

UNBC's Community Development Institute

Nev2: The Recession Response Project

The Community Development Institute at UNBC
www.unbc.ca/cdi

Outline

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The NEV2 project Goals:

- ◆ Document the choices and decisions of northern BC's local governments:
 - as they respond to the recent economic downturn
 - as the economy begins to recover

Develop recommendations on how to respond to dramatic economic pressures

Development Priorities:

- ◆ Economic diversification as protection from uncertainties of the resource cycle.

Actions

- ◆ Developing an engaged working relationship with local and regional business communities and economic development organizations
- ◆ Identifying land use planning or designations for potential future economic attraction.

Actions

- ◆ Reassessing property tax regimes
 - Exploring the opportunities for providing tax and other incentives
- ◆ Active in strategic economic development forums and plans.

Challenges

- ◆ Often lacking a coherent linkage to local assets and aspirations.
- ◆ Not necessarily rooted in places.
- ◆ Chasing government programs, regardless of strategic priorities.

Budget:

- ◆ Recognition of key linkages between:
 - Civic infrastructure
 - Services
 - And the viability / sustainability of the community itself.

Actions

- ◆ Modest (2% to 4%) budget increases to maintain pace with inflation.
- ◆ Struggling to find ways to extend the activities of already busy staff, against the risk of staff burn out or turnover.

Actions

- ◆ Exercising carefully their borrowing power to manage long-term debt.
- ◆ Differences between local governments who have access to programs such as “Fair Share” and those who do not.

Challenges

- ◆ How to sustain existing facilities and key services so as to retain people and businesses.
- ◆ Quality-of-life investments, with concern about long-term debt.

Challenges II

- ◆ Much of the civic infrastructure is 40 to 60 years old.
- ◆ Especially critical for northern BC's local "instant towns".

Challenges III

- ◆ Singular projects as “silver bullets” to kick start local economic development.
- ◆ “Pulling all of your eggs from one basket and putting them all into another basket”

Links to Previous Projects

- ◆ Northern BC Economic Vision and Strategy project
- ◆ Planning to Action project

Link to *NEV* Issues I

- ◆ Scaling up and Investment in four key infrastructure areas.
 - *human infrastructure*
 - *physical infrastructure*
 - *economic development infrastructures*
 - *community development infrastructure*

Link to *NEV* Issues II

- ◆ Attention to four bottom lines for evaluating potential activities and developments:
 - Economy
 - Society
 - Environment
 - Culture

Link to *Planning to Action* Issues

- ◆ Creating and understanding the ***foundations*** and assets of local community and economic development.
- ◆ A robust, sustained, and supported ***implementation*** strategy that would be monitored and evaluated.
- ◆ Identifying ***options*** and “blue sky” possibilities for the local community and economy.

Challenges

- ◆ Continue to be challenged:
 - supports for comprehensive implementation strategies.
 - Still under resourced for community and economic development.
 - Diversification runs the peril of having successes compared to those of the past economy.

Summary

- ◆ Local communities and local governments have indeed transformed.
- ◆ Much better understanding of their circumstances, their histories, and their opportunities in a fast paced global economy.
- ◆ Better prepared, and better connected.
 - They have a level of readiness to react that they did not have previously.

Summary

- ◆ Senior governments have not yet been able to keep pace with these transitions.
- ◆ The global economy continues to move at a high pace.
- ◆ Necessary tools for community development and community economic development are still lagging.

Future

- ◆ Diversification runs the peril of having successes compared to those of the past economy.

Two broad perspectives:

- ◆ That the future will be rosy.
- ◆ That the future will be rosy, mostly because of the difficult time we have had for close to a decade.

Community Development Institute at UNBC

- ◆ For further information please visit our website at:

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Thank you