

Economic Development Strategy

District of Vanderhoof

Report 2 of 2 – Strategy Report

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NOTICE TO READER:

The consulting team gratefully acknowledges the support and direction of the District of Vanderhoof and the Economic Development Committee.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to all those who participated in the consultation process, residents who responded to the community survey, Nechako Valley Secondary School students for agreeing to fill out their own survey, focus group participants and individuals making themselves available for personal interviews.

In this plan, we have endeavoured to reflect and incorporate the diversity of views, concerns and expectations for how Vanderhoof and Area can reach its potential as a sustainable, thriving community, and trust that this work will contribute to that goal.

List of Abbreviations

AAC	Allowable Annual Cut
ALC	Agriculture Land Commission
ALR	Agriculture Land Reserve
ATEEC	Applied Technical & Engineering Education Consortium
BIA	Business Improvement Area
BNRD	Bulkley Nechako Regional District
BCMAFF	BC Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries
BCMHS	BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development
CAM	Community Asset Mapping
Council	District of Vanderhoof elected officials
CNC	College of New Caledonia
CFDCSN	Community Futures Development Corporation of Stuart Nechako
COC	Chamber of Commerce
COTA	Council of Tourism Associations
DOV	District of Vanderhoof
DMO	Destination Marketing Association
DPA	Development Permit Area
DVMA	District of Vanderhoof Municipal Airport
EDO	Economic Development Officer
EDC	Economic Development Committee
FBC	Fraser Basin Council
FBT	Fraser Basin Trust
GNC	Good Neighbour Committee
HS	High School
IPP	Independent Power Project
LHA	Local Health Area
LICO	Low Income Cut Off
m ³	Cubic Metres
MAC	Marketing Action Team
MCD	Ministry of Community Development
MEMPR	Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
MOFR	Ministry of Forests and Range
MOTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
MTCA	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
MITACS	Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems
NBCTA	Northern BC Tourism Association
NCLGA	North Central Local Government Association
NDI	Northern Development Initiative
NGO	Non-government Organization
NHA	Northern Health Authority
NIMG	Northern Interior Mining Group
NRC	National Research Council
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
NVCS	Nechako Valley Community Services
NVFNG	Nechako Valley Food Network Group
NVRCA	Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen's Association
NVSS	Nechako Valley Secondary School
NWCC	Northwest Community College
NWCDC	Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

OBAC	Omineca Beetle Action Coalition
OCP	Official Community Plan
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
PSEC	Post Secondary Education Committee
RDBN	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
TAC	Tourism Advisory Committee
TBC	Tourism British Columbia
TDP	Tourism Development Plan
TSA	Timber Supply Area
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia
VRA	Vanderhoof Real Estate Association
WED	Western Economic Diversification

Action Item Key

- ❖ Activity Begins
- ▶ Activity is continuing. Also used to identify actions that have already started and will continue on.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction To The Plan	5
1.1	Background	5
1.2	Method of Study	6
1.3	What is Economic Development?	8
1.4	Why Undertake Economic Development?	8
1.5	What Principles Should We Have To Guide The Plan?	9
1.6	How Is The Plan Structured?	10
2	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	12
3	WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?	13
3.1	Assets and Constraints	13
3.2	Community Vision	14
3.3	District Vision and Mission	17
3.4	Economic Development Goals	17
4	HOW WILL WE GET THERE?	19
5	FINANCIAL PLAN	55
5.1	Proposed Budget	55
5.2	Proposed Funding Sources	56
6	ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK	57
7	MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	58
7.1	Overview	58
Appendix A	Community Survey Results	61
Appendix B	High School Survey Results	71
Appendix C	Focus Group Participants	80
Appendix D	Personal Communications	81
Appendix E	References	83

List of Tables

Table 4-1	Summary of Economic Development Strategy	20
Table 5-1	Proposed Annual Budget 2010-2014	55
Table 5-2	Potential Funding Sources for Special Projects	56

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Vanderhoof Economic Development Plan Preparation Process 7

Figure 1-2 The Strategic Planning Process10

Figure 2-1 Current Situation Summary.....12

Figure 3-1 Assets and Constraints Summary13

Figure 3-2 Vanderhoof’s Economic Development Goals.....18

Figure 7-1 Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators.....59

1 INTRODCUTION TO THE PLAN

1.1 Background

In August 2009, the District of Vanderhoof invited proposals to develop a comprehensive economic development strategic plan in consultation with Vanderhoof's business and community groups. The overall objectives of the study included:

- ❖ Conducting a review of the local economy and its current economic base;
- ❖ Developing future economic scenarios: one assuming no economic development, and the other with economic development;
- ❖ Identifying specific opportunities for economic development;
- ❖ Developing goals, objectives and competitive economic development strategies;
- ❖ Identifying resources, business assistance, partnerships and policy changes required to implement identified opportunities;
- ❖ Advising on options and providing a recommendation for a delivery model;
- ❖ Identifying funding or grant sources to support plan implementation;
- ❖ Developing measurement criteria to assess the future economic development function; and,
- ❖ Conducting appropriate community consultation.

The selection of a consultant to prepare the economic development plan was made in a collaborative process involving District of Vanderhoof staff and the Economic Development Committee (EDC). Following review and ranking, the selected consulting team was then presented to Council for their approval. In late September 2009 the consulting team, led by Peak Solutions Consulting Inc., was selected as the successful bid. The District staff, EDC, and Council continued to work in a collaborative environment throughout the development of the plan providing oversight and input into the planning process. The EDC members during this period included the following:

- ❖ Bill Dobbs (Forestry)
- ❖ Darlene Turner (Agriculture)
- ❖ Heather Stephens (Tourism)
- ❖ Kevin Moutray (Chamber of Commerce/Retail)
- ❖ Maureen Mallais (Education)
- ❖ Warren Robb (Mining)
- ❖ Gerry Thiessen (District of Vanderhoof)
- ❖ Jackie Thomas (Saik'uz First Nation)
- ❖ Jerry Petersen (Regional District Area F)

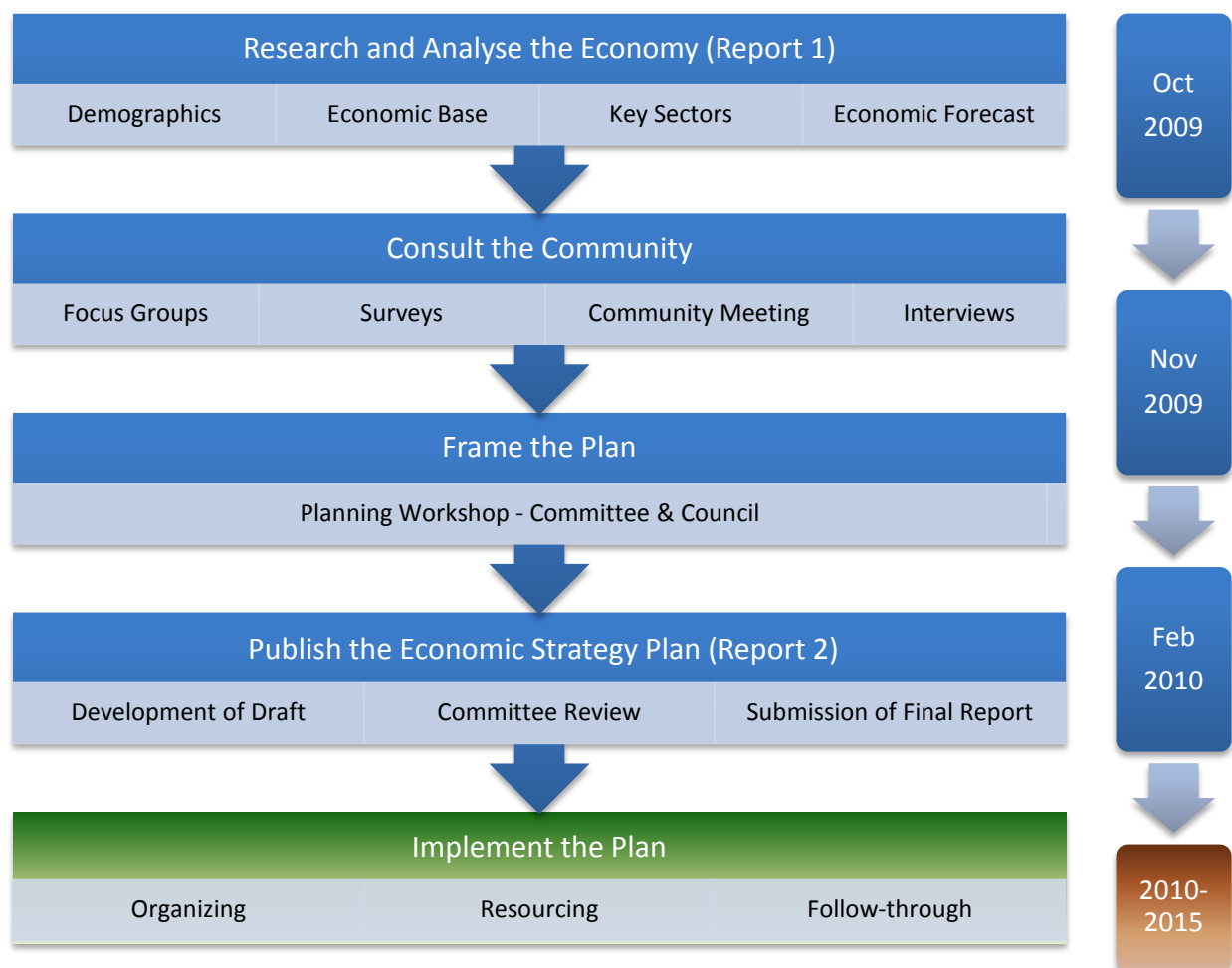
District of Vanderhoof staff, Kathie LaForge, Economic Development Officer, and Tom Clement, Deputy Administrator also provided input and oversight to the project. In addition, they provided logistical support as well as assistance in organizing and conducting meetings and workshops.

1.2 Method of Study

In October 2009 the consulting team embarked on plan preparation following a methodology outlined in Figure 1-1. The first tasks were associated with assessing the current socio-economic situation for Vanderhoof and Area by gathering and analysing available demographic, economic and sector data from various statistical and government agencies such as Statistics Canada and BC Stats. In addition, studies recently prepared for the District were reviewed for insights into the local economy and indications of how the community saw itself growing in the future.

This information was used to prepare the socio-economic assessment report. This report was the first of two reports prepared for the economic development planning process. The socio-economic assessment report provided tangible numbers and insights into the community and economy that supported the strategy development phase. This report was provided in draft form to the District of Vanderhoof for consideration in the preparation of the subsequent planning workshops.

Figure 1-1 Vanderhoof Economic Development Plan Preparation Process



Moving into the strategic plan development, local planning documents such as the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the District Energy Plan were reviewed in detail. At the same time additional outreach was initiated to identify community views and objectives that would guide the economic development strategy. The District and the consulting team were cognizant of the fact that the value of any community planning process would be directly proportional to the amount of participation.

A priority was placed on allowing residents, businesses and community groups to express their views about Vanderhoof and Area and how economic development should be shaped to help the community and Area move forward. A community household survey was conducted in November over a three week period, with 44 returns being received. A further 65 surveys were filled out and returned by Nechako Valley Secondary School students. A discussion of the survey and the results appear in Appendix H and Appendix I. A public meeting held in Vanderhoof on November 18th was attended by nine members of the public and allowed for direct input into the process.

A series of focus groups was held in Vanderhoof on November 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th with participants representing major industry, downtown and small business, community groups, First Nations and individuals. The focus groups outlined a vision for Vanderhoof and discussed important community development issues of what could be done to take better advantage of assets and correct weaknesses. A set of follow-up interviews, most of them in person, were conducted with individuals who could not attend the focus groups. As noted in Appendices E and F, a total of 44 individuals contributed their time and thoughts to this process.

Using the feedback from the community consultation process, the consulting team and the economic development commission, Council and District staff participated in a workshop on December 14th and December 16th to frame up the economic development plan, addressing such issues as a future vision for the community, the economic development mission and related goals and core strategies. The process also reviewed some key planning issues and obtained views on the challenges of implementation, including resource and funding requirements.

In January 2010, the consulting team delivered the strategy framework for consideration and feedback. With input, the consulting team proceeded to work toward a full draft plan, which was delivered later in the month for consideration by the District and EDC. Upon further review and amendments as directed, a final report was approved for presentation to District council. This plan represents the outcome of this process and is contained in Report 2 prepared for the process.

1.3 What is Economic Development?

There is no widely accepted definition of economic development, although it is usually described either in terms of objectives (e.g. employment creation, wealth creation, quality of life), or as a process aimed at shaping and encouraging growth, competitiveness, sustainability and economic welfare. Government does have an important role to serve, as it is responsible for contributing to the environment in which economic development occurs. This is accomplished by applying resources and regulatory powers that encourage investment and leverage factors of production - land, labour, capital, and technology – within a national, provincial or local economy.

1.4 Why Undertake Economic Development?

An *Economic Development Strategy* describes a roadmap for the District of Vanderhoof and its partners (private, non-profit, public sector) illustrating how they can work together on initiatives that enhance investments in wealth-generating and community well-being activities. The need for such a plan is implied when considering the following:

- ❖ With the District's Official Community Plan (OCP), the community liveability, community services, and environmental objectives refer to economic development activities. Specifically, the OCP highlights the importance of strengthening the downtown

by encouraging activity, promoting development in serviced areas, plus encouraging and preserving farm and grazing lands within the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR).

- ❖ The economic objectives listed in the District’s OCP highlight the desire to foster a positive business climate that promotes and encourages expansion and diversifies the local economy.
- ❖ The economy of the region and District has changed over the last decade and will continue to evolve going forward. Change within the traditional economic base, especially forestry, could become negative and could permanently alter the employment and income profile. Conversely, at the same time, the region has opportunities in new ventures that may contribute to diversification and growth.
- ❖ The community has recently completed an Energy Plan that will guide the community towards a “cleaner” energy future. In addition, the District has participated with area partners on sustainability planning for the District and Area. These activities will influence socio-economic conditions in the community and are anticipated to influence the community’s quality of life, which is also a key objective of the economic development strategy.
- ❖ The District of Vanderhoof has also been working with other levels of government on specific economic development tasks. Three specific initiatives stand out for the District including:
 - The pending formalization of a Community Centred Agreement with the BC Ministry of Community Services that will channel implementation effort of the Ministry and the District towards common economic development priorities.
 - Partnership work with the Bulkley Nechako Regional District and surrounding communities on tourism planning and implementation of strategic regional tourism initiatives.
 - Partnership in the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) planning process which includes area communities and the provincial government. This process is now entering the implementation phase.

The presumption is that communities can develop local visions and goals and apply resources systematically and over the long term, so that the economic base and other targets of community health and stability will be enhanced.

