



A CONFLUENCE OF OPPORTUNITY

The Town of Peace River is evolving from a vital regional service hub into a critical industrial and technical hub for Northwest Alberta. While the community has a stable economic foundation in forestry, oil and gas, and agriculture, it is on the precipice of a massive structural shift. The Town serves as the “gateway” to the Peace Country, providing a high-traffic hub for a captive regional audience.

Current data reveals that while Peace River is specialized in utility and administrative services, it remains significantly under-served in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (NAICS 54), with a Location Quotient of only 0.7 compared to the provincial average.

Furthermore, although the construction and trades sector appears statistically balanced by its Location Quotient, a deeper dive reveals the market is dominated by smaller, sole proprietors or businesses with fewer than 5 employees.

As the region prepares for multi-billion dollar initiatives like the Peace River Nuclear Power Project and the Mihta Askiy Data Centre, there is an immediate and growing demand for medium scale service firms or those with the capacity and 5+ employee scale to support complex, higher value industrial developments, while also providing services for the existing residential community.



THE SERVICE REGION

Peace River's business service trade area extends far beyond its 7,217 residents, serving a regional population conservatively estimated at over 24,000. This service region is characterized by:

High Purchasing Power: A median household income of \$110,955, which is 3% higher than the provincial average.

Specialized Workforce: Approximately 11.5% of the population holds apprenticeship or trades certificates, 33% higher than the provincial benchmark.

Large Workforce Inflow: The town experiences an estimated 20% increase in daytime population (approximately 1,500 workers) daily, driving continuous demand for service-based businesses.

Positive Economic Growth Forecasts: Regional "major projects" are expected to conservatively push the service region population beyond 26,000 over the next decade.

