

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT, STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
District of Lillooet, Area A and Area B

December 2012

*“Dream no small
Dream”*

Focus Group Participant

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Executive Summary

The objectives of this project were to review and assess the current economic situation in the Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), develop a process for multi-stakeholder participation and involvement, and to identify potential strategies, projects and initiatives, to create economic development opportunities in the communities of the Northern SLRD. These communities are:

- Area A: Gold Bridge, Bralorne, Gun Lake, Gun Creek Road / Tyaughton Lake, Marshall Lake
- Area B: Yalakom Valley, Bridge River / West Pavilion, Pavilion Lake, Fountain Valley, Texas Creek Road / Highway 12, Seton Portage / Shalath
- District of Lillooet
- St'at'imc communities: Xwisten / Bridge River, Ts'kw'aylaxw / Pavilion, Sekw'el'was / Cayoose Creek, Tsalalh / Seton Lake, Xaxli'p / Fountain, T'it'q'et / Lillooet

Regional Overviews

The Northern communities of the SLRD are increasingly challenged not only in attempting to grow the economy in the area but in developing cooperation and trust within the region. The past few years have seen a decline in economic activity. In the District of Lillooet this is combined with an erosion of community trust and confidence in political transparency in the eyes of a vocal minority. This lack of trust has resulted in some divide among Lillooet community residents and has contributed to the community's inability to move forward. It is crucial for the District of Lillooet to work towards rebuilding trust and to healing its community from the negative tone that restricts them in ways that are beyond economic. If this is not done the Lillooet community may continue to decline and move further away from any economic prosperity.

Despite the negative forces that have been at play over the past few years the region has some very good positive news – an emerging wine industry, specialized agricultural crops (hops), expanded operations at the Bralorne Mine, an active arts, culture and heritage sector, and progressive initiatives by area First Nations. It is unfortunate that the good news of the region has been overshadowed and many residents may be unaware of the optimism that actually exists in the area. There is a desire to quiet the vocal negative minority that exists in Lillooet as it affects the entire region. The time has come for the region, and in particular Lillooet, to move forward in a positive, hopeful manner. This view was expressed consistently and broadly by the various focus groups held in the Lillooet community.

If the area is to be successful in any economic development efforts, the optimism and positive attitude must be brought forward. Negative forces will drive down a community's ability to rebuild and to establish consumer, business and investor confidence.

In addition to changing attitude, economic growth requires people, and the population in the region has lagged behind the population growth in the province as a whole. The District of Lillooet experienced a drastic decrease in population from 2001 to 2006 with a decline of 15.2 percent. Current 2011 census figures show the population at 2,322 – a zero change in population from 2006 levels. The surrounding

First Nation's population however, has outpaced BC's population growth. Over the same period of time, the First Nation population has increased by 12.3 percent.

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for the Northern SLRD were identified through primary and secondary research, which included a review of previously conducted studies. A summary of the SWOT analysis is provided below.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF NORTHERN SLRD

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Desire to change (negative to positive attitude) •First Nation culture •Climate •Agriculture •Political support for economic development •Regional services (hospital, schools) •Strong resource in the people •Scenic (people want to visit what is here) •Diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities •Community pride •Land supply •Affordable housing •Improved land use planning/policy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Perception of the community as a negative place •Declining/aging population •Lack of coordination •Distrust within community •Transportation •Aging infrastructure •Lack of industry diversification •Availability of skilled/trained labour •Inadequate marketing •Seasonal tourism •Out migration of youth •Regulatory environment •Unserviced land (east Lillooet) •Unightly premises •Vocal negative minority •Lack of quality accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agriculture - specialized farming •First Nation partnering •Tourism - outdoor recreation/ wilderness and agri-tourism •Arts, culture & heritage •Non-resident homeowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Transportation •Demographic change •Communication infrastructure (Area A) •Out-migration of youth •Provincial Planning and Policy Making •Global economy •Non-resident homeowners

Input from Northern SLRD

A core component of this project was focused on identifying potential economic development strategies for the communities that make up the Northern SLRD – District of Lillooet, Area A, Area B, and the six St'át'imc First Nations communities. Input was gathered from business, residents and community leaders within each of the regions through a variety of methods including an on-line survey instrument,

focus groups, teleconference, and one-on-one interviews. The input received provided a vast amount of information necessary to develop the specific strategies outlined in this report. The SLRD will have a role in moving forward some of these projects and initiatives; however there may be some good projects that are championed by others. The involvement of the SLRD in any particular project or initiative will vary and other partners and funding sources may be required. The input received from the stakeholder consultation identified urgency for improving community trust, identifying specific opportunities and increasing Northern SLRD business competitiveness.

Many of the projects and initiatives were identified in more than one region, while other projects were specific to a particular area within Northern SLRD. Projects and initiatives are summarized below with descriptions on goals and specific strategies provided in Section 5.0.

5.1.	Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.1.1.	Increase Community Involvement and Communication		✓		
5.1.2.	Enhance Economic Development Communication	✓			
5.1.3.	Create Community Unity (Community Charrette/Vision)		✓	TBD	✓
5.1.4.	Increase Community Dialogue by hosting Mayor's/Regional Directors' Annual Luncheon	✓			

5.2.	Enhance Economic Development Services	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.2.1.	Establish Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee	✓			
5.2.2.	Develop Economic Development Shared Services Agreement		✓		✓
5.2.3.	Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders	✓			
5.2.4.	Create Stand-alone Website InvestLillooet.com	✓			
5.2.5.	Develop Supportive Local Government Policies and Regulations	✓			
5.2.6.	Develop Information and Promotional Material	✓			
5.2.7.	Launch External Regional Awareness Program	✓			
5.2.8.	Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment	✓			
5.2.9.	Relocate Economic Development Office		✓		✓

5.3.	Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.3.1.	Implement a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program	✓			
5.3.2.	Establish a Redevelopment Zone		✓		
5.3.3.	Create an Entrepreneurship Environment	✓			
5.3.4.	Support Mining Activity		✓	✓	
5.3.5.	Develop a Welcome Home Program	✓			
5.3.6.	Explore feasibility of Bio-Energy Sector	✓			
5.3.7.	Investigate Feasibility of Downtown Wi-Fi		✓		

5.4.	Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.4.1.	Support the development and Implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan		✓		✓
5.4.2.	Assist in establishing a Farmers Institute		✓		✓
5.4.3.	Agricultural Marketing Initiative		✓		✓
5.4.4.	Agriculture Awareness Programs		✓		✓

5.5.	Support and Expand Tourism	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.5.1.	Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy	✓			
5.5.2.	Create a Community Inventory of Tourism Product and Infrastructure	✓			
5.5.3.	Create Stand-alone Tourism Website	✓			
5.5.4.	Pursue Locations for a More Prominent Visitor Information Centre	✓			
5.5.5.	Enhance Signage in all Northern SLRD Communities	✓			
5.5.6.	Support and Expand Festivals	✓			
5.5.7.	Support and Expand Arts, Culture & Heritage	✓			
5.5.8.	Develop Retail and Downtown Business Education Workshop		✓		
5.5.9.	Investigate First Impressions Program	✓			

5.6.	Enhance and Improve Infrastructure	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.6.1.	Continue to Pursue Improved Transportation Infrastructure	✓			
5.6.2.	Improve and Develop Communication Infrastructure			✓	

5.7.	Strengthen and Expand Partnerships	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.7.1.	Organize Joint Meetings with First Nations (Economic Development Corporations)		✓		
5.7.2.	Establish Community Accords with First Nations		✓		
5.7.3.	Build a Stronger Working Relationship between Lillooet Economic Development and BRVEDS		✓	✓	

Criteria for developing specific strategies that could assist the region in strengthening the local economy are essential. The following criteria were developed, taking into account existing studies and reports, the Official Community Plans of the communities, and input received from those individuals who live in or operate businesses or champion community initiatives in the Northern SLRD:

1. First and foremost the projects should be communicated to, and supported by, the local community.
2. Projects must be sustainable and economically viable.
3. Projects must provide a benefit to the local economy or work to improve the community's economic development capacity.
4. Projects must demonstrate that a strong team or champion exists to drive the project forward and achieve success.
5. Projects should have the potential to leverage other investment from other sources if required.
6. Projects should build critical mass in strategic sectors.

Service Delivery

The existing provision of economic development services for the Northern SLRD was studied as part of this project and a review was done to identify gaps or duplication in service delivery. The District of Lillooet has an economic development function that provides economic development support for the area of Lillooet, and the Bridge River Valley Economic Development Society (BRVEDS) works to provide economic development services within Area A. In addition, each of the six First Nation Bands has dedicated economic development for their lands – most through the creation of development corporations.

After review of the existing economic development services, several gaps in service delivery were identified. These include:

- No structured forum exists for sharing of information among service providers. There is an informal sharing of information; however, this can result in a lack of understanding of each service provider's goals, activities and future developments. This can result in duplication of services or product development.
- No formalized "regional" economic development model exists. For a region to work together on economic development there must be a structured model in place and a commitment from all players that economic development is truly regional.
- No structured forum exists for sharing information among business owners or residents. This results in a lack of understanding of what economic development does for the community or region.
- There is a lack of mentoring and support for businesses in rural areas and for First Nations.
- Community groups do not always have the volunteer capacity to effectively implement projects or initiatives. Without this capacity, it is more difficult to obtain project funding.
- Community groups/committees lack the understanding of their role in cooperation with local government.

Strategies for More Competitive Vibrant Rural Communities

1. Create a central location for information sharing on government programs and services, contacts and professional expertise.
2. Coordinate networking opportunities for community groups and government representatives.
3. Create a cohesive economic development partnership among neighbouring communities.
4. Coordinate training opportunities for community groups/committees in the region.
5. Enhance relationships with First Nations.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Objective

The objective of this project was to review and assess the current economic situation in the Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), develop a process for multi-stakeholder participation and involvement, and to identify potential strategies, projects and initiatives to create economic development opportunities in the communities of the Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.

1.2 Methodology

The project was conducted in a number of steps. Step 1 resulted in an overview of the economy of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD). The overview was developed using statistics from Statistics Canada and the Province of BC, and by reviewing over 20 studies previously completed for the SLRD. These reports were reviewed for the purpose of establishing a list of ideas and current initiatives for discussion in this comprehensive regional economic development study.

Step 2 reached out to the business owners, residents, community/region leaders and First Nations in each of the areas of the Northern SLRD. This consultation process was to collect input on projects and initiatives they would like to see implemented in the region to improve the economy. Input was collected through an online survey instrument (both resident and business surveys), focus groups and one-on-one interviews. In addition to collecting input on projects and initiatives, participants were asked to provide their opinions on a variety of economic development matters specific to the Northern SLRD. The online surveys were available from November 19 to December 3, 2012, while the majority of the focus groups and one-on-one interviews took place between November 26 and 30, 2012. A few telephone interviews were held the week of December 3, 2012 for individuals who were not able to meet during the previous week. The SLRD and District of Lillooet's economic development office worked with the consultants to develop a list of potential attendees for the particular regions. Business owners, residents and community leaders were invited to complete the online surveys and to attend facilitated sessions. Efforts were made to have participants at the sessions that represented various sectors within the economic profile of the region. At the end of the public consultation phase, 115 individuals were engaged through focus groups, one-on-one interviews or telephone interviews. An additional 105 residents and 33 businesses completed the online surveys.

The final step was focused on the development of strategies for moving the region forward. Section 5.0 outlines the specific strategies recommended.

1.3. Review of Relevant Literature

As mentioned above, the project began with a review of over 20 studies previously completed for the SLRD. Effort was made to ensure any recommendations made in this plan align with the objectives of any existing broader strategic plans of the SLRD. This includes the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and the Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP), currently in development.

The ISP notes the vision of the SLRD is to create a region comprised of diverse, distinct and livable communities that share a commitment to:

- Support the well-being of residents, the workforce and visitors.
- Protect the region's natural environment and beauty.
- Enhance the region's world-class outdoor recreation.
- Foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development.
- Make decisions that are aligned with the criteria for success and sustainability.
- Make decisions that engage local, provincial, federal and First Nation governments and stakeholders, and reflect the values of communities.

In addition, both the RGS and the ISP outline sustainability objectives that are:

- Live within the limits imposed by natural systems.
- Minimize our dependence on limited, non-renewable resources.
- Encourage zero-waste, re-use and recycling.
- Minimize disturbance of ecological and physical processes.
- Manage land, water and air resources wisely and efficiently.
- Recognize and reduce human causes leading to climate change while adapting, as necessary, to unavoidable negative impacts of climate change.
- Understand the interconnections among Economy, Society and the Environment and apply these consideration systematically in the decision making process.
- Work to meet basic human needs, distributing resources and opportunities fairly with an awareness of the needs of future generations.

The RGS also states "Sustaining the region's exceptional quality of life and stunning natural beauty while managing projected increases in population in the south and stimulating economic recovery in the north is a key priority".

Goals noted in the RGS:

- Goal 1: Focus Development into Compact, Complete, Sustainable Communities
- Goal 2: Improve Transportation Linkages and Options
- Goal 3: Support a Range of Affordable Housing
- Goal 4: Achieve a Sustainable Economy
- Goal 5: Protect Natural Eco-system Functioning
- Goal 6: Encourage the Sustainable Use of Parks and Natural Areas
- Goal 7: Create Healthy and Safe Communities
- Goal 8: Enhance Relations with Aboriginal Communities
- Goal 9: Improve Collaboration among Jurisdictions

The ten SLRD ISP strategy areas are as follows:

1. Built Form and Housing
2. Economic
3. Energy, Resources, Waste and Infrastructure
4. Food and Agriculture
5. Land Use and Natural Areas
6. Recreation, Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage
7. Social, Health Care and Emergency Services
8. Transportation
9. Communications and Engagement
10. SLRD Corporation Operations

The Economic Development Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to ensure the recommended strategies complement and enhance the above objectives, goals and strategies as outlined.

In addition to the RGS and ISP, various other reports were provided by the SLRD for review. Both the District of Lillooet and Area A (through the Bridge River Valley Economic Development Society) have undertaken a variety of studies focused on economic development and tourism. Below is a list of reports in the order provided to us by the SLRD. As you will note some of the reports are dated and a number of things have changed, particularly a decreasing population and the decline of the forestry sector. Some of the previous studies were no longer relevant to the Northern SLRD's current situation.

- A Cost-Benefit Assessment of the Hurley River Road Serving Whistler, Pemberton and Lillooet, BC, September 2002 – The purpose of this paper was to present a case for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Hurley River Road. This continues to be an issue for the region and is addressed in this current plan.
- Draft Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan, July 2004 – This plan followed public consultation on the recommendations made from the Conservation, Recreation, Tourism, and Community group. The plan relies heavily on data pre-2001 and does not accurately reflect the forestry sector since that time.
- Lillooet-Lytton Tourism Diversification Program Report, February 2005 – The plan was to investigate the role that tourism could play in developing the economies of Lillooet and Lytton. Much of the information and opportunities identified in the plan are outdated and would not be applicable to the current situation of the Northern SLRD.
- Lillooet Community Dialogue on Economic Development, November 2006 – This plan was a result of an action item from the District of Lillooet's 2006 Interim Economic Development Plan. That plan called for community engagement on economic development issues for public consultation on important community-based initiatives and to ensure that the local administration and Council were aware of the issues affecting local residents and businesses.

- Four themes were identified:
 1. Improve local knowledge of existing businesses and services.
 2. Improve support for small business.
 3. Address transportation issues.
 4. Improve first impressions.

The above four themes continue to be issues for, not only Lillooet, but for the Northern SLRD and are addressed in this current plan.

- Tourism Development Plan (TDP), Lillooet, March 2008 – The TDP was created through the Community Tourism Foundations development program in partnership with the District of Lillooet. The local First Nations bands and other First Nations organizations were invited to participate and contribute. Eight goals were identified in the plan:
 1. Development of more destination amenities and infrastructure.
 2. Improved transportation options.
 3. Expanded roster of market-ready products and experiences.
 4. Professional and competitive industry.
 5. Establish a market brand.
 6. Improved market position and awareness in key travel markets.
 7. Increased visitor volumes and spending.
 8. Develop and enhance partnerships between government, the District, First Nations and industry.

This current plan is not meant to be a tourism development or marketing plan, however, tourism is addressed in this plan and there is some carry over from the 2008 TDP reflected in this current plan, specifically transportation, infrastructure, market position/awareness and partnerships.

- Economic Base Analysis, District of Lillooet, Electoral Areas A & B, Northern St'at'imc, August 2008 – This report provided an overview of local market trends, including demographics, employment, wages and capacity measures. It also provided an analysis of four key business sectors – tourism, forestry, agriculture and energy – and a SWOT. Unfortunately, the report was restricted to using 2001 census data as the 2006 data was not released. This is still a challenge as Statistics Canada has only released a limited amount of data from the 2011 census. The report did provide some data that was useful in developing this plan including their demographic breakdown.

- Economic Opportunity Assessment, District of Lillooet, Electoral Areas A & B, Northern St'at'imc, September 2008 – This report followed the Economic Base Analysis (above) and identified, evaluated and prioritized economic development opportunities. Their top three prioritized economic development activities were:
 1. Joint Economic Development Strategy
 2. Local Economic Development Working Group
 3. St'at'imc Heritage and Learning Centre

This current plan is a result of the 2008 plan's top priority. In this current plan, there are recommendations that are reflected in the 2008 plan including the creation of an Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee. In addition, other recommendations from the the 2008 plan are reflected in this current plan including:

- Build trust among and between communities and governments.
 - Tourism marketing strategy.
 - Visitors Centre.
 - Viticulture and other Horticultural Crops.
- District of Lillooet Value of Tourism Study 2009/2010 – This was a research project using Tourism BC's Value of Tourism model to survey the District's commercial accommodation sector. A questionnaire was developed to gather data from businesses to provide a snapshot of their 2009 and 2010 performance data. Tourism BC then quantified the data and applied local indicators to generate an estimate of the visitor volume and direct expenditures on tourism in Lillooet. In 2009, 50,800 people visited Lillooet with an annual direct visitor expenditure of \$5,740,000. In 2010, 47,900 people visited Lillooet with an annual direct visitor expenditure of \$5,260,000. This data supports the tourism component of this current plan.
 - Climate and Feasibility Assessment of Growing Wine Grapes in the Lillooet-Lytton Area (Final Report), March 2012 – This is one of the newer reports produced. The report focused on providing production and climatic information to better assess the feasibility and suitability of commercial grape production in the area. The report provided excellent conclusions from the data collected. Through the development of this current plan it is understood the information from the grape report was shared with the appropriate businesses and individuals (i.e. Fort Berens). This current report supports the continued development of the viticulture industry.
 - Climatic Suitability and Feasibility Assessment of Growing Wine Grapes in the Lillooet-Lytton Area (Progress Report), March 2012 – This report provided production and climatic information to better assess the feasibility and suitability of commercial grape product in the area. This information was reflected in the above mentioned report.

- Bridge River Valley Tourism Workshop Report, April 2012 – This report was created through the Community Tourism Foundations program. Bridge River Valley tourism stakeholders were invited to attend a one-day tourism planning workshop. Seven specific tourism development objectives were recommended:
 1. To improve visitor information and signage within the Valley itself, to enhance awareness of tourism attractions, features and activities.
 2. To improve road access to the Valley, both via Route 40 on a year-round basis and the Hurley Road during the summer.
 3. To revitalize critical visitor facilities and services that are in decline or have been lost, including the gas station and some local accommodation facilities.
 4. To further develop the heritage tourism potential of the Valley through enhancement and interpretation of existing historic buildings/sites and First Nations cultural tourism.
 5. To work towards development of a major summer festival that would create awareness of and draw visitors to the Valley.
 6. To more effectively partner with adjacent destination areas, communities and First Nations in the region vis-à-vis tourism.
 7. To further enhance marketing and promotional activities for both summer and winter seasons.

This current plan is not meant to be a tourism development or marketing plan, however, tourism is addressed in this plan and there are strategies that reflect the Bridge River Valley tourism objectives. These include signage, transportation, infrastructure, culture and heritage, festivals, improved market position/awareness and enhanced partnerships.

- Bridge River Valley Visitors Survey, Summer/Fall 2011 Study Part 1, February 2012 – BRVEDS conducted a visitor survey on eight dates over a five-month period from June to October 2011. The report provides good data on visits and spending in the area. Tourism is a component of this current report and a number of regional strategies have been identified for BVREDS to be a part of.
- Bridge River Valley Online Survey 2011 Visitor Survey, March 2012 – An online survey was developed as supplementary to the above Visitors Survey, Part 1. Approximately 80 online surveys were completed.

- The Pathway to Prosperity in British Columbia Runs Through its Rural Places, Draft, August 2012 – This is the final position paper which proposes a long-term strategy that will support social and economic development in rural BC. The paper briefly describes the components of a rural strategy for BC as:
 - Use existing regional development organizations as the key vehicle for economic and social development planning and implementation.
 - Pursue collaboration with and the involvement of rural First Nations and Non-First Nations communities, organizations and their leaders in decision-making for rural revitalization.
 - Senior governments must commit to provide stable and long-term investment in rural regions.
 - The provincial government should designate a senior Cabinet Minister with responsibility for rural issues.
 - Rural institutions and other stakeholders ought to be involved in planning for the management and stewardship of public lands and resources.
 - A long-term strategy will require the support of post-secondary institutions including regional colleges.
 - Venture capital and business development supports need to be connected to regional planning.

- Area A, Official Community Plan – The objective specific to economic development is: To foster a diversified economy that meets local and visitor needs. Policies to support this objective are:
 - Emphasize Bralorne and Gold Bridge as the primary centers for commercial activity and community services.
 - Foster a variety of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, where both direct and indirect employment benefits for local residents can be realized.
 - Pursuant to section 920.2 of the *Local Government Act*, all lands within the plan area are designated as areas where temporary commercial or industrial uses may be permitted through an application to the Regional District.
 - Future rezonings, subdivisions, and building permits for commercial properties should promote the use of the land by small- and medium-format businesses that are locally responsive and preserve the character of the area.
 - The zoning bylaw shall be reviewed by the Regional District to ensure the bylaw facilitates and supports home-based business as a means of growing the local economy.
 - The Regional District encourages the provincial government and private businesses to assist in providing the best and most current communication systems.

- Area B, Official Community Plan – the objective specific to economic development is: To foster a diversified economy that meets local and visitor needs, that contributes to the rural character of the area, and stimulates healthy ecological and social conditions. Policies to support this objective are:
 - The District of Lillooet and Seton Portage are supported as the primary centres for commercial activity and community services.
 - Pursuant to section 920.2 of the *Local Government Act*, all lands within the plan area are designated as areas where temporary commercial or industrial uses may be permitted through an application to the Regional District.
 - Future rezonings, subdivisions, and building permits for commercial properties should promote the use of the land by small- and medium-format businesses that are locally responsive and preserve the character of the area.
 - The Regional District encourages the provincial government and private businesses to assist in providing the best and most current communication systems.
 - The Regional District encourages provincial agencies, particularly the BC Transmission Corporation, BC Hydro, and the Ministry of Forests and Range, to protect the scenic values along all major highway corridors.
 - The development of small- and medium-scale tourism operations.
 - Promote partnerships with business/industry and investigate commercial opportunities.

- District of Lillooet, Corporate Strategic Plan, 2007-2017 – This plan identifies a number of priorities that are reflected in the strategies recommended in this current plan including:
 - Aboriginal partnerships.
 - Maximize agriculture and crown land opportunities.
 - Create economic development opportunities.
 - Market Lillooet and its tourism industry.
 - Promote partnerships with business/industry and investigate commercial opportunities.

- District of Lillooet, Official Community Plan – The OCP states “The District of Lillooet strives to strengthen and diversify Lillooet’s economic base while maintaining a balance with environmental goals. Policies to support this objective are:
 - The District will strongly encourage and support long-term employment generating development, particularly initiatives that will not impact negatively on the environment or community’s image.
 - The District will work with the Economic Development Committee to ensure that economic goals are compatible with long-term land use planning goals.
 - The District will encourage the Economic Development Committee to pursue funding and financing for economic development projects in conjunction with private and public sector groups.

- The District will encourage and support joint economic development both with individual St'at'imc Bands and collectively with the St'at'imc Nation.
- The District will encourage and support joint economic development with the SLRD and the TNRD.

It is our understanding that Area A is in the process of completing a Community Asset Inventory with funding provided by the SLRD and Northern Trust Development Initiative. The report is to be completed by year end (2012).

1.4. What is Economic Development?

Successful economic development is defined by:

- Leadership and Vision
- Execution and Collaboration
- The Art of Leveraging Assets
- Continuous Product Improvement
- Creating Sustainable Communities

The above is written by a U.S. based, site selector and economic development consultant, with over 35 years' experience. He goes on to say, "Residents live and work in communities, pay taxes, support local businesses, enjoy the community's quality of life and infrastructure, and participate in public processes when necessary. Citizens, on the other hand, work to promote economic development as a way to improve the quality of their communities for future generations. Citizens continuously seek solutions to problems and challenges".

During the focus groups, each participant was asked what they thought economic development was. There were a variety of answers with many falling into the above definition. However, one participant defined economic development in a way that stood out from the rest.

"Economic development is inclusive, sustainable, respectful and beneficial for everyone and incorporates the long-term view."

What stood out were two words – inclusive and respectful. After gathering input from over 250 individuals through the focus groups, one-on-one interviews and online surveys it became clear the Northern SLRD needs to be inclusive and respectful. The region is ready to move forward from the negativity that has been present in recent years. In order to do this, communication within the region needs to be a priority.