1.5 What Principles Guide The Plan?

The preparation of this plan, and its recommendations, has attempted to abide by the following guiding principles:

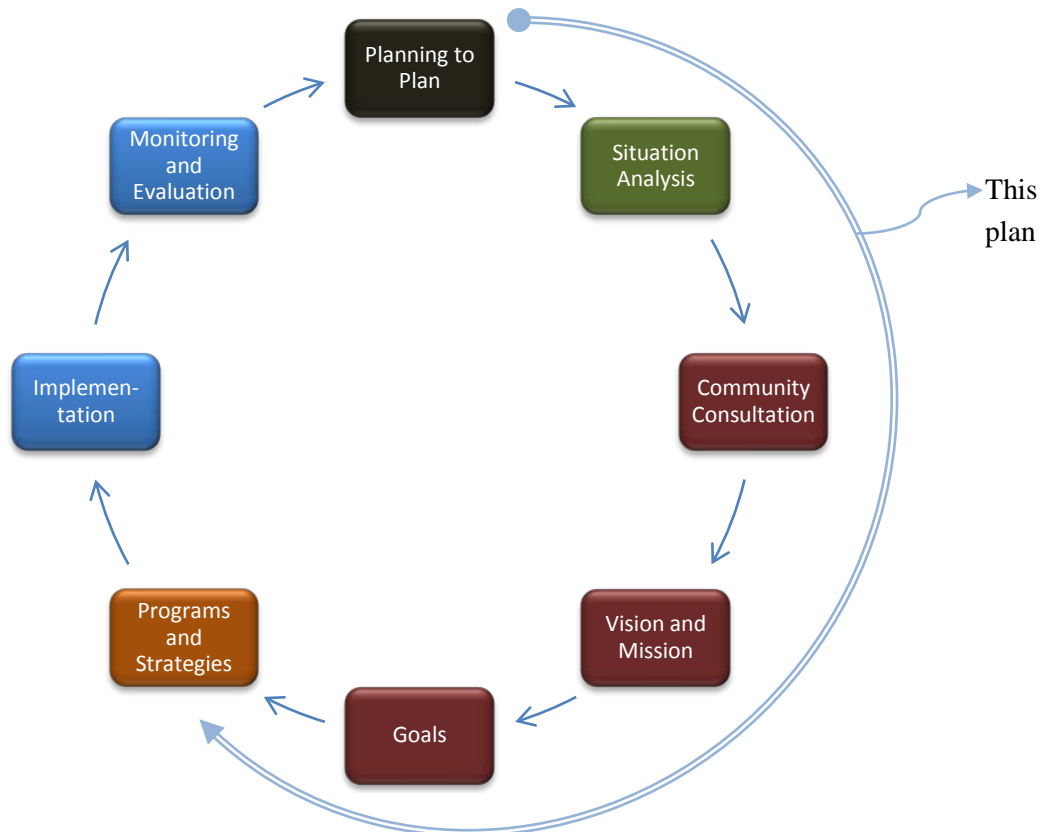
- ❖ **Leadership** – create an environment in which people in the community can contribute to making Vanderhoof a better place: by articulating goals without forcing them on others, by setting the agenda and not simply responding to current events, by initiating rather than by managing change, by encouraging community dialogue, and finally by having transparent decision-making that will encourage results;

- ❖ **Participation** – encourage community participation in different forms and use the results of that process to inform the plan and set its priorities;
- ❖ **Equity** – seek all views and ensure respect to all those who participate in the process;
- ❖ **Sustainability** – encourage the responsible use of natural and built resources and economic development that seeks the long-term maintenance of community well-being;
- ❖ **Partnerships** – seek out partnerships that improve access to resources, encourage innovation and empower the community as it adapts to change;
- ❖ **Integrated planning** – follow the path set forth by other local planning initiatives, especially those built around significant public involvement.

1.6 How Is The Plan Structured?

The process guiding the preparation of this plan is depicted in Figure 1-2. Each step in the sequence is meant to take the community from the general to the specific, from a broad expression of future expectations down through gradually more specific identification of the means and ends that go into making a coherent and cohesive plan.

Figure 1-2 The Strategic Planning Process



The relationship between the process cycle and the chapters of this report are identified below.

Chapter	Content
2	Where are we now? A situation analysis using indicators that collectively describe baseline socio-economic conditions in Vanderhoof and Area and where the community might be headed in the future.
3	Where do we want to go? A future plan direction comprising of vision, mission and goal statements drawn from the community consultation process. The plan direction expresses the targets or results that the community wants to realize.
4	How do we get there? A set of projects, initiatives and programs meant to achieve the vision and goals. They will steer the community toward the results it seeks and encourage strategic decisions for dealing with all the predictable, unpredictable and unknown changes in the surrounding environment. Ultimately, these efforts will determine the overall plan effectiveness – that is the success in achieving the vision and goals.

2 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The detailed Socio-economic Assessment provided in Report 1 identifies some of the more significant demographics and economy changes that have occurred in Vanderhoof and Area over the last 10 years and what to anticipate looking ahead. The highlights of that analysis and implications for economic development are summarized below in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Current Situation Summary



3 WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

3.1 Assets and Constraints

The foundations of economic development planning are built on those distinctive assets that differentiate one community from another and are strengthened through the elimination of barriers and constraints that prevent those assets from being exploited. Figure 3-1 highlights the best assets Vanderhoof has to offer, as well as those constraints it will have to overcome if development objectives are to be achieved.

Figure 3-1 Assets and Constraints Summary

Assets	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/ Proximity to Prince George • Traffic volumes • Local Airport • Nature-based features • Natural Resources • Nechako River • History/heritage • Trail system • Available and affordable Land • Strong manufacturing sector • Quality health care • Quality educational services • Vibrant Downtown • Reasonable costs • Quality of life • Volunteers, community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of growth • Lack of economic diversification • Forestry jobs at risk longer term • Development red tape • Small community size • Aging labour force • Lack of access to rail service • Proximity to Prince George • Unsightly brown field sites in community • Vacant commercial buildings in downtown • Lack of vision and direction • Lack of infrastructure outside downtown

3.2 Community Vision

A vision is meant to convey the community's future expectations about itself and its surrounding environment. In economic development, the vision provides a high-level sense of direction and is the starting-point for all planning. The following vision was developed in collaboration with participants from the focus groups, public meeting, community survey comments, and the workshops conducted during this process.

Community

“In the year 2020 Vanderhoof is a welcoming community that is a great place to live, raise a family and do business. We celebrate the “Vanderhoof Advantage” by building on our strengths – our people, work ethic and collaborative spirit while recruiting individuals, businesses and investors who can positively impact the future.

The increased diversification of the economy has provided many additional benefits including: increased employment opportunities; enhanced cultural activities; the maintenance, and in some cases expansion of health, medical and social services; as well as a greater range of goods and services available locally. Storefronts and streetscapes have been improved while housing, including rentals, remains affordable.

Youth and retirees are choosing to stay, while retirees from elsewhere, new employees, self-employed professionals and their families have increased. The ethnic and cultural diversity of the workforce and community has expanded making Vanderhoof a more cosmopolitan, self-sufficient community that views itself as a place to come to, not move away from. Vanderhoof has enjoyed modest, but sustainable population growth over the past decade.

Vanderhoof is a healthy community, welcoming everyone, with many clubs and organizations, activities and facilities. It is implementing a Recreational / Cultural Facilities Plan that identifies the scope, nature and timeline for a range of facilities that the community has determined to be important to their quality of life.

Residents of Vanderhoof and the Saik'uz First Nation have developed positive social relationships in addition to an ever increasing number of business relationships. There are now many examples of cooperation and collaboration. The community enjoys a productive, collaborative relationship with the adjacent rural areas and neighbouring communities of Fort St. James, Fort Fraser, Fraser Lake and Prince George.

Economy

The business community has become more integrated, collaborative and supportive of each other and the broader community.

While the forest industry continues to prosper, it has experienced a reduced timber supply that has challenged the historical level of employment and activity. Work continues on increasing the utilization of the available wood fibre for wood pellets, electrical production, thermal energy and other uses. The volume and type of silvicultural activities has increased in the area.

Several mines operate in the area, which actively work with the community on long-term sustainability initiatives. Many mine employees live in Vanderhoof, which has become a hub for mining services as several local businesses supply mines throughout the north.

Agriculture has diversified its production into natural beef, forage (hay & grain), vegetables and other value-added products. Local demand for locally produced foods (including natural & organic) has increased, partially due to consumer education. As a result, local farmers now supply an expanded range of products to the farmer's market, participate in a local retail food storefront, as well as ship to other BC communities. Local governments, in collaboration with agricultural organizations, have advocated for recognition of the importance of the agricultural sector. Most farmers and ranchers are now experiencing financial stability that ensures that agriculture will be around locally for future generations.

One of the community's recognized strengths is manufacturing, including furniture and cabinets, log and other truck trailers, portable drill rigs, pavement recycling machines, sawmill and mine mill refurbishment and many other steel fabrication projects. With continued growth and diversification, Vanderhoof's non-wood manufacturing employment remains strong.

Tourism has grown and diversified and now features cultural tourism with the Saik'uz First Nation, eco-tour operators, agri-tourism and other destination tourism developments. Event tourism has expanded as Vanderhoof hosts many events which offer local residents and visitors enhanced access to sports and cultural activities. Hunting and fishing continues to attract significant numbers of residents and tourists alike, both self-directed and through guides and outfitters. Collaborative marketing efforts are having a positive impact.

Transportation and communication services have improved. Advocacy efforts have resulted in better access to rail for local business and significant enhancements to area road infrastructure which has removed physical impediments. The airport has become a small but successful business hub with a commercial pilot's training school, air charter and airplane repair services now operational. All areas within the region can access modern voice and data telecommunications.

Vanderhoof has become a stronger regional service centre with improved inter-community transportation services, new restaurants, accommodation, retail and wholesale businesses which service the forestry, mining, agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Providing exemplary service has become the 'watchword' for the service sector.

The District of Vanderhoof is business-friendly with an inventory of lands suitable for development (residential, commercial, airport, light and heavy industrial). Some regulatory issues, practices and policies impeding the competitiveness of local businesses, farmers and ranchers have been resolved with the collaboration of the District and local stakeholders.

Environment

Vanderhoof is environmentally responsible. The community has a strong focus on protecting and enhancing the environment including the air shed, wetlands, rivers and lakes, saving the Nechako White sturgeon from extinction, more recycling, further enhanced public transportation, hiking trails and biking paths. There is minimal waste from our resource industries as forestry and agricultural wastes have been optimized / maximized as input materials into new products.

Education

The availability and quality of educational opportunities has increased. High school completion rates have increased; in fact the Aboriginal student success-rate leads the Province. Students can seamlessly transition from high school into trades, college, university programs or employment. Local trades and technical training has resulted in leading edge facilities, increased numbers of programs and graduates. Longer term work experience opportunities are available. There is now a greater emphasis on facilitating creative entrepreneurship skills which, with active business mentorship opportunities, has increased new business formation. School District #91's Distance Learning program continues to expand within the province, Canada and internationally."

3.3 District Vision and Mission

3.3.1 District Vision

The following District vision was developed from the community vision above and with input from the Vanderhoof Economic Development committee and the District council. The purpose of the District vision statement is to provide a concise vision statement that will support economic development efforts. The vision statement for the District of Vanderhoof is:

“In the year 2020 Vanderhoof is a welcoming community that is a great place to live, raise a family and do business. We celebrate the “Vanderhoof Advantage” by building on our strengths – our people, work ethic and collaborative spirit while recruiting individuals, businesses and investors who can positively impact the future.”

3.3.2 District Mission

A mission statement is a short statement of the purpose of the organization. Specifically the mission statement is meant to guide actions, spell out the overall goal, provide a sense of direction, and guide decision-making. The mission statement provides the framework or context within which the strategic plan is formulated. The following mission statement was developed at the strategic planning workshop of Council, District staff and the Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee:

“The District of Vanderhoof’s economic development department will serve the needs of area residents and businesses by promoting the community; facilitating a positive environment for existing businesses as well as new business development; advocating for new and improved local infrastructure; and establishing programs and partnerships that contribute to a sustainable and diversified economy.”

3.4 Economic Development Goals

The goals of the economic development process in Vanderhoof are shown in Figure 3-2 and were refined from the feedback obtained from the public processes including the focus group participants, public meeting and survey respondents.

Figure 3-2 Vanderhoof's Economic Development Goals

- 1.) A cooperative planning environment that involves all local stakeholders and the surrounding communities.
- 2.) Population growth that is sustainable, encourages youth and retirees to stay and is desirable to new residents.
- 3.) Increase economic diversification that will lead to increased employment opportunities.
- 4.) A business-friendly environment with an inventory of lands suitable for development and policies that reflect business needs.
- 5.) There is a strong focus on protecting and enhancing the environmental setting and the liveability of the community.
- 6.) A learning community that values education and innovation in which pursuit of knowledge is a key economic driver.

4 HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

This chapter presents the main strategy recommendations for achieving the community vision and goals stated in the previous chapter. The different components of the plan and how they are expected to contribute to goals are summarized in Table 4-1. They cover a wide range of interests from improving the business climate to improving approaches to sustainability and marketing the community. Most economic sectors are represented and many potential projects are discussed, but equal emphasis is placed on establishing processes that will give traction to a continuous, integrated development cycle. For organizational purposes, the strategies have been divided into two categories including:

- ❖ ***Foundation Initiatives*** – that is initiatives designed to support, on an on-going basis, broad ranging change in the socio-economic character of the community and guide the way the community conducts economic development. The foundation initiatives include:
 - A. Improve Business Climate;
 - B. Ensure Land and Infrastructure Services are Available;
 - C. Grow the Economic Importance of Education;
 - D. Support Infrastructure and Services Critical to Quality of Life and Amenity Migrants;
 - E. Improve Regional Transportation Infrastructure; and,
 - F. Develop a Collaborative Regional Sustainability Approach.

- ❖ ***Project Focused Initiatives*** – these initiatives have a more specific focus and are targeted at specific sectors or a specific defined task. The project focused initiatives include:
 - G. Support Agriculture Diversification and Stability in the Region;
 - H. Capitalize on the Growing Mining Sector;
 - I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities;
 - J. Assist in Manufacturing Development;
 - K. Foster Business Development at the Airport; and,
 - L. Develop a Community Brand.

However, it is important to remember initiatives are not meant to be silos that can somehow be implemented independently from one another—they should be viewed as inter-connected components that if implemented collectively will optimize the benefits to the community.

Table 4-1 Summary of Economic Development Strategy

Strategy	Related Goals					
	1) Coop	2) Pop	3) Div	4) Bus	5) Env	6) Ed
Foundation Initiatives						
A. Improve Business Climate	✓	✓	✓	✓		
B. Ensure Industrial & Commercial Service Availability		✓	✓	✓		
C. Grow Economic Importance of Education	✓	✓	✓			✓
D. Support Infrastructure/Services Critical to Quality of Life & Amenity Migrants		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E. Improve Regional Transportation Infrastructure	✓			✓		
F. Develop a Collaborative Regional Sustainability Approach	✓				✓	
Project Specific Initiatives						
G. Support Agriculture Diversification and Stability	✓	✓	✓	✓		
H. Capitalize on Growing Mining Sectors	✓	✓	✓			✓
I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities	✓		✓			
J. Assist in Manufacturing Development	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
K. Foster Business Development at the Airport			✓	✓		✓
L. Develop a Community Brand		✓	✓	✓		

Key: 1) Coop=A cooperative planning environment; 2) Pop= sustainable population growth; 3) Div=Increased economic diversification; 4)Bus= A business-friendly environment; 5) Env=Enhancing environment setting and liveability of community; 6) Ed=learning community.

