



# Energizing our Future:

*The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John*

The funding for this study was provided by the  
City of Fort St. John.

Authored by:  
Marleen Morris, Co-Director  
Greg Halseth, Co-Director

Community Development Institute  
University of Northern British Columbia  
Prince George, BC

Published: June 2020



## Acknowledgements

The partnership between the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and the City of Fort St. John was born out of a conversation between Mayor Lori Ackerman and Marleen Morris. This conversation grew to include Dianne Hunter, City Manager and Moira Green, General Manager, Community Services. The four of us together forged a partnership that was guided by the goals and outcomes we hoped to achieve: community understanding of and engagement in the creation and implementation of a social and economic development framework for the City of Fort St. John.

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** recognizes that social and economic development are intimately intertwined and mutually supportive. Furthermore, it recognizes that the whole community must work together to enhance quality of life and realize economic potential. This is not a mandated plan, like an Official Community Plan, that the City must take sole responsibility for implementing; it is a community plan that belongs to passionate and committed citizens and organizations that want to make a difference by working together to build social capacity and economic growth and diversification. It sets the stage for all facets of the community to embark on a journey together; to seize opportunities, address challenges, and navigate change.

In submitting this framework, we would like to recognize and thank Mayor Lori Ackerman, Dianne Hunter, and Moira Green for their visionary leadership, support, and practical assistance throughout the project. We would also like to thank the other members of the Fort St. John City Council and senior staff for their support and input. In particular, we would like to mention Jennifer Decker, Manager of Economic Development, who was a gifted liaison and a wonderful help to us.

Throughout this project, the team at the CDI engaged with, and received assistance from, many community members. We wish to thank all of the residents, service providers, voluntary groups, business and industry leaders, and public sector leaders and staff who took the time to participate in this work. In particular, we would like to thank the members of The Forge Advisory Committee who provided invaluable support and feedback throughout the process.

We also wish to express our appreciation to our CDI staff and students: Renee LaBoucane, Jennifer Moore, Michael Lait, Leanna Butters, Sally Western, Asuncion Sta. Maria, Carlos Yu, Molly Mabbett, Aliya Jackson, and Julia Good for their work at various points in the project.

It is our hope that **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** will provide guidance and inspiration to committed citizens and organizations for years to come.



## Availability

Copies of this report have been provided to the City of Fort St. John and to all participants who provided input into this process. The final reports are further posted on the website of the Community Development Institute at UNBC:

[www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects](http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects)

## Contact Information

For further information about this topic and the project, please contact Marleen Morris or Greg Halseth, Co-Directors of the Community Development Institute.

Community Development Institute  
University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way  
Prince George, BC  
V2N 4Z9

250-960-5952

[www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute](http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute)

# Contents

- Acknowledgements ..... i
- Availability ..... ii
- Contact Information ..... ii
- Introduction ..... 2
- Organization of Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John ..... 3
- The Process for Developing Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John ..... 4
- What is a Social and Economic Development Framework? ..... 6
- The Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework Model ..... 8
- Introduction to the Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Action Areas ..... 11
- Action Area: Inclusion and Belonging ..... 12
- Action Area: Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness ..... 14
- Action Area: Services for Vulnerable People and Families ..... 16
- Action Area: Public and Government Services ..... 18
- Action Area: Retail and Services ..... 20
- Action Area: Housing ..... 22
- Action Area: Workforce ..... 24
- Action Area: Oil and Gas ..... 26
- Action Area: Agriculture ..... 28
- Action Area: Forestry ..... 30
- Action Area: Tourism ..... 32
- Action Area: Arts and Culture ..... 34
- Action Area: Sports and Recreation ..... 36
- Action Area: Infrastructure ..... 38
- Action Area: Transportation ..... 40
- Cross-Cutting Actions ..... 42
- Summary of Action Areas ..... 44
- Decision-Making for Social and Economic Proposals and Options in Fort St. John ..... 47



## Introduction

Fort St. John is a thriving community in the Peace Region in northeast British Columbia. The community takes pride in its rich history, its current success, and its future potential. Located just north of the Peace River, Fort St. John is situated within Treaty 8 territory, which encompasses Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Blueberry River First Nation, Saulneau First Nation, West Moberly First Nation, and Fort Nelson First Nation.

The City of Fort St. John is a forward-looking local government. Over the past nine years, the City has completed a number of strategies and plans and developed policies and programs that are preparing the community for the future. The vision for Fort St. John is inspiring and aspirational:

**Fort St. John is a flourishing community, where nature lives, businesses prosper, families are active and diversity is celebrated.**

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** is supportive of and aligned with the vision, strategies, and plans that have been developed. It is intended to further the City's commitment to preparing the community for the future. It is also intended to engage and be taken up across the community; by passionate and involved citizens and organizations that want to make a contribution to enhancing

quality of life and economic growth in Fort St. John.

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** recognizes that social and economic development are intimately interconnected; that there are synergies and linkages between social and economic development that require a comprehensive approach to planning and decision-making. It is for that reason that the social and economic frameworks have been combined into one. The purpose of the framework is to:

**Provide guidance, focus, and the tools to build the strong foundation that will support the future social and economic development of Fort St. John.**

**Energizing Our Future: Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** recognizes that it will take the whole community working together to realize its vision and future potential. It sets the stage for all facets of the community to embark on a journey together; to seize opportunities, address challenges, and navigate change. The framework is a tool to help guide the City of Fort St. John, and the community as a whole, in enhancing quality of life and strengthening the economy in Fort St. John, both now and into the future.



## Organization of Energizing our Future:

### *The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John*

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** is organized into seven sections:

1. **Process for Developing Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John:** This section provides a description of the process undertaken to develop the Social and Economic Development Framework, including the research, community engagement and input activities, and the community engagement and mobilization initiatives undertaken by the CDI.
2. **What is a Social and Economic Development Framework?** This section provides a definition for a social and economic development framework and describes its purpose.
3. **The Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework Model:** In this section, we present and describe the model developed for the Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework.
4. **Social and Economic Development Action Areas:** This section describes each of the 15 social and economic action areas. For each area, we have included a vision, background, areas for ongoing attention, and areas for action.
5. **Cross-Cutting Actions:** In this section, we highlight actions that cut across multiple action areas. Because of this, these actions have the potential to be highly effective.
6. **Summary of Action Areas:** This section provides a summary of the action areas and proposes, for each one, a time frame (short-term, medium-term, long-term, ongoing) and role for the City of Fort St. John (implementation, initiation, ongoing support, advocacy).
7. **Decision-Making Matrix:** A decision-making matrix has been developed and included as a tool to assess emergent opportunities against the Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John. This matrix can be used as a working document for staff and as a report for City Council.



## The Process for Developing Energizing our Future:

### *The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John*

Creating a robust Social and Economic Development Framework requires collecting information, engaging the community, and mobilizing that information and engagement. This work is being carried out by the CDI through a partnership with the City of Fort St. John. The purpose of the partnership is to engage with the community to understand Fort St. John today, to develop strategies and plans to enhance quality of life and strengthen and diversify the economy for the future, and to engage individuals and organizations to mobilize and take action on those strategies and plans.

In 2017, the CDI opened its Fort St. John office at the City's Passive House. The Passive House is home to two CDI initiatives: The Forge and the Leaders Lab.

#### The Forge

The Forge is a catalytic space for community engagement and grassroots community development. At The Forge, passionate and involved citizens can make a difference by participating in the creation of plans and activities for building social capacity and economic growth and diversification. The Forge is a hub for research; exchanging ideas, sparking innovation, and igniting change. The Forge has hosted over 700 people in dialogue, research, and planning sessions and meetings.

#### Leaders Lab

The Leaders Lab facilitates opportunities for leadership development through knowledge-sharing, network-building, and collaborative action. The Leaders Lab works with people who are interested in transforming their community, with the goal of leading Fort St. John towards a strong, prosperous, and sustainable future. The Leaders Lab offers tools and guidance through sharing community research, speakers, and workshops.

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** builds upon two years of research, community engagement, and community mobilization by the CDI.

- The purpose of our research was to create a comprehensive community profile that the City of Fort St. John would monitor over time to track changes, monitor progress, and use as a baseline and reference point for future planning and initiatives.
- The purpose of the community input sessions was to create common understanding about the community and involve individuals, as well as organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, in developing strategies that would enhance quality of life and strengthen and diversify the economy.
- The purpose of our community mobilization activities is to work with the community to begin pursuing the opportunities and implementing the strategies that have been identified.



## Research

The CDI's research, conducted over an 18-month period, produced 31 reports, engaged over 1,600 people, and involved more than 75 organizations.

- **Fort St. John Community Profile:** a demographic and socio-economic profile of the community using data from Statistics Canada, BC Stats, and other federal and provincial agencies. To be updated every five years.
- **Your Voice: Fort St. John Community Survey:** a community survey that explores perceptions, attitudes, and values on the following topics: economy, education, services, community engagement, environment, facilities and services, and community change. A total of 1,020 surveys were completed. To be updated every three years.
- **Fort St. John Program and Service Inventory:** a list of available programs and services in Fort St. John. A total of 72 organizations participated, identifying more than 250 programs and services. To be updated every two years.
- **Fort St. John Community Indicators Program:** a monitoring tool that tracks topics and data linked to the vision, principles, and strategic goals of the City of Fort St. John. In addition to assisting the City of Fort St. John with planning and decision-making, the Community Indicators Program could also assist in the future development of key performance indicators. To be updated every two years.
- **Fort St. John Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan:** a tool to assist the City of Fort St. John in planning and implementing age-friendly strategies and programs. The project includes the development of the senior's profile, key informant interviews, a senior's survey with 118 surveys completed, and a community walkthrough.
- **Review of Reports, Plans, and Evaluations:** this encompasses a review of reports, plans, and evaluations, specific to Fort St. John and the Peace region. Reviews were completed for 18 topic areas: eight with a social focus and ten with an economic focus.

## Community Input

The CDI organized and facilitated 55 dialogue sessions to gather community input for the Social and Economic Development Framework, directly engaging more than 430 people.

- **Stakeholder Focus Groups:** 39 focus groups and interviews were conducted, 20 with a social focus and 19 with an economic focus. A total of 181 individuals participated in these sessions representing 29 economic, social, and demographic sectors.
- **Your Voice Community Input Sessions:** 11 Your Voice sessions were facilitated; 6 with a social focus, 2 with an economic focus, and 3 focused on issues for First Nations. A total of 106 people participated.
- **Brown Bag Lunch Sessions:** 4 Brown Bag Lunch Sessions were conducted. A total of 32 people participated.
- **Energizing Our Future Open House:** a 4-day open house held at the North Peace Cultural Centre to present the findings from the community engagement. A total of 112 people participated and 340 comments were received.

## Community Mobilization

Since 2017, the has CDI organized, convened, and facilitated meetings and events to share knowledge and information and mobilize community action.

- **CDI Leaders Lab Speakers Series:** The CDI organized and hosted 8 Speakers Series events, engaging over 270 participants.
- **CDI Dialogue Sessions:** The CDI has hosted two dialogue series. The first, *On the Move*, focused on issues related to labour mobility. It involved 7 academic researchers from across Canada and 65 participants from Fort St. John in 4 separate sessions. The second, *A Dialogue with BC Senators*, involved Senator Yuen Pau Woo and focused on dialogue about issues of concern in northeast BC. It involved 45 participants in 3 separate sessions.
- **Fort St. John Child and Youth Cohort:** The CDI initiated a partnership with the Vancouver Foundation to provide a series of systems change workshops for organizations and individuals involved with children and youth in the community. The cohort has engaged over 30 community leaders.

Each of these reports and events has contributed to the development and implementation of **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John**.

# What is a Social and Economic Development Framework?

A framework is a tool for organizing complex information and illustrating connections and relationships in a clear, concise, and easy to follow manner. As such, a framework helps us focus on the most critical and important issues.

For local government, a framework can act as a guide for planning and decision-making, allowing them to develop policies and programs that align with their vision and strategic directions. Frameworks also support consistent, effective results. Beyond local government, frameworks can be used by other public, non-profit, and private organizations in the community to align their decisions and plans with broader community directions.

Social development frameworks outline a vision for social potential, reflecting goals and aspirations for quality of life in a community or region. They act as a reference point for the creation, delivery, and assessment of social programs and activities and make explicit the vision to which social programs and initiatives should align. As such, they act as consistent guidelines to which decision-makers can refer when policies and/or programs are being developed that pertain to issues like social service support or community cohesion.

Economic development frameworks outline a vision for economic potential, with the goal of supporting economic growth for a community or region. Like social development frameworks, economic development frameworks are tools that decision-makers can use to create, deliver, and assess investment and development opportunities. They are meant to be clear, consistent guidelines that align with a vision for economic success.

