



FROM THE BOOKSHELF TO THE BOTTOM LINE

**Economic Development Forum
Report**

October 26-28, 2005

*Prepared by:
T. Weninger and Associates Inc.
November 2005*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A steering committee of 16 economic development officers organized the 2005 Northern Economic Forum - From the Bookshelf to the Bottom Line.

This forum, which brought together 94 northern economic development practitioners, would not have been possible without the support of the following sponsors:



Western Economic
Diversification Canada

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Steering Committee Members

- Don Zurowski – General Manager – CFDC of Fraser Fort George
- Shirly Prokopchuk – Office Coordinator – CFDC of Fraser Fort George
- Roger Leclerc – General Manager –CFDC 16/37
- Paula Peinsznski (special mention of helping organize – no longer with CFDC 16/37)
- Debbie Beauregard – CFDC 16/37
- Jerry Botti – General Manager – CFDC Nadina
- Sharon Robertson – Assistant Manager – CFDC Nadina
- Jim Rushton – General Manager – Prince Rupert & Port Edward Economic Development Corporation
- Gerald Wesley – Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations
- Linda Wallace – Economic Development – Northern Rockies Regional District

- Dr. Greg Halseth – Professor Geography Program – University Northern British Columbia
- Gordon Borgstrom – Regional Project Manager (Prince George) – Ministry of Economic Development
- Donald Manson - Acting Institute Coordinator -Community Development Institute -UNBC
- Butch Morningstar – Regional Project Manager (Smithers) – Ministry of Economic Development
- Allan Madrigga – Economic Development Officer – Williams Lake
- Ray Gerow – President – Aboriginal Business Development Centre

FORWARD

From the Bookshelf to the Bottom Line was a challenging forum to facilitate. Its goal, very broadly defined, was to benefit the growth of the northern economy. The forum provided economic development practitioners the opportunity to focus on several key economic development studies and to identify actions that will help stimulate growth and evolution of northern BC's economy.

Forum participants received a pre-conference package that contained relevant studies including: Ramp-UP – Vital Economy Inc.; Working Together to Create Sustainable Wealth – Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations; and the Connected North – UNBC.

The forum included a series of presentations that built on the contents of the pre-conference package, plus other key topics. The first half of the forum included presentations followed by question and answer sessions. The second half of the forum included small and large group discussions.

As the forum proceeded, an underlying consensus began to emerge. In the final session, the consensus became obvious and is reported in the section of this report entitled Highlights, under the headings Observations and Recommendation.

This report provides a comprehensive account of the forum including forum deliberations, presentations, question and answer sessions, and the pre-conference information package.

From the Bookshelf to the Bottom Line was an important initiative for the northern economy and it is hoped that this report does justice to the breadth and depth of the discussions, presentations and reports.

Thank you for the opportunity of being part of this important event in the development of our northern economy.

Dr. Terry Weninger

HIGHLIGHTS

Observations

Forum participants reached a consensus on five broad themes that northern BC should address in order for its economy to prosper:

- Improve collaboration and cooperation
- Engage First Nations
- Grow the skilled workforce
- Develop northern-friendly government policies
- Enhance communication and information systems

Improve collaboration and cooperation

Forum participants identified the need for improved collaboration and cooperation among economic development practitioners, government and First Nations officials, and private sector leaders. They identified possible models to facilitate collaboration and cooperation and determined a comprehensive list of potential outcomes.

Engage First Nations

Land claims need to be settled and a new relationship needs to be established with the First Nations. The certainty that will develop through land claims settlements will attract and hold investment for economic development. However, it does not make sense to wait for settlements before exploring opportunities and working together. First Nations participation in the economy will facilitate and stimulate economic development.

As a first step in engaging First Nations, all participants need to become better informed about the treaty process and familiar with the provincial government's "New Relationship" document. They also need to work with First Nations people on local economic development initiatives through various partnership mechanisms such as memoranda of agreement and agreements in principle.

Grow the skilled workforce

The growing northern BC economy needs a skilled workforce. The current shortage of skilled workers will hinder economic development. Economic development officials can help address the shortage by:

- Supporting and challenging local training institutions in accessing and re-focusing funding for delivering training programs
- Supporting appropriate immigration policies
- Facilitating industry buy-in
- Assisting and accessing the First Nations expanding labor pool.

Develop northern-friendly government policies

‘One-size-fits-all’ policies are ineffective to deal with the unique challenges and opportunities of the northern BC economy. Efforts to promote northern-friendly policies include:

- Working in collaboration with the Northern Caucus and the North Central Municipal Association (NCMA)
- Cultivating good relationships with various levels of government including First Nations
- Establishing a northern policy filter to assist in shaping and evaluating policies for the north
- Implementing a strategy for lobbying decision makers

Enhance communication and information systems

Forum participants identified the need for relevant and reliable information and clear communication among all regions of the north as a crucial element in fostering economic development initiatives. Northerners must develop clear positions on economic development issues based on sound information.

Northern BC needs a ‘one-stop-shop’ of information relevant to economic development. It is not a good use of scarce human resources to have each economic development office search for the same or similar information.

Northern BC needs to keep local, provincial and federal governments updated on issues and directions in progress, and economic development officials need to stay apprised of relevant local, provincial and federal policy initiatives that affect local and regional economic development initiatives.

Recommendation – Move to Action

Forum participants identified the following requirements to move the northern BC economy forward:

- 1 Reliable and accessible information to support long and short-term planning and to support advocacy efforts
- 2 Information exchange between and among northern economic development agencies
- 3 Strategic planning to move northern economic development opportunities forward without infringing on local jurisdictions or attempting to develop a pan-northern economic development plan
- 4 Well informed mayors, councils, First Nations governments, as well as provincial and federal politicians updated on trends and plans affecting the northern economy

It is therefore recommended that:

A structure be developed to improve collaboration and cooperation among all northern economic development interests.

To fulfill this recommendation, the following should occur:

- 1 The Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should assume the responsibility of moving the process forward.
- 2 The Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should expand to include representatives of other northern economic development interests that share similar community planning objectives.
- 3 In determining a model of collaboration and cooperation, the Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should analyze in detail the advice resulting from the Northern Economic Forum.
- 4 The Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should:
 - Develop, by July 2006, an implementation strategy for the model including options and follow-up activities
 - Plan a future conference

FORUM AGENDA

This section of the report provides a summary of all presentations and discussions. For sessions marked with an asterisk (*), a copy of the complete presentation is available upon request from the Community Futures Development Corporation of Fraser Fort George.

Wednesday October 26th, 2005

- 6:15 pm: Registration and Networking Opportunity
No Host Bar
- 6:40 pm Welcoming Remarks
Mayor - City of Prince George
Chief Dominic Frederick and Elder, Lheidli T'enneh First Nations
Welcoming to the Territory and Opening Prayer
- 7:00 pm Dinner
- 8:00 pm Dr. Terry Weninger, Master of Ceremonies
Greetings and comments of behalf of federal and provincial government ministers:
*Garth Stiller **
Manager Sustainable Rural Communities, Western Diversification
Jim Cameron
Director – Ministry of Economic Development
- 8:35 pm Keynote Presentation
*Dr. Greg Halseth**
Professor, Geography Program University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) & Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies. Greg will provide an overview of research and strategies completed to set the stage for the forum..
- 9:00 pm Dr. Terry Weninger - Closing Remarks

Thursday October 27th

7:30 am	Registration - Breakfast (buffet)
8:30 am	Master of Ceremony – Dr. Terry Weninger
8:40 am	Dr. Greg Halseth, UNBC Community Development Institute *
9:10 am	Don Zurowski, Northern Community Futures*
9:40 am	Bob Clark, Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan Update*
10:10 am	Refreshment Break
10:30 am	Mayor Nate Bello, Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition
11:00 am	Mayor Len Fox, Omineca Beetle Action Coalition
11:30 am	Lunch
12:30 pm	Janine Elo, Northern Initiative Development Trust*
1:00 pm	Graham Kedgley, Northwest Corridor Development Corporation*
1:30 pm	Kathie Scouten, Framework Initiative*
2:00 pm	Existing Regional Collaboration Models - Panel Discussion: <i>Charles Scott, Export North*</i> <i>Mayor Len Fox - Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)</i> <i>Bruce Anderson, Vancouver Island Economic Development Association)*</i>
3:00 pm	Refreshment Break
3:15 pm	Table Tasks
4:30 pm	Dr. Terry Weninger, Closing Remarks

Friday, October 28

7:30 am

Breakfast

8:30 am

Setting the Stage - Move to Action

MC presents highlights from the previous day.

9:30 am

Next Steps

- Action Items
- By Whom
- By When
- Reporting Out

10:15 am

Refreshment Break

11:45 am

Dr. Terry Weninger, Closing Remarks

12:00 pm

Draw for Brief Case

Box Lunch (to stay or go)

SESSION NOTES

This section summarizes the notes taken at all conference sessions.

October 26 – Opening Comments

Mayor Colin Kinsley

- Economic development has a focus on the future – it's about working toward a vision.
- This conference will examine the new reality of economic development in our context of the global economy.
- We need to be smarter and quicker. There's no better place than here – we must work together because our success is completely dependent on all our communities working together.
- We all need to celebrate the opportunities in our region such as the container port in Prince Rupert because all our communities will benefit.
- I'm passionate about economic development – that's my main role. We need to grow the economy so that we can grow the tax base and that allows us to offer more services to citizens.

Chief Domo Frederick, Lheidli T'enneh First Nations Chief

- Welcome to the Lheidli T'enneh Territory.
- Hope workshop is good for you.
- Lots of good people here – thank you elders for being here

October 26 – Keynote Addresses

Don Zurowski (To introduce Garth Stiller)

Manager, Community Futures Development Corporation of Fraser
Fort George

- Garth was born in Saskatchewan, grew up in north western Ontario. He has a varied background in business and economic development in the provinces of Ontario and BC.
- Garth has been with Western Economic Diversification on the West Coast since the early eighties and is committed to strengthening the capacity of rural communities.