A. Improve Business Climate

Business climate indicates how government policies, relationships and local communities combine to support business development. A favourable business climate allows companies and entrepreneurs to access their production needs and markets with a minimal of interference. Economic and administrative conditions, such as taxation and trade policy, as well as the attitude of government, First Nations and institutions toward businesses and business activity are all considerations. Business climate is affected by both major cost factors (e.g., land, labour, taxes, regulations) and non-cost factors (e.g., quality of life, attitudes toward business).

At the local level, business climate is influenced by flexibility and timeliness of the development approval process, construction costs, operating costs, access to infrastructure, availability of capital and the quality of the local labour force. If these attributes allow investors to find fewer risks and higher returns in a community when compared to other places, then business and financial risk is reduced and presumably investment flows and job-creating activities are enhanced.

Focus group participants and survey respondents had mixed views on Vanderhoof's business climate. In the community survey, 64% of respondents stated they were very or extremely satisfied with Vanderhoof as a place to live—only 21% gave that answer when asked about Vanderhoof as a place to do business, while 43% said they were “somewhat satisfied”.

An improvement in the business climate in Vanderhoof would help attract more businesses, but perhaps more importantly it would encourage the expansion of existing businesses. It would also allow the community to optimize benefits from major resource developments.

- A.1 Implement a business visitation program to better understand current business issues and how the District can work with business to improve development conditions.
- A.2 Review and enhance the District's internal business development policies, including a review of mill rates and the convenience of the permitting process.
- A.3 Assemble community data into a complete community profile and web portal that highlights Vanderhoof's business climate.
- A.4 Develop a welcome package outlining “How to Invest in Vanderhoof”.
- A.5 Monitor, support and maximize local benefits from major resource development projects.

A. Improve Business Climate		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
A.1 Business visitation program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practices for this program through Economic Development Association of BC. • Compile a list of key businesses and organizations, including First Nations. • Conduct monthly meetings with key industry sector reps. and during these meetings, complete retention survey. • Circulate a retention feedback circular to partners for comment and follow-up. • Establish a Welcome Committee for meeting and assisting new business/investment enquiries. 	EDO	COC CFDC	❖	▶	▶
A.2 Review and enhance the District's business development policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review of tax rates and charges in comparison with other communities in the region and elsewhere. • Ensure development approvals are as straight forward and as understandable as possible. • Vet approval processes with business owners and developers to determine a fair but efficient process. • Review the operating and policy practices of the District to ensure business friendly procedures (i.e. open over lunch hour). • Establish benchmarks for permitting approvals and development plans that can be promoted in marketing literature. 	EDO	DOV		❖	
A.3. Assemble data into a complete community profile and web portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy is a cross-reference to the tourism website strategy (see I.4). • Review the business information that is available on-line and what else can be provided. • Obtain International Economic Development Council community information data standards database, and then prepare a community profile using this form • Undertake data collection to complete profile. • Create a site selector page on the website that links to the database. • See Invest BC website for Vanderhoof's current profile using this template. • Prepare a business case for community web portal that can be used as a funding application and RFP. This will include a review of successful community websites. See Village of Valemount for an excellent example of a well-crafted community portal. • Core features would include a business advisory centre, real estate services (e.g. listings for commercial and industrial properties), links to real estate firms and on-line databases, news page, publications, links and site 	EDO	DOV COC CFDC NBCTA	❖	▶	▶

A. Improve Business Climate		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> map. Consideration should also be given to foreign language versions of the introductory web pages. 					
A.4 “How to Invest in Vanderhoof” guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a community investment guide that provides all the necessary information an entrepreneur or investor would seek before establishing a business in Vanderhoof. The guide could be prepared in digital form and “displayed” on the web portal. Content would include guide to government land use, subdivision process, land use plans, access to resources and infrastructure, use of parks, environmental guidelines, building permits and licences, backcountry recreation guidelines and access to utilities. 	EDO	COC CFDC			❖
A.5 Monitor, support and maximize local benefits from major resource development projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor projects engaged in the Environmental Assessment process (Canada and BC). Include local contacts of these projects in the business visitation program (see A.1). Attend local/regional workshops and meetings hosted by project proponents including continuing participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Sustainability Committee for Terrane Metals, Mt Milligan project; Enbridge Pipeline Project Community Advisory Board; and, EA process for the Chu Project, TTM Resources Inc. Determine proponent needs and issues and in return for project support propose strategies, initiatives, incentives and other programs that could be formally recognized as mitigation obligations in the EA certification. Be prepared to undertake research, studies and policy support for ensuring community capacity in infrastructure and services. The most likely areas of need include (See Initiative D): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour force availability Housing, temporary and permanent Community services Recreation services Hospitality services. 	EDO	DOV	▶	▶	▶

B. Ensure Industrial and Commercial Service Availability

Vanderhoof's proximity to major rail and highway routes and its availability of developable land are important attractants for major industry. Most heavy industry are sawmill operations in the west sector between the CNR line and Highway 16, while various light industrial uses are located along the Highway corridor, in the west half of Section 3 and heading north along Highway 27. As of 2005, approximately 37 ha of industrial land were being used in the District. The last OCP noted, however, that there was inadequately zoned industrial land for future anticipated industrial growth. (District of Vanderhoof. 2005)

Vanderhoof's industrial base continues to be heavily dependent on the forestry sector, although that is likely to change over the long term due to the effects of the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Future production levels in wood processing may decline and free up heavy industrial land for other uses. Diversification efforts and developments in other sectors, including mining and energy, could help offset any decline in demand by forestry operations.

Even if the supply of heavy industrial land preferred by forestry operations increases, it may be that new demand will arise for light and serviced industrial lots instead. As the demand for industrial land can arise quickly and sometimes unexpectedly, the community should be preparing now so conditions are optimal for getting supply onto the market.

In the last OCP, additional industrial land was identified west of the town centre along the south side of Highway 16, even though it is in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Past councils have expressed support for an exclusion request to the Agricultural Land Commission. Other efforts to match future demand with supply should be considered and adopted so potential developments (and opportunities for industrial diversification) do not bypass Vanderhoof for other communities.

- B.1 Develop an online industrial land inventory to facilitate attraction efforts and development prospects.
- B.2 Forecast the long-term supply and demand of industrial land that can be used to identify the land and service priorities for the District.
- B.3 Expand future sources of the industrial land supply.
- B.4 Provide assistance to investors or businesses interested in researching or acquiring property in the District.
- B.5 Create a development and marketing program to increase awareness of, and absorption of, Vanderhoof industrial and commercial properties.
- B.6 Consolidate a research record of business zoning, service, infrastructure and permitting issues that would benefit economic development for consideration in the next OCP process.

B. Ensure Industrial and Commercial Services are Available		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
B.1 Develop an online industrial land inventory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on the industrial land survey undertaken by Bulkley Nechako Regional District to determine local land availability. • Conduct research on the experience of on-line land inventories to determine best practices and scope cost. Compile a database that identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site description such as buildings and services; ▶ Ownership, occupancy and availability; ▶ Zoning characteristics and compatible uses; ▶ Air and soil characteristics; and ▶ Overall development potential, including the existence of deficiencies and constraints. • Consider including rural areas and First Nation industrial sites in the inventory. • Expand inventory with under-utilized building/property profiles. 	DOV EDO	RDBN ALC	▶	▶	
B.2 Forecast future industrial land needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative would be contracted to a real estate research firm with the following terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Regional and local market conditions now and in the future; ▶ Industrial land supply (taken from inventory and to include existing land base, designations in the OCP and future potential); ▶ Potential industrial land in the ALR and its exclusion potential; ▶ Forecast of annual demand by area and type of use; ▶ Recommendations on how best to fulfill demand. 	DOV EDO	RDBN		❖	
B.3 Expand future sources of industrial land supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise a policy for brownfield redevelopment which includes an approach to remediation of contaminated lands (e.g. old gas station sites) • Explore servicing of industrial lands to improve their marketability. This may involve working with land owners on scoping services, costs and funding options, including P3 partnerships. • Evaluate the use of District-owned properties for possible sale or exchange to advance land use and development envisioned in the OCP. 	DOV	Land Owners RDBN BC MCRD EDO		❖	▶
B.4 Site location assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the District and real estate professionals to offer streamlined site location services. • Design an enquiry response program to qualify enquiries, prospects and targets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Establish procedures for screening and qualifying enquiries, timeliness of response, information dissemination and follow-up. ▶ Maintain community profile and other promotional information for distribution to all enquiries. 	EDO	DOV			❖ ▶

B. Ensure Industrial and Commercial Services are Available		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Distribute the “Invest in Vanderhoof” package or directions to the web portal to all qualified prospects. ▶ Maintain a contact database of all enquiries. 					
B.5 Land development and marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm those strategic sectors or business areas that would form the primary focus for an external business attraction campaign. • Realtors with expertise in selling industrial lots should be encouraged to become actively involved in the actual sales and to play a role in facilitating transactions and search out potential clients through their network. • Focus efforts on investor-ready properties. Identify land owners willing to partner on design concepts, including sketches or renderings, for under-utilized or vacant properties. The concepts could be used in subsequent marketing. • Consider land banking of Crown lands. MAL will dispose of lands to local government for public facilities and community infrastructure. See Community and Institutional Use of Crown Land. • Consider a marketing team comprised of the EDO, District staff and real estate professionals. Realtors could do the advertising, material prep, sales documentation and day-to-day marketing. 	EDO	DOV RDBN First Nations			❖
B.6 Research record for OCP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OCP and Zoning Bylaw could stipulate the District’s commitment to develop industrial land that attracts a greater diversity of business. • This could include recommendations for refined DPAs in strategic areas. 	DOV	EDO	▶	▶	▶

C. Grow the Economic Importance of Education

Vanderhoof is home to several leading edge educational programs and projects including:

- ❖ E-Bus Distance Learning Program which has a current head count of 1,400 students and 40 instructors and is recognized as the 5th largest distant learning program in the province; and,
- ❖ The career awareness and job experience ‘Projects’ which provides work exposure and experience for school age students in program areas such as agriculture, natural resource management, health, forest management, and fire fighting (School District 91. website).

The College of New Caledonia (CNC) offers a range of programming including: Foundation and Apprentice level trades programs, Office Administration, Health Care, Human Services, and University-level and Business credit courses. In addition, the College works closely with the communities within the region developing programs and services to meet emerging training and education needs. The College has completed their feasibility study and is now working on implementation of the Commercial Pilot Diploma Program. This program would utilize the local airport. In addition, the School District and the College have collaborated on Adult Education, and generally all of the educational institutions within the community collaborate extensively.

Many of the economic diversification opportunities available to the community involve an educational component. Similarly, many of the educational initiatives need the active support of the community in order to become realities. The Vanderhoof community can benefit if the educational leaders meet regularly with economic development and industry / municipal leaders to collaborate on current or potential initiatives and elicit support from all the parties. An informed, unified community has a much better chance of success in achieving its goals and this is particularly true on educational initiatives.

- C.1 The EDC will participate in (facilitate) the formation of an educational steering committee that includes education institutions (SD#91, CNC, UNBC, others), economic development and local government representation. This committee could be informal or more formally structured as the Vanderhoof Education Consortium. The purpose of the committee would be to meet periodically (bi-monthly or quarterly) to bring all parties up-to-date with education initiatives or economic development initiatives that have education components.
- C.2 The EDC will encourage participants to co-operate and collaborate in support of each other and the self-designated ‘lead agency’ to further the implementation prospects of the projects. Specific committees to coordinate individual projects may be established and industry partners will be invited to participate as appropriate.
- C.3 The EDC will identify key economic initiatives that require a significant educational component or conversely identify the key educational initiatives that require significant public sector / industry support.

C. Grow the Economic Importance of Education		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
C.1 Education / Economic Development Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in (facilitate) the development of a committee comprised of senior officials from SD#91, CNC, UNBC and EDO. Meet periodically to inform each other of current and potential educational / economic diversification initiatives. Identify initiatives that require or would benefit from broader support from within the community. In conjunction with the 'lead role agency' develop plans to stimulate and co-ordinate actions to support specific project initiatives (see C.2). 	SD#91 CNC UNBC EDO		❖	▶	▶
C.2 Economic Initiatives with Significant Educational Component	Airport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of a Commercial Pilot Training Program by the College of New Caledonia and Guardian Aerospace. Work with the District of Vanderhoof to ensure the facilities and infrastructure required to support the Commercial Pilot Training Program at the airport is in place. 	CNC Guardian Aerospace	EDO Chamber	❖	▶	▶
	New Industries (Mining, Exploration, Alternative Energy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CNC and SD#91 to improve the availability of training opportunities specifically tailored to new industrial operations. 	CNC SD #91	EDO	❖	▶	▶
	Manufacturing / Agricultural Enterprise Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CNC and SD#91 to improve the availability of training opportunities tailored to these industries. 	CNC SD #91	EDO			❖ ▶
	Health Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with the Northern Health Authority to determine NHA's health care plans for St. John Hospital and other services provided in Vanderhoof. Meet with UNBC and CNC to ascertain their plans for health-care training in Vanderhoof. Monitor changes in plans over time. 	DoV UNBC CNC		❖	▶	▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with CNC, UNBC and NHA to improve the availability of training opportunities for the health care industry in Vanderhoof. 	CNC UNBC NHA	SD #91 EDO		❖	▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a strategic plan designed to capitalize on any comparative health-care / service advantages enjoyed by the community. 	UNBC NHA DOV	SD #91 EDO CNC		❖	▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively participate in ensuring the hospital's housing needs are continued to be met including ensuring upgrades are made to the former nunnery residence at the hospital. 	NHA DOV	EDO CNC		❖	▶

C. Grow the Economic Importance of Education		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
C.3 Educational Initiatives requiring public sector / industry support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work with SD#91, CNC and UNBC to increase the number of course offerings available to Vanderhoof residents. ▶ These can be general interest or ‘credit’ courses. ▶ Work with CNC to increase the base budget (core funding) available to the Vanderhoof campus. ▶ Support establishment of a flexible Trades Training Facility. ▶ CNC, SD#91 and the District of Vanderhoof have already held discussions regarding this facility. ▶ Expansion of the E-Bus Distance Learning Program. ▶ Support the School District’s efforts for regulatory reform that will allow the E-Bus program to expand within Canada and internationally. ▶ Support the enhancement of science and math based education in the K-12 system. 	SD#91 CNC UNBC	Council EDO Industry Comm.		❖ ▶	▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Skills Training Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support SD#91, CNC and Saik’uz First Nation in the development of a Life Skills program that incorporates work placements and cooperative education components. 	SD #91 ATEEC Saik’uz	EDO Industry			❖ ▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative Work Place Experience Development Training Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work with the SD #91, Saik’uz FN, Chamber of Commerce and High School to develop a program that prepares young workers to succeed in their first work experience. ▶ Ensure education skills are linked to cooperative work experiences in this initiative so that practical “hands-on” work experience is developed. 	SD # 91 NVSS Saik’uz	EDO Chamber			❖ ▶

D. Support Infrastructure and Services Critical to Quality of Life & Amenity Migrants

Vanderhoof has been very successful over the years in developing a range of infrastructure assets and services that contribute to a high quality of life for residents. Many residents voiced the importance of these assets and services in their decision to live and work in Vanderhoof. In the focus group sessions held in developing this strategy, participants articulated:

- ❖ The quality and number of community events.
- ❖ The range of clubs and organizations that operate in the community. Specifically the variety of sporting and cultural activities that residents can participate in.
- ❖ The availability of sporting assets such as the arena, curling club, cross ski trails, Rip N' the North Bike Park, and sports fields.
- ❖ The community amenities such as the fair grounds, parks and walking trails and existence of a vibrant downtown core.
- ❖ A variety of quality outdoor assets for the outdoor enthusiasts.
- ❖ The existence of a quality hospital with a full complement of doctors.
- ❖ The range of educational services with a choice of quality private and public schools.
- ❖ A campus for the College of New Caledonia and the College's commitment to bring post-secondary educational opportunities into the community.