The CDI's work and experience in Fort St. John and other communities has led to the understanding that social and economic development are intimately interconnected. The

interconnections are often complex and nuanced. Thus, for Fort St. John, the social and economic frameworks have been combined in to one, **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Framework for Fort St. John**, so that consideration of the linkages and synergies will be considered in the development of social and economic policies and programs.

The purpose of **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** is:

**To provide guidance, focus, and the tools to build the strong foundation that will support the future social and economic development of Fort St. John.**

With this framework, decision-makers and planners will engage in a more comprehensive approach to development. For example, a new industrial investment in Fort St. John will trigger questions about the impact on housing, transportation, public services, retail and services, workforce development, and inclusion and belonging. An application to construct a new senior's residence will trigger questions about impact on and access to retail and services, transportation, infrastructure, sports and recreation, arts and culture, services for wellness and wellbeing, services for vulnerable people, inclusion and belonging, and opportunities for workforce development. The holistic and comprehensive approach outlined in **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Framework for Fort St. John** will allow the City of Fort St. John to identify opportunities to maximize benefit and reduce risks and costs associated with investments and decisions. The framework will serve as a tool to guide decisions, support consistent and effective results, and monitor progress.

**Housing**

**Workforce**

**Inclusion and Belonging**

**Individual and Family**

**Wellbeing and Wellness**

**Vulnerable People and Families**

**Arts and Culture**

**Sports and Recreation**



**Infrastructure**

**Oil and Gas**

**Forestry**

**Agriculture**

**Retail and Services**

**Tourism**

**Transportation**

**Public and  
Government Services**

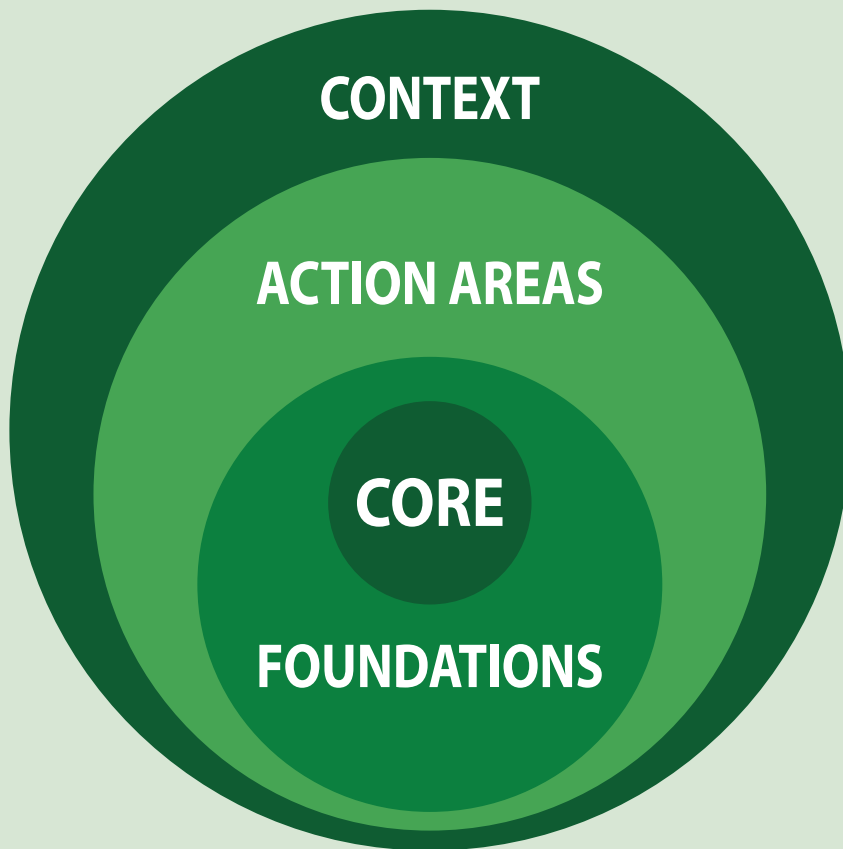


# The Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework Model

A model, like a framework, is a way of presenting complex information and illustrating connections and relationships. A model helps to focus on the interactions between various components of a system in order to provide understanding and clarity about how things work together.

The Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Model consists of four components:

- Context
- Foundations
- Core
- Action Areas



## Context

The Vision for the City of Fort St. John and the Fort St. John Strategic Plan Goals set the context for the development of the Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework Model. As a result, there is a strong alignment between the vision, strategic goals, and the social and economic development framework.

## Vision

Fort St. John is a flourishing community, where nature lives, businesses prosper, families are active and diversity is celebrated.

## Strategic Goals

1. Enhance community economic development to provide opportunities and sustainability for Fort St. John.
2. Demonstrate leadership in environmental responsibility through sustainable and effective practices for municipal operations.
3. Build and manage public assets and human resources that support the current and future needs of the community.
4. Initiate and foster partnerships that will benefit Fort St. John. Advocate to decision makers on issues that impact the community.
5. Actualize downtown Fort St. John as a social, vibrant, livable hub as articulated in the Fort St. John Downtown Action Plan.

## Core

At the centre of the model are the individuals, the organizations, and the community of Fort St. John. Social and economic development can only be realized when the community works together. Lasting change can only be realized when all three levels are engaged. As illustrated earlier, social and economic development are intimately intertwined. This is also true at the individual, organizational, and community levels.

## Foundations

Four community foundations support and facilitate social and economic development. Building, strengthening, and maintaining these foundations over time is critical to success in realizing social and economic development. These are:

## Capacity

The ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to:

- Anticipate change;
- Understand change; and
- Organize, develop, and mobilize ideas, assets, and resources in response.

## Connections

The ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to:

- Communicate;
- Create shared understanding;
- Coordinate; and
- Collaborate.

## Adaptability and Flexibility

The ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to:

- Implement plans;
- Monitor progress;
- Evaluate performance and outcomes;
- Adjust plans; and
- Respond to change.

## Resilience

The ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to deal with and recover from challenges and crisis, to:

- Engage in continuous learning;
- Build strength and depth of networks;
- Build trust and collaboration; and
- Engage in innovative and transformative thinking.

## Action Areas

Fifteen social and economic action areas have been identified through research, community consultation, and community mobilization. These areas are intimately intertwined; action in one will have an impact on others. The nature of this impact, positive or negative, should be considered in developing and implementing plans, programs, and initiatives.

Each of the action areas plays an important role in the social and economic development of Fort St. John. Now, and over time, it will be critical to support and nurture each of areas, because together they determine the quality of life and economic potential of the community.

The action areas in **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework** should be formally reviewed annually, to monitor progress, identify changes that are impacting the community, adjust existing action plans, and consider, develop, and implement new opportunities. These reviews should be guided by the updated information in the reports listed in the Research section, including the **Fort St. John Community Profile**, **Your Voice: Fort St. John Community Survey**, **Fort St. John Community Indicators Program**, and the **Fort St. John Program and Service Inventory**.



## How the Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Framework Model Works

Two examples illustrate how the components of this model will work together to realize social and economic development.

- If we begin with the individuals, organizations, and the community as a whole and enhance their abilities in terms of capacity, connections, adaptability and flexibility, and resilience they will be better able to take on the opportunities and challenges outlined in the action areas.
- If we begin with the action areas, we will find we are building capacity, connections, adaptability and flexibility, and resilience among the people who have come together work on the opportunities and challenges outlined.

In both examples, the community will be better able to anticipate, identify, address, monitor, and evaluate opportunities and challenges related to social and economic development. Importantly, the community will also have developed the networks, trust, and collaborative experience to work together on other social and economic initiatives and issues for the benefit of both current and future residents.

## Moving Forward

**Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** highlights opportunities for leadership and action in Fort St. John for various social, economic, and demographic sectors. It is important to note that the recommendations presented here are for the community as a whole, with some opportunities that will be best addressed by actors and organizations outside of the City of Fort St. John. Moving forward, the CDI will continue to work with the Fort St. John community to move recommendations into action, with the goal of supporting community transformation and renewal.

As a final note, we must recognize that change is constant. As a result, new opportunities may emerge and some existing opportunities may fall by the wayside. Progress will be made, but in some cases it is likely that plans will need to be reviewed and revised. The people and organizations of Fort St. John must always be alert and responsive to change. **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John** is a guide by which decisions can be made, but they are, in the end, just tools. It is the resiliency of the community and the people living within it that, once mobilized, can make all the difference.



# Introduction to the Fort St. John Social and Economic Development Action Areas

## Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John identifies fifteen social and economic action areas.

The areas are:

1. Inclusion and Belonging
2. Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing
3. Services for Vulnerable People and Families
4. Public and Government Services
5. Retail and Services
6. Housing
7. Workforce
8. Oil and Gas
9. Agriculture
10. Forestry
11. Tourism
12. Arts and Culture
13. Sports and Recreation
14. Infrastructure
15. Transportation

These action areas cannot be successfully undertaken by any one organization working alone. They require people and organizations coming together. They also require leadership; in some instances, from the City of Fort St. John, but in many others, leadership from other organizations and sectors in the community would be more appropriate.

One of the most challenging aspects of social and economic development over time is that the community must be able to adapt to change over time without losing focus or direction. For that reason, **Energizing Our Future: The Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John**

has been developed to provide focus and direction while being flexible and adaptable in order to respond to change and opportunity. The structure of each action area allows for change while providing steady guidance.

Each action area defines a vision, areas for ongoing attention, and areas for action. Together, these provide long-term focus and direction while allowing for flexibility and adaptability.

### Vision for the Action Area:

Each action area includes a vision. This vision describes what the community aspires to in that area. The vision is an aspirational statement that can apply to individuals, organizations, and the community as a whole. The vision remains constant. In doing so, it provides focus and direction.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention:

The areas for ongoing attention section identifies considerations that should be kept in mind when developing and implementing plans for the action area. They define the priorities that were identified through the research, community engagement, and community mobilization activities.

### Areas for Action:

The areas for action identify specific actions for implementation. These actions emerged through the research, community engagement, and community mobilization activities that the CDI conducted to develop the social and economic development framework. The areas for action are those that are the most adaptable and flexible. Some may need to be adapted in response to changing circumstances or experiences through their implementation. Some may fall by the wayside while others emerge. An annual review of the social and economic development framework will be important in order to reaffirm and adapt, as required, the areas for action.



## Action Area: Inclusion And Belonging

### Vision for Inclusion and Belonging in Fort St. John

A welcoming and inclusive community where residents feel a sense of belonging.

### Background

- Fort St. John is becoming a more diverse community. In 2016, 20% of the population was from outside Canada, compared with 5% in 2006. In 2016, 12% of the population identified as a visible minority, compared to 5% in 2011.
- In 2016, 11% of the population self-identified as Aboriginal, compared to 5% in BC. While the visibility and acknowledgment of Indigenous culture in Fort St. John is stronger than in the past, more could be done to increase knowledge and understanding of the Indigenous culture and history in the region.
- Community belonging was identified as a critical factor in recruitment and retention of staff and employers. Newcomers to Fort St. John, regardless of where they are from, report that it is difficult to connect with social groups or activities. Long working days and shift rotations often make it difficult to meet people.
- Workplaces are becoming more diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, faith, age, and sexual and gender orientation. Creating welcoming workplaces that respect diversity supports staff recruitment and retention.
- Young families that move to Fort St. John often lack support networks in the community. If young parents have no one to talk with, to ask advice of, to share experiences with, to call on for short term child care, or to socialize with, they can become isolated, lonely, and unhappy.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Appreciation and respect for diversity.
- Continued recognition of and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- Fostering connections between individuals and families.
- Connecting people through groups and organizations. Minimizing barriers to social and economic participation.
- Encouraging broad responsibility for inclusion.

### Areas for Action

#### Establish a roundtable on inclusion and belonging in Fort St. John

Given the critical importance of inclusion and belonging to quality of life in the community and to recruitment and retention in the workplace, a Roundtable on Inclusion and Belonging should be established. This would be a venue for information sharing, research, dialogue, planning, and action on making Fort St. John more welcoming and inclusive. Participants would include community leaders from neighbouring First Nations communities and the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The Roundtable would have the ability to call on experts and would have support for their work. Initially, the Roundtable would focus on identifying the current and future issues, challenges, and opportunities in this area. From there, a strategy and action plan that addresses multiple aspects of community life, including the workplace, schools, businesses, and community organizations, could be developed and implemented. The Roundtable would provide support and leadership in the implementation of the action plan. The goal of this work would be to create a community that binds people to Fort St. John.



## Conduct research to understand community perceptions and issues related to inclusion and belonging

The **Your Voice: Fort St. John Community Survey** conducted by the UNBC Community Development Institute included questions related to inclusion and belonging. The research plan developed by the City of Fort St. John and the Community Development Institute envisions that this survey will be repeated every two to three years. This would be an opportunity to monitor the trends on these questions.

