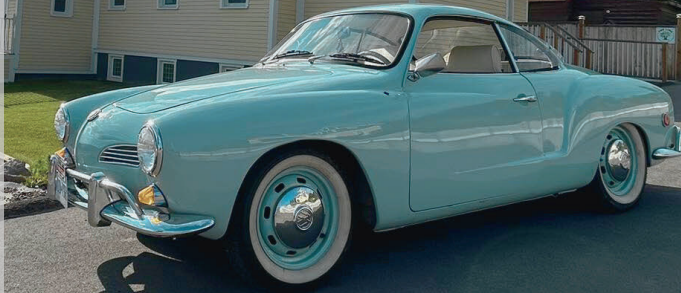


CIVIC SNAPSHOT

*Burns
Lake*



Ph Credit: L Bruce

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

A healthy, thriving community starts with the basics: a safe place to live, reliable services, and access to healthcare close to home. Over the past year, Council has worked hard to advance all three.

When it comes to healthcare, rural communities cannot wait for change. Gaps in the system have forced many smaller communities across BC to take on new roles to ensure residents can access basic care. Burns Lake has responded by advocating directly at the provincial level, partnering with Northern Health, and supporting the recruitment of medical professionals through wrap-around and settlement assistance for incoming doctors and their families.

Thanks to a collective effort, Northern Health has confirmed that five new physicians will be joining our community, with some set to begin practice as early as next summer. Our work now as a community is to support their transition, help them settle, and make Burns Lake a community they will want to call home for years to come.

A welcoming, healthy community also requires places for people to live. With the Venture Corporation in place, utilities now installed on the first Village Heights lots, and Phase 1 rezoning complete, we are finally moving past the long-standing barriers that have stalled residential growth. These steps will mean new housing options for families, seniors, and workers who want to make Burns Lake their home. The Village's Housing Society has also submitted a provincial grant application for a new multi-unit rental complex to help meet local demand for attainable, long-term housing.

Beyond housing, Burns Lake has also delivered significant improvements in active transportation and wastewater infrastructure, including safer sidewalks, new trail connections, and attention to accessibility.

The Village is also nearing completion of a multi-year, \$7.5-million upgrade to the wastewater treatment system. These projects were funded through grants and partnerships and completed on time and on budget.

Prioritizing these investments may not always make headlines, but collectively, they lay the foundation for a resilient, future-ready community with affordable homes, modern infrastructure, safer streets, and long-term environmental stewardship.

They also reinforce a message we continue to bring to provincial decision-makers: rural communities are essential partners in BC's future. We need fair, reliable investment in healthcare, housing, and infrastructure to support the residents and businesses who choose to build their lives here. Burns Lake is demonstrating what is possible when we work together, stay persistent, and turn big challenges into community-focused solutions.

Our progress this year has also been strengthened by the growing partnerships with Ts'il Kaz Koh and Lake Babine Nation. From the Gowan Road recreation planning to shared efforts on housing and community services, these relationships are helping shape development that reflects the values and aspirations of all who call this region home. Earlier this year, the Village and Ts'il Kaz Koh formalized our collaboration through a new Memorandum of Understanding for developing recreation opportunities, an important step that supports long-term planning, joint ventures, and a spirit of respect and shared stewardship. Together with our neighbours, we are building a stronger, more connected future for the Lakes District.

On behalf of the Council, thank you for your feedback, patience during construction, and continued commitment to this community. Together, we are building a future where residents have the homes, services, and opportunities they need to thrive.

— **Mayor Henry Wiebe**



OUR COMMUNITY

UPDATE

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Since the program launched in the spring, Burns Lake's new Recruitment & Retention Coordinator has built an extensive support network for new arrivals, expanded relationships with Northern Health, and personally assisted new and incoming medical staff with housing, childcare access, service information, community tours, and day-to-day settlement needs.

While much of this work happens quietly, through phone calls, emails, trips to Prince George to collect stranded medical staff, and helping people connect with our community, the results are already being felt. Feedback from the physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals she has supported shows that the program is already having a real impact. This type of groundwork provides the kinds of experiences that influence where future physicians choose to practice.

Northern Health has confirmed that three new physicians will begin practice in our community next summer, with two more on the way! The Coordinator is already working with each incoming practitioner, offering support where needed, from accessing housing and childcare to activities and local clubs.

This role was created because successful retention (and recruitment through retention) in rural communities depends on more than job postings; it requires personal relationships, logistical support, and creating a welcoming environment for the professional and their families.

ROD REID TRAIL REIMAGINED AND READY TO GO

Great news for local trail lovers—Rod Reid just got an upgrade!

The Village has completed a series of trail improvements fully funded through the Coastal Gas Link grant and the CNC Research Forest Society Legacy Fund. Fresh gravel, improved drainage, and widened sections mean fewer ruts, fewer puddles, and more room to move. Updated signage and trail markers help everyone stay confidently on track.

Rod Reid has always been a favourite spot to stretch your legs, breathe fresh air, and enjoy Burns Lake's backyard beauty. Now it's better than ever.



CityWest Fibre Installation Continues in Burns Lake

CityWest's fibre-optic network build is still underway throughout the Village, with crews completing neighbourhood connections in phases.