Garth Stiller

Manager, Sustainable Rural Communities, Western Diversification

- Thank you for inviting WD - greetings from Minister Stephen Owen and the ADM.
- The Minister values the importance of BC's north to the whole country and sends this thanks to the group for hosting the forum that brings together professionals to exchange ideas about economic sustainability and to build a more diverse economy. WD is committed to continued collaboration for building a strong north to build a stronger Canada – enjoy your conference.
- WD values our partnership because it is essential to community and economic development
- We want to work with business, industry, post-secondary institutions, First Nations and various community groups.
- You know the challenges- such as the softwood lumber dispute and the mountain pine epidemic so you are in the best position to identify federal priorities.
- WD will continue to cooperate in building sustainability in your region.
- WD participates in a variety of initiatives and studies, which are community identified and driven to develop tools for economic sustainability. For example, the softwood adjustment initiative (SICEA) has helped 140 communities in northern BC – it was very successful and Mayor Colin Kinsley played a pivotal role.
- Northern communities have unique challenges, and by addressing these challenges, we can create new opportunities.
- What are some key opportunities?
 - 2010 Olympics: Many opportunities for northern communities. WD is committed to helping businesses benefit by holding procurement workshops. So far, we have trained 300 people in BC, and have trained trainers to continue training more. WD encourages further work on this. 2010 offers opportunities to diversify the region's tourism infrastructure and many other opportunities. WD wants to leverage 2010 opportunities.
 - Asia Pacific Market: You need to build the trade partnership with the Asia Pacific. Rural communities produce more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of all goods exported. Investments in transportation and trade links are key. WD has contributed \$265,000 to support Export North.
- What do you need to move forward?
 - Advance First Nations and non-First Nations communities.
 - Enhance the economies of First Nations in the north.
 - Work collaboratively.
- Identify competitive opportunities.
- Plan and be inspired by the research.

- This conference shows your commitment to cooperative efforts.
- We look forward to the results of the conference.
- WD ready to assist in any way it can.

Gordon Borgstrom (To introduce Jim Cameron)

- Jim resides in Nanaimo and has been working in regional economic development in BC for over 18 years.
- He is a strong supporter of northern economic development.

Jim Cameron

Director, Ministry of Economic Development

- Minister Hansen is very committed to northern development
- Reference to the work of Frank Knott – very supportive of what he says and that it's important for industry to take the lead - we need to use those ideas.
- It is a most interesting time for economic development, especially in the North with large issues like the mountain pine beetle epidemic.
- Lots of big challenges and opportunities: Mining is back - do we build hydro infrastructure to support it? Oil and gas is booming. Port development in Prince Rupert presents huge opportunities, but also challenges in terms of the capacity to handle growth because of the skill shortage.
- It is very important to involve First Nations as partners.
- We are here to support you – by working to lever our funding with federal resources. Our Ministry is responsible for the Northern Development Initiative - planning is going forward and going well; Pine beetle funds likely to be transferred out soon to regions.
- We are fortunate to have Minister Hansen. He is committed to regional economic development. He spent time with EDOs at a round table – something that's never been done before. He will likely commit to quarterly meetings.
- Asia Pacific is a big part of our future. That economy is growing fast. A city just outside of Hong Kong grew to 8 million people from 20,000 because of huge port. Once the port of Prince Rupert is developed, the impact of rapid growth on infrastructure and workforce demands will be huge.
- Ministry economic development initiatives include:
 - Attracting new investment through immigration. We need to get immigrant investment in the regions. On Vancouver

Island, Chinese investors have invested in 3 value added plants. This offers access to huge market in Asia.

- Developing regional brands/ conducting familiarization tours for regional investment.
- Developing the workforce by attracting highly skilled workers into the BC market;
- Training youth – especially First Nations youth. For example, Kitimat Valley Institute is running a 6 month job readiness training program for working in industry – a program that could have application elsewhere.
- We must work together to effect change. We look forward to working with you in future.

Greg Halseth

Geography Professor, UNBC and Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies

- Thank you and welcome
- We have a lot of information about: economic and community development opportunities, economic development strategies, context, challenges.
- It's time for action – that's why we have this forum.
- We need: coordination, stakeholders that take responsibility, government and industry partners – but they won't drive it, creative ways to make things work.
- We are responsible – we want actions that speak to our aspirations.
- We need to focus on finding opportunities for collective action and draw from northern BC, Canada and the world.
- Key requirements:
 - Include government, agencies, economic development interests)
 - Be ready for growth and expansion - scale up.
 - Cooperate among communities. Recognize our similarities and common challenges to address like access to transportation. Think large.
 - Coordinate our efforts by creating mutually supportive relationships on how to find export opportunities, how to access financing, how to harvest all the skills.
 - Monitor progress and use report cards to motivate funding
 - Grow the infrastructure to market and deliver products attention to human resources
 - Build capacity continuously so that we can adapt and re-adapt quickly on an ongoing basis.
- We have assets for the global economy - from resources to quality of life amenities. We are in the boom stage with the opportunity to invest.

- We need creative solutions to scale up - What are the mechanisms that suit what we need to move forward collectively on a broad scale?
- Prime the pump to work together.

October 27 – Opening Remarks

Terry Weninger – MC/Facilitator

- Many opportunities: Olympics, Asia Pacific, Oil and Gas, Mining and Forestry.
- Many studies have been done.
- Involvement of First Nations as partners is key.
- We need regional collaboration.
- Challenges represent opportunities
- We need to take action collectively

October 27 –Speakers

Greg Halseth Q&A

Q: Can you elaborate on the importance of land claims settlement?

A: Terrace is an example. At a time when every forestry operation was shut down, economic opportunities continued to develop because of the positive impact of the Nisgka settlement.

Q: What mechanisms are needed to mobilize our huge opportunities?

Greg Halseth, UNBC Community Development Institute

Geography Professor, UNBC and Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies

- Connected North: enormous opportunities if we think big.
- We have been successful with transition in the past.
- Key message: change is the norm, scale up and connect communities, build relationships.
- Over the long term we need to build capacity; human and physical infrastructure; act instead of react.
- Connected North: keep our lifestyles and our northern vision that respects culture, environment, economy and community.
- We need to make strategic investments based on a solid resource and infrastructure foundation so that we are ready to respond and take advantage of opportunities.

A: A large cheque... and opportunities to talk collectively broken down in forums for different regions and sectors. (e.g.: Alaska region tourism – creates more opportunities for partners), mechanisms for interaction with senior government levels to make issues known; coordinate agencies to work together; tap intelligence for the entire north to provide easy access to shared information to avoid duplication of efforts/research.

Q: Thanks for your emphasis on treaties. Our people spent \$12-13 million on litigation. We moved to negotiation and spent \$10-12 million with no measurable progress. There are problems with the provincial mandate for negotiation How can we work together to push for changes to the mandate? The New Relationship document is good. We need to build on that work.

A: I agree with your comments. This is a great forum to reflect on that.

Don Zurowski Q&A

Q: Don forgot to speak about his personal commitment to the region. We need to develop our labour force and look at how to involve First Nations partners. Don is helping to identify opportunities for First Nations and is unwavering in his support. Our 5-year strategy has been endorsed – thanks to the partnerships. Don puts in lots of personal time so thank you Don!

A: Skills development is key. We do this in partnership with other agencies. Karen has access to a large pool of young people. We need to continue working together.

- Key recommendations: settle treaties; complete electrical power grid; create a northern body for regional development (like NDI); revenue sharing with aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities; more action/policy coordination within and between all levels of government and agencies.
- Timing is good to act now but the window of opportunity is closing. The transition to a boom phase is seen as absolving government from the need to support transition. We must keep government as a participant.
- Need community plan and must prepare human resource infrastructure.
- Need leadership to benefit from opportunities and reduce risk.
- Consolidate economic development tools (e.g.: Prince Rupert community organization work in cooperation to accomplish more collectively.); coordinate our approach among communities; engage in rural-urban dialogue; develop physical infrastructure - community services, human and social infrastructure (our youth is an asset); continuously build capacity and relationships; settle treaties; scale up (Tumbler Ridge is an inspiring example).

Don Zurowski – Northern Community Futures

General Manager, Community Futures Development Corporation of Fraser Fort George

- 9 Community Futures organizations in the North serve 70% of province and 7% of the population.
- CFDCs have stood the test of time – started in 1987
- CFDCs have continued because they have been capitalized; volunteer driven at board level and connected with community organizations.
- CFDCs are “a sewer and water type of service” which means they help support smaller projects –that’s essential.
- Community development and economic development are complementary. Economic development attracts new people and businesses to create new wealth in a community whereas community development develops people and services from within.
- Strategic approach to community and regional planning – we are future-oriented / forward thinking.
- Roles and core activities: Community and Regional Planning; Developmental Lenders; Business Counselling; Entrepreneurial Training and New Labour market partnerships/workshops/self-employment; CED project mgmt/ Community economic adjustment (e.g.: SICEAI – softwood adjustment program).

Bob Clark Q&A

Q: You spoke about demanding companies to invest in diversification. What?

A: Collaborate might be a better word. We must diversify the use of wood. We need to hold the CEOs to that challenge and they will be interested. It is largely unforeseen – but the wood's shelf life has 3 variables: the biology of the site, range of products to manufacture with the lumber, and opportunities in bio fuels. My view is that the price of energy will continue rising so that will favour the transfer fibre into energy.

Q: Thanks for your comments. You are the right man for the right job. What about burning and reforesting now?

A: If we had huge fires, we would put other species at risk and young strands at risk. Fire is not an answer.

Q: No value added strategy should be proposed without policy change regarding access to fibre.

A: I agree, but I still hold hope for value added. Continuity of fibre supply is important. An area of opportunity is engineered homes. Is it new entrepreneurs or current ones morphing? The latter might be better capitalized and prompted to do it from the 'burning platform'. Existing players need to change as well.

Q: A provincial report suggested that your team and all mills do all they can do, yet we will reach a point where 90% of the forest is dead – What research in on the way to deal with leftovers?

- We are most effective when we are strategic and forward thinking. We have lots of capacity just short bench length.