Additional research into inclusion and belonging should be undertaken to more fully understand this complex issue. Interviews, surveys, and focus groups with new residents and households that have decided to leave Fort St. John could yield valuable insights into the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing inclusion and belonging. The results of this research would be valuable to the Roundtable on Inclusion and Belonging, as well as employers, businesses, and service providers to better meet the needs of the community.

## Develop a welcome program for newcomers to Fort St. John

Orienting new residents to the community can make them feel more welcome, connected, and engaged in community life. A welcome program that is available to all new residents would create a good first impression of Fort St. John. This program could be as simple as a Welcome Package that includes information on the history of Fort St. John, including First Nations history; sports, recreation, arts, and cultural opportunities; retail, service, and professional businesses; public sector services and programs; and other key information. It could also include free passes and discount coupons. A more sophisticated approach would be to recruit a team of Welcome Ambassadors who would meet with all newcomers face-to-face, enquire into their interests and pair them with organizations and groups that match their interests. A Welcome Package could also be part of this.

## Encourage appreciation for diversity in Fort St. John

Given the population diversity in Fort St. John, encouraging appreciation for different cultures and ways of life would contribute to inclusion and belonging. One important opportunity would be to develop a cross-cultural training program that would be available free of charge to businesses, non-profit and voluntary organizations, the public sector, and interested individuals. More festivals and events, for example a traditional dance festival that features performances from Indigenous groups and from local cultural groups would bring people together to celebrate cultural diversity in the community. Acknowledgment by the community of cultural and faith-based celebrations would also help create a welcoming environment. Particular attention should be given to building understanding of and encouraging appreciation for Indigenous culture and traditions.

## Support events that bring neighbourhoods together

Fort St. John supports a number of events that bring the community together, including the High on Ice Winter Festival and the Multicultural Festival. In addition, the City of Fort St. John should consider supporting activities that bring neighbourhoods together. Neighbourhood gatherings would have the advantage of creating connection and bonds between people who live close to one another. Small grants to support neighbourhood or block parties would help people, especially newcomers, meet one another. Not only would this foster a sense of belonging, it would also enhance neighbourhood safety and security.

## Establish a volunteer grandparent program

In order to provide a support network for young families new to Fort St. John, a Volunteer Grandparent program could be established. Volunteer grandparents could provide advice, share experiences, and provide short term child care. This would help young parents who do not have family or friends in the community.



# Action Area: Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness

## Vision for Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness in Fort St. John

A comprehensive range of services that support the wellbeing, wellness, and potential of all individuals and families.

### Background

- Families and individuals in Fort St. John rely on a range of services to support wellbeing and wellness, including health, family support, and social services. Many of these services are targeted at infants, toddlers, and young children in order to ensure that they receive a good start in life. Examples of these services include vaccination programs; infant screening programs; early childhood development programs, such as Success by Six; literacy programs such as story time at the Fort St. John Public Library; and public and private child daycare and after school programs. Many others are targeted at seniors in order to support them as they age. Examples of these include seniors housing, home nursing care, home support, adult day care, Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross (Equipment) Loan Cupboard, and Better at Home. Still others are targeted at adults. Generally speaking, wellbeing and wellness services for adults are there for major events such as childbirth, including pre-natal, birthing, and post-natal care; significant illness and injury, including rehabilitation and occupational therapy; and support for aging parents, including respite and hospice care.
- The pace of population growth in Fort St. John means that most of these services are challenged to keep up with need and demand. Many of these services are provided by non-profit societies. These societies are heavily dependent on community volunteers, at the Board and service delivery level, and have reported concern about volunteer recruitment, retention, and burnout. They are also heavily dependent on grant funding and donations, which makes them vulnerable to revenue insecurity. Other services are provided by the public sector, including Northern Health. Funding for these providers is based on population, which means that funding and staffing increases lag behind need and demand in a rapidly growing community.

## Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Understanding the service needs of individuals, families, and the community.
- Supporting accessibility by individuals and families to needed services and programs.
- Supporting governance capacity and transition.
- Supporting staffing capacity.
- Supporting operational capacity.

## Areas for Action

### Enhance governance capacity for non-profit service providers

Non-profit societies that rely on volunteer board members should have access to programs and support to strengthen governance capacity. Board orientation, board training, and board mentoring would help build a stronger non-profit sector and ensure that boards understand their financial and governance responsibilities and accountabilities. A coordinated approach that would open governance training opportunities to any non-profit in Fort St. John would reduce costs and the administrative burden for any one society. This training could be identified and organized on an informal collaborative basis through an organization such as NP3 or through a more formal arrangement, such as creating a Fort St. John Non-Profit Governance Institute, that would take on this work, on behalf of the non-profit societies in Fort St. John. Funding for this initiative could be provided by the City of Fort St. John, industry, government, or charitable foundations.

## Support volunteer recruitment for non-profit societies

Non-profit organizations and programs rely heavily on volunteers, who provide support in a number of capacities. As is the case for many organizations, there is concern about volunteer burnout, development, training, succession planning, and appreciation. A coordinated approach across the non-profit sector to providing basic support, such as volunteer recruitment, training, recognition, and retention could lighten the load for individual non-profit organizations and ensure that volunteers are matched with a volunteer opportunity that they find rewarding. Basic support could also include, for example, completing criminal record checks and providing training in first aid and dispute resolution.

It should be noted that, with consultation and dialogue, this approach to volunteer recruitment and management could be centralized and used for all volunteer activities in Fort St. John including sports, recreation, arts, culture, and community festivals and events.

## Build awareness and encourage local and regional residents to pursue careers in services for wellness and wellbeing

The population of Fort St. John is growing, and with it the need and demand for services to support wellbeing and wellness, including health, family support, and social services. This means that there are career and job opportunities in these fields. There is an opportunity for service providers in the non-profit and public sector to collaborate to build awareness of the scope and range of careers available, develop job shadowing programs for youth and others; support educational attainment, including funding, study help, and counselling; and develop new entrant and career development mentoring opportunities. This would involve non-profit and public sector employers working with the education sector including School District 60, Northern Lights College, and the University of Northern British Columbia to develop and implement a strategy and action plan.

## Assist organizations to stabilize and increase financial and operational capacity

Organizations that provide services to support wellbeing and wellness are often dependent on grant funding and donations. To receive funding from these sources, they must demonstrate need. Providing statistical and Census data can illustrate broad population need. This information is now available for Fort St. John in the **Fort St. John Community Profile** prepared by the UNBC Community Development Institute. Further need and support for funding can be illustrated through providing an information on the challenges and barriers faced by people trying to access services. Data on wait lists, wait times, service systems gaps, and opportunities for collaboration can help bolster grant and donation applications. Mapping the service system from the user perspective could provide valuable information that can be used by all service providers in funding applications. At a community level, this information would complement the population data available in the **Fort St. John Community Profile**.

Wellbeing and wellness service providers should collaborate on a project that would provide information on the challenges and barriers people experience trying to access services. This 'service map' could be used alongside population data to support the need for funding.

Organizations, especially smaller organizations, often report that they do not have the capacity or expertise to prepare applications for grants or donations and would greatly value assistance in this area. Providing low-cost or free access to experienced grant writers would be of great assistance to these organizations. This would be an area that a funder such as the City of Fort St. John, United Way of Northern BC, or Northern Development Initiative Trust could assist. If established, this is also an initiative that the Fort St. John Community Foundation may wish to undertake.



## Action Area: Services for Vulnerable People and Families

### Vision for Services for Vulnerable People and Families in Fort St. John

A comprehensive and coordinated range of services that support individuals and families experiencing challenges or trauma.

### Background

- In Fort St. John, as in all Canadian communities, there is a need to recognize and understand the full spectrum and pattern of vulnerability. Household factors such as low income, substance abuse, mental illness, education level, and lifestyle all contribute to vulnerability. Also important are economic and social factors associated with resource-based economies, including the impact on people and families of economic upswings and downturns, unemployment, distance from family support networks, and isolation.
- Many of the services provided to vulnerable people and families are delivered by non-profit societies. These societies have indicated they have challenges with staff and volunteer recruitment. Many are also heavily dependent on grant funding and donations, which makes them vulnerable to revenue insecurity.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Understanding the service needs of individuals, families, and the community.
- Supporting accessibility by individuals and families to needed services and programs.
- Supporting governance capacity and transition in service organizations.
- Supporting service organization staffing capacity.
- Supporting service organization operational capacity.

### Areas for Action

#### Build awareness and understanding of vulnerability and who is vulnerable

We recognize that vulnerable people and families include the homeless, the very poor, and those living with mental health and addiction issues, but vulnerability is more pervasive. People and families that appear successful, financially stable, and have steady jobs may also struggle with vulnerability. They may be people whose employment is precarious, seasonal, or part-time. They may be single parents without support, those living with a physically or emotionally abusive spouse, children living in households with abuse and addiction issues, and seniors in abusive or exploitive circumstances.

In Fort St. John, as in every Canadian community, there are vulnerable people and families. This means that there is a need to build broad community awareness and understanding of what vulnerability means and who may be vulnerable. Recognizing the full spectrum of vulnerability and identifying those who are vulnerable are the first steps to addressing vulnerability. The response system, the organizations providing support to vulnerable people and families, must be comprehensive and coordinated.

Building broader community awareness and understanding of vulnerability and who might be vulnerable may be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. Awareness programs for those who may come into contact with vulnerable people: employers, teachers, sports coaches, faith leaders, and human resources personnel, among others, would help them to identify issues. Broad public awareness campaigns would help the general public to recognize issues for themselves and others, and know where to go for help.

## Enhance access to ‘basic needs’ and services for low-income people and families

The **Fort St. John Community Profile**, prepared by the UNBC Community Development Institute, identified that there are families experiencing low incomes. Many of these are headed by single women whose employment may be low-paying, precarious, seasonal, or part-time. With the high cost of living in Fort St. John, many have multiple jobs, but still struggle to provide the most basic needs. Recognizing that service workers play a key role in the local economy, there is an opportunity for businesses and local government to come together to support these families, for example by providing discounts for children’s clothes, school supplies, recreation programming, and public transportation. A model for such a program can be found in Canmore, Alberta.

## Address systemic issues related to vulnerability

Many families experience generational challenges with issues of vulnerability. In addition to addressing immediate needs, programming for vulnerable people and families should focus on the root causes of vulnerability. In many instances, these root causes include challenges with literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, school success, educational levels, and discrimination. Helping families overcome these issues includes a focus on early and middle childhood development, youth engagement, and family stability. There are several organizations in Fort St. John that have the potential to work together to develop programs and services to help these families overcome these systemic barriers.

## Enhance governance capacity for non-profit service providers

Non-profit societies that rely on volunteer board members should have access to programs to strengthen governance capacity. This would help build a stronger non-profit sector and ensure that boards understand their governance responsibilities. A coordinated approach to governance training would reduce costs and the administrative burden for individual societies. This training could be organized on an informal collaborative basis through an organization such as NP3 or through a more formal arrangement, such as creating a Fort St. John Non-Profit Governance Institute.

## Support volunteer recruitment for non-profit societies

Non-profit organizations serving vulnerable populations rely heavily on volunteers, and many have expressed concern about volunteer burnout, training, succession planning, and appreciation. A coordinated approach across the non-profit sector to providing basic support, such as volunteer recruitment, training, recognition, and retention could lighten the load for individual non-profit organizations. Basic support could also include, for example, completing criminal record checks and providing training in first aid and dispute resolution.

## Build awareness and encourage local and regional residents to pursue careers in services that support vulnerable people and families

There is an opportunity for service providers to collaborate to build awareness of the scope and range of careers available in supporting vulnerable people. This could include job shadowing programs for youth; new entrant and career development mentoring opportunities; and support for education and training.

## Assist organizations to stabilize and increase financial and operational capacity

Organizations that provide services to support vulnerable people and families are often dependent on grant funding. To receive funding, they must demonstrate community need. Population need is now available in the **Fort St. John Community Profile** prepared by the UNBC Community Development Institute. Further need could be illustrated through providing information on the challenges and barriers faced by people trying to access services. Service providers that support vulnerable people and families should collaborate on a project that would provide information on the challenges and barriers people experience trying to access services.



## Action Area: Public and Government Services

### Vision for Public and Government Services in Fort St. John

A growing hub for a wide range of public and government services in northeast BC.

