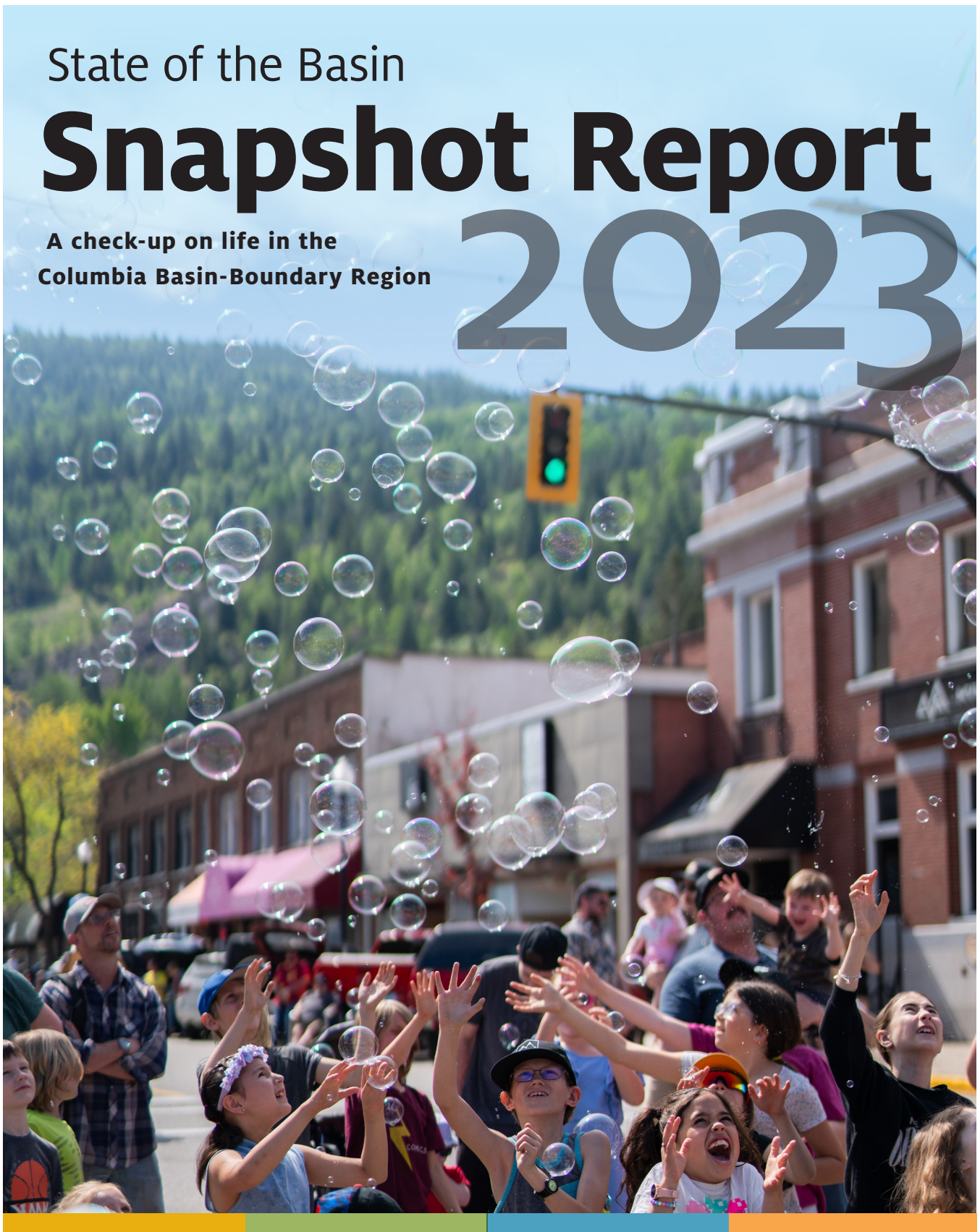


State of the Basin

Snapshot Report

A check-up on life in the
Columbia Basin-Boundary Region

2023



Welcome

The State of the Basin initiative monitors and reports on indicators of environmental, economic, cultural, and social well-being in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. Selkirk Innovates compiles the Snapshot Report to provide a summary of current State of the Basin research. More information on the indicators of well-being and related reports and resources are available on the State of the Basin website: <https://stateofthebasin.ca/>.

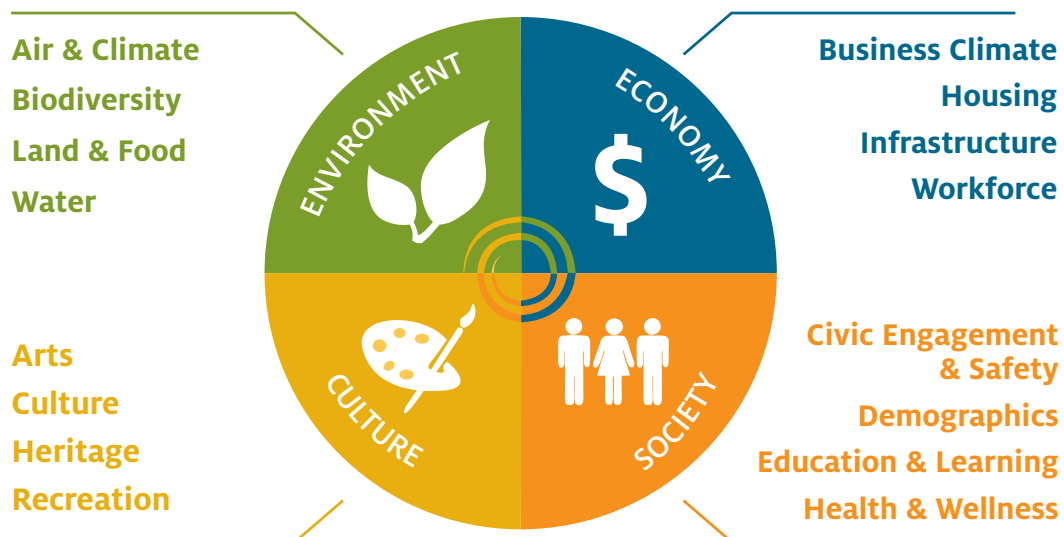
USING RESEARCH TO IMPROVE REGIONAL WELL-BEING

Every day, Columbia Basin-Boundary residents and organizations make decisions that influence the future of our region. The primary goal of the State of the Basin initiative is to provide access to data to support evidence-based decision-making, leading to improved well-being in the region. Four objectives support this goal:

- **Inform** citizens and organizations about the people, natural environment, communities, and economy of the region by providing access to accurate, credible, and timely information;
- **Encourage** understanding of complex issues and trends over time, including future projections when possible;
- **Signal** whether conditions are similar or different within the region, and in comparison to other areas to highlight and celebrate areas of achievement, and to identify significant issues, ideally before they become critical; and
- **Motivate** discussion, information sharing, strategic evidence-based decisions, and collective action.

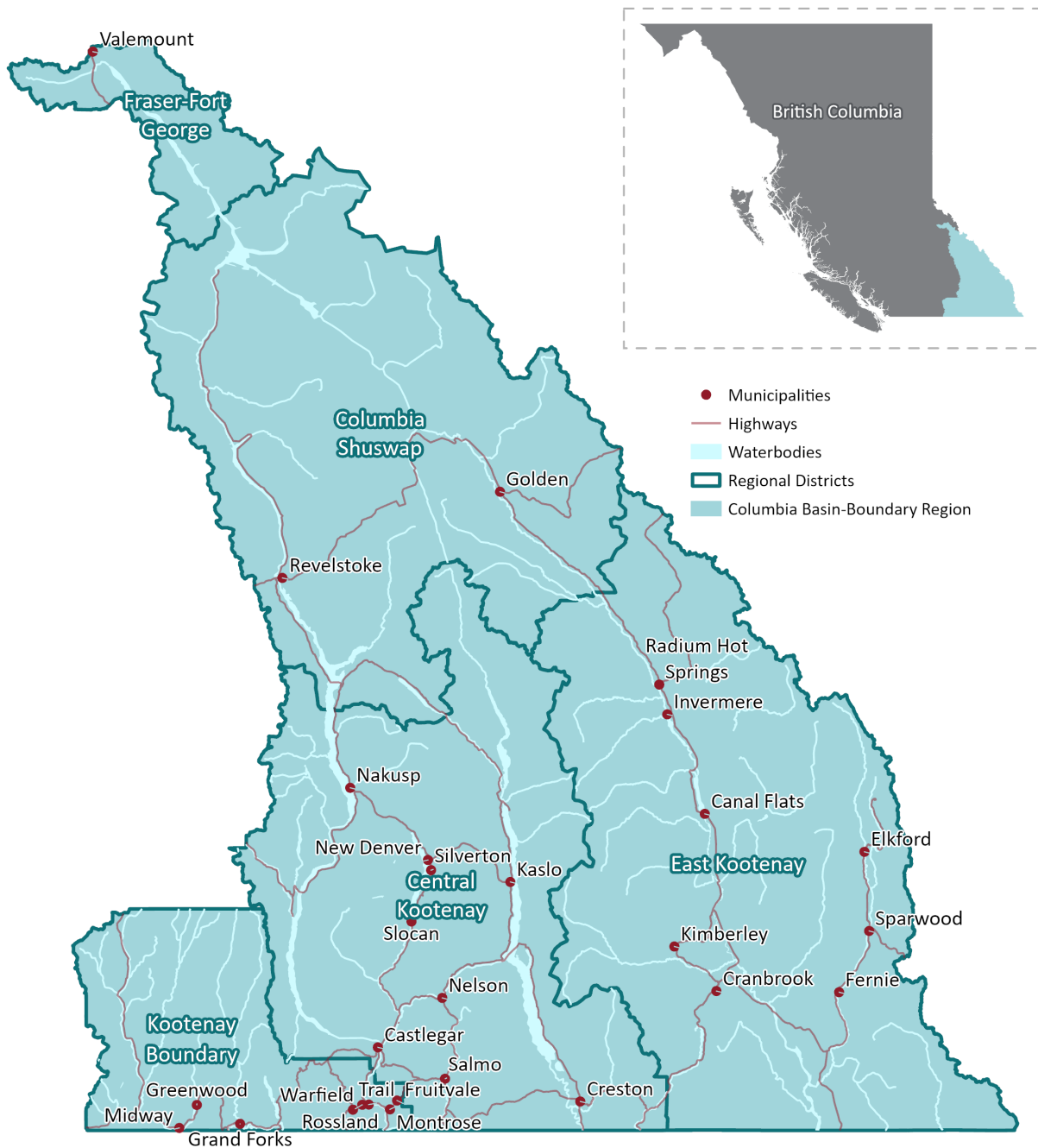
INDICATORS & DATA SOURCES

State of the Basin research draws on available data from a variety of sources including federal, provincial, and local governments, crown corporations, and non-profit initiatives. These data are collected from open access sources and through custom requests. While quantitative State of the Basin indicators help establish foundational knowledge of regional well-being, they only tell part of the story. Qualitative information, including Selkirk Innovates' subjective well-being research, can further contribute to understanding the well-being of our communities and region. In September 2023, a statistically significant random sample of 301 Columbia Basin-Boundary residents participated in subjective well-being research.¹ Participants responded to over 100 closed-ended questions, and some of their responses are included in this Snapshot.



THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION

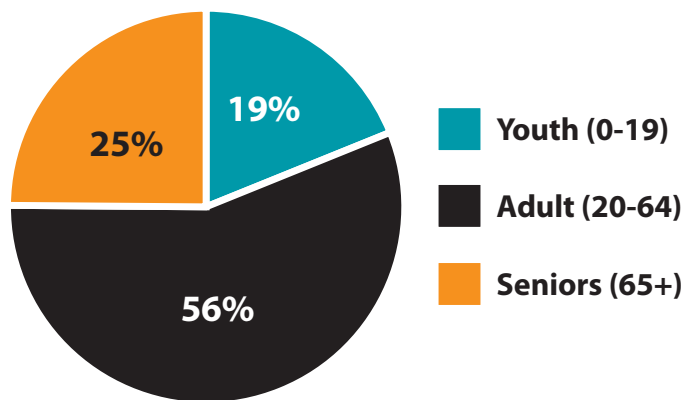
Selkirk Innovates acknowledges that the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region encompasses the traditional territories of the Sinixt, the Ktunaxa, the Syilx, the Secwépemc, and the Lheidli T'enneh peoples. The region encompasses more than 8.6 million hectares of land in southeastern British Columbia, Canada. It includes the Regional Districts of Kootenay Boundary, Central Kootenay, and East Kootenay, which are collectively the Kootenay Development Region, as well as a portion of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. Two other development regions intersect the borders of the region: Thompson- Okanagan and Cariboo. The Columbia Basin-Boundary Region is home to approximately 178,000 people.²



Demographics

All demographic statistics are for the Kootenay Development Region.

Percent of population by age category, 2023 ³



Total estimated population, 2023 ³



Total racialized population, 2021 ⁴

5%

Compares to 34% in BC



Global Life Satisfaction, 2023 ¹

90%

of residents surveyed indicate being satisfied with their life as a whole.

Our population is aging

Average age of residents, 2023 ³

45 ↑ up from 40 in 2003



Personal Well-being Index, 2023 ¹

Of residents surveyed, men report a higher level of personal well-being than women.

Men's average score: 7.7 out of 10

Women's average score: 6.9 out of 10



Number of migrants, 2022/23 ⁵

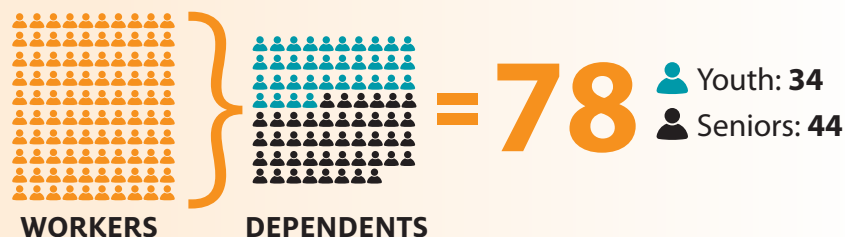
2,955

Net International: **1,834** (62%)

Net Interprovincial: **20** (1%)

Net Intraprovincial: **1,101** (37%)

Dependents per 100 workers, 2023 ³



Civic Engagement & Safety

24,240

Charitable donors in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2022 ⁶

Average donation: **\$1,714**

71%

of residents surveyed donated to a non-profit or charity in the previous 12 months. ¹



Total Donations **\$41.6 million**



62%

of Columbia Basin-Boundary police services reported an increase in the Crime Severity Index between 2022 and 2023. ⁷

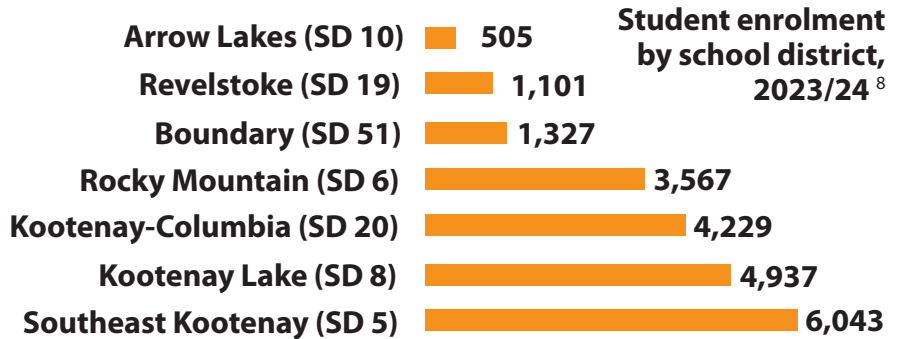
71% of residents surveyed perceive their community as a safe place to live. ¹