If you are not yet on the list for connection, CityWest encourages you to reach out and register your interest. Doing so helps ensure your property is included in the network rollout, supports planning for future phases, and brings faster, more reliable internet options closer to home.

To check your status or sign up:

Call 1-800-442-8664 OR
www.citywest.ca

COUNCIL ADVANCES KEY COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AT UBCM



Burns Lake continues to champion stronger, more equitable access to healthcare across the North. At this year's UBCM Convention, Mayor Henry Wiebe was invited to sit on a provincial healthcare panel hosted by the Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, alongside representatives from Northern Health, Island Health, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, and the Town of Oliver.

The panel explored how to strengthen healthcare services for communities outside major urban centres, focusing on access to ambulance services, emergency care, family doctors, and supporting the many healthcare workers that residents rely on every day. During the discussion, Mayor Wiebe highlighted the pressures rural residents face, including unreliable emergency care, long travel distances, wait times for surgeries, and a referral system that can be difficult to navigate. He also emphasized Burns Lake's role as a regional hub.

Council continues to advocate for practical, measurable improvements, including pooled surgical referrals, enhanced access to support for patients, and continued investment in locally driven initiatives, to help close the gap between northern and urban patients

By bringing a northern perspective into the provincial spotlight, Mayor Wiebe and Council want to reinforce that communities like Burns Lake deserve reliable, accessible care close to home and ensure that rural healthcare remains a priority, not an afterthought.



Francois Lake Drive & Highway 16 Realignment

Local concerns about the intersection near A&W were brought directly to provincial decision-makers. During the meeting, Council members emphasized the safety risks created by the left-turn restriction, including drivers cutting through parking lots to re-enter Highway 16. They requested the Ministry review the change and develop a safe, functional realignment shaped by local and Indigenous input, while also including a broader look at where stoplights are most needed along Highway 16.

Roumieu Drive & Highway 16 Improvements

The Village met with the Ministry to revisit the long-planned safety upgrades at the Roumieu Drive and Highway 16 intersection. Council members presented the extensive work already completed, including engineered designs, archaeological studies, and geotechnical reports, and emphasized the increased traffic volumes now using the route. The Village requested that the project be reinstated as a provincial priority, emphasizing that safety and industrial access depend on advancing these improvements.



Village Heights

The Village met with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to advance highway access for the 86-acre Village Heights development. Council pressed for flexible solutions, reduced covenant restrictions, and faster approval timelines. By presenting workable, safe access options, the Village reaffirmed that timely action is essential to unlocking new housing and easing local shortages



MUNICIPAL UPGRADES

From behind-the-scenes utilities to visible community improvements, the Village delivered a big season of upgrades, including:

Roads & Site Improvements

- Regraded and newly paved the arena parking lot
- Finished the Hwy 16/Richmond Loop intersection, with all contractor deficiencies resolved

Water & Sewer Infrastructure

- Completed a full water valve assessment to improve system reliability and fire-flow performance
- Fully commissioned the Lagoon Blower House with upgraded mechanical, electrical, and air diffuser systems - final phase of a multi-year, \$7.5-million upgrade to the wastewater treatment system. This project, funded through First Nations partnerships and provincial grants, has modernized critical infrastructure while remaining nearly \$500,000 under budget.

Village Heights Development

- Installed utilities to five new Village Heights lots
- Completed Phase 1 rezoning, clearing the way for new residential development
- Submitted a provincial grant application (through the Village's Housing Society) for a new multi-unit housing complex to boost rental supply and support workforce retention

Community Facilities

- Upgrade the Library with brand-new furnaces and air-conditioning



GOWAN ROAD RECREATION UPDATE

The Community-to-Community Recreation Committee, a joint venture between Ts'il Kaz Koh and the Village, is moving ahead with the new multi-use recreation area project on Gowan Road. The Committee's work is guided by a shared vision: year-round recreation, cultural connection, and community well-being, supported by responsible land stewardship.

This fall, the Committee secured major funding from the Burns Lake Community Forest to support the project, and TRUE Consulting will now lead project coordination. A full development plan is targeted for completion in May/June 2026, allowing the partners to pursue additional grants and prepare for construction. This partnership continues to demonstrate the strength of Indigenous-municipal collaboration through shared leadership, collaborative funding, and a commitment to recreational amenities that reflect culture, community, and the natural landscape.



The Multiplex parking area has been refreshed with new pavement, improved drainage, updated lines and barriers, and relocated lighting—thanks to **Resource Benefits Alliance** funding for a smoother, safer experience.

This year, we invited Burns Lake to join us for our first-ever **Trunk or Treat** by decorating a vehicle or booth, handing out candy, and hosting a small and safe activity at the campground. The community showed up in a big way, with over 200 kids participating.



Safer sidewalks and better connections are now in place on Government Street. With provincial Active Transportation funding and RBA support for underground utilities, the Village team, led by Council, was able to upgrade water connections and deliver wider sidewalks, new curb ramps, improved crosswalks, and traffic-calming measures, along with multi-use links to parks, homes, and downtown. The project finished on time and on budget, with reduced long-term disruption thanks to coordinated construction. Thank you to everyone for your patience along the way!



GOVERNMENT STREET

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the unceded ancestral lands of Ts'il Kaz Koh, home to the Wet'suwet'en, Dakelh, and Nadut'en peoples. We honour their deep connection to this land and commit to walking alongside them with respect and care.