

***Prepared by:  
T. Weninger and Associates Inc.  
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A steering committee of 16 economic development officers organized the 2005 Northern Economic Forum - From the Bookshelf to the Bottom Line.

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







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

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

The forum included a series of presentations that built on the contents of the pre-conference package, plus other key topics. The first half of

Forum participants

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

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

### ***Improve collaboration and cooperation***

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

### ***Engage First Nations***

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

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

### ***Grow the skilled workforce***

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

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

### ***Develop northern-friendly government policies***

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

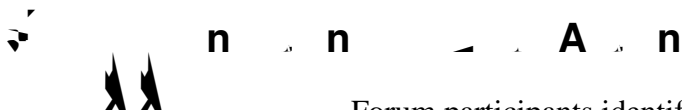
- Working in collaboration with the Northern Caucus and the North Central Municipal Association (NCMA)
- Cultivating good relationships with various levels of government including First Nations
- Establishing a northern policy filter to assist in shaping and evaluating policies for the north
- Implementing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

### ***Enhance communication and information systems***

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

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

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



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

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


It is therefore recommended that:

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

To fulfill this recommendation, the following should occur:

- 1 The Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should assume the responsibility of moving the process forward.
- 2 The Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should expand to include representatives of other northern economic development interests that share similar community planning objectives.
- 3 In determining a model of collaboration and cooperation, the Northern Economic Forum Steering Committee should analyze in detail the advice resulting from the Northern Economic Forum.
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This section of the report provides a summary of all presentations and

- 7:30 am Registration - Breakfast (buffet)
- 8:30 am Master of Ceremony – Dr. Terry Weninger
- 8:40 am Dr. Greg Halseth, UNBC Community Development Institute \*
- 9:10 am Don Zurowski, Northern Community Futures\*
- 9:40 am Bob Clark, Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan Update\*
- 10:10 am Refreshment Break
- 10:30 am Mayor Nate Bello, Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition
- 11:00 am Mayor Len Fox, Omineca Beetle Action Coalition
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:30 pm Janine Elo, Northern Initiative Development Trust\*
- 1:00 pm Graham Kedgley, Northwest Corridor Development Corporation\*
- 1:30 pm Kathie Scouten, Framework Initiative\*
- 2:00 pm Existing Regional Collaboration Models - Panel Discussion:  
*Charles Scott, Export North\**  
*Mayor Len Fox - Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)*  
*Bruce And4(:)-2(3)2( )-2-TuceAnlo)*  
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7:30 am

Breakfast

8:30 am

Setting the Stage - Move to Action

*MC presents highlights from the previous day.*

9:30 am

Next Steps

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

10:15 am

Refreshment Break

11: 45 am

Dr. Terry Weninger, Closing Remarks

12:00 pm

Draw for Brief Case

*Box Lunch (to stay or go)*

This section summarizes the notes taken at all conference sessions.

**Mayor Colin Kinsley**

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

**Chief Domo Frederick, Lheidli T'enneh First Nations Chief**

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

**Don Zurowski**

***Don Zurowski (To introduce Garth Stiller)***

Manager, Community Futures Development Corporation of Fraser Fort George

- Garth was born in Saskatchewan, grew up in north western Ontario. He has a varied background in business and economic development in the provinces of Ontario and BC.
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## **Garth Stiller**

Manager, Sustainable Rural Communities, Western Diversification

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

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

***Gordon Borgstrom (To introduce Jim Cameron)***

- Jim resides in Nanaimo and has been working in regional economic development in BC for over 18 years.
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Island, Chinese investors have invested in 3 value added plants. This offers access to huge market in Asia.

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

### **Greg Halseth**

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

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

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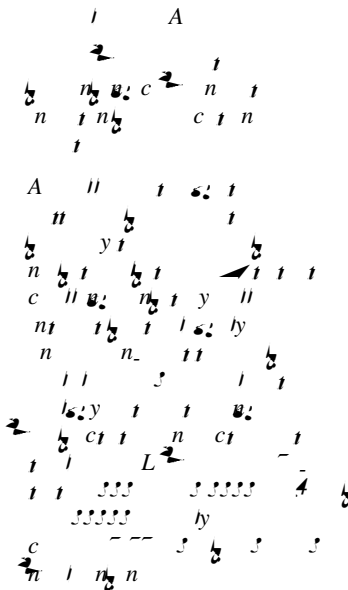


- Key recommendations: settle treaties; complete electrical power grid; create a northern body for regional development (like NDI); revenue sharing with aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities; more action/policy coordination within and between all levels of government and agencies.
- Timing is good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