Education & Learning

Students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2023/24 ⁸

21,709

↑ up 0.6% from 21,572 in 2022/23



High school completion rate by school district, 2022/23 ⁹



85%
SD 5



88%
SD 10



90%
SD 8



92%
SD 20



95%
SD 51



96%
SD 6

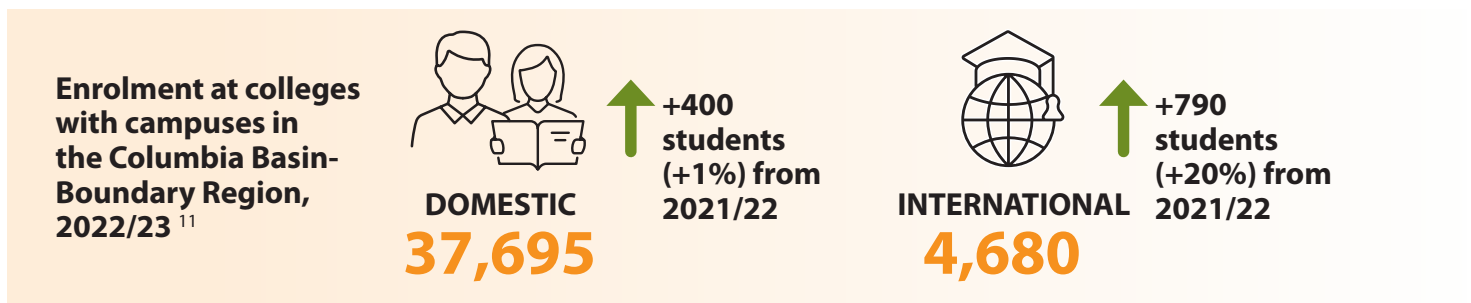


99%
SD 19

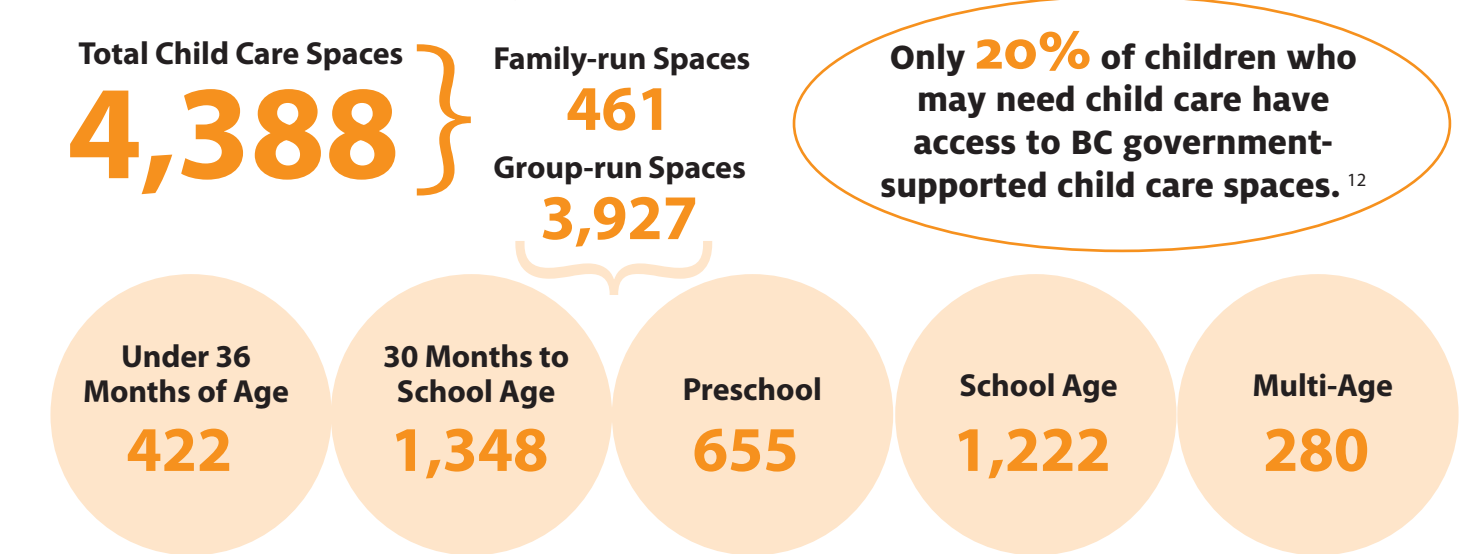


Average class size by grade cohort per school district, 2023/24¹⁰

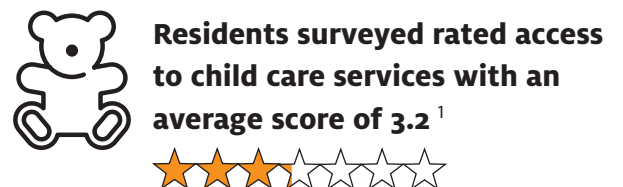
School District	Kindergarten	Grades 1–3	Grades 4–7	Grades 8–12
Arrow Lakes (SD 10)	14	13	17	11
Boundary (SD 51)	16	18	23	18
Kootenay Lake (SD 8)	18	19	22	21
Kootenay-Columbia (SD 20)	19	21	25	24
Revelstoke (SD 19)	17	20	23	14
Rocky Mountain (SD 6)	18	21	26	23
Southeast Kootenay (SD 5)	17	20	20	19



Child care spaces in facilities that opted to participate in BC Ministry of Education and Child Care programs, Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023¹²



These numbers only include child care facilities that have opted in to the provincial programs, therefore this is not a total count of all child care facilities in the region.



Health & Wellness

Residents surveyed rated their physical and mental health with averages scores of: ¹



80% of residents surveyed exercised regularly in the previous 12 months. ¹

Low Birth Weight, 2022/23 ¹³

5%

of the 1,225 live births in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region were low birth weight newborns.



70 deaths caused by illicit drugs in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ¹⁴

Local Health Areas in the region with the highest number of illicit drug deaths:

Cranbrook **Nelson** **Trail**
20 **17** **11**

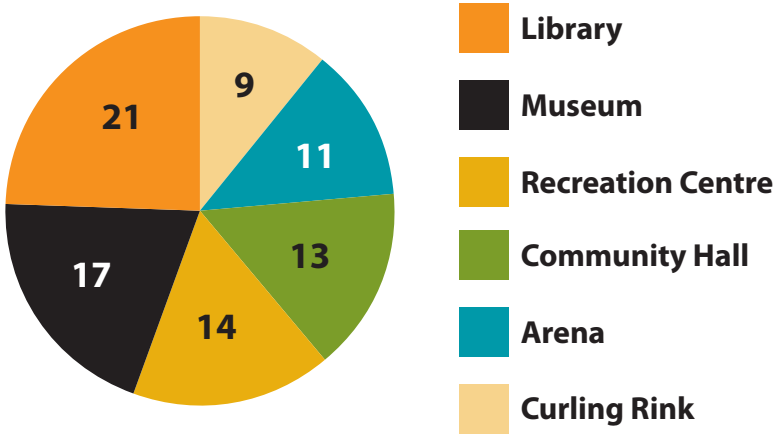
Leading causes of death in Interior Health, 2023 ¹⁵

