

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **1. Project Process and Methodology**

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# Project Process and Methodology

## Overview

The Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project was designed to interact with northern residents to find out what ideas they have for improving economic development opportunities where they live. In general terms, the Project was organized to answer a simple question:

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?

There were two rounds of interaction with northern residents. In the first round, undertaken between September and November 2003, our team travelled to communities around northern BC to speak with individuals and groups. In the second round, from February to March 2004, a series of workshops and roundtable events were held in a number of northern communities to review, refine, and supplement the topics and ideas raised through the community interviews and to develop recommendations for an economic development framework.

## Project Background

The impacts of social, economic, and political restructuring are being experienced across northern BC. To address the challenges and opportunities created by this restructuring requires both a regional perspective and a strategic development plan speaking to the key issues of vision, policy, investment, and coordination. The Government of Canada recognizes the need to develop the economies of rural Canada, and the University of Northern British Columbia is ideally suited to coordinate a process for building and collating the information required for this plan in Northern BC. This specific project emerged out of a dialogue between Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) and UNBC.

The purpose was to undertake a community driven process to produce a document which examines key challenges and opportunities relative to the economic development and diversification of northern BC communities. The document would also include a series of actionable recommendations aimed at creating mechanisms necessary to engage, mobilize, and coordinate key resources and stakeholders for the implementation of the northern economic development strategy.

The scope of the project was organized within a set of key project elements and deliverables. These included:

- i) a SWOT analysis including the identification of key issues, constraints, opportunities, and emerging trends that affect northern BC,
- ii) identification of existing community economic development resources and capacities in the North,
- iii) create a community driven consultation process to identify key challenges and opportunities,
- iv) examination of best practices and other international northern experiences from similar areas with a view to providing recommendations on strategic plan framework options,
- v) identification of the gaps in community economic development resources and capacities that are necessary to overcome constraints and exploit opportunities,
- vi) identification and role of key players/institutions that influence decisions, capacity, and the future of development in the North,
- vii) a list of actionable priorities for overcoming barriers and enabling development, and
- viii) description of a model(s) which would be suitable to develop and manage a multi-partnership agreement aimed at overcoming barriers to community economic development of northern BC.

## **Advisory Committee**

Throughout the project, the project team was supported by an Advisory Committee comprising a cross-section of community, First Nations, government, and industry interests. By no means could any Advisory Committee include representation from all of the stakeholder and interest groups connected with northern BC. As a result, the Project Team worked through the community interviews and workshop processes to ensure broad participation and input. The Advisory Committee provided valuable input over the project period and included:

Doug Routledge  
Vice President, Northern Operations  
Council of Forest Industries

Graham Kedgeley  
Executive Director  
Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

Ken Buchanan  
First Vice President  
North Central Municipal Association

Dawn Miller  
Executive Director  
Innovation Resource Centre

James Kassen,  
President  
Northern Lights College

Paulette Flamond  
Manager  
Northeast Aboriginal Business Centre

Justa Monk  
Co-Chair  
Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations

Garth Stiller  
Manager - Rural Sustainable Communities Unit  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

Greig de Bloeme  
Regional Business Officer, Northern BC  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

John Nosotti  
District Director  
Industry Canada

Tim Low  
Manager, Operations and Partnerships  
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Hal Howie  
Director  
Human Resource Development Canada

Gordon Borgstrom  
Regional Manager  
Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development

Roger LeClerc  
General Manager  
Community Futures Development Corporation of 16/37

Greg Lawrence  
General Manager  
Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Cariboo

Additional people participating in the Advisory Committee included:

Butch Morningstar  
BC Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development

Brad Gagnon  
Industry Canada

Debbie Van Nostrand  
Northeast Aboriginal Business Centre

Wayne Beggs  
Indian and Northern Affairs

Paula Peinsznski  
Community Futures Development Corporation of 16/37

The terms of reference for the Advisory Committee included:

- Members of the Advisory Committee provide a broad cross-section of people who are significant stakeholders to the project. The Advisory Committee will play an important role by providing stakeholder input, guidance, and suggestions relating to project design and implementation. As a result of their individual areas of expertise, Advisory Committee members may also provide links, contacts, or logistical support to the team.
- Interaction with the Advisory Committee will be primarily through teleconference and email discussion. The breadth of the geographic area and budget limitations restrict the use of face-to-face meetings.
- Advisory Committee members will be kept apprised of significant project developments.
- We anticipate that there will be at least four meetings during the course of the project. The first will be to introduce the committee members to each other and to review the general framework and methodology proposed by the team, including timeframes, the community consultation process, and project deliverables. This meeting will be scheduled for the last week in August and will likely be face-to-face.

- A teleconference meeting is being planned for the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will facilitate discussion following completion of the individual interviews that will have taken place throughout the north in September and October.
- The second teleconference will facilitate discussion on an interim report and will be scheduled for the week of March 1, 2004. This meeting will cover project progress to date as well as preliminary assessment of information gathered during the community forums and the material to be discussed at the regional workshops.
- The third teleconference will provide an opportunity for Advisory Committee members to comment on the draft final report prepared by the project team. We expect the draft to be available in late March 2004.
- Material pertinent to the conference calls will be delivered to committee members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting to allow sufficient time for review and reflection. The project has fairly tight timelines and it is hoped that committee members will have reviewed all necessary documentation prior to meetings.
- The Advisory Committee will be a fairly large group (approximately 14) and the project team will make every effort to schedule meetings at a date and time suitable to all participants. In the event that a committee member is not available during the scheduled call, there will be opportunity to provide prior written input that will then be shared with all committee members.

## Community Interviews

From the beginning of September to the first week of November, 2003, the project team travelled just over 13,400 km and visited over 51 communities and villages across northern BC. The area covered is from 100 Mile House north to the Yukon border, and from Valemount to the Pacific Coast. The project team designed and pre-tested a survey instrument to gather northerners' views on a vision and strategy for economic development in northern British Columbia. This survey formed the basis of the team's conversation with residents during the community interview phase of the project. In addition, the interview forms were posted on the Project website and a number of people submitted their comments in that way.

During the community interviews, a standard set of questions were asked and participants were free to provide any additional comments they might wish. Many people also supplied background information and materials on economic development processes or projects with which they had previously worked. As required by UNBC, the community interview process was granted Ethics Review approval and all participants were provided with information about the project and asked to sign a consent form.

The interviews covered four general topic areas. The first concerned characteristics of a “*northern lifestyle*”, and how those characteristics may be important for economic development planning. The second asked about a “*vision*” which might drive economic development in northern BC. The third asked for input regarding “*strategies*” for achieving a desired economic vision within the context of an appropriate northern lifestyle. The final part asked for participants’ suggestions regarding a “*process*” for moving forward with an economic strategy.

The project team compiled a summary of the findings from the community interviews and a draft copy was distributed to all respondents for review and comment. A copy of the Community Interviews Summary Report is included as Appendix 2 of this report.

## Regional Workshops and Roundtables

The initial round of community interviews confirmed that residents of northern British Columbia were keenly interested in pursuing the idea of an integrated vision and strategy for economic development in the region. It also confirmed that they wanted to ‘scale-up’ their economic development thinking and do this at a spatial scale that included all of northern BC. Round two of the community interaction process included a series of regional workshops and roundtables to further explore the ideas gathered during the community interviews. The regional workshops were facilitated sessions with 30 to 40 local participants at each session. The roundtables were smaller consultative processes with no more than 10 participants at each session. The following table presents the schedule of workshops and roundtables hosted by the project team.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Workshop / Round Table</b>
05 February 2004	Prince George	Workshop
17 - 19 February 2004	Queen Charlotte Islands	Roundtables
26 February 2004	Terrace	Workshop
28 February 2004	Dease Lake	Roundtable
05 March 2004	Houston	Workshop
12 March 2004	Williams Lake	Workshop
19 March 2004	Dawson Creek	Workshop
01 April 2004	Prince Rupert	Roundtables

These workshop and roundtable events were structured around three key questions:

- “What are the significant themes you would identify as being an integral part of your vision for northern British Columbia?”
- “What are some of the key strategic directions that you think are important for northern British Columbia?”
- “What framework or model would best suit implementation of a northern British Columbia economic vision and strategy?”



Workshop participants were provided with an overview of the project, a summary of the community interview findings, and material on regional economic development models that had been compiled by the project team. Each working session was preceded by a brief discussion of what the team had heard previously, and participants discussed the questions in small groups to allow for maximum input. As with the community interviews, the community workshop/roundtable process was granted UNBC Ethics Review approval, and all participants were provided with information about the project and asked to sign a consent form.

Overall, almost 200 northerners participated directly in the workshops and roundtables. Summaries of each workshop and roundtable were drafted within 10 days of each event, and participants were afforded the opportunity to provide comment and feedback on the draft summaries. Once the draft summaries were reviewed by participants, a final report was then completed and circulated. Since some individuals invited to the workshops were not able to participate, the project team circulated the finalized workshop summaries to these individuals as well. It should be noted that confidentiality issues preclude the wider circulation of roundtable notes and they are not included in the project Final Report.

## **Final Report**

To ensure that northerners who wished to engage with the process had the opportunity to provide input, the project team circulated draft copies of the Final Report to all those who had been contacted through the project. This included interview respondents and workshop participants as well as those who had been initially contacted for community interviews or invited to the workshops and roundtables but were unable to participate. In addition, the Final Report was mounted on the project website for wider access. The project website address is:

<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg/research/edvs/index.html>

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **2. Community Interviews Summary Report**

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**Summary of Themes  
from the  
Community Interviews**

**Northern BC Economic Development  
Vision and Strategy Project**

Project team:

Greg Halseth  
Leslie Lax  
Don Manson  
Sean Markey

University of Northern British Columbia

January 5, 2004

# Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

## Summary of Themes

January 5, 2004

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### Introduction

The impacts of social, economic, and political restructuring are being experienced across northern BC. The challenges and opportunities created by this restructuring require both a regional perspective and a strategic plan speaking to the key issues of vision, policy, investment, and coordination. A project team at UNBC is coordinating a process for collecting information which can form the foundation for a northern economic development framework. The Northern BC Economic Development Vision & Strategy Project gives community and economic development stakeholders an opportunity to provide input into the elements and desirability of this framework. Such a framework may then support a more extensive strategic development exercise. In turn, that strategic plan can be used to guide long term economic change.

The Project is comprised of two rounds of interaction with northern residents. In the first round, undertaken between September and November 2003, our team travelled to communities around northern BC to speak with individuals and group representatives. In the second round, scheduled for February and March, 2004, a series of workshops will be held in a number of northern communities to review the topics and ideas raised through the community interviews and develop recommendations for an economic development framework.

This report provides a thematic summary of information from the community interviews. As part of our commitment to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, no direct quotations or identifiers are used in this report. One of our key findings is that people and communities in northern BC do not want endless rounds of consultations but are 'ready' to move forward with creating an economic vision and strategy action plan.

## Field Logistics

From the beginning of September to the first week of November, 2003, the project team travelled just over 13,400 kms and visited over 51 communities and villages across northern BC. The area covered is from 100 Mile House north to the Yukon border, and from Valemount to the Pacific Coast. In addition, the interview forms were posted on the Project website and a number of people submitted their comments in that way.

During the community interviews, a standard set of questions were asked and participants were free to provide any additional comments they might wish. As required by UNBC, the community interview process was granted Ethics Review approval and all participants were provided with information about the project and asked to sign a consent form.

The interviews covered four general topic areas. The first concerned characteristics of a *“northern lifestyle”*, and how those characteristics may be important for economic development planning. The second asked about a *“vision”* which might drive economic development in northern BC. The third asked for input regarding *“strategies”* for achieving a desired economic vision within the context of an appropriate northern lifestyle. The final part asked for participants’ suggestions regarding a *“process”* for moving forward with an economic strategy. The summary of interview responses is organized by these four topic areas.

## Northern Lifestyle

When asked about a northern lifestyle, respondents identified a number of key issues:

How people see the north:

- intense land, nature, and climate links
- rugged and remote places
- the ‘north’ as part of our culture

How people see themselves:

- independent
- pioneers and individuals
- people who are used to working hard
- people who have wide skill sets to meet northern needs
- people living a rural and northern lifestyle
- not being trapped in a 9 to 5 office job

How people see their communities:

- a slower, less hectic pace of life
- a non-commercial emphasis to community life
- fewer amenities but greater quality of life

How people see their economies:

- strong resource dependence
- seasonal and periodic work
- a growing need for multiple jobs
- economies vulnerable to global economic pressures
- an economy intimately linked with the seasons and the northern landscape

In discussions over this northern lifestyle, many people identified how these points are also economic development ‘assets’. For example, the connections to an outdoor lifestyle and wilderness setting create opportunities in both tourism and resource development. The small town characteristics of safe and familiar communities provide an ideal setting for recruiting both young families and retirees. A gentler pace and high quality of life can be a foundation for economic development around outdoor lifestyle activities and recreation. A strong sense of independence means that both people and communities in the north are used to accomplishing things. In addition to this ‘can-do’ attitude, BC’s northern communities are an affordable place for living and doing business. With the connectivity of the ‘information age’, many people identified that northern communities are attractive economic and quality of life destinations for companies seeking to move out of expensive and congested metropolitan areas.

Along with assets, a northern lifestyle creates a series of challenges. Many of these are tied to the changes affecting our resource industries. These include that community

economic health is closely linked to these industries, that there is a growing need to work multiple jobs, and that there is increasing uncertainty in all resource sectors.

A northern lifestyle also demands a great deal of respect. This includes respect for the culture, lifestyles, and values of northern peoples. It also includes respect for the environment, something which includes remote locations, long distances, and four seasons.

Of course, not all respondents believed there is a ‘distinct’ northern lifestyle, and that some attributes in the north are mirrored by urban and rural lifestyles in the central and south-east parts of the province (and some parts of Vancouver Island). What provides an element of distinction is the deterioration of infrastructure, and in some cases lack of infrastructure, that the more populous southern rural regions enjoy. While policy, regulation, and legislation typically makes no distinction by place, in some ways the low densities and concomitant lack of services helps describe the north and bolster an argument for attention.

Finally, respondents expressed a great deal of concern about the pace and nature of change. While change is not a new topic in northern BC, there is a general sense that it is quickening. Respondents identified that this creates both opportunities and risks and that a clear economic vision and strategy can assist with embracing the opportunities and mitigating the risks. Three key aspects of change, however, need attention:

#### *Population*

First Nations’ communities are growing and have a very young population profile. Education, training, and access to economic opportunity are crucial to these young people.

In many resource towns, a consequence of recent change has been population losses. This is accelerating the aging of the population seen in the rest of Canada. As a result, towns and services designed for the young families must now adapt to the needs of an older and retirement age population. In addition, a new round of economic opportunities must be created to again attract young people into these communities.

Together, these changes mean a robust and well rounded population profile across the north, one that can take advantage of a range of social and economic development opportunities. However, it is also an age profile that will require access to the full range of services.

#### *Service reductions*

A further consequence of recent change has been reductions in local services. In particular, access to health and education services is crucial for recruiting new economic activity and adapting to rapidly changing market opportunities. We cannot ignore the need to provide this type of ‘infrastructure’ to support economic development.

### *Resource wealth*

There is a clear need to reverse trends which have seen a net outflow of economic wealth. There is a need to not only create more local opportunity, but to keep more of the wealth generated by that opportunity in northern BC.

### **Vision**

When we asked people across northern BC about their vision for the future of the region, they identified a series of opportunities and challenges, but set both of these against the very specific context of northern BC.

### *Context*

Respondents clearly identified that northern BC is part of a global economy. This is nothing new, as northern BC has for centuries been integrated into global trading relationships. There was considerable concern that both federal and provincial governments did not have a good grasp of either northern BC or its position within an increasingly global economy.

Second, respondents identified that northern BC has a set of distinct realities in which changes wrought by a global economy are being experienced. These realities include, first and foremost, a significant First Nations' presence across the region and the need to settle treaty claims in a fair and timely manner. As well, many towns have a resource dependent economy. In turn, there are many very large industries which are also dependent upon resource extraction. And all of these contribute to a 'northern lifestyle' which combines economy and environment.

### *Opportunities*

There was strong support for creating a robust economic development vision for northern BC. Respondents identified a clear set of opportunities associated with such a northern economic vision. They identified that a vision could allow northern BC to speak with a more united voice, and with that united voice achieve to better argue for the needs of the region. If places across northern BC pool their assets, they are better equipped to argue for economic investment and to direct that investment to goals which meet their aspirations. A vision also provides opportunities for economic action to be coordinated and to be innovative. In times of uncertainty, creative options are always possible.

Respondents also identified that there are many groups looking for direction and that a northern economic vision could provide such direction to communities, local governments, small businesses, and the investment community. Finally, it was identified that a coherent economic vision could support development which would then provide the money to support robust community development.



## *Challenges*

Respondents also identified sets of challenges which may impede a northern economic vision. Key among these challenges was that there is a great deal of diversity across northern BC. From place to place, and even within places, individuals may not agree on a coherent direction. Differences in the industrial structure, and current economic fortunes, may also create barriers to cooperation. The challenge will be to create something which receives wide support and which provides a practical foundation to move forward.

The challenge of geography to developing a coherent northern economic vision was further highlighted. While some regions have a distinct identity, other areas do not. Regardless of whether there are distinct regional or local identities, people must still move their thinking from the local, to the regional, to the pan-northern BC setting. In a global economy, inter-community competition is not productive.

Respondents were clear that an effective vision requires people to balance:

- the need to think beyond local places, with
- an ability to accommodate the needs of local places.

A northern economic vision must be broad enough to be inclusive and guiding to economic strategy, but it should not limit the ability of local places to identify a strategy and future which fits with their own needs, assets, and aspirations.

It was also identified that a key challenge to developing a coherent economic vision will be meaningful First Nations' participation. Too often planning exercises have not included all of the peoples from northern BC and thus have not been able to move forward with full support. It will be critical that economic vision discussions be conducted in a respectful manner which includes all participants with a stake in northern BC's future.

Finally, it was clearly identified that northern BC is eager for action. While vision statements may be great concepts, they must be linked to a clear action plan. To do this, it was recognized that one must have access to relevant information, and access to sufficient support funding in order to bring both vision and strategic plans into being. The question of long term and stable support funding is vital to developing the human resources and capacity in northern BC to create innovative and reactive economic development communities.

## Strategy

Respondents identified that northern BC continues to be a land of tremendous opportunity, but that the northern half of the province is unique and needs its own plan. One of the key benefits of moving forward with a strategic economic development plan is that it can provide a blueprint for investors, as well as a blueprint for communities.

### *Opportunities and challenges*

When asked about the possibility of developing a ‘made in the north’ economic development strategy, respondents again identified a range of opportunities and challenges.

Key among the opportunities was a wide recognition that the northern half of the province is unique and needs a blueprint for investment which recognizes that uniqueness and builds from it. In addition, respondents recognized that there were crucial transportation corridors which bind northern BC together and connect otherwise distant locations. Together with a robust economic vision, a coherent strategy can provide the foundation to energize local ideas and options and can provide a forum for working regionally to most efficiently use our assets, capacities, and resources to create a robust economic future. In this sense it was very clearly recognized that this could provide a mechanism for all communities in northern BC to work cooperatively.

Among the identified economic strategy challenges was that many respondents were sceptical on the basis of past land-use and planning exercises. They wanted to be sure that there was ‘buy-in’ from both the federal and provincial governments. This must include reliable funding for the process of completing a strategy, as well as reliable funding for the implementation of that strategy. ‘Actions speak louder than words’ was a common refrain.

A second challenge to developing a coherent strategy is that it must include wide participation. This must cover both First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities, as well as business, labour, and other interests. There was wide support for the sentiment that ‘we are in this thing together and therefore we must work together’.

A final key challenge is that there needs to be a clear understanding of the role of vision and the role of strategy. Many respondents argued that vision needs an action plan in order to give it life, and that any action plan must be clearly linked with a vision so that energy, time, and investments are not wasted.

### *Focus areas*

In terms of the components of an economic strategy, respondents identified three areas of focus and four areas of infrastructure which need attention.

The first area of focus concerned developing meaningful consultation and robust partnerships. Community participation, cooperation, and involvement was seen as a crucial building block for moving the strategy forward. Only by working together, building trust, and establishing working partnerships can there become an effective lobby from northern BC arguing for a greater say in its economic destiny.

Discussions about consultation and partnerships also extended to jurisdictions outside BC. Economic development in northern BC has strong linkages with Alberta, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Alaska. A mechanism for consultation and partnering must include cross-border connections.

The second area of focus is the need to coordinate the process of creating the vision and strategy. Respondents wanted to know who would be leading the exercise and how it would be linked with community input. Many respondents are already active in economic development or private enterprises and they wanted to make sure the process was open for their input. Given the desire for wide involvement, all respondents were looking for greater coordination. Many argued that a northern BC strategy exercise would be the ideal way to bring about some coherence to otherwise disparate local exercises.

The third area of strategy focus concerned breaking the cycle of resource dependency in northern BC. This was clearly built around ideas respecting the need to find new areas of competitive advantage. For some it meant recruiting large and diverse industries, for others it meant augmenting an already strong resource or industrial base with additional small scale economic activity. Many suggested finding ways to increase northern BC's participation in the service economy, and the need to support this endeavour through enhanced marketing and targeted human resources training. Northern BC's resource wealth is impressive, high quality, and will continue to support economic development. But it is critical that more of the benefits from that resource development stay in the north. Similarly, it is also critical that additional economic activity be developed to support a more robust economic region.

### *'Infrastructure'*

One important type of economic strategy infrastructure concerns 'physical' infrastructure. Respondents talked about transportation, communication, and local civic infrastructure as being key economic assets. Transportation infrastructure included road, rail, and air transport facilities, as well as the organization of companies delivering services via those facilities. Local civic infrastructure included recreational and amenity facilities (which are already strongly developed across the region), together with new kinds of facilities such as seniors' housing (which are not as extensively developed).

In addition to physical infrastructure, there was strong recognition of the need to provide health care, education, and social support services. In both retaining residents and business, and recruiting new residents and new businesses, these services were seen as essential drawing cards.

A second element of infrastructure focused upon our ‘human’ capacity. Key points concerned the training of youth, many of whom are First Nations, and the availability of additional skills training as an established workforce seeks to compete in new economic sectors. For example, there were many suggestions for relocating government offices and industrial headquarters to northern BC. The costs of doing business, in terms of office space, land access, and quality of life, is relatively better in northern BC compared to large metropolitan centres. To support diversification into the service economy, there is an enhanced need to access educational facilities at both the school and post-secondary levels. Many respondents identified how odd it seemed that all economic analysts were talking about the need to increase our skills while at the same time, schools and other educational services were undergoing cutbacks.

A third key area of infrastructure development moves from the individual to the ‘community’ capacity level. First among the needs in northern BC is to settle First Nations’ treaties. From a wide spectrum of perspectives came the clear message of the importance of bringing certainty to the land claims issue in northern BC.

Other community capacity building exercises included those that support the voluntary sector and which support mechanisms for conflict resolution over resource use and the allocation of otherwise scarce resources. Competition between economic sectors is a normal part of development debates. It is crucial that efficient and equitable mechanisms be identified to deal with, and resolve, arising conflicts.

A fourth area of infrastructure renewal concerned our ‘economic and business’ infrastructure. Respondents clearly identified that income earning jobs were a key to community viability. Efforts at local diversification were seen as involving investments in both large and small business options, training and support activities, and encouragement of a range of economic sectors. Several respondents noted that this will involve an increasing need for access to capital and business development advice. A number of supportive agencies are already available in northern BC, and respondents felt their role needs to be strengthened.

Finally, a range of sectoral options for economic diversification were identified. These included:

- tourism
- aquaculture
- forestry
- agriculture
- recreation
- retirement
- energy
- education
- services

In each of these cases, respondents identified that economic diversification was critical to avoid sectoral or product crashes.

## **Process**

The fourth area on which respondents shared their opinions had to do with the process of developing a northern BC economic development vision and strategy. Process comments covered topics ranging from responsibility and participation, to funding and implementation. Our key finding with respect to ‘process’ is that people and communities in northern BC are ready and eager to get on with the task of creating an economic strategy for their future.

### *Responsibility*

In terms of responsibility, respondents were convinced that this must be a ‘made in the north’ exercise. As a result, there needs to be shared responsibility amongst communities (First Nations and non-Aboriginal) and economic stakeholders. There was a strong feeling that both the provincial and federal governments have a role and responsibility in northern BC’s economic development planning, and that internal institutions such as economic development organizations, village/municipal/regional governments and the North Central Municipal Association also have a role to play. Against this wide recognition of shared responsibility, there was a clear need identified for a new umbrella group to coordinate the vision and strategy exercise. This umbrella group must involve people not perceived as having a vested interest in one or another of the participating groups.

### *Participation*

Respondents also had strong feelings about who should participate in an economic vision and strategy process. While recognizing that all of the groups sharing responsibility must be active participants, there was also a very strong sense that this exercise should not include the ‘usual suspects’. Respondents argued for ‘open access’ to the process and that information be shared in comprehensive and innovative ways to ensure that people are getting the message out of the process and have opportunity for input into the process. The legacy of public participation exercises carried out across northern BC to mixed success were cited time and again as reasons for a clear and interactive participation process that does not include only vested interests.

### *Funding*

In terms of moving this framework forward to an actual vision and strategy, respondents were clear that the exercise must be well funded. Responsibility for funding was seen as coming from the federal and provincial governments jointly. There was also some recognition for shared costs which would involve local governments. Finally, there was support for private sector investment in funding the vision and strategy process. As northern BC’s large industries have received significant benefits from the allocation of public resources, so too should they participate financially in the public exercise of devising a new economic vision and strategy. The bottom line for many respondents was that it was critical to properly resource the next stage of the process.

### *Implementation*

Finally, there was a clear need for an implementation plan. Again, the legacy of past planning, land use, and management exercises has created an appetite for clear implementation strategies on the part of respondents. There was recognition that wide involvement in developing a vision and strategy can lead to a greater commitment to implementation. There was also recognition that it is likely to require a lead organization in order to ensure that participating groups and government agencies carry through with their commitments.

Comments on implementation also recognized a key role for the network of economic development organizations which are linked across northern BC. These organizations include the North Central Municipal Association, the North West Tribal Treaty Association, Chambers of Commerce, the Northern Caucus, the Community Futures Development Corporations, regional economic development commissions, tourism associations, the Aboriginal Business Development Centres, local economic development offices, and local and regional governments. As a closing note on process, respondents were loathe to think that this exercise should create a new bureaucracy; rather they wanted a flexible and innovative implementation mechanism.

An additional note on process concerned the areas of the province without some form of local government. While regional districts bring a local government function to most unincorporated areas of the province, and many First Nations have well organized band and tribal council functions, parts of the northwest corner of BC lack a local government voice. It will be important that local concerns continue to be a driving force in developing and implementing an economic vision and strategy framework.