Bob Clark, Provincial Bark Beetle Coordinator

Ministry of Forests and Range

- Update on action plan
- Size of infestation is increasing by 50% every year.
- 2 reasons it exists: mature pine has increased 3 times since 1910 – providing the habitat and average winter temperature has increased.
- We will lose 80% of pine as we are unlikely to get the cold weather we need. In some areas – the loss will be greater than 80%. It is worth being aggressive at the fringes of the infestation to help reduce impact.
- There is a great collaborative relationship between government and industry.
- Coffee shop talk is wrong – the epidemic started with scattered infestations and arose throughout BC's working forest of BC. This didn't simply start in Tweedsmuir Park.
- What to do about it to get most value: expressions of interest/ developing new tenure/AAC uplifts/ review LRMPs, promote uses for beetle wood in overseas markets/explore value added opportunities/ consult with local governments, First Nations and industry. Realistically – markets will not likely grow fast enough to consume all the wood.
- Review of uplifts – 13.7 cubic m / year – a very large increase and more to come.
- Province's overall goal – 5 year plan to sustain long term community, economic and environmental well being while dealing with the short term consequences of the epidemic. To be updated continuously. Expect announcement on new governance models.
- Many ministries involved– resource and economic ministries. The file will change from a resource management to community economic development file.
- Federal government has been approached for more funding. Most encouragingly, Minister Emerson called the \$100 million a down payment on future investments in North. Next step is to continue discussions with the federal government.
- Work is underway on an integrated approach and funding to support the action plan. We will continue to work on securing long term (4-30 years) federal funding.

Bob Clark Q&A (cont'd)

A: We need to reforest sites and reforest with pine and truncate growth at 70 years, and have large clear cuts that replicate large disturbance patterns (natural clear cuts). We are going back to nature but with a different look. Who will pay? We need to bring in the federal government – it must share the responsibility for silviculture, especially for this natural disaster!

Q: Back to electricity demands – BC is a net importer of electricity. What about using wood to meet the energy gap?

A: I've been in resource management for 35 years and have seen a steady decline in resource management investment in favour of other priorities. That needs to change – and it is starting to change. Investing in the resource sector will allow us to develop important opportunities like this one.

Q: Smaller producers have trouble accessing expression of interest...

A: We need to look at how to get more wood into successful value added operations. Eventually, both new and existing majors will get more involved in value added.

Q: Why would you want to replant pine

A: If you truncate pine at 70 years or so, you solve the problem. We need to have a tolerance for waste. The public was intolerant of lifting the cut. We need to change that.

Nate Bello Q&A

Q: How do you see the relationships with Ramp UP working?

A: Use Ramp UP as a think tank.

- Information about the \$100 million funding is on the website. We will continue to work with First Nations. This new relationship is real.
- We need a cautious balance between “sky is falling” and the “need to diversify”. We are early, aggressive, and driven enough to deal with this. We need to act when the economy is strong. Dan George is RIGHT ON with the need to settle treaties now.
- The leadership council and the Premier’s views are encouraging.
- A collective effort is required. In Vanderhoof, 85% of the forest is pine – 90% is dead. We must diversify during the boom.
- Vanderhoof has largest pellet plan. Houston has the largest sawmill in the world.. Vanderhoof will surpass Houston with the largest sawmill. From the companies, we need to demand diversification.

Nate Bello

Director, Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Committee

- Thank you – and thank you Bob for your presentation and broad view of the issues.
- In some ways, the epidemic is a wake up call – even without the beetle, we would have to change our way of doing business.
- I have copies of the 2005-05 plan here.
- Communities have to be proactive – the problem will challenge our lifestyle.
- The Board includes mayors and First Nations representation (not just 1 – three major bands other bands outside tribal councils are represented). Full partnership is key.
- We have advisers: Community Futures advisor, and the Economic Development working group. We opted to build on our resources – Quesnel Economic Community Development Corporation and ½ time person from 100 Mil House. This is a regional thing.
- Our guiding principles: positive/ entrepreneurial/innovative; not be “the sky is falling syndrome” but must be realistic so we act with a sense of urgency – it’s a balance; we must be leaders and put community stability upfront.
- Objectives are organized in 2 phases. Phase 1 involves doing initial studies which are underway now to create sectoral plan to build up new opportunities. Phase 2 involves plan implementation. We need to set up a Pine Beetle Trust Fund.
- Considerations in creating plans include: community stability, leadership; misinformation that creates fear; openness and transparency. Labour and small business needs to be involved in addition to Mayors and First Nations. We need to be decisive and pro-active. That’s our responsibility.

- Specific issues: we need to be into salvaging; we have to maximize salvage area and minimize rehabilitation area and then rehabilitate. We need to work on Pine Beetle Trust fund. We must ensure that we have broad communication.
- Conclusion on relationship – we need to talk more and more about BC and Pine Beetle Action program and we need to talk to the Northern Trust (\$30 million for pine beetle mitigation). We need to keep going with local initiatives and push with the federal government. We need to work with groups like Ramp UP.

Len Fox Q&A

Q: Thanks for mentioning the First Nations strategy (75 bands in 80 communities). It is developed on a government to government basis. First Nations are not a third party. 8 themes: 1. Right to use and manage the land; 2. Community consultation 3. Environmental sustainability; 4. Economic opportunity and sustainability; 5 Institutional arrangements and joint decision making; 6 Trade and international negotiations affecting forest policy; 7 Social and cultural sustainability; 8 Funding and potential for harmonization. Thank you for your understanding. Our people look forward to working with your group.

A: I agree and thank you for the information on the themes.

Q: For the Secretariat – what model do you have in mind?

A: At OBAC level, a need for someone in government at high level to communicate with line ministries. Also, you need high level bureaucrats at the provincial and federal level – not politicians.

Len Fox

Chair - Omineca Beetle Action Committee

- Thank you and pleasure to be here – good to hear the non-controversial Beetle Boss.
- The committee includes 9 mayors, 10 Regional District members, 6 land use plans, and 5 forest districts.
- We have energy, resources and we need money (first instalment received.).
- We are very concerned about creating an image of opportunity not doom.
- We want to start out by being totally open and transparent. First Nations are looking to form their own thrust first and we made it clear that the door is open so we can work collectively.
- Looking at the possibility of setting up a Society. We will have a proposal in early January as to how to set up the round table so it is open to people of interest. No policies are formed at this point and we don't want that to be set by interim group.
- We want to work with the provincial strategy according to 7 objectives: 1. Long term economic stability; 2. Respect RMNPs; 3. Examine sectoral opportunities and be mindful of the work First Nations are doing. Recover the greatest value from the timber. 4. Conserve long term values of the forest. 5. Community consultation is essential; 6. Support restoration activities; 7. Partner with the province to measure and mitigate impacts.
- None of the objectives are limiting.
- A secretariat is needed to bring all energies and linkages into one – who can do that?
- Never seen so much resources to secure our future – all we need is the energy and desire to move forward.

Janine Elo Q&A

Q: We need to develop the trust as an asset and develop the region. Balance is important and we need patient lending – what is Board's position on that?

A: Industry support is key for proposals. We will consider more than maximizing return on investment. We understand timeframes and capacity building and not judge each project simply on returns.

Q: CHM \$110 m for pellet plant and shipping to occur out of Vancouver – this should not happen

A: Should not pit one business against another but help move a whole industry forward.

Q: What is mezzanine financing?

A: It is a subordinate financing mechanism like a second mortgage. It is used more in the Coast and involved less ownership control.

Janine Elo – Northern Development Initiative

Executive Director, Northern Development Initiative Trust

- Orientation to the Northern Development Trust. Directors present were acknowledged.
- Act passed in Oct 2004 to develop economic opportunities for north central BC.
- A legacy trust on a North American scale.
- A Regional Advisory Committee informs the board in decision making.
- Initial \$135 million investment from the province plus an additional \$50 million to top up regional development accounts and \$30 million for mitigating pine beetle impact.
- All the provincial trust funds provide great opportunity to generate economic development.
- Board wants a lean/mean structure – will focus on lean.
- Our progress: met with government leaders and the public – 90 day action plan underway with first project announced.
- Investment return to date is \$3 million.
- Expectations (as per legislature debate comments): rigour in proposals; locally controlled and well informed decision-making; partner to ensure quality, economic dev and sustainability.
- Project Categories: open to both public and private in all economic sectors.
- Stay lean and accountable so returns go into the projects.
- Cross regional projects (principles outlined).
- Process for project submissions: e-template sent to local government sponsor for review and resolution; local government may screen letter of intent prior to proposal stage.
- Process for cross regional accounts is still at draft stage.
- Next steps include: further policy development; project decisions this fall; strategic planning; 3 year strategic plan for pine beetle recovery account; develop operational plan.
- There is a need for collaboration with Pine Beetle Action Plans – how will information flow? It is a catalyst for opportunity.
- I look forward to your action plan and how we can be a partner

Graham Kedgley -Northwest Corridor Development Corp.

- NCDC: membership-based; not for profit; public/private partnership; volunteer board;
- We would love to have a First Nations representative.
- Our mission is to sustain and enhance the economic base and trade potential of Canada's northwest transportation corridor.
- You can keep chirping in your community or join a choir. If you want to be heard – you need to be heard – and be part of an organization.

- Encouraging to see cooperation the pine beetle has precipitated.
- For opportunities, think outside the box: whiskey plant; consulting; petrochemical in fertilizers and plastics and drugs; wood work; coke plant; call centres; slaughter houses; high tech, warehousing and refuelling.
- Make your list – we need the big resource industries but let's make pots and pans too.
- Think Positive- especially now that we have a great window of opportunity. 1. PG is the centre of the globe and so are other northern communities (Tom Friedman – The World is Flat) We are in a global village. 2. We have the best air/rail/ports/telecommunications/pipelines and power – what more could you want? 3. Gateway initiative – very major step forward for western Canada to serve a 450 million trade area. 50% of world's population is within a small radius of Hong Kong.
- 2 recommendations: 1. You have to tell people about your product and 2. Bring people into your store. We need far more trade missions. This is very important. Spend \$10,000 on trade mission (inward and outward) rather than spend it on a study.
- No excuses please – ACT.

Kathie Scouten – Framework Initiative

Kathie Scouten Q&A

Q: There is already a plan in place and actioned – a First Nations youth task force (labour market participation rates, impacting local economies, establishment of leadership centre of excellence) so there is excellent opportunity for partnership.

A: Yes – that was brought forward yesterday. This framework is an opportunity to link everything in.

