



# LOOK NORTH

## Report and Action Plan

For Manitoba's Northern Economy





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## Report and Action Plan

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# Look North Task Force Co-Chairs



Christian Sinclair

**Co-Chair**

Onekanew (Chief) Opaskwayak Cree Nation

*Tansi.* As a proud member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation and northern Manitoban, I am honoured and humbled to be serving as Co-Chair. We heard from many northerners and this roadmap has been designed based on the dreams and aspirations of the people of northern Manitoba. It is a challenge, but at the same time it is a great opportunity to enable social and economic development in the north.

As Co-Chair, I am pleased that we were able to engage an Indigenous economic development leader to guide us through this process. As a northerner where my heart lies, I am personally committed to ensuring the success of this strategy and am confident we will create a model of success that communities and northerners can build on for future generations.

I am pleased to share this strategy that shows when Indigenous peoples are engaged as partners, everyone benefits and successes will be shared with all of Manitoba and Canada. *Ekosani.*



Chuck Davidson

**Co-Chair**

President & CEO

Manitoba Chambers Of Commerce

As someone who grew up in northern Manitoba, and still considers myself a northerner, the two attributes that set those that live and work in the north apart from others is their resilience and optimism.

With the current challenges facing the north it was made clear during discussions and consultation that people are no longer looking for quick fixes, they want long-term solutions that will lead to greater economic development that will benefit all communities.

This report and action plan is not the end, it marks a beginning. It is a living document that will continue to evolve as we continue engagement, and build collaboration, within and across, northern communities.

My belief is that the Look North initiative can be the catalyst that will lead to a prosperous and reinvigorated northern Manitoba for decades to come.

# Look North Task Force Members



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**CEO**  
Keewatin Railway  
Company



**David Kobliski**  
**Manager**  
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## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY**



**Oswald Sawh**  
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Communities Economic  
Development Fund



**Julyda  
Lagimodiere**  
**Minister of Justice &  
VP Thompson Region**  
Manitoba Metis  
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**David Lee Roy  
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Pimicikamak Okimawin  
Executive Council

and by the Province of Manitoba

# Introduction



Karl Wixon

**Lead Consultant**

Arahia & Biggar Ideas  
Partnership for Look North

**Director & Indigenous  
Development Consultant**

Arahia Pathfinders • New Zealand

It has been an honour and privilege to work with the Look North Task Force, and to engage with the many communities, organizations and leaders who have contributed to and shaped this report and action plan. Thank you.

**This Report and Action Plan was developed by the people for the people.**

This report and action plan is the result of hundreds of contributions through conversations, workshops and roundtable meetings, combined with desktop research.

It is people who implement strategy and it is many people taking actions, big and small, that create long-term economic growth.

We have a Māori (Indigenous) proverbial saying in New Zealand:

*He aha te mea nui o te Ao? Makue ki atu.*

*He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.*

*What is the most important thing in the world? I will tell you.*

*It is people, it is people, it is people.*

While data paints a bleak picture of northern Manitoba, I encountered a lot of warm and passionate people rich in ideas, committed to the north and committed to growth. The positive spirit and determination provides confidence that people of the north are well poised for growth.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

With 67% of Manitoba's land area and just over 7% of its population, northern Manitoba has been a long-term net contributor to the economic prosperity of all Manitoba, as the source of some of the province's richest natural resources and tourism icons.

Today however, it is a region in decline, suffering significant job losses in key industries and anchor companies – around which infrastructure and communities have been built and become reliant. The current suspension of rail service to Churchill due to flood damage highlights the critical and volatile nature of infrastructure and the importance of it for servicing northern industry and communities.

In a region where nearly 75% of the population self identify as Indigenous, with nearly 50% living on First Nations where unemployment is typically above 75%, where 52% of the population do not have a grade 12 education, and a growing youth population, this trend demands response.

It is these circumstances that gave rise to the establishment of the Look North Economic Task Force to find a way forward.

The Task Force held its first meeting on December 13, 2016 in Opaskwayak Cree Nation and agreed on the following purpose:

- Inspiring an economic movement in northern Manitoba.
- Identifying sustainable and long-term solutions that lead to economic growth and diversification.
- Building understanding and collaboration across communities.

This report and action plan will provide a framework for progress and pointers for growth. It reports, without filtering, what was discovered.

This plan sits within a context of other provincial and sector strategies, many of which provide more detail than will be evident in this document. It is positioned as a companion to those strategies, not a replacement. The next stages demand a deep look into identified areas of focus.

This document points to areas for action and a deeper dive.

