

Hollowing Out the Community:

**Community Impacts of Extended Long Distance Labour
Commuting**

Summary Report

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

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Availability

Copies of this report have been provided to the Mackenzie Public Library, the College of New Caledonia, and the District of Mackenzie. Copies of the report have also been provided to all participants. At UNBC, copies have been posted on the Community Development Institute's website: www.unbc.ca/cdi.

Project Reports

- Hollowing Out the Community: Community Impacts of Extended Long Distance Labour Commuting
- Contrasting Pathways with Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC
- Long Distance Labour Commuting Contributions to Community Capacity in Mackenzie, BC
- Assessing the Scale and Scope of Long Distance Labour Commuting in Mackenzie, BC

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Hollowing Out the Community: Community Impacts of Extended Long Distance Labour Commuting

1.0 Project Description

The town of Mackenzie is one of BC's 'instant towns', built in the late 1960s to house the workforce for a new regional forest industry. A significant economic downturn in Mackenzie beginning in early 2008 resulted in the closure of all major forest industry operations (sawmills and pulp and paper mills) in the community. As a result, many forest sector workers had to engage in long distance labour commuting (LDLC). For many of these workers, this was their first experience with LDLC practices.

This project provides the opportunity to explore the implications of LDLC on families and various aspects of the community that are impacted by sending workers to remote worksites for extended periods of time. Understanding the scale and social and economic impacts of LDLC is important if local leaders, businesses, service providers, and community groups are to strengthen the local capacity to cope with on-going change. This report focuses on the impacts that LDLC has had on community organizations, community relationships, and the overall sense of community.

Table 1.1: Timeline

April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNBC Research Ethics Board process completed.• Research team established.• Project logistics schedule completed.
May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews completed.
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of interview data.
July 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed draft project reports.
August 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of draft reports by community partners.
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final reports completed and distributed.

2.0 Methodology

The data and information for this report was conducted through key informant interviews with community clubs and organizations.

Selecting Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted during May 2012. The purpose was to study the impacts of long distance labour community on community engagement and local organizations in Mackenzie. Participants were recruited using publicly available lists of community organizations and groups. A total of seventeen residents were interviewed. While many participants were long-time residents of the community, we also spoke with participants who had moved to Mackenzie within the last five years (Table 2.1). Many of these participants were also involved with multiple community organizations, such as sporting clubs, emergency / community services, arts

and cultural groups, service clubs, and youth clubs (Table 2.2). Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. A general breakdown of interview participants is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Length of residence

	Number of total respondents	% of total respondents
0 - 5 years	4	23.5
6 - 10 years	2	11.8
11 - 19 years	1	5.9
20 years or more	10	58.8
Total	17	100.0

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table 2.2: What community groups do you belong to?

<p>Sporting Clubs (17) Mackenzie minor hockey club (4) Mackenzie youth lacrosse club (3) Mackenzie youth soccer club (2) Cross country ski club (1) Golf course (1) Hockeyville Committee (1) Mackenzie figure skating club (1) Mackenzie youth wrestling club (1) Old timers' hockey club (1) Rainbow swim club (1) Snowmobiling club (1)</p> <p>Emergency/Services (12) Mackenzie Counseling Services (3) Mackenzie Voluntary Fire Department (2) Parents Advisory Council (2) 'Success by Six' Children's Community Table (2) Mackenzie Public Library (1) Mackenzie Search and Rescue (1) St. Peter's Pantry (1)</p>	<p>Arts and Society (10) Mackenzie and District Museum (2) Mackenzie Arts Council (2) Performing Arts Society (2) Communities in Bloom (1) Community choir (1) Community garden (1) Radio station (1)</p> <p>Service Clubs (5) The Legion (2) Elks (1) Kinsmen (1) Rotary Club (1)</p> <p>Youth Clubs (3) Girl Guides (1) Mackenzie girls club (1) Royal Canadian Air Cadets (1)</p> <p>Other (5) Municipal Council (2) Chamber of Commerce (1) McLeod Lake Trappers Association (1) St. Peter's Catholic Church (1)</p>
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Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Research Ethics

Research conducted by the Community Development Institute is bound by protocols at the University of Northern British Columbia that require all survey or interview guides be submitted to UNBC's Research Ethics Board for review. A key component to this protocol is to provide research participants with a copy of the consent form (Appendix B) that outlines the purpose of the study, how the research process will protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and that their participation is voluntary.

Interview Questions

The purpose of this project was to explore the impacts that long distance labour commuting had on the overall sense of community in Mackenzie. This report assembles a summary of key issues identified from our interviews. A detailed description of questions asked in each section of the interview guide is provided in Appendix C. In general, participants were asked questions in the following areas:

- Background questions;
- Experiences with community life prior to, and after, the mill closures in Mackenzie;
- Impacts on community organizations and clubs;
- Impacts on relationships with family, friends, and neighbours; and
- Impacts on economic development.

Analysis

During each interview, comments were recorded and notes were taken. After a final summary file was created for each interview, qualitative analysis was done to identify, code, and categorize patterns and themes that emerged from the data. Each table consists of theme headings and sub-headings. The theme headings are bolded and have a numerical count beside them of the total number of comments received for that particular topic. Under each theme are sub-headings that are in plain, non-bolded font. These cover the range of issues captured under a key theme. Beside each sub-heading is a numerical count of the total number of participants that raised a specific issue. When all of the sub-heading comments are added up, they indicate the number of times that a particular theme was raised.

