An Inventory of Community and Economic Development Strategies and Plans across the Peace River and Northern Rockies

Prepared for:

KTIDS NORTHWEST
INVESTING IN THE REGION OF OPPORTUNITY
www.ktids.ca

Prepared by:

Laura Ryser, Julia Schwamborn, and Greg Halseth

Community Development Institute
University of Northern British Columbia

September 2012
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Reports</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Gas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Infrastructure</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection Services</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Tourism</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

This spring, our research team contacted several local and regional leaders, business and industry representatives, service providers, and other community groups as part of the Community and Regional Impacts of Major Industrial Development Project for the KTIDS Northwest. We wish to thank all of those participants who took the time to help out and to answer our many questions.

Specific thanks to KTIDS Northwest advisory members: Margaret Warcup, Lael McKeown, Evan Van Dyk, and Rose Klukas. We would like to extend a special thanks to Alexander Pietralla who served as our key contact with the KTIDS Northwest.

Funding for this project came from the KTIDS Northwest, the Terrace Economic Development Authority, and the District of Kitimat.

Laura Ryser, Julia Schwamborn, and Greg Halseth
Prince George
September 2012
Availability

Copies of this project report have been provided to the KTIDS Northwest. Copies of the report have also been deposited in the Kitimat Public Library and the Terrace Public Library. They may also be accessed through the UNBC Community Development Institute’s website at: www.unbc.ca/cdi/research.html.

Project Reports

- Lessons from Economic Upswings: A Case Study of the Peace River Region
- Lessons from Economic Upswings: Summary Theme Tables
- A Historical Guide of Recent Events across the Peace River Regional District: 2000-2012
- An Inventory of Community and Economic Development Strategies and Plans across the Peace River and Northern Rockies

Contact Information

For further information about this topic and the project, feel free to contact Greg Halseth, Director of UNBC’s Community Development Institute:

Greg Halseth
Geography Program
University of Northern BC
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC
V2N 4Z9

Tel: 250-960-5826
Fax: 250-960-6533
E-mail: halseth@unbc.ca
Website: www.unbc.ca/cdi
Website: http://www.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/halseth/
An Inventory of Community and Economic Development Strategies and Plans across the Peace River and Northern Rockies

Introduction

When industrial investments come to small communities, the impacts can be significant and transformative. These impacts occur in all sectors – social, community, service, economic, and governance. Communities across the Peace River and the Northern Rockies regions have considerable experience with large coal, oil and gas, and forest industrial projects. The Community Development Institute has been working to collate lessons and experiences from these areas so as to inform effective responses to the opportunities and pressures of large industrial projects across northern BC.

The project work was carried out by a research team from UNBC in the spring of 2012 with the goal to provide local leaders with information relevant to decision-making over community planning and infrastructure investments. This report includes an inventory of community and economic development strategies and plans across the Peace River and Northern Rockies. We hope that it can be a useful starting point for collating lessons and understanding issues from the recent past.
An Inventory of Community and Economic Development Strategies and Plans across the Peace River and Northern Rockies

Culture


This heritage strategy examines the benefits of community heritage, provides an inventory and description of heritage organizations and facilities in the Dawson Creek area, examines heritage sites in other northern BC communities, and provides proposed heritage strategies and implementation plans for Dawson Creek.

Economic Development


This document assesses the market and financial feasibility to re-use and transform the old post office building into a new community cultural centre.


This strategy includes a community profile and an inventory of infrastructure and services in Hudson’s Hope, as well as a discussion of the opportunities in various industrial sectors. It then outlines a list of recommended community development priorities by participating groups, as well as a discussion of the economic development strategy goals and housing issues that need to be addressed in the community.


This document outlines key initiatives being planned to increase business opportunities for the service sector within industry. It includes a list of contacts for the Business Development Initiative.


This presentation includes information about Energy Services BC, as well as information about the Business Development Initiative and associated activities and partners.

This document tracks the employment statistics, unemployment rates, business and investment activities, bankruptcies, education statistics, and use of social safety net programs for the region.

Northern Rockies Regional Economic Authority. 2007. A Concept for Economic Prosperity Cooperation and Collaboration under a New Northern Rockies Regional Economic Authority. Fort Nelson: Northern Rockies Regional Economic Authority.

Topics addressed in this document include the need for more effective local government collaboration, the need for more collaboration with First Nations, barriers inhibiting regional economic development, and the initiative to establish a regional economic authority.

Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. 2011. The Business Case: For Establishing a Partnership for Investing in the Continued Development of the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality as the Key Service Centre for the Development of the Horn River, Cordova, and Liard Shale Gas Basins. Submitted to the Province of BC. Fort Nelson: Northern Rockies Regional Municipality.

This document includes a description of projections associated with the shale gas sector in the region, as well as a discussion of the impacts that this development has on transportation, industrial, commercial, and other physical infrastructure. It also looks at the changing demand and need for more coordination and partnerships to address housing and community service needs. Property tax mechanisms and provincial policy tools are also discussed.