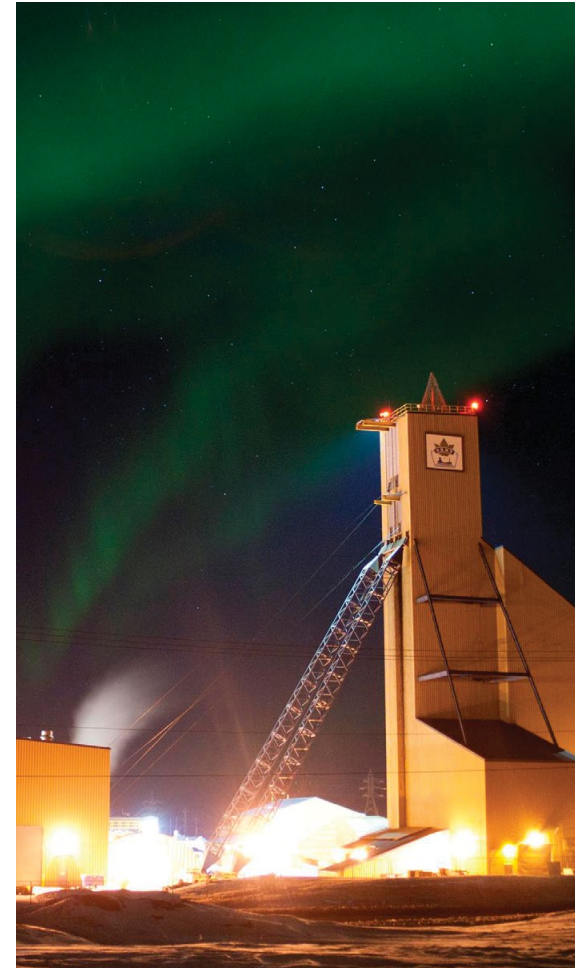


Photo: HudBay Minerals

SECTION ONE

# What We Did





# Shaping Our Approach

A comprehensive engagement process was launched knowing that people of the north best understand their own needs. A broad approach around community enterprise, local enterprise, commercial enterprise and government was used to build an understanding of needs, gain insights and explore ideas.

**COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE:** There is a clear need to build a deeper understanding of community needs and to foster and facilitate collaboration between the public and private sector to develop solutions to those needs. New solutions could be delivered through building a local social enterprise and NGO sector. This is needed in areas such as housing, education, health and social services. A key need here is to engage the population in the economy.

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE:** There is a clear need to develop enterprise culture and to help business start-ups and small and medium enterprise (small business) to succeed in local communities.

**COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE:** There is clear need to support large companies and industries to realize their growth potential.

**GOVERNMENT:** Has a clear role to play in facilitating growth through regulatory enablement, e.g. regulation and policy reform to better enable growth, through better alignment of government resources and support services with need. This could require review of taxation policy and incentives, and taking a long-term view of investment in infrastructure to generate long-term growth.

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## Community Enterprise

Collaboration and social enterprise for local needs

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## Local Enterprise

Developing enterprise culture and small business

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## Commercial Enterprise

Realizing industry growth potential

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## Government

Regulatory enablement, resource alignment and growth investment

# Engaging with Northerners

The development of the Look North Report and Action Plan was based on engagement with northerners, trusting that people of the north best understand their own needs, challenges and opportunities and will ultimately be the ones to drive their own future growth.

Engagement will be ongoing as work on this plan continues and collaborations are formed to turn plans into actions.

Engagement to date has included:

## **DECEMBER 2016**

- Meetings in Thompson with industry representatives from Vale & Mining Association of Manitoba and local leadership.
- Meetings in The Pas with industry representatives from Canadian Kraft Paper & American Industry Acquisition Corporation, Paskwayak Business Development Corporation (PBDC) and community leadership.
- Meetings in Flin Flon with industry representatives from Hudbay and University College of the North (UCN).
- Meeting in Portage La Prairie with the Manitoba Rural Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee.

## **JANUARY – MARCH 2017**

- Conversations with individuals and organizations e.g. Travel Manitoba.
- Presentation to Nunavut Economic Development Association Conference – February 15, 2017.
- Presentation to the Thompson Chamber of Commerce on the launch of the Look North Website and the engagement process – February 21, 2017.
- Presentation to the Hudson Bay Regional Roundtable – March 30, 2017.



Chief Ron Evans speaking at the Look North website launch with Premier Brian Pallister and Cliff Cullen, former Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (current Minister of Crown Services) looking on. February 21, 2017.



## **APRIL 2017 (NORTHERN SUMMIT TOUR)**

Community engagement in 'hands-on' workshops exploring local needs, challenges and developing potential solutions, in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Thompson and Churchill.

Meetings with:

- Opaskwayak Cree Nation & Paskwayak Business Development Corporation
- Manitoba Hydro
- Manitoba Prospectors & Developers Association
- Provincial Departments



## **MAY – JUNE 2017**

Presentations and Discussions:

- Hudson Bay Route Association AGM
- Hudson Bay Regional Roundtable
- Annual Deputy Ministers Dinner
- Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
- Look North Breakfast
- Vision Quest
- Plan Nord Conference
- Nunavut Economic Developers Association
- Northern Lights Conference



## **FEBRUARY – JUNE 2017 (CEDF ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS)**

- Cross Lake Community Council and Administration
- Sherridon Community Council
- Oxford House First Nation
- God's Lake First Nation
- God's Lake Narrows Community Council
- St. Theresa Point First Nation
- Wabowden Community Council & Administration



## **ONLINE ENGAGEMENT**

- Community members were able to submit ideas online through the Look North website at [www.looknorthmb.ca](http://www.looknorthmb.ca) and contribute through social media.
- Between February 21st and May 31st, nearly 3,800 Manitobans visited the site and more than 1,100 engaged through social media through Twitter and Facebook.

# Desktop Research

A Desktop Review Report was provided to the Look North Economic Task Force March 2017. The following documents were reviewed to gain both intel and insight, as well as to identify high level recurring themes.

It is worth noting that findings of the desktop research were cross-referenced with findings from meetings and workshops in order to identify and validate areas of focus or priority.

## **DATA**

- Population statistics by census divisions 19, 21, 22, 23, 2015.
- The Pas, Opaskwayak Cree Nation & RM of Kelsey – Regional Economic Analysis Process Report. April 2016. Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade.
- Northern Region Economic Profile, 2015, Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

## **STRATEGY**

- Draft Rural Economic Development Strategy. June 2016. Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Economic Developers Association of Manitoba, Community Futures Manitoba, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Rural Development Institute and Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM).
- Thompson Economic Development Working Group Action Plans.

- Northern Development Strategy. 2000. Province of Manitoba.
- Manitoba Cooperative Community Strategic Plan 2014-2019. Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Cooperative Association Inc.
- Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy. February 2015. Canadian Community Economic Development Network & Province of Manitoba.