### ***Don Zurowski – Northern Community Futures***

General Manager, Community Futures Development Corporation of Fraser Fort George

- 9 Community Futures organizations in the North serve 70% of province and 7% of the population.
- CFDCs have stood the test of time – started in 1987
- CFDCs have continued because they have been capitalized; volunteer driven at board level and connected with community organizations.
- CFDCs are “a sewer and water type of service” which means they help support smaller projects –that’s essential.
- Community development and economic development are complementary. Economic development attracts new people and businesses to create new wealth in a community whereas community development develops people and services from within.
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- We are most effective when we are strategic and forward thinking. We have lots of capacity just short bench length.

### **Bob Clark, Provincial Bark Beetle Coordinator**

#### *Ministry of Forests and Range*

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

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

**Nate Bello**

*Director, Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Committee*

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

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

**Len Fox**

*Chair - Omineca Beetle Action Committee*

- Thank you and pleasure to be here – good to hear the non-controversial Beetle Boss.
- The committee includes 9 mayors, 10 Regional District members, 6 land use plans, and 5 forest districts.
- We have energy, resources and we need money (first instalment received.).
- We are very concerned about creating an image of opportunity not doom.
- We want to start out by being totally open and transparent. First Nations are looking to form their own thrust first and we made it

## ***Janine Elo – Northern Development Initiative***

Executive Director, Northern Development Initiative Trust

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

***Graham Kedgley -Northwest Corridor Development Corp.***

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

**Kathie Scouten – Framework Initiative**

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Manager, Corporate Initiatives, Initiatives Prince George

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

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

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

### **Charles Scott, Export North**

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

### **Len Fox, Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)**

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

***Bruce Anderson – Vancouver Island Economic  
Development Association***

- Thank you for opportunity to learn about your region and to talk about a regional collaboration project.
- VIEDA is made up of economic development practitioners
- We started by analyzing the region (SWOT, organization review, communications plan, and investment attraction homework) and



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### **Table Task Detail**

This section provides a complete record of all responses.

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

#### *Core messages about our economies*

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

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

*Key strengths of our communities and region*

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

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

*Critical barriers to sustained economic development*

- Access to capital
- Access to capital
- Beetles
- Communication
- Communication systems
- Communities with self-interest
- Competition between communities
- Demographic challenges
- Dependency on one thing
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- Lack of wealthy champions
- Land claims
- Land claims
- No consistent access to fibre
- Ourselves and our rationalizations
- Overlooked / well hidden
- People
- Politically based decision-making
- Provincial government
- Remnants of parochialism
- Resource based mentality
- Skills shortages
- Sustaining change
- Tourism infrastructure
- Transportation costs / lack of infrastructure
- Trust
- Unresolved land claims
- Youth exodus

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

*Economic development questions that need to be answered:*

- How are going to determine the strategy (will the provincial government in principle support our mandate)?
- How can effective proactive planning be enabled (e.g.: is the airport staying opened; how long will the hospital stay open)?
- How do build relationships with new CED providers?
- How do find a common vision?
- How do you maintain the balance between quality of life and economic prosperity for all segments of our society?
- How do our strengths fit into the global economy?
- How do we become aware, connect and communicate all the initiatives?
- How do we build and guarantee inclusiveness?
- How do we build and take action on what has been and is being done?
- How do we change our 882(i)-2(on on w)2(ha)4(t)-2( h)-10(a)4(s)-1( be)4(e)-

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

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

- Build and train and develop human capacity
- Collaborative action
- Communications
- Determine regions by need not geography
- Develop a community vision
- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan
- Develop a northern regional coordinating body (cluster / group)
- Develop community alliances / regional concept
- Develop individual pride
- Develop interim agreements with First Nations
- Develop a strategy (where everyone is on the same page and don't assume that existing strategies are current or appropriate)
- Empower communities (buy-in by citizens and agencies)
- Engage stakeholders
- Ensure NDI's mandate includes planning (opm)-2(e c)4(om)-gnion
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- Have a senior level advocate for the North
- Have community champions/leaders and cheerleaders
- Implementation plans with measurable benchmarks
- Increase northern sales and marketing (cluster inbound / outbound)
- Inform your community of progress on initiatives
- Just do it
- Link information to communities
- Localize funding criteria for projects
- Needs based / initiative based assistance (EDOs and RDOs)
- Regional collaboration
- Secure funding
- Staying the course
- Understanding our place in the global context
- Use a project management approach
- Use a holistic approach

***Table Task Summary***

***Question 1: Based on the background material circulated***

*Pending crisis to motivate / recognition of urgency*

*Economic development infrastructure*

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

***Critical barriers to sustained economic development***

*Human Resource Capacity*

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

*Land claims unresolved*

Cultural barriers

*Infrastructure development*

High cost; Lack of infrastructure

*Government policy*

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

*Pine Beetle Epidemic*

*Access to capital*



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

**Economic development questions that need to be answered:**

*Information on global markets*

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

*Human Resource Capacity*

How do we resolve skills / labour shortages?

