

The Community
Development Institute
2023-2024 Annual Report
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, BC

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE



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Letter from our Co-Directors

It is with great pleasure that we submit this report highlighting the work and achievements of the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia for April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024.

Moving past the COVID-19 pandemic, new patterns are reshaping communities and economies. Through the opportunities and challenges these create for our non-metropolitan communities, the CDI is active in conversation with communities, and others, about their impacts and about pathways ahead.

Through our community-based research program, the CDI continues to provide information and insight into the challenges and opportunities facing non-metropolitan and resource-based communities and economies. Our knowledge mobilization initiatives have included webinar and conference presentations, articles in academic journals and professional magazines, interviews with print and electronic media outlets, and a social media presence.

In partnership with Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), the CDI is supporting CSFS and its member Nations in the journey to achieve jurisdiction over their children and families. To that end, we are completing Child and Family Community Needs Assessments for each of the member Nations and CSFS's urban operations. CSFS provides holistic health, research, legal, and family services to 11 member Nations. The information gathered through this project will contribute to the preparations that CSFS is undertaking to support negotiations for the transfer of jurisdiction and responsibility for children and families to the Nations.

Again this year, we were invited by federal, provincial, and local governments to participate in dialogue sessions and workshops to discuss the future of non-metropolitan communities. Through these meetings, we continued to be strong advocates for the need for investment and action to address long-standing issues in non-metropolitan communities. In all of our policy dialogues, we have encouraged government to collaborate and partner with across sectors and with other levels of government to build resilient communities and diverse economies in non-metropolitan BC and Canada.

As we look to the year ahead, we will continue to work with non-metropolitan communities and our partners to anticipate and adapt to "the new normal", with a view to encouraging support for transformative change that will reignite the future of non-metropolitan communities in northern BC and beyond. There will be challenges and opportunities, but if we can work together, we can emerge with a strong vision and plan for the future.



Marleen Morris
Co-Director
Community Development Institute
University of Northern British Columbia



Dr. Greg Halseth
Co-Director
Community Development Institute
University of Northern British Columbia

About the Community Development Institute at UNBC – Our Vision

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) is dedicated to understanding and realizing the potential of BC's non-metropolitan communities in a changing global economy; preparing students and practitioners for leadership roles in community and economic development; creating a body of knowledge, information, and research that will enhance our understanding and our ability to deal with the impacts of ongoing transformation; and mobilizing this knowledge to a wide range of provincial, national, and international audiences.

In keeping with the vision of UNBC, the CDI is committed to working with all communities – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – to help them further their aspirations in community and regional development.

To realize this vision, the CDI provides programs and services in four broad areas. The 2023/2024 Annual Report is organized under each of these areas:

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION AND RENEWAL

- Work with communities, industry, business, voluntary groups, and government to identify and assess opportunities, develop strategies, and facilitate partnerships for long-term community and economic benefit in a changing global economy.

EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Provide academic and professional development programs and courses, and community education opportunities, to develop knowledge, expertise, and leadership capacity in community and economic development.

RESEARCH

- Provide community-based research and information that enhance our understanding and ability to deal with the impacts of ongoing transformation.

POLICY DIALOGUES AND ADVICE

- Support multi-sectoral dialogue and planning as well as provide policy advice to prepare communities, industry, and government for future opportunities and challenges.

Community Transformation & Renewal

Since 2004, the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) has worked in partnership with communities across BC to develop and implement strategies for economic diversification and community resilience. We focus specifically on the global and local factors affecting these communities, how they impact a community's ability to respond to change, and what options are available for moving forward. Below are highlights for the work for 2023/2024.

Carrier-Sekani Family Services

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) provides holistic wellness services and supports for member Nations. The organization was established over 30 years ago to help First Nations navigate issues related to justice, health, social, and family services; AND to assist and support in bringing control back to the Nations. Today, CSFS provides holistic health, research, legal, and family services to 11 member Nations.



Currently, many Nations are in a journey to achieve jurisdiction over their children and families. The CDI is working in partnership with CSFS to bring together the critical information needed to support this journey. With the CSFS and its member Nations, the CDI is working towards a child and family community needs assessment for each of the member Nations and CSFS urban operations. The information will contribute to the preparations that CSFS is undertaking for the transfer of jurisdiction and responsibility for children and families to the Nations.