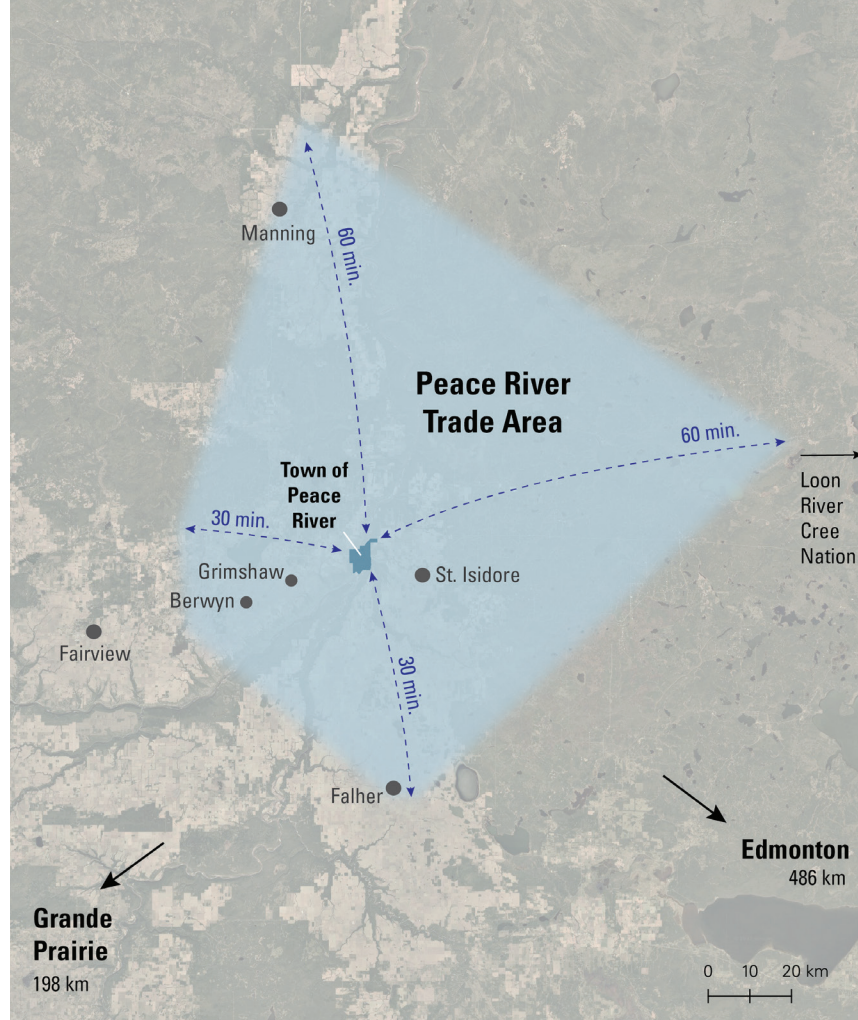


Photo Credit: Town of Peace River



Photo Credit: FBM

- **North End Industrial:** The historic heart of Peace River's light industrial support, fabrication, and technical trades. This node offers the most cost-effective lease rates in the market and is a prime location for scaling specialized firms, particularly in HVAC, electrical, and smaller-scale logistics, that are essential for supporting major upcoming regional initiatives like the Mihta Askiy Data Centre and the Peace River Nuclear Power Project.

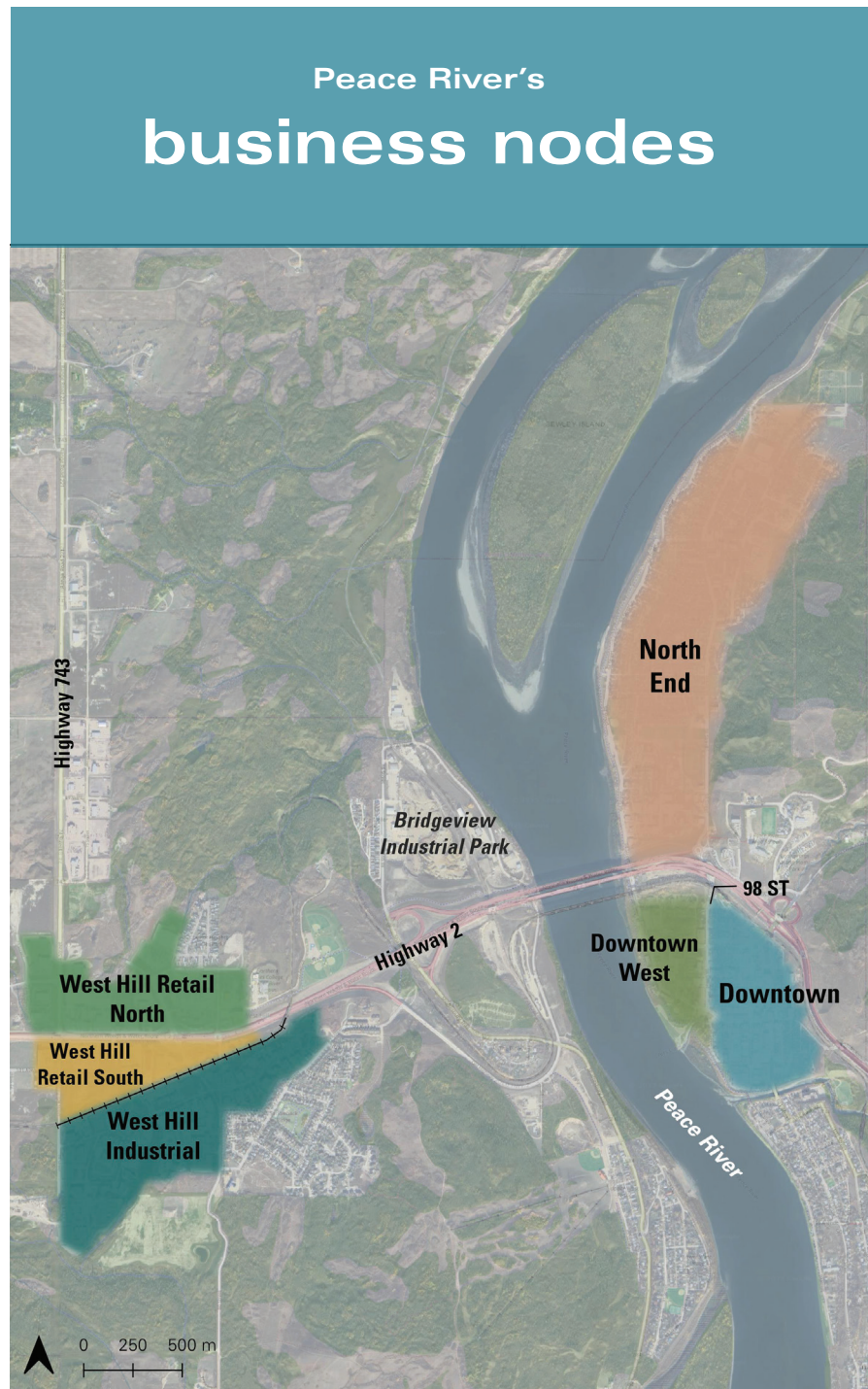
The West Hills nodes are a significant focus of the Town's broader business attraction strategy, particularly for businesses seeking new or existing vacant spaces.