## **Key Things**

This project is about meeting the challenges and opportunities created by the economic changes underway across northern BC. The purpose is to give the people of northern BC, the community and economic development stakeholders, an opportunity to say how they would meet those challenges and build from those opportunities. For too long, the economic fortunes and plans for northern BC have been developed from afar. We asked northerners: “if you had a choice, how would you do it?” The goal is to create a Northern BC Economic Development Vision & Strategy framework for exercising those choices.

Between September and November 2003 we listened to people in communities around northern BC. This report provides a thematic summary of information from those community interviews.

Five key things clearly ran through respondents’ input. These include:

- the need to settle treaties fairly,
- the need for resource benefits to be more readily available to the communities which are generating them,
- the need to identify opportunities for public and private investment options,
- the need to clearly identify and fund infrastructure investments (ranging from physical to social to community to business infrastructure),
- and a recognition that community development is clearly linked to community economic development.

Together, there was recognition of the need to think regionally (as the fortunes of northern BC are connected and interlinked) and of the need to think strategically for the future. In this way, local places would still have independence of determining their individual goals, but an overarching framework would help guide vision, policy, investment, and coordination. Again, people and communities in northern BC are ‘ready’ to move forward with creating an economic vision and strategy.

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As noted at the beginning of this report, the contents are a thematic summary of information obtained from the community interviews. Copies of this summary are provided to all of the people who took time to meet with us and share their views and concerns. Should you have any comments or questions about the summary or the project, please contact Greg Halseth at UNBC.

For further information about the Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project, please contact:

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# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **3. Community Workshop Reports a. Prince George**

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Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

**Meeting Notes**

**Prince George Workshop**

Prince George Civic Centre  
February 5, 2004

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Prince George Workshop  
Prince George Civic Centre  
February 5, 2004

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**WORKSHOP AGENDA**

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**Introductions**

- Participants
- Project
- Day's work plan / agenda

The process for the next three sections will be to share information, gather input from workshop participants, and discuss priorities and recommendations.

**Vision:**

- What we heard through community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / recommendations

**Strategy:**

- What we heard from community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / sectoral focus / recommendations

**Framework**

- Review of models selected from literature review
- Discuss models through a 'northern lens' – what could work for the north.
- Recommendations

**Next Steps**

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Prince George Workshop  
Prince George Civic Centre  
February 5, 2004

Participants

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**Invited participants:**

John Nosotti	Alex Ostapiuk
Andrew Webber	Bob Long
Gerry Offet	Wiho Papenbruck
Glen Dunn	Marc Imus
Dan Rogers	Sue Clark
Dawn Miller	Greg Lawrence
Dan Adamson	Dick Chambers
Kathie Scouten	Rand Stromgren
Laurie Kerr	Bruce Sutherland
Sherry Sethen	Kathy Torpe
Kenneth Whyte	John Rustad
Cameron Beck	Don Zurowski
Keith Playfair	Len Fox
John Backhouse	Michael Riseborough
Gary Blattner	Mike Frazier
Gordon Borgstrom	Tim Barry
Tom Briggs	Eugene Runtz
Colin Kinsley	Charles Jago

**Project Team:**

Greg Halseth	Leslie Lax
Don Manson	Sean Markey

**Facilitator:**

Dave Yarmish

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Prince George Workshop  
Prince George Civic Centre  
February 5, 2004

Meeting Notes

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The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am by Dave Yarmish who acted as facilitator for the workshop.

Dave recognized a welcome from the Lheidli T'enneh and noted that Barry Seymour was not able to attend this morning.

He then invited Mayor Colin Kinsley to offer a welcome from the City of Prince George. Mayor Kinsley welcomed participants and noted that discussions about a regional plan for the economic future of northern BC is timely and wished participants well in developing a vision to guide strategies for our northern communities.

Dave Yarmish then invited participants to introduce themselves and provide some brief background on their interests relative to economic development in northern BC. This was followed by introductions around the room.

Dave Yarmish then invited Greg Halseth from the UNBC Project Team to introduce the Project and the day's event. Greg started by thanking the participants for taking time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. He explained that the interest in a northern BC economic vision and strategy arose from an increasing recognition of BC's role within a global marketplace and that people were telling the Project Team that northern BC must think more collectively and broadly. People have also been telling the Project Team that our competitors are recognizing the impact of global forces on local places and that it is time for us to move our thinking to a regional level to create a new strategic plan which takes advantage of new opportunities and which creates new competitive advantage. A Project goal is to see if people in northern BC are interested in creating a 'made in the north' solution.

Greg Halseth then introduced the rest of the Project Team who were in attendance. These included Leslie Lax, Don Manson, and Sean Markey.

Greg Halseth then provided a brief overview of why this Project has taken a regional orientation to its work. Key points included the political and economic linkages which connect northern BC, the patterns of infrastructure and service delivery which are reinforcing established connections across the north, the role of new factors such as an

interest in the environment which are binding communities across the region, and that our competitors have already ‘scaled up’ their interest in coordinating public policy, infrastructure investment, and the way regional voices are heard in the global marketplace. He reinforced that this Project is not about usurping local interests with a top-down single directive. Rather, it is about developing synergies through a bottom-up collaborative process so as to construct a broad foundation for regionally supporting local strategic planning processes.

Greg Halseth outlined that the Project is based around a single question:

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?

Through the Fall of 2003, the Project Team undertook an extensive community interview process across northern BC. Through February and March we are undertaking a series of community workshops to refine and focus some of the things we heard in those interviews. The goal is to produce a final report which addresses elements of a vision for northern BC, suggestions with respect to strategic directions for development, and options for a structure for implementing these elements and directions. The key message at this point is that there is a keen appetite to move forward with an economic vision and strategy for northern BC.

Don Manson then introduced the workshop to the community interviews process. He emphasized that if a ‘made in the north’ solution was going to be successful, it must hear from as many people in the north as possible and be widely supported. Thus, from September to November 2003, the Project Team travelled over 13,400 kms and visited with people in over 50 communities and villages. The community interviews asked about people’s thoughts and experiences with a northern lifestyle, a northern vision, strategic development directions, and ways to follow through on these ideas. He also mentioned that the Project website contained background information and survey reply forms which allow people to continue to have input.

Don Manson continued by introducing the workshop program. The idea is to take the information we heard from community interviews and add to them, bring some focus to them, and gauge whether there is support for a made in the north solution. He outlined that over the February and March period that we would be holding 7 events including some large community workshops and some smaller round table activities in places across northern BC.

At this point, Leslie Lax provided an overview of how the day’s workshop will proceed and that we are interested in hearing participants’ responses with respect to ‘vision’, ‘strategic directions’, and ‘frameworks’.

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To introduce the workshop session on vision, Leslie reviewed key elements with respect to context, opportunities, and challenges that we heard from people during the community interviews. He reminded participants that our task here today was not to craft a vision statement but to identify key elements which participants supported as important for a northern vision. The results of today's workshop would then be included in consideration with input from all of the other workshop and roundtable processes.

Following this review of background materials, Leslie turned the process over to Dave Yarmish who invited participants to discuss elements with respect to a vision for northern BC.

Some key 'vision' questions asked by participants included:

- That we need to include the word 'implementation', otherwise we will not have a mechanism by which to move forward.
- That a mechanism to move forward is particularly crucial given the need for action and that in the past communities in northern BC 'have been studied to death'.
- That there is a need to be synergistic in order to avoid duplication of efforts in developing and implementing visions and strategies.
- That it will be important to remember how, in a regional debate, not all communities are on a level playing field and there are different degrees of capacity, assets, quality of life, services, and readiness for participation in the process.
- That we must remember past efforts such as the Northern Development Council from the 1970s and the challenges they had in bringing northern communities together to work on problems over the long term. One solution the Northern Development Council employed was to require that more than one Regional District agree on a topic before it could go to the Council.
- It will be important to recognize that the size of Prince George may pose a challenge to regional cohesiveness.
- It will be important that we think about small economic activities as well as large industries and must support infrastructure which serves a wide range of interests.

- It will be important to move communities in thinking from the individual to the regional level as they typically feel alone and are struggling ‘too often in survival mode’.
- It will be important to maintain the viability of local initiatives within a broader regional vision or strategy.
- It is crucial that we understand how inter-community competition is a zero-sum game and ultimately not fruitful when our challenge is to interact in a global marketplace.
- We need to recognize that BC is not an island, but is part of an integrated global economy, and thus form our aspirations within a realistic set of expectations.
- That there is a considerable level of co-dependency across northern BC with our large and small places extending different types of support and benefits to one another.
- That while many places feel alone, we can recognize considerable commonality in terms of opportunities and challenges and build upon these.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of elements which might contribute to a northern vision. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- We need to recognize the realities of the global economy
- We need to develop niche products and roles to fit with the global reality
- We have to recognize and foster a sense of co-dependency among Northern communities: image of a wheel, with Prince George as the hub and the surrounding communities as the spokes
  - We need to feel part of the larger whole, create a feeling of membership in northern BC
- The two keys will be ensuring continuity and avoiding duplication
- There is too much emphasis on conflict and not enough on cooperation
- A certain critical mass is necessary for economic growth



- We have to determine which communities are best suited to different parts of a strategy in northern BC
- We have to find a balance between our aspirations and the economic realities
- We must re-define the core assets of the region – this has been done before but we need to continually update our profile
  - We should pursue diversification strategies around our core assets (i.e., traditional sectors and new opportunities)
- We should consider ‘quality of life’ as a driving force for the region – and promoting quality of life depends on quality infrastructure (health, education, housing, etc.)
- We need public policy that seeks to preserve our quality of life in all northern communities
- Our vision should include good jobs and good wages
- Land use and treaties are the key drivers now in the North - need to resolve treaties
- We need to understand how to make sustainable resources sustainable
- Public policy should allow for tax incentives for investment at the regional / local level
- Need for a public policy that develops quality of life as this is what attracts people and their business
- We should consider how regionalization differs from centralization...what do these concepts mean for the North
- We have to ensure our access to services and infrastructure
- We need the political will to settle treaties
  - Our elected officials need to be more accountable
- The key to a regional strategy will be to reduce duplication and increase cooperation
- We need control; we must determine our own destiny which will involve taking power from other places

- Electoral reform will enhance representation and accountability
- We have to consider jobs in smaller communities – young people are leaving and there is no youth in-migration
- Industry is importing skilled workers while youth are leaving because of lack of opportunity.
- We have to recognize that the playing field is not level between smaller and larger communities in the North – this will be a barrier to a regional strategy
- How do we make this process relevant for smaller communities?
- Smaller communities need more jobs – at the same time, industry is becoming ever more efficient, needing fewer workers for more output
- Public policy in the province needs to recognize the source of our wealth and look to retain more of that wealth in the North
- We need to ensure industry access to resources
- We need to protect and develop the four corners of economic development: 1) education; 2) transportation; 3) communications; 4) health
- Services are key to people being able to stay in their communities
- We need to ‘brand’ our communities for investment purposes
- Investors need to know we are here
- Each community wants to keep its own identity
- We need to foster a sense of community pride
- Public policy should look at incentives to industrial development
- There are lots of existing studies – ‘we have been studied to death’ – but we have to recognize that without the study you don’t get the results
- We have to look at what urbanization means to economic development in the North – do we need critical mass

- There should be emphasis on agricultural renewal
- We should look to European examples – e.g. what will we look like in 2030 – look at agriculture
- Education is key – we need trained people; we need access to education and training
- We need to retain wealth in the North (e.g. refer to Baxter report)
- We need to understand how to draw immigrants to the North
- Unless we are able to access money from the banks, we will get nowhere – we need more security for access to affordable money – this is not there right now
- We need a larger voice to put pressure on governments to ensure that this process is long-term
- Each community should have its own vision and then collect these for a broader regional vision

There was some additional discussion following the table reports. This discussion included:

- That one of the key challenges for public policy development has included government change at (and sometimes between) elections.
- There is some trepidation, based on past experiences, that development initiatives can be too easily dropped from the public policy agenda.
- That we will have to craft a new kind of process that will not drop off the table every time public policy or government interest changes.
- That models for funding regional development initiatives likely already exist. In BC, participants identified resource royalty sharing examples such as the Fair Share Program.

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At 12:15 pm the workshop adjourned for lunch.

Dave Yarmish called participants back together around 12:45 pm to begin the table discussions with respect to strategic directions.

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Leslie Lax introduced the strategic directions discussion. He began by sharing what the Project had heard from northern residents. This information was organized in three broad topic areas. These included opportunities, challenges, and areas of strategic focus. The areas of strategic focus concentrated on physical infrastructure, human capacity infrastructure, community capacity infrastructure, and business and economic development support infrastructure.

Some key ‘strategic direction’ questions asked by participants included:

- That we need to recognize how one of the challenges around diversification options will be that the job types and pay levels are quite different from the (often) high paying resource sector jobs we have been used to.
- Sometimes the people who have the most difficulty adjusting to the different types of jobs in their communities are community leaders. Youth in northern BC are looking for jobs and have few problems with smaller operators or alternative types of employment options.
- Resource job losses in small towns often mean that people must move in order to support their households. This means that there is no ‘latent’ labour pool available to take up new options in a diversifying economy of small industries. We should get comfortable with the idea that regional development will mean different options and possibilities for the different types and sizes of communities in northern BC.
- We should remember that small communities need a stabilizing element. In the past this has been a large industry. With some stability, then we can get along with other elements of economic diversification.
- We need to know our relative strengths and weaknesses as there is no universal solution. In a regional approach, the many different components contribute in different ways to an overall successful strategy.
- Small places near Prince George have been able to capitalize on Prince George’s growth and the increase in traffic along the Highway 16 corridor. We need to recognize that each place must build their local strategies based upon their options and assets. For example, call centres may not be possible in smaller places where high capacity telephone or data lines are not yet available. A challenge for this Project will be to meet the needs of so many

different places.

- We need to keep in mind that there are a number of options for financing economic diversification. These include pension plans and the ‘working opportunity fund’ as potential venues for access to capital.
- We need to recognize the important role many in northern BC can play in devising a strategy. This includes labour, young people, and First Nations.
- It will be important not to duplicate efforts. There is a need for overall coordination between different levels of government and different levels of economic development organizations.
- We need to get on with developing a structure that will allow us to move forward with an economic strategy.
- The issue of poverty is a significant challenge which should be included within our understanding of northern economic development.
- Consideration must be given to finding a way to overcome the many roadblocks which limit the development or expansion of small businesses. Issues as simple as liability insurance and obtaining licenses may pose little challenge for large firms but may be insurmountable for new small businesses.
- Our economic development strategy should include ways to build and capitalize on local pride. Small businesses generate local pride and keep money circulating within the community.
- Like with vision, our development strategies need to recognize that every community is different and that synergistic relationships can be built between places, both large and small.
- We need to recognize that there is an uneven playing field and that some development or investment support mechanisms are simply not available to small communities.
- In developing strategic directions we need to be optimistic and focus on what we can do.

- There needs to be a source of funding available to address the specific needs of small places and small communities. For example, a northern development fund could be used to create access to capital.
- If we recognize that each place is different, the starting point for our strategy should be to find ways to work together without limiting the choices of local places.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of potential strategic directions for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Treaties are a central component of any strategy
- Infrastructure
- Access to small business funding
- We need to remove the roadblocks for small enterprise development: e.g. 1) liability insurance; 2) bar code expenses; 3) how to build a share company
- Give us the resources and we will do the job ourselves
- Five point strategy:
  - We need to conduct an inventory of each community: obstacles and benefits
  - Analyze/audit each situation to identify the big picture items – where can we create change with a collective voice
  - Secure investment sources
  - Policies and incentives to assist enterprise development’
  - Education: now and future needs; match opportunities with training options and also create new opportunities
- Allow for free enterprise
- Two point strategy:
  - Go back to vision:
    - find core assets
    - past negatives may now be positives
    - job diversification
    - land use

- Cluster approach around broader community interests:
  - e.g. business interests; what are the intersections of community interests
- Our biggest barrier right now is the treaty issue
- We need to think differently about non-industry jobs
- We have to recognize that non-industry jobs are not part of smaller communities; smaller communities don't devalue lower-paying jobs, its just that you need a larger industrial base to support these types of jobs and there are always only a handful of them available
- Leave it to communities to determine their own strengths – find out what they need to work as a bigger whole
- We need policies for both individual initiative and collective action
- We need support for human capacity in terms of accessing different funding programs
- A regional plan must incorporate community plans – plan from the bottom up
- What can we learn from other jurisdictions
- How can the North get the power we need to do what we want?
- We need to keep our differences amongst ourselves and speak to the outside with a collective voice
- We will need a collective voice in order to take power from other places
- We need to be radical and not incremental; tinkering won't work; we need to seriously change the status quo
- We need a Northern Bank – our own resources; a Northern Bank could be a vehicle for implementation
- We need to influence policy first and then go after projects
- We need a policy review with a Northern lens

- We need credit from our resources and then use this money for transportation, health, marketing, etc....but this must not become a substitute for covering core provincial responsibilities
  - We need a Northern Development Council with clout
  - We need to create an entrepreneurial culture in the North
  - We need to look at all ideas with a new Northern lens
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At 2:00 pm the workshop adjourned for coffee.

Dave Yarmish called participants back together around 2:30 pm to begin the table discussions with respect to possible regional development models.

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Sean Markey introduced the discussion on alternative regional development models. He began by outlining why a regional approach has become popular and then outlined four general types of regional development models. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,
- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and
- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, Sean outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.



Some key ‘regional development model’ questions asked by participants included:

- Participants were interested in whether we are reporting our results to the Northern Caucus. The Project Team outlined that given the importance of finding an implementation model, we have been, and will be, updating the Northern Caucus.
- Several participants asked about the monies generated from the recent lease agreement of BC Rail by CN Rail. The focus of questions was on the potential for using some of these funds to support a mechanism to coordinate a northern development vision and strategy implementation model.
- It will be important that an independent institution be identified to implement a northern strategy. One of the failures with past efforts was that such institutions either became too political or were dismissed following a change in public policy direction.
- It was identified that a number of valued economic development support institutions, such as the Community Futures offices, already exist across northern BC. Many of these institutions have shown considerable resilience over time. The suggestion was to have any new model build upon an infrastructure network already in place.
- One of the advantages of the Alberta regional development model has been the relative stability of their provincial government. While it might be very difficult to ‘depoliticize’ a regional development body, finding some independent way to assign a budget would be crucial to supporting a long term approach.
- Since economic development takes time, and since it is connected not just to businesses but also involves a community’s social structure, the emphasis on long term implementation will be crucial. Lots of capacity building will need to be undertaken. This may be difficult in an environment where funding agencies often seek quick fixes.
- While knowledge of other model options is good, we may have to find a model that comes out of the north. This will include more dialogue with First Nations governments.
- One of the benefits of the previous Northern Commissioner’s Office was that it was located in the north, it was small and flexible, it was not burdened with bureaucracy, it had its own budget, it had a level of independence from the provincial government, yet it had access to that government at the Deputy-Minister level.

- Any implementation model will need to find a way to involve both the federal and provincial governments since they have legislative jurisdiction over many key areas for economic development.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of regional development models and their potential for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Spheres of influence:
  - We need to ensure participation from different groups: government, NGOs, First Nations
  - We need direct local input and control
- Elements:
  - Direct funding for economic development
  - Capacity building focus
  - Trust fund to ensure program last in perpetuity
  - Foster economic development opportunities
  - Leverage opportunities
- We need political pressure to create change
- The organization must be independent
- Northern Development Commission was a good model: accepted by Northerners, and had a degree of independence
  - Should be non-political and appointed by northerners
- We have to realize that there is an election 1 year from now ... how will this affect this process?
- We have existing examples in UNBC and the Northern Medical program that prove we can do things ourselves – once we have a plan and have started the process, then we go to government
- We need to avoid duplication
- Let's look at what has worked in the past: NDC, CFDCs, NCMA – the North Central Municipal Association is a good model

- We have to ensure that we protect any funding coming to this process
- Core funding should not be dependent on government grants – need to capitalize the organization
- Look at the NCMA – attractive to different levels of government, elected, transparent
- We need a board structure that has representation from NWTT, Treaty Eight, and Industry
- We don't need a large bureaucracy
- The model should be small, focused and effective
- How can we keep this from becoming political so that it lasts?
- We need representation from smaller and larger communities
- We should look at two organizations: one for Aboriginal communities and one for non-Aboriginal communities
- Funding: don't rely on the provincial or federal government; get this started and then go to governments for support; this should be of the North, for the North, and by the North
- Sources of funding could include the Forest Investment Account or other resource revenues
  - Must be new funding for northern development, not monies already targeted at industry

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Dave Yarmish thanked participants for their input and deliberations today. He then invited Greg Halseth to offer closing remarks.

Greg Halseth also thanked participants for contributing to the workshop. As part of the workshop process, all participants will receive a draft copy of the meeting notes. All participants are invited to provide comment and feedback so that our record better reflects the event. He also reminded participants that they will receive a copy of the draft final report from the Project.

From that point, the really important job begins. That job is to ensure that any ‘made in the north’ solution which comes out of this Project remains visible to decision-makers and is not allowed to fall by the wayside. In that regard, Greg invited participants to contact the Project Team if they would like to be involved in keeping this exercise active.

The workshop concluded at 4:00 pm.

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **3. Community Workshop Reports b. Terrace**

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Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

**Meeting Notes**

**Terrace Workshop**

Northwest Community College  
Terrace, BC  
February 26, 2004

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Terrace Workshop  
Northwest Community College  
Terrace, BC  
February 26, 2004

**WORKSHOP AGENDA**

---

**Introductions**

- Participants
- Project
- Day's work plan / agenda

The process for the next three sections will be to share information, gather input from workshop participants, and discuss priorities and recommendations.

**Vision:**

- What we heard through community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / recommendations

**Strategy:**

- What we heard from community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / sectoral focus / recommendations

**Framework**

- Review of models from literature review
- Discuss models through a 'northern lens' – what could work for the north.
- Recommendations

**Next Steps**

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Northwest Community College  
Terrace, BC  
February 26, 2004

Participants

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**Invited participants:**

Jim Rushton	Kathy Bedard
Laurie Brown	Janet Hultkrans
Brian Baker	Judith Lapadat
Shirley Kimery	Treana Decker
Sonny Jay	Laurel Mould
Alisa Thompson	Greg Smith
Herb Pond	Bruce Low
Rod Meredith	Denine Milner
Dullss Kleamyck	Krystal Piper
Cindy Hansen	Lisa Dunn
Betty Barton	Dr. Joseph Gosnell
Dave Menzies	Jack Talstra
Joanne Monaghan	Reg Stowell
Jelena Grabovac	Michael Schuster
Bill Hickman	Ed Brown
Roger Leclerc	Paula Peinsznski

**Project Team:**

Greg Halseth  
Sean Markey  
Don Manson

**Facilitator:**

Andrew Webber



Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Northwest Community College  
Terrace, BC  
February 26, 2004

Meeting Notes

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The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Andrew Webber who acted as facilitator for the workshop.

Andrew invited Councillor Ed Brown from Kitsumkalum to offer a welcome to the workshop. He then invited Mayor Jack Talstra to offer a welcome from the City of Terrace.

Andrew Webber then invited participants to introduce themselves and provide some brief background on their interests relative to economic development in northern BC. This was followed by introductions around the room.

Andrew Webber then invited Greg Halseth from the UNBC Project Team to introduce the Project and the day's event. Greg started by thanking the participants for taking time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. He explained that the interest in a northern BC economic vision and strategy arose from an increasing recognition of BC's role within a global marketplace and that people were telling the Project Team that northern BC must think more collectively and broadly. People have also been telling the Project Team that our competitors are recognizing the impact of global forces on local places and that it is time for us to move our thinking to a regional level to create a new strategic plan which takes advantage of new opportunities and which creates new competitive advantage. A Project goal is to see if people in northern BC are interested in creating a 'made in the north' solution.

Greg Halseth then introduced the rest of the Project Team who were in attendance. This included Don Manson and Sean Markey.

Greg Halseth then provided a brief overview of why this Project has taken a regional orientation to its work. Key points included the political and economic linkages which connect northern BC, the patterns of infrastructure and service delivery which are reinforcing established connections across the north, the role of new factors such as an interest in the environment which are binding communities across the region, and that our competitors have already 'scaled up' their interest in coordinating public policy, infrastructure investment, and the way regional voices are heard in the global marketplace. He reinforced that this Project is not about usurping local interests with a

top-down single directive. Rather, it is about developing synergies through a bottom-up collaborative process so as to construct a broad foundation for regionally supporting local strategic planning processes.

Greg Halseth outlined that the Project is based around a single question:

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?

Through the Fall of 2003, the Project Team undertook an extensive community interview process across northern BC. Through February and March we are undertaking a series of community workshops to refine and focus some of the things heard in those interviews. The goal is to produce a final report which addresses elements of a vision for northern BC, suggestions with respect to strategic directions for development, and options for a structure for implementing these elements and directions. The key message at this point is that there is a keen appetite to move forward with an economic vision and strategy for northern BC.

Don Manson then introduced the workshop to the community interviews process. He emphasized that if a ‘made in the north’ solution was going to be successful, it must hear from as many people in the north as possible and be widely supported. Thus, from September to November 2003, the Project Team travelled over 13,400 kms and visited with people in over 50 communities and villages. The community interviews asked about people’s thoughts and experiences with a northern lifestyle, a northern vision, strategic development directions, and ways to follow through on these ideas. He also mentioned that the Project website contained background information and survey reply forms which allow people to continue to have input.

Don Manson continued by introducing the workshop program. The idea is to take the information we heard from community interviews and add to them, bring some focus to them, and gauge whether there is support for a made in the north solution. He outlined that over the February and March period that we would be holding 8 events including some large community workshops and some smaller roundtable activities in places across northern BC.

At this point, Greg Halseth provided an overview of how the day’s workshop will proceed and that we are interested in hearing participants’ responses with respect to ‘vision’, ‘strategic directions’, and ‘frameworks’.

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To introduce the session on vision, Sean Markey reviewed key elements with respect to context, opportunities, and challenges that we heard from people during the community interviews. He reminded participants that our task here today was not to craft a vision statement but to identify key elements which participants supported as important for a northern vision. The results of today's workshop would then be included together with input from all of the other workshop and roundtable processes.

Following this review of background materials, Sean Markey turned the process over to Andrew Webber who invited participants to discuss elements of a vision for northern BC.