Cause of death group	Percent of Total Deaths
Cancer	25%
Ischemic heart diseases (i.e., coronary artery disease)	11%
Respiratory diseases	8%
Organic dementia	7%
Other heart diseases	7%
All other causes of death	43%

41% of residents surveyed perceive drug abuse and excessive alcohol consumption in their communities. ¹

Recreation

Number of civic facilities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ¹⁶



80% of residents surveyed think there is good access to recreation facilities, experiences, and opportunities. ¹

30% of residents surveyed never participate in sports, while **29%** regularly take part in sports groups or teams. ¹

Visitors to national parks, 2023/24 and one-year change ¹⁷

561,167
Kootenay National Park
↓ -2%

768,430
Mount Revelstoke & Glacier National Parks
↓ -1%

694,867
Yoho National Park
↑ +5%



Arts & Culture



77% of residents surveyed think that tourism brings positive benefits to regional communities. ¹



272,572 visitors to Kootenay Rockies' visitor centres, 2023. ¹⁸
↑ + 5,536 visitors (+2%) from 2022



37% of residents surveyed expressed themselves through an arts and/or cultural activity in the 12 months prior. ¹

↓ - 5 percentage points from 2021



71% of residents surveyed think there is good access to arts and culture. ¹

Arts & Culture



Percent of average spending on parks, recreation, and culture in Columbia Basin-Boundary municipalities, 2022 ¹⁹

13%

↑ + 1 percentage point from 2021

Public Libraries in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region ²⁰

Local government support per capita, 2023

\$38.26

+ 2% from 2022 ↑

Circulation of print materials per capita, 2023

6.5

+ 0.3 from 2022 ↑



Air & Climate

Annual number of days with Smoky Skies Bulletins by airshed, 2023 ²¹

Airshed	Number of Days
Boundary	16
West Kootenay	16
Arrow Lakes–Slocan Lake	17
North Columbia	24
East Kootenay–North	25
East Kootenay–South	25
Elk Valley	27
West Columbia	29
East Columbia	30

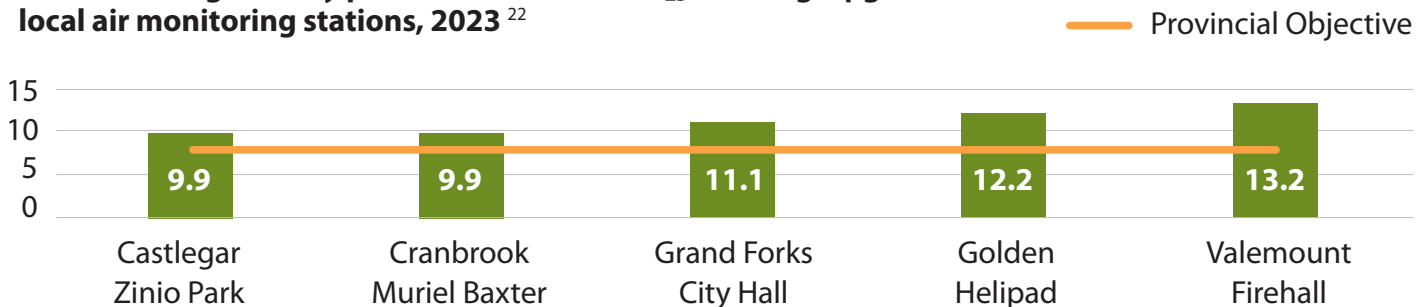
74% of residents surveyed are worried about the impacts of climate change. ¹

78% of residents surveyed regularly perceive the impacts of climate change in the region. ¹

67% of residents surveyed think that climate change is somewhat of a big problem. Only 7% of respondents do not think climate is a problem at all. ¹

Air & Climate

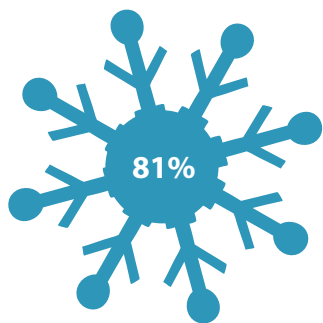
Annual average hourly particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) readings (µg/m³) at local air monitoring stations, 2023 ²²



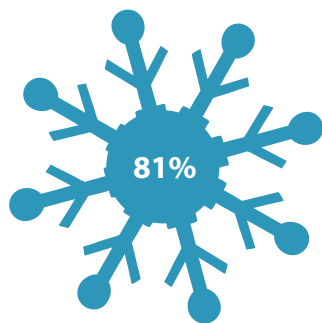
Water

Snow water indices by snow basin, April 1, 2023 ²³

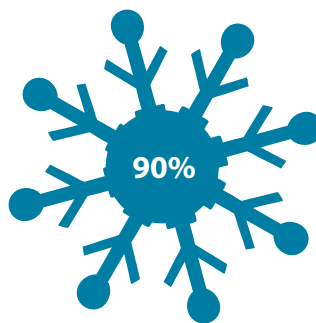
The April 1 snow water index provides an indication of the amount of water that will be available to serve human and environmental needs over the spring and summer seasons. The index reflects the percent of normal expected snowpack.



East Kootenay



Upper Columbia



West Kootenay



Boundary

Land & Biodiversity



Photo: James Perdue / Flickr

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*), a red listed species in the region.