One respondent to the household survey summed up this advantage very well when they stated:

“Vanderhoof has the potential beyond most communities: regional hospital; transportation; skilled workforce; proximity to regional economic hub; affordability; outdoor recreation; unique natural features; diversified economy; reasonable northern weather; and the list goes on. Just sell it and they will come.”

In addition, Vanderhoof's proximity to Prince George further strengthens its “amenity advantage” as it provides it with ready access to an international airport connection and other services of a larger centre less than an hour away. In recent years, the community feels there has been more of a trend of retired people moving to Vanderhoof. Overall it is felt local services and infrastructure is an important asset in keeping existing residents in the community and attracting new residents.

The goal of this initiative is to ensure that the services and infrastructure in the community are maintained and expanded and that they are more formally connected to maintaining the quality of life of existing residents and those services desired by amenity migrants.¹

- D.1 Undertake an inventory of amenity infrastructure and services and link to the development of a community plan that identifies approaches to maintaining existing amenities and looks at new services.
- D.2 Review ways to maintain and expand health services and infrastructure in the community and become more involved in potential future opportunities with the health care system.
- D.3 Undertake a housing study that would look at the type of accommodations that are desired by an aging local population and could be used to attract amenity migrants.

¹ Amenity Migrants are individuals and families that are able to choose where they live because they have employment that does not require them to be in a specific location or they have reached retirement and can easily locate in communities that they feel provide the quality of life they seek.

D. Support Infrastructure and Services Targeting Quality of Life and Amenity Migrants		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
D.1 Undertake an amenity inventory and plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically inventory all assets and services that contribute to quality of life including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recreation and culture assets and services. ▶ Health and educational services. ▶ Outdoor amenities and features. ▶ Regional services (i.e., Prince George airport). • Develop a plan and undertake research that outlines an overarching approach that identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Risks to specific assets and explores how they might be retained. ▶ Future assets that may be desired in the community ▶ A list of priority quality of life assets and services and how these will be maintained or developed. 	DoV EDO BNRD	Rec. Clubs		❖	
D.2 Focus on maintaining existing health services and expanding into new areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more actively involved in health care and community wellness planning that leads to a health care and wellness strategy and considers (Link to C.2 and C.3 Education): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working with the clinic to determine their needs and opportunities. ▶ Identifying health professionals’ interests in medicine and support their interests by facilitating the acquisition of equipment, gain support from NHA. ▶ Exploring with NHA their plans and their needs with regards to health care training programs and services for Vanderhoof and articulate Vander hoof’s support for this activity. ▶ Liaison with UNBC, CNC, and NHA to encourage new health programs that use the Vanderhoof hospital as a training facility; ▶ Developing a plan to market operating room availability. 	NHA Clinic	DoV EDO CNC UNBC		❖	▶
D.3 Undertake a housing study and strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a housing study that determines the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inventory and type of existing stock. ▶ Confirms build out potential. ▶ The desired housing stock amenity migrants and retiring residents desire. ▶ Affordability of housing in Vander hoof. ▶ Demand for future assisted living residents and seniors housing. 	DoV EDO	NVCS VRA			❖ ▶

E. Improve Regional Transportation Infrastructure

Infrastructure is essential for encouraging regional economic growth and diversification because it allows the exploitation of resources, reduces the costs of production for industry, and allows job generating activities that are the bedrock of community development and stability. Where the appropriate conditions exist, infrastructure can facilitate economic development by complementing the available productive capital and, conversely, new investments may be inhibited where infrastructure is inadequate or unreliable.

For the Vanderhoof area, transportation infrastructure is considered critical to future economic activity, especially for resource industries and sectors that rely on transportation services to maintain their viability. During the planning workshop, participants felt that many sectors in Vanderhoof were going to become more reliant on the road infrastructure in the future. Forest companies in the area have already begun implementing plans that will see logs transported from further away to support local mills in the future. New resource developments such as mineral exploration and mining are highly dependent on road and highway access to get people and supplies in and production out. Tourism activity is closely influenced by highway quality and the ability to reach outdoor recreation features safely and efficiently through the regional road network.

However, transportation infrastructure is often the responsibility of senior levels of government, or in the case of the rail link, CN Rail. These organizations have decision making practices and policies that do not always recognize local interests and concerns. It is for this reason that partnerships with like-minded organizations may be the best option if Vanderhoof wishes to pursue transportation infrastructure initiatives. The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) has prepared an infrastructure strategy that prioritizes Highway 16 upgrading and the maintenance of key regional resource roads. Organizations such as the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation also have Highway 16 as a critical transportation corridor requiring senior, regional and local government support. (AGRA 2000) For the rail line, the local business community has identified that better and more affordable access to rail may result in new business opportunities. To encourage CN Rail to better meet the needs of local business it is believed that collaborative discussions may be beneficial to area businesses.

- E.1 Establish partnerships to better represent and promote Vanderhoof's interests in highway and resource road decision making.
- E.2 Increase attraction of Highway 16 for commercial truck and RV use.
- E.3 Monitor rail infrastructure developments to improve local access to services.

E. Improve Regional Transportation Infrastructure		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
E.1 Establish partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure local involvement in future implementation of OBAC infrastructure projects, specifically those related to resource roads and Highway 16. • Take out membership in the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NWCDC). • Maintain contact with and monitor transportation events associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ BC Trucking Association. ▶ UBC Centre for Transportation Studies. ▶ Western Transportation Advisory Council. 	EDO	OBAC NWCDC MEMPR Industry Assns.	▶	▶	▶
E.2 Increase attraction of Highway 16 for commercial truck and RV use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify suitable pullout/parking areas that can accommodate trucks and RVs close to service area of town. • Improve highway directional signage. • Consider pre-development planning for specific properties on Highway 16 suitable for a truck stop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Requires market research and discussion with BC Trucking Assn, BC Truck Loggers Assn, Canadian Truck Alliance, etc. ▶ Existing companies should be consulted for input. ▶ Identify preferred land parcels and service requirements. • Prepare a capital works plan for beautification of Highway 16 frontage. Explore the potential for cost-sharing with CN and MOTI. 	DOV	EDO MOTI CN Rail		❖ ▶	▶
E.3 Monitor rail infrastructure developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress and seek opportunities for partnerships arising from the OBAC infrastructure recommendations, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to improve communications with CN rail. ▶ Facilitate the establishment of commercial spur lines. ▶ Improve rail related infrastructure in communities. • Ensure that Vanderhoof interests are represented in OBAC's priority implementation activities, including its 3-5 year implementation phase and its focused proposal for the first year (ending October, 2010). • In cooperation with OBAC, explore how Vanderhoof's delivery capacity and interests can best be supported. 	Council EDO	OBAC NWCDC	▶	▶	▶

F. Develop a Collaborative Regional Sustainability Approach

On November 3, 2009 a workshop on working towards community sustainability was hosted by several local organizations including: Nechako Valley Community Services; College of New Caledonia; Saik'uz First Nations; Nechako Healthy Community Alliance; and the District of Vanderhoof. The objective of the workshop was to map out a preliminary direction on how the Saik'uz First Nation, District of Vanderhoof, and Electoral Area F of the Bulkley Nechako Regional District could work together on a common sustainable future (Fraser Basin Council. 2009).

Currently, it is recognized that several specific activities are underway locally that are all making a contribution to sustainability including:

- ❖ Increased cooperation between elected officials from the District of Vanderhoof, BNRD, and Saik'uz First Nations.
- ❖ Nechako Healthy Communities Alliance collaborative effort on various initiatives such as farm to school program, local food security, the farmers market, recycling and waste reduction.
- ❖ The Spirit of Vanderhoof Demonstration Project that is being coordinated by CNC in partnership with the Good Neighbours Committee which is represented by BNRD, Saik'uz First Nation, District of Vanderhoof, Rotary Club of Vanderhoof, School District 91 and the Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce. The project is focused on inspiring a broad-based paradigm shift from a position of separateness and fear to one of sharing and safety. The focus will be on dialogue and relationship building through innovative art, education, culture and workplace initiatives (Vanderhoof Omineca Express. 2010).
- ❖ Work by CNC, School District 91, and Saik'uz First Nations on developing and implementing adult education and trades training locally.
- ❖ The District of Vanderhoof's implementation of the Community Energy Plan.
- ❖ Nechako Valley Food Network efforts to build a database of local producers and interested consumers to better utilize local food products within the region.

Moving forward there is a desire to link these efforts to improve sustainability and develop a more holistic approach to environmental issues. However, as pointed out in the sustainability workshop, there still needs to be work done in building consensus on a common vision of what sustainability means for the partners in the region.

Overall, the goal of improving local sustainability within the community and the region is focused on collaboratively influencing human behaviours and land use to improve environmental and community well-being from a long term perspective.

- F.1 Complete a visioning process which maps out the meaning of sustainability and what elements can be collaboratively addressed by the partners.
- F.2 Develop and implement the regional sustainability plan.

F. Collaborative Sustainability Initiative		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
F.1 Complete vision of sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm partners and develop consensus among partners as to the elements and meaning of sustainability in the context of the sustainability initiative. . • Draft out the scope of work that will be addressed by a sustainability initiative. • Secure endorsement of local governments on moving forward on sustainability planning in a collaborative forum. 	CNC GNC Saik'uz BNRD F	EDO NHCA SD 91 NVFN	▶	▶	▶
F.2 Plan, finance and implement a sustainability program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a terms of reference for the plan, incorporating the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identification of participants and their mandates. ▶ Key goals and objectives that are to be addressed in the plan. ▶ Marketing tools. ▶ Project costing. • Solicit funding for the project. 	GNC EDO CNC	NBCTA COC DOV		❖ ▶	▶

G. Support Agriculture Diversification and Stability in the Region

Agriculture has a long history in Vanderhoof and Area and is an important diversifying basic sector in the local economy with a workforce of approximately 215 in 2006. However, the agriculture sector has changed significantly in recent years and the viability of many area farms are now in question as the cost of production has risen, while the value of traditional farm products has fallen.

This transformation is illustrated by the rapid decline in the size of the local cattle herds. In British Columbia between 2004 and 2009 the number of cattle on farms on July 1st of each year declined from 950,000 in 2003 to 705,000 in 2009, a 26% decrease (Statistics Canada. 2009). At the same time, there has been an increase in the Canadian dollar against the American currency and a corresponding increase in fertilizer and grain feeds.

Locally, besides recent declines in the cattle herds, the area has lost most of its dairy farms. The number of local dairies has declined from a historic high of 27 to only two dairy farms today. In addition, children of farming families no longer see farming as a viable career choice and many are leaving farming and ranching which will impair continuation of the farming sector. Already farm land is now starting to be lost for future farm uses as it is converted into tree plantations in order to receive carbon credits instead of put into food production. On top of economic challenges, Vanderhoof and Area has suffered through droughts in both 2004 and 2006 which impacted farm operations. (Agriculture Focus Group. 2009)

On the positive side, small scale agriculture producers and the Nechako Valley Food Network Group are working collaboratively to address many of their challenges and explore new opportunities. The Nechako Valley Food Network Group has been building a database of local producers and interested consumers that can be used by both parties to find where and when local foods are available (Nechako Valley Food Network Website). In addition, members have been exploring better ways to do farm gate sales, enter into specialty markets, expand local sales, and produce more natural food products (Small Agriculture and Nechako Food Network Focus Group. 2009).

The goal of the agriculture research and marketing initiative is to support the diversification and growth of the local agriculture sector. The focus will be on supporting the identification of new viable agriculture products; exploring new markets and methods for market access; and advocate and support industry requests for changes to policies that impact agriculture.

- G.1 Support the development of a regional Agriculture Support Officer who would provide research assistance on identifying new agriculture products and explore access to new markets.
- G.2 Work on fostering entrepreneurship with youth in agriculture through a loans project to the 4H program.
- G.3 Support the local farm community in advocating to senior levels of government for specific farming issues and policy changes.

G. Support Agriculture Diversification and Stability in the Region.		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
G.1 Regional Agriculture Support Research and Marketing Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure buy-in from local industry and funding support from a broad range of partners. • Explore a partnership with BNRD and surrounding communities to establish a regional agriculture support officer who would focus on research and market development. Specific tasks could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assist the farming community to access to the BC Farm Business Advisory Services Program provided by Ministry of Agriculture and Land, designed to provide the farm with insights to business issues and viability. See website: http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/BasicFarmFinancialAssessment19Jan2010.pdf. ▶ Research of new crops and potential markets for agriculture products offshore. ▶ Investigate use of containers to move crops/products to new markets. ▶ Investigate the viability of new farm infrastructure (grain dryer/cleaner, greenhouses heated by anaerobic digesters). ▶ Assist with developing marketing cooperative and establishing network with retailers. • Review OBAC’s progress concerning their implementation of the agriculture support officer project outlined in their agriculture strategy. See OBAC website: http://www.ominecacoalition.ca/Strategies/Agriculture/index.html • OBAC has been working on the support officer project with the province and their direction should become clearer over the next few months. (contact: Sharron Tower, tel: (250)563-7005.) 	EDO	BNRD	❖	▶	▶
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore developing relationships and sharing experiences with other organizations exploring new food markets and research such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ RDCO Agriculture Support Officer program (contact: Keith Duhaime, tel: (250) 762-5873). ▶ Heartland Food Co-op at website: http://www.lookkamloops.ca/index_files/HeartlandFoodCoop.htm ▶ CFDC-TC Agriculture Initiative in the North Thompson (see website: http://www.communityfutures.net/agriculture.htm or contact Shirley Culver, CFDC EDO at tel:1-877-335-2950) 	NVFNG	CFDC SN EDO			

G. Support Agriculture Diversification and Stability in the Region.		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
G.2 Foster Youth Entrepreneurship in Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore establishing a micro-loans program for 4 H member youth. This program was first established by the Cariboo-Chilcotin CFDC and was very well received (contact: Karen Eden, CFDC Tel: 1-888-879-5399). The CFDC is now looking at expanding the loans program to other agriculture activities. 	CFDCSN 4H Club	EDC		❖	▶
G.3 Advocate on Behalf of Farming Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become familiar with local agriculture issues and formulate positions with local partners and council to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lobby for the Ministry of Agriculture to re-establish extension specialist in the region. ▶ Take specific farm issues to UBCM to highlight important policy changes. ▶ Facilitate meetings between local agriculture sector, provincial and federal agencies to resolve specific local issues. 	Council EDO	BNRD OBAC NCLGA	▶	▶	▶

H. Capitalize on the Growing Mining Sector

In recent years there has been a considerable amount of mineral exploration undertaken in Northern BC. Province wide exploration expenditures have risen 1,100 percent between 2001 and 2008 (BC Ministry of Energy and Mines). This has led to the announcement of several mining projects that have now having determined their viability and are going to move towards mine development. The most notable from Vanderhoof's perspective is the Mount Milligan mining project operated by Terrane Metals Corporation and which received its Mine Act Permit from the BC government in September 2009. It is anticipated that all permitting will be in place for construction to start in 2010.