- One general question at this point concerned the relationship between urbanization and globalization. Discussion highlighted the importance of large metropolitan centres as a focal point for investment activity, that while this is not necessarily new it seems to be increasing with the speed of economic interactions, and that such large urban centres clearly function, and are situated, within the global economy.
- A second general observation was how other groups and organizations, such as the Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations, are undertaking economic strategy and planning exercises. Discussion highlighted that an opportune time for coordination exists.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of elements which might contribute to a northern vision. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Self-sufficiency and sustainability are high value items in northern BC.
- It is important that any economic vision recognize, maintain, and enhance quality of life. This included safe and healthy communities, a lack of urban congestion, affordable housing and commuting, and the sense of community which comes from knowing people.
- We need to take an inclusive approach to community involvement. People in the north want to be involved and want to participate, and thus any economic vision and strategy exercise must be from the bottom up.

- We also need to recognize how the vast geography of northern British Columbia presents a challenge for economic visioning, and that our low population density represents a challenge for both working together and affecting public policy.
- In order to make any economic vision a reality we should invest in community capacity and skills development, with particular attention to skills and technical training as well as creating entrepreneurial capacity.
- A regional approach is important in order to maintain sufficient critical mass to lobby for support infrastructure and other matters. Within this regional approach it was also important that sub-regional input is encouraged to increase inclusiveness.
- Within a regional framework, it is important that a balance be struck between healthy competition between communities and businesses, and supportive collaboration. Competition can create innovation, but we must also find ways to work together.
- A vision for northern development should include both diversity and complementary. Diversity involves a variety of different economic directions such that when a market downturn occurs in any one area, there are other areas which can keep the community active. Complementary means searching out ways in which industries can build together and complement one another in a sustainable undertaking.
- A vision for the north can be built upon a sense of connectedness. This involves the sharing of resources in order to broaden their use in northern communities, strengthening transportation and communication linkages through infrastructure investment, and creating a group mechanism by which to build linkages or synergies.
- A vision for northern BC should be built with integrity that recognizes and includes involvement by all peoples in the north. To be fully inclusive, all groups, non-aboriginal and First Nations, must be involved as partners.
- Creation of a northern BC vision should also include governments at all levels so that policies or actions do not inhibit the development of innovative enterprises and economic activities.
- It will be important to bring transportation infrastructure into the north and to diversify beyond the main transportation corridors. This includes development of a loop highways which would help connect communities and broaden their economic opportunities.

- First Nations participation must be brought into all aspects of discussions and actions.
- A northern vision will recognize that rural existence matters, and that this must be recognized at a political level so that policies affecting rural living are evaluated through a rural lens.
- A northern vision should include the development of pride in who we are and what we do. This can be done through communications and active promotion of the north, both within and outside of the region.
- A northern vision needs to be grounded in a safe community setting and clean environmental context.
- A vision for northern BC must also look to new markets and include value added products as well as resource extraction. The opportunities embodied by development of a northern container port could provide a marketing mechanism for value added products.
- A northern vision can be built upon the resource base but only if sufficient resource rents are returned back to the north for use in environmental, community, and economic development activities in the places which generate these resource rents.
- Inclusiveness in developing an economic vision must extend to the spectrum of economic sectors as well as including the diverse peoples of northern British Columbia.
- A northern vision should address crucial human resources investments such as skills development, educational opportunities for youth and currently employed workers, as well as development of mechanisms for trades training. There are roles for educational institutions, trades organizations, and industry in this human resources investment.
- To move a northern vision forward, public policy development needs a northern voice so that it is workable in the north.
- Vision and strategy exercises must recognize that not everyone will be an entrepreneur and that human skills development needs broad attention.
- A northern vision must include attention to the human and community sides of development in concert with economic development activities.

- It will be important in a northern vision to find room for small resource development players, including the people who are tied to regions and who will remain in those regions during economic downturns. Value added activities by small economic actors can provide a complementary relationship to the big industry resource extraction model.
- A northern vision should include using the products which we develop in the north as a way of supporting local businesses and producers.
- To be effective, an economic vision must include attention to market development and the extension of market knowledge to decision-makers.
- Transportation systems must be accessible and cost effective for a range of economic players.
- A northern BC vision should include not only big projects, but also leave places for small efforts and small successes.
- A northern vision should build upon the many activities which can be undertaken quickly and which can add to a sense of success in northern BC.
- A northern economic vision must be a timely one which moves us quickly to strategies and actions.
- Ownership of land and resources will be crucial to an economic vision as it can provide a foundation for the flexible adoption of local options.
- Small energy schemes, including alternative energy schemes by independent power producers and green options, can provide local employment and a foundation for new economic activities.
- As our transportation corridors become more efficient there is a continuing need for ways in which small communities and small economic actors can obtain easy access in order to move their products into the global marketplace.
- A northern vision should recognize that resources are not only our natural resources, but also our human resources, and that we need to value and develop these.
- A northern vision needs to be based in what we value for our quality of life, as employment is only one aspect of a northern quality of life.

- In order to move vision to action, northern BC requires greater control of decision-making. As yet the north does not appear to be very well understood in public policy developments and there was a feeling that we need to have our say, our input, and exercise greater control.
- A northern vision and strategy must be built from the bottom up by northerners. Wariness was expressed about the continuing role of people from outside the region identifying what should and shouldn't occur here. This includes not only public policy, but also advocates within an urban population who might purchase a northern quality of life and then argue against limiting additional economic development.
- In order to be effective, a northern vision must have greater input into public policy development.
- A northern vision can mean moving from dependence to interdependence. Rather than depending upon single large resource industries, a network across northern BC can create complementary interdependencies of economic activity.
- To overcome difficulties in recruiting skilled labour, a northern BC vision can build upon quality of life and skills development within the First Nations youth population.
- It will be important for a northern vision to increase awareness of northern BC's value to the province in terms of both economic and environmental contributions.
- A northern vision should recognize and communicate that resource industries are not sunset industries, but they are innovative and adaptive industries shifting within a changing global context.
- A northern vision should mean that development is done with care for the environment and care for our quality of life.
- A northern vision needs to recognize the role of infrastructure in supporting not only economic development in the short term but providing a robust foundation for flexible economic futures down the road.

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At 12:00 pm the workshop adjourned for lunch.

Andrew Webber called participants back together around 12:35 pm to begin the table discussions with respect to strategic directions.

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Greg Halseth was asked to introduce the strategic directions discussion. He began by sharing what the Project had heard from northern residents. This information was organized in three broad topic areas: opportunities, challenges, and areas of strategic focus. The areas of strategic focus concentrated on physical infrastructure, human capacity infrastructure, community capacity infrastructure, and business and economic development support infrastructure.

The individual tables then took up discussion of potential strategic directions for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- A northern strategy should build upon resource rents as a crucial foundation and a way to build greater local benefits from a range of resources.
- A northern strategy should include a broad approach to economic development and support a diverse range of activities.
- A northern strategy should include support for basic education (including support for upgrading to the Grade 12 level) as part of a coherent educational strategy. It also includes support for community development and community economic development training.
- In the short term, a northern strategy should look to develop specific benefits from the 2010 Olympics. Many opportunities will be created and efforts must be undertaken to bring some of those benefits to the north.
- A northern strategy should include ways to raise the profile of northern BC with the rest of the province and with government.
- A strategy should elucidate the specific benefits that can be derived from operating a business in the north. This could be a foundation for attracting footloose economic activities and head office functions no longer tied to urban centres.
- An economic strategy should also build upon the changing opportunities being created in the north, with one example being cruise ships into Prince Rupert and the potential to develop wider benefits across the north coast.



- A northern strategy should help us ‘get ahead of the curve’ and make sure northern businesses take advantage of opportunities before external investors capture those opportunities.
- A northern strategy should include ways to provide market and regional information to people on cruise ships who may seek return visits, or may seek to start or relocate a business in the region.
- A northern strategy should encourage small local businesses to take advantage of economic opportunities.
- A northern strategy should include a reporting process similar to the BC Progress Board, but which includes other values, linked to northern values, which we would like to measure in addition to economic issues. Creating our own ‘progress’ indicators could be a way of distinguishing the north from the rest of the province.
- A northern economic strategy should contain sub-regional flexibility as some strategies/opportunities may be specific or better suited to one region over another. The development of sub-regional strategies can also build upon the intimate knowledge people have of those areas.
- A northern strategy should recognize that economic and community development planning is needed before actions are taken so we can figure how to take advantage of opportunities and identify information gaps to inform our actions.
- To be effective, a regional strategy will require agreement on priorities and on ways to work in partnership because cooperation is a key tool for regional development.
- Asset mapping as part of a strategic development process can be used to more fully take advantage of resources such as education, skills, community development, and community economic development knowledge and abilities.
- Innovative strategies will be those which make effective use of infrastructure. Since the internet is one of the tools of the global economy, a northern strategy should include skills and practical training so people can use it effectively.
- A northern strategy should include a new employment strategy to draw young people into the region and provide opportunities for youth already in the region. This includes finding ways for industry, educational institutions, and voluntary groups to develop opportunities for internships and co-op work placements.

- When new employees are recruited to northern BC, we need to ensure a welcoming attitude so that some of these newcomers will stay and invest their creativity in the north.
- Creating a more open and welcoming environment within the north will also be a foundation for a more effective set of strategies for sharing information which can be used for development support.
- Information technology infrastructure, especially broadband access, will be a key strategic direction which can help communities collaborate, businesses to reduce costs, and create opportunities for online learning, coordination of online voluntary sector groups, and information sharing and access by decision-makers.
- A northern strategy should involve mechanisms for the ongoing sharing of resources and experiences between places to efficiently use our human resources and avoid replicating the same studies twenty times over.
- A northern strategy will focus upon human capital and ongoing skills development. This should not only be in response to economic opportunities but can also serve as an incubator for potential economic activities.
- A northern strategy should include aggressive branding of the north. This can involve a wide range of industries and will require collaboration between communities. It may involve branding of sub-regions within the north and then setting that within a northern BC context. We need to create an image, and sell that image, of northern BC as a robust rural landscape with a quality of life and high environmental amenities as part of a plan for promoting the north as a good place to live and invest.
- A northern strategy should reaffirm the need to continue investing/upgrading our transportation infrastructure to meet changing needs. For example, completion of the Cranberry Connector to assist with a circle route opportunity may enhance tourism opportunities.
- A northern BC strategy should be tied to an effective implementation mechanism. This will include sub-regional or community task groups which can then look at specific issues and link up to a regional level for effective coordination.
- An implementation mechanism would provide the foundation for action out of a northern strategy.

- A northern strategy should contain mechanisms for effective communications and lobbying efforts with industry and governments outside of northern BC as it will be important to carry and repeat key messages until they resonate with decision-makers.
- A northern strategy should look at skills development that is responsive to local needs and desires, and which is delivered in a timely and responsive manner within the existing network of educational institutions.
- A northern strategy should be developed with a wide involvement, including community groups, labour, business/industry, educational institutions, and other people.
- A northern strategy should focus attention on providing jobs for our youth as a way of keeping students in the north.
- A regional strategy must recognize that places across northern BC are set within the same regional framework relative to Vancouver and Victoria.
- Within a regional strategy, room must be made for sub-regional processes to assist in coordinating and respecting differences which can gain from regional synergies.
- A regional strategy should be proactive and should be our focus of direction no matter what the current state of the economy may be.
- In developing a northern strategy, a local focus is required so that people can readily contribute their thinking about emerging opportunities.
- It is important that a strategy be set within a broad northern context to build a stronger support base for any individual sub-region.
- As part of a northern strategy, the north needs to ‘scale-up’ as the population base is small relative to metropolitan BC.
- A northern strategy should create a foundation for trade marketing and for hosting international economic development investors.

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At the close of the table reports, Andrew Webber invited Betty Barton to update the audience on the Premier’s Task Force on Technology. Betty described how a recent event in Terrace was a follow up to an earlier event, and that discussions focussed upon projects, obstacles, and ways to succeed in the wider adoption of electronic technologies.

Specific links were made to educational and health related information technology projects. This should be of interest to a wide range of groups from the Northwest Region.

On a related topic, Betty Barton also described how on March 16 a public presentation would be made in Terrace on the PIC (Promoting Innovation & Commercialization in Regional BC) report. This will include a number of presentations, guest speakers, and local innovators. The focus for the day will be on 8 strategies for innovation in rural areas with the discussion aimed towards creating action plans.

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The workshop broke for coffee between 2:00 and 2:15 pm.

At 2:15 pm. Andrew Webber reconvened the workshop with a Northwest trivia contest as participants vied for UNBC gift-books.

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Sean Markey was then invited to introduce discussion on alternative regional development models. He began by outlining why a regional approach has become popular and then outlined four general types of regional development models. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,
- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and
- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, Sean outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.

- Following Sean’s presentation, there was some discussion of Newfoundland’s RED Boards as an illustration of a grassroots economic development model based upon sub-regions. Discussion also highlighted other Canadian examples.
- There was also a question about whether any program evaluation or analysis had been conducted on the Northern Commissioner’s Office. It was felt knowledge of past experiences could be valuable in helping to inform future exercises.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of regional development models and their potential application in northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- A regional economic model approach should be focussed first upon the qualities which such a structure should embody. Suggestions included:
  - That it be created from the bottom up and not imposed from above.
  - That it develop as an organic network which includes many of the existing economic and community development networks already in place.
  - That it involve clear connections to local governments and First Nations governments.
  - That it be suited to northern BC while not reinventing the wheel.
  - That it be accountable to its member constituencies.
  - That it also be representative to those constituencies.
  - That it needs a legitimacy to survive provincial or federal elections and government changes.
  - That it have a stable source of funding so that it is independent of government or funding agencies.
  - That it be developed with a cooperative and collaborative approach to partnerships.

- A regional implementation model should include several key roles. Suggestions included:
  - Input into policy development.
  - Input into regulation development.
  - An advocacy role for northern BC.
- A regional implementation model must include funding from the federal and provincial governments to demonstrate their support.
- A regional implementation model should include representation from four regions (Northeast, Northwest, Central, and Cariboo).
- Membership in a regional implementation model should be inclusive and may involve labour, business, industry, government, First Nations, and others.
- One mechanism for coordinating a regional model is a large annual general meeting with federal and provincial representatives in an ex-officio capacity:
  - At this AGM, a five year strategic plan could be reviewed, sub-committees appointed to work on particular tasks, and there would be an annual review of projects undertaken to benefit the region.
  - Ongoing management would be under the direction of an executive director.
  - Part of their role would be to maintain contact with government, private sector, and northern community interests as a foundation for supporting legitimacy and longevity.
  - One or two semi-annual meetings could be held with a smaller number of delegates in Victoria to talk directly to the media and decision-makers about implementing the vision and strategy for northern BC.
- While it is important to create a structure suited to northern BC, there is no need to reinvent the wheel completely as we may be able to move quickly based on examples from elsewhere.
- Development of a regional model must recognize the problems inherent in many places and interests working together and should build on lessons from elsewhere in overcoming these problems.

- To more efficiently feed information to a regional committee or board, local communities (or economic sectors) could set individual task forces to deal with issues of interest. Such task forces could prioritize local needs for the regional committee/board, but they would need to be independently appointed so that they are not organs of the municipal government.
- A regional board or committee needs to take the interests of youth, First Nations, and other groups into consideration.
- A regional board or committee should focus upon creating a foundation for action and momentum for the future which includes both economic development and community development.
- A regional board or committee should be developed from the grassroots and fit with the needs and vision of the north.
- A regional board or committee needs a terms of reference and job description so that it brings a neutral voice to the table, it also should have stable funding for facilitating the development process over time.
- A regional board or committee should build upon existing networks or organizations in order to create additional synergies through effective collaboration.
- If built from the grassroots, a regional board or committee could play an important role in organizing and coordinating both vision and strategy exercises across northern BC.
- Community development and economic development should go together and must be part of a coordinated strategy approach. It is important that a solid community development foundation be in place in order to attract economic activities.

There was a question about Community Futures offices and the use of Western Diversification funds through existing structures so as to avoid duplication. Discussion also highlighted numbers of other networks already in place which could be useful in delivering a northern vision and strategy within the guiding framework of a regional model

There were also questions about the BC Rail money and the benefits of putting all of the regional funds into trust so that they last in perpetuity. There was a strong feeling that the north should identify its own goals for this funding and that the province should not send a southern advisor to tell us what to do.

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Andrew Webber thanked participants for their input and deliberations today. He then invited Greg Halseth to offer closing remarks.

Greg Halseth also thanked participants for contributing to the workshop. As part of the workshop process, all participants will receive a draft copy of the meeting notes. All participants are invited to provide comment and feedback so that our record better reflects the event. He also reminded participants that they will receive a copy of the draft final report from the Project.

From that point, the really important job begins. That job is to ensure that any ‘made in the north’ solution which comes out of this Project remains visible to decision-makers and is not allowed to fall by the wayside. In that regard, Greg invited participants to contact the Project Team if they would like to be involved in keeping this exercise active.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants agreed that a contact list should be circulated as part of a regional networking opportunity.

The workshop concluded at 3:45 pm.



# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **3. Community Workshop Reports c. Houston**

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Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

**Meeting Notes**

**Houston Workshop**

Boardroom, Community Futures Development Corporation - Nadina  
Houston, BC  
March 5, 2004

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Houston Workshop

Boardroom, Community Futures Development Corporation - Nadina  
Houston, BC  
March 5, 2004

**WORKSHOP AGENDA**

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**Introductions**

- Participants
- Project
- Day's work plan / agenda

The process for the next three sections will be to share information, gather input from workshop participants, and discuss priorities and recommendations.

**Vision:**

- What we heard through community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / recommendations

**Strategy:**

- What we heard from community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / sectoral focus / recommendations

**Framework**

- Review of models selected from literature review
- Discuss models through a 'northern lens' – what could work for the north.
- Recommendations

**Next Steps**

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Boardroom, Community Futures Development Corporation - Nadina  
Houston, BC  
March 5, 2004

Participants

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**Participants:**

Debbie Pierre	Ron Mitchell
Cress Farrow	Kim Martinsen
Gloria Catherall	Greig de Bloeme
Ruby Kenzle	Vernon Neil
Sharon Smith	Mike Robertson
Katherine McIndoe	Kenn Whyte
Gary McIntyre	Zarna Dilley
Lynn Synotte	Sabrina Hopps
Susan Schienbein	Susan Stearns
Wayne Sturt	Cathryn Bucher
David Belford	Dee McRae
Dwain Erhardt	Tim Smith
Dave Mayer	Richard Bisanz
Jerry Botti	Tom Euverman
Greg Meredith	

**Project Team:**

Leslie Lax  
Don Manson  
Norm Skelton

**Facilitator:**

Brenda Andersson

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Boardroom, Community Futures Development Corporation - Nadina  
Houston, BC  
March 5, 2004

Meeting Notes

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The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Brenda Andersson who acted as facilitator for the workshop.

Brenda invited Chief Ron Mitchell from the Laksilyu Clan (Wet'suwet'en) to offer a welcome to the workshop. She then invited Mayor Sharon Smith to offer a welcome from the Municipality of the District of Houston.

Brenda Andersson then invited participants to introduce themselves and provide some brief background on their interests relative to economic development in northern BC.

Brenda Andersson then invited Don Manson from the UNBC Project Team to introduce the Project and the day's event. Don started by thanking the participants for taking time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. He explained that the interest in a northern BC economic vision and strategy arose from an increasing recognition of BC's role within a global marketplace and that people were telling the Project Team that northern BC must think more collectively and broadly. People have also been telling the Project Team that our competitors are recognizing the impact of global forces on local places and that it is time for us to move our thinking to a regional level to create a new strategic plan which takes advantage of new opportunities and which creates new competitive advantage. A Project goal is to see if people in northern BC are interested in creating a 'made in the north' solution.

Don Manson then introduced the rest of the Project Team who were in attendance. This included Leslie Lax and Norm Skelton.

Don Manson then provided a brief overview of why this Project has taken a regional orientation to its work. Key points included the political and economic linkages which connect northern BC, the patterns of infrastructure and service delivery which are reinforcing established connections across the north, the role of new factors such as an interest in the environment which are binding communities across the region, and that our competitors have already 'scaled up' their interest in coordinating public policy, infrastructure investment, and the way regional voices are heard in the global marketplace. He reinforced that this Project is not about usurping local interests with a top-down single directive. Rather, it is about developing synergies through a bottom-up

collaborative process so as to construct a broad foundation for regionally supporting local strategic planning processes.

Don Manson outlined that the Project is based around a single question:

“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?”

Through the Fall of 2003, the Project Team undertook an extensive community interview process across northern BC. Through February and March we are undertaking a series of community workshops to refine and focus some of the things we heard in those interviews. The goal is to produce a final report which addresses elements of a vision for northern BC, suggestions with respect to strategic directions for development, and options for a structure for implementing these elements and directions. The key message at this point is that there is a keen appetite to move forward with an economic vision and strategy for northern BC.

Don Manson then introduced the workshop to the community interviews process. He emphasized that if a ‘made in the north’ solution was going to be successful, it must hear from as many people in the north as possible and be widely supported. Thus, from September to November 2003, the Project Team travelled over 13,400 km and visited with people in over 50 communities and villages. The community interviews asked about people’s thoughts and experiences with a northern lifestyle, a northern vision, strategic development directions, and ways to follow through on these ideas. He also mentioned that the Project website contains background information and survey reply forms which allow people to continue to have input.

Don Manson continued by introducing the workshop program. The idea is to take the information we heard from community interviews and add to them, bring some focus to them, and gauge whether there is support for a made in the north solution. He outlined that over the February and March period that we would be holding 9 events including some large community workshops and some smaller roundtable activities in places across northern BC.

At this point, Don provided an overview of how the day’s workshop will proceed and that we are interested in hearing participants’ responses with respect to ‘vision’, ‘strategic directions’, and ‘frameworks’.

---

To introduce the workshop session on vision, Don Manson reviewed key elements with respect to context, opportunities, and challenges that we heard from people during the community interviews. He reminded participants that our task here today was not to craft a vision statement but to identify key elements which participants supported as important

for a northern vision. The results of today's workshop would then be included in consideration with input from all of the other workshop and roundtable processes.

Following this review of background materials, Don Manson turned the process over to Brenda Andersson who invited participants to discuss elements with respect to a vision for northern BC.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of elements which might contribute to a northern vision. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Our vision should include a stronger regional voice.
- We need to have sufficient infrastructure resources to sustain and grow our local populations.
- Our vision should include the idea of “coopetition” – collaborative competition whereby competitors cooperate to improve everyone's market share / situation while maintaining diversity.
- There should be less regulatory infrastructure – policies must be more enabling.
- Elected people should be more accountable to local interests.
- Northern revenues should flow back to the north.
- The North Central Municipal Association (NCMA) should be more proactive in voicing northern concerns.
- There should be fewer levels of bureaucracy, reducing the silos and stove-piping that challenges development.
- Our vision should focus on our strengths.
- There should be a mechanism for resource revenue sharing – perhaps follow the Fair Share model from the Peace.
- Wood should be made more accessible to small operators. Forest policies should focus on attracting investment by increasing public access to timber sales.

- Our vision should include the provision of amenities to attract professionals to northern communities. This includes:
  - Adequate health care facilities,
  - Access to quality education,
  - Cultural opportunities, and
  - Recreation opportunities.
- Tourism infrastructure should be expanded to allow for the development of recreation tourism and cultural tourism, including local cuisine.
- The vision should balance growth with small town living.
- There should be incentives for skilled and professional people to immigrate and stay.
- Opportunities for trades – training and placement – need to grow.
- We need to keep our revenues in the north.
- The vision should include turning crises into opportunities (for example, the beetle problem).
- We must work more closely with First Nations through joint ventures and development of interim measures.
- Government must provide aid for infrastructure development to allow for investment. Examples included:
  - Kemess connector road,
  - Diversify opportunities from forestry to oil and gas, and mining, and
  - Development of hydro project on the Iskut River.
- We must include capacity building for First Nations, providing opportunities for professional development, not just low skill jobs.
- The vision should include sustainability and diversification of our economy.
- We must share information and resources – there is no need to undertake, and pay for, the same project more than once in different jurisdictions.



- Affordable living should be an integral part of the vision. Elements include:
  - Electricity,
  - Insurance (vehicle and property),
  - Health care,
  - Education,
  - Vehicle costs,
  - Housing, and
  - Access to public transportation.
- Natural assets are seen as belonging to the north – we need to share in resource profits as well as revenues.
- Diversity in the north is an asset – there is a good sense of community.
- The economic base must be diversified to include smaller business as well as large industry.
- Because of its contribution to the economy and environment of the province, the north demands respect and acknowledgement from government and voters down south.
- Northern partnerships are feasible - we don't need to rely on international partners.
- Our vision should look to the positive.
- We need a common vision that identifies the scope of growth and at what price, and gets everyone pulling in the same direction.
- We need a new vision for industry. Industry originally built and supported local communities, but now is moving apart from host communities.
- Rural communities need to accept change. We can't have everything and need to recognise that there will be broad but shallow support for clubs, teams, and associations. We need to be wary of volunteer burnout because of this.
- The rural vision should be different. Government is listening to the 85% of voters in urban areas but is not looking at northern interests.
- MLAs need to represent people, not parties.
- We need economic diversification, not just large integrated industry. More diversity requires more infrastructure to support production and marketing.
- We need to stop being reactive and start being proactive.

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At 12:00 pm the workshop adjourned for lunch.

Brenda Andersson called participants back together around 12:35 pm to begin the table discussions with respect to strategic directions.

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Leslie Lax was then asked to introduce the strategic directions discussion. He began by sharing what the Project had heard from northern residents. This information was organized in three broad topic areas. These included opportunities, challenges, and areas of strategic focus. The areas of strategic focus concentrated on physical infrastructure, human capacity infrastructure, community capacity infrastructure, and business and economic development support infrastructure.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of potential strategic directions for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Made in the north is important, but we must have southern consultation as well.
- Participants engaged in developing the strategy should recognise the challenges faced in other communities. For example, as part of the process for creating the strategy there should be a Premier and MLA / Mayor and Councillor exchange. Let the provincial government politicians understand the challenges faced by smaller communities.
- There should be incentives for investing in infrastructure, but we don't want to be caught supporting industrial development that is not attentive to community needs.
- We need to educate people in the south. We need to market the north by presenting our strengths and also our vulnerabilities. People need to understand their dependency on the north, and see the value of investing in the north.
- The strategy must encompass the notion of healthy and vibrant communities. We need to understand and communicate the linkages between healthy economies and healthy communities. It costs less to support youth development than it does to support youth and juvenile corrections centres.