For example, in Table A1, participants were asked to identify what community life was like prior to the mill closures in Mackenzie. The most prominent theme was that Mackenzie was a vibrant community. For example, while 3 participants felt that the community was busy, 2 other participants noted that there were many young families in the community. When all of the sub-heading comments are added up, the theme of Mackenzie as a vibrant community was raised 12 times.

3.0 Results

To explore the impacts of long distance labour commuting on various aspects of the community, participants were asked a series of questions about community life, community organizations, and community relationships. This part of the report describes the key themes running through each section of questions that were posed to the participants.

3.1 Perceptions of Community Life

Participants were first asked to describe their perceptions of community life before the 2008 mill closures in Mackenzie (Table A1). Many participants described Mackenzie as a **vibrant community** with lots of well supported and **vibrant community groups** and **services**. There were many activities and resources for organizations. There was strong attendance or **community engagement** in both social and work settings. Participants felt that there was a stronger, more stable **economy** as more people were employed and had adequate **finances** to support their lifestyle. Concerns were expressed, however, about the difficulty that community groups had securing a **volunteer base** as some felt that a number of community groups relied on the same core group of volunteers. Shift work at the mills was cited as one barrier to recruiting volunteers for community groups.

Following the mill closures, there were a number of changes to participants' perceptions of community life (Table A2). With more people moving out-of-town and others engaged in **commuting** out-of-town for work, the most prominent concern noted by participants was the **loss of volunteers**. This was accompanied by lower levels of participation or **community engagement** in activities as residents focused on spending more time with their families once workers returned to the community. In some cases, this resulted in the **loss of community groups**. Some suggested that there were also fewer sports opportunities for youth. Another key concern was the **financial** impact that LDLC had on the community as residents found it difficult to maintain two households. As residents had less disposable income, there were fewer financial resources available from both residents and businesses to support community groups. When combined with the loss of stores and the Mackenzie Elementary School, some participants felt that the overall **sense of community** had changed. There was a loss of morale and degree of **uncertainty** in the community. In contrast, however, there were participants who felt that there was an **expansion of community supports** and activities. Family-oriented functions, programs at the Mackenzie Recreation Centre, and the Hockeyville experience were all activities that helped to bring the community together. The availability of community supports also helped families who remained in town to cope with both financial and household challenges. For example, in addition to supports offered by Mackenzie Counselling, participants highlighted initiatives offered by banking institutions to restructure or extend loans and mortgages in order to make payments affordable.

3.2 Impacts on Community Organizations / Clubs

Participants were also asked to describe the various impacts that LDLC has had on community organizations and clubs. When we asked participants to describe the impact that LDLC had on the membership of their community organization, the most notable issue was a **loss of**

membership (Table A3). In some cases, this loss of membership resulted in the **instability** or **closure** of community groups. However, some new groups, such as St. Peter's Pantry, were formed to respond to the needs created by the industry closures. Changes to the **age composition** of the membership were also observed as some felt that their membership was aging. Others noted that while the registration of younger children in community groups remained high, there had been a decline in the retention of older children. To support the retention of members, initiatives were undertaken to keep **membership costs** low, as well as to offer a payment plan for membership fees.

LDLC also had an impact on community participation or engagement (Table A4). The most noticeable change highlighted by participants was a **decline in attendance** by both adults and children for community activities and programs. Participants also observed a **change in the capacity** of residents to engage or participate in community groups due to age, time constraints, and limited resources to support participation by club volunteers. **Changes to household roles** also limited community participation as spouses who remained in town assumed more household responsibilities. **Distance** to out-of-town tournaments also impacted participation.

When participants were asked to describe how LDLC impacted the recruitment and retention of volunteers, there were several concerns with the **loss of volunteers and staff** who had contributed specific skills, expertise, and experience (Table A5a). A number of community groups also experienced a **loss of board members** and people willing to fulfill **leadership** or executive positions. With many residents commuting out-of-town for work, participants talked about several **difficulties with the recruitment** of volunteers and staff to provide instruction, coaching, and other general volunteer duties. Participants noted that several groups relied upon the same group of core volunteers, which often resulted in **volunteer burnout** as volunteers were forced to take on multiple roles. Due to **time constraints** with changes to household responsibilities and out-of-town commuting, it was easier for some groups to recruit older / retired volunteers. Other groups relied more heavily on female volunteers who remained in the community. Community groups also **expanded their human resources** by bringing in coaches from other places, hiring new people to keep groups operating, targeting new residents in town, covering **training costs**, aligning training schedules with shift schedules of workers, and by offering a babysitting service to support participation.

Four key types of recruitment strategies were used by local groups (Table A5b). First, many participants noted that their organization had used **technology**, such as the radio or websites, to recruit new volunteers. **Personal communication** through word of mouth, friends, and phone calls were also used. In addition to **print materials**, such as newspapers and school newsletters, participants noted that their community group had used **community events**, such as leisure or trade fairs, church announcements, open houses, and union meetings, to recruit new volunteers.