### Background

- Fort St. John is the largest and fastest growing community in northeast BC. As a result, there has also been growth in the public and government service sector. New or planned facilities include the Fort St. John Hospital, Ma Murray Elementary School, Anne Roberts Young Elementary School, Centennial Park, Festival Plaza, Toboggan Hill Off-Leash Dog Park and the RCMP detachment.
- Currently, many of the professionals and government staff in Fort St. John, including teachers, physicians, nurses, therapists, health support workers, and counsellors are recruited from outside the community and the region. Employers in these sectors report that staff turnover is high, as employees apply and are successful candidates for positions in south and central BC.
- Many specialists and experts are long-distance labour commuters to Fort St. John. Many of these individuals are regular visitors, coming to the community as often as every second week. These include medical specialists, dental specialists, justice staff, legal counsel, accountants, business planners, engineers, and others.
- For many experts and specialists, there is a long waiting list. For those who do not travel to Fort St. John, Fort St. John residents must go to them. Travel to Edmonton, Prince George, and Vancouver is not uncommon.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Support the development of local staffing capacity.
- Work with education and training institutes to build workforce capacity.
- Encourage office and service locations that support user access and contribute to creating a vibrant community.
- Provide services and amenities for mobile workers in this sector.
- Utilize technology to provide access to expert and specialists outside of Fort St. John.

### Areas for Action

#### Build awareness to encourage local/regional residents to pursue careers in government and public services

According to Statistics Canada data, the number of jobs in government and public services in Fort St. John is growing. Research and experience have shown that people who are born in the community and region are more likely to settle there. Given past challenges in Fort St. John with recruiting and retaining public and government workers, Fort St. John should develop a strategy for encouraging local and regional residents to pursue careers in key areas of this sector. This would include building awareness of the scope and range of careers available, developing job shadowing programs for youth and others; supporting educational attainment, including funding, study help, and counselling; and developing new entrant and career development mentoring opportunities. This would involve the major public sector employers such as the federal and provincial government, Northern Health, School District 60, Northern Lights College, the University of Northern British Columbia, and the City of Fort St. John.

## Support the current mobile professional workforce

The needs of people who travel to Fort St. John on a regular basis to deliver public and government services are not well known. Anecdotally, it has been communicated that these workers may wish to have access to fitness facilities, recreation opportunities, business services, formal meeting spaces, and informal spaces, similar to a living room at home, to socialize. Given the importance of maintaining these services for the community, there would be an opportunity to survey this mobile workforce to determine how best to support them to ensure they continue travelling to Fort St. John and then to develop a strategy for doing so.

## Utilize technology to deliver services not available in the community

Video conferencing is being used across the globe to deliver a range of services, including educational and professional development programs, counselling services, medical consult services, client meetings, and more. To reduce the need, cost, and stress of travel, the potential of high speed video technology should be explored to allow residents to more easily access public and government services not readily available in Fort St. John. This technology could also be used by staff in Fort St. John to connect with colleagues, attend virtual meetings, and participate in professional development opportunities. This may require a technical upgrade and support strategy with telecommunications providers, for which the City of Fort St. John and others could collectively advocate.

## Encourage government and public services to local offices and services in locations that will support a vibrant community

Government and public services are often anchor tenants in small communities. For Fort St. John, locating offices and services in the downtown core would bring staff and clients to the area, helping to realize the City's downtown revitalization aspirations. A vibrant and revitalized downtown core, in turn, would make it easier for government and public services to recruit and retain staff, so this strategy would be mutually beneficial.



## Action Area: Retail and Services

### Vision for Retail and Services in Fort St. John

A vibrant, competitive, and innovative retail and service sector that is part of a growing economy and which attracts local residents and visitors to Fort St. John.

### Background

- The retail sector in Fort St. John has been impacted by online shopping, as well as retail and service leakage to communities such as Grande Prairie, Edmonton, and Vancouver.
- Big box and corporate stores are perceived to threaten local businesses, but have also been credited with attracting or keeping shoppers in the community.
- Plans for revitalizing the downtown core (100th and 100th) are being developed. A vibrant downtown core will draw residents and visitors, which will benefit retail and services located there.
- There are service and retail opportunities associated with the increasing numbers of new Canadians and the growing senior's population in Fort St. John.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Revitalizing the downtown core to include services, niche retail, public amenities, housing, public art, programming, and industry offices.
- Incorporating winter city design principles and ensuring that retail and service areas are attractive and accessible year round.
- Reviewing development proposals to assess their impact on retail and service areas and people who rely on them.
- Identifying and adapting to emerging market segments.
- Supporting higher quality customer service in Fort St. John.

### Areas for Action

#### Proceed with plans to revitalize the downtown core

A vibrant downtown core has the potential to anchor a stronger retail and service sector in Fort St. John. Planning for downtown revitalization should include planning and development guidelines that speak to public and private building design requirements; the inclusion of housing in the downtown core; designation and design of public spaces that will accommodate public events and activities; the provision for various forms of transportation, including walking, cycling, scooters for seniors, and automobiles; area beautification; and consideration of summer and winter design. Downtown revitalization should also include an integrated public and private sector programming plan. Programming could include buskers, street performances, outdoor café musicians, and permanent and rotating public art. This approach has been used successfully to revitalize downtown cores in other BC communities.

There is an opportunity for the City of Fort St. John to establish a Downtown Revitalization Group that would focus on achieving a vibrant downtown core. This group could help work toward the implementation of the planning and development guidelines and the programming plan, providing ideas, oversight, and monitoring. The membership could include the Fort St. John Arts Council, arts organizations, youth, seniors, building owners, and business owners.



## Identify emerging market segments in Fort St. John

The population in Fort St. John is changing and becoming more diverse; specifically, there are a growing number of seniors and new Canadians. Businesses that offer targeted products and services and adopt inclusive and welcoming standards of service that are considerate of different ages and ethnicities would benefit from these new market opportunities.

Understanding the needs of specific market segments creates opportunities. Seniors, for example, can be expected to appreciate large print signs and menus, request delivery and assembly services for purchases, and seek home services such as help with yard and home maintenance. New Canadians can be expected to appreciate foreign language speakers on staff and to look for products that they find familiar.

There is an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce to conduct research and offer ongoing advice to the business community on emerging market segments in Fort St. John.

## Organize events that attract retail and service customers

Businesses in communities around the world have organized events designed to attract customers. In BC, Dine Out is designed to attract diners in the slow month of January. In Europe, Christmas markets are organized to bring shoppers downtown. In Woodstock Ontario, Summer StreetFest attracts over 30,000 locals and visitors.

The retail and service sector in Fort St. John, perhaps through the Chamber of Commerce, has the opportunity to create similar events or partner with existing events in Fort St. John to achieve the same ends, namely to increase customer traffic and spending at local establishments.

## Support education for marketing and customer attraction

Attracting customers to retail and service sector businesses requires a multi-faceted approach. Business owners should have a marketing strategy that includes plans for signage, window displays, advertising, social media, in-store displays, in-store events, collaboration with other businesses and events, and incentive programs. That said, many business owners do not have a marketing background.

There is an opportunity for the Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce, perhaps in collaboration with Northern Lights College, to offer targeted business marketing courses or workshops. The courses or workshops could help business owners enhance their marketing strategies. Another opportunity would be to create a co-op or experiential learning program for marketing students at Northern Lights College or the University of Northern British Columbia that would pair them with business owners who need help.

## Focus on standards of service in the retail and service sector

Delivering high-quality service will help the retail and service sector attract and retain customers. It will also help attract and retain staff who take pride in their quality of work. Providing customer service training for staff will help the business community increase revenues, customer satisfaction, and the reputation of Fort St. John for delivering high-quality service. This training could be provided individually or in partnership by the Chamber of Commerce and Northern Lights College.



## Action Area: Housing

### Vision for the Housing in Fort St. John

A range of housing options to attract and retain people across socio-economic categories; to provide affordable, appropriate, and secure housing.

### Background

- Fort St. John has increased the diversity of housing available. Between 1991 and 2016, the number of single-detached homes increased by 50%, the number of row houses increased by 58%, the number of semi-detached homes increased by 286%, and the number of apartments and duplexes increased by 169%.
- The housing stock in Fort St. John is newer than in other northern BC communities. Twenty-nine percent of the stock has been built since 2000, 22% was built from 1980-2000, and 49% was built prior to 1980. Only about 8% of the housing in Fort St. John is in need of major repair.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Availability of a range of housing options.
- Housing affordability across the income spectrum, factoring in elements such as heating, electricity, taxes, maintenance, and other costs.
- Designing neighbourhoods for safety, neighbourliness, and access to services.
- Housing in the downtown core.

### Areas for Action

#### Encourage the development of housing for seniors

Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population in Fort St. John. It is important to note that, while most senior households are financially sound, there are pockets of significant need in Fort St. John. Fully 44% of senior renter households are in core housing need (paying more than 30% of their income on rent). In contrast, only 6% of senior homeowners are in core need, and as a group, they have an average income of \$72,181. For this reason, housing for seniors in Fort St. John should include both market and subsidized housing options to address the needs of people across this range of incomes. Housing developers and providers should also be encouraged to offer support and basic care services that would allow seniors to age-in-place in these homes. Housing for seniors should be located close to services they use every day: grocery stores, pharmacies, senior's activity centres, and coffee shops/cafes.

#### Consider overall housing affordability in the planning, development, and management of housing and neighbourhoods

A number of factors contribute to overall housing affordability. These include energy efficient housing construction to reduce winter heating costs, building within the existing infrastructure envelope to reduce infrastructure and servicing costs, and planning neighbourhoods with amenities within walking distance to reduce transportation costs. Best practices in planning, zoning, and construction would add to the overall affordability and quality of housing and neighbourhoods in Fort St. John.

## Develop housing that supports a mobile workforce

Fort St. John relies on mobile labour for a number of public sectors services, including health care professionals and specialists, justice and legal services, and social services. The community also supports mobile private sector employees, particularly in the oil and gas sector. Currently, most mobile workers reside in hotels or camps and are treated as visitors. Housing that is designed specifically for mobile workers could increase the stability of this population and enhance its connection to the community.

## Encourage the development of housing in the downtown core

The City's plan for the downtown core (100th and 100th) calls for the development of an amenity-rich community that would include retail and services, such as cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies, and public spaces. Developing housing in this area would support area businesses and encourage positive street life in this neighbourhood. Experiences in other communities indicates that downtown living is particularly well-suited to those households that are without children; young and old. The development of housing and the area in general should consider design features that make the area attractive and livable for these populations.

## Plan neighbourhoods to encourage interaction between neighbours

Neighbourhood design can create public space that encourages community connections and supports inclusion. As discussed in the section on Inclusion and Belonging, community connection is seen by residents as a key element in attraction and retention and quality of life in Fort St. John. Public amenities such as play grounds, parks, paths, and trails will create opportunities for neighbours to meet and interact with one another.

## Continue to encourage and support a wide range of housing options and choices

The housing stock in Fort St. John is more diverse and offers more choice than any other community in northern BC. By encouraging the development of apartments, duplexes, and row townhouses, as well as single detached homes, Fort St. John will continue to provide options for a wide range of household sizes.



## Action Area: Workforce

### Vision for Workforce in Fort St. John

A skilled and stable workforce ready to adapt to change and support economic development in Fort St. John.

### Background

- The resource sector continues to dominate the economy in Fort St. John. In the past, people could earn high wages in the resource sector without having post-secondary education or even high school graduation. Across the resource sector, increased use of technology and automation means that many jobs are now highly skilled and low-skilled jobs are disappearing. An increased emphasis in the sector on environmental assessment, mitigation, and reclamation is also opening up new career paths. This will be an opportunity for industry and post-secondary institutions to work together to ensure that education and training programs are developed to meet evolving workplace opportunities.
- Employers across all sectors in Fort St. John shared that it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff. They report that applicants from communities farther south are often hesitant to move to Fort St. John, and those who do come often leave after a short period, citing issues with cold winters, isolation, and quality of life.
- Several employers also spoke of the challenge of staff 'churn'; losing employees to other employers who offer higher wages and better benefits. Smaller firms and the service sector generally experience this 'poaching' most often, however companies in the oil and gas sector also report losing staff to other oil and gas companies. Losing employees to other employers means losing their investment in orientation, training, and often education and upgrading.
- As a growing community, Fort St. John will require more public sector workers, including teachers, nurses, therapists, counsellors, police officers, municipal staff, and others. Historically, most of these staff have come from outside of the region and employers report that recruitment and retention has been a challenge.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Providing education and professional development for local jobs, career advancement, and transition.
- Attracting and retaining new workers.
- Encouraging existing residents to reach their potential.
- Encouraging welcoming and inclusive workplaces.

### Areas for Action

#### Address issues of basic literacy and numeracy

Basic literacy and numeracy are key for success at school and beyond. During consultations with the community, participants expressed concern about families experiencing multi-generational issues with basic literacy and numeracy. In these families, there is no one who can teach the younger generation how to read or do math. Dealing with multi-generational literacy and numeracy means teaching parents, as well as children, and doing so in a way that does not harm the self-esteem of or respect for the parent. In Fort St. John, there are several organizations that are well-positioned to work collaboratively or individually on these issues, including the Fort St. John Literacy Society, the Fort St. John Public Library, School District 60, Community Bridge, and the Women's Resource Centre.