- We need to focus on opportunities in developing strategic directions. For example:
  - Port of Prince Rupert,
  - health care, and
  - airports.
- Perhaps we need a full time lobbyist for the north in both Victoria and Ottawa.
- Communities should look for business opportunities – for example, an empty hotel in a good location could be used to develop a tourism / business school.
- We need to be willing to look elsewhere and learn from others.
- Ideas need to be radical enough to capture government’s attention.
- We need to encourage the development of an oil and gas sector in the northwest and develop a viable service sector to support the industry.
- Government funding programs need to be coordinated at the federal and provincial levels, and applications processes need to be easier.
- We need to develop a mechanism for north – south education and grow support for mutual marketing.
- Broad strategic concepts should include:
  - Building strong community buy-in. Residents need to see themselves as stakeholders.
  - Linking Community Economic Development globally. Small communities connect externally and residents need to understand their contribution to the global economy.
  - Retaining skilled people in the north.
  - A proactive approach to economic development.
- Organized and unorganized communities need basic infrastructure (electricity, telephone, sewer, water, etc.) as well as pools and recreation facilities. The community’s contribution to this infrastructure should be based on their ability to pay.
- The province should provide money resources for a minimum standard of health and seniors’ services. Achieving this should be through lobbying the NCMA and Northern Caucus.
- Trade schools (and places in existing schools) are needed to ensure skilled workers are available.

- The strategy should include regional infrastructure to encourage other businesses – more investment in Chambers of Commerce.
- Communities need to develop the capacity to respect each other and to cooperate.
- Regional transit systems are needed to keep communities linked.
- There should be more capital investment in communities.
- We should provide opportunities to train and retain northern students. This includes offering regional degree programs.
- We need a stronger voice for the north.
- More infrastructure investment is required to facilitate a healthy economy.
- Jurisdictional boundaries should reflect communities of interest.
- Chambers of Commerce should be funded by the province (This raised the question of how to measure the effectiveness of government funding to chambers, etc.)
- Organisations need community support as well. For example, the Northern Health Authority administers government money, but they can't really lobby government.
- While we focus on looking for support from the south, we should not lose sight of funding support from the east. Ottawa has provided more support for communities.
- It is easier to generate a strong voice when priorities benefit the majority.
- The north should focus on what we have – buy in to opportunities.
- Provision should be made for the full utilisation of public spaces.
- Attitudes are changing – we need to build on this.
- Community members need to understand their role in supporting community economic development through, for example, consumer spending. Buy locally to keep communities strong.

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The workshop broke for coffee between 2:00 and 2:15 pm.

At 2:15 pm. Brenda Andersson reconvened the workshop.

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Leslie Lax was then invited to introduce discussion on alternative regional development models. He began by outlining why a regional approach has become popular and then outlined four general types of regional development models. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,
- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and
- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, Leslie outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of regional development models and their potential for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Any model should reflect the overall regional vision that recognises local needs.
- The framework needs a mandate from regional and provincial governments that provides funding for implementation.
- The model should be representative of the region and its people. Perhaps a northern Cabinet and a ‘Ministry of Northern Stuff’, located in the north.

- One model could be a Northern Commission, with representation from federal, provincial, local, and regional governments along with First Nations' representation.
- There could be a body with common interests and goals, providing broad based lobby support and have teeth (a big stick), have financial resources, and be responsive and streamlined. The body should be flexible and innovative, listened to and accountable.
- The definition of region needs to be established.
- A regional model should include federal / provincial and local (including First Nations) representation.
- Funding needs to be sustained and accessible. For some communities, even \$0.30 infrastructure or support dollars are not necessarily helpful.
- The model needs to have long-term funding, be flexible, have autonomy and be accountable to local stakeholders. Priorities should be developed bottom-up and be community driven.
- There should be sectoral elected representation.
- The organisation / body must be based in the north, not Victoria or Ottawa.
- The framework should allow for the balancing of good and bad – reflecting the greater good. Decision making should be fast and effective.
- The framework must have a quick timeline for development.
- There should be a parallel process in communities, allowing for the identification of community interests.
- We do not want to spend 80% of the time trying to get money and 20% of the time doing. Rather, access to finances should not take up more than 20% of our time.
- The body should have a clear mandate, be responsible, and have clear long- and short-term indicators of success.
- The model should be able to transcend government change, allowing for stability over time.
- The model should have access to revenue generated in the north.

- Any model must provide for consultation and be representative.
- Perhaps the NCMA could act as a governing body, building partnerships with First Nations and other levels of government. A separate staff, or community development organisation, would be responsible for lobbying, seeking funding and delivering projects.
- The model does need a recognisable label that identifies the NORTH.

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Brenda Andersson thanked participants for their input and deliberations today. She then invited Don Manson to offer closing remarks.

Don also thanked participants for contributing to the workshop. As part of the workshop process, all participants will receive a draft copy of the meeting notes. All participants are invited to provide comment and feedback so that our record better reflects the event. He also reminded participants that they will receive a copy of the draft final report from the Project.

From that point, the really important job begins. That job is to ensure that any ‘made in the north’ solution which comes out of this Project remains visible to decision-makers and is not allowed to fall by the wayside. In that regard, Don invited participants to contact the Project Team if they would like to be involved in keeping this exercise active.

The workshop concluded at 3:30 pm.

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **3. Community Workshop Reports d. Williams Lake**

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Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

**Meeting Notes**

**Williams Lake Workshop**

Williams Lake Business and Convention Centre  
Williams Lake, BC  
March 12, 2004

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Williams Lake Workshop  
Williams Lake Business and Convention Centre  
Williams Lake, BC  
March 12, 2004

**WORKSHOP AGENDA**

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**Introductions**

- Participants
- Project
- Day's work plan / agenda

The process for the next three sections will be to share information, gather input from workshop participants, and discuss priorities and recommendations.

**Vision:**

- What we heard through community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / recommendations

**Strategy:**

- What we heard from community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / sectoral focus / recommendations

**Framework**

- Review of models from literature review
- Discuss models through a 'northern lens' – what could work for the north.
- Recommendations

**Next Steps**

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Williams Lake Business and Convention Centre  
Williams Lake, BC  
March 12, 2004

Participants

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**Invited participants:**

Tom Alphonse  
Debbie DeMare  
Tim Pennell  
Lynn Paterson  
Mary Glassford  
Brian Pederson  
Carol McGregor  
Susan Hemphill  
Jason Gordon  
Alan Madrigga  
Nancy Oppermann  
Sara Cousins  
Cheryl Chapman  
Sharon Thain  
Ted Richardson  
Ken Wilson  
Crystal Williams  
Dawn M. Lulua  
David Zirnhelt  
Kathleen Cook  
John Nosotti

**Project Team:**

Greg Halseth  
Leslie Lax  
Don Manson  
Norm Skelton

**Facilitator:**

Gail Wallin

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Williams Lake Business and Convention Centre  
Williams Lake, BC  
March 12, 2004

Meeting Notes

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The meeting was called to order at 11:35am by Gail Wallin who acted as facilitator for the workshop.

Councilor Tom Alphonse offered a welcome from the Williams Lake Indian Band to their traditional territory.

Councilor Debbie DeMare offered a welcome on behalf of the City of Williams Lake and reminded the audience that it was the City's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and that Williams Lake had been named "Forest Capital of BC" for 2004.

Gail Wallin then reviewed the agenda for the day and invited participants to collect their lunch so that we could have a working lunch session.

Once participants had collected their lunch, Gail Wallin invited Greg Halseth from the UNBC Project Team to introduce the Project and the day's event. Greg started by thanking the participants for taking time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. He explained that the interest in a northern BC economic vision and strategy arose from an increasing recognition of BC's role within a global marketplace and that people were telling the Project Team that northern BC must think more collectively and broadly. People have also been telling the Project Team that our competitors are recognizing the impact of global forces on local places and that it is time for us to move our thinking to a regional level to create a new strategic plan which takes advantage of new opportunities and which creates new competitive advantage. A Project goal is to see if people in northern BC are interested in creating a 'made in the north' solution.

Greg Halseth then introduced the rest of the Project Team who were in attendance. This included Don Manson, Leslie Lax, and Norm Skelton.

Greg Halseth then provided a brief overview of why this Project has taken a regional orientation to its work. Key points included the political and economic linkages which connect northern BC, the patterns of infrastructure and service delivery which are reinforcing established connections across the north, the role of new factors such as an interest in the environment which are binding communities across the region, and that our competitors have already 'scaled up' their interest in coordinating public policy,

infrastructure investment, and the way regional voices are heard in the global marketplace. He reinforced that this Project is not about usurping local interests with a top-down single directive. Rather, it is about developing synergies through a bottom-up collaborative process so as to construct a broad foundation for regionally supporting local strategic planning processes.

Greg Halseth outlined that the Project is based around a single question:

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?

Through the Fall of 2003, the Project Team undertook an extensive community interview process across northern BC. Through February and March we are undertaking a series of community workshops to refine and focus some of the things heard in those interviews. The goal is to produce a final report which addresses elements of a vision for northern BC, suggestions with respect to strategic directions for development, and options for a structure for implementing these elements and directions. The key message at this point is that there is a keen appetite to move forward with an economic vision and strategy for northern BC.

Don Manson then introduced the workshop to the community interviews process. He emphasized that if a 'made in the north' solution was going to be successful, it must hear from as many people in the north as possible and be widely supported. Thus, from September to November 2003, the Project Team travelled over 13,400 kms and visited with people in over 50 communities and villages. The community interviews asked about people's thoughts and experiences with a northern lifestyle, a northern vision, strategic development directions, and ways to follow through on these ideas. He also mentioned that the Project website contained background information and survey reply forms which allow people to continue to have input.

Don Manson continued by introducing the workshop program. The idea is to take the information we heard from community interviews and add to them, bring some focus to them, and gauge whether there is support for a made in the north solution. He outlined that over the February and March period that we would be holding 9 events including some large community workshops and some smaller roundtable activities in places across northern BC.

At this point, Greg Halseth provided an overview of how the day's workshop will proceed and that we are interested in hearing participants' responses with respect to 'vision', 'strategic directions', and 'frameworks'.

Initial questions included an interest in the work previously completed in the Cariboo region with the discussion identifying organizations such as the Cariboo Economic Action Forum as one of many area based community and economic development exercises which have been completed around British Columbia.

Additional questions were asked about the composition of the project advisory committee and interactions between the project and the North Central Municipal Organization.

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Gail Wallin then invited participants to introduce themselves and provide some brief background on their interests relative to economic development in northern BC. This was followed by introductions around the room.

The meeting took a refreshment break from 12:50 to 1:05 pm.

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To introduce the session on vision, Don Manson reviewed key elements with respect to context, opportunities, and challenges that we heard from people during the community interviews. He reminded participants that our task here today was not to craft a vision statement but to identify key elements which participants supported as important for a northern vision. The results of today's workshop would then be included together with input from all of the other workshop and roundtable processes.

Following this review of background materials, Don Manson turned the process over to Gail Wallin who invited participants to discuss elements of a vision for northern BC.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of elements which might contribute to a northern vision. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- A northern vision should promote respect between sectors, communities, and development partners.
- A northern vision should be based upon cooperation between sectors so that progress and efforts are maximized.
- Our vision should include attention to intact ecosystems and environmental sensitivity in order to provide for future generations.
- A northern vision should be based upon inclusivity and ensure that people from across the north are involved in a meaningful way.
- A northern vision should encompass complementary forms of development within, and among, economic sectors.
- Our vision should ensure that the needs of the northern region are met and taken care of.

- A northern vision should recognize that access to education and training is needed to keep our multi-skill talents in northern BC.
- We need to maintain and expand our rural lifestyles and opportunities.
- We need to maintain such rural attitudes as friendliness, resourcefulness, and self-sufficiency.
- A northern vision should look to increase our capacity to develop and use human resources by providing access to education and training in the north.
- Our northern vision should include a diverse economic foundation that is not entirely reliant on global economic forces and employs a wider customer base for our products.
- A northern vision should be robust and sustained to ensure continuity between government or economic changes.
- A northern vision should be built upon efficient resource use and consideration for the north retaining economic benefit from that resource use.
- A northern vision should ensure that our resources are effectively used in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- A northern vision should be built upon whole community ‘benefits’ so that all people in northern BC benefit from our economic initiatives.
- A northern vision should be built upon healthy ecosystems.
- A northern vision needs an effective infrastructure for knowledge and skill development.
- We need to ensure that more of the wealth generated by our communities stays in our communities.
- A northern vision must be built through close cooperation between First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities.
- A northern vision should recognize that all communities may not wish to grow.
- It will be important for us to settle treaties and have an effective working understanding of traditional territories.

- A northern vision can't wait, we should get to work creating opportunities from the 2010 Olympics.
- A northern vision should be one that includes a diversified economic base with small and large firms participating across all of our economic sectors.
- We need to have more effective access to economic development funding and financing.
- Development of a northern vision needs to be supported by stable long-term funding in order to see that vision to fruition.
- A northern vision means attention to jobs for people of all ages.
- We need to attract people of all ages into the region.
- We need to create vibrant, healthy, and sustainable communities.
- The north needs to speak with a united voice.
- A northern vision should build and promote pride and awareness in northern BC and the northern experience.
- We need to expand access to educational, health, and support services as a foundation for a vibrant economy.
- A northern vision should build upon the connectivity being made available by new communications technologies.
- A northern vision should let us prepare for change and be flexible for the future.
- A northern vision should take a long-term view on planning so as to lead the way forward.
- A northern vision should show respect for all people no matter what their needs or differences.
- A northern vision should support and promote respect for a northern lifestyle.
- A northern vision should focus upon creating a community and economic climate in which our young people can grow up and wish to stay.
- A northern vision should support vibrant and sustainable rural lifestyles.



- A northern vision should respect differences and provide a foundation for a willingness to work together.
- We have to build a collaborative environment by which all levels of government and community players will interact with trust.
- A northern vision should work to create a welcoming community.
- A northern vision needs to be accountable to the people and places of northern BC.
- A northern vision needs to create an independent voice apart from government or economic interests that is able to stand up to political and economic changes over time.
- Our northern vision should recognize the importance of culture as an integral part of our community thinking and planning.
- A northern vision should be built upon economic security and stability and include a diverse economic foundation. We need to recognize that tourism may not be the best or only solution for economic diversification.
- We need to value youth as part of our community and economy.

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The workshop adjourned for a refreshment break between 2:25 and 2:40 pm. Gail Wallin then called participants back together to begin the table discussions with respect to strategic directions.

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Leslie Lax was asked to introduce the strategic directions discussion. He began by sharing what the Project had heard from northern residents. This information was organized in three broad topic areas: opportunities, challenges, and areas of strategic focus. The areas of strategic focus concentrated on physical infrastructure, human capacity infrastructure, community capacity infrastructure, and business and economic development support infrastructure.

The individual tables then took up discussion of potential strategic directions for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- In terms of strategic development opportunities, a number of key points should be considered. These include that:
  - we need to create more value-added and more processing within the resource sector,
  - we need to create more opportunities for youth employment,
  - we need to find the economic opportunities generated by an aging population which is creating a growing demand for services and support,
  - we need to recognize ways in which the diverse physical environment assets of our region embodies a potential set of opportunities for diversification,
  - we need to build upon the growing tourism opportunities, and
  - we need to recognize that our frontier culture is itself a potential economic development asset.
  
- In terms of challenges:
  - we need an infrastructure to support economic growth which includes transportation (including upgrades to roads and airports and renewal of the ferry fleet), services, people, and community capacity,
  - we need a mechanism for tourism information and regional marketing coordination,
  - we need to centralize many of our currently disjointed decision-making processes so that key organizations or agencies are able to talk together,
  - we need to recognize that our geography is a challenge and we need to create a mechanism for addressing that challenge, and
  - we need to increase opportunities for access to funding and financing for community and economic development initiatives.
  
- In terms of strategies:
  - we need to find mechanisms to work cooperatively with all levels of government, including First Nations government,

- we need a regional economic development commission that can provide support for other initiatives and which is able to give stability and funding to community and economic development efforts,
  - we need to raise awareness of the unique and diverse resources and challenges in northern BC, and
  - we need to create marketing tools (such as TV and video clips) which can show the province and the world what is important about life and opportunities in northern BC.
- A northern strategy must ensure that strategic directions are linked to a northern vision.
  - As we develop strategic directions, ecosystem-based management should be our foundation and we should fit economic development around that foundation.
  - A northern strategy should create access to our own dedicated funding base to support community and economic development rather than relying upon crisis funding.
  - We need to demonstrate to funding agencies that crisis funding is inefficient and that longer term sustainable funding support is a more wise and affordable investment.
  - A northern strategy should include foundations and trusts as one mechanism for providing funding and financing options.
  - Our northern strategy should promote the wider involvement of communities and interests so that more people are working together in transparent and open ways.
  - A northern strategy should make use of available technology and support increased internet access via broadband options.
  - A northern strategy should include a made in the north program for arguing our support for government programs that are effective in our communities.
  - Strategies should include training on how to use new forms of technologies both appropriately and effectively.
  - A northern strategy should have a sound governance mechanism so that it avoids the danger of swings in federal and provincial governing parties.

- Moving from a ‘first past the post’ to a ‘proportional representation’ system could help to make the provincial political scene less volatile and would be more cost effective than switching back and forth between priorities.
- A northern strategy needs to spend more time thinking about the social capital and human sides of economic development decisions.
- A northern strategy should use community and economic development in order to build healthy and sustainable northern communities.
- A northern strategy should include a focus upon skills and trades training as part of a comprehensive educational strategy building opportunities and using technologies to access alternative options.
- A northern strategy can be built upon revenue sharing at all levels provided that there is accountability and recognition of our relative contributions.
- A northern strategy should include creating a northern identity through branding our products and places.
- Access to funding and financing to expand our community infrastructure (not just economic infrastructure) should be part of a northern strategy as it is in the case of FedNor.
- A northern strategy should promote coordination within economic sectors and cohesiveness across economic sectors.
- A northern strategy should support small business incubators as a way to diversify our economic foundations.
- A northern strategy should include an effort to develop marketing and self-promotion mechanisms to those outside the region as well as mentoring, product development, and social development within the region.
- A northern strategy should be built upon the imperative of settling treaties in an equitable and timely fashion. Treaty settlement should be put on a ‘timeline’, as we are currently missing investment due to the uncertainty this creates.
- A key challenge for northern strategic directions includes maintenance of social programming in smaller places which have not been as successful as urban places in retaining service supports.
- A northern strategy should promote the ‘one-stop’ provision of services which can make their delivery viable in small places.

- There should be direct funding for economic development activities at the regional level which can support sub-regional economic initiatives.
- A northern strategy should build and enhance our existing social, economic, and environmental values.
- It will be an important challenge for our northern strategy to have the province ‘buy-in’ to what is happening in the north.
- Financing for small businesses and housing is important and a northern strategy should identify ways by which the north can get more investment funding based on its contributions to the provincial economy.
- One strategic option would be development of an exchange program for Victoria based civil servants to better understand northern realities.
- A northern strategy needs to support greater flexibility in the definition of the ability to pay relative to infrastructure, investment, and funding programs.
- A northern strategy needs to spend money to get information technology and increase awareness of what technologies already exist in our communities.
- A northern strategy should support technology and trades training in the north.
- We need to get more students coming north for work and advanced education.
- A northern strategy should include greater identification of opportunities in voluntary and work experiences, and be flexible to changing social and economic environments.
- A northern strategy should recognize what elements attract young people into communities and showcase those elements in our regional advertising.
- A northern strategy should pay particular attention to those jobs and economic sectors which include room for personal growth and advancement.
- We need to recognize that leisure and recreational opportunities are a valuable commodity and should figure more prominently in our community and economic recruiting.
- A northern strategy needs to find way which highlight that it is good to live in northern BC.

- We need to better educate and advertise about our available infrastructure (such as the connectivity available via direct air travel to Vancouver).
- We need to market our experiences and wisdom and that we can solve our own problems.
- A northern strategy should attract technology industries and have the infrastructure to support those industries.
- We need to be prepared to make choices and educate people about what those choices are.
- A northern strategy needs to better connect business, education, and health services to create more affordable transportation and technology options which can enhance our quality of life.
- We need to spend more time looking at options for delivering educational training via satellite campuses or centres of excellence in the north.
- We need to recognize that existing strategies for each community need to be considered in developing a northern strategic direction.
- A northern strategy should be practical, as there is no need to reinvent the wheel and we can make use of the many good pieces of strategic development strategies which already exist across northern BC.
- A northern strategy must make sense to people in northern BC and must be based in continuity with efforts already underway.
- We need to integrate our vision within the strategy development process so that our vision is what is driving the process. We also want our vision to remain in place after the economic development exercise.
- A northern strategy should provide access to northern development monies, but this must be done in an open way so as to meet the needs of all community members.
- A northern strategy should ensure that training and education is available across northern BC and that it is relevant to local economic opportunities and needs.
- We need to support options in traditional and homeopathic medicines and should support entrepreneurs moving up and down the production chain in these traditional and homeopathic medicine industries.

- A northern strategy should ensure that development includes attention to social, economic, and environmental considerations.
- A northern strategy should also shift our thinking from the ‘triple bottom line’ (economy, society, and environment) to a ‘quadruple bottom line’ which includes economy, society, environment, and culture.
- Instead of changing our economic vision to meet the needs of the development industry, a northern strategy should seek out developers who fit within our northern vision.
- Sustaining a northern economic strategy will mean creating a regional economic development vehicle that would support sub-regional development efforts.
- A northern strategy should focus upon collecting a youth perspective as they expect certain links and access to a global culture, and want to live in places that are socially progressive.
- A northern strategy should create an image of the north which shows that affordability, culture, access to the global culture, and quality of life are not missing.
- A northern strategy should recognize that timelines are different in northern BC as a result of seasons and climates. Programs need to be flexible and stable and attuned to the diversity of lifestyles across northern communities – it is not possible to announce a program in September and expect a facility to be constructed by the following March.

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Leslie Lax was then invited to introduce discussion on alternative regional development models. He began by outlining why a regional approach has become popular and then outlined four general types of regional development models. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,

- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and
- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, Leslie outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.

- Initial questions around the models section focused upon the need for accountability and the need for any organization to have authority for approving its spending decisions.
- There were additional questions and discussion around trusts. The focus was on the Columbia Basin Trust and the Gwaii Trust, and included some of the lessons which we can learn from their experiences.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of regional development models and their potential application in northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- A series of principles were identified for a Northern BC Development Council. These principles included that:
  - permanence is a key,
  - it may need to be grounded in legislation,
  - people want security and longevity, and that
  - legislation may still not be enough to sustain such an initiative (it may even need constitutional change around responsibility and control of resources).
- There needs to be equity among the sub-regions of northern BC participating in the model. Elements to support this equity may include:
  - a need to focus upon a federated model,
  - mechanisms to ensure that the interests of sub-regions are considered within the region,



- a need to focus on equity as a foundation for regional cooperation,
  - that equal and fair representation at the sub-regional and regional level will be important as a foundation for building trust, and
  - that small places within larger structures may require that different models are needed at the sub-regional and regional level.
- A legacy fund would give permanence to a northern model. Sources of this legacy fund could be diverse so that they are less susceptible to changing influences over time.
  - This must be a resource body or agency to which communities could turn when they need advice around community development or economic development issues.
  - This model will need to be robust so that it does not dissolve when British Columbia has a political swing.
  - This model needs to include accountability to the public for the results which are achieved.
  - The body associated with this model needs to be responsible for implementing development initiatives which are clearly related to a northern vision.
  - The body associated with this model needs to be representative and needs to have a built-in mechanism for evaluation and renewal.
  - Funding support for community development processes must be based on principles and not just a limited set of criteria. In other words, a northern development body must ensure that its programs are responsive to local needs.
  - A northern development body must ensure equality in decision-making.
  - It will be important for a northern development body to generate some quick results in order to establish a track record of success.
  - A northern development body must have the power and authority to act within its mandate and not be subject to government oversight.
  - A northern development body must be flexible and able to take a project management approach.

- A set of northern BC benchmarks and criteria should be established so as to create a more comprehensive and complete portrait of how northern BC is responding to change.
- A northern development body should be grounded in a stable set of goals based on a northern vision.
- A northern development body should be action oriented and deliver money to projects and community benefits rather than building an internal bureaucracy.
- We need our own source of funding which can support a northern development model. This funding should involve some component of our current contributions to the provincial economy through resource revenues.
- There should be a clear set of terms and criteria for how development monies are spent in northern BC.
- A northern development model needs to be run on a sustainable business case format.
- Given the diversity which exists across northern BC, there should be local chapters which can feed recommendations to a regional development body.
- In terms of an approach or philosophy, the north needs to think more like a team where diverse inputs can contribute to the overall success of all players.
- A northern development model must have mechanisms for getting jurisdiction or authority from the provincial ministries in order to have ability to act.
- A northern development body will need a permanent revenue stream and the authority to distribute those funds.
- This must not be just another government program but will need some type of legislated control over resources and revenue flows so that it is not tied to particular governments and is less liable to be dismissed following a change in governments at the federal or provincial levels.
- A northern development body must be an independent and separate body.
- Mechanisms such as the Northern Caucus need to be integrated with any other northern voice so that they can support one another in developing a stronger role within provincial government decision-making.

- We need to recognize that places will have different levels of capacity and capabilities and may be going through different processes of development as northern programs are rolled out.

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Gail Wallin thanked participants for their input and deliberations today. She then invited Greg Halseth to offer closing remarks.

Greg Halseth also thanked participants for contributing to the workshop. As part of the workshop process, all participants will receive a draft copy of the meeting notes. All participants are invited to provide comment and feedback so that our record better reflects the event. He also reminded participants that they will receive a copy of the draft final report from the Project.

From that point, the really important job begins. That job is to ensure that any ‘made in the north’ solution which comes out of this Project remains visible to decision-makers and is not allowed to fall by the wayside. In that regard, Greg invited participants to contact the Project Team if they would like to be involved in keeping this exercise active.

The workshop concluded at 4:15 pm.

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **3. Community Workshop Reports e. Dawson Creek**

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Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

**Meeting Notes**

**Dawson Creek Workshop**

O'Brien Teaching Centre  
Dawson Creek, BC  
March 19, 2004

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Dawson Creek Workshop

O'Brien Teaching Centre  
Dawson Creek, BC  
March 19, 2004

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**WORKSHOP AGENDA**

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**Introductions**

- Participants
- Project
- Day's work plan / agenda

The process for the next three sections will be to share information, gather input from workshop participants, and discuss priorities and recommendations.

**Vision:**

- What we heard through community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / recommendations

**Strategy:**

- What we heard from community research
- New points – workshop input
- Discussion / key elements / sectoral focus / recommendations

**Framework**

- Review of models selected from literature review
- Discuss models through a 'northern lens' – what could work for the north.
- Recommendations

**Next Steps**

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

O'Brien Teaching Centre  
Dawson Creek, BC  
March 19, 2004

Participants

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**Participants:**

Lori Ackerman  
Ryan MacIvor  
Terri Hanen  
Pamelyn Koehn  
Cyndy Lorincz  
Merlin Nichols  
Jackie Kjos  
Sue Kenny  
Elaine Peterson  
David Huzel  
David Kidd  
Frances Armstrong  
Mike Potter  
Calvin Kruk  
Tammy Danshin  
April Moi

**Project Team:**

Leslie Lax  
Don Manson  
Norm Skelton

**Facilitator:**

Kathleen O'Neill

Northern British Columbia  
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

O'Brien Teaching Centre  
Dawson Creek, BC  
March 19, 2004

Meeting Notes

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The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am by Kathleen O'Neill who acted as facilitator for the workshop.