In the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region there are:

107

red listed species, 2023 ²⁴

32

distinct red listed ecosystems, 2023 ²⁴

Land & Biodiversity

Area burned by wildfires in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ²⁵

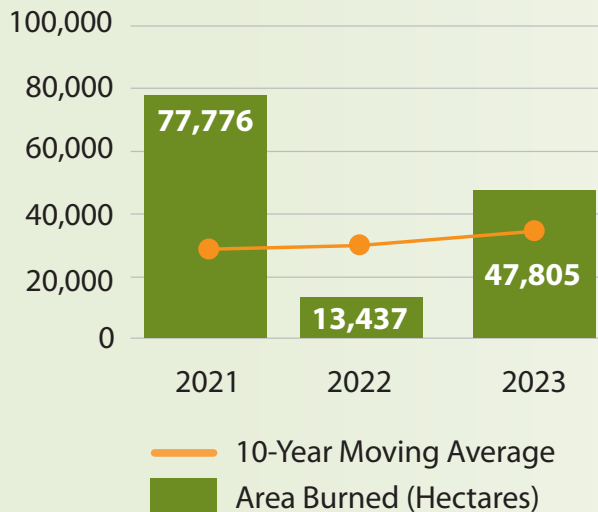


Photo: Province of British Columbia / Flickr



Area logged on crown land in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ^{25, 26, 27}

7,737
hectares

↓
-21% from 2022

82% of residents surveyed are satisfied to some degree with the quality of their local environment. ¹

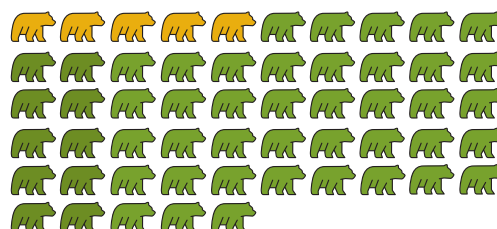


33% of residents surveyed perceive the health of our forests and natural vegetation as somewhat of a big problem. ¹

38% perceive forest health as a small problem or no problem at all.

48% of residents surveyed think that the presence of wildlife is a minor problem or no problem at all. ¹

Bears destroyed by Conservation Officers as a result of human-wildlife conflict in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ²⁸



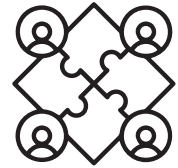
55
Grizzly Bear: 5
Black Bear: 50

Workforce

77% of residents surveyed are satisfied to some degree with their jobs.¹



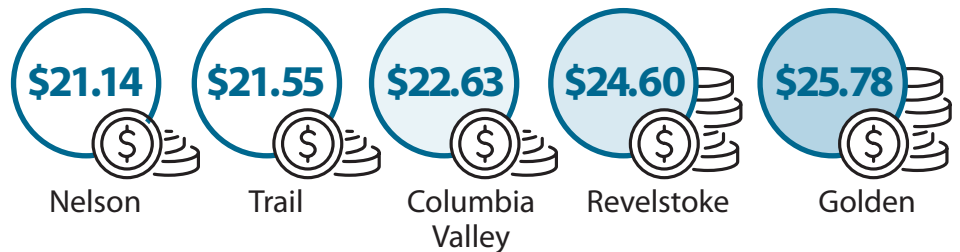
33% of residents surveyed have taken a formal course to improve skills or prepare for a job in the 12 months prior.¹



Median hourly wage for all employees in the Kootenay Development Region aged 15+²⁹



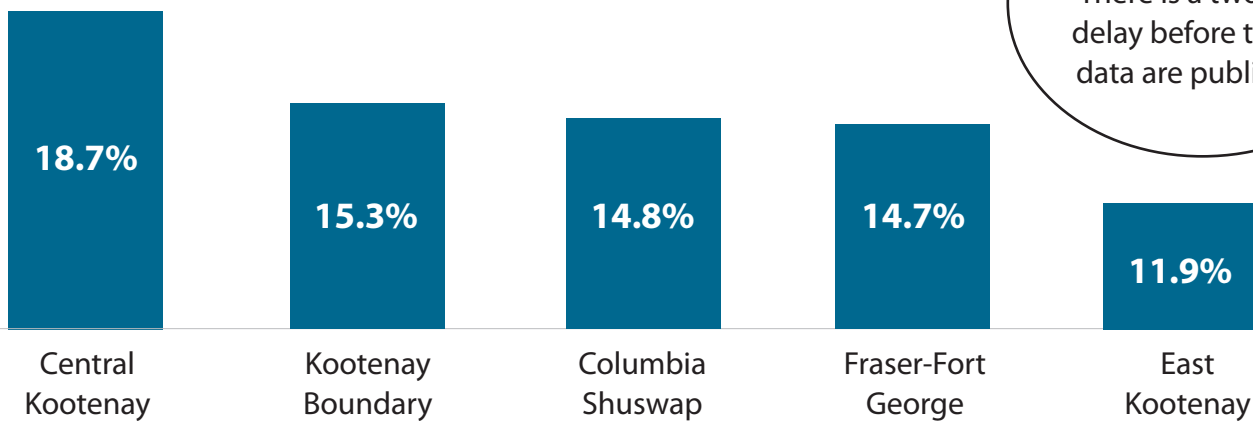
Living wage hourly rate, 2023³⁰



Average before-tax income of Columbia Basin-Boundary taxfilers, 2022³¹



Persons with low income by regional district, 2022³²

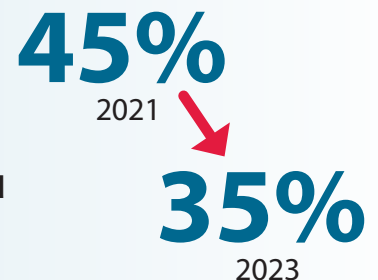


Did you know?

There is a two-year delay before taxfiler data are published!