#### Support women in the workforce

As the community grows, Fort St. John will need to grow the workforce. Workers will be needed in every sector. Women make up 48% of the population, but only 43% of the workforce. Programs and services that enable women to be in the workforce would help the community address workforce shortages. These programs and services would also be of particular value to lone-parent mothers and lower income families that may be struggling with the high cost of living in Fort St. John. Increasing the capacity of programs and services such as child care, after school care, after school programming, summer and school holiday camps would make it possible for more women to enter the workforce and raise a family. A universal approach to fees-gated-to-income would provide assistance to those who need it.

## Encourage educational attainment

Workforce statistics and projections indicate that most jobs today require more education than in the past and that this trend will continue into the future. Employers who participated in consultations for this report supported these conclusions. They indicated that, with technology and automation, the number of manual labour / low skill positions are declining and the number of skilled positions are increasing. In this changing workforce environment, workers will need higher levels of education. Completing high school and moving on to post-secondary education will, more and more, be the pathway to stable, well-paid positions. Post-secondary education may take the form of a trade, technical training, or a university education. Workers must also be prepared to upgrade or transition their skills as their career progresses. It will be important to identify opportunities for post-secondary institutions in Fort St. John, Northern Lights College and the University of Northern British Columbia, to work with employers on programs to support workforce development.

## Create welcoming and inclusive workplaces

As the community grows and the economy expands, all employers, industry, businesses, non-profits, and the public sector will be looking to attract and retain workers. Attracting and retaining workers will be easier if workplaces are welcoming and inclusive; workplaces that consider and accommodate nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disabilities. Creating welcoming and inclusive workplaces will help workers feel comfortable and encourage them to stay in the job and in Fort St. John.

Creating welcoming and inclusive workplaces should be a community-wide effort that involves all employers in Fort St. John. Community-wide standard policies, programs, and practices would increase the effectiveness and impact of these efforts. The City of Fort St. John, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, would be ideally positioned to strike a broad-based community committee that would develop policies, programs, training, and information programs for the whole community.

## Highlight the range and diversity of career options available

Traditionally and currently, most of the positions in Fort St. John have been filled by people from outside of the community. This has included professional, technical, managerial, administrative, creative, and human services staff. The high level of transience and turnover in the community means that there are few long-term recognizable role models in these positions. As a result, many young people thinking about career options do not have an appreciation of the range or number of options available. Highlighting traditional and non-traditional career options and spotlighting role models would help young people think about options.

More specifically, as a growing community, Fort St. John will need to recruit for a wide range of human service positions; teachers, nurses, allied health professionals, child care workers, and social workers. Despite the post-secondary educational opportunities available in Fort St. John, most of these positions are filled by people from outside of the city and the region.

Experience has shown that a person from a small northern community is more likely to remain in a small northern community than a person hired from a southern metropolitan area. Encouraging young people raised in Fort St. John to pursue higher education that will lead to careers in the community would add stability to the workforce and would help provide individual and household financial security. Why young people are not taking up these career opportunities is not well-understood. Research to understand this issue would be the first step to developing a plan to attract young people to these career opportunities.



## Action Area: Oil and Gas

### Vision for Oil and Gas in Fort St. John

A leading and innovative oil and gas sector that provides economic and social benefit in Fort St. John.

### Background

- As the dominant sector in the community and the region, the oil and gas industry sets the pace for the economy. The Montney Formation accounts for 32% of Canada's known reserves. By the mid-2020s, global demand for liquid natural gas is predicted to surpass availability.
- While many people living in Fort St. John work in the oil and gas sector, the sector still relies on significant levels of fly-in/fly-out long distance labour commuting to fill positions in northeast BC. Many of these workers, both local and from away, stay in workforce camps located close to the active fields. While companies are investing more in camp life in an effort to attract and retain workers, there are concerns that camp life and long rotations create challenging social and family issues.
- The sector has become more advanced in terms of measures to reduce impact on the environment. Recycling and reusing water, utilizing 'waste' heat, and using natural gas instead of diesel are common practices. Increased use of automation and technology in extraction and processing means that there will be fewer jobs, but that these will be more highly skilled.
- The BC Oil and Gas Commission is a global leader in setting the regulatory environment. As a result, the oil and gas industry in BC is at the forefront of innovation. Fostering research and development in technology, environment, social impact, workforce development, and community development will help the industry solidify its leadership and remain at the forefront of providing economic and social benefit.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Fostering research and development for ongoing innovation in technology, engineering, systems design, process management, environment, social impact, workforce development, and community development.
- Working with education and training institutes to build workforce capacity for evolving employment requirements.
- Working to address the implications of labour commuting for local workers and those that commute into the region

### Areas for Action

#### Convene a roundtable on the oil and gas sector

The oil and gas industry in northeast BC depends on communities in the region. These communities provide workers, business supply and support services, transportation infrastructure, public sector infrastructure and amenities, and education infrastructure and programs to train workers. From the community perspective, the oil and gas sector plays a central role in community and economic development, in Fort St. John and throughout the region.

This interdependence points to the need for a venue for information sharing, dialogue, planning and action on changes and trends in the oil and gas industry in northeast BC. This could be accomplished through convening a Regional Roundtable on the Oil and Gas Sector. Participants would be drawn from local government, industry, education, and research. The Roundtable would have the ability to draw on experts and would have support for their work. Initially, the Roundtable would focus on identifying current and future opportunities and challenges in the sector, with a focus on specific issues of mutual concern to the industry and the community. This could be followed up by the development and implementation of an action plan and initiatives in support of mutually-supportive community and industry development.

## Strengthen oil and gas research capacity in northeast BC

Given the culture of innovation that already exists in northeast BC, there are opportunities for industry and research institutions to collaborate to develop and test new innovation in the oil and gas sector. This could include innovations in extraction, water use, processing, and transportation. Strengthening research capacity in northeast BC could be furthered through striking an Oil and Gas Research Working Group comprised of industry, the provincial and federal governments, post-secondary research and educational institutes, and non-profit research institutes. This working group could then coordinate with the Roundtable on the Oil and Gas Sector.

## Develop a workforce training program for the oil and gas sector

The nature of work in the oil and gas sector has changed significantly as processes have become more automated and there has been more emphasis on environmental management. These trends are anticipated to continue. As a result, there is a need to increase public awareness of the future of work in the sector, including information aimed at middle and high school students. This could be achieved through programs such as job expos, tours of oil and gas operations, and mentorship programs. There is also a need for more industry-specific post-secondary programs that prepare students for the new jobs in the oil and gas sector. These should include programs in trades, technology, engineering, environmental management and stewardship, and research.

## Convene a dialogue on the family and social impacts of working in the oil and gas sector

The oil and gas sector is known for its multi-day shift rotations, long commutes, and long hours. The nature of this work can be hard on workers, their families, and ultimately, the community. This points to a need for an ongoing dialogue to share information, build awareness of the issues, and develop strategies to support Fort St. John workers and their families to successfully cope with the challenges of work in the oil and gas sector. This dialogue could also extend to developing strategies and programs to attract fly-in/fly-out workers to Fort St. John to reduce the impacts of long-distance labour commuting. Participants in this dialogue would include workers, their families, social service agencies, social service professionals, the school district, and local government.



## Action Area: Agriculture

### Vision for Agriculture in Fort St. John

An innovative, future-oriented, and adaptive agricultural sector supplying products to high-value markets.

### Background

- Climate change will have a significant impact on the agricultural sector, presenting opportunities and challenges. According to a report by Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and the Fraser Basin Council, summers in Fort St. John in 2080 will be similar to summers in the Okanagan in 1980.
- Getting products to markets outside of the region is difficult and expensive. Transportation and supply chain management systems have not been designed to facilitate northeast BC producers to access other BC markets, including the large Lower Mainland market.
- There is a growing demand for the products that northeast BC can produce. Currently, northeast BC produces 95% of BC grain crops and 58% of BC beef. There is growing demand and production in the areas of organic and grass-fed animals, organic crops, and specialty products such as berries.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Information regarding markets and market trends for agricultural products.
- Accessing high-value markets and markets for value-added products.
- Developing transportation and supply chain management systems to allow northeast producers to access other BC markets, particularly the Lower Mainland.
- Increasing production capacity and efficiency.
- Opportunities and challenges for research, innovation, and adaptation emerging as a result of climate change.
- Working with partners, including education and training institutes, to build sector capacity.

### Areas for Action

#### Develop a northeast BC agricultural strategy

The agricultural sector in northeast BC is multi-faceted. It includes many large producers, particularly for grain and beef and a growing number of medium and small producers, many of whom have an interest in niche products such as berries, organic vegetables, and organic and grass-fed meat. An agricultural strategy for northeast BC should identify opportunities across the agricultural spectrum, including high-value niche products, as well as traditional large volume products. The strategy should consider the development of local, regional, national, and international markets for Peace region agricultural products as well as the development of research and educational capacity.

#### Establish an agriculture roundtable

Currently, the networks within the agricultural sector are organized on a product basis, for example the BC Grain Producers Association, BC Cattlemen's Association, BC Sheep Federation, and the BC Greenhouse Grower's Association. In northeast BC, many of the producers and producer organizations are experiencing similar challenges and issues. An Agriculture Roundtable would allow producers to identify these common concerns and develop strategies to address them. These may include strategies for issues such as transportation to markets, access to markets, workforce development, financing availability, and government regulation. A united voice for agriculture in northeast BC would be stronger than each producer group working in isolation on these common challenges and issues.

#### Develop agricultural research capacity for northeast BC

Climate change and changing market demand will have an impact on what is possible and profitable in the Peace region. Developing agricultural research capacity will help the industry and individual producers to innovate and adapt techniques for better management of crops, herds, and water resources. Developing agricultural research capacity in northeast BC would involve producers, the provincial government, post-secondary research and educational institutes, and producer organizations.



## Construct facilities to support opportunities for value-added products and processing

In order to realize the potential of the agricultural sector in northeast BC, facilities for value-added processing are required. These could include facilities for washing, grading, processing, and packaging vegetables, berries, fruits, and forage plants; slaughtering, processing, and packaging meat and fowl; commercial kitchens for producing and packaging value-added products, and distribution facilities for transport to market. Facilities could also include greenhouses and growing facilities to increase opportunities for year-round production. For all agricultural facilities, there is an opportunity to partner with other industrial producers to take advantage of industrial eco-system opportunities, such as using waste heat from forestry mills to heat greenhouses and other facilities.

## Develop a marketing strategy for northeast BC agricultural products

There is a growing demand in BC for food that is raised 'closer to the consumer and the market'. Much of this demand is emerging in southern metropolitan markets such as Greater Vancouver, southern Vancouver Island, and the Okanagan where consumers are willing to pay for regional and specialty products. This trend is an opportunity for northeast BC producers. That said, one of the key challenges for northeast producers is getting their product to these markets. A strategy that addresses issues of transportation, distribution, marketing, and branding is needed to allow producers to realize the full market potential of their products.

## Develop a workforce training program for the agricultural sector

For the past several decades, careers in the agricultural sector have not been seen by young people as being viable. However, increasing demand for and profitability of agricultural products could change that. A growing agricultural sector would create career opportunities in growing, producing, packaging, marketing, distribution, sales, and research. Collaboration between producers, the school system, and post-secondary system would help ensure that the workforce to support sector expansion is available in Fort St. John and the region. This could begin by raising awareness of career opportunities in the agriculture sector, for example through job expos and career experience programs, and then developing programs to educate and train people for these jobs. This could include jobs in secondary processing, research, teaching, logistics, and marketing, as well as jobs directly on the farm.



## Action Area: Forestry

### Vision for the Forestry Sector in Fort St. John

A diverse, innovative, and resilient forest sector focused on sustainability, renewal, and opportunities for innovation.

### Background

- The forests in northeast BC have not been hit as hard as other regions in the province by the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic. However, timber in northern BC is in short supply. The Spruce Beetle infestation is of growing concern.
- To diversify revenue streams, many producers have moved into higher-value products, for example high-strength timber and lignum. Others are using 'waste' streams to create value, for example generating electricity from waste heat.
- Transportation is a significant challenge. Moving goods by rail is unreliable because of car shortages and logistical issues, and trucking is expensive.
- Access to the land base remains a concern as there are competing interests and users in northeast BC.
- Many producers have developed good relations with First Nations communities. They are supporting business partnerships that include skills training and job opportunities for First Nations youth.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Developing relationships and partnerships with land / rights holders (First Nations) that deliver mutual benefit.
- Supporting innovation and research to develop higher-value products.
- Working with industry partners to extract value from production 'waste' streams.
- Working with education and training institutes to build workforce capacity for evolving employment requirements.

