

A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in shades of green and blue, dancing across a dark night sky filled with stars. Below the sky, the dark silhouettes of evergreen trees are visible against a snowy ground. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

LOOK NORTH

NORTHERN MANITOBA ECONOMIC MOVEMENT

DRAFT
WORKSHOP REPORT
THOMPSON

4-5 APRIL 2017

INTRODUCTION

This report is a distilled version of workshop outcomes from the Look North Workshop undertaken in April 2017.

The objective of the workshop was to develop an understanding of economic development needs, issues and opportunities at a community level to:

- Inform the development of a wider Northern Manitoba Economic Strategy.
- Foster local thinking and ownership of economic development - with a view to communities developing their own solutions to their own needs and opportunities.

WHAT WE DID AT THE WORKSHOP

We captured whatever was 'front of mind' for workshop participants in regards to the local economy and community. We used that as a basis on which to explore local needs, unearth insights, define challenges and develop ideas to respond to those challenges. Each group took an idea through to a proposal for presentation to a 'Dragons Den' as a 'fast track' creative process for testing ideas.

We also had some presentations from Look North Task Force members and the local community.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Outcomes from workshops, 'roundtable' meetings, meetings with key people and industries, along with desktop research, will all contribute to the development of a wider Northern Strategy which will be released in June or July 2017 as a 'living document' to enable further engagement and consultation over summer.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Some key themes emerged:

- **YOUTH:** There was a single clear agenda shared by all in regard to a need to focus on Youth to provide for long term economic growth, getting them engaged in learning, engaged in the community, engaged in enterprise and engaged with the local economy.
- **HOUSING:** There was a clear and compelling proposal and justification to establish a social housing co-op using local skills and plant to respond to northern housing needs making better use of existing public spend on housing - whilst returning benefit to the community through training and employment in the housing sector. There is a clear opportunity for this to be a region wide model.
- **ALL WEATHER ROAD:** There was evident appetite to for development of All Weather Roads and to address the evident obstacle to their development - which is the need for a clear business case.
- **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:** In all cases there was an evident need for greater collaboration between schools, industry and government to realize opportunities.
- **INSPIRATION:** The presentation of 'Shorty's Upcycling' also moved everyone there as a demonstration of the potential of local enterprise to turnaround lives and families - such stories need to be more widely shared.

WORKSHOP CAPTURE

The following pages illustrate a distilled version of what was captured and shared at the workshop, including:

- Community Enterprise (social enterprise and NGO sector)
- Local Enterprise (start-ups and small local business)
- Commercial Enterprise (large business / industry)
- Government: Issues arising for government attention.
- Dragons Den Proposals: Ideas presented by groups.

NEEDS:

- Workforce Development: using latent talent, attracting talent and building talent through training and education.
- Infrastructure: All weather roads, rail.
- Healthy Community: Provision of business support and better health and justice support and facilities.
- Government Support: Regulation, Taxation, Participation.

INSIGHTS:

- We have an untapped talent pool due to redundancies that should be deployed to grow the economy.
- The education our youth are getting is not inspiring them towards enterprise or local employment – so they see little opportunity here.
- Government can incentivize enterprise through tax breaks and concessions for start-ups.
- A ‘per-capita’ approach by Government misses ‘per-community’ opportunities i.e. addressing things at an individual level fails to engage and build a community.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

Make it Local
& Make it Work

IDEAS:

- Develop ‘purpose’ we can all participate in as a region.
- Target youth loans / funding for enterprise.
- Develop youth mentorship and placement programs.
- Outpost Camp – Youth development center.
- Youth Dragons Den with funders
- Apprenticeships and co-op placements with schools
- Enterprise attitude / mindset program.

CHALLENGES:

How might we:

- Stimulate Healthy Youth who can participate in the economy.

NEEDS:

- Youth support – something to do – keep them engaged in healthy and fun activities that connect them with the community – and keep them out of trouble.
- Need better elder support.
- Need better support for, and understanding of First Nations communities.
- First Nations need capability building for business and enterprise – including governance.
- Need better understanding of business and tax systems.
- To bring community together to develop solutions.
- Better housing, education and support.
- Better connections between schools and local business.
- Use of skilled people as mentors for others.

INSIGHTS:

- Our youth are not being well prepared for a future in our economy or for enterprise.
- We really need to encourage innovation and ‘out of the box’ thinking.
- We need to become better at recognizing and exercising aboriginal Treaty rights and opportunities.
- A loss of ‘hands-on’ DIY skills is also a loss of ‘can do’ attitude.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE

Make it Start & Make it Smart

CHALLENGES:

How might we:

- Inspire youth to become entrepreneurs.
- Identify and overcome barriers to entrepreneurs and SMEs.

IDEAS:

- Work with High Schools to connect them with entrepreneurs and business consultants at least once a year.
- Make business course a compulsory / core subject in school from Grade 0 to 12.
- Business Network events
- City / tax incentives for start-ups & SMEs.
- Business opportunity night.
- Capitalize on local resources.
- Capitalize on Indigenous Knowledge.
- Duplicate some wins (biz) rapidly.
- Junior achievement program in elementary schools for enterprise.
- ‘Teach Enterprise’ program to support teachers to teach enterprise to kids.
- Mentors for Entrepreneurs program – every entrepreneur has a mentor.
- Tax incentives / subsidies.
- Multi-platform communications to promote collaboration and share success stories.