## **MINING**

- Mining Association of Manitoba Draft Strategic Plan 2016-2019 and 2015 Annual Report.
- Fraser Institute Survey of Mining Companies and Permit Times for Mining Exploration, February 2017.
- Manitoba Prospectors and Developers Association – Advancing a project – success & barriers, 2017.

## **FIRST NATIONS AND METIS**

- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc (MKO) – Community based economic action plan for Northern Manitoba First Nations, May 2016.
- Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) – Manitoba Metis Economic Development Strategy Final Report, September 2008.
- Fraser Institute – The Duty to Consult with Aboriginal Peoples. A patchwork of Canadian policies, Bains, R and Ishkanian, K, May 2016.

- Fraser Institute – Why First Nations Succeed, Flanagan, T, November 2016.
- National Aboriginal Economic Development Board – Reconciliation: Growing Canada's Economy by \$27.7 Billion, November 2016.

## **TOURISM**

- Travel Manitoba – The Benefits of Tourism, 2014 and Tourism Indicators, 2016.
- Tourism North – Growing Stronger Together. 2016.

## **TRADE**

- The Council on International Trade – International Trade Strategy for Manitoba, June 2011.

## **MANITOBA HYDRO**

- 2015-2016 Manitoba Hydro Annual Report.
- Corporate Strategic Plan, November 2013.

## **OTHER INFO**

- Declaration of Northern Values, 2015.
- Manitoba Research Centre – Maximizing Manitoba's Potential, January 2017.

SECTION TWO

# What We Discovered



# Economic Summit Findings

## Opaskwayak Cree Nation

- **UNTAPPED POTENTIAL:** The Pas and surrounding communities (including Flin Flon) still hold a lot of under utilized facilities and resource potential, despite the current trend of decline in mining and forestry.
- **COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION:** There is a general lack of information, coordination and planning to realize opportunities.
- **NEED FOR COLLABORATION:** There needs to be a shift in mindset for change to occur, in particular moving from a competitive paradigm to a collaborative one. The CKP story showed what kind of turnaround is possible when minds are collectively turned toward problem solving and people get onboard with change.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Is seen as both a barrier and an enabler – with road and rail improvement being seen as necessary to open up industry and trade corridors. Access to broadband is also a key economic driver to unlocking the potential of small and remote communities by opening up access to information and support and as an important communication tool for building an online economy.
- **COMMUNITY UNITY:** All groups recognized the need for working closer together as a community to understand needs, develop solutions and create opportunities.



# Economic Summit Findings

## Thompson

- **YOUTH:** There was a single clear agenda shared by all in regard to a need for focus on youth to provide long-term economic growth, getting them engaged in learning, engaged in the community, engaged in enterprise and the local economy.
- **HOUSING:** There was a clear and compelling proposal to establish a social housing co-op, using local skills and expertise to respond to northern housing needs. This could make better use of existing public spending on housing, while returning benefit to the community through training and employment in the sector. This model could be expanded to The Pas and Churchill.
- **ALL WEATHER ROAD:** There was evident appetite for all weather roads and to address the feasibility of their development and the need for a clear business case.
- **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:** In all cases there was an evident need for broader collaboration between educational institutions, industry and government to realize opportunities.
- **INSPIRATION:** There are success stories, best practices and partnership models that need to be more widely shared as sources of inspiration and guidance.



Photo: Delfin de Ramos, MDS AeroTest

# Economic Summit Findings

## Churchill

- **COLLABORATION:** There was an evident need for better engagement and collaboration to be able to develop solutions to local needs and create opportunities, particularly Indigenous engagement.
- **EXTERNAL COMPETITION:** There was recurring discussion about outside competition that is often quicker to create opportunities and yet does not have a long-term vested interest in Churchill and do not reinvest profit in the community.
- **MB HOUSING CONSTRAINTS:** The limitations placed on use of Manitoba Housing for home business is limiting opportunity when the scale of community does not make standalone business premises viable and Manitoba Housing represents about 80% of the housing stock.
- **RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT:** Churchill is reliant upon access and infrastructure being functional for business to be viable. At times response is slow in terms of clearing road, air access and repairs and maintenance. This can inhibit business.
- **BEYOND PORT ENTERPRISE:** There is a wide range of potential opportunities that could be realized, if effective engagement and support is provided.
- **DISCONNECT:** There appears to be a general disconnect between what people outside of Churchill think that Churchill needs and what Churchill residents say they want and need. For example, people outside of Churchill speak of the need for an all-weather road to Churchill, while workshop attendees agreed they did not want one.

Note: This workshop occurred prior to suspension of the rail service to Churchill. While the rail line was discussed in this workshop, it was not a critical issue at that stage, of course that is now a key issue for Churchill.



Photo: Doug Lauvstad



# Things That Matter Most

This document presents a distilled and synthesized version of findings from hundreds of inputs across communities, industries and individuals.

However, there are some things that rise above the rest, things that are front of mind for many and talked about a lot, things warranting focus and concerted effort, things that have the potential to create the biggest quantum shifts, or act as catalysts for wider change.

These are the things we heard often, that matter most to many.

## **ITEM 1 NORTHERN MINERAL AND OTHER RESOURCE POTENTIAL**

Despite current industry decline and massive job loss in the northern mining industry, the latent mineral potential of the north is perhaps still the single most likely source of long-term northern prosperity.

It has sustained the north for close to 80 years, and with the right support and investment could sustain the north for another 80 years. The problems are known and visible, as are many of the solutions. The greatest barriers to growth are regulatory, procedural and relational.

Other important resource sectors such as forestry, fishing, hydro, agriculture, energy and tourism also provide opportunities for new partnerships and growth.

There needs to be a strong and unified partnership between public and private sectors to knuckle down and get on with the jobs to be done.