The priority strategies recommended in this document fall within the goal of "Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning" and "Enhance Economic Development Services". Without successful completion of these strategies, the other recommended strategies have a limited probability of success.

1.5. Defining Sustainability & Sustainable Economy for the Northern SLRD

Throughout the review of the previously completed studies and the specific goals, objectives and strategies defined in the RGS and ISP, sustainability was a key component for the SLRD. Sustainability is generally defined as meeting the needs of this generation without compromising the needs of future generations; ideally making things even better for those who come after us. Today, the term “sustainability” includes not only natural capital or the environment but now encompasses social and economic capital as well. It is generally accepted that the health of each of these three forms of capital – environment, social and economic – are inter-related. In order to have a healthy society or community, all three aspects must be addressed and structurally sound. Clearly, the SLRD has addressed this through the RGS and ISP stated goals, objectives and strategies. Throughout the public input process, there was support for sustainability from residents and business alike.

Sustainable economic development offers global benefits that go beyond the Northern SLRD’s physical boundaries, including:

- Less dependence on the global economy (localization).
- Less dependence on non-renewable resources.
- Elimination of materials and chemicals harmful to humans and the environment.
- Smaller ecological footprint (i.e. reduce water stream).
- Contribution to a more socially responsible society.

In addition, a sustainable economy implies that the Northern SLRD’s basic assets – its natural environment and beauty, historic resources, cultural heritage, social institutions, and its people – should be maintained for the future. In the 21st century economy, successful communities will:

- Differentiate themselves from their competitors through quality of life assets attractive to:
 - Residents (to retain a quality workforce needed to attract business)
 - Businesses (to provide employment opportunities for residents)
 - Visitors (not only to generate direct economic activity but also to increase the visibility of the community for prospective residents and businesses)
- Leverage these assets through place-based development strategies and organizational initiatives.

How can the concept of sustainability apply to the Northern SLRD? The public input process provided an excellent opportunity to discuss how sustainability and economic development can co-exist. Throughout the process, there was a clear consensus among participants that economic development activities should not compromise those natural and historic resources that are important to its citizens. Participants were not opposed to economic development, and in fact, generally supported the function, but they want to ensure that attracting businesses, entrepreneurs and development is done in accordance with existing community principles. These principles are clearly defined in the SLRD’s RGS and ISP outlined previously in this report.

1.6. Strategy Plan

The overall goal of this Economic Development Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan is to be a hands-on working document or work plan. It is not a document written to sit on the shelf. The strategies laid out are realistic and achievable as long as priority is given to improving communications within the region. Because of this priority most of the recommended strategies are one-year approaches combined with a number of medium or long-term strategies. The purpose of developing one-year strategies is twofold – it works towards bringing the community together and it provides small successes to build upon.

A community that is not in agreement about their collective future will continue to be a divided community and economic development efforts, no matter how good, will fail.

This plan is for the Northern SLRD; however, it is important to remember that the Northern SLRD is part of a larger region – the SLRD. There should be ongoing effort to strengthen the connection between the northern and southern part of the District. There are organizations and people in the southern part of the SLRD that could potentially provide valuable knowledge and expertise to the north. One example is Tourism Whistler/Tourism Squamish/Tourism Pemberton which could potentially assist in strategies related to tourism. Another example is the Pemberton Farmer's Institute which may be of some assistance in the strategies related to agriculture. As each individual strategy is reviewed there is benefit to thinking on a larger regional scale to pull in additional expertise and assistance to help achieve the Northern SLRD's goals.

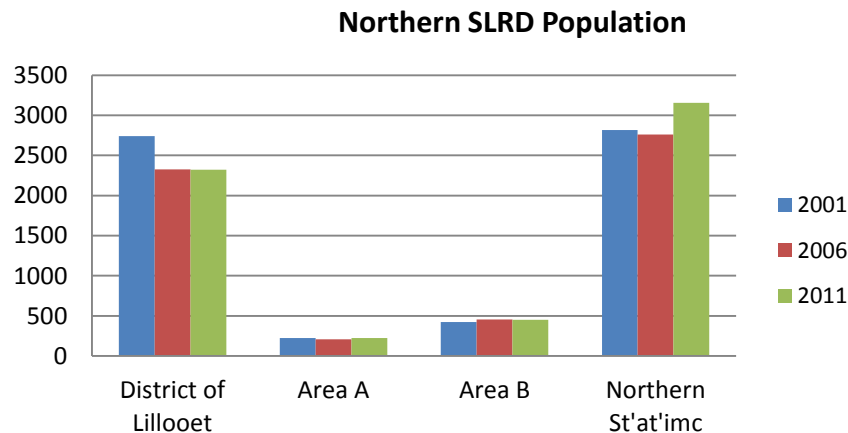
The Northern SLRD has many of the elements to be a successful region and in fact could be a leader in rural development. The people, the beauty, the resources and opportunities are all there. It is time for the region to move forward to the future.



2.0 Demographic Profile

This section provides information on the demographics of the Northern SLRD. Where data is available, a breakdown is provided for individual communities and First Nations. The current census (2011) has not been fully released and some of the following data is from 2006 census figures.

2.1 Population



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011 and District of Lillooet Community Profile

Total population for the Northern SLRD, including First Nations, is 6,151. Over the past ten years, the Northern SLRD communities have experienced an overall decrease in population – 11.5 percent from 2001 to 2011. The exception is the First Nation communities which have increased 12.0 percent over the same time period. The District of Lillooet experienced the greatest loss of population decreasing 15.3 percent over a ten year period, while Area A held its own (0.4 percent decrease) and Area B actually increased by 6.6 percent. Looking at the past five years, Lillooet has been able to retain their 2006 population base only changing from 2,324 in 2006 to 2,322 in 2011. Area A increased by 8.2 percent, while Area B experienced only a slight decrease of 1.1 percent from a population of 456 in 2006 to 451 in 2011.

2.1.2 Age

The Northern SLRD is aging with almost half (47.3 percent) of the population over the age of 50, while only 20 percent are under the age of 19. This gap puts pressure on a community in a number of ways including labour force, need for services and declining disposable income. Median age for the region is between 46.7 and 52.9, higher than the BC median age of 41.1.

Population by Age Group	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
0 to 4 years	100	10	15
5 to 9 years	115	5	20
10 to 14 years	135	5	15
15 to 19 years	130	15	25
20 to 24 years	95	5	10
25 to 29 years	80	10	10
30 to 34 years	95	15	10
35 to 39 years	140	15	15
40 to 44 years	165	20	15
45 to 49 years	185	25	25
50 to 54 years	225	10	35
55 to 59 years	215	20	50
60 to 64 years	195	15	40
65 to 69 years	165	25	40
70 to 74 years	105	10	20
75 to 79 years	85	10	5
80 to 84 years	55	10	5
85 years and over	35	0	0
Median age of the population	47.9	46.7	52.9

2.1.3 Education

The table below provides the educational level of the various areas within the Northern SLRD including First Nations. These statistics are from the 2006 census as 2011 census data for education has not yet been released. It is interesting to note the lower levels of trade certificates/diplomas, particularly in Area A with only 17 percent of the population over age 15 completing a certificate program. One of the main challenges for the Bralorne mine is finding skilled trades people for their job opportunities.

Educational Attainment (shown as a percentage)

Age Group	Population 15 and over	Less than High School	High School Diploma	Trades Certificate / Diploma	College Certificate / Diploma	University Diploma / Degree below bachelor	University Diploma / Degree
District of Lillooet							
15 - 24	230	63%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25 - 34	230	22%	37%	11%	22%	4%	7%
35 - 64	1070	19%	28%	14%	21%	5%	13%
Area A							
15 - 24	20	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25 - 34	10	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
35 - 64	115	35%	22%	17%	9%	0%	22%
Area B							
15 - 24	60	92%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25 - 34	65	23%	15%	0%	31%	0%	23%
35 - 64	305	13%	33%	8%	20%	8%	16%
First Nations							
Xwisten	150	47%	20%	17%	17%	n/a	0%
Sekw'el'was	75	33%	20%	13%	47%	n/a	0%
Tsalalh	155	35%	6%	13%	45%	n/a	0%
T'it'q'et	170	32%	15%	18%	29%	n/a	9%
Xaxl'ip	190	32%	5%	24%	39%	n/a	0%
Ts'xw'aylaxw	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	22%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

2.1.4 Labour Force Activity

Statistics Canada has not released labour force information from the 2011 census. The table below is from the 2006 census; however, it is expected that the labour force make up will not have changed significantly from 2006 to 2011, as major job losses in the primary industries (e.g. forestry) happened prior to 2006.

Labour Force by Industry and Occupation

Sector	District of		
	Lillooet	Area A	Area B
Management	80	25	10
Business, finance and administration occupations	165	0	35
Natural and applied sciences	35	15	25
Health	85	0	25
Social sciences, education, government, services & religion	80	0	10
Art, culture, recreation and sport	25	0	15
Sales and service	340	40	60
Trades, transport and equipment operators	280	25	75
Unique to primary industries	80	15	55
Unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	50	0	20

Source: BC Statistics

Labour Force Participation

	Population
Population 15+ in labour force	1,255
Employed	1,135
Unemployed	120
Not in labour force	625
Unemployment Rate	9.20%
Labour Participation	67.0%
Male	70.2%
Female	63.6%

Source: BC Statistics



2.1.5 Income

Statistics Canada has not released income data from the 2011 census. The data below is the most current data available and is sourced from the 2006 census. Due to the small population size of Area A, Statistics Canada withheld all income data.

The District of Lillooet experienced an increase on income earned from 2000 to 2005. Median income increased by 32.6 percent. The opposite is true for Area B where income decreased by 58.4 percent. This significant drop in wages is due to the decline in the forestry sector during the census periods. The labour force industry and occupation table in Section 2.1.4 illustrates the large number of individuals in Area B employed by the forestry and related sectors. It is unfortunate that at the time of this report more current employment and income data is not available.

Income and Earnings

	Males		Females		Median Income	
	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
District of						
Lillooet	\$41,467	\$51,852	\$32,625	\$49,463	\$37,662	\$49,955
Area A*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Area B	\$46,839	\$18,770	\$40,559	\$19,375	\$45,180	\$18,801

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

* Statistics Canada withheld data

2.1.6. Building Permits

The building permit numbers have been in a steady decline over the past five years for the District of Lillooet with almost half (42 percent) the number of permits being issued in 2012 compared to 2008. While both Area A and B have increased the number of building permits this does not indicate strong development in the commercial/industrial sector but rather in residential and related building permits. In 2012, Area A's 13 permits had only one (1) commercial permit valued at \$150,000 and Area B's issued no commercial permits.

Total Building Permits (000)

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value	No.	Value
Lillooet	83	1,761	78	1,506	62	2,401	53	1,200	48	1,864
Area A	9	681	12	956	11	2,413	10	634	13	2,003
Area B	4	64	3	370	12	81	17	5,590	15	764

Source: SLRD and District of Lillooet

2.1.7 Housing

The following table provides average housing costs based on actual assessed value. Over the five year period shown housing values have increased within the Northern SLRD. Area A experienced the greatest increase at 23.6 percent, while Lillooet saw an 11.2 percent increase and Area B increased by 2.7 percent. Housing costs are an advantage for the Northern SLRD which can offer significantly lower housing costs compared to other areas within the province.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Lillooet	\$193,916	\$197,859	\$224,132	\$220,044	\$215,699
Area A	\$130,758	\$131,198	\$161,439	\$162,127	\$161,668
Area B	\$522,241	\$523,282	\$535,221	\$537,825	\$541,592

Source: BC Assessment

In addition to assessed value the folio counts were also reviewed. The following illustrates the total number of residential folios and total assessed value. It is interesting to note the population jump Area A experiences when non-resident property owners are factored in.

	Lillooet	Area A	Area B	First Nations	Totals
Population	2,322	224	451	3,154	6,059
Total Assessment	\$225,257,355	\$163,371,105	\$86,735,141	N/A	
Residential Folios	1,202	707	480	n/a	2,389
Avg. residential folio	\$162,032	\$216,551	\$157,265	n/a	

Source: SLRD

3.0 Stakeholder & Community Engagement

As part of the project to develop the economic development strategies for the Northern SLRD, several methods of community engagement were used to involve and solicit input and feedback from the business community, residents and First Nations. This included:

- Online surveys – one for residents and one for business.
- Facilitating focus groups.
- Conducting one-on-one interviews.
- Telephone interviews.
- Economic development services meetings (Lillooet, BRVEDS, First Nations).
- Local council meeting.
- Individual comments received directly by email.

Approximately 250 individuals participated in or had direct input during the public consultation process. A summary of how people participated follows:

Interviews:

- Ten individuals were interviewed one-on-one (either in person or on the telephone) representing a range of local businesses, various organizations or groups, government, First Nations and community partners.

Online surveys:

Two surveys were developed – one for residents and one for businesses. The resident survey contained 20 questions and the business survey contained 23 questions. The following responses were received:

- 105 responses to the online resident survey
- 33 responses to the online business survey

First Nations

Particular attention was paid to scheduling meetings with First Nations. Due to the restrictive timeline of the project only three of the six First Nations were able to meet – T'it'q'et / Lillooet, Xwisten / Bridge River, and Sekw'el'was / Cayoose Creek. Effort was made to contact other First Nations, however, given the limited time available meetings could not be arranged.

Focus Group Session:

- Nine focus groups representing input from residents, business owners and community or regional organizations here held:
 - Five in Lillooet – 83 total attending
 - One in Bralorne – 4 total attending
 - One in Gold Bridge – 7 total attending
 - One teleconference focus group representing Gun Lake – 5 total attending
 - One with District of Lillooet staff and Council – 2 staff and Council

- Approximately 105 individuals attended the focus groups and represented various sectors including tourism, agriculture, arts, heritage and culture, healthcare, real estate and development and First Nations.

- During the focus groups participants were asked to share their views, vision or thoughts in regards to the status and future of local economic development challenges and opportunities. All questions were open-ended and were designed to create discussion and to be inclusive of everyone around the table. Participants were asked:
 - What is your definition of economic development?
 - Who should be involved with economic development and what focus should it have?
 - Do you think it's important to work with surrounding communities, including First Nations, regarding economic development efforts? Do you have suggestions on projects that could be worked on together?
 - How do you view the effort of economic development in the region?
 - Tell us about one or two economic development ventures you think succeeded in the region.
 - What do you think are the top economic development issues facing the region?
 - Describe your idea or vision of the type of business that should be retained and recruited in the future?
 - How can the region improve economic development?
 - What are some of the region's strengths as a place to live and/or do business?
 - What are some of the weaknesses of the region as a place to live and/or do business?
 - What are some of the local threats that could impact the region's economic development efforts?
 - What are some of the external (regional/provincial/federal/global) threats that could impact the region's economic development efforts?
 - What are some of the region's opportunities that you think should be pursued to encourage economic development?
 - Five years out how would you like to see the region?

The following section looks at the responses received from the online surveys. For the project, two surveys were made available – one for residents and one for businesses. The surveys were available online from November 19 to December 3, 2012, and were open to any resident or business within the Northern SLRD and do not represent a random sample. Accordingly, this should be taken into account when reviewing the survey results.

The following methods were used to promote the surveys:

- Link posted on the SLRD and District of Lillooet's websites
- SLRD sent direct emails to the area's contacts
- Bridge River Valley Economic Development Society sent direct emails using their database
- A news article and advertisement in the Lillooet News
- A mention in the Mountain Telegraph

3.1 Community Survey

Q.1. Where do you live in the Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD)?

Excellent response was received from Area A and good response from the District of Lillooet. It is disappointing to see little response from Area B and the First Nation communities. This does not necessarily mean residents in those areas were not interested in the process but may be due to a lack of communication or knowledge that input was being requested.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
District of Lillooet	41.0%	43
Electoral Area A	53.3%	56
Electoral Area B	1.9%	2
Sekw'el"was (Cayoosé Creek)	1.0%	1
Xwisten (Bridge River)	1.0%	1
T'it'q'et (Lillooet)	0.0%	0
Ts'xw'aylaxw (Pavilion)	1.9%	2
Xaxl'ip (Fountain)	0.0%	0
Tsalalh (Seton Lake)	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		105

The following questions asked residents where within Areas A or B they reside.

Q.2. If Area A, please indicate where:

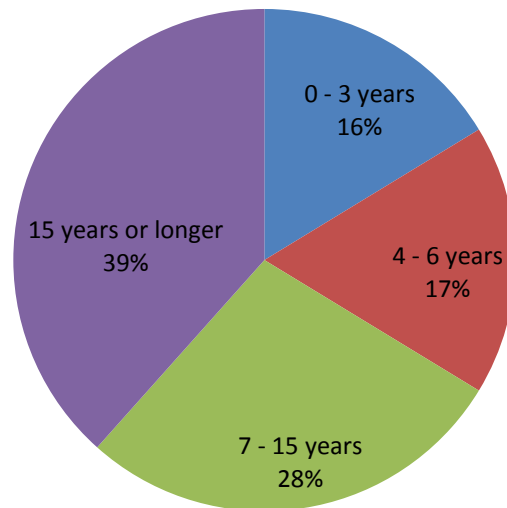
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bralorne	18.2%	10
Gold Bridge	9.1%	5
Gun Lake	49.1%	27
Gun Creek Road/Tyughton Lake	21.8%	12
Marshall Lake	1.8%	1
Other (please specify)		2
<i>answered question</i>		55

Q.3. If Area B, please indicate where:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bridge River/West Pavilion	0.0%	0
Fountain Valley	0.0%	0
Pavilion Lake	50.0%	1
Seton-Portage/Shalalth	0.0%	0
Texas Creek Road/Highway 12	50.0%	1
Yalakom Valley	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		2

Q.4. How long have you lived in the Northern SLRD.

Most residents (38.4 percent) have lived more than 15 years in the Northern SLRD. There is a good mix between 7 – 15 years (27.9 percent), 4 – 6 years (17.4 percent) and newcomers of 0 – 3 years (16.34 percent). Attracting new residents is an important step in securing a vibrant, growing and prosperous future for rural communities.

How long have you lived in the Northern SLRD?

Q.5. Do you live in the SLRD:

As expected, a large percentage of respondents do not live full-time in the SLRD (30.6 percent). This can cause challenges with what full-time residents desire for the community versus what part-time residents want. Area A does have a large number of non-resident property owners. When this question is filtered for Area A the responses are: 46.7 percent of respondents live in Area A full-time, while 2.0 percent of respondents live in Area A Seasonal (full-time) and 31.1 percent of respondents live in Area A part-time (weekends/vacations).

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Full-time	69.4%	59
Seasonal, full-time	10.6%	9

Q.6. Prior to the Northern SLRD, where did you live?

The majority of residents moved to the SLRD from elsewhere in the province – and from outside the Cariboo Chilcotin region. This suggests, and is supported by question 7 below; they came due to the lifestyle or outdoor activities that the Northern SLRD provides.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Have always lived in the Northern SLRD	13.8%	11
Other parts of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District	10.0%	8
Other parts of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Region (outside SLRD)	3.8%	3
In British Columbia, but not in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Region	61.3%	49
Outside of British Columbia, but in Canada	10.0%	8
Outside of Canada	1.3%	1

Q.7. What is the primary reason you have chosen to live within the Northern SLRD?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Grew up in region	16.5%	14
Close to work	8.2%	7
Close to family	5.9%	5
Caring for another person(s)	0.0%	0
Transferred by employer	0.0%	0
Education	0.0%	0
Career opportunities	7.1%	6
Quality of life	14.1%	12
Lifestyle/Recreational opportunities	36.5%	31
Affordable cost of living	4.7%	6

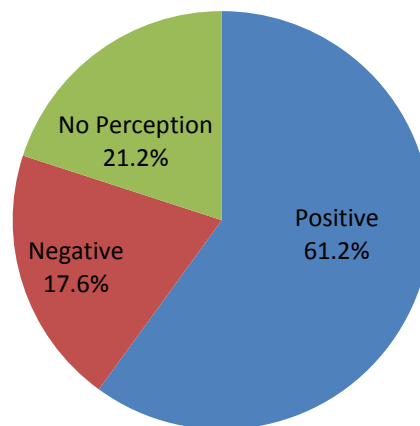
Q.8. Do you live in the Northern SLRD, but work elsewhere most of the time?

Most residents work and live in the Northern SLRD (78.6 percent). For the 12 responses that identified work elsewhere the areas included Vancouver (6), Whistler (2), Northern BC (1), Alberta (1), Ontario (1) and the U.S. (1.).

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	21.4%	18
No	78.6%	66
If yes, please specify in which communities you work.		12

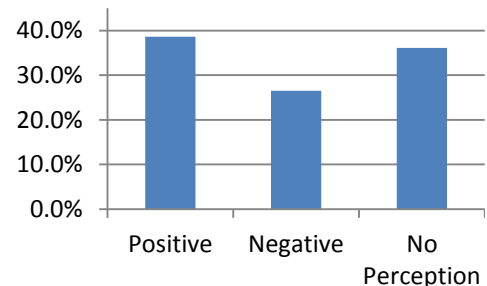
Q.9. How do you perceive the Northern SLRD's image as a region?

When residents were asked how they perceive the Northern SLRD's image as a region the majority (61.2 percent) believe the image to be positive, while only 17.6 percent said negative and 21.2 percent felt there was no perception. Most commented on the beauty of the region, the ruggedness and untouched wilderness. Other comments included the friendliness of the people and support that exists. The negative perceptions were received from Lillooet residents versus either Area A or Area B. These negative comments concerned the lack of communication from the local political level, and the bad media the region receives due to lawsuits within the Lillooet community. The comments received from the online survey were in agreement with what was heard during the Lillooet focus groups.

How do you perceive the Northern SLRD's image as a region?

Q.10. How do you think non-residents of the Northern SLRD perceive its image as a region?

Residents were then asked how they think non-residents perceive the region's image. There was a slight decrease in positive responses with only 38.6 percent thinking non-residents perceive the region's image as positive, while 26.5 percent believe the perception is negative and 36.1 percent believe there is no perception. Comments for this question again included the beauty of the area and being able to get away from it all. Many people commented on the road conditions and year round access challenges, along with lack of available amenities to get people to stay longer in the region and poor signage. As with the question above, the negative media attention and controversy that exists in the Lillooet community gives the region a negative perception.



Q. 11. What does effective economic development mean to you? (Check two best choices).

The majority of responses identified effective economic development as more jobs in the region, followed by new companies and more tourists. For the 8 "other" responses, lower taxes, attracting families, fire zone safety, and improved road access were listed.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More jobs in the region	43.5%	37
Existing companies stable and expanding in the region	18.8%	16
New companies opening in the region	29.4%	25
Improved awareness (reputation) of the region	25.9%	22
More tourists visiting the region	31.8%	27
Better lifestyle amenities	22.4%	19
Buy-local culture: generating dollars and keeping them circulating in the local economy	20.0%	17
Better educational opportunities	11.8%	10
Higher standard of living for citizens	10.6%	9
Other (please specify)	9.4%	8
<i>answered question</i>		85

Q.12. What word or phrase would you use to describe the Northern SLRD?

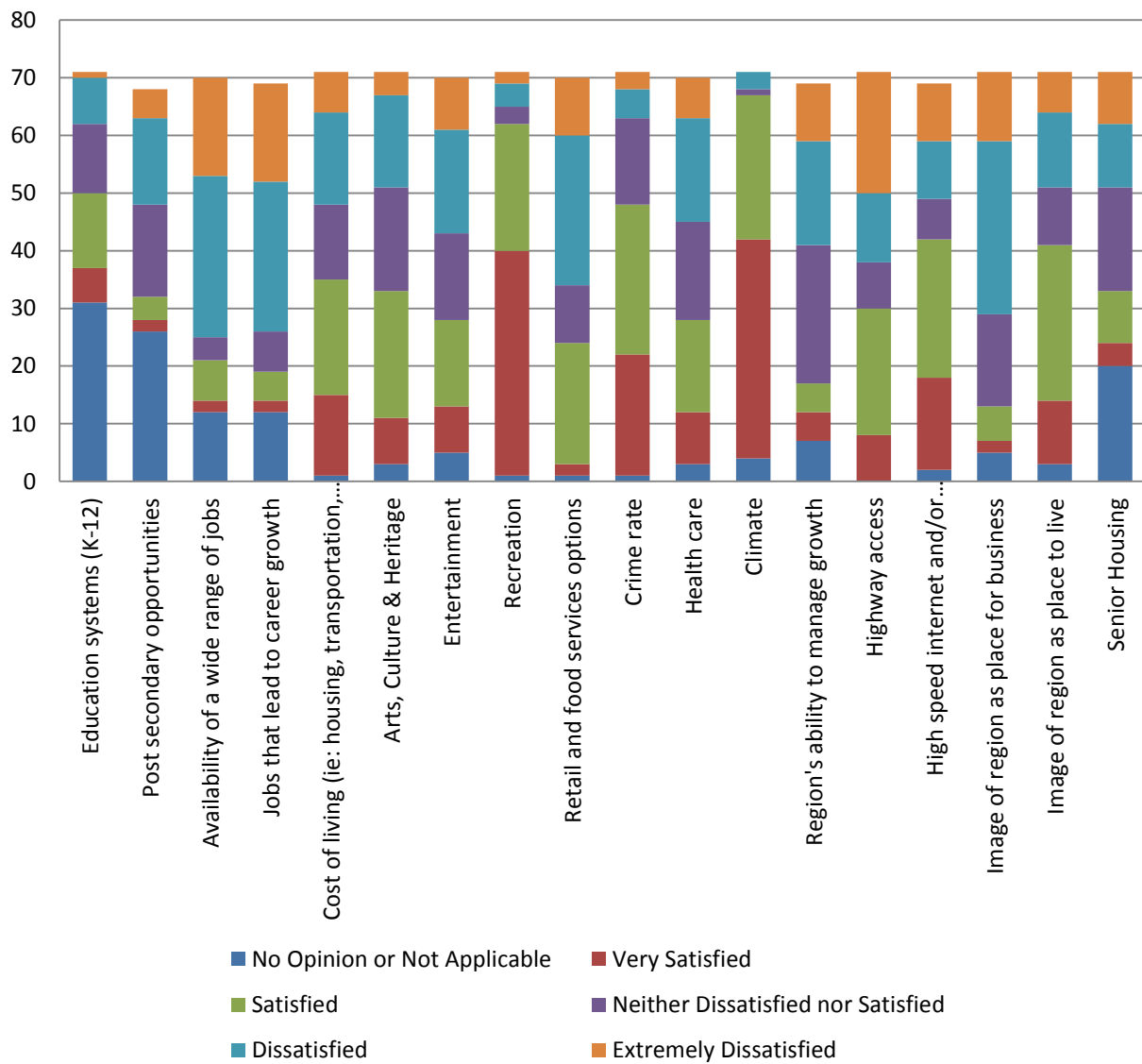
This was an open ended question and 71 responses were received. The majority of the responses were positive and included the words beautiful, remote, potential, and wilderness. There were very few negative descriptions but they include disorganized, stagnant and stale.

