



PRINCE GEORGE AIR IMPROVEMENT ROUNDTABLE

Strategic Plan 2016-2021





BACKGROUND

About the Strategic Plan

The Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable (PGAIR) functions to bring together leaders in multiple sectors to foster improvements in outdoor air quality, with a focus on reducing particulate matter (PM) emissions in the community. PM refers to tiny particles suspended in the air, including aerosols, smoke, fumes, dust, ash, pollen, and water vapour. PM is a key pollutant of concern throughout BC and across the world, for its broad range of health and environmental impacts.

The 2016-2021 Strategic Plan is a guide to build on our success of working together at the local level, and encourage further improvements across all sectors.

The Prince George Airshed

Due to its geographic location (valley community), meteorological conditions, and human activity, Prince George has historically faced the challenge of poor air quality. Air emissions come from a variety of sources in and around the community, including transportation, industry, road dust, burning of wood for home heating and recreational use, and natural background sources. There has been steady improvement in air quality management over the past 20 years, since ambient air monitoring began. This has resulted in reductions in both particulate matter emissions (primary health concern), as well as odorous/sulphur-containing emissions (community well-being concern). The community has consistently met BC's Annual Provincial Objective for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) since 2005, and the occurrence of air quality advisories has been significantly reduced. However, further work is needed to further reduce emissions across all sectors, to ensure a long-term healthy and sustainable community.

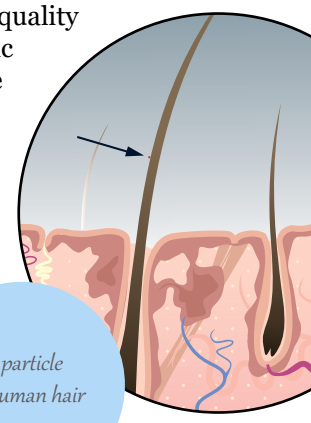
The Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable

Air quality is a complex and multi-jurisdictional issue that requires collaboration among many different organizations. That's where PGAIR comes in, as a non-profit society representing a broad spectrum of the community, including the public, local and provincial government agencies, industry, academia, community groups, health agencies, commercial and transportation sectors. PGAIR works towards continuous improvement of the air quality within the Prince George airshed, and coordinates various programs and communication initiatives in support of this effort. PGAIR also coordinates research and provides science-based recommendations to various stakeholders and decision-making bodies to help improve air quality.

PGAIR has no legal authority, but rather works to bring together those with overlapping jurisdiction and responsibility for air quality in a collaborative nature.

Our Vision

PGAIR is committed to researching, monitoring, recommending and implementing air quality improvements and to promoting public awareness and education in the Prince George airshed, with the goal of improving the air quality in the community. We are guided by the principle that acceptable air quality is everyone's right and protecting air quality is everyone's responsibility.



Fine particle on human hair

Acceptable air quality is everyone's right. Protecting air quality is everyone's responsibility!



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Phase I Air Quality Management Plan (1998)

Many of the 28 original recommendations were completed. Major accomplishments include the phase out of all beehive burners in the Prince George airshed; creation of the City of Prince George's Clean Air Bylaw to regulate aspects of residential wood burning, and emissions from sanding and sweeping operations; and the completion of an Industrial Land Use Study to better inform future industrial development that will have the least impact on the air quality within our sensitive airshed.

Phase II Air Quality Management Plan (2006)

Upon completion of Phase I, it was realized that more research was needed into the types, sources, and dispersion of pollutants in the airshed, particularly the most critical pollutant, $PM_{2.5}$. Major accomplishments in Phase II included the completion of a local Emissions Inventory (2005); initiation of a Dispersion Modeling Study (2010) to determine the contribution of each source to pollution levels where people live and work in Prince George; and further source reductions of particulate matter and odour through upgraded pollution control technology at industrial sites (pulp and paper mills, oil refinery, pellet plant, asphalt plants). Education and public awareness strategies around idle reduction, eco-driving, and wood smoke were implemented.

Phase III Air Quality Implementation Plan (2011)

Significant emissions reductions were achieved through updated technology and practices that came online during this period, including the pulp and paper Green Transformation projects, and public and private sweeping operations improvements. PGAIR created an Education and Awareness Working Group that has worked to research and implement many of the educational strategies that were identified for advancing air quality awareness and improvements among residents and the commercial business sector. The group implemented education strategies around commercial sweeping operations, residential wood smoke reduction, air quality teaching resources for classrooms, a poster contest and Clean Air Champion award for residents; and supported a carbon footprint reduction program for local businesses.

Emissions Reductions Briefing Note Series

An Annual Emissions Reductions Briefing Note series was initiated in order to identify and communicate member agency actions for incorporating Air Quality Management Plan strategies.

www.pgairquality.com/resources-reports



Public Sweeping Operations Improvements

Prince George Ambient Air Monitoring Working Group

PGAIR provides support and input for the Prince George Ambient Air Monitoring Working Group, facilitating information sharing and monitoring network funding and maintenance on behalf of permitted emitters, government, and the public.