### Areas for Action

#### Continue to build relationships and partnerships with First Nations communities

Managed wisely, the forests of northeast BC have the potential to provide sustainable jobs and a renewable resource. Respectful relationships and partnerships between the forest companies and First Nations could provide mutual benefit for generations, protect and even enhance the forest resource and land base, and result in land management and product innovation over time. Legislation and legal decisions are giving First Nations more control over forestry rights, which could set the stage for more value-added production, alternative uses, and a longer term approach to forestry management. More than jobs today, a long-term and multi-use approach to forest management would be an investment in that would benefit people, communities, and the economy over the long-term.

As these changes take place, it will be important for there to be a venue for dialogue, planning, and action on the future of forestry in northeast BC. This could be accomplished through convening a Regional Roundtable on Forestry. Participants would be drawn from First Nations, local and regional government, industry, education, and research. The Roundtable would have the ability to draw on experts and would have support for their work. Initially, the Roundtable would focus on identifying current and future opportunities and challenges in the sector. This could be followed up by the development and implementation of a regional strategy for forestry.

## Strengthen forestry research capacity in northeast BC

There are opportunities for industry, First Nations, and research institutions to collaborate to develop and test innovation in all aspects of the forestry sector in northeast BC, including primary product development, secondary product development, reforestation, and land base management. Changing market demand and climate change will have a significant impact on forestry, and with a long growing cycle for trees, it will be critical to get ahead of these changes. Strengthening forestry research capacity in northeast BC would involve First Nations, industry, the provincial and federal governments, post-secondary research and educational institutes, and non-profit research institutes. This could be achieved through striking a Northeast BC Forestry Research Working Group that reports to and coordinates with the Regional Roundtable on Forestry.

## Identify and utilize forest sector ‘waste streams’ for economic development

While new forest product development may take years of research and development, forest sector ‘waste streams’ can be deployed for economic development and innovation fairly quickly. In Fort St. John, for example, the ‘waste heat’ produced by forestry operations could be used for agricultural production, including greenhouses and food drying processes. It could also be used to heat other large industrial buildings. The first step to utilizing ‘waste heat’ would be to bring together producers of waste heat with potential consumers to explore mutually beneficial possibilities and their potential.

## Develop a workforce training program for the forest sector

There has been significant change in the nature of work in the forestry sector as more processes have become more automated and there has been more emphasis on environmental management. This trend is anticipated to continue with the impacts of increased First Nations control, climate change, and changes in global demand. As a result, there is a need to increase public awareness of the future of work in the sector, including information aimed at middle and high school students. This could be achieved through programs such as job expos, tours of forestry operations, and mentorship programs. There is also a need for more industry-specific post-secondary programs that prepare students for the new jobs in the forestry sector. These should include programs in trades, technology, engineering, environmental management and stewardship, and research.



## Action Area: Tourism

### Vision for Tourism in Fort St. John

A vibrant and diverse tourism sector that creates economic and social benefit for multiple sectors in Fort St. John.

### Background

- The number of people employed in the accommodation and food services sector is growing. From 2011 to 2016, the number grew from 895 to 1,065 employees.
- In January 2020, the Fort St. John Tourism Society was established to provide leadership in the tourism sector in Fort St. John.
- The North Peace Regional Airport handled more than 250,000 passengers in 2017.
- It is estimated that about 1 million tourists travel the Alaska Highway each year.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Working with First Nations and regional partners to build tourism capacity, assets, and markets.
- Information regarding markets and market trends in tourism.
- Capturing value from existing visitors.
- Capturing value from existing and new community assets (events, facilities, and so on.)
- Supporting high quality customer service in Fort St. John businesses.

### Areas for Action

#### Develop a local tourism strategy that is linked to a broader regional tourism strategy

A tourism strategy would help tourism operators focus and collaborate on initiatives that would grow the sector. The strategy would identify tourism assets, emerging trends in tourism and travel, and opportunities for attracting visitors from regional, national, and international markets. The strategy should be linked to a regional strategy so that visitors could plan a multi-day stay to take advantage of a range of opportunities. The list of tourism assets and visitor offerings should include existing and potential visitor offerings, including events, performances, eco-tourism, Indigenous tourism, and historical tourism. The Fort St. John Tourism Society would be well-placed to take on this initiative.

#### Establish a northeast BC tourism roundtable

Following from the development of a local tourism strategy, a Northeast BC Tourism Roundtable should be established. The Roundtable would identify and create synergies between local and regional tourism opportunities, particularly with First Nations communities. In addition to working collaboratively to grow the tourism market across northeast BC, the Tourism Roundtable could identify and take action on other issues and opportunities. One such opportunity is to become a hub for innovative visitor technologies and applications, such as interactive maps for roads and trails and QR codes at tourist sites. This would enhance and enrich the visitor experience in northeast BC.

## Develop collaborative relationships and partnerships to advance tourism

Collaborative relationships and partnerships in the tourism sector can create mutual benefit for participating communities and businesses. Visitor packages that combine accommodation, food, and excursions or events can boost business for all. There are many examples of successful regional or sector collaboration, including The Powder Highway ski resorts in the Kootenays/Okanagan, Golf Vancouver Island, and the Revelstoke Summer Street Fest. Successful initiatives such as these can serve as inspirations and models for local and regional planning. One potential initiative would be to work with communities along the Alaska Highway, from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks to develop a single website and booking hub for accommodation, tours, and attractions.

## Identify offerings that would appeal to business travelers

People traveling for work make up the majority of visitors to Fort St. John. These travelers could be seen as a unique market segment for whom specific offerings could be developed. These offerings could include the ability to book office or small meeting space, business services such as printing and photocopying, and day passes to local gyms. Conducting a survey to understand the needs of these travelers could be undertaken by the Fort St. John Tourism Society, with tourism and business operators organizing to meet these needs.

## Develop tourism and hospitality training programs

Employers in the tourism sector have highlighted employee recruitment and retention as a significant challenge in Fort St. John. Added to the challenge, there is a perception in the community that the quality of customer service in Fort St. John does not meet expectations and that staff in the tourism sector are not equipped with the information to promote local businesses, activities, and offerings. This indicates that there would be an opportunity to develop and deliver tourism and hospitality training programs. These could range from a sector-wide customer service training program to enhanced post-secondary tourism and hospitality management programs that include business, cultural, historical, adventure, and eco-tourism options. The Northeast BC Tourism Roundtable would be well-placed to coordinate these efforts.



## Action Area: Arts and Culture

### Vision for Arts and Culture in Fort St. John

A vibrant arts and culture sector that fosters individual and community creativity, wellbeing, connection between cultures, economic opportunities, and quality of life.

### Background

- There are more than 30 arts and culture groups within the Fort St. John Arts Council, representing a range of interests, including music, visual arts, dance, theatre, and heritage.
- The main arts and culture facilities in Fort St. John are the North Peace Cultural Centre, Arts Post, and the Fort St. John North Peace Museum. We heard from the community that the sector has expanded to the point where it has outgrown these spaces.
- There are no paid staff at the City of Fort St. John with a specific mandate for arts and culture. Neither the Arts Council, or the arts and culture groups, have paid staff. This makes it difficult for artists and groups to realize the economic potential of the sector.
- Groups in the sector rely heavily on grants to support programming, which are never secure and often short-term.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Development of an arts and culture strategy for Fort St. John.
- Investment in facilities/space to create, exhibit, sell, learn, and inspire.
- Investment in organizations that deliver arts and culture programs and opportunities.
- Growing the economic potential of arts and culture.
- Supporting the bridging capacity of arts and culture in the community.

### Areas for Action

#### Develop an arts and culture strategy for Fort St. John

Arts and culture has both an economic and a social development component, and there are tremendous opportunities for both in Fort St. John. Other BC communities have successfully leveraged the arts and culture sector to revitalize downtown areas, support tourism, attract new residents, and build bridges between cultures in the community, including First Nations. An arts and culture strategy for Fort St. John would create a long-term vision for the sector, identifying the economic and social role the sector will play. The process for developing the arts and culture strategy should include a broad examination of the economic and social potential of the sector, and set clear priorities. The strategy should consider the role and potential to create benefit for individual artists, arts organizations and businesses, festivals, exhibits, and shows. It would also identify mutually beneficial links with tourism and other parts of the economy and community.

#### Develop an arts and culture facilities plan

As a follow up to the arts and culture strategy, an arts and culture facilities plan should be developed. This plan will ensure that the community has the facilities and spaces available to achieve the vision for arts and culture outlined in the strategy. The facilities plan should begin by identifying indoor and outdoor, publicly and privately owned arts and culture facilities and spaces in Fort St. John. From there, a long-term plan for facilities and spaces for people involved in the sector to create, exhibit, sell, learn, and inspire can be developed. An arts and culture facilities plan would help individual artists, organizations, and groups focus and collaborate with others on initiatives that would strengthen and grow the sector. A facilities plan could explore various models and approaches to space that supports arts and culture as an integral part of the community. The arts and culture facilities plan would mirror the City of Fort St. John Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## Develop an arts and culture program plan and review existing policies

As a second follow up to the arts and culture strategy, an arts and culture program plan should be developed. This would also be an opportunity to review existing arts and culture policies. As is the case with sports and recreation, the City of Fort St. John has an important role to play in supporting the arts and culture sector in the community.

Public policies and programs that support the sector will be needed if the vision and potential identified in the arts and culture strategy are to be achieved. Public policies that support and make funding available for public art, festivals, events, marketing, and space would provide a stable and reliable foundational level of support upon which artists and arts and cultural organizations could plan and grow. It would also support the opportunities to create synergies with other groups, organizations, and sectors for example, tourism and sports and recreation. Public programs would create an opportunity for resident involvement in arts and culture activities.

With increased commitment and support, there will also be an ongoing need for City involvement to coordinate the work of the sector and monitor needs and issues. To that end, the City should consider developing a position that is actively involved in arts and culture programming and liaison with the sector. This position would be similar to the existing position of Recreation Manager, but with a focus on arts and culture.

Working together, the City of Fort St. John and the individuals, organizations, and businesses involved in the arts and culture sector would create focus and momentum that would realize the economic and social potential of the sector and contribute significantly to other sectors and priorities in the community

## Identify opportunities to leverage and grow existing events

The City of Fort St. John organizes or participates in a number of events each year, for example the High on Ice Winter Festival. There is an opportunity to look at these festivals to determine whether changes could be made to transform them from a local event attended primarily by residents to a regional event that would result in overnight visits from other communities in the Peace. For example, the addition of a major concert or other performance at High on Ice could attract visitors who would spend a night and an extra day in Fort St. John. This would benefit hotels, restaurants, and possibly retail businesses. Working collaboratively, festival organizers and the tourism sector could develop and market visitor packages that could include tickets to the concert or performance, hotel, meals, and discounts at local retailers.

## Support the arts and culture sector to act as a bridge between cultures

The City of Fort St. John is becoming more culturally diverse. The arts and culture sector has the potential to act as a bridge to bring cultural groups and traditions together in a respectful and harmonious way. Arts and culture can play a key role in supporting Fort St. John in becoming a welcoming and inclusive community, through honouring and promoting First Nations, long-time settler, and newcomer traditions. There is an opportunity for the City of Fort St. John to expand the role of and funding to the Fort St. John Community Arts Council to take on the work of expanding cultural diversity in the arts and culture in Fort St. John.



## Action Area: Sports and Recreation

### Vision for Sports and Recreation in Fort St. John

A vibrant sports and recreation sector that fosters health, wellness, economic opportunities, a sense of community, and quality of life.

### Background

- There are more than 50 active sports and recreation groups in Fort St. John, representing a wide range of summer and winter and indoor and outdoor activities.
- There are five recreation facilities maintained fully or in part by the City of Fort St. John; the Pomeroy Sports Centre, North Peace Leisure Pool, North Peace Arena, Kids Arena Fieldhouse, and the Fort St. John Curling Club. The City also maintains numerous outdoor facilities including baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, parks, trails, and children's playgrounds.
- The City of Fort St. John takes an active role in providing sports and recreation programming, for example swimming lessons, aquafit, and drop-in fitness.
- Participants in the community consultations indicated that there is a significant interest in having a multi-use indoor recreation facility in Fort St. John that would offer activities such as an indoor climbing facility, racquet courts, an adventure play area for children, and meeting space for the community. This is consistent with a perception that there should be more indoor sport and recreation options available given the long winter in Fort St. John.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Ongoing commitment to the parks and recreation master plan.
- Investment in facilities, amenities, and programming for sport and recreation, team and individual pursuits.
- Support for volunteer recruitment, retention, training to build organizational capacity.
- Growing the economic potential of sports and recreation, building on the community's experience as an event centre.
- Promoting awareness of programs and facilities

### Areas for Action

#### Continue the City's commitment to the parks and recreation master plan

In 2016, the City of Fort St. John adopted a parks and recreation master plan. This plan is intended to guide the City and the Region's investments in recreation infrastructure, parkland acquisition, and parkland development for the next 15-20 years.