Again the comments received through the online survey mirror the comments received during the focus groups. There was very little negativity when participants were talking about the region. Most agreed there are many opportunities or potential that exists.

Q.13. How well does the Northern SLRD satisfy your needs in the following areas?

Residents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a variety of factors including: education, job availability, cost of living, recreation, services, climate, access, image and senior housing. Residents were very satisfied their needs were being met with recreational and climate, while they were extremely dissatisfied with the availability of a wide range of jobs and jobs that lead to career growth.

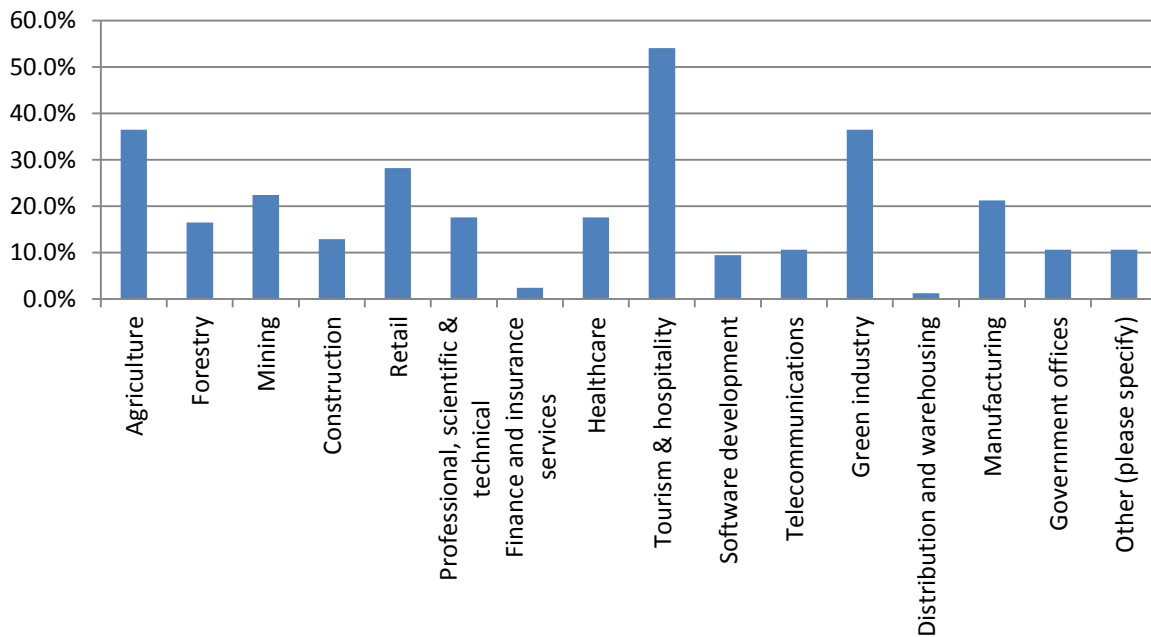
How well does the Northern SLRD satisfy your needs in the following areas?



Q.14. What type of businesses would you like to see expand or locate in the Northern SLRD?

Residents were asked to pick up to three industry sectors they would like to see expand or locate in the region. The top three sectors were tourism and hospitality (54.1 percent), green industry and agriculture (both at 36.5 percent). This is consistent with the input received from the focus groups. During discussions it was felt that tourism and agriculture have the best potential to realize success.

What type of businesses would you like to see expand or locate in the Northern SLRD? (Choose up to three)



Q.15. What are the Northern SLRD's three greatest strengths that CURRENTLY make it a viable place for economic growth? (Check top three)

Tied for top spot are recreational opportunities and climate/location as the region's greatest strengths. Due to the large number of respondents from Area A, proximity to the Sea to Sky corridor was second. Focus groups outside of Area A did not mention the Sea to Sky access as a strength.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Skilled workforce	4.7%	4
Transportation access (close to highways, ease of getting from place to place)	9.4%	8
Close proximity to recreational opportunities	56.5%	48
K-12 schools	16.5%	14
Local government leadership	4.7%	4
Strong employer base	1.2%	1
Entrepreneurial talent	12.9%	11
Affordability of housing	41.2%	35
Strong community pride	18.8%	16
Climate and location	64.7%	55
Multi-cultural presence in the region	10.6%	9
Proximity to Kamloops	10.6%	9
Proximity to Sea to Sky Corridor	48.8%	33

Q.16. What are the three biggest challenges CURRENTLY facing the Northern SLRD as it works to improve jobs and economic growth? (Check top three)

Availability of jobs was rated the biggest challenge facing the region, followed by inadequate transportation infrastructure and keeping young skilled workers. This is consistent with the focus groups. However, the focus groups held in Lillooet also mentioned the negative minority voice as a major challenge or weakness. This was not on the survey as it was not brought forward until the Lillooet focus groups began. As well, this issue is specific to Lillooet although it can impact the region as a whole.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Availability of jobs	64.3%	54
Availability of diverse housing options	6.0%	5
Keeping young skilled workers	38.1%	32
Inadequate transportation infrastructure	38.1%	32
Community infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.)	11.9%	10
Communication infrastructure (internet, cell, telephone, etc.)	19.0%	16
Local government leadership	29.8%	25
Level of community pride	15.5%	13
School systems	26.2%	22
High costs (business and living)	17.9%	15
Availability of retail/restaurant/entertainment options	16.7%	14

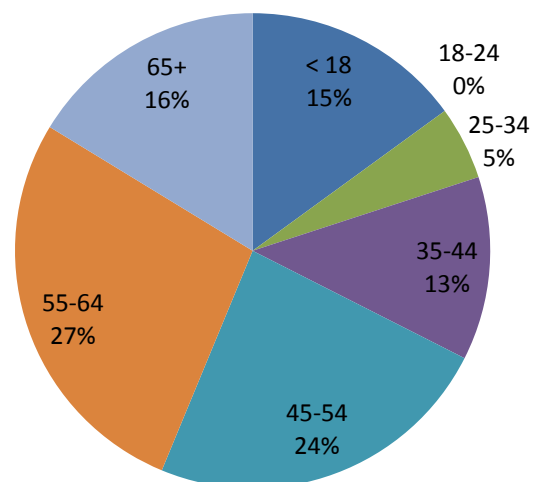
Q.17. What should be the top three economic development goals for the FUTURE of the Northern SLRD? (Check top three)

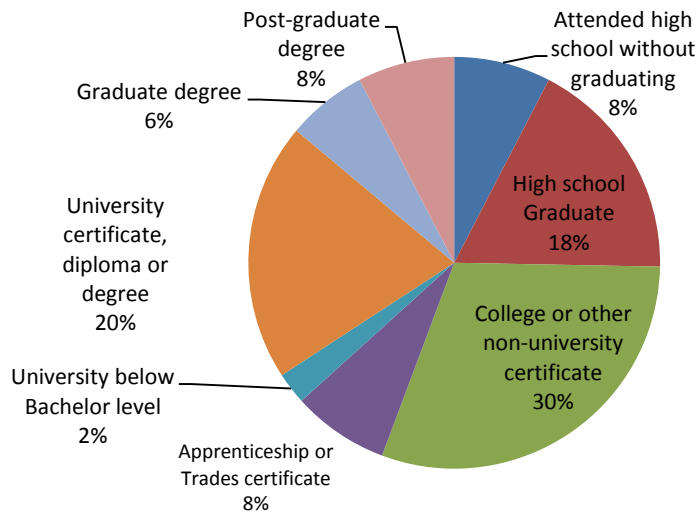
The majority of respondents (52.9 percent) would like to see the retention and expansion of existing businesses, followed by more small business and entrepreneurs (47.1%) as an economic development focus, along with promoting the region externally. The majority of the “other” comments fell within one of the options with the exception of a few wanting to see year-round access to the Hurley. The focus groups discussed the Hurley with the majority wanting it to stay as is, as long as sufficient upkeep is maintained.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing companies staying (and expanding)	52.9%	45
Attraction of non-retail (Please specify in box below)	11.8%	10
More small businesses and entrepreneurs	47.1%	40
Better retail amenities/additional retailers	24.7%	21
Better lifestyle amenities	29.4%	25
Better educational and workforce development opportunities	27.1%	23
Revitalization of older commercial areas	17.5%	15
Retaining young professionals	21.2%	18
Promoting the Northern SLRD in other regions of BC/Canada	27.1%	23
Promoting the Northern SLRD in other countries. (Please specify which countries, in box below)	3.5%	3
Other (please specify)	24.7%	21

Q.18. What is your age?

The majority of respondents fell into the 55 – 64 age range. There was good representation from the school district with 15.0% of respondents under the age of 18. Five percent were between the ages of 25 – 34. The age breakdown of survey respondents is a good mix between young and old.



Q.19. What is your highest level of education?**Q.20. Please include any comments that you think would be helpful to this process?**

Residents were asked to provide any additional comments that they were not able to submit through the other questions. Thirty comments were received and are summarized below:

- Circle route
- Keep and protect the unique beauty – we do not want a Whistler
- Protect the remote and rugged beauty
- Attract people who love outdoor sports
- Improve internet and communications
- Contentious local political climate needs to be addressed
- Improve route 40
- Resolve antagonistic attitudes
- North-south links must be developed
- Upgrades to the Hurley
- Bring back passenger rail
- Focused marketing campaign
- Publish survey results
- Improved accountability
- Need to bring community together

3.2 Business Survey

Q.1. Where in the Northern Squamish-Lillooet Regional District is your business located?

Similar to the resident survey there was an excellent response from Area A. Due to the high percentage of Area A respondents there may be a bias towards Area A issues compared to other areas within the Northern SLRD. The business survey results will be tempered with the input received from focus groups throughout the region.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
District of Lillooet	39.4%	13
Electoral Area A	51.5%	17
Electoral Area B	3.0%	1
Sekw'el'was (Cayoose Creek)	3.0%	1
Xwisten (Bridge River)	0.0%	0
T'it'q'et (Lillooet)	0.0%	0
Ts'xw'aylaxw (Pavillion)	0.0%	0
Xaxl'ip (Fountain)	3.0%	1
Tsalalh (Seton Lake)	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		33

The following questions asked residents where within Area A or B they reside.

Q.2. If located in Area A, please indicate where:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bralorne	22.2%	4
Gold Bridge	22.2%	4
Gun Lake	33.3%	6
Gun Creek Road/Tyughton Lake	22.2%	4
Marshall Lake	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		18

Q.3. If in Area B, please indicate where:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bridge River/West Pavillion	0.0%	0
Fountain Valley	50.0%	1
Pavillion Lake	0.0%	0
Seton-Portage/Shalalth	0.0%	0
Texas Creek Road/Highway 12	50.0%	1
Yalakom Valley	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		2

Q.4. Which best describes the primary industry focus of your company?

The table below shows that “other” has the highest response, however, for the four respondents that indicated “other”, the industry they noted should be categorized as: Construction (1), Mining (1), Health Services (1), Transportation (1).

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Retail trade	16.7%	4
Finance and insurance	0.0%	0
Information technology (software, data processing, computer systems design)	4.2%	1
Media, publishing, telecommunications	4.2%	1
Professional, scientific and technical services	4.2%	1
Real estate	8.3%	2
Construction	4.2%	1
Legal, accounting, engineering services	4.2%	1
Arts, Culture & Heritage	0.0%	0
Entertainment	0.0%	0
Recreation	4.2%	1
Wholesale/transportation and/or warehousing	0.0%	0
Education and health services	0.0%	0
Auto or equipment repair	0.0%	0
Government	0.0%	0
Manufacturing	4.2%	1
Renewable energy	0.0%	0
Utilities	0.0%	0
Accommodation	0.0%	0
Food Services	4.2%	1
Tourism Attraction	4.2%	1
Winery	0.0%	0

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agriculture	4.2%	1
Forestry	12.5%	3
Fishing	0.0%	0
Mining	4.2%	0
Other (please specify)	16.7%	4

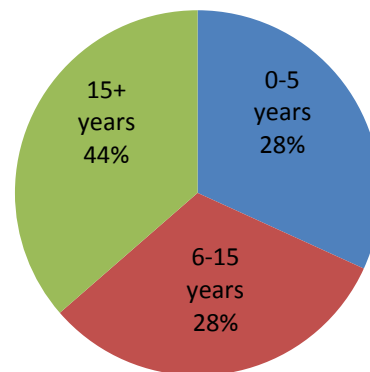
Q.5. How many people are employed by your business (including contract employees)?

As expected most businesses (79.2 percent) employ less than ten people. This is in line with provincial and national statistics.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
<5	62.5%	15
6-10	16.7%	4
11-24	12.5%	3
25-49	4.2%	1
50-99	4.2%	1
100-499	0.0%	0
500-999	0.0%	0

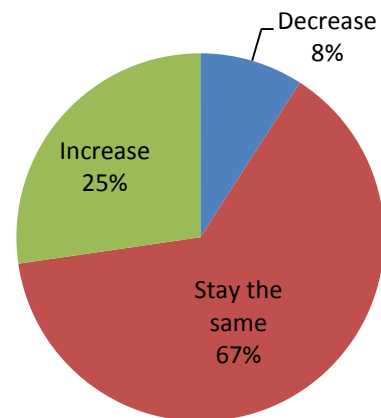
Q.6. How long has your business been located in the Northern SLRD?

There is an excellent mix of years in business with an almost one-third equal divide between start-up, medium and well established companies.



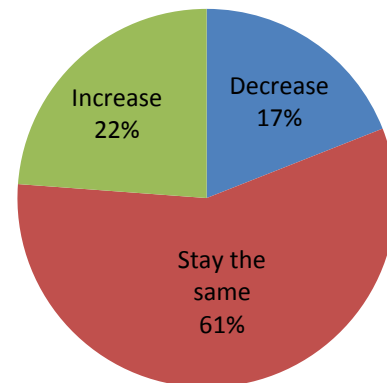
Q.7. Over the next 2 years, do you expect the number of employees to:

Of the businesses responding only eight (8) percent expect their number of employees to decrease. The majority (67 percent) expect their numbers to stay the same, while 25 percent expect their numbers to increase. There is already pressure on finding qualified labour in the region, particularly Area A, and this supports the needs for attracting workers.



Q.8. Over the next 3 – 5 years, do you expect the number of employees to:

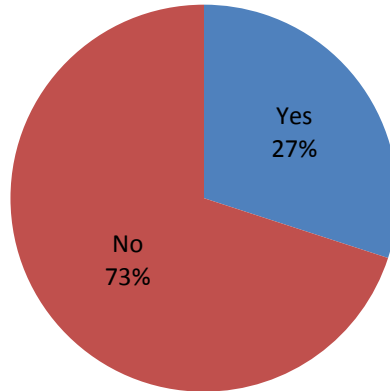
Looking longer out, labour may continue to be an issue as 22 percent expect staff to increase and 61 percent expect no change. The sampling size is fairly small with only 23 respondents to this question, however, information on labour needs should be collected. This could be easily accomplished through a formalized Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.



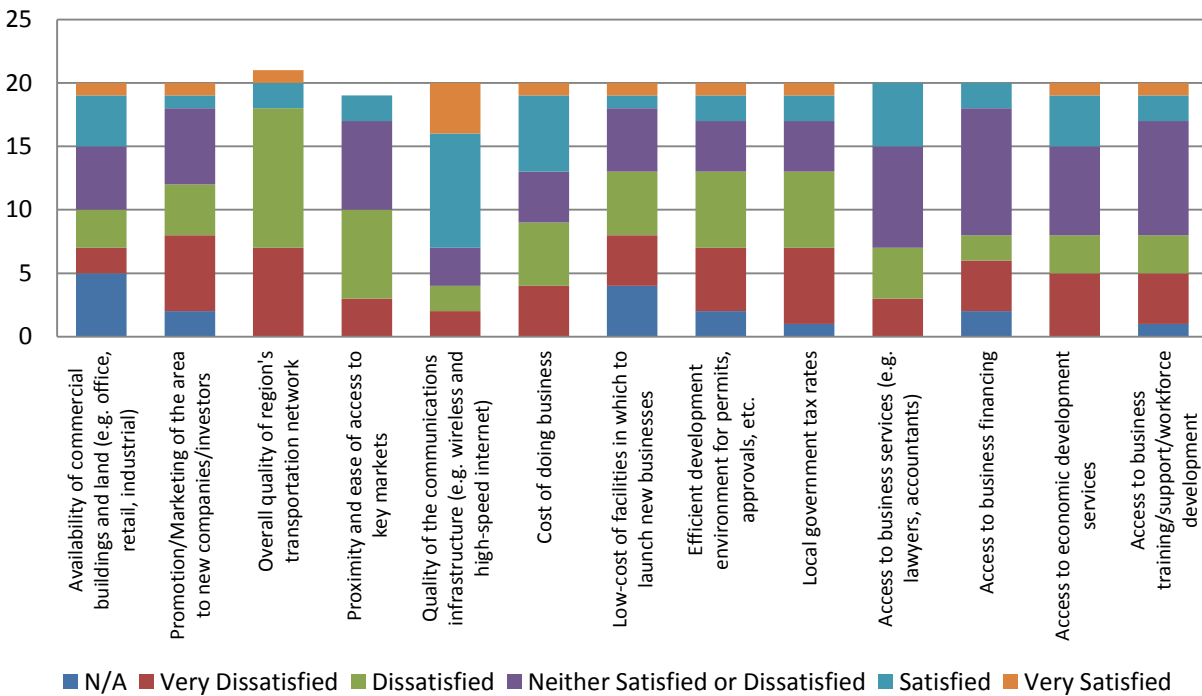
Q.9. What is the primary reason for locating your business in the Northern SLRD?

The four “other” responses included: family business (1), identified a need (1), purchased an existing business (1), like living here (1)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Current resident and decided to start a business	41.7%	10
Availability of a wide range of workers	0.0%	0
Educated and technically-skilled workforce	0.0%	0
Low business costs	0.0%	0
Strong infrastructure (broadband network, utilities support)	0.0%	0
Transportation access and mobility (parking ease, close to highways, unclogged roads)	0.0%	0
Close proximity to customer base	4.2%	1
Close proximity to resources/suppliers	8.3%	2
Strong quality of life	25.0%	6
Came out of retirement to start-up or return to business	4.2%	1
Other (please specify)	16.7%	4

Q. 10. Does your company have another location outside of the region?**Q.11. Please rate your satisfaction level with each factor.**

Businesses were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a variety of factors including: commercial space, promotion, transportation, market access, communications infrastructure, cost of doing business, permitting, tax rates, business services, financing, economic development and labour. Quality of communications infrastructure (i.e. wireless and high-speed internet) received the highest satisfaction approval, while low cost of facilities in which to launch new businesses received the lowest. Dissatisfaction was highest in overall quality of the region's transportation network, followed by local government tax rates and efficient development environment for permits. (Table on following page.)



Q.12. What does effective economic development mean to you? (Check two best choices).

Labour, either through attracting new jobs to the area or keeping the ones already here, are what businesses believe effective economic development means. A Business Retention and Expansion program is an excellent way to monitor existing and future needs of businesses.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More jobs in the region	47.8%	11
Existing companies stable and expanding in the region	47.8%	11
New companies opening in the region	34.8%	8
Improved awareness (reputation) of the region	17.4%	4
More tourists visiting the region	17.4%	4
Better lifestyle amenities	13.0%	3
Better educational opportunities	8.7%	2
Higher standard of living for citizens	13.0%	3
Create a Shop Local Culture	17.4%	4

Q.13. What should be the top three economic development goals for the FUTURE of the Northern SLRD? (Check top three)

As with the resident survey the majority of respondents (68.2 percent) would like to see more small businesses and entrepreneurs as an economic development focus, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses (68.2%). The majority of the “other” comments fell within one of the options with the exception of developing senior/retirement opportunities.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing companies staying (and expanding)	68.2%	15
Attraction of non-retail (Please specify in box below)	36.4%	8
More small businesses and entrepreneurs	68.2%	16
Better retail amenities/additional retailers	13.6%	3
Better lifestyle amenities	22.7%	6
Better educational opportunities	9.1%	2
Revitalization of older commercial areas	18.2%	4
Retaining young professionals	22.7%	5
Promoting the Northern SLRD in other regions of BC/Canada	13.6%	4
Promoting the Northern SLRD in other countries. (Please specify which countries, in box below)	4.5%	1
Other (please specify)		10

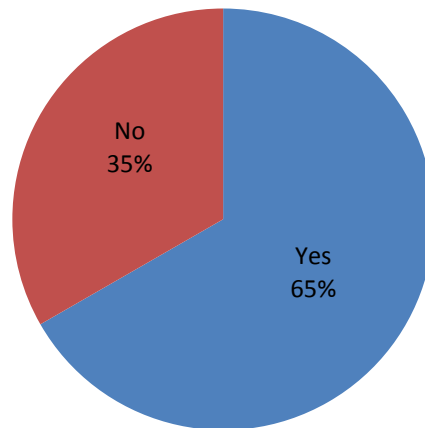
Q.14. What do you think is the most critical regional/local challenge facing your business today?

This open ended question received 20 business responses, they included:

- Local bylaws
- Affordable access to markets
- Stability of global economy
- Shortage of work in the region
- Out migration
- Declining population
- Hurley upgrade
- Promotion of region
- Poor economic development performance
- Poor local political culture
- Loss of provincial services
- Decline of the forestry industry
- Lack of fibre optic/high speed internet

Q.15. Are you aware of the District of Lillooet Economic Development and the services they provide?

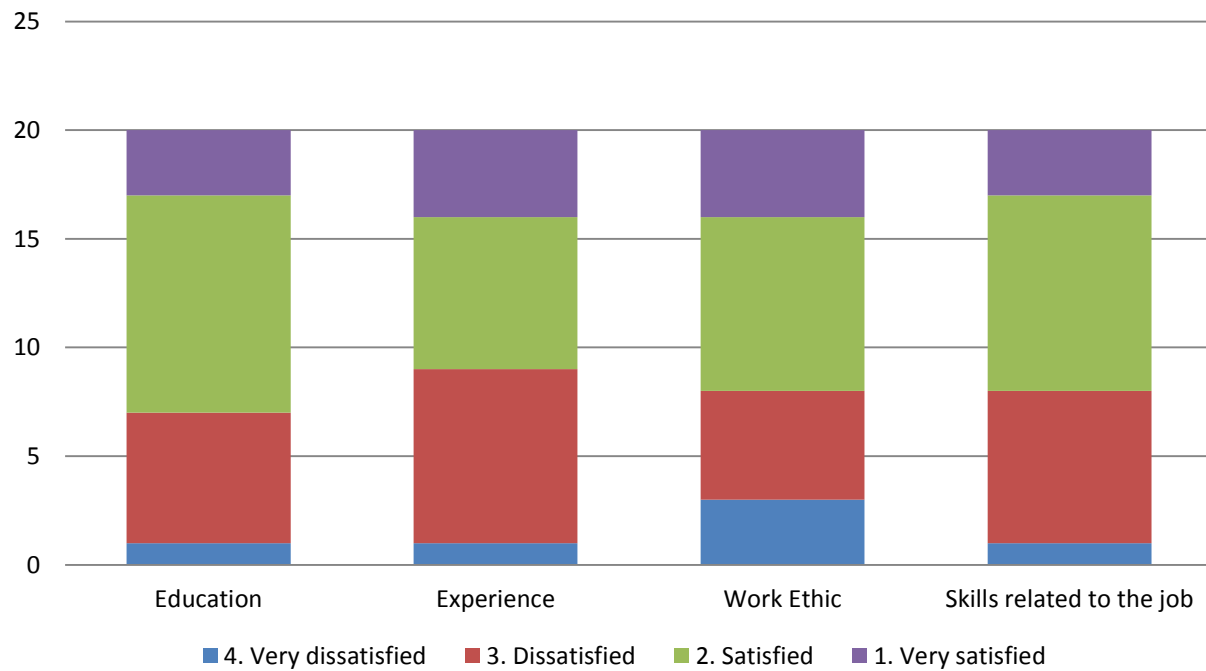
One-third (34.8 percent) of businesses were not aware of the District of Lillooet Economic Development office and the services they provide. There is need for improved communications about what economic development can do to assist businesses.