## **ITEM 2 INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Indigenous peoples and communities are ready for models, protocols and supports to enable the development of partnerships. This warrants a joint effort between Indigenous communities and industry, and supported by government, to identify partnership opportunities for increased economic development that will contribute to local economies and the broader Manitoba economy.

## **ITEM 3 STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

'All weather roads', 'rail', 'air' and 'broadband' were among the most common topics to arise in conversation in the north, however, they are topics that still give rise to more questions than answers. It is time for answers and they will only come from continued engagement plus a concerted effort to conduct sufficient analysis to mount any case for investment.

The current suspension of the Gillam to Churchill rail service highlights the importance of infrastructure to northern prosperity.

## **ITEM 4 HOUSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The poor state of housing, over-crowding and low levels of home ownership in northern Manitoba, has significant impacts on the economy. These challenges will require all parties to bring together the skills and knowledge that exists in northern communities to

identify new models that better meet the needs in northern Manitoba.

However, many of the proposed solutions would require policy changes to support local solutions and new models.

## **ITEM 5 ENTERPRISE ECO-SYSTEM OF SUPPORT**

An enterprise eco-system needs to be built, providing a clear pathway for enterprise growth and connection to the right support at the right time. This will require a lead entity to coordinate.

It starts with developing enterprise culture in schools, and then needs to inspire and stimulate enterprise from start-up all the way through to growth and expansion.

## **ITEM 6 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Improved alignment between identified local industry and community needs with education and training opportunities is necessary to build new 'industry-fit' education pathways.

# General Observations

## **A GAP BETWEEN RESOURCE POTENTIAL AND REALITY**

There are evident gaps between natural resource potential and current reality. For example, in 2015 the Manitoba mining industry was worth \$1.3B (below \$1B today), compared to Saskatchewan and Ontario that were worth \$8.5B and \$10.7B respectively. Similarly, current annual cut allowances in timber are not being fully optimized.

Both of these scenarios paint a picture of industries that actually have significant head-room for growth – if the barriers to growth can be addressed and timely support provided.

## **LONG-TERM RELIANCE ON KEY COMPANIES HAS LIMITED INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Long-term stability and reliance on key companies has not prepared people for innovation and enterprise. There is a general absence of an enterprise mindset in the region.

## **LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT DEPENDENCE**

In many communities there has been long-term dependence on government funding which generates a default expectation that government will always provide.

## **DISCONNECTS**

There are disconnects across and within the region between:

- Support provided and support needed.
- Education provided, and local industry and community needs.
- Communities and leadership.
- Winnipeg and the south, and the north.
- Sectors, and within sectors.
- Indigenous communities and their adjacent communities.
- Municipal, provincial and federal government.

In many cases it is simply the absence of a relationship that is hindering progress and limiting the identification of opportunity.

## **NEED FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND FOCUS**

Everywhere we went, and nearly every meeting and workshop held, the need to invest in youth engagement and development was identified. While youth are the fastest growing portion of the population and future of the economy, in many cases, youth cannot see opportunity or future in the north and question the relevance of their education.

## **NEED FOR STRONG LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY**

There are many leaders **in** the north, but a general lack of coordinated leadership **for** the north.

## LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL NEEDS

Too often, solutions that come from outside of the community have failed to connect with local needs. In some cases this is due to a reliance on outside support, skills or capability. In other cases it is distance to available services. We encountered recurring frustrations about people and organizations from 'outside', who drive or fly in and out, and do not have a vested interest in the well-being of the communities in which they operate.

There are models within the mining industry that have shown leadership in this regard as they have had a vested interest in employee retention and have seen the benefit of long-term pathway development for employees and productive relationships with Indigenous communities.

## NEED FOR MODELS OF SUCCESS

In order to develop local solutions, there is a need to look at models of success and adapt for local needs. Communities tend to be inward looking, and this is limiting their ability to identify and connect with new opportunities and models to achieve them. In many cases, new models or solutions exist in other provinces or outside of Canada, for example models for Indigenous engagement, education, enterprise and economic development.



# Enhancing Opportunities in Indigenous Communities

As the most significant and fastest growing portion of the northern population, it is imperative that First Nations potential is 'unlocked'.

From what we heard it feels 'locked up' by structural and regulatory constraints, long-term government dependence, limitations placed on First Nations communities, and some within First Nations spoke of a 'crabs in the bucket' culture of pulling down those who rise.

There was talk of untapped potential, talent, skills and work ethic associated with traditional economies, such as hunting, trapping and fishing. First Nations communities need to shift from places that limit development, to places that enable it.

Some are on this journey and need to be supported in that quest.

We heard multiple accounts pointing to constraints 'on reserve', such as inability to build inter-generational equity in housing, start and run a privately owned business or build independence.

We heard accounts of people moving 'off reserve' to escape these constraints, then having other consequences, such as being disowned or disenfranchised by the community and cost of living.

The 'crab in the bucket' culture spoken of can have a tendency to entrap people at the lowest common level.

The regulatory and structural constraints imposed on First Nations appear to be continuing the intent of their creation, to isolate and control the Indigenous population. What we are witnessing now is typical of long-term impacts and the consequences of systemic policies and governance structures.

The long-term solution to this has to start with asking and facing the hard questions, questions of structural and regulatory reform, questions of policy, and internal questions to be asked and explored within First Nations.

## **CHALLENGES TO MINERAL DEVELOPMENT**

There are significant opportunities for exploration and future mine development in northern Manitoba. However, the current experience felt by industry is one of uncertainty, which can be a barrier to investment. Land tenure, the consultation process with Indigenous communities and unknown regulatory timelines all affect industry's ability to secure investment for mineral development.