Donations and in-kind support for community groups were impacted by the mill closures and long distance labour commuting in six ways (Table A6). First, participants noted that community groups had experienced a **decline in donations** from local businesses and residents, as well as the loss of support from industry. Community groups also experienced a **decline in revenue** from advertising, membership registration, and hall rentals. While some noted that there was a smaller tax base to allow the local government to provide community grants, other

participants talked about the increase in **government support** (i.e. through the job opportunities program and senior government grants) to support upgrades to technology and **infrastructure**, as well as ongoing operations. Some community organizations also received **equipment** donations following the mill closures. On a positive note, however, several participants talked about an **increase in donations** received from both **local** residents and businesses, as well as from businesses, clubs, and organizations **outside the community** around the province.

When we spoke to participants about how LDLC impacted the availability of programs and activities in the community, people noted that it had mostly affected the **hours of operation** (Table A7). This meant that some community groups had reduced their hours of operation, moved weekday activities to weekends, or offered supports on a need by need basis. Others noted that they were able to maintain their hours of operation or simply rescheduled their group activities to accommodate their volunteers' work schedules. Several programs were also **restructured** through cutbacks, the combination of age groups, and by offering fewer and smaller activities or events. In some cases, programs or events were no longer offered. On the other hand, some groups **created new programs** or projects (i.e. St. Peter's Pantry or free workshops to businesses).

Participants were also asked to describe how other aspects of their operations were impacted by LDLC (Table A8). Despite previous concerns expressed about human resources, a number of participants did not feel that the **meeting times** or the frequency of their group's meetings had changed. Where needed, some groups simply became more flexible with their meeting times. Instead, a key concern involved impacts on the **financial management** of community organizations. With an increase in LDLC, some groups lowered rates for program and events or eliminated fees altogether in order to make programs more accessible to residents. Other participants expressed concerns about being able to respond to **operational and equipment costs** with more constrained fiscal resources. Building maintenance costs, operational costs, out-dated equipment, and costs for sport uniforms were particular issues raised. In response to organizational pressures, community groups have been pursuing **group mergers** or **collaboration** with other organizations in order to share expertise and human resources.

Finally, in this section, participants were asked to discuss how these impacts on community organizations have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie (Table A9). For the most part, many participants felt that the challenges and opportunities that emerged from the impacts of LDLC had increased the overall sense of community as it pulled the community closer together. A number of participants had credited the initiative to participate in the national Hockeyville competition for giving many in the community a positive focus during such difficult times. In contrast, some participants felt that LDLC had a negative impact on the overall sense of community in Mackenzie as there were fewer people who were able to be engaged in community activities and organizations.

3.3 Family, Friends, and Neighbours

When participants were asked to discuss how LDLC impacted the activities and time spent with family, three main themes were identified, including impacts on community participation, household responsibilities, and spousal relationships (Table A10). To start, some participants felt that LDLC had an impact on **community participation** as family members had less time and money to attend or participate in community groups and activities. In contrast, however, other participants felt that there was an increase in community participation, particularly by the spouses and children who remained in the activity as it helped them to connect with networks of support and to stay active. Secondly, LDLC had an impact on the **restructuring of household responsibilities** as the remaining spouse in Mackenzie assumed more responsibility for childcare and household duties. When the commuting worker returned to Mackenzie, their time was often consumed with attending to household repairs. The time that workers spent away from their families was also felt to have an **impact on spousal relationships**. In some cases, this led to the break-up of relationships. In addition to the time that workers spend working out-of-town, they must spend considerable time on their days off commuting back and forth to the job site. This also leaves less **time for family activities**.

Participants were also asked to reflect upon how LDLC impacted the types of activities spent with friends and neighbours in the community (Table A11). Overall, participants felt that LDLC meant that families had **less time to spend with friends** and neighbours as a greater priority was spending time with family. This was particularly the case where commuters experienced **fatigue** from commuting and working out-of-town. Others noted that working out-of-town for extended periods of time impacted the ability of workers to maintain their connections and social circles in the community. In contrast, people spoke about the continued **engagement with friends and neighbours** as these residents provided both emotional support and help with home maintenance tasks. Community groups also pursued several initiatives to increase opportunities and **support for social interaction**, particularly for the spouses and family members who remained in the community.

Furthermore, we asked participants how changes in opportunities to spend time with family, friends, and neighbours impacted the overall sense of community (Table A12). Such changes are important as it can impact the connection that people have to a place, and may impact the long-term retention of residents. For the most part, participants felt that the time they spent with family, friends, and neighbours helped to **enhance their sense of community** as it pulled people closer together. Again, key activities such as the music festival, the Northern BC Winter Games, and other events helped to give residents positive opportunities to interact with each other and to build networks of support. To a lesser extent, there were some concerns expressed about the **decline in the sense of community** as LDLC impacted the time and resources available to residents to engage in community activities and events. Some noted that as the economy declined, some residents needed to sell recreational vehicles and equipment that helped them to engage with friends and groups in the community. This had a negative impact on morale and overall sense of community.

3.4 Economic and Community Development

Finally, participants were asked to describe how LDLC changed their shopping patterns. Shopping can provide opportunities for routine social interaction and may impact the overall sense of community. With respect to local shopping, participants raised four key issues (Table A13). First, there were a number of participants who felt that there was ***more support for local businesses***. Some felt that more residents shopped locally as they had ***fewer financial resources*** to shop out-of-town and focused more on purchasing necessities locally. In contrast, other participants felt that there was a ***loss in support for businesses*** when the mills closed and that local shopping was impacted by the ***limited quality, variety, availability, and costs*** of goods in the community.