With recent recently announced improved road access to the mine from Fort St. James, Vanderhoof may be better positioned to participate in servicing and supplying the mine site. There are also several significant exploration projects underway in the vicinity of Vanderhoof. These include:

- 1.) TTM Resources Inc., Chu molybdenum deposit located 80 kilometres southwest which is currently in the environmental review process;
- 2.) Leeward Capital, Nithi Mountain molybdenum deposit , located 75 kilometres west, which is in the process of deposit definition;
- 3.) Silver Quest Resources Inc., Capoose gold property, located 100 kilometres south, which is in advanced stage exploration; and,
- 4.) Richfield Ventures Corp., Blackwater Gold Property, also located 100 kilometres south, which is in advanced stage exploration.

While BC has a long history of mining, the provincial government has taken several steps recently that, combined with increased mineral prices, should result in the development of new mines in Northern BC. Growth in mining expenditures and employment should create new economic development opportunities for Vanderhoof and Area. Currently, Vanderhoof and Area has only a small work force directly involved in mining. However, the community has had some recent success in providing goods and services to the mineral exploration and mining sector.

Most notable has been the recent contract work that BID Construction Group has undertaken for the mining industry using its local workforce to manufacture equipment for the mine sector. In addition, local exploration work has benefited Vanderhoof and Area workers with companies like TTM Resource Inc., purchasing consulting services and goods within Vanderhoof as part of their Chu property exploration.

The objective of this initiative is to position the District of Vanderhoof to benefit from the growing mining economy in Northern BC by focusing on four key activities:

- H.1 Become familiar with Saik'uz First Nation's mining issues and interests in the region to ensure better collaboration.
- H.2 Network within the mining sector and become familiar with the services, products that the mining industry is looking for in Northern BC and work on attracting or developing these service providers locally.
- H.3 Undertake targeted marketing within the mining sector promoting Vanderhoof's quality of life and amenities.
- H.4 Work with the mining sector to assist in finding skilled workers that will be to staff their operations.

H. Capitalize on the Growing Mining Sector		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
H.1 Become familiar with FN issues and interests in mining locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with Saik’uz First Nation what future mining activities should look like in the area in order to ensure that mining development reflects First Nation values and issues at all stages. • Periodically, review the direction of mining activity locally. 	EDC Saik’uz		❖	▶	▶
H.2 Network within the mining sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host the Northern Mining Conference (bid on 2012). • Actively participate with mining EA processes in the region. • Meet with mining companies working in the North to become familiar with their needs and future activities. • Actively participate in the NIMG and engage in their strategy implementation. The Goals of NIMG can be viewed at: http://www.1697economicalliance.ca/bc/42/northern+interior+mining+group • Become a member in the AMEBC and attend the provincial Round Up conference. More information can be found at: http://www.amebc.ca/membership/become-a-member.aspx 	EDO	CoC Industry	▶	▶	▶
H.3 Mine worker relocation and mine skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with individual mining companies on issue of retaining a skilled work force with three focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work with CNC to deliver programming that will position the local workforce to participate in new mining jobs. ▶ Explore NWCC School of Mining in Smithers. ▶ Currently skilled workers from outside of Canada are being recruited for the mining sector. Work with the mining companies, the province (PNP), and utilize Vanderhoof’s strong German heritage to assist in attracting desired workers. 	EDO CNC				❖ ▶

I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities

In 2009, Vanderhoof was accepted to participate in a one-day pre-qualification workshop as part of Tourism BC's Community Tourism Foundations (CTF) Program. The pre-qualification workshop was meant to help communities in the early stages of tourism development to learn more about CTF and potentially undertake a full tourism development plan. The outcome of the workshop was a report with an initial analysis of tourism products, destination features, market potential and next steps the community could take in pursuing an expanded and more diverse tourism base. In light of its recent vintage, we believe the recommendations made in the CTF report provide reasonably good guidance for tourism priorities in Vanderhoof and Area. One potential project is continued involvement in the CTF program with the intention of receiving a full tourism development plan from Tourism BC. Given the current organizational and budget uncertainties at Tourism BC, the chances of Vanderhoof continuing on with the CTF program before this plan is completed are believed to be low. The following recommendations therefore identify priority projects as drawn from the focus groups, planning workshop, and the CTF workshop report, as well as more specific direction provided by the Northern BC Tourism Association for potential marketing initiatives.

An effective tourism development effort is critical not only for the tourism industry, but for other aspects of community development in Vanderhoof. Any form of community marketing has spinoff effects beyond the primary intended audiences. Tourism marketing may be targeted at "tourists" but it can be just as influential in attracting capital, investment, companies and people (e.g. new residents) who are not tourists. The fact that outside "investors" are also "visitors" underlines the need for a coherent and unified marketing strategy for tourism and economic development. For example, it is expected that any tourism marketing would be coordinated with the community's amenity migration initiative that intends to draw in new residents.

- I.1 Coordinate local tourism development with regional development initiatives.
- I.2 Compile an asset and operator inventory that can be the basis of product development planning and communications activities.
- I.3 Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) to oversee the tourism development and marketing role.
- I.4 Extend involvement in Tourism BC Programs.
- I.5 Prepare an image bank.
- I.6 Build a single community web portal.
- I.7 Prepare collateral materials that can be used in support of marketing and promotion efforts.
- I.8 Ensure that area attractions are well marked and directional signage is in place.
- I.9 Expand advertising to target in-region, BC, and long haul markets.

I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
I.1 Coordinate local tourism development with regional development initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate and leverage planning with other local and regional groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Upper Nechako Wilderness Council, which is implementing its own strategic plan for member lodges; The OBAC tourism strategy which outlines land and resource, infrastructure, marketing and product development issues of importance to Vanderhoof; and The Bulkley Nechako Regional District, which is currently preparing a district-wide tourism plan. To date, the BNRD has only proposed consultations and advisory group meetings with a full plan expected in March, 2010. 	EDO	TBC NBCTA UNWC OBAC	❖		
I.2 Compile an asset and operator inventory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile an asset inventory of businesses, key features, organizations and unique selling points for the area to conduct gap analysis. Use the inventory template available through Tourism BC Community Tourism Foundations. Expand the inventory to an online tourism industry database and resource centre that will support the development of community tourism. Commence with initial resources supplied by Tourism BC as part of the Tourism Assessment project. Using the inventory, assess gaps in accommodation, services and products that could be actively promoted by the EDO. 	EDO	VC COC Industry	❖		
I.3 Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants involved in the CTF pre-qualification workshop should be invited to serve as a permanent Tourism Advisory Committee. A permanent TAC is in recognition of the importance of tourism development and marketing to the overall economic development function. The first task of the TAC could be to investigate cultural tourism opportunities as discussed at the planning workshop. The EDC, DOV, Saik'uz FN, Chamber and Museum could jointly explore marketing and promoting existing assets, promotion of authentic Saik'uz FN and local artisan products, and more First Nation programming at the Museum. 	EDO	DOV Museum COC Saik'uz	❖		

I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
I.4 Extend involvement in Tourism BC Programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Community Tourism Foundation program and tourism development plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to monitor ongoing changes in TBC and be prepared to re-enter the CTF queue when appropriate. ▶ Consider a joint CTF application with Stuart-Nechako signatories to improve the chances for acceptance and to increase leveraging opportunities for Community Tourism Opportunities (CTO) funds. • Maximize uptake of CTO funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communities like Vanderhoof, even though they have not completed the Community Tourism Foundations program, are still eligible for market funding over a three year period. Funding should be accessed before the window closes on the program. ▶ In cooperation with NBCTA, prepare an annual CTO application (see following strategies). 	TAC	EDO NBCTA TBC	▶	▶	▶
I.5 Prepare an image bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a professional photographer and/or collect and inventory existing high resolution images. The image bank should include a variety of impactful, signature experiences and social/cultural shots. • Develop a strategic list of must-have shots that will best represent and market what is unique about Vanderhoof and the surrounding area. When including models, ensure they represent the target visitor demographic. • Essential subjects for Vanderhoof may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Popular activities – bird watching (and the Migratory Bird Sanctuary when active and in season), fishing, hiking, camping and RVing, agricultural tours. ▶ Area landmarks and facilities – Vanderhoof Museum, bike park, Riverside Park and Campground, community events, White Sturgeon Recovery Program. ▶ Signature accommodations including Upper Nechako Wilderness Council and other similar properties. ▶ Natural sights – Aerial shots of the town of Vanderhoof and the Nechako River, Cheslatta Falls, wildlife, agricultural fields. 	EDO	NBCTA	❖		
I.6 Build a single community web portal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A website is an essential marketing tool and the current structure of www.vanderhoof.ca (hosted as a section of the www.stuartnechako.ca site), then linking to information on www.vanderhoofchamber.com, is confusing for the visitor. Use the professionally developed brand identity (see strategy L) and image gallery (previous strategy) to create an inspiring site. (Also see Strategy A3 (Web portal)) 	DOV	EDO NBCTA		❖	

I. Grow and Diversify Tourism Activities		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a task force to oversee the project. • Source funding, approximately \$5,000. • Create a terms of reference to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Design features ▶ Directory of content ▶ Information needs and sources ▶ Data maintenance requirements ▶ Integration and linking with other sites ▶ Tracking and evaluation 					
I.7 Prepare collateral materials that can be used in support of marketing and promotion efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the existing collateral pieces, professionally redesigning where necessary, implementing consistent branding and using impactful images. • Current Vanderhoof collateral includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Visitor Guide (development was in progress as of Fall 2009) ▶ Trail Map & Area Hiking Guide www.vanderhoofchamber.com/pdf/Trail%20Guide%20low.pdf ▶ Migratory Bird Sanctuary Brochure www.vanderhoofchamber.com/pdf/Bird%20Sanctuary.pdf 	EDO	NBCTA COC	▶	▶	▶
I.8 Ensure that area attractions are well marked and directional signage is in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the new brand identity, identify key tourism attractions around the community as well as directional signage for the lakes, resorts and recreational areas to the south. Explore a partnership with UNWC on the resort signage at key locations (e.g. Kenney Dam Road turnoff). • Signage is especially important along the Highway 16 corridor to raise awareness of the Vanderhoof tourism experience given the high volume of tourists travelling directly through the community. 	EDO	NBCTA DOV MOTI			❖ ▶
I.9 Expand advertising to target in-region, BC and long haul markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long haul markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to advertise in key publications, such as the Milepost and the Northern BC Travel Guide, and research and add other publications. ▶ Advertisements need to increase the awareness of Vanderhoof with travelers planning to pass through the area on Highway 16, encouraging them to stop and explore. • BC & In Region Marketing Campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Partner with area operators (e.g. UNWC) to increase awareness of Vanderhoof as a getaway destination in nearby markets. ▶ Conduct a consolidated print, radio and web campaign in the nearby city of Prince George. 	EDO	NBCTA UNWC			❖

J. Assist in Manufacturing Development

Vanderhoof is fortunate to have a strong manufacturing sector supporting a local labour force of 750 (18.3% of the total). It has a significant employment base associated with the primary wood-manufacturing sector, and other manufacturing remains stable with businesses focused on production of furniture, cabinets, truck trailers, specialized equipment (mobile drill rigs, pavement recycling machines) as well as sawmill and mine refurbishment and other steel fabrication projects.

In total, the community has twelve manufacturing firms, with most having just a few employees with a handful of larger manufacturing firms. In addition, there are a couple of home-based businesses involved in manufacturing. Collectively the smaller firms service the local area primarily; however, some have grown to sell into regional, provincial, national and international marketplaces, with these operations seeing their workforce grow with the increased business. Overall, the manufacturing base provides well-paid employment for a skilled workforce that contributes to the economic stability enjoyed by Vanderhoof. It appears that there is a manufacturing cluster forming in Vanderhoof that can eventually provide the critical mass of skills, attitude, aptitude and role models required to grow similar and complementary manufacturing companies in the area.

When asked to identify why certain companies expand, the participants in the manufacturing focus group noted that the first expansion has to come from a company's 'comfort zone' – it must identify its business, culture, ambitions, equipment, human and financial resources. Additionally the company has to thoroughly understand its industry and how it operates. Once this analysis has been completed, the company can seek out a business opportunity consistent with its 'comfort zone,' do the market research, prepare the business case and pursue the contract. This is the first step to expansion. Unfortunately most small companies are so engaged with their day-to-day operations, they do not have the capacity or resources to devote to this vital stage.

Additionally, as companies move into expansion, there are numerous areas (logistics, supply chain procurement and management) where specialized knowledge and / or research can assist them to remain low-cost producers and therefore competitive. The objective of this initiative is to support the development and growth of the manufacturing sector with the long-term goal to develop a diverse manufacturing cluster locally.

- J.1 Develop a Manufacturing Development Assistance Pilot Project (MDAPP) that could provide manufacturers that are committed to expansion with access to business development expertise. Engage local manufacturing firms in confirming the concept and approach.
- J.2 Secure financial support from the various funding agencies to implement the MDAPP.
- J.3 Implement the Pilot Project by engaging the participants. Document, monitor and evaluate the success of the Pilot Project to determine its extension or applicability to other industry sectors.