First Nations also expressed the need for a clearer understanding of the process including the mining cycle, management of natural resources, consultation processes and resource revenue sharing opportunities. Indigenous involvement in all aspects of mineral development will result in greater economic benefits to all parties.

Establishing a collaborative and clear pathway forward on mineral development that addresses the challenges described by both Industry and Indigenous communities will enable investment and development.

## **SHARING MODELS FOR SUCCESS**

There is a clear need to provide and share models for success that demonstrate benefits to everyone, whether they be service delivery models, housing models, partnership models or resource revenue sharing models.

# Community Enterprise

## **HOUSING**

Housing is a recurring issue across the north in terms of high level of need and low levels of ownership, meaning houses readily fall into disrepair and neglect where there is no value to be derived from their upkeep or improvement.

Barriers to housing development, including access to water and waste infrastructure, power and trades people, were also talked about.

A potential opportunity also arose to enable enterprise by addressing the inability to operate home based business from Manitoba Housing units.

Building capacity and skilled labour in communities is a more cost effective alternative and a long-term solution to addressing the need for local housing solutions and a trades-pool for life-cycle repairs and maintenance.

A Northern Housing Network could be established quickly with the right regulatory and policy support favouring local procurement and provision of housing solutions.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Questions and statements regarding infrastructure arose in every community, whether it be all-weather roads, rail, air or broadband.

The evident barrier in all cases is the need for more robust analysis and business case development, drawing upon data from across multiple stakeholder groups to gain a true understanding of potential return on investment. There are multiple existing cost studies, but they tend to be out of date and written from the perspective of one industry or community of interest.

## **PEOPLE POTENTIAL**

The rate of job loss in large companies is seeing qualified and skilled people in communities looking for new opportunities. Similarly, a seeming lack of opportunity means there are people in communities that could and should be contributing positively and productively to local communities and the economy.

This demands a more concerted effort to understand what that talent base is and to find creative means for it to create, or engage in, enterprise. The proposed Housing Network is one such example that may provide an opportunity for the development of local incubators or simple 'make places' to provide a place for people to try new ideas.

## **YOUTH CONNECTION THROUGH EDUCATION**

There were recurring points raised in regard to youth engagement, particularly in education. Disconnects between the education youth are receiving and local/industry needs identified the opportunity to bridge this gap and train for local jobs. The lack of enterprise capability, thinking, learning and curriculum was also raised.

## **APPETITE FOR PILOT PROJECTS**

Communities want the opportunity to try new approaches in order to develop better local solutions. They seek support to pilot new approaches to improve community outcomes.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

All communities identified the need for greater levels of communication, collaboration and coordination within and between northern communities. They see value in gathering, sharing intel and insights, and see value in taking ownership and co-creating solutions.

They see value in 'joining the dots' between needs and opportunities and a need for leadership, networks and facilitation to drive increased collaboration.

# Small Business

## **A LACK OF ENTERPRISE CULTURE**

In general, there is a lack of enterprise culture and mindset. As described earlier in this document, long-term reliance and stability in large anchor companies has reduced the need for enterprise and innovation. If 'necessity is the mother of invention' then long-term comfort based on stability and continuity of employment has generated an absence of need. Additionally, long-term dependence on government, also suppresses enterprise where learned helplessness prevails and the drive for independence can be further suppressed by 'crab bucket' culture.

These combined conditions have suppressed and limited enterprise and consequently there are few start-ups and small businesses. Business start-up is generally not front of mind as an option, when the prevailing mindset has been about 'jobs'. There are also a number of factors inhibiting start-ups, such as difficulty in establishing business in First Nation communities and in Manitoba Housing units.

This has all served to limit and suppress enterprise thinking and culture as normal, or as a viable path to financial independence and long-term economic growth.

Start-ups are the foundation of the economy and if that base is narrowed, then the future of the economy is also narrowed.

In an environment of increasing uncertainty, where the only constant is change, the ability to adapt, innovate and apply fresh thinking to solving problems and identifying opportunities, is vital to survival. As change occurs, new needs and opportunities emerge and the skill of identifying and converting those opportunities into profit, can be fostered, taught and supported.

This then is a behavioral challenge that starts with raising awareness and increasing knowledge in order to change attitudes and behavior to make enterprise the new 'business as usual'.

## **A NEED FOR VISIBLE AND COORDINATED SUPPORT**

For those who pursue an enterprise pathway, support is largely invisible unless you are 'in the know' or know and connect with someone who is. Often that support is also geographically distant from need and is thinly resourced. There is a clear and identified need to better coordinate support in line with small business and enterprise needs, aligned with their enterprise journey.

## **A NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS**

This was best articulated by summit participants in Thompson as the need for an 'Enterprise Development Pathway'.

There is a need for a pathway you can connect with and which can provide wrap-around supports through a single window approach. There are opportunities starting from school through to start-ups, small business, medium enterprise and all other stages of the growth journey such as scaling up or going to new international markets.

This needs a physical and visual point of connection, such as a lead entity, and needs to provide incubation support at the community level. It also needs a campaign idea and platform for community engagement, and a communications strategy that can inspire and stimulate enterprise through sharing local success stories.

## **IMMEDIATE NEED FOR SUPPORT**

All of the Look North economic summits conducted in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Thompson and Churchill identified opportunities in need of such support now.

Support is needed to take these early stage ideas through due diligence and proof of concept stages to then justify the investment of time, resources and effort into their realization.

Identified opportunities are documented in workshop reports and the need for follow up is noted in the Action Plan.

# Industry Needs and Opportunities

## MINING

Despite the evident current trend of industry decline, mining has been, and still shows potential to be, the greatest source of economic growth in the north.