This report provides a profile of both the Peace River and Northeast regions of BC, as well as an assessment of these regions’ changing contributions to BC’s exports.


This plan covers a description of the current supply and constraints on land and buildings, as well as demand projections for labour, housing, and various industries.
Environment


This report documents concerns about oil spills, as well as details concerning responses and recovery operations. It includes identifying who the key industry and government contacts would be under such circumstances, as well as how efforts would be coordinated.

Forestry


The report outlines a series of policy changes that need to be addressed to resituate the forest industry in the Fort Nelson region. This report also advocates for the retention and improvement of the CN Rail extension.


This five year plan identifies opportunities to expand public educational opportunities, as well as to maintain and develop recreational and physical infrastructure (i.e. trails, demonstration forest, drainage, bike trails, amphitheatre, etc.).

Health


This report was produced for the Northern Health Authority to identify potential health impacts from the oil and gas industry (including social issues), as well as to identify the capacity and gaps that may exist to respond to industry emergencies. In addition to policy recommendations, information and communication needs are also identified.


This document includes letters that were submitted to the Fraser Basin Council from industry and local government partners that identify health concerns associated with the oil and gas industry.
This report discusses health concerns associated with the oil and gas industry, including air quality, water quality, safety issues, access to community services and infrastructure, and operational issues with the oil and gas industry (i.e. safety inspectors, monitoring, and compliance). It also highlighted a number of issues that needed to be addressed in order to improve communication and emergency response planning.

**Housing**


Key issues raised in this strategy include vacancy rates, rental rates, limited housing for special needs and older residents, an aging housing stock, and rising transportation and heating costs. To address these issues, the strategy discusses the need for better communication and coordination, the need to support non-market rental housing, the need to rehabilitate / renovate the aging housing infrastructure, the need to address homelessness, and the need to address seniors’ housing needs.


This housing strategy examines growth projections, housing needs, and land use supply opportunities and constraints.

**Hydro**


This document outlines opportunities to maximize the benefits associated with Site C dam construction, such as local hiring, purchasing local goods and services, establishing a trust, training and research, adopt a ‘workers living locally’ strategy, build one camp but not two, and include all staging areas and camp facilities within the municipal boundaries.
Labour


This document discusses sector vacancies, impacts on businesses, the need for on-the-job training, the lack of skilled trades workers, the lack of communication, the need to improve human resource management capacity, and the need for succession planning. These were the issues that led to the formation of the Regional Skills Advisory Councils and associated priorities.


This report highlights economic development issues and skills needs in the Northeast region of BC. This includes attention to the capacity of the Aboriginal workforce. Key themes identified in the report include: learning from existing initiatives, enhancing communication and collaboration, building upon the capacity of the existing labour pool, and strengthening links between education and industry stakeholders.

Mining


This provincial strategy covers topics such as streamlining regulatory processes, addressing the health and safety of workers, addressing environmental issues, partnerships with First Nations, and developing a skilled workforce.


This report provides an economic impact analysis of the mining sector, including an overview of mining activities around the province, industry commodity trends and export values, human resource development issues, a summary of the overall economic impact of the BC mining industry, a summary of the economic impacts of the mining industry on operating and capital expenditures of various levels of government, as well as the economic impacts on transportation sectors, exploration and development activity, and environmental monitoring. It also compares the regional economic impacts with the Nechako and Northeast regions grouped together.
Oil and Gas


The documents reports trends in the oil and gas industry with a particular focus on the shale gas sector. Other topics covered include BC’s energy policy, royalty rates, infrastructure challenges, technology challenges, and economic barriers that may impact industry activities.

Physical Infrastructure


This water quality assurance plan covers topics such as source water, intake facilities, transmission infrastructure, treatment facilities, capital costs, and recommendations.


This document examines hazards to water sources and quality, as well as a description / discussion of water supply infrastructure. Recommendations to improve drinking water source protection and sustainability are included.


This water strategy previews current regulations and policies before addressing measures and tools for water conservation in the Dawson Creek area. It includes an analysis of water use by sector (i.e. industry, commercial, residential).


This document examines the supply and constraint issues for heavy industrial lands within the jurisdictions of the Peace River Regional District, Fort St. John, and Taylor.

Planning


Topics addressed in this visioning exercise include community engagement, alternative financing, tourism, business expansion, youth, environment, arts and culture, and recreation.

This document discusses issues and concerns with home-based businesses, and proposes a range of regulations to address home-based businesses.


This report explores provincial policy and processes for municipal boundary changes, other options for the provision of city services in rural areas, and projected impacts on property taxes.

**Protection Services**


This report discusses residents’ perception of safety in public areas, as well as the topics of pedestrian and road safety, public transportation, phone booths, protection services, and bylaw enforcement.


This plan documents the supports that are available at the detachment, as well as the protection and community services that are available around the community. Initiatives to improve cooperation with First Nations communities in the area are also outlined.