J. Assist in Manufacturing Development		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
J.1 Develop Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the concept that would enable local manufacturing businesses to retain a “Business Development” specialist, whose responsibility would be to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build an understanding of the company’s human and physical resources, their capabilities and competencies, corporate culture and capacity. Identify new business opportunities appropriate for the company in terms of scope and capabilities. Assist the company to secure contracts fulfilling the opportunities so identified. Develop a financial framework whereby funding agencies provide at least 50% of a company’s cost to retain the Business Development specialist over a period of time. Structure a Pilot Project that if successful leads to a ‘longer-term relationship’ between the recipient businesses and the contracted Business Development specialist. (Up to 2 years). Work with local manufacturing company executives to vet / revise the concept 	EDO	EDC MCD CFDC-SN Industry		❖	
J.2 Secure support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the economic and business development funding agencies to secure their support for the MDAPP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Research Council’s IRAP program. Nechako Kitamaat Development Fund. Northern Development Initiatives Trust. Western Economic Diversification. Ministry of Community Development. Other provincial and federal departments and agencies. Finalize criteria for participation (desire and commitment to growth by the company), funding levels (ability of company to pay 50% of costs) and reporting requirements (frequency and detail of reports). 	EDO	NRC NDIT MITACS Accelerate WED MCDS		▶	▶
J.3 Implement and Evaluation Pilot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite key manufacturing companies to apply for project. Confirm participant companies. Institute regular meetings with the participant companies to ensure the project is meeting their needs. Revise as necessary. Document best practices / success stories. Evaluate the Pilot Project at a minimum of semi-annually and at the conclusion of the pilot project. Determine applicability of concept to other industry sectors. 	EDO	Industry		❖ ▶	▶

Note: It is likely that several programs will need to be knitted together in order to develop the support envisioned in this strategy.

Northern Development Initiative Trust's Competitiveness Consulting Rebate will provide 50% of the funding on a cost recovery basis for a company to retain a consultant that can assist a company to improve its competitiveness.

www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/business-incentiveness/competitiveness-consulting-rebate

Accessed December 29, 2009

MITACS Accelerate provides 50% funding for a three month internship for a graduate student (MA, PhD or Post Graduate Studies) who, working under the supervision of a university professor, spends up to 50% of their time researching issues that have been identified by the participating company.

<http://www.mitacsaccelerate.ca/internship?mid=10000458&pid=381>

Accessed December 29, 2009

National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program has been one of the primary funding agencies providing direct assistance to companies. Much of their funding is directed to technology and innovation, including the market development aspects to commercialize opportunities. Two Industrial Technology Advisors are located in Prince George and can be contacted at 250-561-5165.

<http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/services/irap/financial-assistance.html>

K. Foster Business Development at the Airport

The Vanderhoof Airport got its start during the Second World War when it was established as part of Canada's air defence network. In the 1980s the Vanderhoof Airport functioned as a local commercial airport and was used by the Vanderhoof Flying Services (charter and training), Cadet Squadrons (gliders and aviation training), Flying Club, and was home to upwards of 25 aircraft. The Airport was also used for emergency landings and medical evacuations, and regularly hosted British Columbia's second largest airshow. (Airport Authority Group. 1987)

Today the Vanderhoof Municipal Airport is made up of 518 hectares of land and has three runways, one of which is asphalt and two turf/gravel runways. The asphalt runway is 1,529 metres long and located at an elevation of 678 metres. The District of Vanderhoof owns all the land at the Airport as fee simple lands. In 2009, the District of Vanderhoof secured funding from a variety of sources including its own investment to undertake \$1.6 million in upgrades to the Airport (Northern Development. 2009).

The upgrades included installing an airfield lighting system which would include approach lights and a GPS-based instrument approach system as well as an automated weather station and an automated aircraft tracking system. These upgrades build upon the runway paving done previously by the province in partnership with the District.

Currently, Guardian Aerospace is the only business located at the Airport. At the Airport, Guardian has a mobile trailer and a hanger that they have on the land that they lease from the District. Guardian Aerospace is involved in air charter services, flight training, and aircraft maintenance. Besides Vanderhoof, Guardian also operates from two other airports – Prince George and Olds-Didsbury, Alberta.

The District is now undertaking a site design study that will assist in determining the development that may be appropriate at the Airport. This process will also assist in determining the additional infrastructure that will be required to allow for further development on the Airport property.

Already the District has committed airport land to the potential Multi-Use Trades Facility with CNC is now working on an implementation plan that will lead to the development of a flight training school that would utilize the Vanderhoof Municipal Airport as its home base (See educational initiative).

Recognizing these current activities, the objective of this initiative is to ensure that the Vanderhoof Municipal Airport becomes more fully utilized by aerospace related businesses and for airport related activities.

- K.1 Complete all land use planning requirements that will allow for the location of new businesses at the Airport.
- K.2 Undertake targeted business attraction, focusing on attracting desired anchor tenants and support service providers to the Vanderhoof Municipal Airport.
- K.3 Undertake preliminary investigation regarding the upgrading of the float plane landing site on the Nechako River.
- K.4 In support of the Commercial Pilot Diploma Program Development, work with the college to identify funding for simulator.

K. Foster Business Development at the Airport		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
K.1 Complete land planning tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the completion of the Airport Land Use Plan, undertake the activities that are required to prepare the Airport lands for sale to business prospects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Confirm the types of infrastructure and services required at the Airport to realize the design plan. ▶ Undertake business plan for the Airport that will highlight the viability of potential industrial, commercial and residential uses at or near the airport. ▶ Develop private lots that can be sold or leased to individual business interests. • Complete a capital plan for the airport. • Make a submission to the ALC to formally remove the airport lands from the ALR. 	DoV EDO	CNC Industry		❖	
K.2 Undertake targeted business attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the Airport business plan, begin marketing DVMA to specific businesses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore opportunities of relocation of aircraft owners from PG as the PG airport grows; ▶ Identify new services that may establish at the Airport including mining, forest fire fighting; ▶ Target aerospace related manufacturing and maintenance firms that require runway access; and, ▶ Target desired support airport service providers. 	EDO	Industry			❖ ▶
K.3 Explore float plane base on the Nechako River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an investigation of the viability and potential demand of upgrading the existing float plane base on the Nechako River. • If project appears viable, undertake a business plan to confirm the costs and approach to re-establishing its usage. 	DoV	Industry EDO			❖

L. Develop a Community Brand

The objective of a community brand is to create a unique identity that clearly distinguishes the community from its competition. It should reflect the region's rich history, small-town charm, geographic uniqueness and access to the wilderness features. An effective brand will create a positive first impression and inspire confidence within visitors, investors, new residents and government.

In tourism, branding is a strategic process that outlines the essence of a truly distinctive experience from the visitor's point of view. An effective brand projects a value proposition and the essence of the benefits visitors can expect to receive when they visit the region. By consistently using the brand throughout all communication applications, a community develops brand equity starting with awareness, recognition and ultimately loyalty, creating a place in the mind of the consumer. A destination brand needs to be versatile, allowing incorporation of thematic designs throughout various applications.

In Vanderhoof, some branding work has been done around the concept of the geographic centre of BC. The District's tag line for the website is "Our People Make the Difference", while visitor guides promote agri-tourism and nature-based recreation opportunities. Individual operators and consortiums such as the Upper Nechako Wilderness Council may or may not mention these themes in their own advertising. In any case, overall recognition of the region among major markets (including those in BC) is not that good and this is in part attributable to a lack of a clear brand identity.

There are two very important considerations to keep in mind when exploring brand development. First, the current trend is toward regional branding. There is a clutter of brands in the existing marketplace and not enough differentiating factors to set apart single communities, particularly in smaller rural areas. This is one reason why TBC prefers to channel marketing support through regional destination management organizations (RDMO) like the Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA). And second, communities usually brand themselves for tourism purposes, but the application of branding should be seen in a much broader context that includes all investment and business attraction activity.

- L.1 Establish a task force to oversee a branding program.
- L.2 Research best practices in branding.
- L.3 Plan, finance and implement a branding program.
- L.4 Coordinate tourism and community marketing.

L. Community Brand		Lead Role	Partners	Timelines		
Strategies	Actions / Projects			2010	2011	2012 -15
L.1 Establish a task force to oversee a branding program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key partners to provide assistance and resources in building a marketing plan and branding strategy (see next strategy). Form a Marketing Task Force to manage preparation of the plan. 	EDO	NBCTA COC DOV		❖	
L.2 Research best practices in branding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism BC, the Canadian Tourism Commission and the International Economic Development Council websites can be searched for examples of best practices in community branding. 	EDO	NBCTA		❖	
L.3 Plan, finance and implement a branding program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a terms of reference for the plan, incorporating the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market audit that evaluates the community assets and weaknesses, and describes preparedness factors (e.g. appearance, community facilities, education and training systems, access to financing, industrial land, labour force climate, planning and utilities/services). Identification of target markets and sectors. Identification of major players/potential investors. Marketing position. Brand identification. Marketing tools. Project costing. NBCTA has indicated that the brand should be more engaging and themed according to the unique tourism experience of the area rather than the geographically themed tagline. Solicit funding for the project. 	EDO	NBCTA COC DOV		▶	▶
L.4 Coordinate tourism marketing and community marketing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that tourism marketing materials and effort incorporates the marketing needs of other community marketing efforts such as business attraction and amenity migrant attraction efforts. 					▶

5 FINANCIAL PLAN

5.1 Proposed Budget

Table 5-1 highlights the proposed annual budget for the operation of the economic development office over the next few years. It is based on budget forecast and assumptions that the economic development operated under in 2009.

Table 5-1 Proposed Annual Budget 2010-2014

Funding	Annual	Description
District of Vanderhoof	120,000	Core operating budget
Grants for Special Projects	100,000	
Total	220,000	Mainly federal, provincial and regional programs
Expenditures		
Salaries	100,000	Full-time economic development officer and half-time assistant
Staff development and travel	12,500	
Telecomm	2,000	
Office supplies	4,000	
Evaluation, promotion, advertising	6,500	Dependent on partnering from province and NDI
Special projects	65,000	
Tourism marketing	30,000	
Total	220,000	

5.2 Proposed Funding Sources

Most process-oriented initiatives in the Action Plan would be supported through the core budget. The following table itemizes special projects in the plan that would require additional funding support.

Table 5-2 Potential Funding Sources for Special Projects

Project	Reference	Cost	Program
Web portal	A.3, I.6	\$10,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC)
“How to Invest in Vanderhoof” Guide	A.4	\$25,000	REDI-BC Program
Industrial land inventory	B.1	\$10,000	Real Estate Foundation of BC
Regional Agriculture Research and Marketing	G.1	\$75,000	OBAC, NDI, BCMAFF Possibly a JCP eligible project (See BC MHSD website at: http://www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca/job_seekers/job_creation_partnerships.html)
Youth Entrepreneurship	G.2	Minimal/loans	CFDCSN
Image bank	I.5	\$5,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC)
Collateral materials	I.7	\$15,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC)
Signage	I.8	\$10,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC) Canadian Rural Partnership
Tourism advertising	I.9	\$10,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC)
Community brand	L.1, L.2	\$15,000	Community Tourism Opportunities (Tourism BC)
Manufacturing Development Assistance	J.2, J.3	\$50,000	NDI – Competitiveness Consulting Rebate MITAC NRCI – Industry Assistance Programs (See Action Plan J page 62)

6 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee is an advisory committee to the Vanderhoof Economic Development Office (VEDO), as authorized through a District bylaw. The nine members of the committee are appointed for two year terms by council, with recommendations by the EDO, to represent forestry, mining, tourism, agriculture, education and chamber of commerce interests. First Nations, the regional district and a District councillor make up the remaining three positions.

The VEDC is made accountable to the District and its residents, by consulting regularly through quarterly meetings, during the development of all plans, including the Annual Report and yearly Work Plan. Ultimately VEDC acts in accordance with the procedures set out in the Community Charter, Local Government Act and other provincial statutes, District by-laws and policies governing local and regional government in the province of British Columbia.

The District's approach to economic development is unusual in the BC context and the following changes should be considered:

- ❖ Almost all municipal economic development offices in the province have an advisory committee appointed by council but this is done through resolution and not bylaw. The current bylaw appears unnecessary when a resolution would accomplish the same purpose while acknowledging the authority of the sitting council.
- ❖ For a small community, recruiting and maintaining nine members can be difficult. Seven to five members would be more appropriate while still allowing citizen participation.
- ❖ Any other committees with an economic development purpose should be established as a sub-committee (e.g. standing, special or task forces) of VEDC. Sub-committees can recruit other citizens not members of VEDC. Nominations to VEDC should be solicited from the community. The nominees are expected to represent a cross-section of residents of the District of Vanderhoof and surrounding Regional District rural areas.
- ❖ Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee as a sub-committee, and the District should enter into a contract with the Chamber of Commerce for visitor services.

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

7.1 Overview

Economic development programming should be monitored and evaluated so that the District of Vanderhoof and its partners can assess the plan progress. There are two perspectives that should be considered when undertaking monitoring and evaluation efforts including:

- ❖ **Tracking Plan Outputs** – or formative evaluation refers to tracking the accomplishments of tasks associated with plan implementation. It focuses on the resources and activities that are being completed or moved forward within specific strategies and typically represents the activities that the economic development organization controls directly or collectively with its implementing partners. Data tracking is commonly collected from internal sources.
- ❖ **Tracking Plan Outcomes** – or summative evaluation refers to the accomplishment of specific initiatives and how they have achieved the original goals and objectives. Outcomes are not often directly controlled by the economic development organization as they will involve the ultimate business investment and/or decision by residents. However, it does highlight the desired change that the economic development organization had set out to originally influence in “the plan”. Data tracking typically relies on both internal and external sources.

Figure 7-1 highlights some suggested indicators that can be used to track the accomplishments of the plan over time and the specific measures and their associated data sources that can be used to capture the desired information.

A key factor in effectively undertaking a successful monitoring and evaluation program is to confirm the specific information that the economic development organization would like to report on, prior to the implementation process progressing. This will allow the economic development organizations to systematically organize a tracking and information collection system that will ensure the needs of the plan are met as specific events unfold. It will also allow the organization to consider modifying existing databases or add new tracking tools to collect the information in a format that will allow the data to better meet specific goals.

Figure 7-1 Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators

Goal	Indicators	Measures/Target	Sources	Comments	
Outputs					
1) Cooperative Planning Environment	• Funding availability	• Core funding	• Leveraged funding	• Financial statements	• Internal measures, tracked against plan guidelines
	• Partnership Development	• Partnerships created	• # of volunteers	• Internal tracking	
	• Strategy and annual work plan in place	• Tasks completed • Tasks on time	• Tasks on/below budget	• Internal tracking • Annual report	
	• Community satisfaction	• Community perceptions	• Board and committee involvement	• Communications program feedback	
Outcomes					
2) Population	• Population growth	• Population • Target 1% per annum	• Population age • Maintain median age	• BC Stats • Statistics Canada	• Annual populations
3) Economic Diversification	• Employment activity	• Jobs created	• Total labour force • Labour force working locally	• Project information • Statistics Canada	• Annual estimates from Labour Force Survey • Census for 5 year benchmarks
	• Investor activity	• Investor enquiries • Hosted visits	• Companies attracted • Companies retained • Companies expanded	• DOV • Business licenses	• Internal measures tracked against existing activity. • Benchmarking required – add question in business license
4) Business Friendly	• Business activity	• Building permit and licensing	• Projects assisted • Partnerships created	• DOV • VEDC	• Internal measures for tracking.
	• Business climate	• Business perceptions	•	• Public meetings • Open House	• Internal measures for tracking trends
	• Assessments and share by class	• Per capita change in the assessment base	• Per capita change in tax burden	• DOV • BC Assessment Auth.	• External and internal measures • Benchmarking required
	• Land availability • Service availability	• New land inventories • Development permits	• New/upgrade infrastructure	• DOV	• Internal measures • Benchmarking required

Goal	Indicators	Measures/Target		Sources	Comments
5) Environmental setting and liveability	• Well-being	• Socio-economic well-being index		• BC Stats	• Composite of 6 measures available for Nechako LHA
	• Reduction of energy consumption locally	• Reduced energy consumption in local industry, commercial and institutional buildings	• Reduced energy consumption in District buildings and operations	• DOV • Energy planning committee	• Benchmarking and internal tracking required. • Linked to Community Energy Plan
	• Lands reclaimed	• Contaminated sites rehabilitated		• DOV	• Benchmarking and internal tracking of identified contaminated sites.
6) Learning Community	• Work related training	• Number of school age students that receive specific training for identified job in community.	• Number of local residents trained in industrial/commercial programming	• SD # 91 • EDO • CNC	• Benchmarking and internal tracking
	• Programs and courses offered locally that target non-residents	• Number of aerospace trainees • Estimates on spending by students and for program	• Number of health care workers training locally. • Number of UNBC students training locally.	• Guardian Aerospace • CNC • UNBC • EDO	• Benchmarking required and internal tracking required.