Manager, Corporate Initiatives, Initiatives Prince George

- Here to talk about the Ramp UP process.
- A provincial roadmap developed over 1.5 years.
- A grassroots initiative involving several communities.
- Examines economic diversification and dependencies – the north is the least diversified. We have to grow in new areas.
- Regional economies have great potential through linkages and collaboration. We can create critical mass through coordination. We must grow the overall pie so that there is less scarcity.
- 8 recommendations: 1. Benchmarking and measurement; 2. Establish a regional framework for collaboration including a funding model (e.g.: 20 organizations come together with \$5000/year). Use a cooperative structure under BC law – the co-op is not an implementer (private/not for profit/public on the board at 1/3 each). The coop decides how to use resources. This is a regional directed and driven model; 3 Develop regional cluster based industry strategies – inventory assets and map them on a global level; 4 Establish a finance and innovation network to access capital. Need to map debt and equity resources in relation to regional opportunities. This requires the mass of perhaps more than one region. 5. Establish regional branding consistent with

ambitions and actions. 6. Establish a collaborative leadership institute. 7. Establish a youth engagement strategy – 8. Establish regional benchmarking capacity.

- Next Steps: look at outer limits of a potential region (Smithers – Valemount-Mackenzie-Cariboo Chilcotin).

October 27 – Existing Regional Collaboration Models

Panel Q&A

Q: Len, why are some things so slow?

A: For years, communities fought to build a tax base – that is changing, but some small town politicians are slow to change. It is difficult for politicians to sell the idea in their communities. One of the successes was having a non-political Chair.

Comment: At NCDC we hear out all projects. If a project has merit, then we champion it. If we don't like a project, we just stay silent. It works very well.

Comment: Everyone is for progress – it's change they don't like. By December, Export North will have been around for 3 years – it is exciting to watch and be part of the process of entrepreneurs discovering and following through on export opportunities.

Charles Scott, Export North

- Regional collaboration is not easy
- 5 cornerstones: product /business/organizational/market/and workforce development.
- The mindset of Northern BC has changed – our capacity to export has increased significantly.
- Regional collaboration is not easy - getting into a new market is tough;
- We looked at best practices - why did it work?
- We help companies that are ready to go build capacity in doing business abroad;
- How do we do it? Act then ask. Cooperate and build local capacity.

Len Fox, Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

- It is challenging to get communities to work on a regional strategy. People need to see some immediate successes. Communities can lose sight of the big picture and the progresses being made. We overcame that challenge with REDI. It took 4 years to convince some members of the benefits of belonging. Even now, we need to go back to the objectives regularly.
- More opportunity and resources available when communities work together. But it's NOT EASY.
- To be successful on a regional basis, you need immediate successes that are planned in the process so that the partners can see how they are benefiting.
- Don't spend a significant chunk of your time keeping the collaborative together.
- Huge benefit to collaboration – but it is challenging – make it immediately measurable in small communities.

Bruce Anderson – Vancouver Island Economic Development Association

- Thank you for opportunity to learn about your region and to talk about a regional collaboration project.
- VIEDA is made up of economic development practitioners
- We started by analyzing the region (SWOT, organization review, communications plan, and investment attraction homework) and decided to focus on the marine sector - specifically shellfish farming (see www.westcoastshellfish.com).
- We used the Ramp UP model in the early stage and we worked with politicians.
- The regional approach offered the potential to leverage modest investments
- Success factors: broad and deep strategy/common thread/commitment of time over a long term (this project took 8 years)/regional approach/ongoing communication/internal champions/involve 3rd parties/have the right partners at the right time/
- Results: 9 permanent jobs, incremental seafood production of \$1 million/year for near term; the goal is to reach 60 jobs and expand sales to \$5 million per year. Many other deals also under consideration.
- We are now working toward the formation of an alliance.

Table Task Sessions

Table Task Detail

This section provides a complete record of all responses.

Question 1: Based on the background material circulated prior to the conference and on what you have heard from today's presentation, what are your table's top 5 recommendations for:

Core messages about our economies

- 10-year (approx) to act in the upturn in the economy
- Accept change
- Acceptance of current realities: treaties, pine beetle, global competitiveness, grassroots driven – not government, sustainability, quadruple bottom line
- Access to capital
- An economy in transition
- Building relationships and working with First Nations
- Capacity: skill shortages (trades, collaborative leadership and management)
- Commodity driven
- Cyclical economy
- Dependent on international markets
- Dependent upon policy and legislation
- Disconnect between skills level and industry needs
- Diversify
- Economic diversification
- Export dependent
- Fear
- First Nation involvement in the economy
- Grow the pie
- Lack of certainty
- Lack of cohesive and collaborative provincial strategy
- Lack of electricity
- Lack of local regional strategy
- Many different and unique economies
- Need to diversify
- Need to diversify
- Not diverse enough
- People driven
- Regional collaboration vs. competition mechanism
- Regional disparity
- Regional unification
- Resource dependent
- Resource dependent
- Sense of urgency

- Skill shortages
- Social structure: horizontal strategy to economic strategy
- Strategic use of assets (niche markets)
- Willingness to collaborate / need to be inclusive
- Youth engagement (aboriginal)

Key strengths of our communities and region

- Abundant natural resources
- Access to nature
- Broad range of physical, natural, cultural assets
- Communication systems
- Crisis creates action/collaboration (pine beetle)
- Diversity of economies and players
- Economic development infrastructure/ organizations
- First Nations
- Gateway to Asian markets
- Government buy-in
- Growing transportation infrastructure
- Huge renewable energy resource
- Land base
- Linkages to global markets
- Location
- Natural resources
- Natural resources
- Natural tourism resources
- Partnerships
- People
- People
- Pool of available funds
- Post-secondary education: UNBC and Community Colleges
- Potential transportation
- Productive economy
- Quality of life
- Quality of life
- Recognition of urgency
- Relatively skilled labour force
- Resource rich
- Strategic location in BC and globally
- Strong presence /involvement of First Nations: Guaranteed fibre supply, certainty consultation/accommodation agreements, tourism, participation, finding common threads
- Talent pool
- Tourism opportunities
- Transportation infrastructure: air/rail/ports

- Transportation systems
- Untapped labour pool – youth and First Nations
- Variety of cultures
- We have been discovered
- Willingness to collaborate
- World class forest industry

Critical barriers to sustained economic development

- Access to capital
- Access to capital
- Beetles
- Communication
- Communication systems
- Communities with self-interest
- Competition between communities
- Demographic challenges
- Dependency on one thing
- Development / construction costs
- Differing cultural models
- Differing governance models
- Disproportionate investment by government (to where people vote rather than where the revenues are generated)
- Distance from expertise
- Electricity
- Entrenched power structures
- Fear of change
- Geographic dispersion / sense of isolation
- Getting senior governments to accept the need for sustained funding
- Government interference
- Government policy changes
- Human resources
- Human resources to respond to skill shortage
- Infrastructure
- Infrastructure
- Investment interrupting quality of life
- Labour force shortage
- Lack of a common vision
- Lack of collaboration and cooperation
- Lack of coordination
- Lack of electricity
- Lack of industry participation
- Lack of infrastructure: health, airport, roads
- Lack of political clout
- Lack of regional economic development strategy
- Lack of skilled trades and professionals

- Lack of wealthy champions
- Land claims
- Land claims
- No consistent access to fibre
- Ourselves and our rationalizations
- Overlooked / well hidden
- People
- Politically based decision-making
- Provincial government
- Remnants of parochialism
- Resource based mentality
- Skills shortages
- Sustaining change
- Tourism infrastructure
- Transportation costs / lack of infrastructure
- Trust
- Unresolved land claims
- Youth exodus

Question 2: Based on the background information, today's presentations, and earlier table reports, what does your table think are the 5 key -

Economic development questions that need to be answered:

- How are going to determine the strategy (will the provincial government in principle support our mandate)?
- How can effective proactive planning be enabled (e.g.: is the airport staying opened; how long will the hospital stay open)?
- How do build relationships with new CED providers?
- How do find a common vision?
- How do you maintain the balance between quality of life and economic prosperity for all segments of our society?
- How do our strengths fit into the global economy?
- How do we become aware, connect and communicate all the initiatives?
- How do we build and guarantee inclusiveness?
- How do we build and take action on what has been and is being done?
- How do we change our mindset (rural to urban)?
- How do we clarify our economic goals / vision?
- How do we create balance?
- How do we create the urgency without creating panic?
- How do we define a model of community collaboration?
- How do we define the social issues behind resistance to change?

- How do we develop an effective mechanism for aboriginal engagement (including skills development)?
- How do we diversify our economy?
- How do we find an economic development model to meet emerging economy needs?
- How do we find the money?
- How do we get access to comprehensive and timely data?
- How do we get through the red tape?
- How do we identify baseline data?
- How do we identify the demand of available markets?
- How do we influence the provincial government to develop policies and legislation friendly to our needs?
- How do we overcome the skilled labour workforce shortages?
- How do we pay for it?
- How do we resolve land claims?
- What is your community going to do to diversify?
- What will be our priorities?
- Where will we acquire investment / funding?
- Who is going to be the economic development coordination group?
- Who is the champion?

Steps needed to move strategies/Information into action in order to assist in moving our communities and regions towards long-term economic development:

- Build and train and develop human capacity
- Collaborative action
- Communications
- Determine regions by need not geography
- Develop a community vision
- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan
- Develop a northern regional coordinating body (cluster / group)
- Develop community alliances / regional concept
- Develop individual pride
- Develop interim agreements with First Nations
- Develop a strategy (where everyone is on the same page and don't assume that existing strategies are current or appropriate)
- Empower communities (buy-in by citizens and agencies)
- Engage stakeholders
- Ensure NDI's mandate includes planning functions and acts as liaison with federal and provincial governments (Northern Alberta Development Council)
- Find champions
- Finding a common thread
- Grow our skilled workforce through training and immigration
- Have a one-stop research point

- Have a senior level advocate for the North
- Have community champions/leaders and cheerleaders
- Implementation plans with measurable benchmarks
- Increase northern sales and marketing (cluster inbound / outbound)
- Inform your community of progress on initiatives
- Just do it
- Link information to communities
- Localize funding criteria for projects
- Needs based / initiative based assistance (EDOs and RDOs)
- Regional collaboration
- Secure funding
- Staying the course
- Understanding our place in the global context
- Use a project management approach
- Use a holistic approach

Table Task Summary

Question 1: Based on the background material circulated prior to the conference and on what you have heard from today's presentation, what are your table's top 5 recommendations for:

Core messages about our economies

Need for regional collaboration:

Not competitive between communities; Need for collaborative regional and provincial strategies; Regional willingness to collaborate; Need for First Nations involvement / building relationships.