This report covers topics such as personal experience with drug use and abuse, access to services and programs to address addiction issues, and legal / policy responses.
Recreation and Tourism


This document includes the Alaska Highway Corridor Thematic Strategy; the Dawson Creek Thematic Strategy; a Dawson Creek Downtown Revitalization plan; and an Alaska Highway House Concept Plan.


This document includes a financial analysis and description of the challenges to maintaining and developing cultural, heritage, and recreational infrastructure in Dawson Creek.


This report documents the economic impact of the South Peace Community Multiplex by examining usage statistics and spending at the facility, as well as the effects the centre has had on nearby businesses.


This report examined the value of the region’s commercial accommodation sector. Visitor expenditures and characteristics of accommodation properties are tracked (i.e. rooms available, rooms occupied, rates, length of stays, etc.).


This report detailed the volume of visitors and direct expenditures associated with the tourism sector in Dawson Creek and the South Peace.

This report contains information about the Northern Rockies Destination Marketing Program, as well as strategies to enhance and develop tourism infrastructure. Other issues that are discussed include tourism industry cooperation and training.


This report explores the challenges and opportunities for tourism in the Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe region. Key topics that are discussed include tourism partnerships, infrastructure, information management and research, marketing and branding, community engagement, and business development.

Northern Rockies Regional District, Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, Tourism Dawson Creek, Tourism Research Innovation Project, Northern BC Tourism Association, and BC Parks. 2007. *Northern Rockies District Value of Tourism Research Project*. Fort St. John: Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association.

This report contains information about the number of visitors to the area, visitor expenditures, and recommendations to improve tourism infrastructure, partnerships, promotion, and workforce training.


This needs assessment includes information about socio-demographic trends in the community, as well as issues raised by youth, service clubs, sports teams, and seniors. Key recommendations included developing a sports council, completing a master plan, developing a comprehensive communications strategy, and expanding outdoor recreational infrastructure.

**Social Development**


This report examines gaps and opportunities with labour, energy services procurement, education, First Nations partnerships, water management, information management, and regional collaboration.

The purpose of this strategy was to identify common ground that would support collaboration across a range of stakeholders. Key topics that were explored include health and well-being, culture and recreation, social infrastructure, education, safety, and housing. Recommendations focused on developing a governance structure, coordinating a network, developing innovative strategies to address seniors’ housing needs, and ways to address youth and young adult activity needs.


This literacy strategy focuses upon the needs for young children, school aged children, adults, and Aboriginal residents. A variety of venues, both conventional and unconventional, to promote literacy are explored.


This social plan includes priorities, gaps, and actions for child and youth issues, community development, safety, education and training, food security, housing and homelessness, and health.

**Sustainability**


This report highlights key steps that need to be taken to reduce GHG emissions including the need to identify a champion, expanding awareness about environmental issues and environmental programs, partnering with other municipalities, and completing a community energy management plan.


Key issues raised in this report include density approaches, transportation, green building practices to reduce energy consumption and costs, the development of multi-task spaces, the development of integrated green infrastructure, etc.

This report identifies the potential for solar energy in commercial buildings, bio-energy, and wind energy. The use, and examples, of bylaws for supporting energy efficiency and reducing GHG emissions are considered. Other topics explored include program needs, training auditors, coordinating equipment purchases, and developing a comprehensive communications strategy.


This document discusses current and future energy consumption patterns and costs for municipal buildings and operations (i.e. airports, cultural centres, recreational centres, public works, etc.).


Topics covered in this document include transportation, neighbourhood planning, green building policies, adapting a solar ready community policy, heat mapping, waste management, rebate programs for businesses, energy efficient buildings, etc.


Topics covered in this report include retrofit programs, waste management, transportation, ‘solar ready’ regulations, etc.


This document explores some of the challenges to pursuing a carbon neutral strategy in Dawson Creek. It also highlights some successful conservation and energy efficiency policies and initiatives.


Topics addressed in this document include land use density, transportation, resident behaviours, energy efficiency of buildings, and partnerships.
This report examines the feasibility and effects of a proposed biomass burner at the Multiplex Facility in Dawson Creek. The key issue was to explore opportunities to reduce operating costs, while having a facility that could link with other initiatives in education and industry.

This report documents fibre sources from the South Peace region that could be used for bio-fuel in municipal facilities in Dawson Creek. Economic opportunities associated with power generation and wood pellet manufacturing are also discussed.

**Transportation**


This business plan examines the location constraints, infrastructure, and activity forecasts; as well as governance issues, human resource needs, operations and expenses, revenues, and capital requirements.

InterVISTAS Consulting Inc. 2010. *Long-Term Strategic Plan for the Northern Rockies Regional Airport*. Prepared for the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. Vancouver: InterVISTAS Consulting Inc.

This strategy highlights estimated trends and forecasts, as well as land and infrastructure needs (i.e. ground access and parking, terminal needs, airport operations and support, safety management systems, commercial development, etc.).


The focus of this report was to develop recommendations to enhance the use of the airport as a community resource and economic tool for community development. Topics that were addressed include financial support, use of airport, airport services, governance, and population / economic forecasts.