

The Connected North Appendices

- 1. Project Process and Methodology**
 - 2. Community Interviews Summary Report**
 - **3. Community Workshop Reports**
 - a. Prince George**
 - b. Terrace**
 - c. Houston**
 - d. Williams Lake**
 - e. Dawson Creek**
 - 4. Regional Development Model Briefs**
 - 5. Workshop Themes Summary Report**
 - 6. Actionable Items**
 - 7. Bibliography**
-

The Connected North Appendices

3. Community Workshop Reports a. Prince George

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

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 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

Invited participants:

John Nosotti
Andrew Webber
Gerry Offet
Glen Dunn
Dan Rogers
Dawn Miller
Dan Adamson
Kathie Scouten
Laurie Kerr
Sherry Sethen
Kenneth Whyte
Cameron Beck
Keith Playfair
John Backhouse
Gary Blattner
Gordon Borgstrom
Tom Briggs
Colin Kinsley

Alex Ostapiuk
Bob Long
Wiho Papenbruck
Marc Imus
Sue Clark
Greg Lawrence
Dick Chambers
Rand Stromgren
Bruce Sutherland
Kathy Torpe
John Rustad
Don Zurowski
Len Fox
Michael Riseborough
Mike Frazier
Tim Barry
Eugene Runtz
Charles Jago

Project Team:

Greg Halseth
Don Manson

Leslie Lax
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

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”.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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

3. Community Workshop Reports b. Terrace

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

Invited participants:

Jim Rushton
Laurie Brown
Brian Baker
Shirley Kimery
Sonny Jay
Alisa Thompson
Herb Pond
Rod Meredith
Dullss Kleamyck
Cindy Hansen
Betty Barton
Dave Menzies
Joanne Monaghan
Jelena Grabovac
Bill Hickman
Roger Leclerc

Kathy Bedard
Janet Hultkrans
Judith Lapadat
Treena Decker
Laurel Mould
Greg Smith
Bruce Low
Denine Milner
Krystal Piper
Lisa Dunn
Dr. Joseph Gosnell
Jack Talstra
Reg Stowell
Michael Schuster
Ed Brown
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

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”.

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 to 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

3. Community Workshop Reports c. Houston

Northern British Columbia
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Meeting Notes

Houston Workshop

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

Northern British Columbia
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Houston Workshop

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

Participants

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
5 March 2004

Meeting Notes

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.

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.

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.
- Organised 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.

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

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

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.

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

3. Community Workshop Reports d. Williams Lake

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

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

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

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 75th 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

3. Community Workshop Reports e. Dawson Creek

Northern British Columbia
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Meeting Notes

Dawson Creek Workshop

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

Northern British Columbia
Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project

Dawson Creek Workshop

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

Participants

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
5 March 2004

Meeting Notes

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 9 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”.

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.
-

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.

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.

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.

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.