To explore the topic of out-of-town shopping further, participants were asked to explain additional factors that may influence out-of-town shopping patterns (Table A14). In this case, the most prominent reason cited for out-of-town shopping was to improve ***access to goods and services***, particularly for items that were no longer available in Mackenzie. Others shopped out-of-town due to more ***competitive prices***. Participants also talked about the influence of ***proximity and convenience*** as people shopping out-of-town when they visited family or attended medical appointments in larger centres.

Lastly, we asked participants how any changes to shopping patterns impacted the overall sense of community (Table A15). In this context, participants felt that shopping had very little impact on the overall sense of community. Of interest, some participants talked about commonly known meeting places in other communities – such as the Tim Horton’s in the Hart Highway in Prince George - where many Mackenzie residents stop before travelling back home.

4.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to highlight some of the core themes that came out of the key informant interviews held in Mackenzie to discuss the impacts of LDLC on various facets of community life, community organizations, and community relationships. Appendix A contains the detailed tables that describe the range of responses to each question. These themes, together with the nuances captured in the appendices, can form the basis for planning programs, policies, and infrastructure investments.

Several positive things were done in Mackenzie to respond to the challenges facing community groups and residents as a result of the impacts from the mill closures and LDLC, such as:

- Keeping program / activity rates low;
- Using key events / initiatives to provide a positive focus for the community;
- Sharing expertise and resources across community groups;
- Providing flexibility in the timing and delivery of supports; and
- Organizing interagency committee meetings to share information across a range of service providers, government staff, and industry leaders.

Although our work focused on the impacts of LDLC on community groups and community relationships in Mackenzie, there are a number of issues that fall outside of local jurisdiction. As

such, some topics may simply become advocacy issues for the District of Mackenzie and other local leaders to raise with other levels of government. Others are clearly available for local action. Below, we have highlighted some possible areas that community groups and leaders can build upon to respond to the needs of residents and strengthen the resiliency of various facets of the community:

- Continue to support and broaden infrastructure and opportunities for social interaction to allow residents to connect with a broader range of support networks;
- Ensure supports are in place to facilitate community participation (i.e. child care, transportation, etc.);
- Devote attention to succession planning and strengthen the capacity / leadership skills of the volunteer base;
- Build upon opportunities for collaboration and synergy across community groups;
- Lobby for more resources and personnel to provide services and outreach supports within the community (i.e. support networks, flexible child care, home maintenance / repairs, yard work, etc.);
- Support and expand connections with non-local networks and organizations that can link community groups with a broader range of resources, expertise, and information; and
- Continue to ensure that information about local, regional, provincial, and federal supports is up-to-date and accessible in multiple formats for residents.

Strengthening community organizations and opportunities for social interaction is important in order to enhance local quality of life, as well as efforts to attract and retain residents. Addressing these needs is particularly important to help workers and their families cope with the stresses associated with LDLC given the time and logistical constraints facing these households.

Appendix A: Tables

Table A1: What was community life like prior to the mills closing in Mackenzie?

Vibrant Community (12)

Busy (3)
Lots of people in the community (3)
Good life (2)
Lots of families (2)
Vibrant (2)

Vibrant Community Groups (9)

Kids groups had high numbers / waiting lists (2)
Lots of things to do in the community (2)
Resources available for community groups (2)
Clubs and groups were busy (1)
Large number of activities for kids (1)
Lots of competitive activities (1)

Community Engagement (8)

Active/engaged social community (6)
Active/engaged work community (1)
Friendly (1)

Economy (5)

Businesses were not affected (1)
Many stores open (1)
People had jobs (1)
Reliance upon mills (1)
Stable economy (1)

Volunteerism (5)

Core volunteer group – same people (2)
High volunteerism (1)
Search and Rescue struggled due to shift work at mills (1)
Unengaged parents did not volunteer with kids activities (1)

Finances (3)

Money spent on material items rather than kids' activities (1)
People had money (1)
People were in town for the money (1)

Services / Amenities (2)

Lots of service groups (1)
Schools were open (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A2: What was community life like after the mill closures?

Volunteerism (12)

Fewer parents/lone parents meant less support for activities (3)
Lost volunteers (3)
Difficult to get volunteers (2)
Loss of coaches (2)
Gained volunteer time from unemployed people remaining in the town (1)
Loss of referees (1)

Financial / Economic Challenges (9)

Business owners had to take on multiple partners (1)
Business owners had to take on second jobs (1)
Business sales declined (1)
Children did not get allowances (1)
Difficult to maintain two households (1)
Difficulty filling vacant stores (1)
Increase in vacant stores (1)
Lack of funding for community groups (1)
Residents had less money (1)

Community Engagement (8)

Low participation numbers in clubs and groups (4)
Less community engagement (2)
Horse club membership down (1)
More time spent with family rather than community due to commuting (1)

Population Change (7)

Families moved out of town to find work (2)
Population declined (2)
Families stayed in town (1)
Fewer children in school (1)
Renters left town (1)

Community Cohesion (5)

Sadness/depression/low morale (3)
Difficult for former Mackenzie Elementary School students to integrate into Morfee Elementary School (1)
Sense of community changed (1)

Commuting (5)

Lots of commuting for work (2)
Most commuters were men (2)
Family stayed in town and commuted due to costs of moving (1)

Expansion of Community Events / Clubs (5)

Hockeyville (2)
Brought back Mackenzie soccer club (1)
District put on more events (1)
More family orientated functions (1)

Loss of Community Groups (4)