The development of this plan signaled the City's commitment to ensuring that sports and recreation facilities and programming keeps pace with population growth and community expectations. It also signaled an understanding of the important role that sports and recreation plays in enhancing quality of life in the community. It will be important for the City of Fort St. John to continue its commitment to implementing the current plan and to review, evaluate, and update the plan on a regular basis.



## Develop a plan for sports and recreation programming

Sports and recreation programming contributes to a high quality of life for residents. With changing demographics, for example more seniors, young parents, and new Canadians, sports and recreation programming must be prepared to change and adapt to new interests and demands. Sports and recreation programming should strive to offer something for everyone. To do this, it will be important to understand and consider the age, life stage, financial capacity, and cultural background of residents. In this way, sports and recreation can continue to offer opportunities that enhance quality of life, contribute to health and wellbeing, and bring the community together.

## Ensure that income is not a barrier to participation in sports and recreation

While Fort St. John enjoys a high median income, there are families and households with very low incomes. Many of these are seniors and female-led lone-parent families, where the experience of low-income is ongoing. Others are families that experience unemployment and low-income during economic downturns. Fort St. John has two funds, KidSport and Jumpstart, that provide funding to children and youth who require financial assistance to participate in an organized sport. These programs are well-funded and well-used in Fort St. John.

There are, however, no funds or programs to assist children and youth who are more comfortable in non-organized programs, for example fitness or swimming. There are also no funds or programs that provide financial assistance to adults and seniors. For low-income adults and seniors, attending a recreation program can offer an important opportunity for social connection, as well as physical activity. The City of Fort St. John, in collaboration with potential donors and funders, should strive to create a broader, more inclusive approach to financial assistance for sports and recreation that would benefit those in the community who are currently 'left out'.

It should be noted that this approach could also be extended to arts and culture programming in the community.

## Develop a plan for sports and recreation events

In addition to contributing to a high quality of life for residents, sports and recreation has the potential to contribute to the economic potential of the community. Growing the economic potential of sports and recreation would include hosting events such as tournaments, competitions, and coaching clinics. The City has already had experience with this in hosting the World Under 17 Hockey Challenge. The learnings from this experience could be applied to hosting other international, national, and provincial events.

## Offer more support for volunteerism in sports and recreation

Sports and recreation organizations and programs rely heavily on volunteers, who provide support in a number of capacities. As is the case for many organizations, there is concern about volunteer burnout, development, training, succession planning, and appreciation. A coordinated approach to providing basic support, such as volunteer recruitment, training, recognition, reward, and retention could lighten the load for sports organizations. Basic support could include, for example, training in first aid and dispute resolution and support in volunteer registration and recognition. This would leave only sport specific training, such as coaching or refereeing (for example, hockey or soccer) for the sport organization.

It should be noted that this approach could be centralized and used for all volunteer activities in the community including arts, culture, seniors, and community festivals and events.



## Action Area: Infrastructure

### Vision for the Infrastructure in Fort St. John

Services that support safety, health, quality of life, and promote development.

### Background

- Infrastructure supports the growth and development of the community. It includes municipal systems such as water, sewer, and roads; provincial systems such as power and natural gas; and private sector systems such as telephone, internet, and cellular service.
- Municipal infrastructure is a costly to install, maintain, and repair. These costs are ultimately borne by the residents of Fort St. John through property taxes or rent. The cost of infrastructure per household or business is reduced when those costs are shared by a greater number of households or businesses. In terms of municipal finance and planning, the higher the density of housing or businesses, the lower the infrastructure cost per household or business.
- The City of Fort St. John has undertaken a number of innovative projects that illustrate the potential of adopting new technologies. These projects have demonstrated cost-savings, increased capacity, supported environmental sustainability, and generated revenue for the City.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- The cost and energy-effectiveness of infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- Asset management including maintenance and replacement.
- The role of infrastructure in economic and social development.
- Forecasts and trends for the future.

### Areas for Action

#### Maintain and develop the capacity to anticipate and plan for future infrastructure needs

In order to anticipate future infrastructure needs, the City of Fort St. John must stay informed about the issues, opportunities, trends, and legislation that will influence infrastructure development. This could include, for example, gathering information on innovation in systems design, demand projections, anticipated legislation, climate change, water availability, and availability of energy. It will then be important to ensure that this information is integrated into the long-range plans for infrastructure investment and asset management.

#### Undertake innovative pilot or demonstration projects

The City of Fort St. John has a track record of undertaking innovative demonstration projects to illustrate the potential of adopting new technologies. Recent examples include the water recovery facility, micro hydro project, passive apartment, and passive house. These projects illustrate the value of incorporating leading edge design and technology into municipal infrastructure. The City should continue to pursue pilot or demonstration projects that incorporate new technologies that can support economic and community development.

## Link infrastructure asset management plans to development planning

The cost of installing and maintaining infrastructure and services should remain a key consideration in development planning. Building and maintaining roads, sidewalks, sewer, water, hydro, and gas lines is costly, particularly in a northern climate. In addition, there are other costs that come with expanding infrastructure such as increased costs for public bus service, school bus service, and public facilities such as parks. This would suggest that the City of Fort St. John should encourage development within its existing infrastructure envelope. Developments that require the extension of the existing infrastructure should be subject to a costing analysis related to building and maintaining the required infrastructure.

## Increase public awareness of the issues that impact infrastructure needs and costs

Public awareness of the issues that impact infrastructure needs and costs can help build understanding of Council directions and decisions on these matters. For example, the cost of supplying treated drinking water to industry for industrial uses can help explain the investment in the water recovery facility. The knowledge that passive construction techniques can more than pay for themselves in energy savings can help justify using this technology. An ongoing public awareness campaign, one that includes materials that can be incorporated into the K-12 curriculum, should be adopted.

## Advocate for communications infrastructure investment

In today's global economy, access to leading-edge communications infrastructure is critical. Access to high speed internet and cellular network coverage will give residents access to economic opportunities, as well as health, educational, cultural, and social services to support economic growth and quality of life. Access to leading-edge technology can also serve to attract and retain business investment. As this technology is rapidly evolving, it will be important for the City to continually advocate to the private sector companies that control this infrastructure to invest in installation for Fort St. John and surrounding areas.



## Action Area: Transportation

### Vision for Transportation in Fort St. John

Supporting multiple forms of transportation for ease of movement by people and product in and around the community safely and efficiently.

### Background

- The road network in Fort St. John provides an effective, efficient, and safe means of transportation for passenger vehicles. While there are challenges for road maintenance, for example snow removal and spring road repair and line painting, the roads are generally seen to allow passenger vehicles to easily move around the community.
- The public transportation system is seen to be challenging and inadequate. A number of issues, including limited hours of operation for bus and HandyDart services, infrequency of bus services, routing of bus services, and lack of bus shelters were highlighted by the community.
- The pedestrian infrastructure in Fort St. John includes sidewalks, multi-use pathways, and trails, while the bicycle infrastructure is comprised of bike paths, multi-use paths, and bike trails. These networks are less well-developed than the road network, but they are growing. Some issues, including the lack of sidewalks in some areas; the need for improved lighting, road crossings, and accessibility features; and attention to maintenance, repair, and snow removal were mentioned by the community.
- With the growing senior's population, the need for attention to transportation for those who are mobility-challenged is growing. This would include consideration of factors such as access, safety, and affordability.

### Areas for Ongoing Attention

- Ongoing commitment to the transportation master plan.
- Encouraging a multi-modal approach to transportation.
- Safety and personal safety for users (for example, crosswalk lights and signals).
- Affordability and availability of services.
- Forecasts and trends for transportation use in the future.
- Investment in infrastructure and infrastructure maintenance.

### Areas for Action

#### Continue the City's commitment to the transportation master plan

The City of Fort St. John adopted a Transportation Master Plan in 2015. This 20-year plan is intended to guide development of transportation infrastructure to support other goals and objectives of the City related to health, environment, economy, and social sustainability. The plan envisions a multi-modal transportation network that enhances quality of life by supporting environmental, economic, and social sustainability to make the community vibrant, safe, and accessible. Continued commitment to the goals and actions outlined in the plan will support the economic and social development of Fort St. John.

## Identify emerging and changing transportation needs

Community transportation needs can change in response to a number of factors, including changes in demographics, technology, and climate. For example, the growing senior's population in Fort St. John could result in the need to consider wider sidewalks, charging stations, and parking areas for scooters; a greater number of accessible transportation options; and more senior's/disabled parking. The growing number of young children in Fort St. John may increase the need for multi-use paths that allow trikes, bikes, and pedestrians. New technologies, such as self-driving and electric vehicles, could have an impact on road and building design. Climate change, which may result in more ice in winter and rain in fall, could have an impact on road maintenance.

Transportation infrastructure is an expensive and long-term investment. With this in mind, the City of Fort St. John should actively monitor changes in the community that could lead to changes in transportation needs. Anticipating these changes will allow for infrastructure planning and investments that meet community needs today and in the future. Focusing development within the existing infrastructure envelope will reduce transportation infrastructure costs.

## Increase accessibility and awareness of public transportation options

Public transit services are managed by BC Transit. Currently, ridership in Fort St. John is low, however, for people who do not have access to a passenger vehicle, public transit is a critical service. Regular dialogue between BC Transit and the City of Fort St. John should be maintained to identify ways to enhance service. Options such as having smaller, but more, buses and a targeted night service, could be explored. There is also a need to increase public awareness of the public transit system. A public transit orientation session that would familiarize residents with the transit services available in Fort St. John could help increase ridership. These sessions could be aimed at students, new Canadians, and seniors who are no longer driving.

## Ensure that income is not a barrier to using public transit

Despite the high median income in Fort St. John, there are families and households with very low incomes. Many of these are seniors, female-led lone-parent families, and new Canadians. Providing these households with access to transit would increase their ability to search for and travel to work, keep medical and counselling appointments, attend programs and services, and participate in opportunities for social connection. The Fort St. John Women's Resource Society has ten Adult and ten Senior/Student bus passes to distribute free of charge each month to people with limited incomes, however, there are never enough to meet the need. Research to determine the extent of transportation need in Fort St. John and explore strategies and options for meeting these needs would enhance opportunities and quality of life for low-income households in Fort St. John.



## Cross-Cutting Actions

Through our research, community engagement, and community mobilization activities, we heard a number of concerns and opportunities that cut across action areas. In this section, we highlight actions that were common across multiple action areas. Because of this, these actions have the potential to be highly effective in addressing community needs.

### Provide Community-Wide Access to Training for Non-Profit Boards

There is concern in the non-profit sector about board capacity and board burn-out. Many organizations indicated that providing board training is time consuming and costly. By centralizing the provision of training for non-profit boards, this initiative would make more training available and reduce costs and the administrative burden to any one organization. It would result in a stronger non-profit sector in Fort St. John.

This action was identified in the following action areas:

- Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness
- Services for Vulnerable People and Families
- Arts and Culture
- Sports and Recreation

### Developing Research Capacity in Fort St. John and the Peace Region

Research can help economies and communities anticipate and adapt to change. Developing local research capacity can help ensure that Fort St. John is on the leading edge of change. In addition, research generates jobs and economic activity. The need for local research capacity and knowledge-sharing was identified by a number of sectors, particularly in relation to climate change, environmental stewardship, and changes in adapting to advances in automation and technology.

This action was identified in the following areas:

- Oil and Gas
- Forestry
- Agriculture

### Provide Community-Wide Access to Training for Non-Profit Organizations

There is recognition in the non-profit sector that many organizations would benefit from access to additional training and development opportunities for staff. These opportunities range from professional development to operational management, evaluation, and grant writing. A community-wide approach to training for non-profit operations would make more training available and reduce costs and the administrative burden to individual organizations. It would result in a stronger non-profit sector in Fort St. John.

This action was identified in the following action areas:

- Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness
- Services for Vulnerable People and Families
- Arts and Culture
- Sports and Recreation

### Providing Support for Roundtable Dialogue

The potential of bringing stakeholders together to work on common opportunities and challenges was identified in a number of action areas. As a result, there are a number of action areas that include the establishment of a stakeholder roundtable. These roundtables have the potential to anticipate change, identify emergent opportunities and challenges, develop strategies and plans to address opportunities and challenges, and monitor progress and outcomes. While the potential of these roundtables is very high, they must be supported through providing facilitation, organization, research, and capacity to follow up on ideas and questions. Developing capacity to support roundtable dialogue would be required for the success of these initiatives.