50 – 30 Challenge

Canada's population is growing, and Canadian communities and workplaces, are becoming more diverse. The Government of Canada, through the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, established a program to assist communities and workplaces in becoming more inclusive. The 50-30 Challenge encourages and supports organizations to increase their representation of women and non-binary individuals; Indigenous and Aboriginal people; Racialized, Black, and/or People of Colour; people with disabilities, and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ in senior management positions and on boards.



The CDI partnered with Northern Lights College to deliver the federal government's program in Western Canada. To foster conversation and understanding about diversity in Canada, the CDI presented data and information at 12 workshops in 10 communities to illustrate the growing level of diversity and increasing need for inclusion in the workplace. The list of workshops can be found in the presentation section of this report.

Education for Community & Economic Development

In the coming decades, BC will need people who understand, and can provide leadership in, community and economic development in government, business, community, and academic organizations. We will need practitioners who know how to build strong and resilient communities and economies. We will need leaders who know how to collaborate across sectors and across cultures. The CDI has a commitment to sharing our research and the learnings from our community development work with a broad range of stakeholders.

Housing Information Portal

On January 26, 2022, the CDI launched our [Housing Information Portal \(HIP\)](#). The portal provides one-stop, easy access to the CDI's housing research and data on non-metropolitan BC and Canada.

The Housing Information Portal consists of three sections: research reports and data, webinars and presentations, and media coverage of non-metropolitan housing issues. Information from each new housing project is added to the portal.

- The housing research reports and data section provides access to population and housing data for the CDI's sample of 39 non-metropolitan communities in BC. It also provides access to our sample of 26 communities across Canada.
- The webinars and presentations sections provide access to our knowledge mobilization webinar series, consisting of seven regional presentations, as well as slide decks from other conference and workshop presentations.
- The media coverage section includes links to print articles and video coverage of non-metropolitan housing issues.



The information and data on the housing information portal can be used as a decision-making tool and will be of interest to local government, developers, planners, contractors, economic developers, the non-profit sector, and senior levels of government. It highlights the strong links between housing and economic development potential.

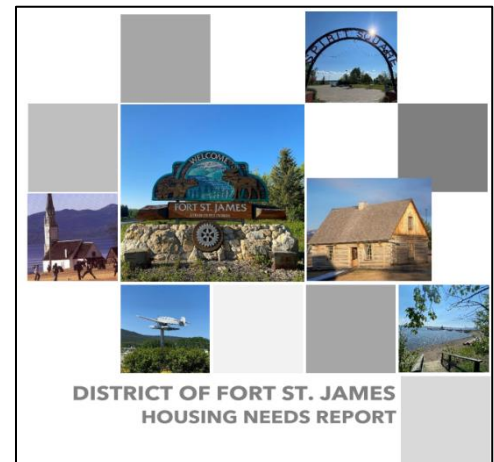
As the CDI expands our research and new information comes to light, we have updated the portal to share that information. The portal is accessible to anyone and is available free of charge.

Research

Along with the CDI's mandate to work with communities in northern BC, the CDI uses its close connections with academic institutions, community groups, business organizations, and others to conduct research that examines, explains, and analyzes aspects of community and economic development. Most of the CDI's research employs community-based research methods in order that the findings are useful and relevant to communities, government, business, and the non-profit sectors. A selection of projects from 2023-2024 includes:

District of Fort St. James Housing Needs Study

In keeping with the requirements of provincial legislation, the District of Fort St. James commissioned the CDI to create an updated housing needs report to help ensure that the community has an adequate supply of high-quality housing and that the housing stock includes options that meet the needs of current and future residents. The District was particularly interested in ensuring that the housing stock includes suitable options that consider the full range of incomes in the community, people at different ages and stages of life, worker and workforce mobility, and the long-term costs of maintaining the local government services and infrastructure. The project was particularly timely due to new economic activity in the community, including the expansion of the Stuart Lake Hospital and the need to support plans for a growing tourism sector.