Decline in opportunities for kids (2)
Curling club closed (1)
Fewer sports opportunities for kids (1)

Safety (4)

Minimal fire safety needs addressed in businesses (1)
New bylaw created to change fire safety inspections from annually to every 3 years (1)
Preventative maintenance sometimes overlooked (1)
Some businesses did not keep up to date with safety equipment (1)

Availability of Community Supports (2)

Counseling support (1)
Job opportunities program helped (1)

Closures (2)

Mackenzie Elementary School closed (2)

Financial Support (2)

Bank restructured existing loans (1)
Banks extended mortgages to make payments affordable (1)

Increase in Crime (2)

Crime rate increased (1)
The knapsack rule came to Mackenzie (1)

Uncertainty (2)

Quiet (1)
Worry for community survival (1)

Communications (1)

People unsure where to go for help (1)

Family Cohesion (1)

Families separated (1)

Other (2)

Golf course was easy to book (1)
Horse stalls vacant (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A3: How did LDLC impact the membership of community groups?

Changes to Total Membership (22)

Loss of members (16)
Consistent membership (2)
Members left to work out of town (2)
Members who commuted moved out-of-town (2)

Age Composition of Membership (15)

Age of members remained the same (4)
Registration of older kids was low (3)
Registration of young kids remained high (3)
Younger members left (2)
Membership is aging (1)
Merged age groups (1)
Retired members stayed (1)

Gender Composition of Membership (9)

Gender of members remained the same (7)
Girls play on boys teams (1)
Lots of boys in groups (1)

New Group / Clubs (5)

New club opened and membership increased (3)
Group did not exist prior to mill closures (1)
Group exists because of closures (1)

Membership Costs (2)

Costs kept low to retain members (1)
Created payment plan for membership (1)

Closure of Groups / Clubs (1)

Loss of community groups (1)

Instability (1)

Loss of members meant groups almost shutdown (1)

Other (3)

Opened up membership for anyone who wanted to join (2)
Group is very popular (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A4: How did LDLC impact community participation / engagement?

Attendance (7)

Drop in attendance (2)
Decline in children attending / entering programs (1)
People stopped showing up (1)
Single parents must limit children's activities (1)
Small numbers to construct teams (1)
Some commuters did not want to get involved due to time commitments (1)

Changing Capacity (6)

Commitment from volunteers is growing (1)
Less club money led to less participation by club volunteers at community events (1)
Limited commitment from volunteers (1)
Parents drive the clubs (1)
Some volunteers were trained in other work environments while commuting (1)

Changing Capacity Cont'd

Volunteer participation changed due to aging volunteers' capabilities (1)

Change in Household Roles (2)

Mothers assumed more responsibility to maintain kids' participation in groups (1)
Wives stepped in to take on roles held by spouse (1)

Distance Affected Participation (1)

Parents do not want to drive to out-of-town tournaments (1)

Other (1)

No noticeable change (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A5a: How did LDLC impact the recruitment / retention of volunteers?

Loss of Human Resources (26)

Volunteer numbers are down (10)
Lost coach/instructors to out of town work (4)
Some volunteers left town for work (3)
Lost staff (2)
Lost volunteers with seniority and experience (2)
Fewer office staff (1)
Lack of full-time staff (1)
Reliant upon small number of volunteers (1)
Short of staff on the weekend (1)
Volunteers with trades skills left town (1)

Recruitment of Volunteers (22)

Difficult to attract / retain new volunteers (11)
Same core group of volunteers (6)
Difficult to find instructors for classes (1)
Difficult to find qualified coaches in town (1)
Difficult to get coaches due to dads commuting (1)
Difficult to recruit young volunteers (1)
Not difficult to recruit volunteers (1)

Time Constraints / Allowances (15)

Easier to recruit older volunteers with fewer time commitments (7)
Little time due to work and family commitments (3)
Can't train volunteers due to work commitments (1)
Decline in manpower/time (1)
Mothers split their focus between groups (1)
People had more time to volunteer after closures (1)
People laid off not spending time in town (1)

Expansion of Human Resources (11)

Were able to recruit women (3)
Had to recruit coaches from out of town (1)
Handyman jobs done by volunteers (1)
Hired new people to keep group running (1)
Increased church volunteering (1)
Number of mother coaches increased (1)
People in the community stepped in to help (1)
Target new families in town to volunteer (1)
Volunteers with technology expertise volunteered time and skills (1)

Volunteer Burnout (6)

Volunteer burnout is a big issue (4)
Low volunteer numbers mean stress on existing volunteers (1)
Volunteer core is stretched (1)

Expansion of Roles (4)

Volunteers forced to take on multiple roles (3)
Administrative staff held other jobs (1)

Impacts on Board of Directors (3)

Same people sit on multiple boards (2)
Board members dropped (1)

Impacts on Organization Leadership (3)

Declining leadership pool (1)
Difficult to find volunteers for executive positions (1)
Left with a skeleton council (1)

Training (3)

Group covers cost of volunteer training (1)
Group waits to ensure that volunteer is committed before allocating training funds (1)
Training structured to accommodate shift workers (1)

Impacts of Small Population Base (2)

Small volunteer pool in the community (2)

Expansion of Supports for Volunteers / Staff (1)

Babysitting service provided during meetings (1)

High Turnover of Volunteers (1)

Constantly training volunteers (1)

Other (1)

