone, tablet and desktop computer once a month – we fundamentally believe that the better the content that we produce, the more readers we'll have. Second, our newsletter is now digital only – you won't find Building a Stronger North delivered to your doorstep anymore. And, finally, Building a Stronger North is where we'll be

that graphic through your social networks

- Funding program videos that highlight economic development success stories
- Links to recent news articles about economic growth in northern B.C.
- Quick facts that can be shared across social media channels;
- A monthly Q&A with economic development and community leaders in our region; and
- A variety of short stories about the Trust's programs and funding approvals.

We hope you enjoy our updated newsletter, and we encourage you to contact us with any comments or questions you may have.

Explore hundred of projects...

and connect with the people who are building their communities and a stronger regional economy in central and northern BC.

Share Your Story...

Do you have an update or personal story about a project undertaken in central and northern BC that has made a positive difference for you, your family, or organization?