Need to address skills / labour shortages

Disconnect / shortage; Capacity

Need for economic diversification

Grow the pie; Cyclical economy; Dependent on export / international markets; Regional disparities; Resource dependent / commodity driven; Lack of certainty; Need to diversity; Social structure; Many different and unique economies.

Other:

Access to capital

Key strengths of our communities and region

Abundant natural resources

High renewable energy resource; Land base, natural resources; World class forest industry; Broad range of physical, natural, and cultural assets; diversity.

People

Willingness to collaborate; Untapped labor pool – First Nations; Strong presence of First Nations; Talent pool / cultural diversity; People and partnerships; Quality of life; Relatively skilled workforce; Productive economy

Transportation infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure, transportation systems, growing transportation infrastructure; Access to Asian markets, linkages to global markets; Location, strategic location.

Pending crisis to motivate / recognition of urgency

Economic development infrastructure

Post-secondary institutions; Organizations (CFDCs and others);

Critical barriers to sustained economic development

Human Resource Capacity

Skill shortages; Labour shortages; Demographic changes; Lack of a community economic development vision; Lack of coordination; Community competitiveness

Land claims unresolved

Cultural barriers

Infrastructure development

High cost; Lack of infrastructure

Government policy

Politically base; Government interference; Need for sustained funding; Need for investment policy

Pine Beetle Epidemic

Access to capital

Question 2: Based on the background information, today's presentations, and earlier table reports, what does your table think are the 5 key:

Economic development questions that need to be answered:

Information on global markets

How do we determine an overall strategy; How do we find a common vision; How do we clarify our economic goals; How do we define a model of community collaboration; How do we diversify our economy; How do we find an economic development model to meet emerging economic needs?

Human Resource Capacity

How do we resolve skills / labour shortages?

Land claims settlement

How do we build/guarantee inclusiveness; How do we achieve aboriginal engagement.

Access to capital

How do we increase access to capital?

Influence Provincial Policy

How do we have and influence government policies that are friendly to our needs?

Steps needed to move strategies/Information into action in order to assist in moving our communities and regions towards long term economic development:

Need for collaboration

Communication; Develop a coordinated community vision; Develop a comprehensive strategic plan; Develop a northern regional coordinating body/clusters/group; Develop community/regional alliances (what kind of model?); Need for First Nations Engagement; Settle land claims; Develop interim agreements

Need to grow our skilled workforce

Training; Immigration

Need government policy friendly to our needs

Influence government policy at federal and provincial levels

Need communication mechanism

Within communities and throughout the north

Setting the Stage - Table Task Highlights

The MC presented a summary of the table previous day's table task discussions.

Messages about our economy:

- Need for regional collaboration
- Need for First Nations involvement
- Need to address skills / labour shortages
- Need for economic diversification
- Other: Lack of electricity, access to capital

Key strengths of our communities and region

- Abundant natural resources
- People
- Transportation infrastructure
- Pending crisis to motivate us
- Economic development infrastructure

Critical barriers to sustained economic development

- Human Resource Capacity
- Lack of a community economic development vision
- Land claims unresolved
- Infrastructure development
- Government policy
- Electricity
- Pine beetle epidemic
- Access to capital

Economic development questions that need to be answered:

- Information on global markets
- Human resource capacity
- Land claims settlement
- Access to capital
- Influence provincial policy

Steps needed to move strategies/Information into action

- Stimulate collaboration and coordination in economic development planning

- Engage First Nations
- Grow our skilled workforce
- Develop northern friendly government policies
- Communicate between and within communities
- Other: access to capital, need for diversification

Next Steps - Strategic Responses by Strategic Area

Forum participants elaborated on the strategic areas and recommended follow-up actions.

Collaborate and coordinate regionally

There is a need for strategic planning to move northern economic development opportunities forward and for coordination to deal with emerging issues.

An organization similar to the former Northern Development Commission would serve this need by advocating on behalf of northern economic development interests, by coordinating regional action on key issues, by providing a voice for the north in the political arena, and by disseminating information and facilitating the exchange of information within and outside the region. The group emphasized the importance of starting small with concrete and specific action.

Participants explored various models that could be used. The section on Implementation Models provides the details of those discussions.

Collaboration and Cooperation actions suggested

- Strengthen local economic development agencies by sharing information and resources – ‘one-stop-shop’.
- Assess current activities in all communities to determine best practices.
- Have EDO’s and governance representatives attend the same events (e.g.: Skeena Labor Market Development Committee events).
- Build community ownership to deflect political pressure
- Speak to Victoria with a united voice rather than leaving Victoria speak to us.
- Inventory all collaborative initiatives occurring throughout the region.
- Inventory community plans and map assets.
- Help communities update their plans.
- Roll up community plans into regional, northern and provincial plans.
- Establish a working group to move forum recommendations forward.
- Use a regional approach when accessing funding, identifying opportunities, positioning and branding, and measuring
- Involve grassroots.
- Use Frank Knott methodology
- Coordinate actions by involving politicians and supporting agencies

- Continue holding economic development forums 1-2 times per year to continue identifying ideas and solutions.
- Involve industry representatives and include information on First Nations strategies in future forums.

Engage First Nations

To engage First Nations, the North needs to set an atmosphere of respect and understanding of the First Nations' contribution to the region, their history, their culture, and their socio-economic circumstances. This atmosphere will provide the foundation for a new way of doing business in policy development, for treaty negotiation, and for building relationships between municipalities and First Nations governance structures. The treaty making process is about building and establishing relationships.

First Nations engagement actions suggested

- Read and understand the provincial government's "New Relationship Report", the NWTT's report, and the BC Chamber of Mines report on consultation
- Help to define and build municipal and First Nations relationships
- Separate politics from economic development (e.g.: CFDCs have aboriginal or First Nations coordinators)
- Focus on cooperation by and with First Nations – recognize everyone's strengths.
- Enhance non-First Nations understanding of special issues, circumstances and culture in order to build their capacity to work effectively with First Nations
- Use the political power that First Nations have as a result of unsettled treaties. Through collaboration and partnership, First Nations and non-First Nations can bring their respective strengths to the treaty negotiation table to achieve win-win outcomes.
- Build relationships during the pre-treaty period based on new attitudes of mutual respect and understanding
- Ensure collaboration accrues equal benefits to all parties involved
- Connect structures to opportunities

Grow a skilled labour force

Participants identified labour force development as a key area requiring focussed attention.

Labour force actions suggested

- Focus on trades and technology training, particularly with First Nations youth
- Develop the First Nations workforce
- Develop leadership capacity
- Start with basic literacy programs
- Provide incentives of industry to hire apprentices
- Encourage job fairs
- Use technology for program delivery where appropriate
- Emphasize the importance of life-long learning and early education
- Target immigration to meet skill gaps
- Identify future workforce needs
- Collaborate with education institutions to ensure graduates are workforce-ready
- Recruit specific age groups – emphasize the opportunities in the north (infrastructure, tourism, lifestyle)
- Develop labour market partnerships (Service Canada)

Communicate

Participants identified communication as a key area requiring focused attention.

Communication actions suggested

- Share information on an ongoing basis between and among all municipal, provincial, and federal governments and EDOs.
- Identify champions
- Celebrate successes
- Establish a one-stop-shop for economic development research and information
- Hold regional economic development forums that include local, municipal and federal government representatives, First Nations leaders (and information on First Nations strategies), economic development practitioners, industry representatives
- Work with existing and soon-to-exist organizations such as NDI / enhanced NDI.
- Network with people from all agencies that relate in some way to northern economic development
- Develop a website for the North / use as a tool for the forums
- Engage UNBC as a partner to compile and disseminate research information.

Develop northern-friendly policies

The aspirations of northerners need to be reflected in government policy. One-size-fits-all policies do not fit the North. Participants identified northern-friendly policies as a key area requiring focussed attention.

Policy actions suggested

- Co-opt government's imperative to northern benefit.
- Get input from Northerners.
- Present regionally relevant perspectives using a business case approach that includes credible information based on sound research.
- Develop a common northern position to leverage northern power.
- Focus on the emerging oil and gas sector.
- Establish a northern advocate.
- Identify ways to strengthen the northern caucus.
- Establish a northern policy filter to assist in evaluating proposed policies and helping to shape northern relevant policies.
- Lobby by suggesting solutions with a collective voice using existing structures strategically.
- Cultivate good relationships with the provincial and federal governments.
- Examine approaches for revenue sharing.

Other strategic responses

Participants identified other strategic areas and responses that could be pursued:

- Northern corridor development
- Several suggestions regarding previous strategic areas: succession planning to address the skilled labour shortage; government policies that are friendly to the north; government providing resources for further development consistent with the wealth generated by the north; equitable involvement of First Nations people; need for a collaborative/coordinating mechanism to further economic growth in the north.

Implementation Models

Forum participants noted various models such as NDI, NCMA, CFDC, Skeena Labour Market Development, Pine Beetle Coalition, Branding (Peace Model) as examples that could inspire development of a northern collaboration and coordination mechanism. They noted that the model should facilitate information sharing, collaboration, issues management, advocacy, and industry involvement.

The following section describes the implementation models that participants suggested to support creation and maintenance of sustainable, vibrant, and high quality-of-life communities. These models would work to facilitate achievement of community, regional and northern visions.

Frank Knott Model

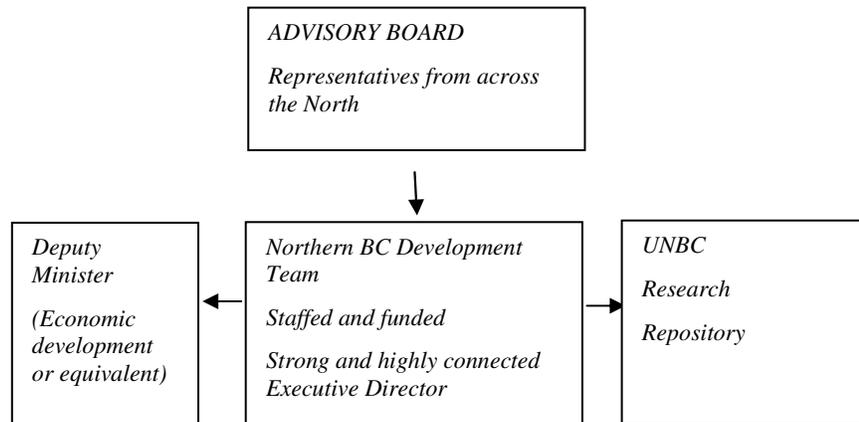
Kathie Scouten provided a comprehensive overview of the Frank Knott Model.