If you are looking for a 'magic bullet', then mining could still very well be it, albeit one that is slow to deliver. When you get it right the benefit and value endures for decades, just as the mines opened up in the 1950s and 1960s continue to deliver benefit today.

The evident geological potential is well beyond current value, and despite decline, adjacent provinces have shown growth and were cited by many as having more advanced regulatory support, better investment attraction policies, better First Nations partnerships and stronger investment.

What we are experiencing now is the downstream effect of under-investment in grass-roots exploration and survey, coupled with downturn in global commodity prices, increased environmental pressure, more complicated consultation processes, some long-serving mines reaching the end of their life-cycle, while others sit inactive and 'locked up' by permits.

Investment in growing the 'grass-roots' of the industry in survey, exploration, prospecting and First Nations engagement, is needed to expand the base and future potential of the Industry. This justifies a

long-term plan and investment, to deliver long-term benefit.

It will take government and industry partnership and targeted investment to turn a trend of decline into a trend of growth, if the regions mineral potential is to be realized.

The upside of this long-term investment could then be measured in billions in terms of value and decades in terms of enduring impact and legacy, just as the 'roads to resources' program and policies of 1957-63 opened up access to develop the industries we have reaped the benefit of to this very day.

Companies like Vale and Hudbay have arguably done more for the north recently than other private or public organizations, despite their trend of decline.

Their investment in workforce and community development, and initiatives like TEDWG (Thompson Economic Development Working Group) and partnership with education providers like UCN, is significant. They have been more proactive in their relationships with First Nations than is evident in most other sectors.

The mining industry continues to suffer from a prevailing public perception that it is a 'dirty' industry, despite raised environmental standards and increased effort in minimizing impact and investment in environmental restoration. It is a bit like the person

who has given up smoking still being labelled as a smoker.

This strategy does not go into deep detail as to what has to be done, as what is also evident is that the industry and industry bodies are very clear on the issues and barriers they face, and in their identification of solutions. What we have discovered through Look North simply aligns with, and serves to reinforce, their point of view.

The Mining Association of Manitoba and the Manitoba Prospectors and Developers Association have both engaged with Look North proactively and are very supportive of the agenda.

What really needs to happen is a closer and more direct partnership between government, industry, First Nations and other stakeholders to address barriers to growth and redirect the industry from its current path of decline to one of long-term growth. This needs to be viewed in terms of inter-generational return on investment, rather than cost, as the short term costs to turn the industry around have the potential to deliver inter-generational outcomes for the future of the north.

The Task Force proposes establishment of a Joint Action Group for this purpose.

# Industry Needs and Opportunities

## **INDUSTRY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **TOURISM**

A 'Northern Manitoba Tourism Strategy: 2017-2022' has been drafted through a partnership between Tourism North and Travel Manitoba and will be a companion strategy to this.

The Tourism sector in Manitoba represents close to 3% of GDP.

It is relatively immature as a sector when viewed from a global perspective, particularly in terms of international tourism.

The majority of tourism revenue is domestic at 87% with 9% from other provinces, 3% from USA (which could be considered semi-domestic given proximity to market), and 1% from overseas.

Overseas visitors are by far the biggest spenders in the north spending an average \$2,229.00 per person compared to \$184.00 per person per visit from Manitobans.

While there are many businesses working with Travel Manitoba to promote the region, the prevailing strategy is a push, not pull, one i.e. based on product development and marketing what the region has to offer, rather than responding to deep market insights.

There are obvious key barriers to international visitor attraction in terms of distance and cost, when a flight from Winnipeg to Churchill for instance can cost more than the flight from country of origin.

The tourism sector is the second largest employer in the region behind health services, but given the largely domestic market of the cluster, this is not a significant contributor to attracting export revenue.

Tourism does however provide opportunity for small local operators to gain a livelihood so the economic value of the domestic market is not to be underestimated and provides scope for local growth.

Areas of strength and potential growth are identified in the report down to individual community level.

### **FORESTRY**

The forestry industry still has room for growth, both in terms of optimizing sustainable annual cut allowances, but also in industry innovation, diversification and value add.

While there are significant barriers and complexity to optimizing annual cut allowances, including the necessary capital required, there is evident opportunity to explore the wider forest and timber eco-system to identify new opportunities.

### **FISHERIES**

Regulatory liberation of the fishing industry from a single channel operation, to an open market one, opens up new opportunities for collaboration and a more targeted higher value market approach.

The industry then is in its infancy in terms of an open market model and will need to go through some maturing to reach its potential.

The open market model will create opportunities for value growth in quota species, and will likely lead to more open competition. This may see operators quick to collaborate and thrive, while others may struggle to adjust.

Non-quota species could also provide new and less limited market opportunities for those who seek to commercialize them, and this will need to be closely monitored to assure sustainability.

The commercial value of one fish sold is still less than the economic value of one fish caught, if the angler has invested in lodging, food, travel and gear, within the local economy.



# Infrastructure

## **RAIL**

Rail is perhaps the most topical area of infrastructure need due to current issues and interests, particularly given the recent suspension of the rail service to Churchill.

The Town of Churchill is now only accessible by air (year round) and by sea through a short shipping season (July to October). This has significant impacts for supplying critical and essential goods to the community.

Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization established an intergovernmental team to coordinate efforts across three levels of government and with the private sector in order to assess impacts and develop solutions to support Churchill. Actions were taken to address immediate needs of food affordability, fuel supply and transportation/ logistics.

The Look North Economic Task Force recognizes the significance of rail service to Churchill and the region and as an immediate challenge for the well-being of northern communities that will require support to explore potential long-term strategies.

## **AIR**

The cost of air services is seen as a barrier to northern tourism and development, and the economics of operating airport infrastructure is evidently challenging. There was also an identified need to rationalize the two airports in The Pas, but different groups have a vested interest in each so opinions on this issue differ. This needs to be addressed by the parties concerned in partnership with the airlines.