Kathleen invited Councillor Calvin Kruk to offer a welcome from the Municipality of the City of Dawson Creek.

Kathleen O'Neill then invited participants to introduce themselves and provide some brief background on their interests relative to economic development in northern BC.

Kathleen O'Neill then invited Don Manson from the UNBC Project Team to introduce the Project and the day's event. Don started by thanking the participants for taking time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. He explained that the interest in a northern BC economic vision and strategy arose from an increasing recognition of BC's role within a global marketplace and that people were telling the Project Team that northern BC must think more collectively and broadly. People have also been telling the Project Team that our competitors are recognizing the impact of global forces on local places and that it is time for us to move our thinking to a regional level to create a new strategic plan which takes advantage of new opportunities and which creates new competitive advantage. A Project goal is to see if people in northern BC are interested in creating a 'made in the north' solution.

Don Manson then introduced the other members of the Project Team who were in attendance: Leslie Lax and Norm Skelton.

Don Manson then provided a brief overview of why this Project has taken a regional orientation to its work. Key points included the political and economic linkages which connect northern BC, the patterns of infrastructure and service delivery which are reinforcing established connections across the north, the role of new factors such as an interest in the environment which are binding communities across the region, and that our competitors have already 'scaled up' their interest in coordinating public policy, infrastructure investment, and the way regional voices are heard in the global marketplace. He reinforced that this Project is not about usurping local interests with a top-down single directive. Rather, it is about developing synergies through a bottom-up



collaborative process so as to construct a broad foundation for regionally supporting local strategic planning processes.

Don Manson outlined that the Project is based around a single question:

“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?”

Through the Fall of 2003, the Project Team undertook an extensive community interview process across northern BC. Through February and March of 2004, we are undertaking a series of community workshops to refine and focus some of the things we heard in those interviews. The goal is to produce a final report which addresses elements of a vision for northern BC, suggestions with respect to strategic directions for development, and options for a structure for implementing these elements and directions. The key message at this point is that there is a keen appetite to move forward with an economic vision and strategy for northern BC.

Don Manson then introduced the workshop to the community interviews process. He emphasized that if a ‘made in the north’ solution was going to be successful, it must hear from as many people in the north as possible and be widely supported. Thus, from September to November 2003, the Project Team travelled over 13,400 km and visited with people in over 50 communities and villages. The community interviews asked about people’s thoughts and experiences with a northern lifestyle, a northern vision, strategic development directions, and ways to follow through on these ideas. He also mentioned that the Project website contained background information and survey reply forms which allow people to continue to have input.

Don Manson continued by introducing the workshop program. The idea is to take the information we heard from community interviews and add to them, bring some focus to them, and gauge whether there is support for a made in the north solution. He outlined that over the February and March period that we would be holding nine events including some large community workshops and some smaller roundtable activities in places across northern BC.

Participants had a number of questions relating to the project. The following provides a summary of team responses.

- Western Economic Diversification Canada initiated the Project in conversation with senior UNBC staff.
- The Project Team is aware of other strategies, and we would be pleased to hear of others that we are not aware of. This Project is looking at ways to help coordinate and share information from these other strategies.

- The Project recognises the Peace region’s connections to other jurisdictions, especially Alberta. Project team members have initiated contact with other organisations, for example, the Northern Alberta Development Council. At the same time, there are other regions in northern BC that have cross-jurisdictional linkages. For example, the northwest has strong linkages to the Yukon.
- The Project is not about creating templates for project development and funding. The Project is about facilitating coordination between strategies and policies.
- There will be opportunity for further input and feedback, once the draft workshop report has been completed, and again once the draft Project final report has been completed.
- The Project Team has been in contact with Treaty 8 Tribal Association. We are hoping to present the project draft report to the Treaty 8 Tribal Council, and will be forwarding the report to First Nation contacts for further input.

At this point, Don provided an overview of how the day’s workshop will proceed and that we are interested in hearing participants’ responses with respect to ‘vision’, ‘strategic directions’, and ‘frameworks’.

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To introduce the workshop session on vision, Don Manson reviewed key elements with respect to context, opportunities, and challenges that we heard from people during the community interviews. He reminded participants that our task here today was not to craft a vision statement but to identify key elements which participants supported as important for a northern vision. The results of today’s workshop would then be included in consideration with input from all of the other workshop and roundtable processes.

Following this review of background materials, Don Manson turned the process over to Kathleen O’Neill who invited participants to discuss elements with respect to a vision for northern BC.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of elements which might contribute to a northern vision. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop and may be generalized. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Our vision should include strong support for diversity and be inclusive.
- Northerners are pioneers, resourceful, and independent entrepreneurs. The vision should recognise and support those traits.

- While recognising our place in the global economy, we need to balance local and global. “We should have a wood stove for those times when hydro goes down.”
- The vision should recognise the need for a paradigm shift from heartland to hinterland.
- The vision should address north-south differences. For example, northerners find it easier to move east to west than from north to south.
- The vision should include an increase in research and development funding for industrial development.
- Serious attention should be paid to connectivity infrastructure.
- The vision should include enhanced opportunities for employment, especially for professionals.
- We need more ‘fair share’ dollars for the region to allow for enhancement of economic development opportunities through infrastructure development. This resource revenue sharing should be expanded to include First Nations’ communities.
- There should be more opportunities for trusts to support industry and community (for example, the Columbia Basin Trust).
- The north needs a coordinated economic development vision.
- The vision needs to help communication between disparate economic development strategies.
- The vision should include local control of resource revenues.
- The vision must recognise the importance of economic diversification.
- Western Economic Diversification needs to diversify opportunities for accessing funding.
- Our vision must focus on development and improved access to markets.
- Victoria must quit patronising the north - stop treating us like hillbillies.
- The vision should include a level playing field. That is, services and amenities should be available in the north at the same cost to consumers / users as in other parts of the province.
- The north needs quicker and better quality access to information.
- There needs to be a change of mindset in the north. Northerners need to be confident and assertive rather than meek supplicants.
- We should promote the benefits of living in northern BC.
- People need to understand that we live in the north because we want to.

- Government needs to recognise the role resources play in driving the economy of BC and should return some of the revenues to local communities.
  - There needs to be coordination of economic development programs and policies. These processes need to be tied together to allow for more effective outcomes.
  - The Federal and Provincial governments need to communicate better with communities and allow real opportunities for participation.
  - We need to have local people in communities to communicate and provide information on government sponsored opportunities for regional growth.
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At 12:10 pm the workshop adjourned for lunch.

Kathleen O'Neill called participants back together around 12:40 pm to begin the table discussions with respect to strategic directions.

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Leslie Lax was then asked to introduce the strategic directions discussion. He began by sharing what the Project had heard from northern residents. This information was organized in three broad topic areas. These included opportunities, challenges, and areas of strategic focus. The areas of strategic focus concentrated on physical infrastructure, human capacity infrastructure, community capacity infrastructure, and business and economic development support infrastructure.

The individual tables then took up a discussion of potential strategic directions for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop and may be generalized. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- Strategies should include financial support that works.
- Local leadership must be part of the plan.
- One strategy could include the development of a central repository of information and analysis.
- Training should be made more accessible. Programs should provide training opportunities for all who want it. For example, the Self Employment Program is open only to those collecting Employment Insurance, not employed people currently looking to become entrepreneurs.

- Strategies must be developed with local input.
- The strategy should include effective lobbying for policy change.
- Plans should be long term. Strategies should be persistent and designed for the long-haul.
- The north needs to do more promotion about the north: research, branding, and marketing.
- We need to develop an ‘information Mall’ that serves to coordinate information from the region and externally.
- The strategy should help identify what communication (telephone, cell, internet) services exist, in order to establish how to connect communities better.
- The strategy must include a plan for funding and implementation.
- The strategy should help coordinate between provincial, local, and federal initiatives. There should also be local coordination.
- There is a need to provide a forum for front-line people to share ideas and information, not just those who have political decision-making authority (for example, mayors, councillors, and regional district directors).
- The strategy should include the development of a regional economic development network. This should be non-political, that is, not made up of elected local / provincial / federal politicians.
- The strategy should identify the need for local advisors who can support economic development through disseminating information and providing seed funding, etc.

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Leslie Lax was then invited to introduce discussion on alternative regional development models. He began by outlining why a regional approach has become popular and then outlined four general types of regional development models. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,
- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and

- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, Leslie outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.

Some general questions were asked by participants. The following provides a summary of the team's responses.

- A longer-term approach generally refers to a 5-10 year time-frame.
- Criteria for success include longevity, responsiveness to local needs, providing local benefits, and having a mechanism for evaluation. (One participant suggested that criteria for success should be relevant to regional and industry interests).

The individual tables then took up a discussion of regional development models and their potential for northern BC. The results of their deliberations were reported back to the workshop. It should be noted that these table summaries are presented as they were presented at the workshop and may be generalized. Tables were asked in random order for their responses.

- The model should accommodate accessible and flexible funding. This would include staged funding, so that not all money has to be spent in a short time-frame.
- Local projects should have access to funds.
- The model should include 3-way funding to ensure financial buy-in from municipal and regional government and to allow for an equal say in deliverables and outcomes.
- In the short-term, the model should build on enhancing relationships with existing bodies (for example, Film PG, Export PG, and NRAHTA). There should be staff resources to collect and disseminate information, and funding should be provided to assist local participation.
- The model should not replicate existing areas of responsibility. For example, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committees already provides local input on transportation issues.
- In the long-term, agencies or organizations such as the Regional Sciences and Technology Network could serve as a guide.

- The regional body could provide support and recommendations to funding agencies.
- An important element of the framework should include teamwork and must include a larger number of players (broader than just government).
- Funding for the framework should come from federal, provincial, and local sources, including First Nations.
- The model could include Community Resource Boards, providing liaison with ministries and industry, and scheduling joint meetings.
- Administration must be at the local level. The board must include all sectors and all communities.
- The body could apply for funding for projects, as well as develop collaborative approaches.
- The model could include a Ministry of the North, with Deputy Ministers stationed in the northwest and northeast.
- Activities need to be self funded – perhaps from resource revenues.
- An umbrella approach is needed to manage competition.
- Perhaps a Council with a mandate to promote partnership for economic development that could help reduce competition within the region and foster effective cooperation and clustering.
- Provincial government ministries could be moved from Victoria into the north.

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Kathleen O’Neill thanked participants for their input and deliberations today. She then invited Don Manson to offer closing remarks.

Don also thanked participants for contributing to the workshop. As part of the workshop process, all participants will receive a draft copy of the meeting notes. All participants are invited to provide comment and feedback so that our record better reflects the workshop. He also reminded participants that they will receive a copy of the draft final Project report.

From that point, the really important job begins. That job is to ensure that any ‘made in the north’ solution which comes out of this Project remains visible to decision-makers and is not allowed to fall by the wayside. In that regard, Don invited participants to contact the Project Team if they would like to be involved in keeping this exercise active.

The workshop concluded at 3:00 pm.

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **4. Regional Development Model Briefs**

- **Northern BC Context**
  - **British Columbia Experiences**
  - **Alberta Experiences**
  - **Saskatchewan Experiences**
  - **Ontario Experiences**
  - **International Experiences**
  - **Policy Options**
  - **Organizational Models**
-



# Northern B.C. Economic Development Vision & Strategy Project

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## Regional Development Briefs:

British Columbia can now draw upon a wide range of experiences with regional development policies and strategies. The current emphasis upon regional approaches derives from the need to reconcile the local context with an increasingly global economy, all through the lens of increasingly limited fiscal resources to invest in support infrastructure. A regional approach allows for a stronger voice for marketing and advocacy, the pooling of resources, the coordination of infrastructure investments, and more.

Attached are Regional Development Briefs under eight topics:

- Northern BC Context
- British Columbia Experiences
- Alberta Experiences
- Saskatchewan Experiences
- Ontario Experiences
- International Experiences
- Policy Options
- Organizational Models

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

### Regional Development Brief: NORTHERN BC

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The purpose of this regional development brief is to outline the basic features of development in Northern BC. Northern BC is economically, culturally, and environmentally diverse. As a result, we must be careful when generalizing about ‘The North.’ Nevertheless, this brief reviews numerous reports that document basic trends in rural and northern BC to help build a picture for regional development strategies.

Northern BC comprises about 70% of the provincial land mass and contains approximately 10% of the provincial population. The economy of the North is similar to other northern economies being heavily dependent on forestry, mining, power-generation, and tourism. There is also a strong second economy of hunting, fishing, and trapping. The North contains a variety of economic assets (strengths/opportunities) and challenges:

First, when considering the assets of the North, it is clear that the Northern regions are endowed with a variety economic advantages:

1. The attraction of people and investment is encouraged by the following factors:
  - Affordability (e.g. land and housing)
  - Quality of life factors (small town, natural environment)
  - Demand for amenities (e.g. burgeoning tourism opportunities)
2. The Northern regions of BC are resource rich:
  - Resource wealth for extraction and processing
  - Share of export wealth (non-metropolitan regions of BC are responsible for 71% of the export wealth generated in BC)
  - Tourism opportunities
3. The Northern regions of BC display strong social characteristics:
  - Commitment to place exhibited by Northerners
  - Aboriginal rights
  - Strong aboriginal youth population

Regional development strategies in the North must capitalize on each of these economic development assets.

Second, the North faces competitive challenges by virtue of *pockets* of the following social and economic trends:

- Higher dependency on primary industries (less economic diversity)
- Higher levels of unemployment
- Lower levels of education
- Fewer and less access to services

These trends vary in magnitude; however, as a generalization, socio-economic performance tends to decrease as the distance from metropolitan areas increases. Negative socioeconomic trends are particularly low in Aboriginal communities. In addition, as Hutton (2002) states, uneven patterns of development are increasing across the province (i.e. things are getting worse), leading to socio-economic disparities and the

potential for political and social alienation.<sup>1</sup> Now that local development conditions play an even more critical role in economic development, Northern BC faces particular challenges. These points provide strong supportive evidence of the need for a Northern development vision and strategy.

There are two interconnected ways to explain the economic challenges faced by the North. First, economic development strategies in the North must address and overcome a variety of competitive disadvantages (FERENCE, 2003; Lax *et al.*, 2001)<sup>2</sup>:

- Employment in primary industries is declining
- Smaller businesses that are more geographically dispersed
- The population base is declining; youth out-migration
- Information and IT access more limited than in urban centres
- Access to investment capital is a challenge
- Geographic isolation
- Revitalization of downtown business sectors is needed
- Access to education is improving

Second, there is increasing attention being placed on the North's economic inheritance, or the legacy of development, which has shaped regional economies. An over-reliance on primary industries without adequate strategies for economic diversification and regional re-investment (i.e. the North retaining more wealth from resources), creates barriers to maintaining economic health and resiliency.

The 'mainstreaming' of this legacy perspective is evident in the words of Jock Finlayson, Vice-president of the BC Business Council, who states:

“We grew rich off resources. Now we are in genteel decline. We created a political and institutional environment in which we didn't seek other ways to make a living” (Little, 2002).<sup>3</sup>

In order to reverse declining trends, the North must identify new, and re-conceptualize old, economic assets and relationships. Part of this transition is in moving from a position of *comparative advantage* (i.e. relying on the sheer abundance of resources) to a position of *competitive advantage* (i.e. finding better ways to use resources). This requires changes in attitude, policy, and capacity.

The Urban Futures Institute indicates that the rural regions of BC serve as the powerhouse of export wealth in the province – generating 71% of international export revenues. The frequency with which this finding is repeated in recent rural development discussions is evidence of the extent to which it has rocked

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<sup>1</sup> Hutton, T. (2002). *British Columbia at the Crossroads*. Vancouver: BC Progress Board.

<sup>2</sup> FERENCE Weiker & Company. (2003). *Promoting Innovation and Commercialization in Rural BC*. Vancouver: FERENCE Weiker & Company; Lax, L. and Backhouse, J. and Bowles, P. (2001). *The Northern Development Commission: one model for supporting community economic development in northern British Columbia*. Prince George: University of Northern BC.

<sup>3</sup> Little, B. 2002. “B.C.'s decades of 'genteel decline'.” *Globe and Mail*, Saturday, April 20, 2002, B1, B4.

preconceptions of the role rural BC plays in the provincial economy – and forwarded arguments for greater local and regional re-investment:

Before accepting that they [larger urban centres] are either the engines of growth or deserving of a greater share of taxes, it is necessary to determine how much metropolitan regions actually contribute to the provincial and national economic base. Such analysis indicates that, in reality, metropolitan regions in British Columbia make a below average per capita contribution, and hence are dependent on international export revenue from commodities originating in non-metropolitan regions of the province (Baxter and Ramlo, 2002: 3).<sup>4</sup>

Despite the significance of the Urban Futures report, the BC Progress Board notes that between 1981-1991, 360,000 net new jobs were created in BC, all but 1,000 of these were located in the Lower Mainland (de Wolf, 2002).<sup>5</sup> This indicates that the real economic challenge in the North is to transform non-metropolitan (rural) wealth into real development in the North.

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<sup>4</sup> Baxter, D. and Ramlo, A. (2002). *Resource Dependency: The Spatial Origins of British Columbia's Economic Base*. Vancouver: The Urban Futures Institute.

<sup>5</sup> de Wolf, J. (2002). *Growth Drivers in British Columbia*. Vancouver: BC Progress Board.

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: BRITISH COLUMBIA

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There is a long history of direct regional development experience in BC at both the provincial and federal levels. The purpose of this brief is to outline a variety of past regional development programs in BC and present some of the main features of the most recent initiatives – the BC Heartlands Strategy and the Northern Development Initiative.

### Provincial Programs:

BC has implemented a variety of regional development programs over the years:

#### BC Regional Development Summary

Date	Model	Description
1950s-1970s	Province Building: Road to Resources	Province building: economic expansion, infrastructure dev. and access to resources
1987-1992	Ministers of State and Regional Development Officers (RDO) Minister of Regional Economic Development (1989)	Regional districts formed and assigned a Minister of State. Regional offices opened in eight regions, consisting of regional development officer (RDO), a regional development liaison officer (RDLO) and clerical staff. Mandate to establish regional priorities, implement government programs, and conduct evaluations and reporting.
1993-1996	Regional Economic Development Offices	Five regional offices established with Regional Economic Development Officers (REDOs). REDOs responsible for a more community-based approach towards economic development and implementation of government programs.
1998-2001	Northern Development Commission	Established by the Northern Development Act and headed by a Commissioner supported by five staff servicing three Northern regions. NDC mandate for advocacy and consultation with small fund available to assist development projects.
1999-2001	Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives, and Volunteers	Variety of community economic development programs and transition funds: e.g. Community Enterprise Fund
2000	Provincial Liberal Government	Macro environment: tax reductions, deregulation, labour flexibility
2000+	Northern Caucus Community Charter Heartland's Strategy Northern Development Init.	Tourism; Transportation; First Nations interim measures; Sector marketing and support; Trust

*(adapted from Lax et al., 2001)<sup>6</sup>*

The main point from the above chart, however, is to contrast what we know about the long-term process of community and regional development with the sporadic three-five year policy horizons of various provincial governments. The relatively sustained regional expansion and infrastructure policies of the

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that there are other development programs not listed, e.g. the Fair Share agreement in the BC Peace, Build BC (BC 21), etc.

W.A.C. Bennett government from the 1950s to the early 1970s are an exception for hinterland regions in BC.<sup>7</sup>

The two most recent provincial initiatives pertaining to regional development in the North include the BC Heartlands Strategy and the intention to create a Northern Development Initiative (NDI) Trust. Both strategies are summarized below:

The BC Heartlands:

The Provincial Liberal Government has recently launched its Heartlands Strategy, intended to create economic opportunities and greater economic certainty in BC’s rural areas. The strategy re-enforces a macro-policy approach of tax relief, regulatory streamlining, and labour flexibility; however, there are a variety of specific mechanisms designed to stimulate various sectors. There is no particular vision attached to the strategy and also no specific reference to a delivery vehicle beyond the specific program linkages. Below is a summary of strategies for the Northern regions:

Cariboo	Northwest	Northeast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forestry: timber access; value-added support (Advanced Tech Centre at UCC); First Nations (Economic Measures Fund)</li> <li>• Agriculture: federal business development partnership; new use of ALR</li> <li>• Tourism: \$1.25 million marketing fund; Resort task force; 2010 Olympics</li> <li>• Transportation: Highway 20 upgrades</li> <li>• Film: funding for Cariboo-Chilcotin and Prince George Film Board; tax credits for films outside of Vancouver/Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mining: increased exploration; less red tape</li> <li>• Forestry: timber access; enhanced flow of timber; revenue sharing with FN</li> <li>• Transportation: \$135 million including Highway 16 and 37</li> <li>• Tourism: expanded cruise ship capacity at Prince Rupert; provincial marketing fund; resort task force; 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy development</li> <li>• more land-base certainty and opportunities for First Nations through initiatives like the commitment of \$1.9 million to further Treaty 8 First Nations’ participation in the oil and gas industry.</li> <li>• Forestry: same as other</li> <li>• Transportation: \$153 million for transportation infrastructure improvements over the next three years, \$10 million annually in royalty credits toward construction and maintenance of resource roads</li> <li>• Tourism: Same as Northeast</li> </ul>

See: [http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/content.do?brwId=%402INiw%7C0YQtW&navId=NAV\\_ID\\_province](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/content.do?brwId=%402INiw%7C0YQtW&navId=NAV_ID_province)

Northern Development Initiative:

The Government has announced its intention to establish a Northern Development Initiative (NDI) aimed at giving Northern communities the funding, control and mechanism to identify and pursue new opportunities

<sup>7</sup> For example: hydro development; rail policy; the ferry system; provincial highway upgrades; Roberts Bank.

aimed at stimulating economic growth and job creation in their regions.

Specifically, this initiative is intended to give the NDI's Board of Directors and its four Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) the ability to manage a \$135 million Trust that can be used for strategic investments in forestry, pine beetle recovery, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, Olympic opportunities, small business and sustainable economic development.

The NDI will be headquartered in Prince George and managed by a Board of Directors that will act on behalf of four Regional Advisory Councils that are broadly representative of the communities and residents in each of the four participating regions. These regions include the Peace, Prince George, the Northwest, and the Cariboo-Chilcotin-Lillooet, whose boundaries will be defined in the NDI founding legislation and aligned around groupings of provincial electoral districts.

The funding for this initiative will be granted by a supplementary Estimate from the proceeds of the \$1 billion BC Rail Investment Partnership anticipated in fiscal 2003/04. The funding will be held in the Northern Development Initiative Trust, which will be established in the proposed legislation. See: [http://www.prov.gov.bc.ca/prem/down/cabi/dec\\_10\\_03\\_northern\\_development\\_initiative\\_cab\\_sub.pdf](http://www.prov.gov.bc.ca/prem/down/cabi/dec_10_03_northern_development_initiative_cab_sub.pdf)

### **Federal Programs:**

The Federal government also provides direct development assistance through programs such as Western Economic Diversification, Community Futures, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Industry Canada, the Canadian Rural Partnership, and Human Resources Development Canada (and historically through a variety of regional development programs dating back to the 1950s).

The Federal government is generally praised for providing a much more consistent and coherent approach to rural policy and regional development. Particularly since the mid-1990s, the Feds have sought to design and integrate various rural programs through a common framework. The framework is the responsibility of the Canadian Rural Secretariat, although this program has not been particularly well funded – concentrating more on administration than program delivery. Also, a federal commitment to the regionalization of development programs through such agencies as Western Economic Diversification and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is widely regarded as a successful approach to program delivery to meet the challenges of a culturally and geographically diverse nation.

Stated principles guiding federal rural policy development are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

1. Recognize rural strengths and core values and build on them. Encourage the development of community and regional strategic plans to optimize comparative advantages of specific communities, and to minimize undesirable competition among communities in the same region.
2. Incorporate increased flexibility into program design, eligibility criteria, implementation and monitoring.
3. Foster, promote and utilize community-based program design, planning, implementation, and monitoring to ensure accessibility and to achieve local management of the development process.
4. Continue to investigate multi-partnering initiatives involving the federal government.

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<sup>8</sup> Canadian Rural Secretariat. 1998. "Rural Dialogue: Rural Canadians Speak Out." [www.rural.gc.ca/discpaper\\_e.html](http://www.rural.gc.ca/discpaper_e.html).

5. Promote rural human resource development.
6. Promote the development of leadership skills and community capacity building to enable communities to work cooperatively for local community development.
7. Support policies and programs which promote a job-creating environment and provide tools for achieving meaningful employment.
8. Promote re-investment of capital in rural communities.
9. Ensure tax structures better reflect rural realities and support rural economic diversification, northern living and transportation expenses.
10. Integrate and coordinate the resources of multiple government departments in support of the rural sector.
11. Ensure that any new policy/program would take into account economic, social, and environmental impacts on rural areas.
12. Promote rural Canada in urban centres to ensure better appreciation of the role that rural communities play.

**Policy Suggestions for BC:**

The following page provides a summary of various policy prescriptions, as presented in various reports, for rural and Northern BC.



BC Regional Development: Suggested Policy Summary

Progress Board, 2002	Hutton, 2002	FERENCE WEIKER, 2003	Other: Terluin; OECD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restoring land base certainty and productivity</li> <li>• clearly define and implement fair and durable consultation process with First Nations</li> <li>• streamline treaty process</li> <li>• encourage business-Aboriginal partnerships</li> <li>• market-based forest reforms</li> <li>• performance-based Code</li> <li>• additional community-based forest tenures</li> <li>• finalize remaining LRMPs</li> <li>• reduce business taxes and regulatory burden</li> <li>• identify large-scale private sector financed and managed growth-driving resource projects (coal-bed methane, natural gas, mines)</li> <li>• private development of electricity</li> <li>• pursue offshore oil and gas</li> <li>• tourism marketing</li> <li>• support emerging clusters</li> <li>• consider resource dividend</li> <li>• engage participation of regions: feeling disconnected and isolated by macro policy approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regional development as a strategic priority</li> <li>• secure future of regional resource industries and employment</li> <li>• education, human capital, and regional development (K-12, completion rates, adult education, cultivate entrepreneurship, access to post-secondary</li> <li>• infrastructure and land use for the ‘new regional economy’</li> <li>• governance and process issues (stronger regional ‘voice’ and role in development)</li> <li>• support network formation</li> <li>• re-invention of regional districts; all undergo growth strategies</li> <li>• new secretariat for regional development</li> <li>• benchmarking</li> <li>• stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recommendations re: capacity building focuses on intermediary organizations in the rural context</li> <li>• arguing for enhanced research role through colleges and universities</li> <li>• financing component</li> <li>• support innovation system components: research institutes and organizations; sources of funding for R&amp;D; technology transfer organizations and facilitators; education and training; sources of business capital; agency and institutional support for commercialization</li> <li>• advocates for stronger community – regional linkages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve access and quality of life through infrastructure</li> <li>• develop policies to valorise natural and cultural amenities, especially in rural areas</li> <li>• strengthen cluster conditions by enhancing local social capital</li> <li>• invest in human capital</li> <li>• development of clusters</li> <li>• link universities with local economic actors (regional strategies for innovation)</li> <li>• public-private partnerships for private finance initiatives</li> <li>• diversify rural economies and create positive urban-rural linkages</li> <li>• focus on wealth creation rather than redistribution</li> <li>• improve capacity of local actors</li> <li>• strengthen cooperation of local actors (creation and maintenance of networks)</li> <li>• adjust administrative structures to respond to bottom-up</li> <li>• use a comprehensive territorial development plan</li> </ul>

BC Progress Board. (2002). *Restoring British Columbia’s Economic Heartland*. Vancouver: BC Progress Board.