Do not use volunteers (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A5b: Recruitment strategies

Technology (11)

Recruitment through radio (8)
Recruitment through websites (3)

Personal Communication (9)

Recruitment through word of mouth (7)
Recruitment through asking friends (1)
Recruitment through phone calls (1)

Print Material (9)

Recruitment through the newspaper (6)
Recruitment through school newsletter (2)
Recruitment through welcome package (1)

Community Events (7)

Recruitment through leisure fair (2)
Recruitment through the trade fair (2)
Recruitment through church announcement (1)
Recruitment through open houses (1)
Recruitment through training/unions (1)

Recruitment Style (5)

Recruitment strategy has not changed (2)
Aggressive in recruiting (1)
Group has not been as proactive as they would have liked in recruiting (1)
Interview process to recruit volunteers (1)

Other (1)

Recruitment through notice boards (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A6: How did LDLC impact donations / in-kind support for community groups?

Decline in Donations (17)

Local businesses become tapped out due to the increased need from groups (5)
Decline in monetary donations (4)
Decline in fundraising (3)
Lost support provided by mills (3)
Difficult to secure grants (1)
Fewer community events held to support fundraising initiatives (1)

Government Support (14)

Job opportunities program helped (3)
Received federal funding (2)
Received regional district funding (2)
Smaller tax base due to mill closures meant less money for community groups (2)
Groups applied for grants (1)
Limited tax base to support groups (1)
Received grant for technical upgrades (1)
Received municipal government funding (1)
Support from BC Hydro (1)

Increased Donations Outside the Community (10)

Support from businesses in other towns (4)
Support from other clubs around the province (2)
Donations from other towns (1)
Start up funds provided by Prince George group (1)
Support gained from Hockeyville (1)
Training opportunities provided in other places (1)

Increased Local Donations (9)

Community organizations/groups donated (4)
Community donations (2)
Community participated in fundraising (1)
Increase in book donations as people moved (1)
Support from community businesses (1)

Equipment / Infrastructure (8)

Decline in equipment donations (1)
Equipment donations received by closed mills (1)
Garden beds built (1)
Gazebo built (1)
Halls were painted (1)
Shared equipment (1)
Smoke house building built (1)
Work on trails around town (1)

Decline in Revenue (4)

Advertising revenue declined (1)
Loss of member registration meant loss of club money (1)
Loss of revenue from hall rentals (1)
Music festival stopped which impacted revenues for some groups (1)

Other (2)

Being affiliated with a society has helped (1)
User funded group (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A7: How did LDLC impact the availability of programs and activities?

Hours of Operation (14)

Reduced hours of operation (4)
Volunteers/members on call 24/7 (2)
Maintained hours of operation (1)
Moved weekday activities to weekends (1)
Open on a needs basis (1)
Practices were rescheduled to make time for other user groups (1)
Schedule group activities around volunteers work schedules (1)
Tournaments and practice times were maintained (1)
Training times did not change (1)
Tried to keep hours of operation consistent (1)

Program Restructuring (13)

Cut back programs (3)
Age groups were combined (2)
No events held (2)

Program Restructuring Cont'd

Classes and workshops had to stop due to loss of leaders (1)
Events were scaled back (1)
Fewer weekend activities (1)
Focused on maintaining society status (1)
Programs lost (1)
Projects were scaled back (1)

Program Creation/Growth (4)

Engaged in new projects (1)
Food pantry created (1)
Offered free workshops/seminars to businesses (1)
Programs increased (1)

Other (5)

No change in programs (4)
Able to maintain programs and events (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A8: How did LDLC impact the operations of community programs and activities?

Meeting / Work Times for Groups/Clubs (11)

Meeting times did not change (4)
Frequency of meetings did not change (3)
Working times became more flexible (2)
Meeting times became more flexible (1)
Unemployed people were able to meet more often (1)

Financial Management (8)

Lowered program rates (2)
Eliminated fee for program (1)
Increase in government grants available (1)
Lowered costs to attend community events (1)
Operational budget reduced (1)
Scaled down pursuit of community donations (1)
Tried to keep fees low (1)

Operational/Equipment Costs (7)

Building maintenance was difficult (1)
Equipment losing its shelf life (1)
Equipment not being replaced (1)
Lack of money for new equipment (1)
May sell building due to operating /maintenance costs (1)
Operational costs diminished quite a bit (1)
Registration / clothing costs for sports (1)

Collaboration (3)

Clubs are sharing expertise (1)
Groups are pulling together to share resources (1)
Sharing human resources (1)

Changes in Demand for Services (2)

Call volume decreased (1)
Lots of emergency calls (1)

Declining Quality of Operations (1)

Due to workloads at clubs some jobs not done (1)

Group Mergers (1)

Trying to combine groups for more efficient work (1)

Impacts on Incentives (1)

No promotions (1)

Other (3)

Activities changed due to new regulations (1)
Some groups closed (1)
Staff competition for more work hours due to spouse losing mill job (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A9: How do you think that these impacts have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

Increased Sense of Community (16)

- Pulled the community closer together (6)
- Hockeyville had a positive impact on community (5)
- Gained mechanisms / infrastructure to bring community groups together (1)
- Big community events were well attended (1)
- Enhanced the sense of church community (1)
- Groups are now starting to work together (1)
- People try to help each other (1)

Decreased Sense of Community (10)

- Difficult for newcomers to settle into the community (2)
- Loss of people engaged in the community (2)
- Harder to attract people to the community without basic community groups (1)
- Increase in unemployed people in the community (1)
- Limited job security affected volunteer's willingness to participate (1)
- People are involved in many groups, so losing members affects the whole community (1)
- Smaller groups saw less socialization (1)
- Volunteers frustrated if their contributions not appreciated (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A10: How has LDLC impacted the types of activities / time spent with family in the community?