## **ALL WEATHER ROADS**

A need for all weather roads arose in a number of meetings and workshops and some analysis has been undertaken, such as the Nunavut-Manitoba all weather road initiative exploring possible all weather route through to Churchill and up as far as Rankin Inlet.

The key barrier in every case is cost justification. It was also stated that not having these roads increases costs of service delivery for public sector and has other social and economic impacts. Actual data would be needed to assess this properly.

There needs to be more detailed cost/benefit analysis across multiple sectors of interest to develop a more comprehensive basis for justification of priorities and areas for investment.

## **INTERNET / BROADBAND**

Nearly every community spoke of the need for access to high speed internet as a means of connection, communication and for development of a digital economy.

## **HYDRO**

Hydro development has had a significant impact on Indigenous communities in northern Manitoba. Recent Manitoba Hydro projects including Wuskwatim, Keeyask and Bipole III have provided new models for equity sharing with partnering communities. Industry focused skills training has led to significant employment of approximately 5,000 jobs in the north. As these projects come to a completion, there is need for planning to address the challenges and opportunities of retaining this skilled workforce in the north.

# Sustainability

## **NATURAL TENSIONS**

Everyone seeks a sustainable future for northern Manitoba, although different groups of interest have differing views of what that means.

For most the bottom line is environmental sustainability, for some sustainability of a company or industry is front of mind. For families it can simply be about sustainability of a job or home. Economic sustainability is all of these things.

Universally, everyone we met shared a desire for environmental sustainability, but recognizes that a natural resource based economy can place this at risk, creating tension in decision making and consideration of benefits versus impacts.

All of the northern industries encountered through this process have a genuine commitment to environmental sustainability and enhancement, and have made great progress towards improvement, but they also experience strong pressure from environmental lobby groups and at times federal government initiatives, such as the creation of parks.

## **NEED TO WORK WITH – NOT AGAINST**

There is a clear need for industry, environmental groups, First Nations, Metis and government, to work with each other, rather than in opposition to each other on environmental matters.

A combative 'back and forth' process tends to have significant time and cost implications for all involved and is only good at making lawyers rich.

There is a need for a more open facilitated forum for consultation, that is more collegial than combative, and a need for more expedient processes of negotiations for decision making.

## **THE DECLARATION OF NORTHERN VALUES**

This declaration arose at a number of meetings and workshops as a possible starting framework for a more unified approach to regional sustainability. It has a wide range of existing signatories.

The agreed values are:

- **Prosperity**
- **Balance**
- **Cooperation**
- **Community Benefits**
- **Rights and Respect**
- **Financial Attractiveness**
- **Knowledge**
- **Clarity**

[www.northernvalues.ca](http://www.northernvalues.ca)

SECTION THREE

# Action Plan



# Action Plan

The Action Plan is organized by the six things that matter most to northern Manitobans.

This is a living, working document and further engagement will continue to develop the actions, work plans and identify partners to lead and implement the strategy.

In the current environment of fiscal restraint, this is not necessarily about finding and investing new money, it is about being more targeted, more accountable, and more focused, on where limited resources can be applied for maximum impact.

In many cases what is needed is closer and more targeted private and public sector 'Joint Action Groups' to tackle issues head-on and develop more detailed specific strategies. The need to establish such 'JAGs' has been identified in a number of areas.

**The following pages set out KEY ACTIONS and NEXT STEPS in each area.**

**The next round of engagement will also be looking to identify key stakeholders for each areas and look for best practice models and case studies in areas of action.**

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## 1 Northern Mineral and Other Resource Potential

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## 2 Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships

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## 3 Strategic Infrastructure Investment

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## 4 Housing Challenges and Opportunities

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## 5 Enterprise Eco-System of Support

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## 6 Education, Training and Workforce Development

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# 1

## Northern Mineral and Other Resource Potential

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Working with government to address barriers to realizing the potential of the mining industry to grow from \$900M to \$5B in 10-15 years (barriers and constraints have been identified and included in the Mining Association of Manitoba strategy).	Work with government in establishing a mining 'Joint Action Group' for industry growth.
Mining industry partnership to drive the necessary reform to turn around the mining industry.	Establish a 'Joint Action Group' to drive turnaround of the mining industry from trend of decline to trend of growth.  Note: The Manitoba government has established The Mineral Development Protocol and this process is underway.
Natural resource optimization.	Carry out a comprehensive audit of the natural resources of the region and their commercial potential (forestry, mining, agriculture and other resources).
Accelerating evolution of the fishing industry from FFMC model to open-market higher value models.	Identify growth options and models for the fishing industry, drawing upon best practices from other jurisdictions. Convene fisheries roundtable to explore ideas and broker collaborations for industry development.
Building a tourism sector – including authentic experience and cultural tourism (link with Tourism Strategy).	Continue to work alongside Tourism North, Travel Manitoba and partner organizations to ensure strategic alignment and support for identified growth strategies.

# 2

## Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Development of 'best practice' models and exemplars for Indigenous engagement and resource revenue sharing partnerships.	Engage with current government initiatives to develop an improved 'Duty to Consult' framework and policy to ensure it engages with and meets Indigenous, industry and community needs as identified through Look North.
Identify models, procedures and support to improve Duty to Consult.	Develop Duty to Consult JAG to ensure Best Practice Models and 'How to Guides' being developed meet needs.  Note: The Manitoba government has already established a JAG for this and is well into the process of developing new policy and models.

# 3

## Strategic Infrastructure Investment

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Development of detailed business case for any investment in road, rail, air and broadband infrastructure.	Convene a cross-sector and community working group, to explore and conduct infrastructure options analysis through a multi-layered approach to considering cost benefit and opportunity cost.  Work with government to build business case for long-term infrastructure plans that provide return on investment.