**Q.16. Businesses were asked if they were interested in receiving information about Lillooet/SLRD Economic Development to provide their email address.**

There were nine responses with eight providing their email address or telephone number, while the remaining response was a negative comment regarding economic development services. The eight emails/telephone contact will be provided to the SLRD for follow up.

Q.17. How would you evaluate the quality factors of the overall workforce?

Businesses were asked to evaluate four workforce quality factors – education, experience, work ethic and skills. Businesses were mostly satisfied with all four factors, however, experience received the lowest evaluation. (Table is on following page.)



Q.18. What are the top three hardest-to-fill jobs in your business?

This question received 17 responses. The following are the jobs mentioned:

- Forest layout crew
- Accountant
- Management
- Design and building skills
- Office worker
- Skilled labour – trades, healthcare

Q.19. What percentage of your workforce, including sub-contractors, are hired within the Northern SLRD?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
100%	40.9%	9
75-99%	13.6%	3
50-74%	9.1%	2
25-49%	0.0%	0
1-24%	18.2%	4
0%	18.2%	4

Q.20. What do you see as the biggest barrier to business growth in the Northern SLRD?

Businesses see access to markets/transportation as their biggest barrier to business growth in the region. There were four “other” responses that included lack of skilled workers (1), attitude of some businesses (1), and lack of commercial buildings (1). The remaining response was a negative comment directed at the economic development office.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of Serviced Land	9.1%	2
Declining Population	18.2%	4
Lack of Regional Cooperation	4.5%	1
Municipal Infrastructure Gaps	4.5%	1
Resistance to change	9.1%	2
Negative attitudes	4.5%	1
Access to Markets/Transportation	27.3%	6
Ability to Hire/train skilled workforce	4.5%	1
Communications Infrastructure	0.0%	0
Access to financing	0.0%	0
Regulations/zoning	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	18.2%	4

Q.21. What are the top three advantages of doing business in the area?

This was an open ended question; however, the three most commonly mentioned advantages to doing business in the area are:

- Lifestyle (includes climate, recreation, people)
- Cost of doing business
- Potential

Q.22. What are the top three disadvantages of doing business in the area?

As with the question above, this was an open ended question. The three most commonly mentioned disadvantages of doing business in the area are:

- Transportation access
- Local government
- Negative community attitude

Q.23. Please add any thoughts on how the SLRD and the District of Lillooet Economic Development department could help support a strong, sustainable and vibrant economy for the future.

Businesses were asked to provide any additional comments that they were not able to submit through the other questions. Twelve comments were received and are summarized below:

- Regulatory body(s) need to let businesses operate and not get in the way
- Proposed development has to be self-sustaining – development should not be at the expense of the natural beauty and wilderness
- Local procurement opportunities should go to local businesses who can do the job
- More resources in promoting the area for tourism and history
- Improve route 40
- Improve downtown (make it more welcoming)
- Water issues
- Area needs to be more family friendly
- Increase/attract new entrepreneurs
- Increase to economic development to promote the area
- Need positive thinking – a “let’s go” attitude
- Promotion of agriculture
- Great place for a seniors and retirement community

In addition to the above comments there were two other responses. One mentioned wanting a fair assessment to the recent sewer, water, community plan and recycling – this individual left a name and telephone number. The contact information will be passed on to SLRD.

The remaining response was a negative comment regarding the District of Lillooet economic development function and included personal negative comments. This negative opinion appears to be from only one individual as the surveys, both residential and business, did not have any other similar negative comments, nor did the focus groups. Open communication has been identified as a challenge in the community and as such the response is being reported in this document. It is unfortunate that no follow up can be provided to address the negative response.

4.0 Analysis, Opportunities and Trends

4.1 What is a SWOT Analysis?

A scan of the internal and external environment is an important part of an economic development strategic planning process. Environmental factors internal to the city, community or region being reviewed can usually be classified as Strengths (S) or Weaknesses (W) and those external can be classified as Opportunities (O) or Threats (T). This analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as SWOT Analysis.

The SWOT Analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the city, community or region's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates. As such, it is instrumental in strategy formulation and selection. The SWOT analysis has been characterized in these terms:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Local/Regional</p> <p>Internally</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Positive</p> <p>Local/Internally</p> <p>External</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Negative Local/Regional</p> <p>Externally</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Internally/Regional</p> <p>Provincial/Federal/International</p>

- Strengths (*Positive, Local/Regional/Internally*): Positive attributes currently present in the Northern SLRD, particularly in comparison to competitors.
- Weaknesses (*Negative, Local/Regional/Internally*): Local issues or characteristics that limit the current or future growth opportunities for the Northern SLRD.
- Opportunities (*Positive, Local/Internally with External impacts*): Areas where the Northern SLRD can remedy its weaknesses (learning from others, regional/provincial/national change, aggressive marketing, targeted investment, etc.)
- Threats (*Negative, Internally/Regional/Provincial/Federal/International*): Trends that threaten the Northern SLRD's future and attractiveness to new industry, from local weaknesses or external threats.

4.2 The Results

The following section provides some of the findings of both the resident and business surveys along with the information gathered from the focus groups and individual interviews.

S.W.O.T.

The SWOT analysis provides an inventory of the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and assesses the degree to which each economic factor supports future growth. The overall goal of this section is to have a clear understanding of the Northern SLRD's strengths and areas of potential which can be built upon and better marketed. The findings in this analysis, combined with other research are used to assist in developing recommendations for inclusion in the overall strategic economic development plan.

Observations in this report are based on significant consultation collected from local citizens, businesses, First Nations, and economic development service providers. Survey results were also included in the analysis. Analyzing the perception that residents and businesses in the region have is an important step as it directly relates to how well the region conveys its strengths, or tells its economic development story.

The Northern SLRD strengths and challenges are examined within two key factors which are important economic development topics:

- Regional Area
- Business and economic development climate

Companies, site selectors and residents looking to expand or relocate a business will analyze these factors to determine how well a city ranks compared to other communities. It is important for the region to be aware of its strengths and opportunities, to be able to expand upon them. At the same time it needs to be aware of its threats and weaknesses. It is only through understanding the SWOT of a community or region that programs can be developed to adjust and proactively work towards a resolution that will increase opportunities.

The Northern SLRD has some excellent strengths to build upon, however, there are a number of weaknesses or threats that must be addressed before economic development strategies will succeed. It is important however to recognize that some of these weaknesses are significant and need to be overcome in order to capitalize on the strengths that have been identified. Failure to do this can result in not achieving the region's goals towards a sustainable and prosperous economy. The key will be to ensure communication within the Lillooet community is improved to ensure the perception of the region is improved.

The following table provides the results of the SWOT. The factors within each category are regional in nature (Northern SLRD) unless specifically noted. Each factor has been prioritized as to its importance to economic development and creating a sustainable Northern SLRD.

4.3 Key SWOT Findings

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Desire to change (negative to positive attitude) •First Nation culture •Climate •Agriculture •Political support for economic development •Regional services (hospital, schools) •Strong resource in the people •Scenic (people want to visit what is here) •Diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities •Community pride •Land supply •Affordable housing •Improved land use planning/policy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Perception of the community as a negative place •Declining/aging population •Lack of coordination •Distrust within community •Transportation •Aging infrastructure •Lack of industry diversification •Availability of skilled/trained labour •Inadequate marketing •Seasonal tourism •Out migration of youth •Regulatory environment •Unserviced land (east Lillooet) •Unsanitary premises •Vocal negative minority •Lack of quality accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agriculture - specialized farming •First Nation partnering •Tourism - outdoor recreation/wilderness and agri-tourism •Arts, culture & heritage •Non-resident homeowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Transportation •Demographic change •Communication infrastructure (Area A) •Out-migration of youth •Provincial Planning and Policy Making •Global economy •Non-resident homeowners

4.3.1 Strengths

The Northern SLRD has a long list of strengths that can be applied across the region and to all communities.

A Desire to Change: It was evident in our dialogue with the residents and business community that there is a lack of communication within the District of Lillooet. This has led to distrust between citizens and the local political environment within Lillooet. There is also a sense of negativity being spread throughout Lillooet by a small but vocal minority group. The citizens participating in the public consultations held in Lillooet agree it is time to stop the negative voice and to move forward. There is a strong desire for things to change and to start to focus on what's positive.

First Nation Culture: There was overwhelming support for partnerships with First Nations. There is a strong desire to showcase their history and culture and to work towards expanding tourism opportunities.

Climate: One of the top strengths noted was the region's climate. There's not the rain experienced in the Greater Vancouver area, nor the cold, long winters experienced in communities further north.

Agriculture: The Northern SLRD has a rich history in agriculture and there is a strong desire for agriculture to be a part of its future. There is a move from traditional agriculture to specialized farming with a focus on innovation, sustainability and collaboration. These are all traits participants agreed upon.

Political Support for Economic Development: Economic development efforts enjoy support from the local political level, an aspect other BC communities do not necessarily have. As well, for the most part there was general support for economic development from the regional level as well. It was said many times that the economic development efforts have been hampered due to the negative attitude within the Lillooet community.

Regional Services: Individuals are proud of the services available in the region, particularly given the size of population. There is pride in the hospital, the recreation centre and the schools. Residents want people outside the area to be made aware of the amenities and services that are available.

Strong Resource in the People: It was often said the greatest resource in the region has always been its people. The Northern SLRD has people who are willing to work towards success for the region, willing to stand up against the vocal minority and make a change.

Scenic: The natural beauty of the Northern SLRD cannot be put into simple words but even those who do not support the District of Lillooet's *Guaranteed Rugged* branding, do not dispute the area is indeed rugged. There was much talk about the opportunities that the scenic beauty can offer and there was consensus that regardless of how you feel about the branding, it is here, so let's go with it.

Diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities: It was expressed the recreational opportunities within the Northern SLRD are diverse and need greater promotion. Within the Northern SLRD there are many recreation opportunities for all seasons including hiking, biking, fishing, and ice climbing

Community Pride: Lillooet has had a long history of taking pride in what it has. With a strong contingent of volunteers, Lillooet and area (including Bralorne/Gold Bridge) have managed to host a variety of events, maintain service clubs and have a strong hospital foundation.

Land supply: Lillooet has a significant amount of underutilized land – the industrial park in east Lillooet, the old forestry site, CN Rail lands, and a number of vacated properties owned by the school district. A creative program to market the industrial lands and the old forestry site needs to be developed, along with a program to either sell or lease vacated school properties.

Affordable Housing: The cost of housing is seen as a definite advantage that should be promoted, particularly to higher priced areas like Vancouver. As one focus group participant put it “You can buy a palace here for less than \$250,000”.

Improved Land Use Planning/Policy Documents: The Official Community Plans (OCP) within the Northern SLRD have all recently been updated and each provides a relevant economic development component. The OCPs also recognize the importance of engaging the First Nation communities in land use planning and economic development. In addition, the Regional Growth Strategy and Integrated Sustainability Plan and the Area B Agriculture Area Plan – all currently in development – indicate additional supportive policies for the Northern SLRD.

4.3.2. Weaknesses

Perception of the Community as a Negative Place: It was clear from the public consultation held in Lillooet that communication is perceived as poor and that the negative minority voice needs to be addressed. Though these comments are specific to Lillooet it does affect the entire region. The Northern SLRD has many positive attributes that are getting lost in the negativity Lillooet has been experiencing. People expressed frustration at the negative press the entire region is receiving from the local newspaper to articles in the Vancouver Sun and Globe and Mail and news stories on CBC Radio.

Declining/Aging Population: Over the past 10 years, the region has experienced a population decrease of approximately 15 percent. Though BC attracts many new immigrants, most are moving into the Greater Vancouver region. This has done little for rural development in the rest of the province, including the Northern SLRD. The loss of primary industry in the region has significantly contributed to the population decline.

Lack of Coordination: Lillooet used to be a community that rallied together to make things happen. Today it seems that people are working in their own silos. A coordinated approach on events, promotion and economic development, along with new partnerships among communities is needed to start rebuilding an economy and a sense of community pride. According to the 2008 Economic Baseline report, there is limited economic development cooperation in the region. In addition to the lack of a regional, multi-stakeholder economic development working group or committee, there is no region-wide coordinated tourism planning involving key tourism players.

Distrust within the Community: There has been a building of distrust within the community due to a number of factors including what’s seen as a non-transparent local political process. Many believe decisions are made by a few individuals with little or no input from the community. They indicated that reasons for why certain decisions are made are not explained to the general public.

Transportation: One of the most critical components of supporting economic activity is the presence of stable and reliable transportation networks and infrastructure. Unfortunately, in the Northern SLRD, there are numerous instances in which the road infrastructure is inadequate to realistically attract new economic activities and tourists. This includes Highways 99, 12 and 40 as well as the Hurley pass between Gold Bridge and Pemberton.

Aging Infrastructure: Many of the roads, facilities and systems were built decades ago and have outlasted their original design life and are in need of repair or constant maintenance. Communities that do not address their aging infrastructure will not be in a position to bolster their economies, stimulate growth or to ensure their long-term competitiveness.

Lack of Industry Diversification: The loss of primary industry jobs in the region has certainly had its impact. Most of the input received agreed that these jobs are unlikely to return, however, there is interest in working to diversify industry to help strengthen the local economy.

Availability of skilled/trained labour: There are a number of industries that are challenged with finding a local labour force to fill available positions. These include healthcare, education and mining. Recruitment must be done outside of the community.

Inadequate Marketing: It was felt better or improved marketing efforts could be undertaken to promote the region's opportunities – tourism, agriculture and resident attractions.

Seasonal Tourism: The shoulder and winter seasons for tourism need to be expanded in order for tourism to improve. This includes improving the recreational amenities as well as attracting entrepreneurs to take advantage of the tourism business opportunities that exist during these times (i.e. ice climbing).

Out Migration of Youth: The region is losing its young population base as many move to larger areas for education or job opportunities. The median age of the region is 47.9. As a comparison Canada's median age is 39.9, while BC's is 41.1. This is a continuing challenge as the 2008 Economic Base Analysis SWOT stated "There are very limited, in-community post-secondary education opportunities available. Along with more limited job opportunities, this has led to a decline of residents in the 20-29 age range".

Regulatory Environment: There was extensive discussion on the aggressive nature of enforcing regulations for business in the Lillooet community. While it is important for a community to have standards it is equally important for a community to have flexibility and regulations that encourage business growth.

Unserviced land: While the area has an extensive supply of land available it is not "shovel ready." Shovel ready land makes it easier for new developments to occur. Lack of water, sewer or other basic requirements to sites will result in limited possibilities for sale and development.

Unightly Premises: Many commented on the "look" of the area, in particular the downtown core of Lillooet. As one focus group participant commented "the way we look is a reflection of how we feel about ourselves". There is a Beautification Committee in Lillooet which does what it can but is challenged with resources – time, volunteers and money. The same can be said for the other areas within the Northern SLRD where resources are tight so community beautification is not a priority.

Vocal Negative Minority: Every focus group held in the District of Lillooet, and most other public input methods, brought up the negative attitude from the Lillooet community. This was seen as a significant barrier to moving forward as a community and as a region. The negativity is seen as coming from a

small core group of individuals whose views are not shared by the majority. There is an overwhelming consensus that it is time to stop the negativity and to work positively to improve the region and to bring economic prosperity.

Lack of Quality Accommodations: At the focus groups, including Bridge River Valley, it was stated the lack of quality accommodations limits the ability to meet the needs of tourists and business.

4.3.3 Opportunities

The Northern SLRD, with the help of the strategies in this plan, champions, resources and cooperation, has an opportunity to direct its future in a positive manner. Improved communication and planning has to be the first step to realizing the opportunities that exist.

Agriculture: There are some excellent beginnings happening in the region – hops farming, viticulture and a focus on organic farming. These innovative agricultural methods are not farming the old way. They require good science, innovation, technology and hard work like any farm. But unlike traditional farming they are proven to be a draw to bring new people into farming. They are seen as a way to keep the next generation on the farm by making the transition to organics or agri-tourism, which can be lucrative when done right.

First Nations: There are a number of opportunities to expand upon with the First Nation communities in the region. One recent success was the Community Link Bus that ran in the summer. In partnership with the Xwisten (Bridge River) First Nation, bus transportation was made available from the band lands to the District of Lillooet. Tourists and residents took advantage of the free public transportation. Many expressed a desire for expanded services. In addition, there are many other tourism and cultural opportunities that exist within the region.

Tourism: The natural beauty of the region provides many opportunities for tourism – recreational outdoors in particular. There is opportunity to expand the peak tourism season as well as shoulder and winter seasons. Tourism for the region also includes Agri-tourism and Arts, Culture and Heritage tourism.

Arts, Culture & Heritage: The Northern SLRD has a strong Arts, Culture and Heritage community. This was evident in the recent Arts sale held at the Lillooet Recreation Centre. An opportunity exists to build a working committee to enhance the visibility of this group and to create a partnership to display local arts in a location in Lillooet, such as the Miyazaki Heritage House.

With archaeological evidence stretching back more than 8,000 years, Lillooet is one of the oldest inhabited locations in North America. The area attracted large seasonal and permanent populations of the St'at'imc people, who relied on a lifestyle and trading economy based on salmon from the Fraser River. Today the strong culture of the St'at'imc people is visible throughout the region and they play an important role in the region's economy. In the 1860's the Gold Rush made Lillooet Mile 0 of the Gold Rush trail and at one time it was the largest city north of San Francisco and east of Chicago. In Area A, the re-emergence of the Bralorne Mine is an excellent example of taking advantage of what was one of the area's largest employers. This history is still visible throughout the region and the Lillooet Historical Society and the Bralorne-Pioneer Museum Society do good work in the museums bringing the history to

life. It is important that this history is not forgotten and partnerships must be formed to promote and expand the knowledge of what is one of the most important historic locations in British Columbia.

Non-resident Homeowners: There are a number of homeowners that do not live in the Northern SLRD on a permanent, full-time basis. While this can present a disadvantage to business sustainability it can present an opportunity to convert non-resident homeowners into full-time residents. In turn these “new” full-time residents can further invest in and contribute to the Northern SLRD.

4.3.4 Threats

Transportation: One of the most critical components of supporting economic activity is the presence of stable and reliable transportation networks and infrastructure. Unfortunately, in the Northern SLRD, there are numerous instances in which the road infrastructure is inadequate to realistically attract new economic activities and tourists. This includes Highways 99, 12 and 40 as well as the Hurley River Road between Gold Bridge and Pemberton. In addition, there is a lack of scheduled bus, air and rail service into the area.

Demographic Change: Like most every community across Canada the aging population in the Northern SLRD is seen as a significant challenge to growth. There is pressure on the local labour force, demand for services that may not be able to be met locally, and shrinking disposable income.

Communication Infrastructure: Not all areas within the Northern SLRD currently have access to high speed internet which can negatively impact doing business in the area. It hampers many economic activities from attracting entrepreneurs, tourism and expanding local business. For example, Area A has access to high speed internet with varying levels of cost. Depending on usage this cost can be a deterrent to business expansion or attraction. Telephone and cell phone service are also issues. There are areas within the Northern SLRD (i.e. Yalakom Valley) which have no telephone or cell service. Today businesses and travellers expect, and in many cases require, reliable communication services.

Outmigration of Youth: The region is losing its young population base as many move to larger areas for education or job opportunities. The median age of region is 47.9. As a comparison Canada’s median age is 39.9, while BC’s is 41.1.

Provincial Planning and Policy Making: This continues to be a challenge for the Northern SLRD. As stated in 2008 Economic Base Analysis SWOT: “Currently, area stakeholders have limited influence on critical provincial-level decisions. In particular recent provincial transportation planning decisions (and non-decisions) have generated considerable impacts, including the termination of scheduled passenger rail service and funding delays for critical transportation improvements. Another key external policy threat is the provincial policy position towards resolving St’at’imc Title and Rights in the area. It is widely recognized by project stakeholders that private sector and provincial/federal economic development and investment in the study area will be limited until this critical issue is resolved.”

Global Economy: Communities are still feeling the impact from the 2008 global economic downturn. The Northern SLRD has not rebounded to 2008 levels and do not forecast doing so until 2014.

Non-resident Homeowners (Area A): The number of non-resident homeowners, in particular in Area A where less than 1/3 of the residents are populated full-time, limits the feasibility of business sustainability or attracting investment.

4.4. Key Opportunities

Through the public input process and SWOT analysis it is clear that there are opportunities for the Northern SLRD. These opportunities will be realized if concerted effort is made towards improving communication within the region and specifically within the District of Lillooet.

Moving forward the Northern SLRD should focus on the key opportunities that will help to bring prosperity and growth to the region. The region can no longer depend on the primary industries as its drivers and must now look to other sectors that present the best opportunities. For the Northern SLRD these drivers including:

- Agriculture – there should be a move from traditional agriculture to specialized farming with a focus on innovation, sustainability and collaboration. This includes the emerging wine and hops industry, along with organic and other specialized farming.
- Tourism – the area’s natural beauty, rich history and cultural aspects all work towards building a vibrant tourism industry. Partnerships within the region need to be made to foster the development of new tourism products.
- Business Retention – this is not restricted to any particular sector but includes all. A Business Retention and Expansion Program (BRE) can be a key driver in a region by working to identify businesses that are emerging or growing. It should be a core component of any economic development plan.

4.5. Competitive and Locational Advantages and Disadvantages

The competitive and locational advantages of the Northern SLRD may be summarized as follows:

- Availability to expand industrial lands: The Northern SLRD, and in particular Lillooet and Area B has a significant amount of underutilized industrial lands available for development. Additional lands could be made available through partnerships with CN Rail and area First Nations.
- Relatively low cost land: In comparison to other areas of the Thompson Okanagan or Mainland Southwest Economic Regions cost of land within the Northern SLRD is amongst the lowest. This includes both industrial and agricultural lands.
- Rail access: CN Rail has a rail yard in Lillooet that is underutilized and through discussions could be made available to the right customer or industrial user.
- Climate: In addition to being recognized as the hottest area in Canada it provides significant competitive advantages for the agricultural sector. The climate is key in the emerging wine industry.

- **First Nations:** There are six surrounding First Nations which provide many opportunities to support business growth with a younger population per capita than Lillooet or the regional areas. This available labour force combined with financial resources made available through a recent BC Hydro settlement and their own business initiatives helps to maintain the viability of many businesses in the region, in particular Lillooet.
- **Healthcare:** While the Lillooet and District hospital is not as utilized as it once was it still remains a critical service centre for the Northern SLRD. It is reassuring for those looking to invest in the area that healthcare services are available.

The competitive and locational disadvantages of the Northern SLRD may be summarized as follows:

- **Access and infrastructure:** While there are three primary access points (Highways 99, 12 and 40) these roads are of poor quality to meet the needs of industry and others (tourism, residential).
- **Labour:** There is a lack of available labour due to out-migration of youth and an aging population that limits the region's ability to attract business to the area.
- **Population:** The region has experienced a decline in population over the past number of years. This can have a significant impact on business decision makers who are looking for a stable or growing population to support their activities.
- **Absentee residents and landlords:** Many homes, in particular in Area A where less than 1/3 of the residents are populated full-time are owned by absentee residents which limits the feasibility of business sustainability or attracting investment. In the remainder of the Northern SLRD the issue of absentee landlords can result in rundown or neglected properties. This can dissuade many businesses from investing in the area.
- **External image:** The Northern SLRD is being negatively perceived by not only local residents but by external audiences who are reading or hearing the negative anger being expressed by a vocal minority within Lillooet. It is important to note that while the District of Lillooet only makes up a portion of the Northern SLRD this negative media impacts the entire region. Regardless of whether the negative attention is warranted the fact remains that a vocal minority is creating the external image.

4.6. Economic Forecast

4.6.1 Economic Overview

The global economy has yet to shake off the fallout from the crisis of 2008-2009. Global growth dropped to almost 3 percent in 2012, which indicates that about a half a percentage point has been shaved off the long-term trend since the crisis emerged. This slowing trend will likely continue. Mature economies are still healing the scars of the 2008-2009 crisis. But unlike in 2010 and 2011, emerging markets did not pick up the slack in 2012, and won't do so in 2013. Uncertainty across the regions –

from the post-election “fiscal cliff” question in the U.S. to the Chinese leadership transition and reforms in the Euro Area – will continue to have global impacts in sluggish trade and tepid foreign direct investment.

Much of the fate of the global economic outlook rests with policy makers in Washington. The U.S. economy expanded by a better than anticipated 2.7% (annualized) in the third quarter of 2012, supported by an outsized rise in defense spending and accumulation of private inventories. TD Economics forecasts the following for the United States:

- The U.S. economy is forecast to grow at a modest pace of 1.9% in 2013, before accelerating to 3.0% in 2014.
- The worst of the consumer deleveraging cycle and its dampening effect on economic growth appears to be over.
- In recent months, significant events have taken place, both expected and unexpected. Superstorm Sandy hit the U.S. east coast disrupting economic activity and causing billions of dollars’ worth of property damage. The U.S. federal election in November also left the power mix in Washington essentially unchanged.
- The main obstacle standing in the path of faster economic growth is a strong headwind blowing in from fiscal restraint. The legislation passed to avert the fiscal cliff resolves some of the fiscal uncertainty which was hanging thick in the air. At the same time, more spending battles and debt ceiling debates lie ahead for Washington policymakers.
- The housing market has become a tailwind to growth rather than a headwind. Home prices have risen consistently through 2012 and foreclosure inventories have fallen. The strengthening housing market recovery alongside rebounding consumer credit markets is a good reason to expect acceleration in economic growth.
- Many are characterizing the recovery as jobless – the unemployment rate including discouraged and under-employed workers remains elevated at 14.4%. As job growth accelerates, we could see the unemployment rate rise due to discouraged workers returning to the work force.