Community Participation (13)

Less community participation (3)
Increased community participation by families (2)
Spouse of commuter wants to go out (2)
Commuters do not want to travel anywhere when they come home (1)
Fewer dads available to volunteer to support children's activities (1)
Parents could not get children to some practices/tournaments (1)
Parents could not stay and watch children perform (1)
Women brought children with them when volunteering (1)
Women volunteered as an outlet (1)

Impacts on Household Responsibilities (11)

Commuter must attend to household repairs when home (2)
Female had to shoulder more responsibility for childcare (2)
No break for remaining spouse when commuter returned home (2)
Female had to shoulder more responsibility for household duties (1)
Limited help available for household maintenance (1)
Minimal repairs done (1)
Mothers became disciplinary parent (1)
Tough on households where both spouses work (1)

Impacts on Spousal Relationships (7)

Family breakup (2)
Limited time spent with commuter (2)
Emotional impacts of being away from spouse (1)
Groups provided counseling support for people with spouses commuting (1)
Hard on relationships (1)

Time for Family Activities (4)

Loss of time with family due to traveling to/from work (2)
Family activities were planned around commuter's schedule (1)
Family activities were planned around when mothers had time (1)

Housing (3)

Lost house (2)
Housing prices dropped (1)

Involvement with Children (2)

Children were impacted by their dads being away (1)
Parents wanted to get involved more with their children (1)

Other (3)

Depends upon individual families (1)
Families relocated due to stress of commuting (1)
Unsure (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A11: How has LDLC impacted the types of activities / time spent with friends / neighbors in the community?

Limited Time to Spend with Friends (9)

Priority on spending time with family rather than friends/neighbors (3)
LDLC impacted time spent with friends and neighbors (2)
Difficult to find a balance between spending time with family and friends (1)
Impacted the ability to have social circles (1)
Lost connections with families in town (1)
Social life suffered (1)

Engagement with Friends / Neighbours (4)

Commuters catch up with friends when home (1)
Friends and neighbors help each other with maintenance tasks (1)
Get-togethers of spouses remaining in town (1)
Women would volunteer to engage with others (1)

Support for Social Interaction (4)

Community Awareness Committee met to identify ways to keep people busy (1)
Community did a good job on providing opportunities for people (1)
Increased support for spouses in the community (1)
Less support for social evenings (1)

Financial Impacts (2)

Commuters would drive together to share costs and duties (1)
Mill worker families could not afford to go out for dinner (1)

Commuter Fatigue (1)

Commuters want to stay at home vs. going out (1)

Infrastructure Impacts on Spending Time with Friends/Neighbours (1)

Restaurants closures limited places to socialize (1)

New Friendships in Other Communities (1)

Commuters make friends with others at work rather than through Mackenzie (1)

Other (3)

Little change in time/activities spent with family and neighbors (2)
Does not spend time socializing (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A12: How do you think these impacts have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

Enhanced Sense of Community (17)

People have pulled closer together (6)
People kept their spirits up (3)
Sense of community amongst those who stayed (2)
Winter games gave people a focus (2)
Broader awareness of groups working for people's benefit (1)
Government workers able to maintain their own support circles (1)
Music festival gave people a focus (1)
People kept the community going (1)

Decline in Sense of Community (8)

Mill closures impacted community morale (2)
Community is divided into different groups (1)
Few supports available for former mill workers (1)
Parents did not have time to do fun activities (1)
Resentment towards people who would not bring their families to Mackenzie (1)
Smaller attendance at community events (1)
Some people had to sell recreational accessories (1)

Other (2)

Not sure (1)
Took a long time for people to accept permanent job losses (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A13: How has LDLC impacted how you shop locally?

Expanded Support for Businesses (11)

Prefer to shop locally (4)
Tries to shop more locally since closures (3)
Business community did better than expected (1)
Businesses rallied to get people to shop locally (1)
Dry cleaners have contracts with mines and are doing well (1)
Lots of business for liquor stores (1)

Limited Quality Goods (10)

Lack of variety leads to out-of-town shopping (4)
Product quality is not as good in Mackenzie (3)
Only necessities purchased in town (2)
Limited availability of goods (1)

Financial Barriers to Shopping (8)

People lacked money to shop out-of-town (5)
People survived on necessities (2)
People shop more day-to-day due to financial restraints (1)

Loss of Support for Businesses (7)

Businesses suffered when population declined (6)
Some businesses lost their client base when mills closed (1)

Costs of Goods (3)

Product prices are high (2)
Prices are similar to outside prices (1)

Business Operational Costs (1)

Some businesses shut off lights/reduce heat to save power and costs (1)

Lack of Incentives (1)

Since closures businesses find it difficult to give discounts (1)

Limited Business Capacity (1)

Local businesses have little experience with advertising and marketing (1)

No Change (2)

Business community was not affected (2)

Other (4)

Shopping patterns remained the same (3)
Businesses and community groups are experiencing similar problems (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A14: How has LDLC impacted how you shop outside of the community?