# 4

## Housing Challenges and Opportunities

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Development of a northern Manitoba Housing Network of community based social housing providers and other stakeholders to discuss best practices in social housing management, availability of resources, home ownership, jurisdictional challenges, regulatory environment, procurement and home-based business.	Convene a stakeholder roundtable to explore issues and opportunities for development of northern Manitoba Housing Network.
Regulatory and policy review for housing to address barriers and to support and enable the development of northern Housing Network solutions.	Work with all levels of government and other stakeholders to drive the necessary policy changes to facilitate the establishment and implementation of northern Housing Network solutions.

# 5

## Enterprise Eco-System of Support

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Development of an enterprise development pathway from start-up to success and wrapping support services around it	Identify or establish a lead entity and establish a Northern Business Network and convene a roundtable of enterprise support providers and stakeholders to map the enterprise eco-system, identify clutter, fill gaps, and create a development pathway.  Hold small focus group(s) with entrepreneurs to identify clutter, gaps and barriers.
Exploring enterprise support options including establishment of local enterprise coordinators / navigators / mentors, local biz networks, and incubators.	Review existing resources, support and services to better align with northern needs  Explore opportunities to establish navigator roles, local small biz networks and incubator hubs.  Work with communities to provide economic data and information that is accessible to communities.
Maintain momentum in regard to enterprise opportunities identified in April economic summits – treat as collaborative pilot project for support providers. Also seek to establish regular forums / events.	Coordinate collaborative response to immediate opportunities identified through April workshops. Seek support and resource to establish annual or annual local enterprise forums / events.



KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Business diversification and value added.	Work with government to develop business innovation and diversification plans to identify development opportunities.
Capability development for First Nations, Metis and small communities to support development of social enterprise.	Identify exemplary case studies of community and social enterprise to share, and opportunities for social enterprise training.
Development of community food production and retail co-ops. Primarily to supply local needs, but with growth business growth potential.	Explore opportunities for transfer of food production and retail co-op models and possible creation of a northern Food Co-op and sustainable business models.
Addressing barriers to private enterprise in First Nation communities.	Conduct a survey of First Nations to better understand barriers to enterprise.
Local needs analysis to inform enterprise.	Carry out a general survey of needs within northern Communities to identify opportunities for community enterprise.
Incentivizing start-ups and SMEs through tax breaks – particularly during bridging from unemployment and establishment or capital intensive stages.	Work with government to explore options for creating tax incentives for start-ups and early stage enterprise, particularly for unemployed.
To inspire and stimulate enterprise through sharing local success stories.	Develop a communications and promotions strategy to inspire and engage drawing on northern success stories.

# 6

## Education, Training and Workforce Development

KEY ACTIONS	NEXT STEPS
Development of 'Industry Fit' education pathways through industry partnerships and labour market analysis.	Convene a regional working group to use labour market data to explore what a 'fit for purpose' northern education might look like.
Developing a youth enterprise program with schools based on partnership with local industry.	Working group to explore opportunities for connection with schools, youth enterprise and industry partnerships.
Provide procurement policies, and employment targets for northerners.	Develop procurement policies, and employment targets for northerners.
Targeted youth engagement.	Initiate an annual youth forum that brings together existing youth councils to advance and advocate for youth needs.

SECTION FOUR

# Next Steps



# What's Next?

## **CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION**

This report and action plan is just a starting point. It is intended to fuel conversation through further engagement.

This document is the first wide reflection of findings back to those who contributed, in many cases from their own spheres or sectors of interest. In addition, the following reports have been provided to the Look North Economic Task Force and act as companion documents to this strategy:

- Desktop Review Report. March 18, 2017.
- Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Workshop Report. April 2017.
- Thompson. Workshop Report. April 2017.
- Churchill. Workshop Report. April 2017.

## **GET MOVING**

While some of these actions may require investment of resources and effort, there is no reason this cannot get moving, particularly advancing discussions on those things that matter most as set out on page 17:

1. Northern Mineral and Other Resource Potential
2. Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships
3. Strategic Infrastructure Investment
4. Housing Challenges and Opportunities
5. Enterprise Eco-system of Support
6. Education, Training and Workforce Development

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

A companion communications strategy needs to be developed with northern stakeholders to drive the next stages of engagement and development. The development of a northern brand is needed to build pride and movement, tell the northern story, inspire confidence and position the north as a region ready for investment.

## **STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND LEAD ENTITIES**

The Task Force recommends establishing a northern steering committee and supporting structure to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Look North Action Plan.

Strategic alliances will need to be formed with key stakeholders in each area of strategic focus, in order to:

- Identify interests in the focus areas and actions.
- Identify opportunities for strategy resourcing and integration into existing work-streams or programs of work.
- Identify appropriate, willing and able strategy leaders or performing entities to take up leadership for each area of strategy and set of actions.
- Establish 'Joint Action Groups' for each of the six key areas identified.

## **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The development of KPIs and a system for monitoring and reporting progress across multiple entities will need to be agreed and established between partners.

"[Look North] is something that every community, and all business leaders and young people need to get behind. How can we strengthen the north and make it what we really think it can be? So this is really a tipping point."

**Chuck Davidson**

Task Force Co-Chair

"We all need to be part of it... a situation where it is "win-win-win" for the individual, developer and government. I think with this strategy going forward it will allow for that... without reinventing the wheel, but by taking models of success from other parts of Canada. We know that we can bring that into Manitoba and enhance and develop them to our needs as Manitobans."

**Christian Sinclair**

Task Force Co-Chair



Photo: Travel Manitoba

LOOK <sup>^</sup>NORTH