Appendix A Community Survey Results

During November 2009, an economic development survey was sent to all households in the District. The survey was meant to get feedback from residents about the economy of the region, economic development priorities and thoughts about how Vanderhoof might evolve in the future.

The blanket survey was distributed by the District with to a total of 2,500 addresses. A total of 44 surveys were returned by the cut-off date of November 20th, 2009, for a response rate of 1.8%. Since this was a blanket survey and not a random sample, there are no claims as to the statistical validity of the results, nor has there been any weighting of the results to conform to population demographics.

Demographic Profile

Are you currently employed?				
	Response Percent	Response Count	answered question	skipped question
Yes	66.7%	28		
No	7.1%	3		
Retired	21.4%	9		
Other	4.8%	2	42	0
What is your age?				
	Response Percent	Response Count		
18-24	0%	0		
25-34	7.3%	3		
35-44	22.0%	9		
45-54	26.8%	11		
55-64	29.3%	12		
65+	14.6%	6	41	1
For how many years have you lived in Vanderhoof?				
	Response Percent	Response Count		
Less than 1 year	0%	0		
1 to 2 years	6.9%	2		
3 to 5 years	6.9%	2		
6 to 10 years	3.4%	1		
11 to 20 years	10.3%	3		
More than 20 years	72.4%	21	29	13
Are you a permanent resident of Vanderhoof?				
	Response Percent	Response Count		
Yes	100.0%	41		
No	0%	0	41	1

Question 1

Which statement best describes your views regarding future growth in Vanderhoof?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I would support less growth overall.	2.4%	1
I would support the current level of growth.	17.1%	7
I would support more growth overall.	80.5%	33
Answered question		41
Skipped question		1

Question 2

How satisfied are you with Vanderhoof as a place to live?

	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Rating Average
Total	1 2.4%	5 12.2%	9 22.0%	20 48.8%	6 14.6%	3.61
					Answered question	41
					Skipped question	1

Question 3

How satisfied are you with Vanderhoof as a place to do business?

	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Rating Average
Total	1 2.4%	18 42.9%	14 33.3%	9 21.4%	0 0%	2.74
					Answered question	42
					Skipped question	0

Question 4

What percentages of your total shopping purchases are spent locally?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Almost all	23.8%	10
60-80%	52.4%	22
30-60%	23.8%	10
15-30%	0.0%	0
0-15%	0.0%	0
	Answered question	42
	Skipped question	0

Question 5

In your opinion, what are the two most important economic opportunities in Vanderhoof today?

1. Mining (mentioned in 13 responses)
2. Forestry (mentioned in 13 responses)
3. Biofuel (mentioned in 10 responses)
4. Tourism (mentioned in 4 responses)
5. Indoor Pool (mentioned in 2 responses)
6. Health Care (mentioned in 1 response)
7. Recreational Sports (mentioned in 1 response)
8. Wind power (mentioned in response)

Note: There are 44 responses with each of the 42 surveys initialled to supply 2 responses.

Question 6

In your opinion, what are the two most important economic threats facing Vanderhoof today?

1. Forestry (including Pine Beetle, lost logging opportunities, world lumber markets, softwood lumber agreement, inability to react to forest sector changes) (mentioned in 20 responses)
Agriculture (including price of beef, low prices for agriculture products) (mentioned in 4 responses)
2. Government (senior and local) policies towards development (mentioned in 4 responses)
3. Out of town shopping (1 response)
4. Local businesses not competitive with Prince George (1 response)
5. Lack of economic diversity (1 response)
6. Climate change (1 response)
7. Apathy (1 response)
8. Limited vision and not willing to try new ventures (1 response)
9. Lack of recreational infrastructure (1 response)
10. Declining population (1 response)
11. Global Uncertainty (1 response)
12. Price of Gas to travel (1 response)
13. Very little economic development to replace loss to forestry (1 response)
14. Dependence on one industry (1 response)
- 15.

Note: Ranked by number of times mentioned

Question 7

Which development priorities do you feel are appropriate for Vanderhoof?

Answer Options	not important	somewhat important	important	very important	extremely important	Response Count
Attract business to community	4.9%	2.4%	28.8%	31.7%	34.1%	41
Help existing business expand/grow	2.4%	4.9%	22.0%	36.6%	34.1%	41
Assist entrepreneurs and startups	2.4%	7.3%	26.8%	22.0%	41.5%	41
Reduce red-tape	7.5%	10.0%	17.5%	37.5%	27.5%	40
Offer development incentives	5.0%	17.5%	20.0%	22.5%	35.0%	40
Other	0%	0%	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Please specify						13
Answered question						41
Skipped question						1

Responses listed under "Other"

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Indoor Pool (4 responses) | 6 Health Service Hub (1 response) |
| 2 Pool and skating rink (1 response) | 7 Expand Shopping (1 response) |
| 3 Cultural Development (1 response) | 8 Oil and gas and woodwaste (1 response) |
| 4 Carports for seniors homes (1 response) | 9 Senior care and reduced government (1 response) |
| 5 Attract major industry/senior housing (1 response) | 10 Lower property taxes (1 response) |

Question 8

If you have a vision for the future development of Vanderhoof, please share it with us in a few short sentences.

Note: 34 respondents to the community survey attached additional comments or provide insights to the vision question. These responses are reproduced below as they were presented in the individual surveys. Thanks are given to all residents who responded to the survey, special thanks to those taking the time and care to submit longer replies.

Vanderhoof has the potential beyond most communities: regional hospital; transportation; skilled workforce; proximity to regional economic hub; affordability; outdoor recreation; unique natural features; diversified economy; reasonable northern weather; and the list goes on. Just sell it and they will come.

Remain true to our agriculture and forestry roots but to embrace future economic trends such as alternative energy. To support our educational and trade opportunities for young people. To continue to support recreational opportunities for families thinking of coming to Vanderhoof. To push our tourism opportunities with the many people that travel through the community each year. Develop stronger ties with our Native neighbours with regards to pursuing future common interests.

Concentrate our vision for our town only. Do not depend on others to do it for us. Look at possibilities outside of our country as well as the US. The world is a big place, full of opportunities. Promote Vanderhoof as a wonderful place to bring up a family. A great community.

To become an “event centre” To develop Vanderhoof as a desired brand to have. Certified lumber products, certified agriculture producers. Not too much larger – a constant population with visitors welcome.

I think the town should have more of a theme. Beautification in the downtown would be good. We need an affordable shopping for young people’s clothes.

I would like to see expansion of recycling services here. There have been a lot of improvements in the last 3 years. What about blue boxes? What happens to the piles of coloured ink flyers? More education on air pollution and less dependence on wood stoves. Bring in a “No Idling Bylaw” Please!

Would like to see a swimming pool and theatre for drama and music.

Have forestry drop or extremely drop stumpage on bug killed timber – small mill are going out of business because of the costs of timber.

Support the community in growing events at fall fair grounds and within recreation opportunities. Create desire to live here with Quality of Life enhancements including taxes.

Make Vanderhoof the most attractive location near Prince George to live and raise a family.

- 1.) Drill deep water wells (5 to 7 km) to find very hot water. Build greenhouses to grow food and plants. Sell food and plants to produce income. Heat homes and stores/facilities.
 - 2.) Develop huge indoor water park with shopping centre/hotels (i.e., West Edmonton Mall)
-

More attractive senior housing. Covered skating/hockey rink (outdoors). Maintain the area in Ferland Park. Town has already spent time and money levelling area in Ferland – does anyone know how to flood it? Put a Band shell in the park, Toboggan hill in the park. Was a ski hill with tow bar in town but was torn down for trailer park. Rebuild it above museum area.

More local food production, possibly utilizing greenhouses.

Utilization of dead pine too small for the stud mill. Pellet plants, biofuel etc. If the new mine proposal goes ahead 102 km on the Kluskus, there should be job spinoffs from that. Maybe a recreation centre/community centre (indoor pool/tennis courts/running track etc.) to draw people from FSJ and Fort Fraser, etc.

Seniors need a garage or carport for those that still drive. No senior looks forward to shovelling snow off vehicles before they can drive somewhere. Also it’s dangerous for the elderly often due to health problems.

More diversity

Senior housing is very important. A recreation room with a swimming pool would be welcomed addition to the Village.

I would like to see Vanderhoof continue to expand its senior housing and services, and provide more social services to its citizens. Things like (you guessed it) a pool, literacy programs, trails, recycling, a rec. Facility so sports can be played year round, expanded drug and alcohol services, homelessness programs, etc.

Many of these are in place but need to be expanded or to receive more government support. Some are in the beginning stages, and the need to be strongly supported by all community leaders.

In my opinion, economic development needs a healthy functional society to be successful. This sense of community, wealth of services, and level of facilities will encourage business and industry to invest in Vanderhoof.

A place where we want to live and want others to have the same positive experience we have in living, working and being neighbours in our area.

We as a family would like to see a pool. We as a family would like to see reduce crime and proper recycling facilities.

Streets and lanes without potholes. Please repave Rivett Lane when we repair 4th street.

Great place to retire with affordable property, close proximity to international airport.

Could Vanderhoof airport support regional flights? How about alternative airport to PG when foggy.

Lots of affordable land close to town – do some rezoning to attract manufacturing enterprises

How about a rehab centre/facility – lots of acreages close enough to town to provide a setting conducive of healing.

Bring in new stores. Coming in from the East and West only see industrial shopping. The downtown is improving – work on beautification of approaches from East and West.

We have the largest area of wood fibre in the province and we currently burn 90% of all our woodwaste. Help entrepreneur's willing to start these wood energy programs instead of saying it costs too much.

Vanderhoof needs to be more than a one mill town and I think you will start to see this change as a way of survival. Vanderhoof will diversify into a broad range of economic drivers to ensure sustainability. What those drivers are depends on what we do to attract people to the resources we have to offer.

Should support other industries such as mining. Professional people would stay if there was more recreational activities (e.g. Pool)

Develop medical potential and facilitate seniors' facilities/needs (access, zoning, and recreational potential)...

Increase facilities for seniors and near-seniors. The pool and such are going to be an asset as I age. I plan on staying in Vanderhoof once I retire and hope to have many things to keep us here. We will need more extended/medical facilities for those aging and the aged.

Expansion of Vanderhoof both with homes and businesses. Maintenance of beauty of the community, trees, etc. Creation of a pool and other leisure activities to make Vanderhoof attractive.

Vanderhoof needs a pool. Too many go to Prince George to use their facilities, and while there also shop.

More family oriented things to do without a huge cost to the families. E.g. Swimming pool.

A town that is not too dependent on forestry. One in which our surrounding forests are celebrated and "developed" (but not too much) for hiking, biking, horses, skiing, etc. A destination for the outlying communities for its wealth of amenities such as a pool, conference rooms, multi-purpose sports room to house gymnastics, yoga, martial arts, aerobics. A community keen on the health of the population. A community that

is supportive and encouraging of the local producers leading to sustainability.

For all sectors, especially mining, Vanderhoof should develop an industrial development plan so as to create a sustainable quality of life. This is very important. We are not just about jobs; we are about quality of life for generations to come.

- Attract such groups as: writers, animators, tertiary manufacturing, science researchers, in anything from water to forestry, wildlife to weather, aboriginals from around the globe market
 - Think within our own parameters and then find the diamonds in our own fields. Take these potentials and offer it to the world. Build it and they will come. But stay within the limitations of common thinking and we will remain just another Northern community with no vision.
 - Create the infrastructure (i.e., build pool/gathering place) develop the airport, open doors to the development desired – have a short and long term vision.
-

In Valemount BC, there is a playground climbing truck. It's a logging truck donated by CANFOR. I would love to see one of those in Vanderhoof.

Still waiting for a swimming pool.

Question 9

Which of the following sectors of the economy do you feel hold the greatest opportunities for Vanderhoof?

Answer Options	no potential	some potential	average potential	good potential	excellent potential	Response Count
Forestry (logging and silviculture)	0%	20.5%	35.9%	28.2%	15.4%	39
Forestry (processing)	0%	12.8%	43.8%	30.8%	12.8%	39
Forestry (bioenergy)	0%	10.5%	21.1%	39.5%	28.9%	38
Agriculture	0%	4.9%	19.5%	48.8%	26.8%	41
Tourism	4.9%	14.6%	34.1%	26.8%	19.5%	41
Independent power projects	2.6%	18.4%	18.4%	44.7%	15.8%	38
Mining	0%	7.5%	22.5%	37.5%	32.5%	40
Technology	0%	30.0%	35.0%	17.5%	17.5%	40
Manufacturing	0%	12.8%	41.0%	25.9%	10.3%	39
Transportation	10.5%	26.3%	13.2%	34.2%	15.8%	38
Construction	5.1%	5.1%	46.2%	30.8%	12.8%	39
Other	0%	0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	5
Please specify						5
Answered question						41
Skipped question						1

Responses listed under "Other"

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Expand health facilities and senior care (2 responses) 4 More community events such as dog shows, bird watching among others (2 response) 3 Retail development and pool (1 response) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Become more of a bedroom community (1 response) 5. A greener community (1 response) |
|---|--|

Question 10

What economic development goals should the community pursue?

Answer Options	not important	somewhat important	important	very important	extremely important	Response Count
Create more jobs	2.4%	2.4%	19.0%	40.5%	35.7%	42
Create sustainable jobs	2.4%	0%	9.8%	34.1%	53.7%	41
Improve family incomes	0%	7.3%	26.8%	34.1%	31.7%	41
Increase the business tax base	4.9%	14.6%	31.7%	26.8%	22.0%	41
Enhance quality of life	0%	5.0%	17.5%	27.5%	50.0%	40
Build a safer/healthier community	0%	2.5%	10.0%	27.5%	60.0%	40
Other	0%	0%	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	8
Please specify						6
Answered question						42
Skipped question						0

Responses listed under “Other”

- 1 Pool (4 responses)
- 2 More opportunities for seniors (2 responses)

Appendix B High School Survey Results

In November 2009, an economic development survey was handed out to students at Vanderhoof Secondary. As with the community survey, the high school survey was meant to get feedback from students about their perspectives on Vanderhoof's economic and community characteristics.