Model 1

This model involves establishing an association that has potency and profile, and focuses on sharing information and developing solutions. It would start as a small secretariat with key partners such as CFDCs, EDOs, UNBC, NCDC, and government (provincial and federal). It would not be involved in pan-northern BC planning nor regulation but builds upon each level from the grassroots:



The objective is to create/maintain/build sustainable, whole, vibrant communities with a high quality of life for all residents.

Model 2*Model 2 Functions*

- Capture, monitor, and facilitate the issue or geographic regional alliances.
- Scan for priority issues across the north.
- Develop strategies addressing the priority issues.
- Assist regional initiatives as required.
- Facilitate collaboration among initiatives where possible and effective.
- Gather and disseminate information on markets and opportunities / research and development.
- Position and brand the North.
- Advocate for the North.

Model 2 Attributes

- Start small – stay in one region to prevent loss of focus and build from that premise.
- Work on concrete, specific and measurable objectives.
- Build in opportunities for visible and measurable success in the short term so that stakeholders stay engaged and committed.

Speaker Biographies

Speaker biographies (if available) are presented in alphabetical order.

Anderson, Bruce

Bruce Anderson, MA, MCIP, is current President of the Vancouver Island Economic Developers Association (VIEDA); and a member since 1997. As a member of VIEDA, Bruce has participated in several economic development initiatives representing a region-wide perspective.

He holds the position of Manager of Development Services for the Town of Ladysmith; where he is responsible for community planning and economic development. Prior to coming to the island, Bruce was engaged in the private sector as a consultant for a decade. He provided planning and development services to a range of private and public sector clients; first in southern Ontario, and then based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Bello, Nate

Cameron, Jim

Clark, Bob

Elo, Janine

Fox, Len

Halseth, Greg

Dr. Greg Halseth is a Professor in the Geography Program at UNBC where he is also the Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies. With a focus on northern BC, Greg's research examines rural and small town community change and development. He serves as a member of several federal, provincial, and community advisory committees. His most recent books include "Building Community in an Instant Town" which talks about Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge, and "Building for Success" which talks about rural and small town community economic development

Kinsley, Colin

Kedgley, Graham

Graham Kedgley has a long history in the transportation business and has been Executive Director of NCDC since its inception in 1998. Born and educated in New Zealand, Graham has a Master of Commerce Degree and is a Chartered Accountant. In the mid-sixties, Graham set out to see the world. He spent a couple of years in New York and London, England. After returning to New Zealand, he decided that Canada was the place of the future and so he immigrated to Canada to start his own import business.

In the seventies, he spent 8 years in Vancouver at Neptune Terminals Ltd. where he was president. After that, he moved on to become BC's coal coordinator charged with the task of ensuring the development of BC's northern coal. Following successful completion of this project, Graham established himself as a private consultant in international trade, transportation and government relations.

Graham has served on numerous Boards and was chair of a harbour commission for a number of years.

Scott, Charles

Charles Scott is the Chief Executive Officer of Export North. Charles's background is in business development and risk financing, garnered from 11 years of working directly with entrepreneurs to strategically position their firms, handle rapid growth, enter new markets, and get out of trouble. In his 8 years in commercial lending (GE Capital, Community Futures), he helped small, medium and large firms structure their financial needs, typically in major expansion and workout situations. Charles teaches at the University of Northern British Columbia's business school, specializing in marketing and entrepreneurship. Northern BC has been home to Charles, his wife Susan, and their three teenage sons since 1993.

Scouten, Kathie

Stiller, Garth

Zurowski, Don

PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT

From the Bookshelf to the Bottom Line

Introduction

The Northern BC economy is improving and research indicates that if we do the “right things” this trend may continue. The 2005 Northern Economic Forum in Prince George will discuss this research with the community and economic development professionals of Northern BC. The Forum, an initiative of Community Futures Development Corporations of Northern BC and partnering economic developers, is made possible through the support of Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Provincial Government.

The conference is to focus on answering key questions that could be implemented by the participants and benefit the northern economy. There are numerous and substantial Northern BC reports, studies, plans, and initiatives that have been generated in recent years; the conference will increase regional knowledge of this work. To do this, we will draw specifically upon the findings of recent large scale economic development research projects.

This package contains brief summaries of three projects. Included is a brief introduction to each report and a general overview of the data collection methodology used. The appendix contains bibliographic and website details for the three summarized Northern BC economic development reports.

Ramp Up! Bringing Out the Best in British Columbia’s Regional Economies Report: Sustainable Economic Roadmap

Ramp Up! Bringing Out the Best in British Columbia’s Regional Economies: Sustainable Economic Roadmap is a report prepared by Frank Knott, of ViTAL Economy, Inc. and sponsored by Telus. The report, completed in April 2005, contains the results of an economic competitiveness assessment conducted for the Province of British Columbia. In addition to a provincial level point of view, it also contains regional perspectives. The project is an effort to promote sustainable economic development in the non-metropolitan regional economies of British Columbia.

Methodology:

The ViTAL Economy, Inc. team spent 10 months developing this research. They engaged the community by conducting over 400 interviews with provincial, regional, private sector and industry officials and experts. The majority of them (281) were interviews with

regional leaders and citizens. A wide variety of economic and business data was obtained and synthesized as well, including over 350 prior provincial and regional economic development reports.

Report Summary

*This is a condensed and edited version drawing from the original text.

This report tries to answer a series of questions about the future direction of BC's economic development – with a particular focus on the regions outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria. These questions are:

- How well positioned is BC to compete in the future world economy?
- How well positioned are BC's industry sectors to compete internationally?
- What strategic initiatives should BC's regions pursue to compete in the future world economy?
- Given the above, what provincial level economic roadmap should BC follow to generate the highest standard of sustainable prosperity for its citizens? **(This is strategic in nature and should not take the place of regional or provincial detailed economic development studies.)**

The RAMP UP! Report was developed around three key approaches:

- The market segment research included in the report goes beyond BC's competitiveness. It provides access to global benchmarks for about 17 market segments key to the BC economy, which have not been previously available to BC regions.
- There is a first study of its kind on best practices for achieving sustainable economic development for regions external to Olympic host cities, which was based on interviews with Olympic sponsor communities and economic research of long-term results over the past 30 years of Olympic Host City Sponsorship.
- RAMP UP! includes a very specific set of recommendations and measurable goals for implementing sustainable economic development in BC's rural regions, which would be led by the regions and the private sector. These recommendations also include a funding and budget model for these recommendations.

The report examines 3 topics to identify a focus, and set of priorities, for economic development in BC's regions:

- previous economic development work
- industry clusters
- enabling environment assessments

It also draws on current government efforts to build BC's economy, like the Promoting Commercialization and Innovation Final Report and the BC Progress Board's key recommendations.

The regional focus of the report is also driven by the opportunity to further diversify regional economies away from a dependence on public sector employment, transfer payments, and natural resource industries.

The report identifies 7 high level industry clusters and 17 market segments for analysis of BC global competitiveness, and identification of niche sustainable growth markets for which BC is uniquely positioned. These industry clusters and their associated market segment focus areas include:

- Agriculture – focus on high value agriculture and wine
- Tourism – focus on upper end tourism and adventure/eco-tourism
- Forest products – focus on raw logs, furniture, panels, alder
- Energy – focus on fuel cells/hydrogen
- Marine – focus on salmon aquaculture, yacht building, shellfish aquaculture
- Technology – focus on wireless, biotechnology, specialty computer chips, forest tech
- Mining

For each industry cluster, the report looks at limitations to production, demand, market potential, local and international trends, and other production factors. Further, it identifies industry clusters and market segments that hold potential as areas of innovation and market growth based on unique regional resources and centers of excellence. The industry clusters with such potential are:

- aerospace
- bio-products
- oceans
- education
- senior living
- film & television

Results from Ramp Up! suggest that BC can build on recent economic successes and new regional initiatives to create a sustainable, regionally driven, economic roadmap. The roadmap has four major points:

- Natural resource clusters – Reduce dependency on this sector and identify new sustainable niche markets
- Technology driven clusters – Enhance the economic potential of these clusters by boosting the enabling environment to catalyze growth
- Other industry clusters – Identify new sectors that can leverage indigenous resources and diversify the economy
- Enabling environment – Continue regulatory reform and regional economic development focus, improve provincial & regional collaboration and facilitate availability of start-up equity

Major economic development and diversification goals are: job and wage growth, lower unemployment and sector dependency, and retention/improved quality of life. To achieve these goals, the report suggests BC's regional economies should pursue eight integrated initiatives:

- Set quantifiable and measurable economic and quality of life goals.
- Create management organization & regional frameworks.
- Develop regional cluster-based economic strategies.
- Establish a finance and innovation network serving regions.
- Create regional branding.
- Form a collaborative leadership institute.
- Implement a youth engagement strategy
- Build regional capacity to benchmark local economy and increase productivity.

The report also outlines some key characteristics of BC's position within a rapidly globalizing economy. Continued reduction of export orientation and loss of export markets has resulted in reduced long-term global competitiveness and prosperity.

BC's natural resource sector is caught between two pressures: countries that can produce primary natural resource products at a lower cost, and the increasing commoditization of natural resource products traditionally considered to be value added. Over 70% of BC's GDP

economy is dependent on the natural resource sector, exposing the economy to long-term global commodity pricing and industry trends which are negative for BC. Not only is BC a high-cost producer vis-à-vis international competitors, competitive pressures are being felt with lower cost producers now starting to produce secondary and tertiary value added products.

The technology sector is small and has some significant challenges to overcome in order to become a future driver of economic growth. Still, BC is perceived to have an attractive environment for technology companies, low operating costs, and high market potential. It is also well positioned in the fuel cell technology sector.

Continued acceleration of globalization will require that BC leverage its assets and geographic location to compete in the global economy. For example, Cariboo opportunities include:

- a well-educated workforce
- historical heritage
- transportation hub
- internationally recognized winter city
- off-shore oil and gas
- abundant and inexpensive outdoor recreation
- affordable housing

Cariboo challenges include:

- geographic remoteness
- strong sense of isolation
- resource extraction dependency
- mountain pine beetle threat
- challenging weather
- poor roads

The Cariboo has assets that can be leveraged to develop the forest product, bio-tech, and tourism opportunities identified in the study.