Access to Goods and Services (10)

It is a challenge to buy some items in Mackenzie (6)
Local stores closed (2)
More variety with out-of-town shopping (1)
People shop out-of-town for clothing (1)

Proximity / Convenience (8)

People shop out-of-town as they pass through larger centres (3)
Families will pick up supplies when out-of-town (2)
Spouses shop out-of-town as they visit workers (2)
People shop out-of-town during medical visits (1)

Costs of Goods and Services (6)

People shop out-of-town for better prices (4)
It is expensive for Mackenzie stores to bring some items in (1)
People weigh gas costs with savings from shopping out-of-town (1)

Frequency of Out-of-Town Shopping (5)

Increase in people shopping out-of-town (3)
Decreased frequency in out-of-town shopping (2)

Capacity to Shop Out-of-Town (3)

Some people could afford to shop out-of-town (2)
Some people have always shopped out-of-town (1)

Frequency of Local Shopping (3)

People had less money to shop out-of-town (2)
A lot of people are actively trying to keep their shopping local (1)

Other (4)

No change in shopping patterns (3)
People travel to major centers as an excuse to get out of Mackenzie (1)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Table A15: How do you think these changes have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

Contributions to Sense of Community (2)

Run into Mackenzie residents while shopping in larger centres (1)

Hart Highway Tim Horton's in Prince George known as the Mackenzie Tim Horton's (1)

No Impacts on Sense of Community (2)

Sense of community not impacted (1)

Some people have not been out of town for 5 years (1)

Negative Impacts on Sense of Community (1)

Animosity between local vs. out-of-town shoppers (1)

Other (2)

Not sure (2)

Source: Mackenzie Community Groups Interviews 2012.

Appendix B: Consent Form

Hollowing Out of Community: Impacts of extended out-of-town work commuting
Interview Consent Form

Purpose – A key change in Canada’s northern resource towns has been the growth of long distance labour commuting (LDLC). Mackenzie was built in the late 1960s to house the workforce for a new regional forest industry. A significant economic downturn beginning in 2008 meant that many workers had to engage in LDLC. This project will examine the experiences and impacts of LDLC on community engagement and overall sense of community.

How Respondents Were Chosen - The interview participants were selected from organization lists and from local suggestions of people with an interest in, or experience with, long distance labour commuting. Interview participants were selected for their potential to provide information that can help to better understand the impacts of LDLC on community life. The interview should take about 45 minutes to complete.

Anonymity And Confidentiality - The names of participants will not be used in any reporting, nor will any information which may be used to identify individuals. All information shared in this interview will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked research room at UNBC and will be accessible only to the research team. The information will be kept until the final project report is complete. After which time, shredding and file erasure will destroy all information related to the interview.

Potential Risks and Benefits - This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. The project team does not consider there to be any risks to participation. We hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into issues relevant to long distance labour commuting and its impacts.

Voluntary Participation - Your participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may chose not to participate. If you participate, you may choose not to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you have the right to end your participation in the interview at any time and have all the information you provided withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

Research Results - In case of any questions that may arise from this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. The final project report will be distributed to all participants.

Complaints - Any complaints about this project should be directed to the Office of Research, UNBC (250) 960-6735, or email: reb@unbc.ca

I have read the above description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

(Name -please print)

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix C: Interview Guide

**Hollowing Out the Community:
Community impacts of extended out-of-town work commuting
INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Participant name: _____

Contact information: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____

Interview Time: Start _____ Finish _____

TOPIC AREAS:

- Opening Questions
- Experience
- Community Organizations / Clubs
- Family, Friends, and Neighbours
- Economic and Community Development
- Concluding Question

A. Opening Questions

What is your name and how long have you lived in Mackenzie?

What community groups do you belong to? What role do you have with these groups?

B. Experience

Prior to the mill closures in Mackenzie, can you describe what community life was like in Mackenzie?

Following the mill closures in Mackenzie, can you describe what community life was like in Mackenzie?

C. Community Organizations / Clubs

How did LDLC impact the membership of community organizations?

Prompt: total numbers, gender, age.

How did LDLC impact community participation / engagement?

Prompt: frequency, types of engagement, timing of engagement.

How did LDLC impact the recruitment / retention of volunteers / members?

How did LDLC impact donations / in-kind support for community programs and activities?

Prompt: time, repairs, materials, equipment, etc.

How has LDLC impacted the availability of programs and activities?

Prompt: hours of operation, frequency, etc.

How has LDLC impacted the operations of community programs and activities?

Prompt: skills / experience accessible to community groups, leadership, etc.

Are there any other impacts that LDLC has had on the capacity of community groups?

How do you think these impacts have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

D. Family, Friends, and Neighbours

How has LDLC impacted the types of activities / time that is spent with family in the community?

Prompt: maintenance / repairs, children activities, adult activities, etc.

How has LDLC impacted or changed the types of activities / time is spent with friends / neighbours in the community?

Prompt: visiting, going for coffee / dinner, attending events / activities, etc.

How do you think these impacts have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

E. Economic and Community Development

How has LDLC impacted how you shop locally?

Prompt: frequency, types of items, etc.

How has LDLC impacted how you shop outside of the community?

Prompt: frequency, types of items, etc.

How do you think these changes have affected the overall sense of community in Mackenzie?

F. Concluding Question

From the experiences you have had in the community, do you have anything else that has not been touched on here that you would like to comment on?