Demographic Profile

What is your age?			Total Response	No Responses
	Response Percent	Response Count		
16 and younger	4.6%	3		
17 years	76.9%	50		
18 years	18.5%	12		
19 and older	0.0%	0	65	0
For how many years have you lived in Vanderhoof?				
	Response Percent	Response Count		
Less than 1 year	4.7%	3		
1 to 2 years	4.7%	3		
3 to 5 years	7.8%	5		
6 to 10 years	9.4%	6		
10 to 15 years	17.2%	11		
All my life	56.3%	36	64	1

Question 1

"Over the next year, I feel the Vanderhoof economic area will grow and prosper."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Rating Average
Total	3.1%	13.8%	38.5%	40.0%	4.6%	3.29
					<i>Answered question</i>	65
					<i>Skipped question</i>	0

Question 2

Which statement best describes your views regarding future growth in Vanderhoof?			
	I would support less growth overall.	I would support the current level of growth.	I would support more growth overall.
Total	3.1%	39.1%	57.8%
			Answered question 64
			Skipped question 1

Question 3

How satisfied are you with Vanderhoof as a place to live?						
	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Rating Average
Total	7.7%	32.3%	33.8%	20.0%	6.2%	2.85
						Answered question 65
						Skipped question 0

Question 4

Have you been in the workforce (i.e., had a paying job) sometime in the last year?			
	Yes, part-time or seasonal	Yes, full-time	No
Total	78.5%	9.2%	12.3%
			Answered question 65
			Skipped question 0

Question 5

Do you intend to pursue post-secondary education or training after high school?					
	No	Yes, College	Yes, University	Yes, Vocational School	Yes, Other
Total	9.2%	32.3%	46.2%	3.1%	10.8%
					Answered question 65
					Skipped question 0

Question 6

In considering your most likely course of action after high school, please select the statement that best reflects your feelings today?

I will likely leave Vanderhoof to attend school or get further training	61.5%	
I will likely stay in Vanderhoof to attend school or get further training	9.2%	
I will likely leave Vanderhoof to find a job	7.7%	
I will likely stay in Vanderhoof to find a job	12.3%	
I have no idea what I might do.	9.2%	
	<i>answered question</i>	65
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Question 7

If you plan on leaving Vanderhoof, even temporarily, to seek further education or job opportunities, do you think you would have an interest in returning to live in the community some day?

Yes	No	
55.4%	44.6%	
	<i>Answered question</i>	65
	<i>Skipped question</i>	0

Comments on respondents decision:

- I feel it is a safe community to raise children in, and it might have more to offer in the future
- I just love the community and the people. There is a lot to do out of town which is in my interests.
- Vanderhoof is too small. I like big cities
- It's a great place to raise kids
- I've lived here all my life and I'd like a change and there isn't really anything to offer here.
- I want to specialize in pediatrics - better services in a larger centre
- The work and hunting is good
- I grew up in the general area and it's where most of my family lives.
- I like this community, and it has been a good place to grow up in.
- Looking for a larger centre
- I love Vanderhoof
- Prefer to live in a larger city with more job opportunities
- I would prefer to live in a warmer town
- It's a nice small place to grow up for kids and stuff
- Good place to live and raise a family
- Vanderhoof doesn't have very many job opportunities

Question 8

Please select any statement from the list below that reflects your opinion of your future full-time job prospects in Vanderhoof.

		# Responses
There are few jobs in Vanderhoof that interest me	61.9%	39
I'm interested in staying and working in Vanderhoof, but there are few job vacancies.	27.0%	17
There are jobs in Vanderhoof that interest me, but they don't pay enough.	7.9%	5
Other	11.1%	7
	<i>Answered question</i>	63
	<i>Skipped question</i>	2

Description of other comments:

1. There are no jobs
2. I am interested in staying in Vanderhoof
3. No jobs that interest me.
4. There are jobs, but I don't want to live here
5. There are jobs
6. There is lots of work in the electrical trade
7. I have lots of work in plumbing, gas trade

Question 9

What new stores or commercial facilities would you like to see in Vanderhoof (list up to four)?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Pool (36 responses) | 2. Variety of restaurants (18 responses) |
| 3. Dairy Queen (13 responses) | 4. McDonald's (12 responses) |
| 5. Clothing Stores (12 responses) | 6. Wal Mart (10 responses) |
| 7. Arcade or go cart track (8 responses) | 8. Recreation Centre (8 responses) |
| 9. Bigger or new shopping mall (5 responses) | |

Note: Variety of restaurants includes all references to restaurants other than Dairy Queen and McDonald's which are referenced separately.

Question 10

Which of the following sectors of the economy do you feel hold the greatest opportunities for Vanderhoof?						
	no potential	some potential	average potential	good potential	excellent potential	Response Count
Forestry (logging and silviculture)	1.6%	12.5%	34.4%	39.1%	12.5%	64
Forestry (processing)	1.6%	14.8%	26.2%	47.5%	9.8%	61
Forestry (bioenergy)	3.3%	11.7%	31.7%	40.0%	13.3%	60
Agriculture	1.6%	11.3%	29.0%	37.1%	21.0%	62
Tourism	22.2%	28.6%	28.6%	17.5%	3.2%	63
Independent Power projects	8.3%	28.3%	41.7%	18.3%	3.3%	60
Mining	11.3%	27.4%	19.4%	25.8%	16.1%	62
Technology	11.3%	22.6%	30.6%	27.4%	8.1%	62
Manufacturing	8.3%	31.7%	38.3%	20.0%	1.7%	60
Transportation	10.0%	30.0%	33.3%	23.3%	3.3%	60
Construction	4.8%	11.3%	24.2%	25.0%	75.0%	4
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
					<i>Answered question</i>	64
					<i>Skipped question</i>	1

Question 11

Which development priorities do you feel are appropriate for Vanderhoof?						
	not important	somewhat important	important	very important	extremely important	Response Count
Create more jobs	1.6%	3.2%	20.6%	23.8%	50.8%	63
Create sustainable jobs	1.6%	3.2%	11.1%	38.1%	46.0%	63
Improve family income	1.6%	3.2%	23.8%	42.9%	28.6%	63
Increase the business tax base	12.9%	25.8%	38.7%	16.1%	16.5%	62
Enhance quality of life	1.6%	6.3%	30.2%	30.2%	31.7%	62
Build a safer/healthier community	1.6%	8.2%	23.0%	19.7%	47.5%	61
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	100.0%	3
					<i>Answered question</i>	63
					<i>Skipped question</i>	2

Question 12

In a few short sentences, please share your ideas for the future growth goals we should be setting for Vanderhoof.

Note: 42 respondents to the school survey provide insights to the future growth goals question. These responses are reproduced below as they were presented in the individual surveys. Thanks are given to all residents who responded to the survey, special thanks to those taking the time and care to submit longer replies.

We should have a better bully-prevention system because having a safe community is extremely important. We should also have more recreation facilities.

We need a pool

Teens need more job opportunities at local businesses.

Teens need more job opportunities at local businesses.

I like Vanderhoof the way it is.

Teens need more job opportunities in local businesses

Vanderhoof needs more jobs open for people - especially teens.

We need improvement on the town set-up, more stores, better stores, better landscaping, scenery to attract tourists who give the town money, plus it makes it nicer to live around. More people, more work.

Look into more bio-energy. Grain is very big now days, look into more forestry practices that incorporate more jobs - look into air transport - commercial activity at airport

Improve the job economy, bring in more stores and make the town better looking. We need to improve on the town set up and renovate many old buildings and houses

We should have more healthy places for students because they mostly go to fast-food restaurants. We're supposed to be healthy but there are no healthy fast-food places. Keep Vanderhoof safe.

I think we need to get more jobs opened for people, and more stores and other things so that money is staying here and not in Prince George

We should focus on growing into a community of opportunities. I think as a small town we have many things. Different family venues would be good for Vanderhoof's growth

We need some more churches and definitely a pool

Get more businesses that have more sustainable jobs

Vanderhoof should have more varied opportunities that can keep Vanderhoof going when the economy's down. We need to be less reliant on the forestry and logging industries

I like the size of Vanderhoof. Variety of jobs would be great.

There needs to be more job opportunities and more variety of jobs such as a clothing store. The police officers should focus more on crime prevention. Should give more support to the Agriculture community of Vanderhoof

Create more jobs for teens. Create more activities for teens.

The future should help to create more jobs, but the small town setting is always nice and it wouldn't better me if it stayed small.

More quality jobs

We should be setting up more high paying jobs in Vanderhoof

Create more jobs and activities for the youth, so they don't get into trouble

In Vanderhoof, there aren't many activities for the students to do so I think Vanderhoof should plan more recreational stuff and buildings. More fun stuff for the younger generation to do.

You should be providing more employment jobs for high school students and students just out of high school that are a little higher paying than minimum wage. As it is hard for some students to raise money to go to post-secondary school.

Give the youth something to do instead of party and do drugs. Create more jobs for the youth so we can afford post secondary education.

Get like three bus loads of beautiful women to move here.

I believe that Vanderhoof should get more big companies/businesses into the community. Vanderhoof should grow more. We should expand.

- More jobs for students
 - More places (advertise) for us students to volunteer
 - More learning opportunities (courses) outside of school.
 - More restaurants (DQ and McDonalds)
-

Vanderhoof should grow positively because right now Vanderhoof isn't a great place to live.

Get rid of all the drugs. Make more things for kids to do.

We should be keeping it cleaner and safer so it is more welcoming to others. Also healthier restaurants and physical activities available so people stay healthier also.

Vanderhoof needs to be longer for most people to enjoy it. Everyone is always bored.

Make the community more inviting, and more things to do and participate in.

Just making it a safe, healthy, eco-friendly community.

Get a pool. Another Arena, more shops and restaurants.

More activities or things for youth to do.

Create more nightly entertainment to keep teenagers out of trouble, get people more interested in culture and opportunities outside of Vanderhoof and/or after school - more jobs to bring people to Vanderhoof

- Create more jobs.
 - Transportation.
 - Mining.
 - Bio - energy
-

More jobs for family and young people because lots of young people want jobs but can't get any.

They should get better cops

Lots of potential. Just have to get involved

Appendix C Focus Group Participants

For each focus group session Kathie LaForge, EDO for the District of Vanderhoof was in attendance. The workshops were facilitated by Tim Barry and Randy Sunderman of the consulting team.

Education – November 16, 2009

Maureen Mallais
Manu Madhok
Ray LeMoigne
Michael Shenk

Forestry – November 16, 2009

Mark Churchill
Bill Dobbs
Paul Heit
Jim Magowan
Bob Montague
Dave Philpott
Stuart Sinclair
Rick Sommer
Peet Vahi

Alternative Energy – November 16, 2009

Bill Dobbs
Keith Spencer
Rick Sommer
Leslie Lax

Tourism and Culture – November 17, 2009

Trish Belsham
Ken Holden
Kevin Moutray
Wayne Salewski
Erin Siemens
Heather Stephens

Recreation – November 17, 2009

Mary Anne Funk
Jim Hurtado
Kevin Moutray
John Murphy
Sarrah Storey
Shallon Touet

Manufacturing – November 18, 2009

Lawrence Pausche
Keith Spencer
Jerry Wadel

Agriculture – November 18, 2009

Gary Blattner
Roland Baumann
Lisa Burgener
John Cotrell
Darlene Turner

Commercial and Retail – November 19, 2009

Phil Bayliss
Bobby Bradley
Clifford Irving
Kevin Moutray
Ken Simon

Construction – November 19, 2009

Alex Pearson
Ed Schneider

Small Agriculture/Food Network – Dec 1, 2009

Jon Aebischer
Lisa Burgener
Heidi Hill
Michelle Roberge

Airport Feasibility Meeting – November 5, 2009

Eric Stier, chief pilot, Guardian Aerospace & Williston Lake Air Services
Paul Hascarl, public works superintendent. District of Vanderhoof
Jim Hurtado, Fire Chief. District of Vanderhoof
Clark Norton, Senior Consultant, Airport Group
Shawn Sutherland, Senior Airport Consultant
Brian Wallace, Guardian Aerospace & Williston Lake Air Services
Maureen Mallais, College of New Caledonia
Kathie LaForge, EDO, District of Vanderhoof

Appendix D Personal Communications

- Archie, Dickson. Councillor, Saik'uz First Nation. In-person interview on November 20, 2009.
- Culver, Shirley. CED Coordinator, Community Futures Development Corporation Thompson Country. Telephone interview on December 16, 2009.
- Dobbs, Bill. Board Member. Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee. In-person interview on December 15, 2009.
- Dowswell, Denise. Board Member Agriculture Land Commission. In-person interview on November 20, 2009.
- Erasmus, Hilary Northern BC Tourism Association. Telephone interview January 7, 2010.
- Everett, Anthony CEO, Northern BC Tourism Association. Telephone discussion, January 5, 2010.
- Federink, Ken. General Manager, Stuart Nechako Community Futures Development Corporation. In person interview on November 20, 2009.
- Fox, Len. General Manager Premium Pellets. In-person interview on December 1, 2009
- French, Jack. Councillor District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on November 16, 2009.
- Harris, Roger, Vice-President Aboriginal and Community Relations, Gateway Northern Pipeline Project, Enbridge Ltd. In-person interview December 10, 2009.
- Hughes, April. Health Services Administrator, Lakes/Omineca. In-person interview on December 15, 2009.
- Klingspohn, Ray. Nechako Valley Sporting Association. Telephone interview on December 2, 2009.
- Lamprecht, Fiona. Grant Writer. District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on December 16, 2009.
- Levy, Louise. Councillor District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on November 19, 2009.
- Little, Steve. Councillor District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on November 19, 2009
- Lindsay, Devin. School District 91. Telephone interview on November 24, 2009.
- Moutray, Kevin. Board Member, Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee. In-person meeting November 17, 2009.
- Petersen, Jerry. Bulkley Nechako Electoral Area F Director. In-person interview on November 3, 2009.
- Read, Frank. Councillor District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on November 18, 2009.
- Robb, Warren. Chief Operating Officer. TTM Resource Inc. and Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee. In-person interview on December 15, 2009
- Salewski, Wayne. BC Wildlife Federation representative, In-person interview on November 18, 2009.
- Thomas, Jackie. Chief, Saik'uz First Nation. Telephone interview on November 12, 2009 and in-person interview on November 20, 2009.
- Tower, Sharron. General Manager. Omineca Beetle Action Coalition. Telephone conversation January 7, 2009.
- Turner, Darlene. Board Member Vanderhoof Economic Development Committee. In-person interview on November 20, 2009.

Wejr, Randee. Nechako Valley Community Services Society. In-person interview on November 20, 2009.

Woodruff, Jim. Councillor District of Vanderhoof. In-person interview on November 19, 2009.

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