Connectivity and collaboration with other regions is vital for future economic growth. Province-wide and regional collaborative frameworks are needed to foster collaboration, manage shared investments, organize shared resources, and assure shared accountability for initiatives. The report presents a series of eight recommendations:

Recommendations

- 1 BC's regions should set quantifiable goals for economic and community development objectives to enable progress to be tracked.
- 2 Establish a province-wide private-public sector partnership to guide a BC economic development and diversification strategy, coordinate funding of regional initiatives, and oversee implementation of province-wide capability building.
- 3 Complete detailed regional asset mapping and industry cluster assessments to identify investment opportunities and focus 2010 economic development activities.
- 4 Establish a Finance and Innovation Network that supports development of climates of innovation in regions and links funding needs with funding providers to provide start-up and early stage equity financing in the regions.
- 5 Create branding strategies for each region.
- 6 Form a Collaborative Leadership Institute to develop skills of regional leaders.
- 7 Develop a youth engagement strategy to reverse youth brain drain from BC's regions and increase labour force participation rates.
- 8 Establish a regional capacity to benchmark and measure the regional economy in cooperation with BC Stats and the BC Progress Board.

Working Together to Create Sustainable Wealth

Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations - Economic Strategies Initiative Final Report

The Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations (NWTT) is an association of First Nations groups in northern British Columbia. The NWTT's Economic Initiative Project aims to plan and develop an integrated and coordinated approach to northern economic development for member First Nations. The March 2005 report, *Working Together to Create Sustainable Wealth*, focuses on what will be necessary for First Nations in Northern BC to create sustainable wealth. It provides strategies, guidelines, and approaches to help address this question. The report examines basic dimensions of economic development, such as the need for capital, technology, and markets, as well as holistic characteristics which recognize that economic development must be guided by a vision for the future and grounded in values and connections to traditional territories.

Methodology

The NWTT project team undertook to facilitate and improve working relationships among First Nations, governments, and business leaders in northern BC by hosting and attending an array of meetings, planning sessions, forums, and conferences. In addition to utilizing data from these sessions and from a large number of documents, a detailed questionnaire was used to collect information for the final economic strategy report. In total, 37 First Nations communities, representing 14,544 people, participated between November 2003 and January 2004. Information was collected about many aspects of the economy including: economic staff and structures, planning and business development activities, economic ventures, economic indicators in the community, barriers to economic growth, information technology capacity, and general information on economic matters.

Report Summary¹

The Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations (NWTT) is comprised of 40 distinct First Nations from northwestern British Columbia. In December of 2002, the NWTT concluded an Economic Measures Agreement with the Treaty Negotiations Office of the Ministry of the Attorney General of British Columbia. The rationale for the agreement

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¹ This is a condensed and edited version drawing from the original text.

was to support the Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations to develop a First Nations Economic Strategy.

The major purpose of the NWTT economic initiative project is to plan and develop an integrated and coordinated approach to northern economic development for participating First Nations. The primary goal of the NWTT economic strategy is to improve the quality of life for First Nations in the north through economic growth that creates high quality jobs, generates wealth and investment, supports self-government, and helps to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the respective communities.

The report focuses on the fundamental question, “What will be necessary for First Nations in northern BC to create sustainable wealth?” and on providing strategies, guidelines, and approaches for the creation of this wealth. The report comprised of a brief report, a main report, and a set of appendices, examines eight areas requiring strategic action and change to enable First Nations to create sustainable wealth for themselves. These 8 areas include:

- Governance
- Access to lands and resources
- Planning capacity
- Human resource capacity
- Entrepreneurship
- Business & financial capacity
- Access to capital
- Access to markets

Governance

Sound governance is an essential prerequisite to successful social and economic development. First Nation governments must have stability and must create a political environment that is safe and secure for business development. They must also be able to build confidence, attract commitment, and provide security of assets for companies doing business in the respective communities.

Access to lands and resources

Creating sustainable wealth for communities requires that First Nations reclaim and begin to utilize the resources on their traditional territories. This reclamation may take on various forms, including: land claim settlements, interim agreements, joint ventures where tenures of the resources are secured for economic purposes, or occupation and use of the land. The exercise of jurisdiction and

utilization of these resources, and the management and utilization of these resources for their own benefit is essential to economic progress.

Planning capacity

Another vital stage for achieving sound governance is the ability to develop, initiate, complete, and implement sound fundamental planning processes. All too often, the examples of planning processes in First Nation communities are short term and program based; most having a one-year window for action and results. To create sustainable wealth, a multi-functional, comprehensive strategy of ongoing activities is necessary, in contrast with individual economic development projects or other isolated attempts at community betterment.

Human resource capacity

A strong case can be made that a quiet crisis is building because of the low education attainment of First Nations. There is an increasing gap between the community's need for expertise, trained professionals, and technically skilled workers, and the production of them. Strategies must be implemented that have a renewed focus on increasing educational attainment from preschool through adult education. Human resource development efforts, such as education and training programs, must be complemented by a broad program of economic development at the regional and community levels. Without a supply of jobs, training makes little sense for those who are economically disadvantaged.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is fundamental for the creation of economic wealth. The challenge is to develop and foster an entrepreneurial community with an entrepreneurial attitude or imagination that visualizes how existing resources may be used to create new economic opportunity. The growth and development of entrepreneurship and subsequent entrepreneurial companies in First Nation communities requires more than just the provision of capital and training courses to develop entrepreneurial skills. It demands a supportive environment in which entrepreneurs can build their companies and flourish as respected members of the community. Entrepreneurial activity emerges when the conditions are right. Effective leadership, sound institutions with integrity, and strong business relations are needed to create these conditions.

Business & financial capacity

Most NWTT communities are significantly limited in their human resource capacity to lead, support, and create economic diversification.

There must be strategies to increase expertise and proficiency in financial and business operations. There also needs to be an organizational format in which the for-profit sectors of the community are independent and managed with sound business and financial principles, even though community government entities are closely linked to their work. Businesses cannot compete successfully when the decisions are being made according to political instead of business criteria.

Access to capital

Access to equity capital is essential to strengthening First Nation participation in the economy. There is a need for more capital overall, and for a broader scope of financing instruments to better respond to the needs of aspiring First Nation entrepreneurs. The large majority of opportunities for financial support for economic growth are piecemeal in nature coming from an ever-changing host of programs that are often poorly suited to First Nation communities. A pool of equity capital designed specifically for this purpose is needed. In addition to new sources of equity capital, a focused effort by First Nations to accumulate and to retain capital, and a coordination of the vast array of regional programs so they have a community-based focus, are also needed.

Access to markets

In order to create sustainable wealth there must be recognition that key markets for selling products or services will most likely be somewhere outside the north and likely outside the province and country. Without a clear recognition of the market demand and price for the proposed products or services, many of the attempts at wealth creation will be based solely on the hope of markets and the interests or present capacity of the members of the respective First Nation communities. Most often these attempts in the creation of sustainable wealth fail. There must be a clear focus on creating access to markets for the products and services that First Nations plan to develop and produce.

Key Roles in the Implementation of the Economic Strategy

The NWTT economic strategy will benefit the entire northern BC region. The strategy recognizes that the respective First Nation and non-First Nation communities, and the surrounding regions, comprise a single economic region. A key goal of the strategy is to advance the economy of the First Nations of the north in a manner that also serves to benefit the economy of the entire region. No one community or institution can take on the breadth and depth of actions necessary to

advance the economy of the North. It will take the collective know-how, skill, resources, and energy of the private sector, all orders of government including public institutions such as universities, colleges, and schools, and a

collective of communities working in concert to achieve the goals articulated in this document. There must be an acceptance and willingness to engage in activity by the mainstream in collaboration with First Nation communities. This infers a positive collaboration process, and cooperative strategies, mechanisms, and institutions that reflect the diversity of communities within the region.

Role of NWTT

The NWTT role includes:

- Providing leadership by insuring the First Nations economic strategy is continually moved forward
- Coordinating economic development activities across the region
- Continually working to build networks of support and cooperation
- Pursuing larger scale business opportunities in cooperation with the communities in the region
- Providing technical help and professional expertise when requested.
- Helping communities build their own capacities by providing workshops, assisting community leadership, sharing best practices, and supporting planning processes.

The strategy proposes the formation of a First Nations Economic Association or Institute to be created by the Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations. The Institute's role includes:

- Providing ongoing direction to the implementation of the economic initiative strategy.
- Being a strong, unified voice to advocate and represent the First Nations interests to government, potential investors, regional and community organizations and to the multitude of other stakeholders.
- Developing a work plan, establishing benchmarks, and monitoring and communicating success in advancing the First Nation economic strategy.

The research has strongly indicated that in order for development to succeed, public policy must come to grips with First Nations having stewardship of their economies, and abandon acceptance of the present severely constrained land and resource base.

Role of Federal and Provincial Governments

Federal and provincial governments also have a role in the NWTT economic strategy, including:

- Support of the recognition and implementation of treaty rights in the area of lands and resources
- Encouragement, advocacy, facilitation, and support of the development steps and actions taken by First Nations in the creation of self-governing institutions
- Provision of a broad policy framework within which First Nation communities and Nations can plan the development of their economies, develop the projects, implement, monitor, and change them if necessary
- Program flexibility to allow First Nations to address development processes in their respective communities
- Funding arrangement flexibility to enable First Nation communities to identify needs, design programs, fashion funding, and allocate funding to their own priorities rather than fitting spending into categories determined elsewhere, and to encourage and oblige leaders to be more accountable to community members
- Stability in funding to develop programs for the longer term
- Funding levels sufficiently large to establish legitimacy, to generate excitement, to provide leverage, and to bring community leaders to the table and keep them there

Role of Mainstream Communities, Institutions, and Private Sector

Economic development of First Nation communities cannot occur in isolation from the rest of the Canadian, provincial, or regional economy. Until recently, First Nations overall participation in the Canadian economy has been marginal. All too often, local First Nations economies are invisible to the surrounding economies, although they are significant contributors to those economies. First Nations must participate in federal, provincial, and local economic planning mechanisms. The establishment of genuine partnerships with the non-First Nation private sector has been very successful in some local communities and the development of further partnerships need to be encouraged and facilitated.