*Land claims settlement*

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

*Access to capital*

How do we increase access to capital?

*Influence Provincial Policy*

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

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

*Need for collaboration*

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

*Need to grow our skilled workforce*

Training; Immigration

*Need government policy friendly to our needs*

Influence government policy at federal and provincial levels

*Need communication mechanism*

Within communities and throughout the north

Handwritten text or markings at the top of the page, possibly a header or title.

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

## *n y A*

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

### ***Collaborate and coordinate regionally***

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

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

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

### ***Collaboration and Cooperation actions suggested***

- Strengthen local economic development agencies by sharing information and resources – ‘one-stop-shop’.
- Assess current activities in all communities to determine best practices.
-

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

### ***Engage First Nations***

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

#### *First Nations engagement actions suggested*

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

### ***Grow a skilled labour force***

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

### *Labour force actions suggested*

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

### **Communicate**

Participants identified communication as a key area requiring focused attention.

### *Communication actions suggested*

- Share information on an ongoing basis between and among all municipal, provincial, and federal governments and EDOs.
- Identify champions
- Celebrate successes
- Establish a one-stop-shop for economic development research and information
- Hold regional economic development forums that include local, municipal and federal government representatives, First Nations leaders (and information on First Nations strategies), economic development practitioners, industry representatives, 2es, First Nations





### ***Implementation Models***

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

The following section describes the implementation models that participants suggested to support creation and maintenance of sustainable, vibrant, and high quality-of-life communities. These

*Model 2*

*Model 2 Functions*

- Capture, monitor, and facilitate the issue or geographic regional alliances.



***Kedgley, Graham***

Graham Kedgley has a long history in the transportation business and has been Executive Director of NCDC since its inception in 1998. Born and educated in New Zealand, Graham has a Master of Commerce Degree and is a Chartered Accountant. In the mid-sixties,







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

- Natural resource clusters – Reduce dependency on this sector and identify new sustainable niche markets
- Technology driven clusters – Enhance the economic potential of these clusters by boosting the enabling environment to catalyze growth
-



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

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

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

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

Cariboo challenges include:

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

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

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

**Recommendations**

- 1 BC's regions should set quantifiable goals for economic and community development objectives to enable progress to be tracked.
- 2 Establish a province-wide private-public sector partnership to guide a BC economic development and diversification strategy, coordinate funding of regional initiatives, and oversee implementation of province-wide capability building.
- 3 Complete detailed regional asset mapping and industry cluster assessments to identify investment opportunities and focus 2010 economic development activities.
- 4



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

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

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

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

### *Governance*

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

### *Access to lands and resources*

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

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

*Planning capacity*



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

collective of communities working in concert to achieve the goals articulated in this document. There must be an acceptance and willingness to engage in activity by the mainstream in collaboration

### *Role of Federal and Provincial Governments*

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three messages drive this report:

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

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

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

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

***Part I – From Strength to Strength***

Northern BC's people and organizations expressed an urgent need for community and economic renewal. This sense of urgency is driven, in part, by the legacy of unresolved land claims and treaty negotiations, and has been accelerated by 25 years of uncoordinated economic restructuring. Their suggestions for moving forward with a renewed community and economic strength builds on lifestyle issues, economic

- Service reductions/consolidations: especially in health and education and
- Resource wealth that is draining out of the region and needs to be



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

- **Institutional Stability** that will survive external change
- **Representation** that is inclusive and involves participation from





## *Recommendations*

The major recommendations identified in this report include:

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



Contact information for the three summarized Northern BC Economic Development Reports

Halseth, G; Lax, L; Manson, D; Markey, S.; Buttar, O. (July 30, 2004).  
THE CONNECTED NORTH: Moving from Northern Strength to Northern Strength: A Report from the Northern BC Economic Vision and Strategy Project July 30, 2004.

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

Knott, Frank. (April 7, 2005) Ramp Up! Bringing Out the Best in