For Canada the 2013 forecast is:

- Economic trajectory for Canada will be an unexciting 1.7% in 2013, before picking up to a healthier 2.5% in 2014.
- Fiscal policy uncertainty in the U.S. remains a negative headwind for Canada’s near-term economic growth profile.
- As the fiscal drag in the U.S. abates and the course of U.S. fiscal policy is cemented, Canada is likely to gain from a recovering U.S. economy and improving financial conditions.
 - By the second half of 2013, exports and business investment should ramp up.
 - Corporate profits should grow at 8-9% over the next two years, which should also support business spending.
- National jobless rate is likely to hold above 7% in 2013, before heading modestly lower in 2014.
- Cooling resale housing market is likely to curb the pace of debt growth while constraining spending over the medium-term.
 - Amid rising inventories of newly completed homes, residential construction is expected to be a soft pocket.

- Mortgage rule changes often prove to be temporary; average home prices and sales are likely to stabilize in mid-2013, as low interest rates support demand. Most of the unwinding of the over-valuation should occur in 2014-15, as interest rates start to climb higher.
- Household debt growth will moderate to 3-4%, helping to stabilize debt-to-income – albeit at an elevated level.

Closer to home, British Columbia's economy is expected to be successful in overcoming the drag generated by the downturn of its housing market and more extensive public-sector restraint in 2013. Improving demand from the U.S. and stronger non-residential investment will provide solid support for the province's economic growth to maintain a fairly steady course. B.C.'s real GDP is expected to grow by 2.3% in 2013, only slightly faster than the 2.1% that was forecast for 2012 – both rates will nearly match the national averages.

The BC economy enters 2013 dealing with a substantial cooling of its previously red-hot housing market. The lower levels of home re-sales will cause new home construction to decline in 2013. This decline will be further assisted by the recent slowing population growth in the province. The housing downturn will weigh on other parts of BC's economy and it is expected that this downturn will also restrain activity in several segments of the retail trade sector.

Another challenge facing the BC economy in 2013 will be a tightening in public administration spending, particularly at the provincial level. It is expected the government sector will be a drag on growth in 2013.

On a brighter note, the recovering US housing sector will benefit BC's economy disproportionately. Already in 2012, stronger housing starts south of the border have helped BC softwood lumber exports to the US surge by more than 15% in the first three quarters of the year. It is expected US housing starts will continue to climb out of their deep hole in 2013 and 2014, which bodes well for further gains in what was traditionally the province's top export commodity.


Non-residential investment will be a powerful contributor to BC growth in the coming year (and beyond). There are several major projects in the commodities, including mining, smelting and electric power) and transportation (including the federal government's \$8 billion, eight-year order for seven non-combat ships) sectors that will generate substantial activity in the province. Investment in these and future projects will form the backbone for development of BC's remote regions for years to come.

British Columbia forecast at a glance

% change unless otherwise indicated

	2011	2012F	2013F	2014F
Real GDP	2.8	2.1	2.3	2.6
Employment	0.8	1.7	1.4	1.4
Unemployment rate (%)	7.5	6.8	6.5	6.4
Retail sales	3.1	2.7	3.1	3.7
Housing starts (units)	26,400	27,700	23,800	23,500
Consumer price index	2.3	1.3	1.2	1.7

Source: RBC Provincial Outlook – December 2012

 December 2012

5.0 Recommended Strategies

During the course of this project, a number of specific projects/initiatives were suggested, many of which appeared viable and could potentially contribute to the long-term economic growth of the Northern SLRD. Many of the projects and initiatives were identified in more than one region while other projects were specific to a particular area. The ideas suggested, in combination with the review of previous studies, data collected, public input process and analyses, form the recommended goals and strategies.

The strategies have been organized into the following goals:

1. **Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning:** strategies will provide the framework necessary for successfully implementing other economic development strategies
2. **Enhance Economic Development Services:** strategies are aimed at creating and supporting favourable conditions for economic development within the Northern SLRD
3. **Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion:** strategies aimed at retaining, expanding and attracting existing and new business and investment
4. **Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry:** strategies will work towards expanding and enhancing agricultural opportunities
5. **Support and Expand Tourism:** strategies will work towards expanding and enhancing tourism opportunities
6. **Enhance and Improve Infrastructure:** strategies directed to improving the standard of transportation and communication networks.
7. **Strengthen and Expand Partnerships:** strategies focused on building upon and creating new relationships to foster economic development opportunities

This section provides the strategies along with general actions only. The Action and Implementation Plan (Section 6.0) contains detailed actions including potential partners, budget implications, timelines and responsibilities. The strategies under each goal have been organized in order of priority. The Working Committee requested the top three most important strategies be identified. We believe all the strategies outlined are critical to building a long-term, sustainable economic development program for the Northern SLRD; however, if the Northern SRLD is only able to implement three initiatives we recommend the following:

- Increase Community Involvement and Communication
- Establish an Economic Development and Tourism Committee
- Develop Economic Development Shared Services Agreement

Many of the projects and initiatives were identified in more than one region, while other projects were specific to a particular area within Northern SLRD. Projects and initiatives are summarized below:

5.1.	Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.1.1.	Increase Community Involvement and Communication		✓		
5.1.2.	Enhance Economic Development Communication	✓			
5.1.3.	Create Community Unity (Community Charrette/Vision)		✓	TBD	✓
5.1.4.	Increase Community Dialogue by hosting Mayor's/Regional Directors' Annual Luncheon	✓			

5.2.	Enhance Economic Development Services	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.2.1.	Establish Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee	✓			
5.2.2.	Develop Economic Development Shared Services Agreement		✓		✓
5.2.3.	Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders	✓			
5.2.4.	Create Stand-alone Website InvestLillooet.com	✓			
5.2.5.	Develop Supportive Local Government Policies and Regulations	✓			
5.2.6.	Develop Information and Promotional Material	✓			
5.2.7.	Launch External Regional Awareness Program	✓			
5.2.8.	Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment	✓			
5.2.9.	Relocation of Economic Development Office		✓		✓

5.3.	Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.3.1.	Implement a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program	✓			
5.3.2.	Establish a Redevelopment Zone		✓		
5.3.3.	Create an Entrepreneurial Environment	✓			
5.3.4.	Support Mining Activity		✓	✓	
5.3.5.	Develop a Welcome Home Program	✓			

5.3.	Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.3.6.	Explore feasibility of Bio-Energy Sector	✓			
5.3.7.	Investigate Feasibility of Downtown Wi-Fi		✓		

5.4.	Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.4.1.	Support the development and Implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan		✓		✓
5.4.2.	Assist in establishing a Farmers Institute		✓		✓
5.4.3.	Agricultural Marketing Initiative		✓		✓
5.4.4.	Agriculture Awareness Programs		✓		✓

5.5.	Support and Expand Tourism	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.5.1.	Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy	✓			
5.5.2.	Create a Community Inventory of Tourism Product and Infrastructure	✓			
5.5.3.	Create Stand-alone Tourism Website	✓			
5.5.4.	Pursue Locations for a More Prominent Visitor Information Centre	✓			
5.5.5.	Enhance Signage in all Northern SLRD Communities	✓			
5.5.6.	Support and Expand Festivals	✓			
5.5.7.	Support and Expand Arts, Culture & Heritage	✓			
5.5.8.	Develop Retail and Downtown Business Education Workshop		✓		
5.5.9.	Investigate First Impressions Program	✓			

5.6.	Enhance and Improve Infrastructure	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.6.1.	Continue to Pursue Improved Transportation Infrastructure	✓			
5.6.2.	Improve and Develop Communication Infrastructure			✓	

5.7.	Strengthen and Expand Partnerships	Northern SLRD	District of Lillooet	Area A	Area B
5.7.1.	Organize Joint Meetings with First Nations (Economic Development Corporations)		✓		✓
5.7.2.	Establish Community Accords with First Nations		✓		✓
5.7.3.	Build a Stronger Working Relationship Between Lillooet Economic Development and BRVEDS		✓	✓	

Most of the strategies outlined in the following section are to be completed within the first year (2013) with a few strategies starting in year two (2014), the exceptions are the strategies falling under the agriculture goal. The SLRD requested that these strategies be delayed until the completion of the Agricultural Area Plan expected to be approved in the first quarter of 2014.

Due to the lack of communication and distrust that is felt in the Lillooet community, longer-term strategies were not developed. If the effort is not put into the first year strategies, particularly the strategies falling within the Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning goal, along with the Enhance Economic Development Services goal, there is a risk that economic development will fail regardless of the type or length of strategy. In addition, development of longer term strategies would have benefited from an extended and more comprehensive public consultation process. However, due to funding obligations this was not possible.

It is recognized at a general level that an economic development plan must help to sustain the economy of the region while at the same time help to increase its competitiveness. It is important to keep in mind that while increased competitiveness is one of the overall goals of an economic development plan, there are important considerations arising out of current economic conditions and environments that must be taken into account. These conditions cannot be ignored.

For the Northern SLRD one important condition is the local community environment. Throughout the data collection process (survey, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews) there was a prevalent theme of community disjointedness within the District of Lillooet. The region as a whole does not have a common vision for its future, the Lillooet community feels a lack of distrust both within the community itself and at the local political level, there is a perceived lack of communication particularly in Lillooet, and Lillooet residents are tired of the dominating negative attention their community is receiving when the reality is that the outlook is fairly positive. This negativity affects the entire region.

The region wants to move towards a positive future. The strategies laid out in the following pages work towards bringing that positive future to realization.

KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Currently the District of Lillooet has a full-time Economic Development Officer (EDO) who is responsible for economic development activities within the District boundaries only. There is the Bridge River Valley

Economic Development Society (BRVEDS) with one part-time employee and a volunteer board. BRVEDS is responsible for economic development activities within Area A boundaries only. Currently Area B does not have any economic development function.

In addition to implementing the strategy, an EDO or the individual in charge of economic development, is responsible for day to day activities and considerable time is devoted to the following core activities that take place on an ongoing and/or daily basis. Some of these activities are built into the strategy while others involve additional time and resources.

Core Activities

- Respond to public inquiries daily (phone, email, and walk-in)
- Clearing house for information
- District office meetings
- Data updates (community profiles, website, customized requests)
- Regional initiatives
- Work with companies or individuals seeking to locate in the community
- Work with groups of companies with specific industry sector to ensure new markets developed
- Communications – community, business, government, organizations

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Before outlining the strategies it is important to note the current resources available for economic development. As mentioned the District of Lillooet has a fully funded economic development function with a full-time economic development professional, while Area A manages economic development through BRVEDS with one part-time staff with little economic development experience and Area B has no economic development.

One of the key strategies of this plan is formalizing a service agreement for shared economic development services between the District of Lillooet and Area B. Area A does not wish to be a part of a shared service agreement at this time and prefers to work on economic development independently or in partnership with Lillooet when mutually beneficial.

Section 6.1. provides a budget for year one implementation. The total cost is estimated to be \$44,800. This is for project funding only and does not include staff or operational costs. In order to implement the recommended strategies, to take on additional economic development services through Area B, and to work in partnership with strategies involving Area A, additional staff will be required. It would not be possible for the Lillooet economic development staff to carry out their existing workload and add on the implementation of the recommended strategies. Even if BRVEDS's part time staff is made available to work on partnership initiatives this would not be of much assistance as the recommended strategies require someone with economic development experience and expertise.

In order to successfully implement the recommended strategies an additional full-time staff member is required. It would be expected the staff member would work out of the Lillooet economic development office but could be made responsible for liaising with Area A and focusing on partnership initiatives.

At the end of the day working on regional economic development initiatives will be more successful if the economic development function is a regional model. Working in partnership with Area A is not a desired situation. It is hoped that through the implementation of the year one strategies, a discussion can be opened about a future formal regionalized economic development model that includes all areas within the Northern SLRD.



Goal 5.1 Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning

The strategies that fall under this category receive the highest priority. Without the successful implementation of the following strategies it will be difficult to effectively find success with the other strategies.

Strategic objectives:

5.1.1. Increase Community Involvement and Communication

Create leadership that is inclusive, collaborative and connected. Successful communities understand the importance of an expansive view of community leadership. The traditional notion of community leader (i.e. mayor) as chief community problem-solver has given way to a new, more dynamic model of the community leader as catalyst, connector and consensus-builder.

This new leadership model recognizes that leadership is not confined to a few elected officials and business leaders. Rather, successful leadership requires mobilizing the knowledge, talents and perspectives of every segment of the community. Successful communities tend to be full of leaders.

It was clear from the public input process that the community wants to be heard and wants local government to listen. This was heard in the District of Lillooet versus Area A or Area B. Therefore, it is recommended that two town hall-type meetings be organized for the District of Lillooet – one in the spring and one in the fall. The meetings should be managed by the SLRD which can provide some “distance” or an unbiased position to the interaction between District of Lillooet constituents and local municipal leaders. Alternatively, there may be benefit to having these meetings facilitated by a neutral third party. The emphasis must be on respectful communication. The meetings need to focus on bringing out the positive voice in the region. That positive voice is there but in recent years the vocal negative minority has been more prominent as evidenced by the negative media attention and the external negative perception the region receives.

Hosting a meeting in the spring and a meeting in the fall provides an opportunity to monitor whether there has been a change in the community from the first meeting to the second. It is hoped that a change for the positive will have occurred. Year 2 activity will be developed based on the results from the first two meetings.

Actions:

- Develop and implement communications plan
- SLRD to establish format and structure for Town Hall Meeting(s)
- SLRD to host bi-annual meetings in 2013

Desired Outcomes:

- The District of Lillooet becomes a more inclusive, collaborative and connected community
- Improved communication within the District of Lillooet
- The fading of the negative vocal minority within the District of Lillooet
- An increased pride in the community (Lillooet)

5.1.2. Enhance Economic Development Communication

Communication of economic development – its role, its vision, its sustainability – is vital to success. The goal is to identify fundamental ways elected officials, organizations, businesses and the general public, can become informed and become advocates of economic development. They can and should actively participate in and support strategies that make sense within the region. This cannot be accomplished without the local economic development office providing the necessary information about what economic development is, what it does for the region and the connection between economic development and other local government policies, the business community and other stakeholders and partners.

There are a number of methods that can be incorporated to ensure the Northern SLRD and key stakeholders understand the importance of economic development, to raise awareness and support, and to educate the region. It is recommended the Lillooet EDO and BRVEDS submit regular articles to the local newspaper, Bridge River Lillooet News. The submissions must be regular (i.e. monthly) and content should focus on existing activities, highlighting a business success story or good news. There is also a local radio station to which regular submissions could be made. These are small, simple steps to start to improve communication with the Northern SLRD and to demonstrate positive stories.

To ensure ongoing support from the District of Lillooet office, and to demonstrate accountability, the EDO should provide quarterly activity reports providing updates on activities within the economic development department. The report will need to take into account and respect the confidentiality of clients. This is another small, simple step that starts to build upon open communication.

There are a number of other small and simple steps to take to work towards improved communications including:

- Monitoring social media
- Becoming an active and positive voice through social media
- Developing a quarterly newsletter
- Gathering and publishing good news stories

The above steps are easy to do and have little to no cost implications.

Actions:

- Activity Reports (quarterly)
 - Meet with local government (Council and Area Directors) regularly to update activities to identify potential new partnerships or initiatives
 - Electronic newsletter (quarterly)
 - Develop earned media (newspaper/radio)
 - Monitor and utilize social media to focus on economic development
 - Utilize Business Retention & Expansion results to submit business success stories and increase public awareness
 - Create a good news repository
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Elected officials, organizations, businesses and the general public are informed and advocates of economic development
- Economic development has built in accountability/reporting and improved communication
- Increased support for economic development
- Increased communication within the Northern SLRD

5.1.3. Create Community Unity (Community Charrette/Vision) – District of Lillooet & Area B

Successful community economic development strategies are guided by a broadly held local vision. Participants in the public input sessions consistently remarked how they do not know what the region is or where it's going – they felt there was no vision for the communities within the Northern SLRD or the region as a whole.

In recent years, the Charrette has become more of an accepted form of community and economic development planning. A Charrette is an intensive, hands-on planning and design exercise where planners, property and business owners and other interested persons work together to discuss issues and potential solutions, create alternatives and finally settle on a preferred plan for the future of the area. It provides the opportunity for participants to explore their common economic future and chart a course for further action to control their destiny through community involvement and commitment.

This strategy is a focus for the District of Lillooet and Area B. Area A can be involved; however, there was not the same level of dissatisfaction or lack of vision for that area. Geographically it makes sense to tie in Lillooet and Area B, along with the recommended strategy of a shared service with Area B. Ideally, Area A will participate in the community Charrette and even in shared services. This would illustrate regional cooperation and recognition of the importance that economic development for the Northern SLRD is regional.

Actions:

- Develop and implement a Communication Plan
- Determine Area A's participation
- Develop a Charrette/Vision planning session for District of Lillooet and Area B

Desired Outcomes:

- The community/region comes together to participate in a Charrette
- The creation of a community/regional-oriented vision of the Northern SLRD
- Improved communication and cooperation within the Northern SLRD

5.1.4. Increase Community Dialogue by hosting Mayor's/Regional Directors' Annual Luncheon

The intent of this strategy is to improve communication linkages between the District Office, Area Directors, economic development, First Nations, business community and residents. The economic potential and success will be enhanced through regular communication between the District Council, Area Directors, First Nations and the Northern SLRD. Council will become better informed about ongoing issues in the local economy and will have the chance to discuss investment and job creation opportunities and direction.

The Northern SLRD community, both business and residents, are expressing a distrust of local leadership, particularly within the District of Lillooet. The Lillooet community is anxious for improvement and wants to see the District open up communication lines. It is recommended the District create a regular forum for interaction between Council and the business community. There are a number of possible formats and many communities around the province have implemented annual town hall meetings or an economic development summit. Another option is to have a Mayor's Annual Luncheon where the Mayor addresses current issues, achievements, etc. This type of event is usually held in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

There may be apprehension in starting this initiative given the vocal minority group that exists. The first event may be in partnership with the SLRD, where the focus is not just on the District of Lillooet. Through appropriate planning and handling, the event can be managed in a respectful manner while allowing all voices to be heard. It can be the first step in re-opening the lines of communication.

Actions:

- Develop annual luncheon
 - Establish budget
 - Create guest list
 - Host Luncheon
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Stronger communication linkages between the District of Lillooet office, Area Directors, economic development, First Nations, business community and residents
- Increased communication within the Northern SLRD
- The fading of the negative vocal minority within the District of Lillooet
- Increased support for economic development

Goal 5.2 Enhance Economic Development Services

The strategies that follow focus on improving and expanding economic development to encompass a more regional approach. The strategies also look to bring economic development into the community versus just working for the community.

Strategic Objectives:

5.2.1. Establish Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee

The District of Lillooet supports economic development and tourism both from a local political standpoint and from the general community. Although support was expressed it was also noted that some residents and businesses were not clear on what economic development does or how they can be involved. It was also expressed that tourism opportunities need improved promotional efforts. Similar comments were echoed in Area A. For successful economic development and tourism to happen within a community, residents, businesses and stakeholders must be included in the process. The economic development office in Lillooet is responsible for both economic development and tourism and as such it is recommended that an Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee be created consisting of stakeholders within the region, including key sectors or businesses. This committee would only be responsible for economic development in the District of Lillooet and Area B (see 5.2.2. Shared Services). BRVEDS does have a role to play, and should be appointed as an ex-officio member of the committee. This provides the opportunity to share information and to discuss initiatives that could be worked on and funded by the two organizations. The committee will be instrumental in helping to raise the awareness of economic development and tourism within the Northern SLRD and to build support at the regional level. The committee should meet on a quarterly basis and then evaluate whether monthly meetings would be more beneficial. Usually, in a rural community an economic development and tourism committee is comprised of between 7 – 9 key individuals who represent:

- Major employers and businesses
- School districts and post-secondary institutions
- First Nations
- Tourism operators
- Key industry sectors, i.e. agriculture
- Downtown businesses or organizations (e.g. Chamber and Community Futures)
- Local government (District of Lillooet, Area A and Area B)
- BRVEDS

There are a number of individuals within the Northern SLRD who could provide the leadership skills and enthusiastic desire to help the region in its economic development and tourism efforts. Once the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee has been established it is important to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities. It must be stressed that the committee is advisory only and is not to be responsible for administrative duties or staff. The committee must be clear on its role, expectations and responsibilities to the community. It will be important to communicate to each committee member what happens within the economic development office and what the goals and objectives are. It is recommended that a committee manual be completed to provide guidance for new

and future committee members. It is also recommended that a quarterly activity report be created and submitted to all committee members providing updates on activities within the economic development department. The report will need to take into account and respect the confidentiality of clients.

The advisory committee should be reviewed annually to assess work completed and to develop an annual work plan. The committee makeup should also be reviewed annually to ensure the right representation is at the table.

Actions:

- Establish an Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee
- Create an advisory committee manual
- Annual review of advisory committee

Desired Outcomes:

- An involved and active Economic Development and Tourism Committee steering strategies and initiatives in the Northern SLRD
- Increased communication within the Northern SLRD
- Increased support for economic development
- Increased cooperation within the communities (including First Nations) of the Northern SLRD

5.2.2. Develop Economic Development Shared Services Agreement

The District of Lillooet has an economic development department with a full-time economic development officer. Area A has an economic development advisory committee – Bridge River Valley Economic Development Society (BRVEDS) – with a volunteer committee and one part-time staff located in their Gold Bridge office. Area B is without a formalized economic development function.

During discussions, there was a strong desire for shared services from Area B. It is recommended that Area B become a fully serviced area under Lillooet’s economic development office. This shared service should be based on a three to five year formal agreement. A formalized Terms of Reference will need to be developed to detail the reporting structure. It is recommended that the EDO continue to report to the District of Lillooet Chief Administrative Officer.

Area A expressed the desire to continue to work at arm’s length but would like to work with the Lillooet economic development office when mutually beneficial. For Area A, it is recommended that BRVEDS continues to operate independently with partnerships being formed with the Lillooet office on specific issues (i.e. job training, transportation issues, etc.). For partnership initiatives with Area A that require the participation of the Lillooet EDO funding issues will have to be addressed. Ideally, in order to create a stronger and sustainable economic development program for the entire Northern SLRD a regional economic development model would be best. However, until that time one potential solution is to pool all economic development funds into one program. This could be through the Lillooet economic development office with the Economic Development and Tourism Committee (5.2.1.) being responsible for the entire region. One of the conditions could be to fund the existing part-time position for BRVEDS out of this pool of funds. All of the funds could then be used and easier managed to promote economic development for the entire region rather than having to discuss each initiative on a case by case basis.

In order to ensure ongoing communication with both Area A and Area B, representatives from those areas should have a position on the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee when formed.

The addition of Area B to the economic development function provides an excellent opportunity to review current and future personnel needs. The current economic development function is experiencing a large amount of overtime hours. A review will ensure there is the required level of staffing to take on the additional responsibilities of shared services. As well, throughout this strategy there is expansion of existing programs/services recommended (e.g. tourism) that may require additional staff support. For partnership initiatives with Area A that require the participation of the Lillooet EDO funding and staffing issues will have to be addressed. As mentioned previously, there is need for an additional staff person to assist in implementing the recommended strategies.

Actions:

- Review department structure and staffing needs
- Develop and approve Terms of Reference or Shared Service Agreement with Area B
- Regular communication with Area A to identify projects and initiatives

Desired Outcomes:

- Long-term economic development commitment and shared services by the District of Lillooet and Area B
- Strong partnership initiatives with Area A working towards the potential of merging into a fully serviced and funded regional economic development model
- Increased support for economic development
- Increased cooperation within the Northern SLRD

5.2.3. Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders

The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) offers a one day training session for local leaders on the topic of economic development. The session covers what economic development is, the role of the EDO, business retention and attraction, workforce development, tourism and more. BCEDA is currently working on a partnership with the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training on hosting sessions in eight locations around BC between January and March of 2013. Northern SLRD leaders could either attend one of these sessions, lobby the ministry to host one in Lillooet or instead contract with BCEDA to deliver one specific to local leaders in the Northern SLRD. Costs can be shared with regional communities and First Nations.

Actions:

- Approach BCEDA to determine potential dates
- Host workshop in Northern SLRD

Desired Outcomes:

- The completion of an economic development training session for Northern SLRD local leaders
- Increase support economic development at the local political level

5.2.4. Create Stand-alone Website InvestLillooet.com

It is important in economic development marketing to promote the region with a name that is recognizable to potential visitors, businesses and investors. For example, the Central Okanagan is a regional economic development organization but focuses their marketing efforts using the community name “Kelowna”. This is evident throughout their promotional materials including their website InvestKelowna.com. For the Northern SLRD, Lillooet is the hub, the only incorporated community and is the name most recognized externally. As such it is recommended a stand-alone website focused on business and investment attraction be developing using the Lillooet name.

BRVEDS does have a website; however it does not provide the information required by businesses or investors. Discussions should take place as to whether or not Area A wishes to be included in this new stand-alone website. If BRVEDS chooses not to participate their website should be re-designed for an investor/business target audience. If they decide to be part of the new website financial and staffing resources will have to be discussed.

The current economic development webpages for the District of Lillooet are within the main District of Lillooet website – there is not a dedicated, unique URL associated for economic development, business or investment opportunities within the region. This can make finding appropriate information extremely difficult.

From a site selector or investor’s point of view nearly 90 percent of location information is derived from the Internet and a recent corporate study showed that 88 percent of respondents said they use the Internet for obtaining community information. There is little information on the existing economic development web pages that is of value to businesses or investors. An economic development website needs to have the information people and businesses are looking for. The information needs to be available, current and accurate because most times a community has no idea they are even being looked at. The information on an economic development website often comes from a community profile – one of the key pieces of information for economic development.