Non-First Nations roles in assisting First Nation communities and institutions move forward include:

- Focusing and renewing commitment to increasing the participation and success rate of First Nation students through kindergarten to grade 12
- Supporting a better fit between education and training for personal development and the needs of community economic development

Students need appropriate training available within the region and need to be directed towards academic programs in high demand positions like business and economic development. The major priority areas for development of First Nations expertise are:

- Land and resource management
- Development of business activities based on lands and resources
- Leadership training
- Community economic development workers

The Connected North - Moving from northern strength to northern strength

A Report from the Northern BC Economic Vision and Strategy Project

UNBC's Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project was designed to interact with northern residents to find out what ideas they had for improving economic development opportunities where they live. The resulting report, *The Connected North: Moving from northern strength to northern strength*, released in August 2004, examines key challenges and opportunities relative to the economic development and diversification of northern BC communities. It also includes a series of actionable recommendations aimed at creating mechanisms necessary to implement a northern economic development strategy.

Methodology:

The project team traveled throughout Northern BC to speak to individuals and groups in 2 separate rounds between September 2003 and March 2004. Community interviews, workshops and roundtables were held to gather information and develop recommendations for an economic development framework. Interviews covered four general topics: northern lifestyle, vision, strategies, and process.

Report Summary²

Over the past 200 years the social, economic, cultural, and political landscape of northern BC has undergone considerable transformation. The pace of change has accelerated over recent decades and communities, industries, businesses, and decision-makers recognize that this creates both new challenges and new opportunities. There is emerging recognition of the need to coordinate at a strategic level a vision and plan for guiding investment and assisting policy development and program implementation for the region. This report reflects the input from northerners about suggestions for renewing the community and economic foundation of northern BC. It draws from their sense of place and their experiences with the land and resources that have long sustained communities, businesses, and industries. They

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² This is a condensed and edited version drawing from the original text.

know northern BC and their suggestions and observations can play a valuable role in guiding development.

The Northern BC Economic Development Vision & Strategy Project provided a process whereby community and economic development stakeholders could provide input into the elements and desirability of a framework for collaborative strategic planning and implementation. The central question for the project was:

“If people in northern BC were going to devise a vision and plan for economic renewal and a structure to manage that renewal, how would they do it?”

This report confirms widespread interest in creating a framework for regional strategic discussions and outlines key ideas and principles which people considered important if this process is to work in the north.

Three messages drive this report:

- Communities and economic futures are connected through resources infrastructure, technology, and the environment
- The region wants the capacity, resources, and tools to coordinate its community and economic future
- This future must include all of the people and industries in the region, and must respect the quality of life and environmental foundations on which those people, places, and cultures are based

In terms of context, this project is different from previous economic planning exercises in that it addresses the need for Northern BC to think more collectively and broadly so that local places can coordinate at a strategic level to take advantage of new opportunities and create new competitive advantage. What constitutes northern BC? For the purposes of the Project, northern BC includes everything from 100 Mile House north to the Yukon, and from Alberta to the Pacific Ocean. Political relationships, economic flows, and a range of other commonalities link this region. Finally, why take a regional approach? Several factors support the need to take a regional approach. Other jurisdictions and competitors have shifted from local to regional approaches and from sectoral to ‘place-based’ policies; the private sector is already adopting a regional approach; limited infrastructure and services funds require that we invest wisely; and a regional voice has greater impact on public policy debates and the marketplace.

What should a northern BC strategic framework be about? According to people, businesses, community groups, and agencies across the region it should be about:

- Constructing a shared foundation for region wide strategic discussions to support local planning processes
- Developing synergies and a bottom-up generation of ideas and directions,
- Building communication and collaboration
- Developing closer links between a wide range of strategic planning processes and partners

Part I – From Strength to Strength

Northern BC's people and organizations expressed an urgent need for community and economic renewal. This sense of urgency is driven, in part, by the legacy of unresolved land claims and treaty negotiations, and has been accelerated by 25 years of uncoordinated economic restructuring. Their suggestions for moving forward with a renewed community and economic strength builds on lifestyle issues, economic vision and strategy elements, and a range of options for ways to work more cooperatively between sectors and across the region.

Northern Lifestyles

In the new economy, quality of life and other rural and small town characteristics can now form its economic development assets. The small town characteristics of safe and familiar communities can provide an ideal setting for recruiting both young families and retirees. The northern pace and quality of life can be a foundation for economic development around outdoor lifestyles. With the connectivity of the 'information age', northern communities are attractive economic and quality of life destinations for companies seeking to relocate from expensive and congested metropolitan areas while still remaining 'plugged in' to the global economy.

The main issues relating to northern lifestyle are:

- Landscape
- Northerners
- Communities
- Economies
- Respect

People also identified three key aspects of change:

Population: youthful First Nations population, aging non-aboriginal population, declines in rural and urban centres in the north

- Service reductions/consolidations: especially in health and education and
- Resource wealth that is draining out of the region and needs to be returned to renew the community and economic infrastructure
- A Northern Vision: People, Environment, and Quality of Life

A northern economic vision is rooted in the interaction between people, the environment, and a high level of quality of life. The key elements of this vision include:

- Diversity
- Inclusivity
- Cooperation
- Lifestyle
- Sustainability
- Northern perspectives
- Connections
- Human resources
- A solid foundation for community development
- Community development resources
- Attitudes
- A renewed regulatory framework

Strategic Directions: From Northern Strength to Northern Strength

A number of strategic directions and guiding principles for renewal have been identified, including:

- **Education and training** are key for capitalizing on changing opportunities
- **Community Capacity Building** is needed to support economic renewal diversification, and to meet the changing needs of industry and governance in the north
- **Youth Opportunities** in education and training, and jobs with opportunities for advancement
- **Economic Strength and Diversification** to ensure that more resource industry benefits accrue to northerners
- **Financing, Investment, and Funding** that works for the north
- **Infrastructure improvements** for both physical and human capacity issues
- **Marketing and Branding** that values northern BC's characteristics and creates new opportunities in new markets
- **A Collective Voice** to increase the visibility of the region in policy debates and the marketplace
- **Partnerships in Decision-Making** within and between communities and sub-regions

- **A Framework** that is northern based and recognizes community assets and aspirations
- **A Northern Context** that recognizes the ‘quadruple bottom line’ of economy, society, environment, and culture
- **Support Mechanisms** that make efficient use of existing economic development tools/institutions and builds on the community development supports at our educational institutions
- **Building Blocks for Community Development** that include tools to create economic and community knowledge.

These principles can be directed to:

- Physical infrastructure
- Human resource infrastructure
- Community capacity infrastructure
- Economic and business infrastructure

A Northern BC Regional Development Model: Getting on With the Job

The community interviews and workshops explored appropriate models or vehicles to create a regional forum for discussing strategic options respecting community and economic development. Key lessons from other jurisdictions and examples include:

The importance of a vision to guide directions

- The need for clear goals
- The need for a clear mandate and management structure
- The need for strong linkages at the local and regional level
- The need to adopt a long term approach

People and groups across the region also want less connection with federal/provincial government structures. They need a bottom-up mechanism to coordinate strategic economic development investments with the financial resources to accomplish its tasks. They also want this structure to be inclusive of community, economic, and government interests and input, but be built around respectful participation.

Principles

A wide range of principles to help guide the development of a Northern BC regional development model have been suggested, including:

- **Institutional Stability** that will survive external change
- **Representation** that is inclusive and involves participation from community economic interests, governments, First Nations, and the private sector
- **A Governance structure** that is small and flexible, perhaps with a small board supported by a small staff, linked to governance functions at the federal and provincial level
- **Roles and Responsibilities** that enable effective northern participation in the economy
- **Funding** sources that are secure and demonstrate buy-in from partners
- **Location** of the Council in the north, including a presence in each of four sub-regions in order to enhance access, visibility, and accountability
- **An Effectiveness** so that northern views and concerns are incorporated into federal and provincial policy development and program implementation around regional economic development

Part II – Building Blocks

The second part of the report recognizes that there already exists a wide range of tools and resources for economic development and renewal, but they need to be used more wisely. One of the mechanisms for coordination of these tools and resources is recognition by communities that the region is connected by a defined set of corridors through which transportation, settlement, communications, and energy flow.

Innovation and Opportunities for Northern BC

Community and economic interests across northern BC identified a range of sectoral options for economic diversification to mitigate impacts of market fluctuations. Some of the most often suggested options include:

- Tourism
- Aquaculture
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Recreation
- Retirement
- Energy
- Transportation
- Minerals

- Education
- Services

People wanted a coordinated regional economic development framework through which discussion could take place about options for repackaging and accessing existing assets.

Opportunities for new potential were also identified, in:

- Seniors' services
- Tourism
- New information technology
- Small town quality of life
- The hydrogen economy
- Innovations in the resource sector, including inter-sectoral linkages
- Alternative energy sources and completion of the power grid in the region
- Education based activities

To do this, the region's economic strengths may need to be re-bundled to create innovative clusters based on knowledge and skills.

Community Economic Development Resources

An impressive array of community economic development resources exist across northern BC, including community planning documents, economic development strategy documents, land and resource plans, and reports encapsulating human resources and knowledge needs and assets. A mechanism to access and share this information is needed.

Community Economic Development Institutions

As with economic development resources, an impressive array of community economic development institutions also exists across the region. Many of these institutions function at local and regional levels and collectively they cover many of the pressure areas experienced by small and large businesses alike, and by aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. In support of these community and regional based organizations are a host of federal and provincial government offices including line-departments and ministries, as well as crown corporations and agencies. Again, people did not wish to re-invent the wheel, but instead find a way to facilitate the communication and coordination needed to make effective use of all these resources.

Recommendations

The major recommendations identified in this report include:

- Settle treaties in a fair and timely fashion
- Complete the electrical power grid across the region to facilitate new economic development opportunities in northern BC
- Move forward with the next steps in discussions about creating some form of a Northern BC Regional Development Council
- Direct Funding to “Potential Actionable Items” as identified through the community meetings
- Move on the various suggestions for a Resource Revenue Sharing arrangement with the region’s aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities
- Greater cooperative and coordinated policy development within and between all levels of aboriginal and non-aboriginal government to support economic and community development across the region

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