Working with a broad-based community advisory committee, including District staff, the CDI team collected relevant data, interviewed key stakeholders in the community, and conducted community open houses. As a result, the final report was comprehensive in considering the District's unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities in its recommendations.



Housing Research for Seniors in Non-Metropolitan British Columbia

Population aging is a demographic reality that is having a profound impact on communities everywhere. The impact on non-metropolitan communities, however, has been even more pronounced than in urban centres. The complexity of the aging equation in non-metropolitan BC communities has been further impacted by factors such as local population growth or decline, economic growth, cost of housing, and availability of services.

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Housing Research for Seniors in
Non-Metropolitan British Columbia

For this research, the CDI returned to our sample of 38 communities, located across BC. These communities range in 2021 population size from 1,252 (Valemount) to 76,708 (Prince George) and represent seven regions throughout BC. The histories of the NMA sample communities vary from settlements established with early settler economic activity to instant towns purpose-built in the mid to late twentieth century. They also represent a diverse range of primary economic activity, which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas, manufacturing, tourism, retirement living, and government services.

The findings of this research point to the need for a flexible policy response in meeting the housing and service needs for seniors in non-metropolitan BC. As much as BC needs to prepare for the coming wave of seniors, the province must also plan for the senior's population trough that will follow. Population and community-specific considerations should guide health and public policy and program responses for the coming decades.

Publications

In addition to preparing research reports for communities, CDI researchers also publish their findings in books, academic journals, and other publications. Many of these publications are completed in collaboration with other researchers from Canada and around the world.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Mateaus, M., Markey, S., Murphy, L., Halseth, G., and Hallstrom, L. (Accepted 2024) "The Role of Local Government in Coal Transition: The Case of Rural Alberta". *Canadian Planning and Policy / Aménagement et politique au Canada*, Vol. 2024, 23-42. Doi: 10.24908/cpp-apc.v2024i2.17887.

Storey, K., Halseth, G., Murphy, L., and Markey, S. (Available online 2024) Digitalization and changing value propositions for mining regions: Options for action. *Resources Policy*, Vol. 91, 104861. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2024.104861>

Darko, R., and Halseth, G. (2023) Mobilizing through local agency to support place-based economic transition: A case study of Tumbler Ridge, BC. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, 15, Available online 12 July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2023.101313>

Ryser, L., Halseth, G., and Markey, S. (2023) Municipal entrepreneurialism: Exploring new fiscal levers for small municipalities. *Local Government Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2023.2171018>

Research Reports

Morris, M., Good, J., and Halseth, G. (2024) Housing Options for the Future: Housing Research for Seniors in Non-Metropolitan British Columbia. Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia.

Morris, M., Good, J., and Halseth, G. (2023) Seniors Profile: Mackenzie, BC – New Horizons for Seniors, Second Edition. Community Development Institute, UNBC

Morris, M., Good, J., and Halseth, G. (2023) District of Fort St. James: Housing Needs Report. Community Development Institute, UNBC

Mateus, M., Markey, S., Ryser, L., and Halseth, G. (2023) Municipal Reform in Rural Alberta: The Case of Coal Transitions. School of Resource and Environmental management, Simon Fraser University.

Morris, M., Good, J., and Halseth, G. (2023) Exploring the State of the Building Sector in Non-Metropolitan Areas of British Columbia. Report for BC Housing. Community Development Institute, UNBC.

To view copies of these reports and other published works by the CDI, visit [Our Research Reports](#) page on the CDI website.

Policy Dialogues & Advice

Through our focus on policy dialogues and advice, the CDI is working to create platforms for discussions that build awareness and generate insight into issues in northern British Columbia and other non-metropolitan areas in Canada and around the world. Our platforms for discussion are where knowledge is shared and information is exchanged; where networks and relationships can be built; and where the challenges and issues can be explored.

Meetings and Committees

Meetings with BC Government Elected Officials and Senior Advisors

As part of the CDI's commitment to knowledge mobilization and advocacy for non-metropolitan BC, CDI Co-Directors Greg Halseth and Marleen Morris regularly meet with BC Government elected officials and senior advisors to share research findings and insights.