Hutton, T. (2002). *British Columbia at the Crossroads*. Vancouver: BC Progress Board.

FERENCE WEIKER & COMPANY. (2003). *Promoting Innovation and Commercialization in Rural BC*. Vancouver: Ference Weiker & Company.

Terluin, I. (2003). “Differences in economic development in rural regions or advanced countries: an overview and critical analysis of theories. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19: 327-344.

OECD. (1996). *Better Policies for Rural Development*. Paris: OECD.

BC Progress Board publications are available on the web at: <http://www.bcprogressboard.com/>

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: ALBERTA

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### **Northern Alberta:**

Northern Alberta includes 60% of Alberta's landmass and has 10% of the province's population. It is resource rich, with 90% of Alberta's forests, all of Canada's oil sands development, nearly 40% of Alberta's conventional oil and gas activity, and 20% of Alberta's agricultural land.

### **Provincial Programs**

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a regional development council with a focus on advancing the development of the northern economy. The mandate of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) as outlined in the Act of Legislature is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the Government thereon." The mission of the NADC is to identify and implement measures that will advance northern development, as well as advise government on opportunities and issues. See: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/nadc/>

### **Governance**

- 10 member council
- 15 staff, including Executive Director and Development Officers

### **Program areas<sup>9</sup>**

Goals of the NADC are:

- Establish priorities for northern opportunities, and increase awareness and support among government and key stakeholders for those priorities.
- Increase skill levels of northern Albertans.

NADC offers a variety of program areas:

- Coordinate government and non-government strategies through the Northern Development Strategy to increase awareness and advance the importance of northern development to the well-being of Alberta.
- Engage northern communities, businesses and other stakeholders through information-gathering processes to identify northern priorities, opportunities and challenges (e.g., Challenge North 2003).
- Partner with other jurisdictions, ministries, businesses and communities to promote opportunities and address northern challenges.
- Support learning initiatives aimed at increasing northern skill levels.
- Medical student bursaries
- *Opportunity North* website: <http://www.opportunitynorth.ca/>

### **Financial Structure**

The budget for the Northern Alberta Development Council was \$1,954,000 for 2002-2003.

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<sup>9</sup> Alberta also has a Minister of Economic Development and a Minister of Community Development for the province as a whole.

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: SASKATCHEWAN

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### **Northern Saskatchewan:**

The Northern Administration District (NAD) makes up about half of Saskatchewan's total area yet has a population of less than 40,000 people. The size of the North, yet lack of population, presents Northerners with both challenges and opportunities. Northern Saskatchewan is a beautiful region. It is rich in cultures, history and resources.

### **Provincial Programs**

The Office of Northern Affairs was created in 1996 to improve the planning and coordination of provincial government services in the NAD. See: <http://www.northern.gov.sk.ca/default.html>

In 1998, northern political leaders joined with the Premier and the Northern Affairs Minister to sign the Northern Strategy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Northern Strategy is an agreed statement of goals and objectives for social, economic and political development in the Northern Administration District of Saskatchewan (see below).

### **Governance**

Saskatchewan Northern Affairs (SNA) is responsible to the Saskatchewan Legislature through the Minister of Northern Affairs. Under the direction of its Deputy Minister, SNA operates with six operational sections. These sections include Communications, Regional Development, Programs And Financial Services, Resource And Industry Development and Planning And Performance Management.

### **Program Areas**

The Northern Development Fund was established in February 1995 to stimulate and support economic and business development in northern Saskatchewan, and to encourage diversification and job creation.

The Fund provides:

- commercial loans to northern businesses
- primary production loans to trappers, commercial fishermen and wild rice growers
- grants for marketing, research and development through the Northern Development Fund – Marketing, Promotion, Research and Development Program
- grants for organizational development and business skills training through the Northern Development – Business Skill and Organizational Development Program
- financial support to assist northern youth entrepreneurs in the development of their entrepreneurial and business skills in Northern Saskatchewan through the Northern Development Fund – Youth Entrepreneurship Program
- Regional Development Program: Provides financial and business support services to northern entrepreneurs, businesses, co-operatives, community development corporations and other organizations.

### **Financial Structure**

SNA's budget was \$4.478 million for 2002-2003.

## **Federal Programs**

The purpose of the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement, signed in 2002, is to promote and support sustainable economic development for northern Saskatchewan and encourage the full participation of Northerners in the Saskatchewan economy. See: [http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/snda/default\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/snda/default_e.asp)

Purpose:

- To enhance the economic opportunities available to Northerners, promote and support the sustainable economic development of northern Saskatchewan and encourage the full participation of Northerners in the Canadian economy; and,
- To provide an opportunity for appropriate representatives of Northerners to directly participate in establishing the priorities to be pursued by this Agreement and to play a significant role in the decision-making process.

## ***Governance***

Board structure: two federal appointments; two provincial appointments; two appointments by the Northern Development Board

## ***Program Areas***

The Agreement will provide funding for projects that address five strategic priorities:

- Economic Infrastructure: projects that support major new economic initiatives with significant benefit to Northerners;
- Innovation: projects that could lead to new discoveries, new products or new services in Northern Saskatchewan;
- Realizing Employment Opportunities: initiatives that will help Northerners to take advantage of employment opportunities, with emphasis on the needs of Northern youth;
- Capacity Building: support for organizations that will enhance the capacity of Northerners and their organizations to be self-sufficient; and,
- Investment Attraction: efforts taken to identify, research and promote specific investment opportunities in northern Saskatchewan, particularly value added industries.

Principles:

The Parties recognize that, in pursuing the vision of this Accord, they will need to be guided by the following principles:

1. that northern development needs to take a strategic approach;
2. that northern problems require northern solutions;
3. that northern development can most effectively be promoted through a genuine partnership between the federal and provincial governments, and with First Nations, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan locals in northern Saskatchewan, local government authorities, northern communities, industry, labour and non-governmental organizations;
4. that the traditions and cultures of all northerners must be respected; and
5. that, in implementing initiatives in support of the goals of the Accord, efforts will be made to treat all regions of the north equitably.

## ***Financial Structure***

The Agreement includes funding of \$20 million over a five-year period, cost shared equally by the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan.

## THE NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN STRATEGY: Vision, Goals and Objectives, Enabling Mechanisms

### A. VISION:

The people of northern Saskatchewan will possess the means to address the goals and aspirations they have for their communities, their families and themselves. With respect for northern people, their cultures and traditions, government will work as an active partner with communities, Aboriginal authorities, business and industry to promote the social and economic development of the North.

### B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

#### 1. DEVELOPING A STRONGER AND MORE DIVERSIFIED NORTHERN ECONOMY, CREATING JOBS AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- develop the potential of northern economic sectors
- establish partnerships among governments, communities and industry to promote economic growth and diversification
- increase northern participation in, and benefits from, economic development activities (e.g. forestry, tourism, mining)
- strengthen northern businesses' access to financial and business support services
- enhance northern entrepreneurs' ability to provide goods and services to industry and the public sector

#### 2. ENHANCING COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL ASSIST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE NORTHERN LIVING CONDITIONS

- improve transportation, energy and communication services
- improve municipal and community services such as sewer and water, land use planning and zoning, health and recreation facilities
- increase the availability of adequate housing and support the further development of housing markets

#### 3. STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE NORTH; ENABLING NORTHERNERS TO PURSUE FURTHER ACADEMIC GOALS AND TO BETTER COMPETE IN THE LABOUR MARKET, BOTH IN THE NORTH AND BEYOND

- expand educational approaches to improve school retention and completion rates
- strengthen adult education and literacy programs to improve the labour market opportunities for mature northerners
- improve access to training programs to gain skills and practical experience
- improve entrance rates to post-secondary institutions

#### 4. INCREASING COMMUNITY SELF-RELIANCE AND ENHANCING NORTHERNERS' OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN, AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR, NORTHERN INSTITUTIONS

- enhance child development programs
- increase participation of northerners in public service employment
- improve access to information, training, administrative and technical expertise to better develop organizational skills and foster community development
- facilitate the delivery of justice initiatives that respond to northern cultures and support community and social development
- work with communities to lessen dependence on social assistance

#### 5. INCREASING NORTHERNERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NORTH

- strengthen the research and communication services of the Environmental Quality Committees
- develop and apply, with northerners, new models of co-management in administering northern resources
- work with northerners to build expertise in reclamation of abandoned resource development sites
- in partnership with northerners, undertake reforestation of non-renewed forest harvest areas
- restoration of species' habitats to ensure Northerners' ability to continue practising traditional lifestyles, while also contributing to new opportunities for economic diversification (e.g. ecotourism)

#### C. PROPOSED NEW ENABLING MECHANISMS (IN ADDITION TO EXISTING FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES) TO HELP ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

##### 1. STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT

- analysis of each sector of the northern economy to determine where public and private investment will achieve self-supporting economic diversification and job creation
- \$150,000 1998-99 provincial budget allocation to immediately begin the process, building on existing information and undertaken with the Interim Northern Development Board.
- additional funds to be determined for work in 1999-2000, to ensure assessments are complete within 18 months

##### 2. CANADA-SASKATCHEWAN NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

- a multi-year cost-shared investment in economic development and diversification, targeted to commence April 1999
- consideration of an 'equity investment' vehicle
- associated investment in infrastructure and 'capacity building' that will facilitate economic diversification and opportunities for employment and business development by northern people
- based on input from the Interim Northern Development Board, the Province will initiate discussions with the federal government immediately

### 3. NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT BOARD

- a twelve-person board, created and funded under the Northern Development Agreement, to oversee the Strategic Opportunities Assessment and the Agreement
- two members named by each of the: Metis Nation, New North, Prince Albert Grand Council, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan and Canada
- in co-operation with the Northern Dialogue Steering Committee, the Province will create an Interim Northern Development Board, pending federal agreement to establish the proposed Board under the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: ONTARIO

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### **Northern Ontario:**

Northern Ontario covers over 800,000 square kilometres, representing nearly 89 percent of the Province of Ontario's land area. It extends across two time zones, from the southern boundary of the District of Muskoka, north to Hudson Bay and James Bay, and westerly from Quebec to the Manitoba border.

Northern Ontario is comprised of 10 territorial districts and the District Municipality of Muskoka, 154 municipalities, 104 First Nations, and over 150 unincorporated communities, including 46 Local Services Boards.

Although Northern Ontario comprises approximately 89 percent of the area of Ontario, the population of 839,549 represents only 7.4 percent of the provincial population.

### **Provincial Programs**

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is the only regional ministry within the government and plays a central role in northern affairs.

See: [http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/MNDM/Default\\_e.asp](http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/MNDM/Default_e.asp)

### ***Governance***

Ministry model: Minister; Parliamentary Assistant; Deputy Minister

### ***Program areas***

The Northern Development Division of the Ministry has four main components to service Northern Ontario (See: [http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mndm/nordev/Default\\_e.asp](http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mndm/nordev/Default_e.asp))

### **The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)**

The NOHFC assists northern communities to generate short and long-term employment important to their economic viability and the quality of life.

Funding areas:

- infrastructure
- tourism
- telecommunications
- strategic partnerships
- community foundations

### **Transportation**

The Northern Development Division of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines allocates funding to develop and maintain the necessary transportation infrastructure that will promote economic growth, sustain an evolving industrial base and meet the social needs of Northern residents. With its funding, the Ministry supports four capital activities in the North:

- Northern Roads Program
- Local Roads Boards Program
- Resource Access Roads Program



- Winter Roads Program

### **Regional Economic Development Branch**

Recognizing the North's uniqueness, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' Regional Economic Development Branch has established an integrated network of 'area teams' to serve as the focal point for economic development in Northern Ontario. The North has been divided into six service areas.

### **Trade and Investment Marketing**

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, recognizing the importance of export trade and investment attraction to the development of a strong balanced economy in Northern Ontario, established the Trade and Investment Marketing Branch (TIM). The Trade and Investment Marketing Branch works closely with northern businesses, economic development practitioners and agencies, and other levels of government to market northern Ontario.

### ***Financial Structure***

Operating- \$72m; Capital - \$307m; 145 staff

### **Federal Programs**

The Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) was launched in 1987. FedNor's mission is to promote economic growth, diversification, job creation and sustainable, self-reliant communities in Northern Ontario, by working with community partners and other organizations to improve small business access to capital, information & markets. see: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/infednor-fednor.nsf/vwGeneratedInterE/Home>

### ***Governance***

Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario); Director General; Community Economic Development offices

### ***Program areas***

FedNor adopts a bottom-up approach in five major program areas. The organization emphasises capacity building and skills training within each area:

- community partnerships
- investment
- connectedness
- innovation
- trade

### ***Financial structure***

FedNor has an ongoing base budget of \$20 million per year. FedNor invests more than \$40 million a year directly into programs and services which bring economic benefit to northern communities. An additional \$20 million is flowed through the provincial network of Community Futures Development Corporations which are managed by FedNor, strategically located throughout Northern and rural southern Ontario. In addition, FedNor receives additional program specific funding, for example:

- an additional \$30m added in 2000 for three years to deal with declining mining sector
- an additional \$38m added in 2001 to support adaptation to knowledge based economy

## **Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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The following brief provides information on a variety of international policies and programs that may hold particular relevance for Northern BC. Countries covered include the United States (with a particular focus on Alaska), Norway, Australia, and the UK. Perhaps the main lesson to be learned from these examples is that the North is not alone in seeking ways to develop strong regional economies. Countries all over the world are working to adapt to new economic and political dynamics and to find ways of ensuring that rural regions remain viable and vital components of national economies and societies. Summaries of different country models and specific strategic themes are provided at the end.

### **United States:**

The US has a federal program that applies to economically depressed rural regions: Enterprise Zones and Empowerment Communities – the EZ/EC program. The EZ/EC program is interesting because it offers a variety of tax incentive tools to stimulate rural development (See: <http://www.ezec.gov/>). For example:

- Rural EZs receive substantial flexible grant dollars to help implement their strategic plans. Rural ECs receive somewhat less for the same purpose.
- Rural EZs are eligible for tax credits, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Section 179 tax deductions, as well as tax-free facility bonds.
- Both rural EZs and ECs receive primary consideration for many other federal and state programs.

Program examples include:

The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund was created to expand the availability of credit, investment capital, and financial services in distressed urban and rural communities. CDFIs are specialized financial institutions that work in market niches that have not been adequately served by traditional financial institutions. CDFIs include community development banks, credit unions, loan funds, venture capital funds, and microenterprise loan funds, among others.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire nine targeted groups of job seekers by reducing employers' federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified new worker; \$750, if working 120 hours or \$1,200, if working 400 hours or more, per qualified summer youth. The program hosts a variety of other interesting tax and capital gain deduction programs for rural areas.

### **Alaska:**

Alaska provides an interesting example for Northern BC given it faces many of the same geographical challenges and opportunities. The most prominent state-sponsored regional development program in Alaska is the Alaska Regional Development Organization program – ARDORs. There are 13 ARDORs in Alaska. The ARDOR program is based on the notion that locally driven initiatives, in partnership with the State, can most effectively stimulate economic

development and produce healthy, sustainable local economies. See:  
<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/dca/ardor/ardor.htm>.

Each ARDOR reflects the regional diversity in which they are situated. Thus, what each ARDOR does, is unique to that region. Generally, however, ARDOR's:

- conduct economic development related research and planning, including develop and implement a regional economic development strategy;
- respond to information requests;
- coordinate ARDOR's activities with other development activities in the region;
- provide services designed to encourage economic development in the region;
- collect and distribute economic information;
- develop and maintain community and village economic profiles; coordinate State economic or business development efforts in the region; and
- serve as a liaison between State government and the region.

The ARDOR web site lists the strategic plan for each regional group, providing interesting examples and comparisons for regions in Northern BC.

### **Norway:**

Norway has implemented a variety of regional development programs in recognition that many peripheral areas of the country are under-performing in key socioeconomic indicators. The overall goal of their rural and regional policy is to maintain the main features of population settlement patterns and to have an equal standard of living throughout the country.

Norway uses the concept of 'robust communities' to guide their program design and implementation. The concept of robust communities helps to guide regional and program visions and objectives, providing an interesting lesson for Northern BC. In Norway, robust communities have:

- Equal and stable welfare provisions
- A competitive, profitable and flexible business sector
- Good access to skills
- A varied employment market, housing and service provision
- A flexible capacity to adapt to change

Norway has implemented a variety of programs with specific themes, including:

- gender and women's opportunities
- youth
- municipalities as a focus for regional design and implementation (they are working to ensure a vigorous municipal sector – with equivalent service delivery across the country)
- separate 'small communities initiative' – which are given priority in distribution of policy resources

Specific Norwegian policies include:

- locating new government activities outside of Oslo
- commitment to maintenance of the welfare state
- broad band system by end of 2004
- focus on attractive built-up areas in outlying districts
- refers to business-oriented ‘extra effort’ in rural policy: competency, entrepreneurial development and education, regional cooperation
- increasing capacity of municipalities

### **Australia:**

Australia provides a good comparative example for British Columbia given that we face similar development issues. Federal regional development programs are listed in a document titled *Stronger Regions, A Stronger Australia*.<sup>10</sup> Australia lists a large array of programs and services to support regional economic and community development. For examples, the Sustainable Regions Program assists regional communities to address priority issues that they have themselves identified.

Western Australia has its own specific regional development programs implemented through nine regional development commissions that report to a Minister for Regional Development. The Commissions are mandated to:

- Develop and broaden each region's economic base;
- Identify infrastructure services to promote economic and social development;
- Identify and encourage regional investment;
- Provide information and advice to promote business development;
- Seek to ensure that regional government services are comparable to the metropolitan area;
- Facilitate coordination between relevant statutory bodies and State government agencies.

Western Australia has a Regional Investment Fund which will provide \$75 million over four years to assist with the economic and social development of regional Western Australia or improve the access by regional communities to services and a regional infrastructure program.

Other programs and services include:

- A program to identify investment opportunities
- A regional profiling and indicators program: (an interesting list of indicators is found on their web site: <http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/indicators.html>)
- The development of a CommunityWise Toolkit (how to information for communities)
- A telecentre network
- A community leadership program
- A Rural, Remote, and Regional Women’s Network. See: <http://www.rrr.online.wa.gov.au/>

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<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.dotars.gov.au/regional/statement/contents.htm>

### **United Kingdom:**

In July 2000, the UK amalgamated all of its regional development agency (RDA) programs into a single financial and program framework. RDAs in the UK are charged with the following mandate:

- to further the economic development and regeneration of its area
- to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in its area,
- to promote employment in its area
- to enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment in its area, and
- to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom where it is relevant to its area to do so.

Regional development policy in the UK is discussed in the White Paper *Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy*, see:  
<http://www.dti.gov.uk/comp/competitive/main.htm>

Two RDAs with particular relevance to Northern BC are the Northwest Development Agency and the Northeast Development Agency. The Northwest Development Agency (<http://www.nwda.co.uk/>) provides an interesting strategic planning model (Regional Economic Strategy 2020), which can be found at: <http://www.englandsnorthwest2020.com/>.

The core areas of for the Northwest include business include:

- Business Development
- Regeneration
- Skills and Employment
- Infrastructure
- Image

One NorthEast is the Regional Development Agency set up in April 1999 to help the people of the North East to create and sustain jobs, prosperity and a higher quality of life (see: <http://www.onenortheast.co.uk/aboutone/index.cfm>). Core development areas for the organization include:

- To further the economic development and the regeneration of the Region
- To promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in the Region
- To generate employment
- To encourage and enhance the development and application of relevant work skills of the people living here

Strategies are listed at <http://www.onenortheast.co.uk/strategyreview/pif.cfm> and include the following:

- Creating Wealth by Raising the Productivity of all Businesses
- Establishing a New Entrepreneurial Culture
- Creating a Healthy Labour Market Supported by a Skilled Workforce
- Recognising Our Universities and Colleges at the Heart of the Region's Economy
- Meet 21st Century Transport, Communication and Property Needs
- Realising the Renaissance of our Rural and Urban Communities

The European Union also delivers a wide variety of regional development programs to member countries. Programs include the following:

1. INTERREG: promote cross-boarder trade and encourage balanced development
2. LEADER: bring together actors in rural areas to look at new strategies for sustainable development

Finally, the EU lists four regional development objectives for all of its programs:

1. Development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind
2. Social and economic conversion of declining industrial regions
3. Economic diversification of vulnerable rural areas
4. Economic Adjustment of regions with an extremely low population density

### **Country Summary:**

McNiven and Plumstead (1998)<sup>11</sup> compiled a recent comparative assessment of different international regional development approaches and summarized their findings into the following chart – providing easy viewing of different models:

International Comparison of Regional Development Approaches

<b>County/International Region</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
European Union	Regional disparities in income and employment	EU and national governments	Improve employment and GDP per capita	Grants and special agencies
Canada	Employment growth in low employment, rural and dispersed populations	Federal / provincial	Reduce unemployment and maintain local populations, protect territorial sovereignty	Repayable soft loans, infrastructure expenditures and SME assistance
United States	Infrastructure development and reduction of unemployment	Primarily state governments with some federal expenditures	Relieve sectoral and labour migration problems	Tax concessions, grants and infrastructure expenditures
Australia	Infrastructure and employment adjustment	Federal/state agreements	Ensure competitiveness and social adjustment	Infrastructure expenditures and grants

<sup>11</sup> McNiven, J. and Plumstead, J. 1998. *Comparative Perspectives on Regional Development*, North American Policy Group, Dalhousie University, Report commissioned by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada.

Common themes that emerge from effective regional development programs from around the world include the following:<sup>12</sup>

- the importance of well integrated and stable governance;
- a recognition of businesses as a key driver of economic development;
- human and social capital capacity-building;
- provision of essential infrastructure;
- promotion of sustainable development; and
- taking a long-term approach.

**Strategic Themes:**

Finally, the Welsh Development Agency (2002)<sup>13</sup> provides the following summary of key strategic themes from different competitive regions around the world. These themes represent strategies that could be adapted to suit the specific conditions found in Northern BC regions:

Key Strategic Themes for Competitive Regions

<b>Key Themes</b>	<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Vision, Leadership, Coordination and Funding	Establish regional networks Strengthen local capacity Develop long term vision	Strategic approach to economic development Increased local ownership Effective local networks, public and private partnerships
Clustering	Establish science and technology parks Support existing clusters Encourage emerging urban clusters	Sharing of skill development and technology Competition Improved business climate

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE). 2003. *Government Interventions in Pursuit of Regional Development: Learning from Experience*. Australia, Working Paper 55.

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Development Agency. 2002. *Competing with the World: World Best Practices in Regional Economic Development*. Report commissioned for the Welsh Development Agency, One North East and Barlcays, May.

Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Support Systems	Promote entrepreneurship Strengthen schools, universities and business linkages Strengthen links between financiers and businesses	More collaborative research and technology transfer Business start-up incubators Risk capital more readily available
Role of Universities in Economic Development	Establish links between academia and industry Blur demarcations between research product development and commercialization Act as a focal point for diversification of economy	Think tanks on local economy Knowledge and ideas generated R&D facilities provided
Human Resource Development	Vocational training Promote education and lifelong learning	Greater productivity and competitiveness Adaptability to market change Culture of self help and initiative
National and International Networking	Export promotion Targeted foreign investment Outward investment	Access to new markets Pooling of expertise Increased competitiveness



## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: POLICY PRIMER

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### **Why Regional Development?**

Regional development has become an increasingly popular approach for creating economic opportunities in rural areas. There are a variety of reasons why regional strategies are experiencing a resurgence:

#### **Politics:**

On the political side, a new regional focus is emerging because communities and regions are seeking more control over their economic futures and central governments are looking for ways to decrease their direct responsibilities for development (and regions represent an appropriate scale for governing, pooling resources, building networks, etc.). As a result, regions need to become more proactive and sophisticated in their economic development efforts.

#### **Economics:**

Of different focus but with similar effect, economic change is also causing us to pay attention to the region. On the one hand, economic restructuring and increasing global competition makes our communities and regions more vulnerable to economic change and our economies less stable. On the other hand, we are increasingly recognizing the value of local and regional economic advantages. As Industry Canada (2002) states in its innovation strategy:

A paradox of the global, knowledge-based economy is that sources of competitive advantage tend to be localized. Communities and regions across Canada use their knowledge resources to create economic value, and it is in communities that the elements of the national innovation system come together.

#### **Regional Development Works:**

Finally, we have learned over the years, that community and regional economic development can really work. A territorial approach to development can be more cost effective; respond more quickly to opportunities and crises; use local knowledge to create economic opportunities (e.g. local cultural and value added products); address local needs more effectively; and build relationships (necessary for business success); and be very effective at improving the quality of life for local residents.

#### **Policy Options:**

There are a wide variety of policy options available to communities, regions, and governments to support and facilitate economic development. The best approach for generating policy and program options is through extensive local consultation, followed by direct local involvement in decision-making and implementation.

The following chart provides a summary of different goals and objectives found in many regional development programs from Canada and around the world:

Regional Interventions: Strategic Themes<sup>14</sup>

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment growth</li> <li>• Income/output growth (wealth creation)</li> <li>• Distributional equity: reduce regional disparities between lagging regions and the rest of the economy</li> <li>• Address market failures to regional development and non-market benefits</li> <li>• Structural adjustment assistance: facilitate transition from declining to productive industries and/or mobility between regions</li> <li>• Economic diversification: improve resilience of regions to external shocks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality of opportunity: access to services and benefits across regions</li> <li>• Social cohesion: enhance quality of life and community vitality of regions</li> <li>• Diversity: maintain cultural and social diversity</li> <li>• Population decentralization: reduce urban congestion</li> <li>• Political/administrative decentralization: improve governance and democratic structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity: enhance life support and ecological services from ecosystems</li> <li>• Quality of life: address pollution and landscape impacts</li> <li>• Resource stewardship: ecologically sustainable use of renewable and non-renewable resources</li> <li>• Structural adjustment assistance: in the case of environmental pressures such as global warming, infestation, etc.</li> </ul>

**Policy Instruments:**

Finally, governments may use a variety of policy instruments to achieve regional development objectives. Macro policies are designed to improve the broader economy through taxation, spending, and control of the money supply. Micro policies are designed to influence the economic, social, and environmental outcomes for particular sectors and regions.

