



CHARTING BC'S ECONOMIC FUTURE 100 COMMUNITIES

PARTNERED WITH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

FORT ST.
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HOPES AND CONCERNS FOR BC

Hopes

- That we'll move away from the constant discourse that the economy, and oil and gas, is evil
- That people who come to the region for a season to make money are attracted to stay
- To see an increase in local amenities
- That people realize BC and Fort St. John are a great place to be
- That quality programming won't only take place where there are a lot of people
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Concerns

- That people in this province misunderstand the connection between a strong economy, and the other legs of the stool (social and environment). Two legs are not enough
- How to attract manpower to the northeast, and how to keep it
- A lack of willingness to converse with, and understand, each other throughout the province (i.e. on a provincial scale)
- Housing, cost of living, and quality of life in the north is a concern
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- Concerned about the local discourse and mentality that newcomers are coming to ‘take our jobs away’
- The lack of control over our own destiny, because we’re waiting on decisions that are being made elsewhere (Victoria, Vancouver, Beijing)
- The growing division between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’—growing inequality in BC
- That the province won’t recognize the importance of rural areas
- That local youth, and family units, will be separated
- Over the past year and a half, many workforce strategies have been done on a regional basis
- That training at the large universities and colleges in the lower mainland does not address labor needs throughout the province and where labor is needed
- That politics will trump good decision-making and policy-making

SWOT

WEAKNESSES

- The “no” attitude (with regards to natural resource development)
- Toxic political atmosphere
- Need for infrastructure—in terms of health and social services
- Lack of skilled workers
- Lack of affordable housing
- Poor logistics for transportation
- Debt
- Lack of services
- Uneven income distribution—inequality
- High tax rate for some (unfair system)
- Failure to recognize fundamental long-term issues such as cumulative impacts (failure to apply stewardship principles so that economic prosperity can continue on long-term)
- Short-term thinking in general
- High labor costs
- PST
- Red tape
- Lack of urban understanding of rural concerns and obstacles
- Lack of investment in rural areas
- Lack of exporting expertise
- Diverse society demands
- Too much primary industry—little value added

OPP

THRISA

- World competition from unstable competitors (ie. Russian pressure on Potash)
- Ignorance of how economy works
- Environmental
- Up/down global economy i.e. Economic slowdown if oil/gas prices drop on market
- Lack of acknowledgment for the people and economy outside major urban centers
- Lack of knowledge of diverse segments of province
- Site C
- Short-term thinking
- Loss of control over our diversity
- Climate change
- Decision making process out of our hands in regards to resource development
- Environmental and social concerns outweighing political decision-making
- Aging population
- Loss of expertise
- Increased environmental regulation due to perceived fears
- Lack of desire or inability to bring segments together

TOP ACTIONS FOR BC'S ECONOMY

GROUP #1

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

1. Eliminate the sales tax.

2. Education
 - Try to balance skills training and training people to be good civic 'citizens'
 - Effective system to match education with the skill needs
 - Exchange programs such as Katimavik
 - Efforts to facilitate exchanges between the lower mainland and rural areas

3. Have an ongoing forum to discuss the economy, but turn the question upside down
 - Have the question: what actions are needed to protect the environment while maintaining a healthy economy?

GROUP #3

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

1. ,QFUHDVH WKH TXDOLW\ DQG VXEVDQFH RI SROLWLFDO R

- Look for solutions and quit bickering

2. Improve educational opportunities and training in our region

- Train people to stay at home in local communities
- Flexible hours of training
- Student loans for adult or adult training opportunities with pay (if you're not on EI, you're ineligible for funding)

3. Improve transportation infrastructure (air, roads, rail, pipeline, power, waterways)

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