Consumer confidence index, a measure of the degree of optimism consumers feel about the economy overall and their personal financial situation.¹



Workforce



70% of residents surveyed indicated it is a bad time to make a major purchase (e.g., home, car, etc.).¹

Unemployment rate in the Kootenay Development Region, 2023³³

5.4%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

5.3%
3-YEAR MOVING AVERAGE

Employment insurance recipients in the Kootenay Development Region, May 2023³⁴

2,790 ↓ -250 recipients (-8%) from 3,040 in May 2022

Business Climate

Employment in the Kootenay Development Region, 2023^{35,36}

 **81,000**
+1,000 persons employed from 2022

 **57%**
Employment rate

95% of residents surveyed made an effort to buy local in the 12 months prior.¹

↑ +4 percentage points from 2021

51% of residents surveyed perceive good access to retail services.¹

★★★★☆
Average Score: 4.4

Business starts and closures in the Kootenay Development Region, 2023³⁷

809 ↓ -31 businesses from 2022
Starts

6 ↑ +5 businesses from 2022
Bankruptcies



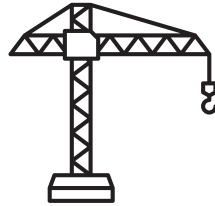
Business Climate



67% of residents surveyed perceive good access to financial and professional services.¹



Average Score: 4.9



Major projects in the Kootenay Development Region, October to December, 2023³⁸

34 } at an estimated cost of **\$5.1 billion**



Total building permit amount in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2022³⁹

\$525 million

↑ +\$55 million (+12%) from 2021

Infrastructure

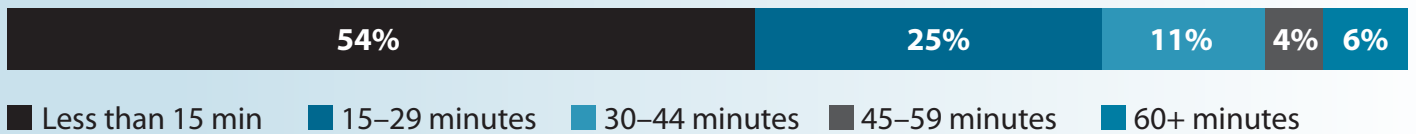


44% of residents surveyed have carpooled, ride shared, taken public transit, walked, or biked to work regularly in the 12 months prior.¹

73% of residents surveyed perceive good access to telecommunication services.¹

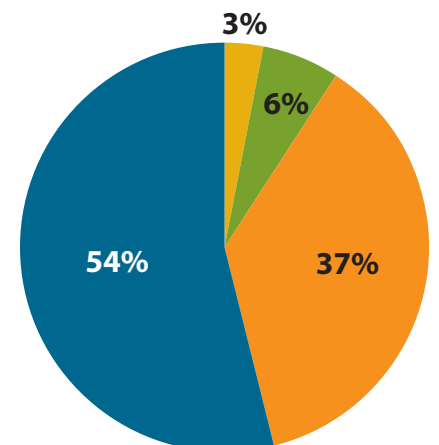
↑ +12 percentage points from 2021

Commute time in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2021⁴⁰

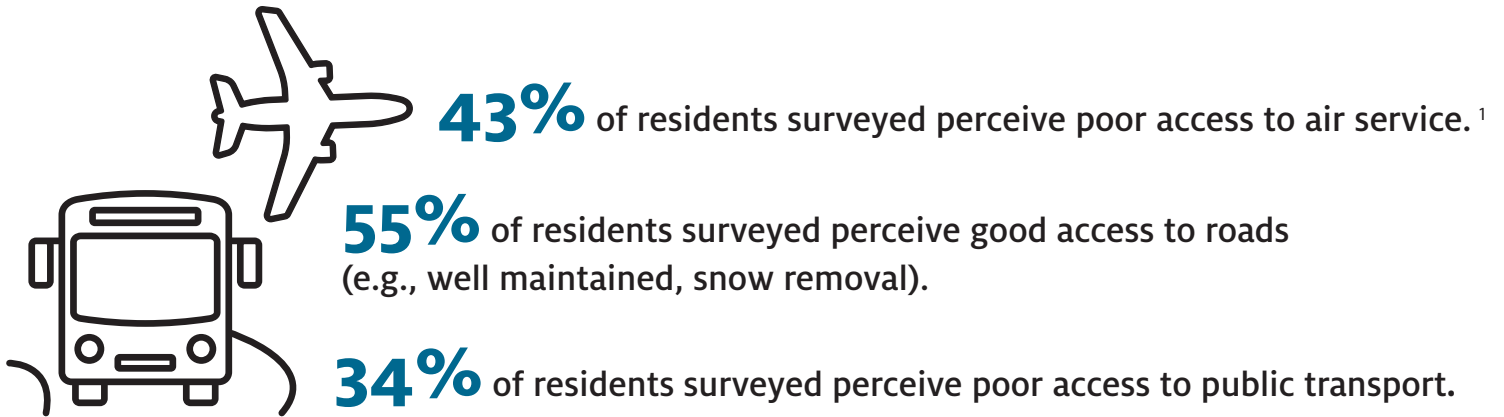


Commute destination in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2021⁴¹