In May 2023, Marleen and Greg, along with Sean Markey, Professor with the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University, travelled to Victoria. The key topics for discussion included housing, housing affordability, homelessness in non-metropolitan BC, and local government entrepreneurialism. The group met the following individuals and groups:

- The Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs
- The Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing
- The Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation
- Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development
- Megan Dykeman, Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits
- BC United Caucus, particularly MLAs from northern British Columbia
- Lisa Helps, Special Advisor to the Premier on Housing



Roundtable Discussions, Presentations, Panels, and Conferences

Marleen Morris (2024) "Housing challenges in non-metropolitan BC and Canada: 13 indicators to watch". Presentation to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. February 27.

Greg Halseth and Marleen Morris (2024) "Connections to Community". Presentation to a joint meeting of the UNBC Board of Governors and UNBC Senate. February 2.

Marleen Morris (2024) "Out of stock: Housing challenges in Northwest British Columbia". Presentation

to the Rotary Club of Terrace. January 8.

Greg Halseth (2023) Cooperation in Readiness: Social and Economic Transformation. At the “Perspectives Conference: The Land of the Future? Rapid Industrialization for a Societal Transformation in Peripheral Regions – Opportunities and Impacts”. Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden, December 1.

Greg Halseth (2023) Readiness: Rapid Industrialization and Societal Transformation in Peripheral Regions. At the “Perspectives Conference: The Land of the Future? Rapid Industrialization for a Societal Transformation in Peripheral Regions – Opportunities and Impacts”. Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden, November 30.

Marleen Morris and Greg Halseth (2023) Housing affordability, income, and vulnerability in non-metropolitan British Columbia: What local governments need to know. Civic Info BC Conference – CivX 2023: Post Secondary Partnerships and Successes. Vancouver, BC, November 29.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation to Alberta Chiropractic Association. November 3.

Marleen Morris and Greg Halseth (2023) Readiness: Community development research in support of northern BC communities and regions. UNBC regional Advisory Committee meeting, Prince George, BC, November 2.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Kelowna. October 17.

Marleen Morris and Greg Halseth (2023) Readiness: Community development research in support of northern BC communities and regions. UNBC regional Advisory Committee meeting, Terrace, BC, October 16.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Dawson Creek. October 12.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Nanaimo. September 27.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Victoria. September 26.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Surrey. September 14.

Marleen Morris (2023) "Regional agriculture strategy: Regional District of Fraser Fort George". Presentation to the Agricultural Standing Committee of the Regional District of Fraser Fort George. September 13.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Burnaby. September 13.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Vancouver. September 12.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Edmonton. September 7.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Calgary. First of two community presentations. September 5.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Calgary. Second of two community presentations. September 5.

Markey, S., Ryser, L., and Halseth, G. (2023) Restoring the *Right to be Rural* in British Columbia. Annual meetings of the BC Rural Centre, Kelowna, BC, June 1-2.

Ryser, L., Halseth, G., and Markey, S. (2023) Living well in Rural Canada: Revisiting the New Rural Economy Project. Annual meetings of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Lethbridge, Alberta, June 23.

Markey, S., Ryser, L., and Halseth, G. (2023) Local Government Entrepreneurialism: Prospects for Resilience. Annual meetings of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Lethbridge, Alberta, June 22.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Whitehorse. August 9.

Marleen Morris (2023) "Old stock, new pop(ulation): Why housing in non-metropolitan BC doesn't cut it anymore". Presentation to the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, Planning 583. August 22.

Marleen Morris (2023) "The 50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion". 50-30 Challenge Hub Project presentation in Prince George. May 17.