There are two generic micro-oriented regional development policy themes: labour enhancement and capital enhancement (BTRE, 2003):

Labour Enhancement Policy:

- Development of human capital (e.g. improved vocational and skill based training)
- Mobility policies (e.g. housing and relocation assistance)
- Development of less restrictive labour markets tailored to local conditions (e.g. local collective bargaining)

Capital Enhancement Policy:

- Taxes and subsidies on production inputs such as finance, land, labour, and buildings
- Improved access to capital markets (e.g. provision of venture capital, subsidized loans)
- Provision of regional infrastructure (e.g. roads, telecommunications and industrial sites)
- Administrative controls (e.g. zoning and planning)
- Development of social capital (e.g. capacity building grants)
- Improved business operations of firms (e.g. advisory services, counselling, training)

<sup>14</sup> Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics (BTRE). 2003. *Government Interventions in Pursuit of Regional Development: Learning from Experience*. Australia, Working Paper 55.

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project Regional Development Brief: ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS

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### **Introduction:**

Successful regional development depends upon the existence of an organization with a mandate to coordinate and facilitate development initiatives. Regional development strategies recognize that we *can* influence and change factors like the capacity of local people, the entrepreneurial environment, and the extent to which local people work together, rather than at odds against each other. Having an organization dedicated to regional development increases the likelihood that development will proceed in an organized, transparent, and efficient way – all necessary in an increasingly competitive economic environment.

The Canadian provinces and other countries around the world offer a large variety of models and programs to promote regional development: Ministries, trusts, boards, commissions, regional economic development organizations and officers (REDOs), different funding programs, etc. The purpose of this brief is to outline some key organizational lessons and present a variety of pros and cons attached to different regional development structures.

### **General Organization:**

Research and experience point to a variety of organizational necessities that regional development structures must have in order to be successful, including:

- the importance of a vision (almost unanimously, accounts of regional development stress this given that regional development bodies are introducing new approaches and linking different sectors, cultures, and agencies)
- the entity must have a clear mandate
- the regional entity must have a clear management structure
- the entity must have clear goals.

The Oregon Benchmarks (a highly successful regional development program in the US) offers an excellent example of simple and clear goals to guide their development efforts:

1. To invest in Oregonians to build a work force that is measurably the best in America by the year 2000, and equal to the any in the world by 2010
2. To maintain Oregon's natural environment and un-congested quality of life to attract the people and firms that will drive an advanced economy
3. Create an international orientation in Oregon's business and cultural life that distinguishes Oregonians as unusually adept in global commerce

### **Respect for Local Context:**

Regional development programs cannot be imposed from above (a lesson painfully learned in previous programs here in Canada and elsewhere). Policies and programs must respect local knowledge, be mindful of local conditions, and work to involve local people in decision-making and implementation. The Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement offers an interesting example of select principles used to guide the implementation of their regional development objectives:

The parties of the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement recognize that, in pursuing the vision of this Accord, they will need to be guided by the following principles:

6. that northern development needs to take a strategic approach;
7. that northern problems require northern solutions;
8. that northern development can most effectively be promoted through a genuine partnership between the federal and provincial governments, and with First Nations, Metis Nation of Saskatchewan locals in northern Saskatchewan, local government authorities, northern communities, industry, labour and non-governmental organizations;
9. that the traditions and cultures of all northerners must be respected; and
10. that, in implementing initiatives in support of the goals of the Accord, efforts will be made to treat all regions of the north equitably.

### **Organizational Models: Pros and Cons:**

Two of the most common institutional structures used to manage and implement regional development strategies are to create a specific Ministry (e.g. the Ministry for Northern Development and Mines in Ontario) or create one or more regional development agencies (e.g. the Northern Alberta Development Council). There are a variety of pros and cons attached to both models. Local conditions and resource availability generally dictate which model is used:

- Ministry:
  - Pros: more resources; direct access to government
  - Cons: less flexible; distance from regions; extensive structural change and cost heavy
- Regional Development Organization:
  - Pros: Greater flexibility; better local integration; cost effective; degree of independence from political process may lead to better decision-making
  - Cons: fewer resources; easier to ignore; potentially competitive with other levels of government

### **Regional Development Barriers and Critiques:**

Despite the global interest in regional development approaches, there are a number of critiques and potential barriers that we should be mindful of when considering and designing a regional development approach:

- Devolution to regional development authorities may create a democratic deficit – un-elected individuals determine regional priorities;
- Regional promoters tend to under-represent the continued importance of the state;
- Regionalization creates danger of elitism, parochialism, and loss of ability to enforce the broader public interest;
- Interpersonal conflicts at a local level may become more influential;
- Regional development authorities often lack effective sanction abilities – and are therefore ignored;
- Regional bodies may require bureaucratic adjustments and power sharing

The collection of regional development briefs makes it clear that a range of options and practices exist under the umbrella of regional economic development. The strategies themselves are not complex, however, matching strategy to local context and finding ways to build relationships and adopt innovative practices can be a challenge. A strong commitment to local participation is perhaps the best source of innovation and accountability within the process.

# **The Connected North Appendices**

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## **5. Workshop Themes Summary Report**

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**Summary of Themes  
from the  
Project Workshops and Roundtables**

**Northern BC Economic Development  
Vision and Strategy Project**

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April 10, 2004

## Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

### Summary of Themes from the Project Workshops and Roundtables

April 10, 2004

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#### Introduction

Part two of the Project process included a series of regional workshops and round tables to further explore the ideas gathered during the community interviews. The regional workshops were facilitated sessions with between 20 to 40 participants at each session. The roundtables were smaller events with no more than 10 participants at each session. The schedule was as follows:

Date	Location	Workshop / Round Table
05 February 2004	Prince George	Workshop
17 - 19 February 2004	Queen Charlotte Islands	Roundtables
26 February 2004	Terrace	Workshop
28 February 2004	Dease Lake	Roundtable
05 March 2004	Houston	Workshop
12 March 2004	Williams Lake	Workshop
19 March 2004	Dawson Creek	Workshop
01 April 2004	Prince Rupert	Roundtables

These events were structured around three key questions.

- “What are the significant themes you would identify as being an integral part of your vision for northern British Columbia?”
- “What are some of the key strategic directions that you think are important for northern British Columbia?”
- “What framework or model would best suit implementation in northern British Columbia?”

Workshop participants were provided with an overview of the Project, a summary of the community interview findings, and material on regional economic development models compiled by the Project Team. Each working session was preceded by a brief discussion of what the team had heard previously, and participants discussed the questions in small groups to allow for maximum input. As with the community interviews, all participants were provided with information about the Project and asked to sign a consent form.



The workshops involved group meetings in large public facilities. Invitees included community leaders from across northern BC. These leaders were selected from: local government, First Nations, regional district government, chambers of commerce, community futures development corporations, industry associations, unions, educational institutions, and community associations. In each case, names were drawn from publicly available information lists. In all cases, even though participants might be chosen because they are community leaders, they participated as individuals based upon their particular life experiences in the north and were not asked to act as representatives of a particular group.

Overall, nearly 200 northerners participated in the workshops and roundtables. Summaries of each workshop were drafted within 10 days of each event, and participants were afforded the opportunity to comment on the summaries. Since some individuals invited to the workshops were not able to participate, the Project Team circulated workshop summaries to these individuals for comment and input.

This summary report focuses upon themes identified within each of the three key questions for the workshop/roundtable.

## **A Northern Vision**

Through both the workshops and roundtables it was clear that a northern vision is rooted in the interaction between people, the environment, and quality of life issues. In describing key elements of a northern vision, this Project has recorded twelve core areas of interest. These core areas should drive consideration of economic development planning. They include:

- diversity,
- inclusivity,
- cooperation,
- lifestyle,
- sustainability,
- northern perspectives,
- connections,
- human resources,
- community development foundations,
- community development resources,
- positive attitude, and
- regulatory framework.

### *Diversity*

The issue of diversity ran through much of the discussion around northern development themes and strategies. Diversity was a multi-faceted characteristic in these discussions. One of the first areas of emphasis included a recognition that not all communities will desire to have the same level of economic activity or communities may choose different paths for their economic development activity. In addition to recognizing diversity among communities, there was also strong support for recognizing diversity among people in northern BC, and that different cultures may choose different approaches to the economic development question. Respect for these noted differences was identified as a potential building block to create both a foundation and willingness to work together, and a diversity of economic opportunities and experiences across northern BC. A third area of diversity included attention to the needs of different age groups. Access to training and jobs was considered crucial for youth, while access to health and other services was considered essential for those communities with an aging population. Finally, questions of diversity also included the physical geography of northern BC. In this case, the rich diverseness was considered both a challenge for economic visioning, but also an opportunity in that it created a much wider range of possibilities. Examples were continually raised about how one type of economic activity in a particular region in northern BC could provide spin-off opportunities for other regions or areas of northern BC.

In terms of economic development potential, there was strong support for constructing a diversified economic base. This economic base extended not only across industry types, but also to the distribution of large and small firms participating in these economic sectors. Examples of opportunity for creating a diversified economic base included:

- tourism (recognizing that it may not be the best or only solution for diversification in some places),
- developing niche products and roles to fit with the global reality,
- recognizing that resource industries are innovative and adapting to the changing global context, attributes which in turn can be turned into marketable commodities,
- providing support for smaller business as well as large industry,
- placing an emphasis on agricultural renewal in these times of increasing concern about food security and food safety,
- building on existing opportunities, for example, in transportation infrastructure,
- supporting value added activities by small economic actors so as to provide a complementary relationship to the big industry resource extraction model,
- making wood more accessible to small operators (and increasing choice of processing options),
- pursuing diversification strategies around our core natural resource assets (such as smelters for mining to get more employment value beyond concentration of ores),
- supporting small energy schemes, including alternative energy schemes by independent power producers, and
- completing the power grid in the province so that communities and entrepreneurs can take advantage of some of the development potential in their local areas.

### *Inclusivity*

Building upon the question of diversity, and the clear recognition that northern BC is home to a wide range of First Nations, support was expressed to the Project through every venue that community and economic development visions and strategies must be inclusive. First Nations' participation must be brought into all aspects of discussions and actions. There was strong support for 'bottom-up' creation of a vision.

A second key issue under inclusivity is that the development of an economic vision must extend to the spectrum of economic sectors active across northern BC. In this sense, it was also recognized that discussions should involve governments at all levels so that policies and actions do not inhibit the development of innovative enterprises and economic activities.

A further point under inclusivity concerns smaller, or unrepresented, places. In some cases these communities may have a single individual on a regional district board, while in others there is no 'local government' representation at all. It is important to include this group of communities as well.

## *Cooperation*

It was widely acknowledged for the Project that northern BC must move from bitterly competitive inter-community relations to one based more on cooperation. It was recognized that competition between communities and economic sectors can be a healthy exercise, and one which drives participants to be innovative and creative. At the same time, there was also recognition that northern BC must build a collaborative environment within which levels of government and community players can interact with trust. If we are going to attract new economic opportunities, many participants identified that tools and infrastructure (human, community, economic, and physical) must be combined into competitive packages as northern BC competes in the global marketplace for talent and labour.

A second aspect of cooperation focussed again upon the need to settle treaties and develop an effective working understanding of First Nations' traditional territories. A northern vision must be built through close cooperation between First Nations and non-aboriginal communities.

A third element to cooperation recognized that while each community should have its own vision, it is possible that these be collected together under a broader regional vision. Using a market analogy, it was argued that our vision should include the idea of "coopetition", where collaborative competition between competitors helps improve everyone's market share while maintaining flexibility and diversity.

## *Lifestyle*

There was strong support for the view that a northern vision should support and promote respect for a northern lifestyle, including such rural attitudes as friendliness, resourcefulness, and self-sufficiency. As noted earlier, elements such as safe and healthy communities, a lack of urban congestion, affordable housing and commuting, and the sense of community that comes from knowing people, were all identified as important.

Three additional areas of lifestyle were identified. The first is that rural communities need to accept change. This was put into the context that change has in fact been part of the northern experience for a considerable period of time and that we must continue to be engaged with change. Many people argued that change can be managed, even exploited. It is not just something that 'happens to you'.

The second is that lifestyle issues underscore a great deal of the social capital that helps our communities function. This includes support for clubs, teams, and associations which can work to build trust and relationships upon which economic development planning can take place.

The third is that rural communities must take pride in their lifestyles and their contribution to the provincial economy. In turn, political leaders, especially at the provincial and federal level, must recognize the role of northern BC in powering the

economy. Recognition of this economic role would enhance the development and evaluation of public policy, by placing it within a ‘northern lens’.

### *Sustainability*

This Project found strong support for undertaking economic and community development activities only where they support the people, environmental, and quality of life assets so valued in northern BC. The sense of sustainability communicated by northerners was not an abstract concept but one grounded in connections between generations. This involved four components. The first is that a northern vision should be robust and flexible enough to ensure continuity between government changes and the boom and bust cycles of particular economic sectors. The second is that more of the wealth generated by our communities must stay in our communities. Respondents pointed to the need for the provincial government to create programs which return generated wealth so as to create vibrant, healthy, and sustainable communities. The third element includes diversification of economic activities. This notion of diversification connects with other themes described under a northern vision which describe the development of broader industry and community supports to ensure local employment through economic downturns and economic restructuring. Finally, there was broad support for the sustainability of small communities which are home to many of the resource industries and activities that drive economic wealth across the region.

### *Northern Perspectives*

Northern BC has developed a clear sense of its place within the province. It understands keenly the contributions which it makes to the provincial economy and has a strong sense that these contributions must be recognized. In this respect, four elements of a northern perspective or northern voice were recognized. The first involves a clear recognition that the north needs to speak with a strong and united voice. In an increasingly global economy, and a provincial context which includes more competition for provincial revenues, it is only by scaling up that northern BC can have meaningful input in the marketplace and in public policy development. Organizations such as the Northern Caucus and the North-Central Municipal Association were identified as examples of scaling up to enhance a northern ‘voice’ to be more pro-active in voicing northern concerns. The second is that a vision for northern BC should include more local control of resource revenues. This may be accomplished through partnerships or access to land or resources, but will underscore the ability of northern BC to shape a vision for itself. The third is that we need a new vision for industrial development. Industrial development had originally built and supported local communities but is now moving away from many of those communities. We need to create opportunities which once again position the ‘Community’ as the focal point for economic benefits. This includes moving now to capitalize on opportunities from the 2010 Olympics. Finally, there is again clear recognition that one of the realities in northern BC is the participation of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, and the need to create mechanisms for working cooperatively as part of a northern perspective on economic development. All of these are

set within a determination that northern BC must have the tools and responsibility necessary to shape its own destiny.

### *Connections*

One of the topic areas running through most of the discussion of a northern vision centred upon connections. These included connections between people, connections between communities, infrastructure connections which facilitated communications and development, and connections to both the environment and a quality of life created within that environment. So strong were the recognized values and opportunities in ‘connections’ that this became the theme for the Project Final Report.

### *Human Resources*

As described above, northern BC is about the people and communities set within the rich and diverse physical environment. The realities enveloped by the new economy demand a flexible and responsive human resource base in order to take advantage of changing opportunities. As a result, one of the topic areas raised time and again to the Project involved a northern vision in which access to education and training was a critical component. In these cases, roles were identified for educational institutions, trades organizations, industry, and community groups. In addition to capacity building in response to the needs of new economic activities, there was also a keen sense that human capacity development in general should be an important core value in northern BC. This includes capacity development for voluntary and community groups, as well as supporting entrepreneurial capacity.

### *A Solid Foundation for Community Development*

The Project heard that the vision for northern BC should include the provision of amenities to attract people and economic activities to northern communities. These amenities included adequate health care facilities, access to quality education, cultural opportunities, and recreational opportunities. These amenities also included the ‘connecting’ tools of infrastructure. This extended beyond road, rail, and air transportation systems to include internet communications.

A second community development foundation aspect contributing to a new northern vision builds around the affordable living found in many rural and small town places. In both cases, a robust community development foundation was considered crucial to not only recruiting new people and economic activities, but also to retaining people and activities, including our most precious resource, our youth.

### *Community Development Resources*

A renewed northern vision also includes the economic development resources important for revitalizing northern communities. These include tools to focus upon our strengths, to balance our aspirations with economic realities, to ‘brand’ our communities and assets for

investment purposes, and to tap into the existing array of community and economic development support structures and services. People in northern BC have long been wise in the use of scarce resources. In identifying community development resources there was wide recognition that many tools are already in place, but that they require better coordination and dissemination.

### *Attitudes*

A new northern vision argues that we should become proactive to economic change and not simply reactive to crisis. Building upon a strong recognition of our assets (broadly described), our vision should look to the positive and energize those characteristics of a northern lifestyle which include innovation and self-sufficiency. Northerners expressed a clear desire to ‘take control, and responsibility, for their economic destiny’.

### *Regulatory Framework*

A final topic area identified under vision includes a clear recognition that northern BC is a ‘have’ area of the province but that many other regions are benefiting from the our resource wealth while there are significant local unemployment and development deficits. A key vision question for northern BC is how we can redistribute resource wealth equitably across the north. Following this, a series of opportunities for public policy to create or modify the regulatory framework to allow a more enabling context for northern investment, to move quickly from vision to strategies and actions, and to do so while recognizing the realities of a global economy.

## Strategic Directions

Through the workshop/roundtable processes, people and organizations from across northern BC were asked about potential strategic directions for economic renewal. This section of the report outlines a set of principles which can organize and guide consideration of strategic economic development directions.

Twelve topic areas were identified through the Project as important for guiding and developing strategic directions for economic renewal in northern BC. These include:

- education and training,
- youth opportunities,
- economic strength and diversification,
- financing, investment, and funding,
- infrastructure,
- marketing and branding,
- a collective voice,
- partnerships in decision-making,
- framework and coordination,
- a northern context,
- support mechanisms, and
- building blocks for community development.

### *Education and training*

The new economy is very much an information economy. The rapid pace of change demands that the workforce be able to adapt to changing opportunities. This presents a considerable challenge for northern BC where a legacy of low skill employment in the resource sector has been replaced by increasingly rigorous skill and educational training needs in that sector. A key principle and strategic direction for northern BC is to develop an articulated education and training structure so that:

- people are trained in the north,
- they take advantage of new forms of technologies,
- they take advantage of different delivery options,
- they address basic education as well as advanced skills training,
- they create the capacity for northern BC to get ahead of the economic opportunities curve, and
- that northerners must be competitive for the new jobs being created in the north.

### *Youth Opportunities*

The Project clearly identifies one of northern BC's key strategic advantages as being its large cohort of young people. While many of our competitors in the developed world are confronted with an aging population, northern BC has a much more balanced population



profile. To energize this economic advantage means that we need to create more opportunities for youth employment. This will be important not only for holding our youth in the north, but also for attracting young families to new economic opportunities in the north. Important for northern BC's strategic directions will be to:

- create training opportunities for youth,
- include a youth perspective in the development of a northern vision and strategy,
- provide links and access to a global culture and create places that are socially progressive, and
- create jobs and opportunities for advancement.

### *Economic Strength and Diversification*

Northern British Columbia has long developed under a resource strength model. The value and quality of our resource base continues to be high and will form a crucial foundation for the future. Experience tells Project participants that more of the benefits from these resource industry activities must be left in the north. This includes the need to develop support and service activities so as to reduce economic leakage.

Building on existing economic strengths, there is also a need for economic diversification to enhance that strength. This includes building upon the value-added and processing sectors within various resource industries. It also includes looking beyond those industries to energize other economic development assets available in northern BC to grow and develop viable and complementary economic supports for local and regional economies. One driving pressure at the moment is to look to develop opportunities and benefits from the 2010 Olympics.

### *Financing, Investment, and Funding*

Access to financing continues to be one of the most significant challenges for firms and entrepreneurs in northern BC. During the 1950s, the provincial government introduced radical changes to public policy, in part, to provide the certainty which large resource companies needed to obtain funding for investment. At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a flexible global economy requires other options for financing economic diversification, options which will include a degree of flexibility not currently available.

Potential mechanisms include the creation of community trusts and foundations, as well as revenue sharing schemes out of the resource wealth generated in northern places. Another vehicle or mechanism is to expand existing programs such as offered through Western Economic Diversification, but to make these more flexible to small scale entrepreneurs. Another is to create a new institution for supporting community and venture capital ideas. Suggestions along this line included creation of a 'Northern Bank' that could be supported by resource revenue wealth, while another suggestion is to encourage the northern BC credit unions to scale up and to take on community economic development functions along the lines of those programs with VanCity and Coast Savings credit unions.

### *Infrastructure*

Two broad themes ran through discussion of infrastructure as part of northern BC's strategic directions. The first involves physical infrastructure. In this case, the roads and railways which developed northern BC for the past 100 years need extension and renewal. The ferry fleet, both inland and along the coast, need renewal and updating to serve as economic development links in addition to transportation links. Also needed is a new form of infrastructure to support economic development for the next 100 years in the form of information technology expansion and upgrading to global standards. New information technologies will not 'save' northern BC, but they are important tools in order to be competitive just as were roads and railways in an earlier period. The second infrastructure area involved the community and human side. In this case, human resource development and community service and support infrastructure were identified as economic development essentials which need much greater support. These infrastructure issues are dealt with in more detail in the following part of this section.

### *Marketing and Branding*

Over 100 years ago, companies like the North Pacific Salmon Cannery recognized the value of a brand name which captures market imagination. Over the past 20 years, legal battles undertaken by various wine producing regions in France reinforce that the new global economy values the imagery of place-based branding. Northern BC, with its rich physical landscape, clean natural environment, and rich cultural heritages, contains all of the characteristics which drive marketing campaigns. It was strongly put to the Project that northern BC must engage in a branding process. This may be undertaken at a northern BC level, but may also be undertaken at a sub-regional level in order to draw upon particular place-based characteristics. Regardless, it is important that this process be coordinated and that it then be rolled into a marketing scheme which pools our limited resources in order to effectively capture and reach broad markets.

### *A Collective Voice*

The global economy is a very large market and most of our competitors have already scaled up in an effort to increase the visibility and voice of rural places in that marketplace. One of the principles guiding the development of strategic directions for northern BC must be that we develop a strong collective voice in order to represent our views and interests. This representation includes not only the marketplace, but also public policy debates in both Victoria and Ottawa. On a public policy side, one of the strong suggestions is that policies and regulations affecting northern BC must be vetted through a northern lens.

### *Partnerships in Decision-Making*

Drawing upon the same motivation identified above, it is clear that effective partnerships must be developed which work across northern BC in order to assist in effective decision-

making. It was pointed out time and again to the Project Team that northern BC communities and economies are intimately connected with one another and that a lack of coordination in local strategies can be a detrimental path. Four clear areas were suggested as places where enhanced partnership development would assist decision-making. These included:

- within communities such that they involve a wider range of sectors,
- between communities such that synergies can be created from regional opportunities,
- far greater attention to partnership development and interaction between First Nations and non-aboriginal communities, and
- partnerships across northern BC to link sub-regions in order to capitalize on opportunities not ‘visible’ in local areas.

### *Framework and Coordination*

One of the principles driving input received by the Project is that northern BC must develop its own framework for coordination. This framework needs to be based in the north and developed from the bottom up. It also needs to recognize that while individual places have their own assets and aspirations, these are set within, and affected by, what happens across northern BC. There was a clear message that northern BC must scale up its coordination and interaction as its population base is small relative to metropolitan BC and to the international marketplace. Suggestions for this framework are contained in the next section of this report.

### *A Northern Context*

Northern BC has some specific characteristics that were identified as important in the development of strategic directions. Key among these was identification of the ‘quadruple bottom line’ which includes economy, society, environment, and culture. These are the foundations of a northern lifestyle. A second key principle driving a northern context is a broad recognition of the imperative to settle treaties in an equitable and timely fashion. Not only is this process overdue in terms of respectful relationships between First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities, but there were strong suggestions of missed investment opportunities due to the uncertainty this creates.

### *Support Mechanisms*

Most northern BC communities and economic development organizations are small and have limited staff time and resources. Even if northern BC scales up to create a broader framework for coordination and interaction, that framework will also require information and support in order to be effective. As a result of these needs, there was a strong recognition that support mechanisms must be created to more efficiently use our human resources and to more effectively access information on a timely basis. There was strong support for a community development support mechanism at UNBC which could stand alone from development debates. Similarly, there was support for greater coordination

among the economic development support organizations in northern BC. These mechanisms could provide for the on-going sharing of resources, information, and experiences between places to enhance efficiency, to better equip local debate, and to avoid replicating the same types of studies twenty times over.

### *Building Blocks for Community Development*

There exist a wide range of tools for creating economic and community development knowledge. One of the principles guiding the development of strategic directions for northern BC must be to deploy these tools. The suggestions include community inventories of skills and assets, asset mapping exercises, and the like. It was also suggested that these exercises not only be conducted within communities, but also be scaled up to sub-regional areas in an effort to create innovative outcomes. Finally, it was recognized that these building blocks need to be supported by information and resources. The creation of a support mechanism within northern BC could facilitate these building block exercises, while economic development organizations could be encouraged to direct funding specifically to these local and regional exercises.

## Principles for a Northern Development Model

The following section summarizes workshop discussions on questions of the appropriate model or vehicle to house a northern regional development strategy. In each workshop, the discussion on models was preceded by an introduction to regional development models by the Project Team. The team outlined why the regional approach has become a popular development tool in other jurisdictions and then outlined four general approaches to implementing regional development. These models included:

- a provincial Ministry approach, such as the Ontario Ministry of Northern Mines and Development,
- a provincial commission/development agency approach, such as the Northern Alberta Development Council or the Alaska Regional Development Organization Program,
- an integrated federal approach, such as FedNor (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario) or the Sustainable Regions Program of Australia, and
- a combined federal-provincial model, such as the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement.

In each case, the UNBC Project Team outlined key lessons from, as well as the pros and cons of, each model type. Key lessons from these national and international 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, and the need to adopt a long term approach.

Key principles which can guide the development of a northern economic development model include:

- institutional stability,
- representation,
- governance,
- roles and responsibilities,
- funding, and
- location.

### *Institutional Stability*

There was clear recognition that economic development takes time and that considerable capacity building is needed in northern BC. Project participants identified a clear set of issues connected with institutional stability which are important for any northern BC development body. These included a sense of permanence, that its justification be grounded in legislation, and that people want security and longevity. Two key messages were that any development model must be robust so that it does not dissolve with new governments or political parties. The second was that this must not be another government program but will need some type of legislative control over resources and

revenue flows so that it is not tied to particular governments and is less liable to be dismissed following a change in governments at either the federal or provincial levels.