Conversely, the Downtown West offers strategic and affordable infill and redevelopment opportunities with scalable lot assemblies and buildings ideal for new business startups.

THE MARKET PROFILE

Peace River's business services market is organized into distinct light industrial nodes, each meeting specific consumer needs each presenting a range of available land and space suitable for scaled operations. Most prominent for retail opportunities include:

- **West Hill:** The town's premier regional commercial corridor and "gateway" for large-scale business services. This node is positioned for technical firms requiring high regional visibility and modern facilities. It is ideal for mid-to-large scale service anchors that can capitalize on high traffic counts and the town's long-term commitment to "connected transportation infrastructure".
- **Downtown & Downtown West:** The region's established professional centre, currently hosting over 100,000 sq. ft. of professional and financial service floorspace as well as other smaller, specialized light industrial businesses (Downtown West). This node offers an accessible environment for scientific and technical firms, providing cost-effective, mixed-business spaces with office and warehouse that are ideal for independent service-based businesses prioritizing access to the town's civic, medical and retail core.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The 2026 Gap Analysis identifies a critical disconnect between perceived and actual service capacity. While residents report a “missing” presence of trades like plumbing and HVAC (selected by 156 respondents), these businesses exist but lack the scale to be timely and responsive for the current and growing population.

Targeted Service Gaps:

Technical & Scientific Services: Currently “underweight” at an LQ of 0.7. Immediate opportunity exists for engineering, environmental consulting, and AI-literate technical firms to support the Mihta Askiy Data Centre and forestry sectors.

Construction Support & HVAC: While plumbing/HVAC has an LQ of 1.14, the vast majority of these firms have fewer than 5 employees. There is a clear market for larger, multi-crew firms that can handle regional industrial contracts.

Specialized Industrial Repair: The Peace River Nuclear Power Project (slated for 2029 construction) will necessitate a massive expansion in regional fabrication, logistics, and specialized repair services in the West Hill node.

CONCLUSION

The Town of Peace River is a market that consistently “punches above its weight”. For professional and technical firms, the town represents a “sweet spot”: high industrial demand, affluent residents, and a stable economic floor provided by the resource sector today and into the future.

The business services market in Peace River is a direct beneficiary of the town’s regional positioning as an important node for forestry, oil and gas, and agricultural support services, providing a stable economic foundation for light industrial businesses. This industrial activity translates into targeted business services opportunities to meet current and anticipated demand.

The province and town’s focus on “connected transportation infrastructure”, specifically Highway 2 and Highway 35, reinforces the long-term value of well-placed light industrial nodes like West Hill. As the “gateway” to the Peace Country, West Hill will undoubtedly continue to garner interest for regional business services. For those requiring larger vehicle access or regional visibility, West Hill is ideal where base lease rates are commensurate with higher regional traffic volumes and high visibility.

The Town is actively seeking service-based businesses to join a community that is investing in its future. With immediately available opportunities high-traffic visibility on West Hill, as well as in the North End and Downtown, Peace River has the infrastructure for your firm to scale alongside the region’s next generation of major energy and data projects.

The Town is seeking businesses to join a community that is growing, investing, and looking toward the future.....Be part of that future.

Contact:

Kariene Whittley | Economic Development Officer
780.617.4683 | KWhittley@peaceriver.ca

