

## Winner: Excellence in Sustainability

### Regional District of East Kootenay – Accelerate Kootenays

Accelerate Kootenays is a collaborative project with the Regional Districts of Central Kootenay and Kootenay-Boundary that has resulted in Canada’s first community-driven regional electric vehicle (EV) charging network. This 2-year, \$1.8 million initiative has addressed a key infrastructure gap in BC by installing 13 DC Fast Chargers and 40 Level 2 charging stations across the three Kootenay regional districts.



Accelerate Kootenays demonstrates the successful integration of the four pillars of sustainability – cultural, social, economic, and environmental – in a single initiative. The project works within the rural “car culture” of the area, builds social change by increasing the practicality of EVs outside of urban centres, generates sustainable economic benefits by bringing EV tourism into the region and branding Hwy 3 as the “electric highway”, and reduces harm to the environment by decreasing the 61% of greenhouse gas emissions currently attributed to transportation in the region.

All levels of government worked together to realize this project, including the Government of Canada, the Province of BC, the three Kootenay regional districts and 24 resident municipalities, as well as two National Parks, numerous local residents and businesses, and corporate partners BC Hydro, FortisBC and Teck Resources.

This “lead by example” project is meant to be replicable for other rural areas, and is already being pursued by a coalition of five other Regional Districts in Northern BC and several local governments in Southeastern Alberta wishing to extend the Highway 3 charging network into their province.



The Excellence in Sustainability category acknowledges UBCM members that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering the four pillars in planning, policy and practice.