Currently there is a draft Community Profile underway for Lillooet and one for the SLRD. Once the documents are complete they should be placed on the website as pdf downloads. The information in the profiles should also be broken out and provided as separate information pieces (web pages and/or downloads). In addition, Area A is in the process of completing a Community Assets Inventory which will be used to develop a Community Profile for their area. If Area A chooses to be included in this stand-alone website their Community Profile should also be added as a pdf download, alternatively, if Area A chooses to redesign the BRVEDS website the profile should be added there.

In addition to the Community Profile a good economic development website has the following information available:

- Buildings and/or sites (land inventory information)
- Data on investment opportunities (could be a direct link to OpportunitiesBC website)

- Information on the region’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – it is not seen as a negative to talk about weaknesses or threats – it shows the community is honest and looking for ways to improve
- Access to information about the region’s strategic plans, market conditions, sectoral trends, etc., and business contacts, including investment promotion and other city or regional government agency contacts and private business contacts
- Labour force statistics (availability, skills and educational attainment)
- Research resources for information on potential partners
- The nature and extent of client servicing provided by the community, the economic development officer or any other business organizations that may assist in attracting investments

The website should be no different than any other contact or piece of promotional material developed. It needs to be accurate, up-to-date, relevant, informative and readable. This website should focus on Lillooet as the “hub” or identifier to the Northern SLRD. Clear and prominent links should be provided to Area A’s economic development website (brigerivervalley.ca).

The first step will be to obtain the new domain name and to populate the website with content. For the first year much of the content can be the existing webpages currently on the District of Lillooet’s website. Year 2 activity should include a fully designed and comprehensive economic development and investment website.

Actions:

- Secure domain name
 - Redirect current webpages to new domain
 - Determine Area A participation
 - Determine Year 2 planning and development
-

Desired Outcomes:

- A comprehensive, Northern SLRD, stand-alone economic development website focused on the requirements of business and investment
- Increased recognition of the Northern SLRD as a place to do business
- Increased investment in the Northern SLRD

5.2.5. Develop Supportive Local Government Policies and Regulations

Local governments can play an important role in developing the regulations and policies needed to support the success of economic development initiatives. Local government bodies need to contribute their expertise to the development of economic development programs to help ensure success and sustainability. Local governments need to develop the policies and regulations necessary to enable existing and start-up businesses.

Providing a regulatory environment that eases the burden on businesses can have just as much impact as providing financial incentives to companies. Time is money and businesses appreciate locating or expanding in communities with minimal government delays and bureaucracy. The Northern SLRD has

little support from the business community and there is improvement to be made to be seen as being supportive and accommodating. Working within regulatory requirements the economic development department can work with the municipal departments to implement a few initiatives that would increase or improve on their current image. One recommendation includes a “Business First” program that provides expedited site plan and building approvals, enabling businesses to fast track their development plans.

Actions:

- Complete an internal and regional review
- Compile a best practices review of other BC communities
- Business First program

Desired Outcomes:

- Improved image of a more business friendly environment within the Northern SLRD
- Increased business and development activity within the Northern SLRD

5.2.6. Develop Information and Promotional Material

Many times economic development is the first point of contact for information, whether it be from an existing business, an outside investor or an individual looking to make the Northern SLRD their home. Having, maintaining and packaging the region’s information are critical to answering those inquiries in a timely fashion.

Currently there is a Community Profile and Investment Guide for Lillooet being prepared and once it is completed it should be made available on the website. Creating a hard copy profile on glossy paper or in magazine format is not required and is not worth the costs associated. Rather the information can be distributed online and printed as required. In addition to cost savings it allows for frequent updates to the information. The profile can also be customized for specific purposes (e.g. trade shows, target industries, resident attraction, etc.). The draft copy of the profile includes a large section on agriculture. This section should be removed from the profile and provided as a separate document. The draft community profile should be reviewed to ensure information is included on:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Community overview | • Government |
| • Fast facts | • Taxation |
| • Population | • Transportation |
| • Education levels | • Utilities |
| • Ethnicity | • Map |
| • Regional demographics | • Quality of Life |
| • Physical characteristics | • Unique or competitive advantages |
| • Climate | |

In addition there is also a Community Profile underway for the SLRD. The SLRD and Area A is in the process of completing a Community Asset Inventory which will be used to develop a Community Profile for their area. There is benefit in developing all promotional materials as regional, for example, a

Northern SLRD investment guide, community profile, sector profiles, etc. incorporating all the communities within the Northern SLRD. It is recommended that a Regional Investment Guide be developed to promote the Northern SLRD. Discussions will need to take place to gauge the interest, the financial implications, staffing, responsibility to update and promote.

A community profile is a minimum requirement for economic development information. In addition to a profile, various other materials can be developed including sector profiles, opportunity profiles, business directories, and resident attraction packages. A review of existing promotional material should be completed detailing the cost, distribution method, and effectiveness (ROI). It is only by understanding what is working, and what isn't working, that a community can improve. Once the review is completed the Northern SLRD can then begin to develop specific and targeted promotional pieces that work.

Actions:

- Review and finalize Community Profiles
 - Complete review of existing promotional materials
 - Develop regional investment guide incorporating all Community Profiles - Year 2
 - Develop other promotional material (e.g. sector profiles, opportunity profile, etc.) – Year 2
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of Community Profiles for Lillooet, Area A and Area B
- Full review of existing promotional materials
- Completion of a regional investment guide for the Northern SLRD

5.2.7. Launch External Regional Awareness Program

During the public input process, and supported through the on-line survey, residents and businesses would like to see an increase in the promotion of the Northern SLRD. This promotion was broad based and included tourism, business attraction and resident attraction efforts. Promotion of a region cannot be done by sitting in the office or through advertising efforts alone. Promotion and building awareness must be in combination with external strategies – in other words: get out of the office and create new relationships and partnerships with individuals, organizations and various levels of government that can assist. The EDO should be encouraged to participate in sessions hosted by external agencies (like BCEDA) such as the annual Ministry dinner which allows for discussions with key staff from ministry departments, attend receptions with the BC Trade and Investment Representatives, and more.

In addition, the EDO should attend BC Immigration sessions hosted by the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) where the community can promote opportunities directly to immigrants and immigration consultants. Working with each community in the Northern SLRD, the EDO should get on the list to present opportunities to those immigrants that attend the session. Upwards of 70 participants attend each session. Attendance at various trade shows including BC Real Estate show, presentations to UDI/NAOIP and others should also be considered in order to increase the awareness of the Northern SLRD as a place to live, work and invest.

If the Lillooet EDO is attending these events on behalf of the Northern SLRD, including Area A, financial and staffing considerations will need to be addressed.

There is also benefit to reviewing current memberships to ensure they are benefiting from the economic development function and region. There may be opportunities for memberships that are not currently held (e.g. LinxBC). Memberships in economic development organizations provide needed networking and partnerships that cannot be found elsewhere.

Actions:

- Develop list and budget of events
- Contact PNP to schedule presentation
- Develop presentation for PNP workshop
- Review existing and potential memberships
- Create schedule of event attendance and appropriate budget

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of two (2) presentations at the PNP workshops
- Ongoing participation at future PNP workshops
- Attendance at the Provincial Minister's Dinner
- Full review of current memberships
- Annual list of external marketing initiatives/events
- Increased external recognition of the Northern SLRD as a place to live, invest and do business
- Increased investment in the Northern SLRD

5.2.8. Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment (Year 2)

Communities need to be ready for investment when the opportunity arises and investment readiness means ensuring your community is as ready as possible to attract and retain business investment. It means having all the pieces in place to be in the right place at the right time.

Investors want to talk to communities who are knowledgeable, accessible and who have current information available at their fingertips. Investment readiness means making the most of a community's resources – its land, people, unique characteristics and planning system. It also means being able to communicate your strengths effectively.

An investment readiness assessment evaluates a community's current status by reviewing:

- Economic development capacity
- Investment marketing
- Development approvals process
- Property inventory
- Electronic readiness

For the Northern SLRD an investment readiness assessment should be a Year 2 activity as it will be an excellent monitoring tool to measure how successfully the region has implemented the various strategies within this report.

Actions:

- Allocate budget for Investment Readiness Assessment

Desired Outcomes:

- Budget allocated for 2014 to complete an Investment Readiness Assessment
- Completion of an Investment Readiness Assessment

5.2.9. Relocate Economic Development Office

Consideration should be given to the relocation of the Lillooet economic development office. Area A has expressed their desire to remain independent and operate their area's economic development under BRVEDS. As such, this strategy applies to Lillooet and Area B only.

One of the important features of economic development is having an appearance of independence. Too many times economic development fails because a community perceives it as being a member of the bureaucracy instead of being an advocate for business growth. Having the economic development function located within the District office limits this appearance of independence and may aid in a false perception. There is also the risk that the EDO is made responsible for items that are not related to economic development.

With the recent turmoil the Lillooet community is experiencing and the lack of trust towards the District office the economic development function is being seen as part of the problem instead of part of the solution. This limits the EDO's ability to highlight the successful economic development initiatives that have either happened in the area or are being pursued.

The relocation of the economic development office would fall in line with the recommendation of shared services with Area B. A separate office from the District will clearly demonstrate the economic development function is regional in nature. It will remove the perception or appearance that only Lillooet projects or initiatives are being worked on and at the same time add a level of perception that the Lillooet economic development function is independent from local and regional government.

The new office could be located in short-term lease premises until such time as a new visitor information centre is built. One idea for short-term lease is to pursue a partnership with CN Rail to utilize the vacated passenger service area as an economic development office.

Actions:

- Discussions with District Administration/Council and SLRD
- Determine location/budget/funding for new regional economic development office
- Communicate and move office

Desired Outcomes:

- A visible economic development presence in the District of Lillooet serving Lillooet and Area B
- Increased support for economic development

Goal 5.3 Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion

Strategic Objectives:

5.3.1. Implement a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program

Often the best chance of creating new jobs for a community comes from existing businesses. That is why economic development organizations should keep track of who is hiring, who is cutting back, who is looking for more space, and what is standing in the way of growth. A BRE program can help identify problems facing existing businesses and determine opportunities for growth. The Northern SLRD has the advantage of being able to participate in the province-wide BC BusinessCounts initiative through the BCEDC. The tools (i.e. survey instrument, training, and database) are ready to go. The economic development office now needs to create the parameters around their BRE program – who is to be interviewed, annual number of interviews, confirm “red flag” partners and schedule of interviews.

A strong, targeted BRE is a critical element to a thoughtful and complete economic development plan. Typically, 60 to 75 percent of new job growth comes from existing industry. It is much less expensive and time-consuming to help a company grow than to recruit a new company into an area, and some of the best business recruitment leads come from suppliers or vendors that support existing industry.

By implementing a BRE the Northern SLRD can:

- Help businesses at risk of leaving/downsizing
- Identify opportunities to help businesses expand in the community
- Identify problems that could cause employers to leave the community
- Build relationships with individual business owners
- Enhance communication with the local business community
- Increase support for economic development services

In addition, it will need to be determined if the interviews will be completed by the EDO, a consultant, or a combination. The advantage of a consultant is the ability to get a base number of business interviews completed in a short time frame. Once a base number of interviews are completed by a consultant, the EDO would then take over business interviews at a slower pace as resources allow. For a region the size of the Northern SLRD this option may not be cost effective, as well, in smaller or rural communities it is often beneficial for the EDO to complete all interviews. This is even more important in the Northern SLRD with the perceived lack of communication.

Actions:

- Investigate participation in BC BusinessCounts or other BRE programs
 - Participate and complete BRE training
 - Implement BRE program in region
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Purchased license to BC BusinessCounts
- Completed training in a formalized BRE program
- Implementation of a BRE program in Northern SLRD
- Increased expansion of local business
- Increased job creation and opportunities
- Increased knowledge of economic base in the Northern SLRD
- Increased support of economic development from the business community

5.3.2. Establish a Redevelopment Zone

The Provincial Government has developed a process under the community charter to allow incorporated communities to create revitalization tax zones. Several areas in Lillooet could use this zone to see redevelopment that enhances the area to attract new investments and redevelopment of existing business storefronts. The cost to the community for these types of programs is minimal as you would continue to collect existing taxes while forgoing the increased revenue for a specified period of time that you would get from new development. However, without the designation many of these redevelopments would not occur which could eventually result in less tax revenues as property values on older facilities are decreased.

The District of Logan Lake just enacted a similar bylaw and has taken it a step further by exempting the complete municipal portion of the taxes depending on the value of improvements. The other unique aspect of the Logan Lake initiative is that it designates different tax exemptions for different parts of the community depending on level of need for redevelopment. Lillooet should seriously consider this type of designation throughout the community or at least for the Old Forestry Site, the Industrial Park (including Bridgeside Higa) and Downtown Lillooet.

Actions:

- Investigate other community redevelopment programs
- Redevelopment Zone designation
- Prepare marketing tools

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of best practices review on other communities
- Completion of redevelopment zone designation
- Development of marketing tools
- Increased redevelopment of areas specified within the zone
- Increased awareness of the Northern SLRD as a place to do business

5.3.3. Create an Entrepreneurial Environment

Entrepreneurship is one of the cornerstones of economic development and community capacity building. Entrepreneurs are the risk takers, innovators and agents of change who will provide the essential leadership element for eliminating disparities and improving the economic and social welfare of a community. Entrepreneurs can be attracted to a region, but the best prospect for future prosperity resides in those communities which have successfully developed their own culture and spirit of

entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are not born – they have to be educated, nurtured, and assisted in an environment that allows them to realize their potential. A community that values and encourages entrepreneurship will have a much more valuable tool for adapting to change and developing a prosperous economy. The Northern SLRD should create an environment that reinforces and promotes the values of entrepreneurship in the region.

First Nation communities have become one of the most entrepreneurial in Canada and many locally are looking at developing programs to encourage and expand these opportunities. Working with the local First Nation communities in the area the Northern SLRD could collectively develop programs and initiatives to support the development of an entrepreneurial community. One suggestion is to host a small business workshop and invite Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band to speak at this event. Chief Louie is widely regarded for his success in driving entrepreneurial success and economic development for his band and surrounding communities.

There are many examples of communities which have implemented programs or projects to foster entrepreneurship. In Kelowna there is an established Young Entrepreneur Program – high school students create a business, complete with business plan, financials, marketing, and present to the judges made up by the business community. A more expanded program is Lemonade Day. A program where communities across the country unite to teach youth how to start, own and operate their own business through a lemonade stand.

Actions:

- Develop and host small business workshop in partnership with First Nations
 - Develop a mentorship program
 - Work with local school district to develop an entrepreneurship program for high school students
 - Investigate other successful entrepreneurship programs – Year 2
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of a small business workshop in partnership with First Nations
- Stronger relationship and partnerships with First Nations
- Entrepreneur mentorship program in place
- Completion of entrepreneur program within the school district
- Increased awareness of entrepreneur opportunities
- Increased start-up businesses
- Increased support of economic development

5.3.4. Support Mining Activity

Mining is a difficult sector to influence at the local level because outside factors tend to drive decisions on exploration and development. In the case of metals, which have historically supported local activity, prices are an obvious driving force. With the current price of gold at the \$1500 per ounce range the projects with the best potential are proceeding, such as the activity at the old Bralorne mine and in other locations in the Northern SLRD. Another significant factor is the provincial investment climate in the mining industry, which at present is fairly positive but could change with a new government or changes to existing policies which are encouraging new mine development.

The Bralorne mine currently has 60 employees which are housed in camps, or in houses rented in the Bralorne area. They are experiencing difficulties in getting labour and this may be an area where the Northern SLRD could assist. With the number of unemployed or underemployed in the Northern SLRD they may be able to find employees who would be willing to learn new skills.

Local actions will not necessarily affect the increase or decrease in the mining sector. However, the development of new projects should be closely monitored and action taken in order to ensure that local employees and trades are considered. In addition to monitoring activity, there are a number of programs that could be initiated. Bralorne mines mentioned the challenge of attracting new employees to the area and would be interested in partnering with economic development to create a specific attraction package. There is also the opportunity to develop a local job fair in Lillooet showcasing job opportunities along with procurement opportunities to local businesses to supply the needs of the mine. These activities should be a partnership between Lillooet and BRVEDS.

Actions:

- Monitor existing mining activity
- Work with Bralorne mines to develop an employee/resident attraction package
- Partner with the Bralorne mine re: local job fair/supplier boot camp

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of mining activity
- Development of an employee/resident attraction package
- Job fair and supplier boot camp held
- Increased awareness of the mining industry and its opportunities within the Northern SLRD
- Increased number of Northern SLRD residents employed within the mining sector
- Attraction of new residents

5.3.5. Develop a Welcome Home Program

There is overwhelming evidence from the business and resident community that the Northern SLRD is an excellent place to live, raise a family, retire and enjoy the lifestyle it offers. Unfortunately, the population has been stagnant for some time and homes are sitting empty.

Everyone talks about the excellent recreational opportunities that abound in the region – ice and rock climbing, snowmobiling, hiking, biking, hunting and fishing – that are sometimes minutes away in any direction. Residents are anxious to share their attributes with others and are determined to make the region a place where others can share in the high quality of life they enjoy.

Young residents leave the community to explore new opportunities or to get a higher level of education. Many of these people never return as residents but do return to visit family and friends. In order to increase the awareness of the opportunities that exist, the area should develop a Welcome Home program that can encourage those who have left to come home and rediscover what it is like to live, work, and start a business in the Northern SLRD.

Actions:

- Investigate best practices in communities/regions who have initiated a program
- Determine feasibility, costs and steps to implement a local program

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of best practices review on other “welcome home” programs
- Understanding of the feasibility of implementing a local program

5.3.6. Explore Feasibility of Bio-Energy Sector

Internationally, the biofuels industry is likely to continue to evolve at a rapid pace as government mandates and programs show exceptional support for renewable energy sources. Canada is clearly on board and British Columbia, with its mainly resource-based economy, is striving to be a leader in the area of clean technology. The BC government claims to have the most progressive energy policy in North America as demonstrated through the BC Jobs Plan and in other initiatives. The impact of the mountain pine beetle and years of logging in areas like the Northern SLRD leaves a large supply of fibre available for alternate uses.

There is interest in Area A and in the Lillooet area to develop projects that can use this fibre for biofuel projects and for a pellet facility operated by several of the area's First Nation communities. While these are great initiatives they are also very costly and in many cases, depending on the various factors, bringing these types of projects to fruition is a challenge and a tremendous risk. Before the area will be successful in these types of initiatives a proper business plan will need to be completed to ensure that a project is feasible.

There is considerable risk and cost to municipal or regional governments taking on the responsibility of completing a business plan for investment projects. It is recommended the first step be to identify potential private sector partners who can complete the due diligence necessary for this type of project.

Actions:

- Identify private sector partners to review opportunity

Desired Outcomes:

- Identification of private sector partners
- Discussions underway for next steps

5.3.7. Investigate Feasibility of Downtown Wi-Fi

In the past ten years there has been a growing interest in sponsoring the development of public wireless communication networks that allow users to have immediate access to the Internet via their own personal computer or hand-held device. For a municipally driven service the Wi-Fi network is considered city infrastructure much like sidewalks and sewers. The municipality takes responsibility for providing Wi-Fi connectivity, but it does not guarantee quality of service. Many communities are supporting broadband systems as a way of driving economic development and tourism. The link between a local economy, its infrastructure and industrial profile is not a new concept; however, in the

past decade, multiple economic indicators suggest that municipalities that are home to or attracting tech industries may have a competitive advantage.

Research on rural communities finds that technology-led development generates more entrepreneurial activities, attracts more highly skilled workers, increases the number of residents employed by local businesses and attracts more technology-related businesses. Many communities are providing Wi-Fi “hotspots” along downtown corridors or main streets.

There are many examples of communities offering free Wi-Fi services – Langford and Langley are two BC communities that have implemented Wi-Fi projects. Research would need to be completed to evaluate the feasibility of free Wi-Fi.

Actions:

- Investigate costs to implement downtown Wi-Fi
- Consult with other communities who have implemented free Wi-Fi
- Determine if Wi-Fi is feasible for the Lillooet downtown

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of a downtown Wi-Fi feasibility study

Goal 5.4 Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry

The strategies that follow focus on expanding the agricultural opportunities within the Northern SLRD. Every focus group talked about the potential for expanding the sector and the unlimited opportunities that are and can be available. There is support for agriculture from the SLRD with the recent Agricultural Area Planning process for Electoral Area B and the District of Lillooet. An Agricultural Area Committee has been formed to oversee the development of the plan. The plan is not expected to be completed until the first quarter of 2014 and as such the following strategies will be year two implementation.

Strategic Objectives:

5.4.1. Support the Development and Implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan

The SLRD has recently started an Agricultural Area Planning (AAP) process for Area B and the District of Lillooet. The AAP will allow for greater communication, potential partnerships and collaboration with First Nations, neighbouring Regional Districts and municipalities. The plan also allows for enhanced communication about agricultural possibilities and increased public participation throughout the planning process. This should contribute to increased general knowledge and public support for agriculture. Specific objectives of the plan are to:

- Complete an inventory of lands, soils, crops and water resources as they pertain to agriculture,
- Communicate with farmers to discover strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting the agricultural sector,
- Conduct a market opportunities analysis for agricultural crops,
- Create policy on a wide range of pertinent issues, to be determined through the AAP process.

The AAP is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2014. As such, the following strategies (5.4.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.4) are examples of what could be done for the agriculture industry. The strategies have been moved to a 2014 implementation timeline.

Actions:

- Review AAP to prioritize recommendations for implementation

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of the AAP
- Established action plan to implement AAP recommendations
- Increased awareness of the importance of agriculture

5.4.2. Assist in establishing a Farmers' Institute

Farming and food production has a long history in Northern SLRD (in particular Area B and District of Lillooet). This sector is re-emerging in the area with early development of a wine industry, reintroduction of hops, and new farmers moving to Lillooet to grow new crops. A Farmers' Institute strives to improve the conditions of rural life in support of prosperous and permanent settlement. In addition to education, the Farmers' Institutes acts on behalf of its members to arrange for the purchase, distribution, or sale of commodities, supplies, or products, and generally to act on their behalf in all

matters incidental to agricultural pursuits. Farmers' Institutes encourage buy-local events, and actively encourage people to learn more about agriculture and livestock.

There is an existing Agricultural Advisory Committee that could oversee the development of a Farmers' Institute. Additional partners could be the Lillooet Beer and Wine Association and the Lillooet Food Matters group. This initiative would illustrate support for the development and implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan and demonstrate support for the agriculture community.

It is suggested that actions on this strategy be delayed until the Agricultural Area Plan's final recommendations are completed. Final plan is expected in the first quarter of 2014.

Actions:

- Work with Agriculture Advisory Committee on Farmers' Institute
- Develop terms of reference for Farmers' Institute
- Establish Farmers' Institute – Year 2

Desired Outcomes:

- Farmers' Institute in place
- Increased education of local farmers on crop production
- Increased awareness of importance of agriculture
- Expanded and sustainable agricultural industry

5.4.3. Develop a Specific Agricultural Marketing Initiative

The BC government is now providing funding to support local food producers by encouraging British Columbians to shop for food produced in their own communities.

The Buy Local Program announced on Nov 8, 2012, will offer applicants matching funds from \$5,000 to \$100,000 to launch or expand local food marketing campaigns. Eligible organizations include associations, co-operatives, marketing boards, Aboriginal groups, companies and non-profit organizations. This will mean that the community should act fast in establishing a committee to lead the development of the Farmers Institute.

The campaigns can promote B.C. food, seafood, agricultural products, agri-tourism, and include in-store promotions, social media or web campaigns, traditional advertising and on-product labelling. One of the initiatives to be considered is establishing in the summer of 2014 a "Guarantee Rugged" kiosk at Vancouver's Granville Island promoting Lillooet grown and produced products. The benefit of this initiative is it offers an opportunity to market the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

It is suggested that actions on this strategy be delayed until the Agricultural Area Plan's final recommendations are completed. Final plan is expected in the first quarter of 2014.

Actions:

- Await final AAP's recommendations
- Apply for funding from the Province of BC – Year 2
- Establish marketing programs – Year 2

Desired Outcomes:

- Marketing programs developed for local producers
- Summer booth at Granville Island
- Increased product distribution at local retailers and restaurants
- Increased awareness of agriculture

5.4.4. Create an Agriculture Awareness Program

The Northern SLRD can further enhance the expanding agriculture efforts by educating local business and residents about the growth of the agricultural industry and the reemergence that it is taking in the area's economic future. There is an increased interest in agriculture globally yet most people, in particular youth, have never been on a working farm. In 2009, New Zealand developed an initiative, *Farm Day*, to educate and promote agriculture to the public. This successful initiative focuses on educating the public on the importance of agriculture and on various land management principles.

The relationship between the food and the emerging wine industry can be further developed through agri-tourism initiatives including the ongoing support, and potential expansion, of the beer and wine festival. The Lillooet Wine and Beer Festival has been growing and is run by the Lillooet Beer and Wine Association. A brochure highlighting those farms that have farm gate sales, tours and more should be developed to increase the awareness of these operations for tourists and residents alike.

It is suggested that actions on this strategy be delayed until the Agricultural Area Plan's final recommendations are completed. Final plan is expected in the first quarter of 2014.