This action was identified in the following areas:

- Oil and Gas
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Inclusion and Belonging

## Workforce Development and Local Career Opportunities

Several sectors have identified challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. Many employers have to recruit from outside of the community and the region, usually from southern urban regions. Their experience is that these employees often move back south after a relatively short period of time.

Experience has shown that a person from a small northern community is more likely to remain in a small northern community through their work and career. Encouraging people, youth and adults, raised in Fort St. John and the Peace region to pursue higher education and careers that they can work at in the community would be beneficial to social and economic development.

A Career Awareness and Development Program could include career expos, as well as job shadowing and career mentoring opportunities. It would involve School District 60, Northern Lights College, University of Northern British Columbia, Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce, major employers, and small and medium sized businesses.

This action was identified in the following areas:

- Oil and Gas
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Public and Government Services
- Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness
- Services for Vulnerable People and Families

## Establish a Volunteer Service for Fort St. John

Many non-profit organizations rely on volunteers and have concerns about volunteer staffing and burnout. While new volunteer recruitment would be desirable, it is also time consuming for these organizations. At the same time, people and organizations interested in volunteering would benefit from having a single point of contact to find out about and access volunteer opportunities. A central volunteer service for Fort St. John could develop partnerships and capacity that would assist non-profit agencies and community event organizers in recruiting and retaining volunteers. This could include links with industry and businesses seeking to make a contribution of time to the community or with high schools to help students fulfill their graduation requirement for volunteer community hours. A central volunteer service would assist non-profit organizations by taking on a number of tasks related to volunteer recruitment and retention, including:

- Community awareness
- Recruitment
- Applications
- Screening
- Criminal record checks
- Placement
- Basic training
- Appreciation
- Recognition

This action was identified in the following action areas:

- Inclusion and Belonging
- Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness
- Services for Vulnerable People and Families
- Arts and Culture
- Sports and Recreation

## Summary of Action Areas

This section presents a summary of all of the action areas. It also includes a proposed time frame for the initiation and implementation of each of the action areas and identifies the most likely role for the City of Fort St. John.

### Key

Time Frame	City's Role
Short: 1 year	Implement: Fund and deliver
Medium: 2-3 years	Initiate: Start and pass over to another organization
Long: 4+ years	Support: Delivery by another organization
	Advocate: Actively advocate for action

### Action Area

	Time Frame	City's Role
<b>Inclusion and Belonging</b>		
Establish a Roundtable on Inclusion and Belonging	Short/Ongoing	Implement
Conduct research to understand and track community perceptions and issues	Medium	Implement
Develop a welcome program for newcomers	Medium	Implement
Encourage appreciation for diversity	Ongoing	Support
Support events that bring neighbours together	Medium	Implement
Establish a Volunteer Grandparent Program	Long	Support
<b>Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness</b>		
Enhance governance capacity for non-profit service providers	Medium/Ongoing	Support
Support volunteer recruitment for non-pwofit societies	Medium/Ongoing	Initiate
Build awareness and encourage local and regional residents to pursue careers in wellness and wellbeing	Long	Support
Assist organizations to stabilize and increase financial and operational capacity	Long	Support
<b>Services for Vulnerable Individuals and Families</b>		
Build awareness and understanding of vulnerability and who is vulnerable	Short/Ongoing	Support
Enhance access to 'basic needs' and services for low-income people and families	Short/Ongoing	Support
Address systemic issues related to vulnerability	Medium/Long	Support
Enhance governance capacity for non-profit service providers	Medium/Ongoing	Initiate
Support volunteer recruitment for non-profit societies	Medium/Ongoing	Initiate
Build awareness and encourage local and regional residents to pursue careers in services that support vulnerable people and families	Long	Support



	Time Frame	City's Role
<b>Public and Government Services</b>		
Build awareness and encourage local and regional residents to pursue careers in government and public services	Long	Support
Support the current mobile professional workforce	Medium	Support
Utilize technology to deliver services not available in the community	Medium/Long	Advocate
Encourage government and public services to locate local offices and services in locations that will support a vibrant community	Medium/Long	Advocate/ Support
<b>Retail and Services</b>		
Proceed with plans to revitalize the downtown core	Short/Ongoing	Implement
Identify emerging market segments	Medium	Support
Organize events that attract retail and service customers	Medium	Support
Support education for marketing and customer attraction	Short	Support
Focus on standards of service	Medium	Support
<b>Housing</b>		
Encourage the development of housing for seniors	Medium/Long	Implement
Consider overall housing affordability in the planning, development, and management of housing and neighbourhoods	Short/Ongoing	Implement
Encourage housing that supports a mobile workforce	Long/Ongoing	Implement
Encourage the development of housing in the downtown core	Short/Ongoing	Implement
Plan neighbourhoods to encourage interaction between neighbours	Ongoing	Implement
Continue to encourage and support a wide range of housing options and choices	Ongoing	Implement
<b>Workforce</b>		
Address issues of basic literacy and numeracy	Medium	Support
Encourage educational attainment	Long	Support
Highlight the range and diversity of career options available	Long	Support
Support women in the workforce	Short	Support
Create welcoming and inclusive workplaces	Short	Support
<b>Oil and Gas</b>		
Convene a Roundtable on the Oil and Gas Sector	Short/Ongoing	Initiate
Strengthen oil and gas research capacity in northeast BC	Long	Support
Develop a workforce training program for the oil and gas sector	Long	Support
Convene a dialogue on the family and social impacts of working in the oil and gas sector	Short	Initiate
<b>Forestry</b>		
Continue to build relationships and partnerships with First Nations communities	Short/Ongoing	Support
Strengthen forestry research capacity in northeast BC	Long	Support
Identify and utilize forest sector 'waste streams' for economic development	Long	Support
Develop a workforce training program for the forest sector	Long	Support

	Time Frame	City's Role
<b>Agriculture</b>		
Develop a northeast BC agricultural strategy	Medium	Support
Establish an Agriculture Roundtable	Short/Ongoing	Initiate
Develop agricultural research capacity for northeast BC	Long	Support
Construct facilities that support opportunities for value-added products and processing	Long	Support
Develop a marketing strategy for northeast BC agricultural products	Medium	Support
Develop a workforce training program for the agricultural sector	Long	Support
<b>Tourism</b>		
Develop a local tourism strategy that is linked to a broader regional tourism strategy	Medium	Support
Establish a Northeast BC Tourism Roundtable	Short/Ongoing	Initiate
Develop collaborative relationships and partnerships to advance tourism	Medium	Support
Identify offerings that would appeal to business travelers	Medium	Support
Develop tourism and hospitality training programs	Long	Support
<b>Arts and Culture</b>		
Develop an arts and culture strategy	Short	Implement
Develop an arts and culture facilities plan	Medium/Long	Implement
Develop an arts and culture program plan and review existing policies	Medium/Long	Implement
Support the arts and culture sector to act as a bridge between cultures	Ongoing	Support
<b>Sports and Recreation</b>		
Continue the City's commitment to the parks and recreation master plan	Ongoing	Implement
Develop a plan for sports and recreation programming	Medium	Implement
Develop a plan for sports and recreation events	Medium	Implement
Ensure that income is not a barrier to participation in sports and recreation	Medium/Long	Initiate
Offer more support for volunteerism in sports and recreation	Short/Ongoing	Support
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
Maintain and develop the capacity to anticipate and plan for future infrastructure needs	Ongoing	Implement
Undertake innovative pilot or demonstration projects	Medium/Long	Implement
Link infrastructure asset management plans to development planning	Ongoing	Implement
Increase public awareness of the issues that impact infrastructure needs and costs	Medium/Long	Implement
Advocate for communications infrastructure investment	Short	Advocate
<b>Transportation</b>		
Continue the City's commitment to the transportation master plan	Ongoing	Implement
Identify emerging and changing transportation needs	Medium/Long	Implement
Increase accessibility and awareness of public transportation options	Medium/Long	Implement
Ensure that income is not a barrier to using public transit	Ongoing	Implement

# Decision-Making for Social and Economic Proposals and Options in Fort St. John

This decision-making matrix has been developed as a tool to assess emergent opportunities against the Social and Economic Development Framework for Fort St. John. The matrix may also be used to assess projects that are already underway.

The matrix has been designed to be used as a worksheet by City staff, as a discussion guide to gather input, and as tool to discuss project strengths and opportunities for improvements with project proponents. It can also be used to provide reports to Council regarding project assessments.

## Action Areas

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on Inclusion and Belonging	Contribution to creating a welcoming and inclusive community where residents feel a sense of belonging.				
Impact on Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness	Contribution to creating a comprehensive range of services that support the wellbeing, wellness, and potential of all individuals and families.				
Impact on Services for Vulnerable People and Families	Contribution to creating a comprehensive range of services that support individuals and families experiencing challenges or trauma.				
Impact on Public and Government Services	Contribution to creating a growing hub for a wide range of public and government services in northeast BC.				
Impact on Retail and Services	Contribution to creating a vibrant, competitive, and innovative retail and service sector that attracts local residents and visitors.				
Impact on Housing	Contribution to creating a range of housing options to attract and retain people across socio-economic categories; to provide affordable, appropriate, and secure housing.				

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on Services for Individual and Family Wellbeing and Wellness	Contribution to creating a comprehensive range of services that support the wellbeing, wellness, and potential of all individuals and families.				
Impact on Workforce	Contribution to creating a skilled and stable learning workforce that is ready to adapt to change and that supports economic development.				
Impact on Oil and Gas	Contribution to creating a leading and innovative oil and gas sector that provides economic and social benefit.				
Impact on Agriculture	Contribution to creating an innovative, future-oriented, and adaptive agricultural sector supplying products to high-value markets.				
Impact on Forestry	Contribution to creating a diverse, innovative, and resilient forest sector focused on sustainability, renewal, and opportunities for innovation.				
Impact on Tourism	Contribution to creating a vibrant and diverse tourism sector that creates economic and social benefit for multiple sectors.				
Impact on Arts and Culture	Contribution to creating a vibrant arts and culture sector that fosters individual and community creativity, wellbeing, connection between cultures, economic opportunities, and quality of life.				
Impact on Sports and Recreation	Contribution to creating a vibrant sports and recreation sector that fosters health, wellness, economic opportunities, a sense of community, and quality of life.				

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on Infrastructure	Contribution to creating services that support safety, health, quality of life, and promote development.				
Impact on Transportation	Contribution to supporting multiple forms of transportation for ease of movement by people and products in and around the community safely and efficiently.				

### Building Foundations to Achieve Goals and Aspirations

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on Building Capacity	Contribution to enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anticipate change;</li> <li>• understand change; and</li> <li>• organize, develop, and mobilize ideas, assets, and resources.</li> </ul>				
Impact on Developing Connections	Contribution to enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate;</li> <li>• create shared understanding;</li> <li>• coordinate; and</li> <li>• collaborate.</li> </ul>				
Impact on Fostering Adaptability and Flexibility	Contribution to enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement plans;</li> <li>• monitor progress;</li> <li>• evaluate performance and outcomes;</li> <li>• adjust plans; and</li> <li>• respond to change.</li> </ul>				

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on Building Resilience	<p>Contribution to enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations, and the community to deal with and recover from challenges and crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engage in continuous learning;</li> <li>• build strength and depth of networks;</li> <li>• build trust and collaboration; and</li> <li>• engage in innovative and transformative thinking.</li> </ul>				

## Synergies

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact at Multiple Levels of the Community	Degree to which the proposal incorporates attention to making a positive difference at the individual, organizational, and community level.				
Impact on Multiple Action Areas	Degree to which the proposal incorporates attention to having a positive impact on multiple action areas.				
Impact on Multiple Foundation Areas	Degree to which the proposal incorporates attention to having a positive impact on multiple foundation areas.				
Impact on Engagement and Collaboration in Fort St. John	Degree to which the proposal engages and encourages collaboration among individuals, organizations, and the community in Fort St. John.				

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Impact on External Engagement and Collaboration	Degree to which the proposal engages and encourages collaboration with individuals, organizations, and communities regionally, provincially, and beyond.				
Impact on Housing	Contribution to creating a range of housing options to attract and retain people across socio-economic categories; to provide affordable, appropriate, and secure housing.				

## Role of the City of Fort St. John

Question	Definition/Vision	Direct Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)	Indirect Impact	Ranking -3 to +3 (0=no impact)
Identification of the City of Fort St. John's role	Identify the City of Fort St. John's role in the proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Policy</li> <li>– Funding</li> <li>– Delivery</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Initiation</li> <li>• Ongoing support</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> </ul>				



**FORT ST JOHN**  
*The Energetic City*

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