Prince George Woodstove Exchange Program (2007-current)

PGAIR has coordinated a local Woodstove Exchange Program and complementing education programs for residents since 2007, in order to reduce wood smoke emissions.

www.pgairquality.com/Programs/burn-it-clean

Idle Reduction and Drive Smart (2009)

PGAIR has worked on the installation of idle reduction signage throughout Prince George and area, and continues to facilitate solutions for problem areas that are identified. PGAIR also developed an Idle Reduction and Eco-Driving Campaign that increases awareness among residents about best practices for reducing emissions from personal transportation.

www.pgairquality.com/Programs/idle-free



Woodstove Exchange
Demonstration
Photo courtesy of
Ben Weinstein



PGAIR Directors
and Staff at Clean
Air Forum



Children
learning about
clean air

Teaching Resource Package for Educators (2013)

A resource package was formulated for educators in Prince George to explore the issues of air quality with their students. The package is available online and through the local District Learning Commons at the School District.

www.pgairquality.com/Programs/teach

North Central BC Clean Air Forum (2013)

PGAIR has been a leader in bringing together communities to work together in finding common solutions to common problems. We recently hosted the North Central BC Clean Air Forum, bringing together air quality managers from communities throughout interior BC. PGAIR has also provided presentations, advice and lessons learned, and written resources (e.g. Airshed Management Committee Startup Packages) to communities on request.

Air Quality Video Series (2015)

PGAIR teamed up with local artists to create a series of fun, educational animated videos that raise awareness of the multitude of particulate matter emissions sources in the community, and encourage residents and businesses to help Clear the Air.

www.pgairquality.com



LOOKING AHEAD

Priority Roles for PGAIR

PGAIR's priority roles are to act as Catalyst, Facilitator, and Educator for air quality in Prince George and the surrounding area. PGAIR will help flag important issues, particularly those requiring inter-jurisdictional collaboration, and will facilitate inclusive processes directed at finding sustainable solutions. PGAIR will help public and private sector leaders understand air quality issues and the importance of collaborative processes for planning and decision-making. Within these priority roles, PGAIR will serve a variety of roles as group secretariat, institutional coordinator, conflict resolution agent, interim project coordinator or manager, monitor and reporter, researcher and analyst, and communicator.

5-Year Goals for PGAIR (2016-2021)

- Strive towards meeting long-term annual fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) targets of 8 ug/m³ (BC's Annual Air Quality Objective) and 5 ug/m³ (aspirational community target)
- Support the development of new research projects in the airshed that enhance our understanding of particulate matter and odour emissions sources
- Support a core group of agencies that meets and communicates regularly on air quality initiatives, emerging issues, and solutions
- Promote a community that is well informed of air quality challenges, actions, and progress

- Continue to support the regional Woodstove Exchange Program to bring the total particulate matter reduction to 35 tonnes/year
- Support the development or enhancement of air quality roundtables/groups in other BC communities, using lessons learned from PGAIR

Strategic Priorities

Be a Catalyst and Facilitator for Taking Action on Air Quality

- Encourage and support the implementation of emissions reduction strategies from the Air Quality Management Plan, with a continued focus on meeting fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) targets.
- Provide a forum for inter-agency communication and collaboration on addressing air quality.
- Communicate air quality needs and potential solutions to key agencies and individuals in the community, who may or may not be Members of PGAIR.
- Evaluate implementation of past management techniques, and help inform new strategies for air quality management.

Promote Air Quality Education and Awareness in the Community

- Share success stories, Member Briefing Notes, and monitoring data updates with local governments, decision makers, community groups, and the public
- Increase public awareness of air quality through media, social media, events, and presentations.
- Coordinate the local Woodstove Exchange Program and implement educational strategies to support wood smoke reduction.
- Seek out and support new fund development for air quality education and awareness projects.
- Meet and strategize with other interior communities facing similar air quality challenges.

Measuring Success

In 2016-2021, the PGAIR will measure success by:

- An improvement in annual means of ambient particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) in the airshed
- An increase in multi-agency meetings hosted or supported through the year; and the number of new plans, programs, and projects that are initiated for improving air quality in the community
- Continued assessment of air quality management strategy implementation
- An increased level of communication activities aimed at raising awareness in the community, including media releases, presentations, public events, website and social media posts, dissemination of print and electronic resources, and the release of new reports and studies related to the airshed
- The number of old woodstoves changed out under the Woodstove Exchange Program and number of participants involved in related educational programs (Burn It Clean)

Next Steps

The Strategic Plan is intended to guide the PGAIR in fulfilling our vision over the next five years. The Plan is a framework document for the annual Work Plan approved by the Board.

For more information on PGAIR please visit www.pgairquality.com

Planning for success in Prince George



STAY IN TOUCH

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Other Important Contact Information

Prince George Air Quality Complaints
RAPP Line - 1-877-952-7277
Online: www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm

Real-time Monitoring Data and Air Quality
Health Index - www.bcairquality.ca