Actions:

- Await APP's final recommendations
- Work with Agriculture Committee on agri-tourism opportunities
- Utilize the BRE program to meet with agriculture industry to gain insight and ideas on agri-tourism
- Create website focused on agriculture experiences – Year 2
- Host a farm day – Year 2

Desired Outcomes:

- Expanded Wine and Beer Festival
- Increased number of visitors to the Wine and Beer Festival
- Increased awareness of agriculture
- Expanded agri-tourism opportunities and marketing

Goal 5.5. Support and Expand Tourism

The District of Lillooet's economic development office is also responsible for tourism and marketing its products. The strategies in this section are focused on understanding what product exists and expanding opportunities.

Strategic Objectives:

5.5.1. Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy

Public consultation illustrated a desire for the Northern SLRD to have a more a focused effort to promote the area as a destination. With the vast recreational opportunities, the beginnings of a wine industry, a strong First Nations culture and emerging organic agriculture, the community must take advantage of these efforts by marketing to potential visitors. In smaller communities, the EDO plays an important role in managing all activities related to tourism including overseeing the management of visitor marketing and services. The EDO usually leads the effort to develop a tourism marketing and development strategy. The strategy should be a clear plan on partnering with key industry groups on leveraging funds to increase the visitation to the community and local attractions.

Discussions surrounding the brand "Guaranteed Rugged" drew mixed responses, not only in the brand itself but around the lack of community consultation during its development. In the end, regardless of whether it's a likeable brand or not, the general consensus was to go with it. Individuals expressed a desire to have the brand be more customized to a specific product. "Guaranteed Rugged" works for the outdoor recreation sector but may not be suitable for the winery or First Nation culture.

The last tourism plan was completed in 2008. The document has some excellent recommendations, some of which can be applied to today's environment, and some of which are included in this document, including:

- Agri-tourism opportunities
- Aboriginal tourism opportunities
- Expansion of new festivals
- Signage

The plan needs to be revisited. As mentioned there are a number of good recommendations that could be implemented today so the cost to complete a new study would not be cost effective. It is recommended a targeted tourism plan based on the recommendations in the 2008 plan along with this document be developed. This can be accomplished in house with the assistance of the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee.

When tourism was discussed in Area A there was a distinct division of relating to Lillooet. Through the public input process Area A clearly related tourism opportunities toward the Pemberton/Whistler area. However, in addition to reviewing the 2008 tourism plan, any tourism studies completed specifically for Area A should also be reviewed. This includes the Visitors Survey Summer & Fall 2011 Study Part 1 (February 2012), Online Survey 2011 Visitor's Survey (March 2012), and the Bridge River Valley Tourism

Workshop Report (April 2012). Area A is also in the process of completing a Community Asset Inventory. This document should also be included in the review.

Actions:

- Review previous tourism studies completed for the Northern SLRD
 - Develop a targeted tourism/marketing plan
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of a focused tourism/marketing plan for the Northern SLRD
-

5.5.2. Create a Community Inventory of Tourism Product and Infrastructure

There are a number of tourism attractions, operators and services in the Northern SLRD but there is no coordinated inventory of the actual product available (e.g. mountain biking, ice climbing, snowmobiling, wine tasting, first nation tours, etc. A community inventory lists categories of tourism products as well as community infrastructure that support tourism. An inventory of these assets will enable a community to review the number, range and quality and also identify any gaps that need to be addressed. The inventory should not just include accommodations and restaurants but be more focused on those activities that will keep tourists in the community for a long period of time. This was something that was clearly heard throughout the public engagement process.

Area A is in the process of completing a Community Asset Inventory, however, Lillooet and Area B do not have an inventory. The Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skilled Training has a [toolkit](#) to assist communities in the development of a tourism asset inventory. This project can be done cost effectively with the use of a student – either as a partnership with the local school district or through a summer student grant program.

Actions:

- Download and review the toolkit from the Ministry website
 - Develop funding application for summer employment program
 - Complete and publish inventory
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Completion of a community asset inventory for the Northern SLRD
 - Published inventory of Northern SLRD assets
 - Increased promotion of Northern SLRD assets
 - Increased visitation and consumer spending within the Northern SLRD
-

5.5.3. Create Stand-alone Tourism Website

Most visitors to a region or community will first turn to the internet to collect information on the area. A Google search for “Lillooet tourism” provides 122,000 results. People will usually review only the first few pages of Google results and interestingly the Guaranteed Rugged webpage is not on the first 20 pages of results.

Results from the public input sessions were mixed on the Guaranteed Rugged brand but in the end consensus was “love it or hate it, the brand is here so let’s make the best of it”. One simple strategy is to purchase a domain name dedicated to the brand – VisitGuaranteedRugged.com. The brand needs to take prominence and not be just a subpage of the District of Lillooet’s website.

Costs to purchase a new domain are nominal and visitors can simply and seamlessly be redirected to the current webpage. However, it is suggested that page visits be monitored and compared to previous year’s visits to determine if the new domain is being readily found through the various search engines. A Year 2 activity could be the development of new web content for the dedicated domain. It will be important to ensure inclusion of the other areas within the Northern SLRD to expand tourism information on the entire region.

Actions:

- Secure domain name
 - Redirect current webpages to new domain
 - Monitor new domain activity
 - Website planning and development – Year 2
-

Desired Outcomes:

- A comprehensive, Northern SLRD, stand-alone tourism website
- Increased recognition of the Northern SLRD as a place to visit
- Increased visitation to the Northern SLRD
- Expanded tourism sector

5.5.4 Pursue Locations for a More Prominent Visitor Information Centre

There was a clear and overwhelming expression of disappointment with the cancelation of rail service into Lillooet. The impact on area tourism and bringing tourists into the downtown core has been substantial. The current location of the Visitor Information Centre at the museum was good when tourists came into town by rail, but a new location needs to be found where tourists arriving in the area will actually see the centre.

It is unlikely that rail service will be put back into operation in the short-term and as one participant put it “if the mountain won’t come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain”. Since the majority of tourist traffic is along the highways a recommended location is at the entrance to the community on Highway 99. Alternatively, there was excellent support through the public input process for the facility to be relocated to the bottom of Station Hill at the Cayoose Campground or at the intersection of Hwy 99 and Hwy 12.

A new visitor’s centre could be combined with the economic development office, have an arts and culture display from First Nations and other artisans and a smaller exhibit from the Heritage Society to encourage guests to visit the museum. The new centre should also help direct tourists to take part in activities throughout the Northern SLRD and should direct traffic to the Bridge River Valley area.

Actions:

- Determine most feasible location
- Develop partnerships
- Secure funding
- Design and build – Year 2

Desired Outcomes:

- Relocated Visitor Information Centre
- Expanded visitor information services
- Increased visitation throughout the Northern SLRD
- Expanded tourism season business activity

5.5.5. Enhance Signage in all Northern SLRD Communities

During the focus groups it was mentioned several times that the lack of signage and sandwich boards in the Northern SLRD, and in particular at the museum in Lillooet, was not giving a fair impression of the recreational opportunities and local businesses available in the region.

An effective signage program not only attracts visitors and provides direction and information, but it also plays a critical role in linking visitors to “product” or experiences. It is the final and likely most critical piece of the marketing process and is an essential part of the product development process. To benefit the most from the efforts made to attract tourists, and to make sure that the entire region benefits it is important to provide travelers visiting the area with appropriate directions to easily locate attractions and merchants. Not every visitor will visit the VIC and those that don’t are left wondering what the region has to offer.

Professionally designed sandwich boards can be an attractive addition to the downtown core and help to redirect traffic to a specific business or tourist attraction in the region. Signage at the museum and in other strategically located areas of the region will also direct visitors to stop in locations where they may not otherwise stop.

Actions:

- Review and improve signage policies
- Develop directional signage at museum and other identified locations

Desired Outcomes:

- Improved signage policies within the Northern SLRD
- Increased directional signage within the Northern SLRD
- Increased awareness of destinations and activities within the Northern SLRD
- Increased visitation and consumer spending within the Northern SLRD

5.5.6. Support and Expand Festivals

There are a number of festivals held in the region that have been well attended and successful events – In Lillooet there’s the Apricot Tsaqwem Festival, Sturgeon Day, Salmon in the Canyon, and the Beer and Wine Festival. In the Bridge River Valley, there’s Winterfest and new for 2013, Summerfest. Festivals



such as these can bring vibrancy to a region and offer a venue to showcase opportunities. The public input process indicated there was very favourable response from the various festival attendees, however, there is no actual data to support this. It would be beneficial to have a survey developed for festival attendees to gather information on the success of the festival(s) and where improvements could be made.

There is an expressed desire to expand the number of festivals in the region. There is a role to play for the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee when formed. The committee should investigate what type of festival expansion is feasible for the region. This could be easily accomplished by adding in the question to the survey. Many of the participants in the public input sessions stated they would like to see a winter festival developed. It is suggested the committee focus on the addition of only one new festival during their first year. It is better to do one thing really well then it is to do many things poorly. The success of the additional festival can be built upon in subsequent years.

Actions:

- Explore the creation of a winter-focused festival
- Continue support of existing festivals
- Develop a visitors survey for expansion or improvement to festivals

Desired Outcomes:

- Creation of addition festivals
- Increased visitation throughout the Northern SLRD
- Increased community cooperation and pride
- Increased awareness of the Northern SLRD

5.5.7. Support and Expand Arts, Culture & Heritage

Over the last decade, the work of Richard Florida on the creative economy has captured the attention of many communities. At the heart of Florida's creative economy is the argument that economic growth is now dependent on the talents of a "creative class" who innovate and create new ideas, new technologies, and/or creative output. Florida argues that the creative class flourishes in places that offer the "3Ts" of economic development – Talent, Tolerance and Technology – as well as a wide range of natural, cultural and recreational amenities. Based on public input the Northern SLRD's creative economy is expanding and there is strong support for its continued growth. There is a need now to ensure the growth can be measured, monitored and capacity can be strengthened. This can be done through the formation of a regional committee focused on the sector in the Northern SLRD established by the SLRD in partnership with the District of Lillooet. Area A has identified some specific strategies for the arts, culture and heritage sector in their Bridge River Valley Tourism Workshop Report. The 2008 Tourism Plan for the District of Lillooet identifies strategies for the Lillooet area. Review of these reports can be one of the first steps of the regional committee.

Through the public input process there was strong support for the arts, culture and heritage sector, however, there was also a lack of clear understanding of who, what and where the sector is. The committee can evaluate methods for completion of an inventory of sector businesses, employment and opportunities including cultural mapping. This could be accomplished by pulling in other partners to help fund the project or by developing a student-led project with the post-secondary system.

A year two initiative for the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee is to discuss the use of the Miyazaki Heritage House as a home to a summer arts centre.

Actions:

- Establish a Regional Arts, Culture & Heritage committee
 - Draft Terms of Reference for Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee
 - Create an inventory of arts, culture & heritage businesses, organizations and opportunities
 - Summer arts centre – Year 2
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Coordinated approach to the marketing and promotion of Arts, Culture and Heritage within the Northern SLRD
- Marketing tools promoting Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Utilizing of the Miyazaki Heritage House as a regional arts centre
- Increased awareness of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector
- Expanded Arts, Culture and Heritage sector

5.5.8. Develop Retail and Downtown Business Education Workshop

A community located in northern BC wanted to develop a Shop Local program, however, they felt their downtown retailers and businesses were not yet ready. The community developed a retailer education workshop where retailers were provided with the value of what a Shop Local program can do for their business. In addition to the Shop Local program, the workshop focused on merchandising, multi-channels, online and social media aspects of retail. Retailers were also offered an assessment of their business operation. The retail shop was assessed from the perspective of the customer – first impressions, how well the merchandise was displayed, signage, environment, professionalism, etc. Each retailer was provided with the assessment and recommendations for improvements.

During the public engagement process there were a number of comments on the existing downtown businesses concerning their lack of professionalism, friendliness and lacklustre displays. Implementation of a one day session for local downtown businesses is an easy strategy that can provide a small success demonstrating support for local business. In turn it allows local businesses to show they are keen to support the needs of the consumer.

Actions:

- Host a retailer education workshop
 - Develop a Shop Local program (Year 2)
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Retail education workshop held
- Increased retail activity in the Northern SLRD
- Reduced consumer leakage
- Increased awareness of shopping local

5.5.9. Investigate First Impressions Program (Year 2)

First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) is a structured process that reveals the first impression a community conveys to outsiders, including tourists, potential investors and residents. It offers a fresh perspective on the community's appearance, services and infrastructure and helps communities learn about their strengths and shortcomings.

Volunteer "visiting teams" from two exchange communities do unannounced visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. The knowledge gained through a FICE can be the basis for positive community action, focused on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction quality service improvement, or broader community strategic planning efforts.

There are a number of states and provinces (Alberta and Ontario) that have undertaken community exchanges and there is a wealth of information available to walk a community through the process. The Northern SLRD would be a prime candidate for a First Impressions Community Exchange due to its size and limited resources. The District of Lillooet/Area B and Area A should each have separate exchanges completed. Partner communities for the exchange should be of similar size and not too close in proximity that they already have knowledge of the visiting community. Communities like Merritt, Summerland or Osoyoos could be community partners.

Actions:

- Gather on information on FICE
 - Implement FICE program – Year 2
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Implementation of FICE throughout the Northern SLRD
- Implementation of FICE recommendations

Goal 5.6. Enhance and Improve Infrastructure

A basic requirement for economic development is the presence of a minimum standard of transportation and communication facilities, networks and services. The following strategies work towards the improvement of the Northern SLRD's infrastructure network.

Strategic objectives:

5.6.1. Continue to Pursue Improved Transportation Infrastructure

A basic requirement for economic activity is the presence of a minimum standard of transportation facilities, networks and services. Unfortunately, the Northern SLRD has numerous instances in which the road infrastructure fails to meet acceptable standards and some cases where the situation is poor enough to prohibit future economic development. In places like the Bridge River Valley and Seton Portage it can have a major impact on the feasibility of development projects. It was reported that the area has been seeing provincial road improvements and maintenance budgets decline and it doesn't appear this will change over the coming years.

There is a great deal of talk and agreement over the current situation but there is no formalized regional effort toward improving transportation linkages. It is recommended a committee, or task force, be created to lead the discussion and to create a coordinated effort towards lobbying the Province of BC and Interior Roads.

Actions:

- Establish a transportation infrastructure working group
 - Develop a communications plan
-

Desired Outcomes:

- Active transportation infrastructure working group
 - Completion of communications plan
 - Improved transportation infrastructure
-

5.6.2. Improve and Develop Communication Infrastructure

Today, because of broadband technologies, most communities in the province have an unprecedented opportunity to diversify their economy. Many entrepreneurs today can conduct business from almost any place in the world. They can choose to work and live in almost any community because they seek a high quality of life. This is not the case for some areas within the Northern SLRD. Internet and cell coverage is not sufficient enough to attract those who can live and work anywhere.

We are living in a time when access to the internet and ability to communicate easily with your team members in other centres is an expected norm. It is critical for communities to have a solid communications infrastructure in place. A large number of professionals use the areas around Gun Lake and other areas as summer cottages often only spending a few weeks or months in the community. This limits the ability for retailers and for other services to make a living year round. By adding additional

connectivity options it may be possible to encourage these owners to spend more time in the area, helping to create a more sustainable economy.

A coordinated effort is needed to work towards expanding the available services in the more remote and rural areas. The Province of BC is committed to supporting affordable high-speed internet in remote areas of the province through their Network BC program, and Telus has funding to provide more than 1,700 kilometres of additional cellular coverage throughout BC and to increasing internet bandwidth connections for designated rural and remote communities. Currently, a private provider in Area A is pursuing fibre optic connection and has received support from both the local and provincial government levels. This bodes well for the area and a telecommunications committee can work towards continued support and push for action.

Actions:

- Establish a local telecommunications committee
- Complete a telecommunications assessment
- Develop and implement a concentrated communication plan

Desired Outcomes:

- Active telecommunications committee for Area A
- Completion of telecommunications assessment for Area A
- Improved telecommunications infrastructure within Area A (i.e. cellular and fibre optic)

Goal 5.7. Strengthen and Expand Partnerships

One of the most effective ways to encourage economic growth is to establish cooperative partnerships. Partnerships can help to reach the critical mass needed to establish and maintain momentum. At the very least, partnerships can reduce the damaging effects that occur when groups or communities compete with each other and thereby negate separate efforts. It is important for economic development to maintain existing partnerships as well as to work to align new, broad-based partnerships that increase the region's identity, build on strengths, and address barriers to growth and the mobilization of resources.

Strategic objectives:

5.7.1. Organize Joint Meetings with First Nations (Economic Development Corporations)

Each of the six surrounding First Nations has created an Economic Development Corporation. Each corporation has an EDO managing the operation. Recently the EDOs have gotten together to discuss current activities and future plans. During discussions with the Lillooet Band it was asked if the District of Lillooet's EDO could be a participant in these meetings. Efforts should be made to follow up on the discussion and formalize the participation of the Lillooet EDO. Being part of these joint meetings will help to create relationships and strengthen existing connections. A strong partnership with First Nations is a critical factor that must be in place to ensure that new development can proceed with their full support and assistance. First Nation communities can provide employees for new or expanding industries (i.e. Bralorne Mines). Communities like Osoyoos and Kelowna have developed strong working relationships with neighbouring First Nation communities. Both the First Nations and local governments receive mutually beneficial outcomes as a result of these relationships.

Actions:

- Initiate discussions for joint meeting(s)
- Arrange quarterly meetings with First Nations EDOs

Desired Outcomes:

- Stronger working partnerships on economic development initiatives with area First Nations
- Increased awareness of economic development

5.7.2. Establish Community Accords with First Nations

Today many First Nations and neighbouring local and regional governments recognize the need to develop better relationships and work together more closely on community and land use planning issues of mutual interest. There is more interest in improved intergovernmental relations and joint planning.

One community leading the way is Powell River and the Sliammon First Nation (Tla'amin). Through a community accord and a protocol agreement on culture, heritage and economic development they are leading the way in sustaining an intergovernmental relationship.

Meeting with the St'at'imc Chiefs Council, the District of Lillooet and the SLRD should determine the best approach to this effort whether it is one joint accord or individual accords with each First Nations

community. It would be advantageous to invite the District of Powell River and Sliammon First Nation to one of the meetings with the Council to gather input on the process and how to proceed.

Actions:

- Meet with St'at'imc Chiefs Council to introduce concept
- Host District of Powell River and Sliammon First Nation
- Develop and sign community accord(s)

Desired Outcomes:

- Community Accords signed with area First Nations
- Stronger relationships and partnerships with area First Nations

5.7.3. Build a Strong Working Relationship Between Lillooet Economic Development and BRVEDS

A key recommendation in this plan is for the District of Lillooet and Area B to formalize an economic development shared services agreement. Area A has expressed a preference to implement economic development on a more independent basis through BRVEDS. There are various strategies recommended in this plan to bring economic development together for all areas within the Northern SLRD including the creation of an Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (5.2.2). The committee will have an ex-officio representative from Area A and it would be beneficial if the individual also represents BRVEDS. This would help to ensure that economic development initiatives and plans for the entire region are shared. It would also assist in identifying specific initiatives that could be a partnership between the Lillooet economic development function and BRVEDS. This type of cooperation will help to strengthen the working relationship between Lillooet economic development and BRVEDS. Further down the road it may be a starting point for working towards a more formal regionalized economic development model for the Northern SLRD.

Actions:

- Appoint ex-officio Area A/BRVEDS representative to the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee
- Identify economic development initiatives for partnership
- Open discussions on formal regionalized economic development model (Year 2)

Desired Outcomes:

- Stronger working relationship between Lillooet economic development and BRVEDS
- Formal regionalized economic development model for the Northern SLRD

6.0 Action and Implementation Plan

This section outlines the specific actions and implementation guidelines for the completion of the recommended strategies laid out in Section 5.0. It is organized to follow the goals listed on page 62.

This Action and Implementation Plan is structured in the following way. Each strategy is contained within a summary table of actions that breakdown specific steps, timelines, budgets (including any external funding sources), potential partners and responsibilities.

It is important to note that there must be adequate resources – financial, staff, time – to implement the actions in an effective manner. This is a challenge for many economic development organizations where resources can be tight and the opportunities to increase resources may be limited.

Effective monitoring and evaluation is an important part of any strategy development process as it ensures that projects are realistic and kept on track. It justifies the resources that may be involved in their implementation and determines if adjustments to any of the actions are necessary. Section 7.0. outlines indicators to measure progress and success.

Throughout the public input process it was clear that within the Northern SLRD, the District of Lillooet needs to improve communication and eliminate the current lack of distrust that exists between their community members and the District office. The strategies laid out for goal 5.1 Improve and Strengthen Communications and Planning and for the creation of an Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee are designed to assist with this. As mentioned throughout this document these strategies are the priority. These strategies are also likely the most difficult to implement. We encourage the community to take the bold step and work towards building a better and stronger future for themselves. Every community member of the Northern SLRD deserves it.

6.1 Goals, Actions and Implementation Tables

The following pages provide the goals and specific actions to implement the recommended strategies. The strategies within each goal are in order of priority. The actions are prioritized by the date within the timelines column. Any external funding sources are indicated within the budget column. Partners and responsibility to implement the strategies are also provided.

Goal 5.1. Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning

5.1.1. Increase Community Involvement and Communication

Lillooet Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Develop and implement communications plan	March 2013	Staff Time		SLRD DOL
SLRD to establish format and structure for Town Hall Meeting(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SLRD to identify partners for involvement • Work with SLRD to define the meeting(s) parameters • Develop communications plan 	April 2013	\$1000	SLRD DOL Area A Area B First Nations	SLRD Lillooet EDO
SLRD to host bi-annual meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine meeting dates • Work with SLRD to develop agenda • Market the Town Hall meeting • Work with SLRD to host the meetings • Evaluate each meeting 	Ongoing	\$1000 Annually	SLRD DOL Area A Area B First Nations	SLRD Lillooet EDO

5.1.2. Enhance Economic Development Communication

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Activity Reports (quarterly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a quarterly template • Prepare quarterly report and include in council/board packages • Provide report quarterly to economic development and tourism committee 	March 2013 Ongoing every quarter	Staff Time		Lillooet EDO
Meet with local government (Council and Area Directors) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with local government on an annual basis to update activities and to identify potential new partnerships or initiatives 	November 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B	Lillooet EDO/ SLRD
Electronic newsletter (quarterly) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if newsletter will be done in-house or contracted out • Define objectives, timing and distribution of newsletter • Subscribe to online Newsletter Program • Utilize existing database(s) to send out newsletter • Design newsletter • Utilize media sources to publicize • Distribute newsletter 	March 2013 Ongoing every quarter	\$400	DOL Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO
Develop earned media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion with newspaper editor and Lillooet Radio Society to submit earned media 	Ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a schedule for submissions • Write and submit articles/radio shows – Story ideas: include an article whenever a new program or publication is released (e.g. Community Profile); a good news business story, etc. 				
<p>Monitor and utilize social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Twitter and Facebook for a one – three month period to hear what people are saying about the Northern SLRD • Review monitoring results • Establish a Twitter and Facebook account specific to economic development • Sign up for training from Hootsuite University on the use of Social Media • Expand awareness of economic development initiatives through Twitter and Facebook • Assign staff or volunteers to ensure accounts/posts are updated regularly 	Ongoing	\$200	DOL Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO
<p>Utilize BRE results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the results from BRE to submit business success stories and increase public awareness 	Ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
<p>Good news repository</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an ongoing good news repository • Use as newspaper article or radio show ideas or for quick Twitter or Facebook updates 	Ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS

5.1.3. Create Community Unity (Community Charrette/Vision)

Lillooet/Area B Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Develop and implement a Communications Plan	June 2013	Staff Time		SLRD DOL
Determine Area A's participation	June			SLRD
<p>Develop a Charrette/Vision Planning Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners/stakeholders • Identify qualified consultants/professionals • Determine meeting date(s) and place • Create invitation and distribute • Communicate through media • Host session • Send thank you letters to participants • Review report documentation • Communicate results through media • Next steps to adopt vision 	October 2013	\$10,000 <i>NDIT may provide funds as a special project</i>	SLRD DOL Area A (TBD) Area B First Nations Chamber	Lillooet EDO Communication Officer – SLRD

5.1.4. Increase Community Dialogue by hosting Mayor/Regional Directors' Annual Luncheon

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Develop annual luncheon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For first event determine if SLRD should be primary partner • Identify other partners (i.e. Chamber of Commerce) • Determine format (who will be invited and how and how will meeting be managed) • Determine venue • Establish date • Set price (cost recovery) • Develop agenda/topics – define what the forum will do and what topics will be included • Determine if other speakers will be required • Develop agenda 	March 2013	\$500	SLRD DOL Chamber	Lillooet EDO/ CAO SLRD
Host Luncheon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host luncheon annually 	Annual	\$500	SLRD DOL Chamber	Lillooet EDO/ CAO SLRD

Goal 5.2. Enhance Economic Development Services

5.2.1. Establish Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Establish advisory committee – Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review various committee structures • Establish terms of reference • Determine first board representing various sectors 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet Area A BRVEDS Area B
Create committee manual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish annual meeting schedule • Create appropriate bylaws • Establish Code of Ethics • List of Board Members and their role 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO
Annual review of committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current committee members • Assess board appointee process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include sector specific representation 	December 2013 (Annually)	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet Area B

5.2.2. Develop Economic Development Shared Services Agreement Lillooet/Area B

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Review department structure and staffing needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current EDO workload including number of overtime hours • Evaluate what additional support services are required • Develop a budget for additional support services Present to Council	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO/ CAO SLRD
Develop ToR or Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SLRD, Council and Area B to develop Terms of Reference or Shared Service Agreement • Determine additional costs and human resource requirements • Draft and approve agreement 	February 2013	Staff Time	SLRD DOL	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet SLRD
Regular communication (Area A) Develop a regular communication method with Area A and BRVEDS – this can be through the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee	March 2013	Staff Time	Area A BRVEDS	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS



December 2012

5.2.3. Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Contact BCEDA for dates • Contact BCEDA for dates and available options	March 2013	Staff Time		Lillooet EDO SLRD
Host workshop	June 2013	\$3,500		Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.2.4. Create Stand-alone Website InvestLillooet.com**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Secure domain name • Register and purchase domain name	January 2013	Nominal	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO
Redirect webpages • Identify existing pages to redirect • Add new content (e.g. Community Profile) • Ongoing monitoring of new domain site and evaluation of content and addition for full redesign	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD BRVEDS	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet
Determine Area A participation	March 2013	Staff Time	SLRD BRVEDS	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Plan and develop website	Year 2 - 2014			

5.2.5. Develop Supportive Local Government Policies and Regulations**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Internal and regional review • Complete a review of internal processes and costs • Define how information will be disseminated • Communicate information to community • Conduct review on an annual basis	March 2013	Staff Time	SLRD	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet SLRD
Best practice review • Complete a best practice review of policies and costs by comparing Northern SLRD to other BC communities – utilize NAIOP (National Association for Industrial and Office Parks) annual survey • Evaluate where Northern SLRD stands against other communities • Make appropriate recommendations to improve standing if required	March 2013	Staff Time	SLRD	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet SLRD
Business First Program • Research programs from other communities • Work with District/SLRD staff to define a realistic and achievable process to fast track progress • Release program to public	June 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet

December 2012

5.2.6. Develop Information and Promotional Material**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Review draft Profiles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review drafts profile to ensure information is accurate • Review what information should be included in a profile and add to draft • Remove agriculture information from Lillooet profile/use as separate agriculture sector profile • Finalize draft profile • Communicate completion of profile to the community • Add profile to website 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Review of existing material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List what promotional material has been developed over the past two years • Evaluate success of materials • Determine next steps once evaluation is complete 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Develop regional investment guide	Year 2 - 2014			
Future promotional material	Year 2 – 2014			

5.2.7. Launch External Regional Awareness Program**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Develop list and budget of events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 2013 events e.g. Minister's Dinner • Prepare budget to attend events • Highlight best events 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B EDABC	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Contact PNP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact BCPNP to determine dates available in 2013 • Confirm date for presentation 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B PNP	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Develop PNP presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare presentation to highlight opportunities in the Northern SLRD • Deliver presentation 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Review memberships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing members to determine value • List potential memberships that may provide better value 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B	Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.2.7. Launch External Regional Awareness Program**Regional Initiative**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain or acquire new membership in economic development and related associations 				
Create schedule of events and budget	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B SLRD	Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.2.8. Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Allocate budget for assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine costs for assessment Apply to ICCI (Invest Canada – Community Initiatives) for funding 	November 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO
Investment Readiness Assessment	Year 2 – 2014			

5.2.9. Relocation of Economic Development Office**Lillooet/Area B**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Discussions with District Administration/Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussion with District administration and Council on potential of relocating economic development office Open discussion with SLRD 	June 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO/ CAO SLRD
Identify locations/budget/funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List potential locations both for the short term and long term Provide to District/SLRD administration Allocate new budget funds to cover costs 	June 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO/ CAO SLRD
Communicate and move office	Fall 2013	TBD	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO SLRD



Goal 5.3. Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion

5.3.1. Implement a Business Retention and Expansion Program

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Investigate BRE programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and compare BC BusinessCounts through BCEDA and other available programs Choose appropriate BRE program 	January 2013	Staff Time and \$1700 for program purchase	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B EDABC	Lillooet EDO SLRD
BRE training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend a BRE training program prior to initiating BRE – programs available through BCEDA, IEDC and others 	May 2013	\$2,500 <i>ICCI may fund up to 50%</i>		Lillooet EDO
Implement BRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine number of business visits per year Establish external partnerships for referral program Schedule and complete business visits Input all visit information into BRE program Prepare annual analysis of visits Communicate findings to Council, advisory Committee and general community 	September 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations Chamber Community Futures	Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.3.2. Establish a Redevelopment Zone

Lillooet Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Investigate other programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research various programs undertaken in other communities to develop best practice 	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL	Lillooet EDO
Redevelopment Zone designation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify “core” area to be considered for designation Review examples from other communities who have implemented program(s) Prepare report for consideration by Council Apply to Province of BC for approval 	July 2013	Staff Time	DOL Province of BC	Lillooet EDO
Marketing tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare marketing sheet for distribution to property owners to promote the availability of the program 	Fall 2013	Staff Time	DOL	Lillooet EDO

5.3.3. Create an Entrepreneurial Environment**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Develop and host small business workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with school district, TRU and First Nations to develop partnerships • Research other communities and what is being done • Develop and promote workshop • Host workshop • Evaluate workshop results 	June 2013	\$500	DOL School District TRU Area A Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Mentorship program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research other community mentorship programs • Meet with Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee to identify community mentors • Evaluate community need 	June 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B Chamber First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Partnership with school district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with school district to develop an in-class entrepreneurship program • Research other community's entrepreneurship programs for high school students 	September 2013	Staff Time	DOL School District	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Investigate other entrepreneurship programs	Year 2 – 2014			
Source Funding:				

5.3.4. Support Mining Activity**Lillooet/Area A Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Monitor existing mining activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with industry representatives to determine short term and long term plans • Monitor BC Mines Map (BC Mining Assn) to identify new activity 	February and ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B Bralorne Mine	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS SLRD
Employee/resident attraction package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with mine to determine requirements • Identify information to include in package (i.e. education, health, social, recreation, economic, etc.) • Identify other partners to participate and provide information • Develop recruitment package • Communicate package to business community 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B Bralorne Mine	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS SLRD
Job Fair/Supplier Bootcamp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with mine to determine interest 	June 2013	\$1,000	DOL Area A	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS

 December 2012

5.3.4. Support Mining Activity**Lillooet/Area A Initiative**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If interest is there, develop parameters around the job fair/supplier bootcamp: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Date ○ Costs ○ Other partners 			Bralorne Mine	SLRD
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5.3.5. Develop a Welcome Home Program**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Investigate best practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research other communities and their programs 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Determine feasibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify next steps if program implementation is feasible 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B	Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.3.6. Explore Feasibility of Bio-energy Sector**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Identify private sector partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Area A and First Nations to identify potential partners 	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A First Nations	Lillooet EDO
Source Funding:				

5.3.7. Investigate Feasibility of Downtown Wi-Fi**Lillooet Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Investigate costs to implement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online research to evaluate costs implications 	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL Community Futures Chamber TRU	Lillooet EDO
Consult with other communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify other communities who have implemented the program • Contact communities to gain a good understanding of their experience • Complete a report of findings 	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL Community Futures Chamber TRU	Lillooet EDO
Determine feasibility	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL Community Futures Chamber TRU	Lillooet EDO/ CAO
Implement Downtown Wi-Fi (if feasible)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Goal 5.4. Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry

5.4.1. Support the Development and Implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan

Lillooet/Area B Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Await AAP's final recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review AAP's recommendations Identify applicable and supportive recommendations 	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO

5.4.2. Assist in establishing a Farmers Institute

Lillooet/Area B Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Work with Agriculture Advisory Committee on Farmers Institute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish terms of reference for committee Appoint members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growers(3) Processors (2) Complete work plan for new committee to address agriculture related issues including development of the Farmers Institute	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Develop ToR for Farmers Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate other BC based Farmer's Institute Develop a three-year work program for a farmers institute Prepare to transfer activities from a community "Agriculture Committee" to an Institute 	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Establish Farmers Institute	Year 2 – 2014			

5.4.3. Develop a Specific Agriculture Marketing Initiative

Lillooet/Area B Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Await AAP's final recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review AAP's recommendations Identify applicable and supportive recommendations 	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Apply for funding from Province of BC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review requirements of BC Buy Local Program Partner with Fort Berens or local agriculture associations to submit application Review with Agriculture committee 	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL MOA Fort Berens Farmers Ins Area B First Nations Agriculture Associations	Lillooet EDO
Establish marketing programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a marketing strategy for Lillooet 	Year 2 – 2014	\$10,000	DOL Fort Berens	Lillooet EDO Consultant

5.4.3. Develop a Specific Agriculture Marketing Initiative**Lillooet/Area B Initiative**

grown and produced agriculture			Ag Comm	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with growers through the Farmers Institute to implement strategy 			MOA Area B First Nations	

5.4.4. Create an Agriculture Awareness Program**Lillooet/Area B Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Await AAP's final recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review AAP's recommendations Identify applicable and supportive recommendations	Year 2 – 2014	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Agri-tourism opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Circle Farm Tour Create a brochure promoting local Agri-tourism operations Host a farm day in the Northern SLRD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote to general public Invite key local stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local politicians and city staff MLA, MP Chamber ALC 	Year 2 – 2014	\$2,500	DOL SLRD Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO
Utilize BRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a target list of growers and producers in Northern SLRD to interview as part of BRE process Complete interviews Report on findings of interviews Act on issues and opportunities identified during interviews 	Ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area B	Lillooet EDO
Agriculture website	Year 2 – 2014			
Host a farm day	Years 2 - 2014			

Goal 5.5. Support and Expand Tourism

5.5.1. Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Review previous tourism plans	March 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO
Develop targeted plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide plan to agriculture committee • Facilitate a planning session based on recommendations to determine additional tourism related activities • Budget and implement 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO

5.5.2. Create a Community Inventory of Tourism Product and Infrastructure

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Download/review toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Download from JTST site http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/industryresources/tourism_planning_resources/tourism_asset_inventory.htm 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO
Funding application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor summer funding programs for students • Prepare job description • Prepare and submit application 	May 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO
Complete and publish inventory	August 2013	\$3,500	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B First Nations	Lillooet EDO

5.5.3. Create Stand-alone Tourism Website

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Secure domain name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register with Network Solutions new domain name 	January 2013	Nominal	DOL	Lillooet EDO
Redirect WebPages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request current provider to direct new domain to existing site until new one completed 	February 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO District of Lillooet
Monitor new domain activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish account with Google Analytics or similar to monitor site traffic include geographic location of those visiting 	Ongoing	Staff Time	DOL Area A BRVEDS Area B	Lillooet EDO
Plan and develop website	Year 2 – 2014			

5.5.4. Pursue Locations for a More Prominent Visitor Information Centre **Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Determine location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a short list of location options in partnership with committee • Negotiate agreement 	September 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD First Nations Historical Society	Lillooet EDO/ CAO
Develop partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with local First Nations to determine partnership • Meet with service clubs, regional areas, and other to discuss possible partnerships 	September 2013	Staff Time	DOL Chamber First Nations	Lillooet EDO/ CAO
Secure funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to NDIIT for funding to build centre • Apply to Province of BC (Ministry responsible for Tourism) for operation funding 	Nov 2013	<i>NDIT may have funds available</i>	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO
Design and build	Year 2 – 2014			

5.5.5. Enhance Community Signage **Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Review and improve signage policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing policies • Compare existing policies with other tourism destinations • Amend existing policies • Adopt necessary bylaw amendments 	April 2013	Staff Time	DOL BRVEDS Historical Society Chamber	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Directional signage at museum and other identified locations	Fall 2013	\$5,000	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS

5.5.6. Support and Expand Festivals **Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Winter-focused festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners (service clubs) for new winter focused festival • Identify date, times and location • Develop marketing plan • Host festival 	Nov 2013 (event 2014)	\$2500	DOL Area A Chamber Lions Club First Nations	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Support existing festivals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with organizers to determine needs 	Ongoing	Staff Time	Chamber Apricot Festival	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Visitors survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop visitors survey for festivals • Compile results and prepare report with recommendations following each event 	May 2013	Staff Time	Chamber Local Accommodations Service Providers	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS

5.5.7. Support and Expand Arts, Culture and Heritage**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Regional Arts, Culture & Heritage committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify individuals to represent the arts, culture & heritage industry on committee Develop invitation letter to form committee Hold first meeting to define roles, responsibilities and objectives 	April 2013	Nominal	DOL Area A Area B Chamber	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Arts, Culture & Heritage inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with committee and First Nations to identify all arts, culture and heritage activity 	March-April 2013	\$5,000 <i>Apply for student funding through Service Canada</i>	DOL Area A Area B Chamber First Nations	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Summer Arts Centre	Year 2 – 2014			

5.5.8. Develop Retail and Downtown Business Education Workshop**Lillooet Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Host retailer education workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify workshop leader/consultant Develop workshop content Host workshop 	June 2013	\$2,500	DOL Chamber	Lillooet EDO
Shop Local program	Year 2 – 2014			

5.5.9. Investigate First Impressions Program**Regional Initiative**

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Gather information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research information Consult with business community and chamber of commerce Identify partner communities Host community partners Distribute feedback from community partners to business community Develop action plan to address items identified in feedback 	November 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD Chamber	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Implement FICE program	Year 2 – 2014			

Goal 5.6. Enhance and Improve Infrastructure

5.6.1. Continue to Pursue Improved Transportation Infrastructure

Regional Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Establish Transportation working group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLRD to appoint a working group of Northern SLRD Regional stakeholders • Establish Terms of Reference • Identify common issues 	June 2013	Staff Time	DOL Area A Area B SLRD First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD
Communications plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare briefings on each transportation issue identified • Arrange meetings with Interior Roads and the Ministry to discuss issues on a regular basis • Report back to SLRD on steps, actions and results 	August 2013	Staff Time	Area A Area B SLRD First Nations	Lillooet EDO SLRD

5.6.2. Improve and Develop Communication Infrastructure

Area A Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Telecommunications committee Establish Telecommunications committee in Area A	June 2013	Staff Time	Area A SLRD	BRVEDS SLRD
Telecommunications assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop survey of communication needs of property owners (resident and non-resident) • Analyse survey results • Develop need assessments of both phone and internet • Identify provincial and federal initiatives to support telecommunications infrastructure expansion 	July 2013	Staff Time	Area A SLRD	BRVEDS SLRD Telecommunications Committee
Communications plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify target audience (Telus, Province of BC, Government of Canada) • Develop communications plan and program to reach target audience 	Aug 2013	Staff Time	Area A SLRD	BRVEDS SLRD Telecommunications



Goal 5.7. Strengthen and Expand Partnerships

5.7.1. Organize Joint Meetings with First Nations (Economic Development Corporations)

Lillooet/Area B Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Initiate discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a discussion with individual EDO's or Band Managers • Seek approval to be added to EDC meetings 	January 2013	Staff Time	DOL First Nations	Lillooet EDO
Quarterly meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend quarterly meetings and host when appropriate 	Ongoing (quarterly)	Staff Time	DOL First Nations	Lillooet EDO

5.7.2. Establish Community Accords with First Nations

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Initiate dialogue with Chief's Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing Community Accords in BC • Identify goals of Accords for the Northern SLRD including District of Lillooet • Arrange discussions with Chief's Council to determine next step of action and how they should be developed 	Feb 2013	Staff Time	DOL First Nations	Lillooet EDO CAO Mayor
Host Powell River/Sliammon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite representatives of Sliammon First Nations and the District of Powell River to Lillooet • Host meeting with key stakeholders to hear what activities and successes have occurred 	March 2013	\$5,000	DOL Area B First Nations SLRD	Lillooet EDO
Community Accord(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on feedback with Chief's Council develop one joint or individual Accords 	May 2013	Staff Time	Area B First Nations SLRD	Lillooet EDO

5.7.3. Build a Stronger Working Relationship Between Lillooet Economic Development and BRVEDS

Lillooet/Area A Initiative

Action	Timelines	Budget	Partners	Responsibility
Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Area A/BRVEDS representative 	January 2013	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Economic development initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify initiatives for partnership 	Ongoing (quarterly)	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet EDO BRVEDS
Open discussions on formal regionalized economic development model	Year 2 (2014)	Staff Time	DOL SLRD	Lillooet ED BRVEDS SLRD

6.2. Year One Budget

The costs of implementing the strategies identified in this plan are estimated at a total of \$44,800. The tables within Section 6.0 Implementation and Action Plan indicate where there may be other sources of funding available. However, as external funding sources can change at any time and may not be guaranteed the total estimated year-one budget is based on receiving no external funds.

Strategy	Action	Lillooet/ Area B	Area A	Total
5.1.	Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning			
5.1.1.	Increase Community Involvement and Communication	\$ 1,000	\$ 0	\$ 1,000
5.1.2.	Enhance Economic Development Communication	480	120	600
5.1.3.	Create Community Unity (Charrette/Vision)	8,000	2,000	10,000
5.1.4.	Develop Annual Luncheon	400	100	500
5.2	Enhance Economic Development Services			
5.2.1.	Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
5.2.2.	Shared Services Agreement	0	0	0
5.2.3.	Facilitate Economic Development and Training	2,800	700	3,500
5.2.4.	Create Stand-alone Website	0	0	0
5.2.5.	Develop Supportive Government Policies	0	0	0
5.2.6.	Develop Information and Promotional Materials	0	0	0
5.2.7.	Launch External Regional Awareness Program	0	0	0
5.2.8.	Undertake an Investment Readiness Assessment	0	0	0
5.2.9.	Relocate Economic Development Office	0	0	0
5.3	Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion			
5.3.1.	Implement a Business Retention Expansion Program	\$ 4,200	\$ 0	\$ 4,200
5.3.2.	Establish a Redevelopment Zone	0	0	0
5.3.3.	Create an Entrepreneurship Environment	400	100	500
5.3.4.	Support Mining Activity	500	500	1,000
5.3.5.	Develop a Welcome Home Program	0	0	0
5.3.6.	Explore feasibility of Bio-Energy Sector	0	0	0
5.3.7.	Investigate Feasibility of Downtown Wi-Fi	0	0	0
5.4	Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry			
5.4.1.	Support development and implementation of the Agricultural Area Plan	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
5.4.2.	Assist in establishing a Farmers Institute	0	0	0
5.4.3.	Agriculture Marketing Initiative	0	0	0
5.4.4.	Agriculture Awareness Program	0	0	0

5.5	Support and Expand Tourism			
5.5.1.	Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
5.5.2.	Create a Community Inventory of Tourism Product and Infrastructure	2,800	700	3,500
5.5.3.	Create Stand-alone Website	0	0	0
5.5.4.	Pursue Locations for a more Prominent Visitor Information Centre	0	0	0
	Enhance Signage in all Northern SLRD Communities			5,000 add
5.5.5.	Support and Expand Festivals	4,000	1,000	2,500
5.5.6.	Support and Expand Arts, Culture and Heritage	2,000	500	2,500
5.5.6.	Support and Expand Retail and Downtown Business Education	4,000	1,000	5,000
5.5.7.	Workshop	2,500		2,500
5.5.8.	Investigate First Impressions Program	0	0	0
5.6	Enhance and Improve Infrastructure			
5.6.1.	Continue to Pursue Improved Transportation Infrastructure	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
5.6.2.	Improve and Develop Communication Infrastructure	0	0	0
5.7	Strengthen and Expand Partnerships			
5.7.1.	Organize Joint Meetings with First Nations (Economic Development Corporations)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
5.7.2.	Establish Community Accords with First Nations	5 000	0	5 000
5.7.3.	Establish Relationship with BRVEDS	0	0	0
TOTALS		\$38,080	\$7,720	\$44,800

7.0 Performance Indicators and Measurements

Ongoing performance evaluation is a critical component to the success of any economic development strategy or plan. The performance measurements proposed on the following pages will help stakeholders to effectively measure the implementation of the strategies within this plan. Economic development needs to have the built-in mechanisms to demonstrate the positive results of their efforts to help build support from the public and stakeholders. It is recommended that once performance indicators are decided upon an annual “scorecard” be developed to review progress.

The following incorporates indicators from the Integrated Sustainability Plan currently in draft. As stated in the plan “indicators are essential for measuring performance toward the vision, as well as for communicating progress”. Key components of this economic development strategy focus on creating a vision for the region and improving communication.

The Lillooet Economic Development Officer would be responsible for tracking performance and reporting back to the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Board, District of Lillooet and SLRD.

Goal 5.1. Improve and Strengthen Communication and Planning

- **Clear vision for Lillooet and Area B**
- **Level of approval from community**
- **Fading negative vocal minority within the District of Lillooet**
- **Positive news coverage (internally and externally)**

Goal 5.2. Enhance Economic Development Services

- **Active and involved Economic Development and Tourism Committee with broad-based representation from across the Northern SLRD**
- **Completion of shared services between District of Lillooet and Area B**
- **Creation of partnerships with Area A and First Nation communities**
- **Launch of stand-alone investment website**
- **Number of unique visitors and hits to website**
- **Developed list of external events participation**
- **Increase in presence at external events**
- **Increase in understanding of the role of economic development within the Northern SLRD**
- **Increase in support and understanding of economic development from public officials**
- **Speed of development approval process**
- **Relocated economic development office**

Goal 5.3. Develop an Environment to Maintain and Encourage Business Growth and Expansion

- Ongoing and active Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Number of businesses met with by Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Identification of new business opportunities
- Level of business satisfaction level
- Number of business start-ups
- Number of new jobs created and retained
- Number of new businesses attracted
- Increase in taxation revenue
- New programs for revitalization
- Improved perception of downtown (Lillooet)
- New supplier opportunities to the mining industry and other sectors
- Number of new and returning residents
- Reduction in consumer leakage
- Real median income of Northern SLRD based tax filers
- Total income reported by Northern SLRD based tax filers
- Value of residential building permits and commercial permits

Goal 5.4. Support the Growth of the Agriculture Industry

- Completed Agricultural Area Plan highlight opportunities within the agricultural industry
- Established Farmer's Institute increasing the awareness of the agricultural industry
- New market opportunities for local agriculture products
- Increase in awareness of the importance of agriculture in the regional economy
- Active agri-tourism industry
- Total ha of active farms

Goal 5.5. Support and Expand Tourism

- Acceptance and support of the Guaranteed Rugged brand
- Active and coordinated regional tourism marketing program
- Number of visitors to local attractions and events
- Level of visitor satisfaction levels
- Amount of visitor spending
- Identification of new tourism business opportunities
- Number of unique visitors and hits to tourism website
- Operation of visible Visitor Information Centre
- Increase in directional signage within the Northern SLRD
- Increase in Art, Culture & Heritage opportunities
- Reduction in consumer leakage
- Room revenue within Northern SLRD

Goal 5.6. Enhance and Improve Infrastructure

- **Improvement in transportation network**
- **Number of residents and businesses having access to cell service and fibre optic high-speed internet (Area A)**

Goal 5.7. Strengthen and Expand Partnerships

- **Number of economic development partnerships with First Nations**
- **Number of economic development partnerships with Area A**



Acknowledgements and Final Comments

EDCD Consulting would like to thank the many individuals, businesses and organizations that contributed their time and provided invaluable input throughout the development of the Economic Development Assessment Strategy and Action Plan. Through one-on-one interviews, focus groups or online surveys we were provided with community insight to help identify issues for the Northern SLRD. We express our appreciation and thanks for your involvement.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the District of Lillooet Council and staff, SLRD Regional Directors and staff for providing us with the opportunity to spend time in your region. We thank you for all the support and input you have provided.

As we complete the work on this plan we have a few comments and observations we would like to share.

The authors originally attempted to complete a strategy as a regional partnership between Lillooet, Area A and Area B of the SLRD. The District of Lillooet has a fully funded and active economic development function with an experienced economic development professional. Area A has a volunteer committee, Bridge River Valley Economic Development Society (BRVEDS), and one part-time staff, while Area B has no dedicated economic development function.

As consultation occurred it became evident that Lillooet and Area B were willing to work together on economic development initiatives and to create a shared services agreement. As such, this is a recommended strategy in this plan.

Area A offers a more challenging solution. In Area A, BRVEDS has worked individually on economic development activities and has seen some success. They have completed a number of studies on their area, primarily focused on tourism, and have been successful in hiring part-time staff to help the volunteer board. Area A expressed no interest in being part of a shared services agreement and instead prefers to work with Lillooet and Area B on a project by project basis. While it is positive that Area A wishes to work on specific initiatives it makes it difficult to ultimately plan the structure of an economic development program for the region. Area B clearly recognizes that Lillooet currently has an economic development program and that they would be best served to be part of that program.

As the authors originally prepared this report we considered the entire region “the community” with Lillooet as the hub. For economic development to be truly successful all parties need to recognize the strengths of the other players. In the Northern SLRD, the District of Lillooet is clearly the hub of the region. It provides not only the basic infrastructure but it is also the centre for health care and education services. It is the centre for shopping, and professional services. It is the community recognized by external agencies and business. While Lillooet is experiencing some challenges we believe these can be overcome through improved communication and by focusing on the positives. We were pleased to see that the positive forces in Lillooet are tired of the negative few shaping the image. [rework]. The majority support the need by the District to just move on. We were also pleased to see that the District of Lillooet truly wants to form partnerships and alliances with others in the region,

including First Nations, to better the economic future of “the community.” This can be done if all players come to the table and do not draw artificial boundaries around each individual jurisdiction.

If shared services with Lillooet and Area B are agreed upon, funding levels will need to be appropriately increased. Projects identified to be done in partnership with Area A will need to be funded through individual partnership agreements. This unfortunately creates a more bureaucratic process and can result in delays in implementing successful initiatives. The consultant encourages all parties to work together on creating a shared services agreement which provides at least a base level of funding from Area A on a long term basis. By allowing this to happen it will be easier for the economic development program to develop and implement annual plans based on the items identified in this strategy and in other initiatives that are identified. Ideally, for true regional economic development to be successful a move towards a formal regionalized economic development model is required.