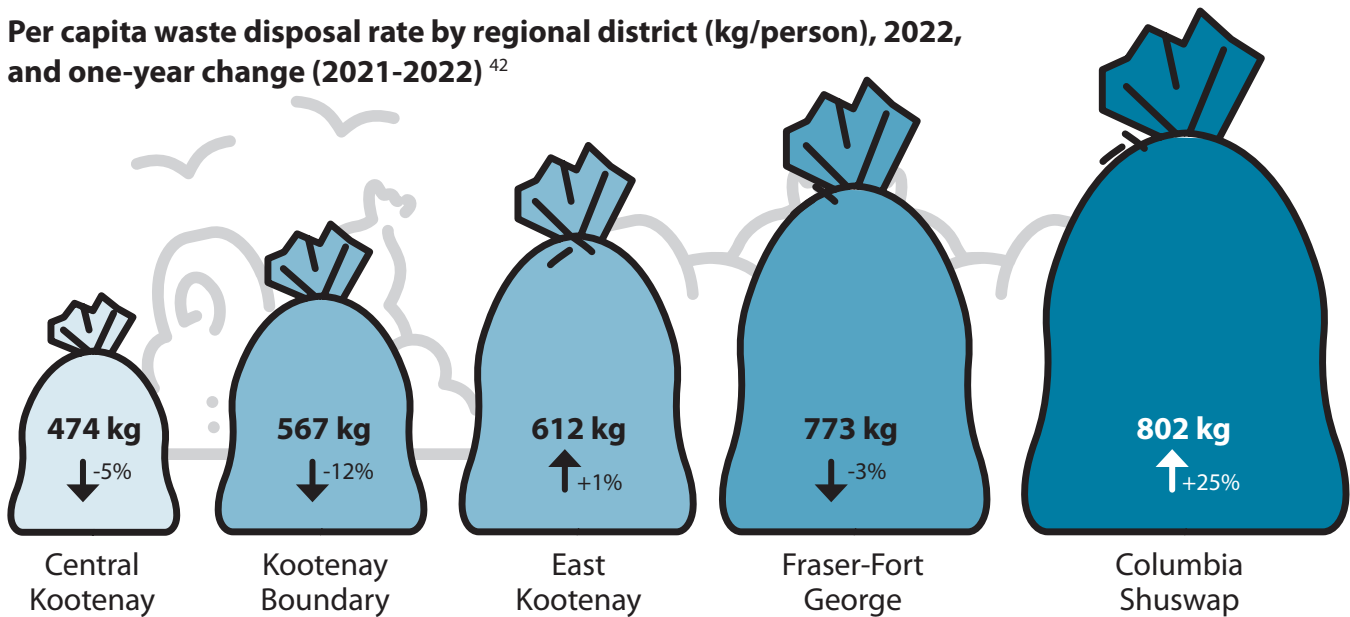
- Commute within community of residence
- Commute to a different community within the same regional district
- Commute to a community in a different regional district
- Commute to a different province or territory



Infrastructure



Per capita waste disposal rate by regional district (kg/person), 2022, and one-year change (2021-2022) ⁴²



Housing

44% of residents surveyed perceive poor access to housing. ¹



Vacancy rates and average rent costs for townhouses and apartments in communities with populations greater than 10,000, 2023 ⁴³



Housing

Average rent costs for townhouses and apartments in communities with populations between 2,500 and 10,000, 2020 ^{44, 45}

Community	Average Rent	Increase from 2015
Revelstoke	\$1,010	9%
Castlegar	\$998	52%
Fernie	\$960	14%
Elkford	\$925	16%
Golden	\$878	26%
Creston	\$866	39%
Kimberley	\$770	23%
Grand Forks	\$765	21%
Trail	\$757	18%
Invermere	\$752	8%
Rosland	\$675	21%

Total subsidized housing units in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, 2023 ⁴⁶



285 Emergency housing

570 Independent social housing

870 Rental assistance

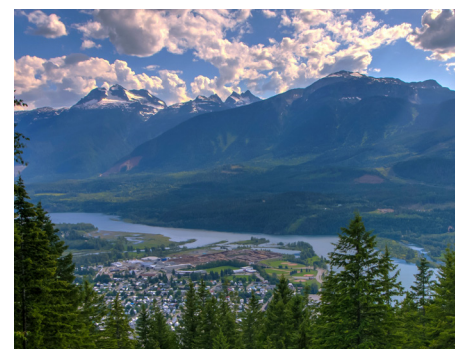
1,590
Transitional, supportive and assisted

Median assessed property value for single-family residences, 2023 ⁴⁷

Community	Value
Greenwood	\$235,000
Canal Flats	\$285,000
Midway	\$338,000
Elkford	\$344,000
Trail	\$350,000
New Denver	\$361,000
Salmo	\$375,000
Slocan	\$381,000
Warfield	\$385,000
Nakusp	\$387,000
Silverton	\$395,000

Community	Value
Grand Forks	\$403,000
Sparwood	\$414,000
Creston	\$414,000
Fruitvale	\$418,000
Montrose	\$437,000
Cranbrook	\$446,000
Radium Hot Springs	\$454,000
Kaslo	\$470,000
Kimberley	\$472,000
Castlegar	\$497,000
Golden	\$553,000

Community	Value
Rosland	\$579,000
Invermere	\$588,000
Nelson	\$674,000
Revelstoke	\$801,000
Fernie	\$836,000



Learn More

To get more information on indicators of well-being within the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region go to stateofthebasin.ca. This website also contains resources including previous [Snapshot Reports](#), [Subjective Well-being Reports](#) (results of a poll of Columbia Basin-Boundary residents focused on perceptions and behaviours), and [Community Profiles](#) (summaries of community-specific State of the Basin data); and [featured trends and analysis](#).

Through the State of the Basin initiative, Selkirk Innovates provides remote data provision support. This is one-on-one support to provide State of the Basin research for use by an organization or initiative. Access this service by contacting [Jayme Jones](#).

References & Resources

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State of the Basin findings have been developed by a team of qualified researchers. A variety of data sets were used to develop indicator findings, and as such, community groupings may vary from indicator to indicator. In some cases, community-specific data are not available. State of the Basin research should not be considered a complete analysis, and we make no warranty as to the quality, accuracy or completeness of the data. Selkirk Innovates, Selkirk College and Columbia Basin Trust will not be liable for any direct or indirect loss resulting from the use of or reliance on this data.

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