### *Representation*

It was made clear to the Project that membership in a northern BC regional development model must be inclusive. Most suggested models and representations focussed upon an equal contribution of local governments and First Nation's governments. Additional suggestions included a regional implementation model which would involve representation from four regions (Northeast, Northwest, Central, and Cariboo). Access to a northern development model must be open such that it can involve labour, business, industry, and others with an economic development interest. In addition to questions of representation, there was also a clear need for support at the local community level. This was identified as important for generating feedback on the interests of individual communities.

### *Governance*

A northern BC regional development model must be a flexible and responsive tool for meeting the needs of the diverse interests participating across the north. As a result, the governance model most suggested involves a small number of board members supported by a small staff. Selection to any form of governing board would be by existing institutions (such as North-Central Municipal Association and BC First Nation's Summit). A focus on equity means a consideration of a federated model such that sub-regions are represented by advisory boards to the regional body. As the regional body has a small support staff, so too would these sub-regional advisory committees also need a support person to ensure continuity and to maintain constructive linkages with communities and other organizations.

Ongoing management should be under the direction of an executive director.

It is important that legislation establishing the northern development model create an effective linkage to the provincial government at the deputy minister level and with reporting requirements through a minister.

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

There was strong support that a northern BC regional development model should serve a variety of roles and responsibilities. As a voice for the north, it should provide input into policy and regulation development. It should also play an advocacy role on the part of northern BC and its communities. Third, it should create a foundation for action and momentum in terms of both economic development and community development across northern BC. Finally, it should be a resource body to which communities could turn for advise on how local plans fit with broader regional interests and activities.

One of the tasks that a northern BC regional development model should undertake is to organize and coordinate a series of vision and strategy exercises across northern BC. It should also create a set of northern BC benchmarks and criteria to provide a more comprehensive and complete portrait of how northern BC is responding to change.

Finally, a northern BC regional development model should build synergistically on mechanisms which already exist. These include the Regional Transportation Advisory Committees, North-Central Municipal Association, Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations, Premier's Technology Council, and a host of others.

### *Funding*

One of the key aspects of longevity is that a stable source of funding is required in order for a northern BC regional development model to remain independent of government or funding agencies. There were a wide variety of potential funding sources identified to support this northern model. These funding sources included:

- resource royalties dedicated to the north and not routed through government agencies / ministries,
- nominal funding from northern communities,
- private sector participation,
- northern development initiative monies,
- forest investment account,
- programs such as FairShare, and
- additional revenues from the mountain pine beetle stumpage.

Core funding was considered crucial in order to provide some independence and stability. This core funding should involve a legacy or endowment fund which would give permanence to a northern model. The Project was clearly told that this model should have access to the resource revenues being generated in the north. Finally, it is important to ensure buy-in from participating communities and thus it was strongly advocated that financial contributions come from municipalities, regional districts, band councils, and tribal councils.

### *Location*

A northern BC development model should be housed in the north. While it may have a central office, earlier principles supporting sub-regional advisory committees suggest a presence throughout northern BC. One of the challenges from the previous Northern Commissioner's Office was exactly this lack of a local sub-regional presence. A third element identified for a northern development model was a presence in Victoria to act as a liaison with government. One of the important suggestions included having an annual meeting in Victoria with the provincial cabinet and media in order to reinforce the messages coming from northern BC.

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As noted at the beginning of this report, the contents are a thematic summary of information obtained from the workshops and roundtables. Copies of each workshop or roundtable summary reports were provided to all of the people who took time to meet with us and share their views and concerns. Should you have any comments or questions about the summary or the Project, please contact Greg Halseth at UNBC.

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# The Connected North Appendices

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## 6. Actionable Items

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## **Recommendations on Possible Actionable Items arising from Project**

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Through our conversations, meetings, and workshops/roundtables with a wide array of people and groups interested in community and economic development in northern BC, a range of projects were identified that could already start to contribute to regional renewal. It was identified that these projects were items on which immediate action could be taken by some of the federal and provincial funding agencies and would not have to wait for further discussions regarding a possible Northern BC Economic Development Council.

Many other suggestions were made with respect to specific infrastructure development. These included investments in airports, ports, road and rail lines, as well as community facilities like retirement housing and health care facilities. Due to the far reaching nature of these types of investments, and the scale of investment they involve both in the short and long term, people recognized that these sorts of suggestions would need a much wider discussion in order for their strategic importance, contribution, and ranking for northern BC to be developed. This is just the sort of discussion people thought that a Northern BC Economic Development Council could be designed to undertake.

There is considerable community support for these suggestions and they are listed in each topic area in a general order of priority as identified by the Project Team. They are organized under three topic areas that represent different types of regional economic development tasks:

- Network Building Workshops
- Economic Development Information Projects
- Economic Development Support Projects

### **Network Building Workshops**

#### **1) Northern BC Economic Strategy Symposium**

People spoke to us a great deal about having the opportunity for a wide range of interests to come together to discuss options, opportunities, and strategies for community and economic development for northern BC. This suggestion brings together many of the themes identified through our bottom-up interactions with community and economic development groups. These include the opportunity to network between the various interests, groups, and agencies active across and in northern BC, the opportunity to find out what is going on and working well in other places so that partnerships or options can be explored, and to develop a better sense of possible strategic infrastructure and support needs that may be assisted by investments from processes such as the Northern Development Initiative and others.

It will also be important that this opportunity include participation from northern BC's inter-jurisdictional partners. These could include a range of governmental, regional development, and private sector organizations in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, and Alaska. Connections have already been well demonstrated between these jurisdictions and an opportunity for dialogue could be useful in connecting to support future strategies and initiatives.

## **2) Treaty Process Participant Symposium**

People and groups involved throughout our Project spoke about the clear need to move forward with the treaty process in BC in a fair and timely fashion. While individual negotiating tables are at work, people also spoke about the need to move forward with building effective working relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities. We received suggestions for a symposium involving the range of treaty process participants, possibly hosted by the BC Treaty Commission, which would provide an informal forum (outside of the negotiating table process) for the debate of general suggestions around moving both such goals forward.

## **3) EDO Visioning Workshop**

Similar to the suggestion for bringing together Chambers of Commerce to facilitate greater integration of information exchange, it would be useful to bring together northern EDOs. This could be done in partnership with EDABC (Economic Development Association of BC). Some EDOs have been at it for ten plus years and getting them to share their experiences (what has worked/not worked, common frustrations, needed infrastructure, training and leadership needs, etc). The results could then be packaged into an educational tool for new EDOs and a strategic planning tool for WD and EDABC.

The need for this process has increased with the province's Northern Development Initiative (NDI). EDOs in municipalities, regional districts, band offices, and tribal council offices will be asked to provide advice to representatives on various NDI committees to inform decision making. It is important that this network be strengthened and foundations for collaboration and support be established.

It is recommended that Western Economic Diversification participate in supporting a set of 4 regional EDO workshops and a joint Northern BC EDO workshop. The agendas for these meetings should be three fold:

- identify mechanisms for network development/information sharing,
- share recent success strategies and information challenges, and
- focus regional attention on opportunities within the provinces' NDI.

#### **4) First Nations Chief's Conference**

There is an opportunity to provide a venue which would bring First Nations representatives together to discuss their interests and needs relative to northern development visions and strategies. The working plan is for a one day workshop with provision for a follow-up day of discussions. The likely venue is Prince George due to centrality for travel arrangements. Potential support could come from the four northern colleges and universities, NWT and other First Nations groups, the North Central Municipal Association, and the provincial and federal governments.

#### **5) Multi Level Government Meeting On Cooperative Policy Development**

One of the hallmarks of BC's development policy during the 1950s and 1960s was its emphasis of policy coordination. As noted in other jurisdictions which are now employing a regional approach to community and economic development, cooperative policy development remains critically important. A very strong recommendation from people, industry, and businesses we spoke with was that BC establish a platform for cooperative policy development. A multi-level government meeting could initiate this process. Such a meeting could be built from the Inter-Agency Management Committee which already exists among British Columbia Ministry offices in northern BC and whose mandate involves maintaining discussions on policy development and implementation matters.

#### **6) Regional District Unincorporated Areas Symposium**

There is a need for one or more economic development strategy meetings focussed specifically on the electoral area directors of the Regional Districts across northern BC. While their needs are incorporated within organizations such as the North Central Municipal Association, as unincorporated places these settlement regions face additional challenges and lack some of the tools available to municipalities. Providing a specific forum for electoral area representatives to share input on visions and strategies is critical. These exercises may need to be distributed across northern BC to facilitate attendance. Special attention must be given to communities in the Stikine region which have not been organized under a regional district.

#### **7) NCMA Economic Vision Workshop**

There seems to be an ideal opportunity for WD to partner with the NCMA (North Central Municipal Association) to facilitate a workshop on economic visions and goals. This could be organized as most appropriate for NCMA (such as an add-on to their annual meetings). It could function with facilitators to look for common ground in terms of economic development partnerships, infrastructure and information needs, and potential mechanisms for enhanced coordination and cooperation. The province's NDI also makes this an important task.

## **8) Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Information Centre Coordination**

Two interconnected projects:

The first involves a critical analysis of protocols for sharing space and delivery of services by Chambers of Commerce offices and community Visitor Information Centres. This economic and management analysis could create a suite of options from which northern communities could select those which fit their needs. While not always a workable relationship, our field work identified a large potential for synergistic relations and efficiencies between these organizations (such already exists in some places). Template pretests would save local groups considerable time and money (both of which are scarce).

The second involves following the Yukon/Alaska joint training model. This involves a coordinated effort to share information between Chambers of Commerce/visitor information centres so that inquiries at any particular locale can access information across the network. This shows a high degree of professionalism and coordination. In BC it would seem sensible to organize the training and coordination exercises along transportation corridor routes at first as part of a pilot exercise. (i.e.: Highway 16, Highway 97, and Highway 37). The upcoming Alaska Highway International Forum in September 2004 in Dawson Creek demonstrates the interest and value in this attention to corridor coordination.

## **9) Media Symposium**

Access to information is a critical issue during times of rapid economic, social, and political change. News media across northern BC is generally organized under one of the large Canadian media groups or under independent local ownership. It is important that a forum be organized which would bring these media representatives together to identify opportunities for cohesive network development which could assist with access to information.

## **Economic Development Information Projects**

### **1) Access to power and economic development**

Based on Project experiences, it is recommended that Western Economic Diversification undertake a technical study on the relationship between the availability of different levels of electrical power and the needs of various industries commonly cited in economic development strategies. Across northern BC there is considerable diversity in the range of the electrical power supply available for additional development. There is also ample evidence that economic development strategies suggested for small places contain a relatively lengthy (but repeated) set of economic development alternatives. These two elements need to be brought together so communities know what their real choices are and that government/industrial providers know where investments could be fruitfully made.

### **2) Economic Infrastructure Inventory Survey**

A coordinated study of economic infrastructure is required for the communities across northern BC. This infrastructure inventory would then need to be compared against requisites for industrial and community development (ie: transportation infrastructure for new industry and medical infrastructure for retirement communities). This program would be ideally coordinated by the Community Futures offices across northern BC and could build upon their local data base. Requirement for this inventory became acutely clear as we documented numbers of communities still relying on diesel generators for their electrical power supply, or without access to natural gas or fibre optic internet connections despite that trunk lines run past or through the community - and the limits this poses for economic diversification.

### **3) Industry - Community Educational Needs Survey**

Building upon the meetings of the northern BC university/college presidents there is an opportunity to support a mechanism for 1) university - college networking around capacity building and community outreach, and 2) integration of this network with industrial interests. The regional development literature stresses the importance of university and college linkages with the economic development process and our industrial interviews highlight the need for additional types of skills and training. This project could set a foundation for the north capitalizing on the new economic development opportunities through labour born, trained, and living in northern BC.

### **4) Economic Development Funding Survey**

The Economic Development Association of BC has identified that there is considerable unevenness in the amount of funding provided to economic development and business development activities by regional and municipal governments. The EDABC, in association with the Business Improvements Associations of BC, has suggested a project to survey and inventory funding available for economic and business development. As a

result of the unevenness identified in the Project, we recommend that Western Economic Diversification, in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, work to support and extend this project to include all places in northern BC.

### **5) Role of Cultural Industries in the Northern Economy**

The cultural sector is complex, involving a wide array of people, organizations, facilities, and services. In northern BC it is also a key contributor to local quality of life. This sector also makes a contribution to economic development in the north, a contribution that extends beyond just cultural tourism. It is important to obtain good information about the scope and scale of the cultural sector, and its contributions to northern economic development.

### **6) Land and Resources Planning Workshop**

British Columbia now has considerable experience and expertise in land and resources management planning. Where such plans have been put into place they provide a template for dialogue on land use and guidance to both public and private sector decision-makers. There remains considerable interest in land and resource planning which have not yet been exercised through a consistent process. Key among these are the First Nations which are now initiating land and resource management planning exercises through their territories. These exercises include interactions with other governments, industry, and business representatives, and other stakeholders. Many people spoke to us about the need to transfer the experience and expertise gained through land and resource planning processes to organizations now so engaged.

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### **Northern BC Development Collection**

There exists across northern BC a wide range of materials, reports, and other information relevant to economic and community development. This includes materials produced by government, community groups, NGOs, labour, and industry. Unfortunately, many of these materials do not receive wide circulation and few find their way to libraries where they might be accessible to a wider audience. Thus, communities and businesses across northern BC are not able to make use of the tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience that is being generated, and often paid for, in the north. Thus, the collection of northern BC relevant economic and community development reports can be a crucial building block that fits well with the notion of being wise in our use of limited resources.

This project should include the collection of materials from across northern BC and the organization of a process to secure copyright for library style circulation. A key partner in this exercise will be the UNBC Library along with the libraries of the community colleges across northern BC.

## **Northern BC Development Collection Electronic Database**

Many of the items which may become part of a Northern BC Development Collection will be older, poorly bound, rare, and fragile. In addition, the demand for the information will come from people and places across northern BC where the logistics of postage and return will be costly, time consuming, and labour intensive. Further, there is always the matter of locating such information in a collection, and being efficient in browsing collections, when one is not quite certain of the exact titles or details of specific reports. All of these pressures suggest the need to create an electronic and searchable database and to scan materials so that they will be stored and 'circulated' over the internet.

A further project to support the creation of effective and accessible economic development information will involve resource digitizing and database creation. The UNBC library may be a useful partner to support the outcomes of this exercise to make information available to a wide range of user groups. A library partner is considered essential given the needed expertise in database creation such that they are accessible to a range of the standard search engines.

### **Demographic shifts**

The Project identified several important elements of population change which should be pursued as they have implications for economic opportunities and community development. While there is a strong process of aging in northern BC, it is accompanied by another large share of the population which is under the age of 25. This is important because northern BC has a quite different demographic profile relative to the rest of the province. In a context where so many of our competitors have aging populations, northern BC's demographic profile may be an important development asset. In addition to the age profile question, there is also the changing nature of immigration which needs to be more clearly understood. The resource development era of the 1950s to 1970s brought people from many countries, and from many other places in Canada, into northern BC. Immigration has not only declined in northern BC but many people suggest it has a different form and function. These elements of demographic change have baseline comparative studies available at the national level, but these must be matched by good quality information at the regional level in order to inform decision makers about patterns and trends.

### **Population aging and service provision**

A companion to the demographic change project is that northern BC communities are dealing right now with the question of population aging. Many of the services and infrastructure in these communities was put in place for a population of young families. Neighbourhoods have playgrounds and elementary schools and recreational facilities are geared to active sports. With the aging of northern BC's workforce, many people who have worked their lives in resource industries are now looking to retire in these communities but they encounter a critical shortage of appropriate services. These services include seniors' housing and care facilities, medical services geared to an older



population, civic infrastructure which includes greater attention to snow clearing on sidewalks and snow protection on access ramps, and recreational facilities and programming geared for an older clientele.

One recommendation which the project heard across northern BC is that a coordinated study of seniors' needs and appropriate community responses would be of value to many small places not necessarily able to afford such studies on their own. Many decision-makers (in local government and in service provision industries) are facing questions without appropriate information and resources.

## **Economic Development Support Projects**

### **1) Support for Next Steps Process in “The Connected North”**

As noted in the project Final Report, there is a keen appetite by the people and groups we spoke with about continuing the discussion on options for a regional development body. The report outlines a concrete set of next steps which may be used to guide that continuing discussion. As a result, a strong recommendation from our interviews, workshops/roundtables, and community meetings is that funding support from both the federal and provincial governments be directed to the Next Steps process. Additionally, the Next Steps process should have participation from public and private sector interests as well.

### **2) Community Development Institute at UNBC**

The Project found very wide support for creating a reference and assistance centre at UNBC. The three focal points of the Community Development Institute at UNBC of 1) community relevant research, 2) information sharing and dissemination, and 3) education and local capacity building were noted often as foundational to economic development and change across northern BC.

### **3) Community Economic Development Training**

Across BC, a range of groups and organizations have expertise in delivering information, training, and skill upgrading with respect to Community Economic Development. Some of these groups include the Community Economic Development Centre at SFU, The Social Planning And Research Council (SPARC), CED Net, and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. However, these programs are not available in a consistent and coordinated fashion in northern BC communities, and when they have been offered they are often priced far above that which community groups can afford. People felt that direction and coordination of CED education, perhaps through UNBC but using the skills and resources of the expert organizations, should be a priority for northern BC and that funding to provide affordable access should be made available to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

### **4) REDI projects**

Clear support was identified to expand the WD funded REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative) projects through the northern Community Futures offices. It is necessary to develop regionally focussed information and profiles to support most forms of local economic development planning. These regional initiatives would make the crucial bridge between a northern vision - strategy and community centred economic plans.

A second component of expanded support for the REI program was also identified, in that it would be useful to bring together key participants from all of the REDI exercises

so that they could identify common themes, issues, and opportunities. This would not only assist capacity building among participants, and bring additional information to the table which each REDI exercise could then use, but it may set the foundation for a broader information base to support future Community Futures' initiatives or to inform a possible Northern BC Regional Development Council in its priority setting.

### **5) Baseline Target Investment Initiative**

Access to information about baseline conditions, economic opportunities, and community or regional capacities is crucial. The BC Ministry of Sustainable Natural Resources recently began piloting a "Baseline Target Investment Initiative" at the regional district level. This program includes modeling of a Regional Net Wealth Balance Sheet, and Evaluation of Economic Opportunities, and Inventory and Assessment of Regional Economic Development Reports and Studies, and an Analysis of Regional Employment. Partnership arrangements should be identified to move this initiative to other regional districts in northern BC.

### **6) Youth Strategies for Northern and Rural Communities**

There now exists considerable knowledge and information around successful strategies for retaining youth in northern and rural communities, and for creating an economic and community environment to which young families might wish to return. This body of knowledge includes research done by the federal government (through the Rural Secretariat), through the provincial government, and various youth organizations across the province. Despite this body of work, community leaders spoke time and again about the need for suggestions on how to create a social and economic climate conducive to supporting youth in northern and rural communities. It is recommended that a compendium of knowledge and experiences, together with suggestions and options, be collated in a user friendly format for rural and small town communities to use in evaluating their circumstances and potential action plans. This package of information should be widely distributed through the provincial youth network, the BC Rural Team, and organizations such as the First Nations Summit and the North Central Municipal Association.

### **7) Strategies for an Aging Population in Northern and Rural Communities**

As with youth strategies, there exists a considerable body of information on the implications of population aging in northern and rural communities. In addition to the project identified above with respect to the specific services needs for an aging population, it is also recommended that a concise guidebook be assembled with collates in a user friendly fashion available information on the issues and implications of population aging in rural and small town communities, especially as applicable to the northern BC region. This package of information should be disseminated widely through available networks including, old age pensioners groups, Royal Canadian Legion, the BC Rural Team, First Nations Summit, and North Central Municipal Association.

## **8) Community Asset Mapping**

Using the federal government’s asset mapping guide, two approaches are possible.

a) A first approach would be for Western Economic Diversification to make a small program available to municipalities and regional districts across northern BC. Under the program, these groups would hire local residents, who could be trained by Community Futures, to execute a community asset mapping exercise. The results would be housed in the local government office and coordinated into a database in the Community Futures offices. One advantage of hiring local residents is to create local capacity. If this approach is pursued, there are strong suggestions that it be coupled with a broader CED exercise like the REDI process to make the link in thinking “what are our economic assets upon which we can build a development plan”.

b) A second approach would be for Western Economic Diversification to contract a research team to execute the work. It is estimated that a 3 person team would take approximately one year to travel to communities, spend about one week in intense local work on the inventory and background information. An asset map product would be left with each local government.

A second element to local ‘assets’ mapping is to employ a tool such as the Business Vitality Index developed in BC by Mike Stolte and Anne Stacey. The BVI is flexible and can be applied in a variety of contexts. It has been used in rural and small town settings. Information of the BVI is available at [www.BusinessVitalityIndex.com](http://www.BusinessVitalityIndex.com)

## **9) Community Foundations Information Package**

Community foundations are philanthropic organizations which operate and manage endowed funds, the earning of which are used for the long term benefit of a local community. Such community foundations are becoming increasingly popular across Canada and BC as a way to support community sustainability and build local engagement. A useful action item would be to support a group like the Community Foundations of Canada, perhaps in association with financial institutions, in the preparation of an information package which small town and rural communities might use in deciding whether they wish to establish such a foundation, and a development guidebook which they might use to move forward with plans to set one up.

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## **Stikine Area Servicing Plan**

The Stikine area in northwest BC is the only region of the province outside of Regional District organization. The communities in this region involve unincorporated settlements and First Nation’s reserves. Across the rest of BC, the municipal and regional district structure provides a framework for local services planning, funding, and management. It also provides a structure for negotiating joint servicing arrangements with adjacent First

Nation's reserves. A useful action item is to undertake a study which examines a range of innovative mechanisms and options to supply services to all communities across the Stikine area under a jurisdictional arrangement that meets the needs and circumstances of the people and communities.

### **Business Basics Training Packages**

Many of the groups and organizations which spoke to us talked about the need for improving basic business training. Suggestions for fundable projects included the creation of basic business planning training packages which could cover the creation of a business plan, the development of budgeting and management practices, and the inclusion of oversight mechanisms on both. Such a training package could also include directions to existing venues which are available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs. A further, and potentially separate, area of business planning and training concerns the basics of contract negotiations and contract law. There are already a number of agencies including Community Futures offices and local development corporation which might be well suited to developing such packages or animating them through workshops.

### **Access to capital**

One of the clear messages from those who spoke with us involved the difficult experiences of small and medium enterprises with the question of access to capital. In some cases this involved start up capital, while in others it was for expansion or diversification of an already successful enterprise. There is a potential for creating a project to summarize and communicate key questions and issues around access to capital for small and medium sized businesses. Such a reference package could also include potential sources of capital and procedures for contacting such sources. Also useful as well would be directions to the many organizations which could provide assistance in locating capital. Again, there are possibilities for using the region's Community Futures or local development corporations to either develop such information packages or to animate them through workshops for individuals and groups across the region.

### **Ports Fuelling Study**

Given the dynamic and positive changes underway in BC's northern ports of Prince Rupert, Kitimat, and Stewart, suggestions were received about updating studies on key aspects of port development. Included among these were suggestions supporting a study of the structure of fuel access at BC's northern port. It was identified that the port of Prince Rupert has no bunker fuel facilities. This means that the ships working into/out of the cargo, bulk, and cruise ship terminals must fuel up elsewhere, and at the moment it seems that they get their fuel in Washington State. Given the production of oil in BC's Peace River area, that connecting pipelines bring that oil to a refining facility in Prince George which has been producing bunker fuel for the area's pulp mills, and that rail tanker cars could move bunker fuel to northern BC ports, it seems wise to conduct an investigation of opportunities to see how additional competitive advantage could be

created. This investigation should also include issues related to existing, and potential changes to, regulations, policies, and taxes to allow ports such as Prince Rupert to capture this market. Where studies, such as recent work by the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation, or the material compiled for the joint BC-Alberta Provincial Cabinets meeting in Prince Rupert, exist, these could be renovated in light of new opportunities.

### **Cluster Study**

Telus recently contracted a consulting firm to undertake an economic cluster opportunities study for non-metropolitan BC. Phase 1 is a two-prong set of background reports (2010 opportunities; national/global cluster opportunities). Phase 2, if it proceeds, would be a set of community level analyses of economic cluster potential. While there is nothing new to the cluster approach, the information from Phase 1 should provide valuable input to northern BC communities and industries about the opportunities available through the national or international marketplace. Based on this information, there is an opportunity through various Community Futures offices to support EDOs taking the Phase 1 national or international marketplace information into consideration for potential work under Phase 2, the REDI program, Asset Mapping, or the Baseline Target Investment Initiative.

### **On shore cruise industry potential**

Increasing interest in the potential benefits derived from the cruise ship industry in northern BC raises the question of providing timely information on opportunities and challenges within that sector. A two-prong investigation has been suggested to the project. The first would be an inventory of the kinds of businesses and resources already existing in northern BC which could be directed to opportunities created by the cruise ship sector. This would also require an element of innovative investigation to create linkages and networks (and thus opportunities) that may not presently exist.

The second prong is to conduct an investigation of an established cruise ship centre in order to identify economic leakage and areas of untapped opportunity. Economic leakage is particularly important as the large firms which structure the cruise ship industry have extensive on-shore experience and may be able to out-compete local entrepreneurs for opportunities. For example, it has been suggested that some of the Alaska ports have a high level of cruise ship company ownership of stores and services. Employment in these stores and services often goes to people hired from abroad for the summer season. Clarity in opportunities and risks could be of great benefit to communities and businesses in northern BC as they consider moving into this sector.

## **Queen Charlotte Island Visitor Survey**

Basic information and knowledge about market trends is key in any business decision-making context. On the Queen Charlotte Islands, tourism plays an important supplemental role in the economy. It also provides an opportunity for different community members to participate in a form and level of activity which is comfortable to their sense of community and culture.

It has been suggested to the project that a partnership opportunity exists to conduct a summer survey of visitors coming to the Queen Charlotte Islands by BC Ferry Services. This would involve a partnership with the Queen Charlotte Visitor Information Centre, the Council of Haida Nations, Heritage Tourism group on the Queen Charlottes, and BC Ferries. It would be possible to employ Queen Charlotte's youth to ride the ferry in order to administer the survey and distribute information to guests. It could also include a partnership with an educational institution to assist with capacity building by providing training for the survey teams. The expertise in conducting and analyzing market survey information would be a valuable addition to economic development on the islands, and the information could be used by decision-makers to evaluate opportunities and risks. If organized soon, this survey could be executed over the summer and shoulder seasons of 2005.

# The Connected North Appendices

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## 7. Bibliography

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