Research and Contract Funding

Funding Agency	Subject	\$ / Year	Year	Principal Investigator(s)	Co-Investigator(s)
District of Fort St. James	District of Fort St. James Housing Needs Report	\$65,000	2022-2023	Marleen Morris	Greg Halseth
Carrier-Sekani Family Services	Child and Family Community Needs Assessments	\$411,796	2024-2025	Marleen Morris	Greg Halseth
SSHRC – Insight Grant	Entrepreneurialism and rural/small-town local government	\$50,000/yr	2020-2024	Greg Halseth	Sean Markey, Kelly Vodden, Ryan Gibson, Lars Hallstrom
SSHRC – Insight Grant	Resource Royalties: Returns to Producing Rural Regions	\$39,786/yr	2016-2023* (COVID extension from SSHRC)	Sean Markey and Greg Halseth	Neil Argent, Matthew Tonts, Fiona Haslam-MacKenzie

UNBC, TRU, UBC-O	Interior Universities Research Consortium (IURC) Initiative on Homelessness.	\$45,000	2022-on-going	Lead is Greg Halseth	This involves faculty at UNBC, Thompson Rivers University, and University of British Columbia – Okanagan.
Northern Lights College	50-30 Challenge for Diversity and Inclusion	\$120,000	2023	Marleen Morris	
BC Housing Management Commission	Housing Options for the Future: Housing Research for Seniors in Non-metropolitan BC	\$86,683	2022-2024	Marleen Morris	Greg Halseth
BC Housing Management Commission	Exploring the State of the Building Sector in Non-Metropolitan Areas of British Columbia	\$77,240	2021-2023	Marleen Morris	Greg Halseth
College of New Caledonia	Service Canada - New Horizons Program: Bridging the Gap” - Mackenzie Seniors	\$45,000/year	2020-2024	Marleen Morris	Greg Halseth
SSHRC and CMHC	At Home in the North: Partners in Northern Housing and Home	\$1.374 million over 7 years	2021-2028	A cross Canada partnership led by Julia Christensen of the Department of Geography at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.	Greg Halseth and large list
SSHRC	Understanding Precarity in Work and Beyond in Northern BC	\$2.5 million over 7 years	2021-2028	A pan-BC project led by Simon Fraser University and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives	Greg Halseth and large list

The CDI Team

Committed to working with communities, the CDI is known for its ability to effectively blend research with hands-on community development. Each CDI team member contributes a mix of skills and experiences which sustains the CDI's well-rounded reputation. Alongside staff, the CDI also partners with Faculty Associates and seeks input from the CDI Advisory Committee.

Staff

Dr. Greg Halseth, Co-Director, UNBC Community Development Institute; Professor, Geography; Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies
Marleen Morris, Co-Director, UNBC Community Development Institute; Adjunct Professor, Geography
Julia Good, Research Associate



Faculty Associates at UNBC

Dr. Stephen Déry, Professor, Environmental Science; NSERC/Rio Tinto Senior Industrial Research Chair in Climate Change and Water Security
Dr. Scott Green, Professor, Biology
Dr. Mark Groulx, Associate Professor, Environmental Planning
Dr. Neil Hanlon, Professor, Geography

CDI Advisory Committee

We would like to acknowledge the contribution and support of the CDI Advisory Committee:

Mark Barnes, Director, Office of Research, UNBC
Jason Fisher, Partner, Consulting Services, MNP
Sandy Jones, Retired Superintendent, SD52-Prince Rupert
Kathy Lewis, Acting Vice-President, Research, UNBC
Kevin McCort, President and Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Foundation
Barbara Neis, CM, Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Judy Rogers, CM, Board Chair, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority

Greg Halseth, Professor, Geography Program and Co-Director, Community Development Institute, UNBC
Marleen Morris, Co-Director, Community Development Institute and Adjunct Professor, Geography Program, UNBC

The CDI Advisory Committee meets annually to provide strategic advice and counsel to the CDI.

The Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia

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The Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC was established in 2004 with a broad mandate in the areas of community, regional, and economic development. Since its inception, the CDI has worked with communities across the northern and central regions of British Columbia to develop and implement strategies for economic diversification and community resilience.

Dedicated to understanding and realizing the potential of BC's non-metropolitan communities in a changing global economy, the CDI works to prepare students and practitioners for leadership roles in community and economic development, and to create a body of knowledge, information, and research that will enhance our understanding and our ability to deal with the impacts of ongoing transformation. The Community Development Institute is committed to working with all communities – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – to help them further their aspirations in community and regional development.



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*The Community Development Institute at
The University of Northern British Columbia*