NEEDS:

- Jobs
- Infrastructure: Housing and Road.
- Youth access to technology
- Doubling growth in health needs
- More connected and cohesive approach to developing local solutions to issues.
- Sustained effort and multi-year plans to make a difference.
- Aligning services and support for youth with local needs.
- Practical solutions in schools to link kids with opportunity.
- Indigenous procurement participation – targets needed.

INSIGHTS:

- Too many people operating in silos means opportunities are not being exploited.
- First Nations potential is not being realized.
- We need to inspire more business.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

Make it Grow
& Make it Global

IDEAS:

- Create investment in opportunities for Northerners.
- Tourism.
- Grow skill set to take advantage of projects.
- Green technologies – Municipal composting.
- Basic business skill development programs and services.
- Partnership with education and training around opportunities.
- All season road network.

CHALLENGES:

How might we:

- Attract public & private investment in the north.
- Build local economies
- Retain skilled professionals
- Demonstrate ROI
- Retain local dollars
- Increase local participation
- Attract and retain diversified investment in the North.

GOVERNMENT

Make it Local & Make it Fits

We did not focus specifically on Government as a focused agenda, rather we identified points of note for Government arising from group workshopping the other agenda i.e. Community Enterprise, Local Enterprise (small biz) and Commercial Enterprise (large Biz).

FINDINGS:

COMMUNITY (SOCIAL & NGO) ENTERPRISE

- There is a clear opportunity and need for government to support local solutions to local problems. The housing proposal set out in the next few pages is a clear example of this, where procurement policy needs to recognize the value of investing funds into community driven solutions to problems, rather than through open tender processes that only measure proposals in financial terms – rather than economic and social return and impact of investment. There is a feeling at the moment that lowest price wins contracts – rather than a wider ROI.

LOCAL (SMALL) ENTERPRISE

- There is a clear need and opportunity to better align support with need and to collaborate with industry and community regarding how that is provided and delivered at a community, rather than individual level.

COMMERCIAL (LARGE) ENTERPRISE

- It is clear that large enterprise carry the same concerns as the wider community and are willing to be part of the solution. Government needs to work closer with Industry on joint solutions development.



Dragons Den Thompson

Groups rose to the challenges they identified and the ideas they generated to advance one idea to a presentable prototype stage.

Life is a Highway

Plan to open up all weather roads to service the north – including to Churchill and in stages to Nunavut with a view to increasing commodity, supply and visitor flow.

Propose this is done through public-private partnership on premise that investment is a by-product of access and access will reduce cost of supply into North e.g. medical transport alone costs \$150m/yr north to south.

What's Up

Educate & Encourage Entrepreneurs.

Get kids making money early and quickly to incentivize enterprise spirit.

Use of 'What's Up' app as a connective device between and within schools for enterprise projects and to feed content to inspire and connect.

Income from app goes back into schools.

Incubator provided to develop Youth ideas.

Team Awesome

An enterprise success ladder providing an enterprise pathway from grade school level competition, to local fair, through to regional and provincial, and global – using some of the existing services and awards programs to incentivize participation and showcase success.

Addressing a lack of collaboration and providing access to mentorship and the available support services at every level of the 'enterprise ladder'.

Artistically Challenged Introverts

A mentoring program focused on youth, particularly in High Schools – linking them with key people and industries.

Key is bridging them from High School life to post High School life.



Northward Board Youth Venture Camp

A proposal to bring youth together with business and match youth with mentors, based on asking local businesses to provide a mentor.

Starts with listening to youth and what issues and barriers they are facing and then placing them in their own areas of interest with the right support.

Develop skills and endeavor to transfer those skills to out-lying communities as well.



Day 2 extension: Housing Co-op

Proposal to use redundant skills and plant to respond to Northern Housing needs through establishment of construction facility and trades apprenticeship - to provide housing and carry out housing R&M.

This should be achievable though making smarter use of existing housing funding and local providers. Needs government backing in terms of procurement approach & policy, and can work for other northern communities.



Day 2 extension: Youth Pilot Project

Creating a program to work with school teachers and boards to develop their capability to teach and engage students in enterprise by aligning current support entities e.g. CEDF & Enterprise Manitoba, with local industry and schools.

Use a 'business skills' or 'youth enterprise' competition to engage everyone.

Work with schools to embed enterprise e.g. create a 'make lab' or 'repair lab', create staff development program and curriculum.



Day 2 extension: All purpose roads

Building a business case for Northern All Purpose Roads north to Nunavut.

Advance TEDWG process - need to revisit and gather existing info as well as getting all key stakeholders involved in understanding need and formulating ROI.

Need to move from cost estimates to cost:benefit analysis.

Key Recurrent Themes

Three key areas of focus emerged from the Thompson Workshop:

Youth Enterprise:

A strong focus on youth education, connection, participation and mentoring into enterprise and into local economy and industry.

Housing Enterprise:

An opportunity to quickly turn local problems into local solutions - and one that could be coordinated and repeated across Northern Manitoba.

Infrastructure / all weather road:

There is a clear need to build a multi-stakeholder business plan that integrates all sectors of interest in road development to understand real ROI.