

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE  
NORTH**

**A Holistic Approach to  
Creating Positive Change  
at the Community Level**

**A Master's Degree Project submitted to  
The Faculty of Environmental Design  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Environmental Design (Environmental Science)**

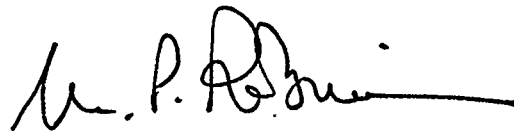
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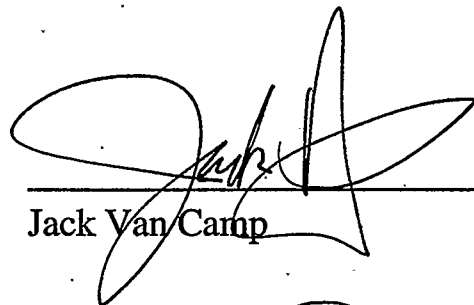
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Environmental Design for acceptance, a Master's Degree Project entitled "Sustainable Community Development in the North: A Holistic Approach to Creating Positive Change at the Community Level," submitted by Jana Kotaska in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design.



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH**

#### **A Holistic Approach to Creating Positive Change at the Community Level**

Jana Kotaska, January 1996

Prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the M.E.Des. degree in the  
Faculty of Environmental Design, The University of Calgary  
Supervisor: Michael Robinson

Until recently, development in the north of Canada has focused on the development of non-renewable resources. Northerners, especially First Nations people, have benefited little. As northerners gain more political control, northern development is taking a turn, becoming more community-based and focusing on sustainability.

This Master's Degree Project (MDP) presents a concept of and process for sustainable community development in the north which emerges from a combining of the principles of sustainable development, practice of community development and methods of strategic planning. The approach is holistic, arguing that development can only be sustainable if it leads to community members meeting their needs, maintaining a healthy environment, building an economy which serves local people, strengthening community culture and gaining political control. The community is instrumental in all stages of the strategic planning process, including initiation, planning, implementation and evaluation. The sustainable community development process outlined in this MDP was tested during a planning project initiated by the community of Fort Smith.

The MDP document is divided into three parts: Part I introduces the MDP and the sustainable community development approach and synthesizes the ideas and information provided in the other two parts; Part II is the final Sustainable Development Plan from the project in Fort Smith; and Part III is a guide to sustainable development planning for northern communities.

**Key Words:** sustainable community development, sustainable development, sustainable community, community development, northern development, strategic planning, community participation, Northwest Territories, Fort Smith.

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Bill Perks assisted and supervised me through the majority of this project, from initial planning through the process in Fort Smith and a good portion of the writing of this document. His ideas and criticism helped shape this project. Mike Robinson supervised me through the last part of the project, enabling me to complete the process and providing valuable comments on the document. My other two committee members, Bob Page and Jack Van Camp provided direction during the project and important comment on the document. Thank you to all of you for your support and assistance.

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**Part I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**AND**

**SYNTHESIS**

## INTRODUCTION

Human civilization has evolved over the centuries, attempting to meet the challenges and solve the problems which face us. Western Civilization has developed and adopted an ideology characterized by, among other things, patriarchy, colonialism, competition, individualism, capitalism or communism, hierarchical structures, scientism and a view that humans have dominion over the natural world. This ideology has facilitated many positive changes in our society and the human condition. However, it has also failed and negatively impacted many people and places, leaving us faced with many problems and challenges as we enter the twenty-first century. We need to work at all levels, from individual to global, to address the problems, meet the challenges and create a positive future. This work needs to be grounded in a different ideology, one that is characterized by feminism, peace, cooperation, collectivism, a new economic paradigm, true democracy, holism and a view that humans are a part of the natural world.<sup>1</sup>

For this Master's Degree Project (MDP), I have focused on the problems of a particular geographical area—the north of Canada, and work that can be done at one level—the community. Thus, the subject of this MDP is sustainable community development in the north. I have chosen the north for two reasons. First, there is a dearth of information regarding community-based development in the north. Second, the Town of Fort Smith wished to undertake a sustainable development planning project.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS MDP

The purpose of this MDP is to determine an appropriate process for sustainable development in the north. The project has four main objectives:

- 1) to examine the concept of sustainable community and the sustainable development approach in a northern context;

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<sup>1</sup>For discussions on these views, see Ekins, 1992; Mellor, 1992; M'Gonigle, 1992; Henderson, 1991; Bookchin, 1990; Andruss *et al.*, 1990; Daly and Cobb, 1989; Dauncy, 1988; Eisler, 1987; and Starhawk, 1987.

- 2) to develop an appropriate process for sustainable community development in the north;
- 3) to test the process by undertaking a sustainable development planning project with a northern community; and
- 4) to reflect on the experience and share the conclusions with northerners and the academic community.

## **MDP RESEARCH METHODS AND DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION**

This MDP document is divided into three parts:

Part I: Introduction and Synthesis

Part II: *The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan*

Part III: *Sustainable Community Development: A Guidebook for Northern Communities*

Part I was written for the purposes of introducing and explaining this MDP. Part II is the final Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan adopted by Fort Smith Town Council. Part III was written to be published separately and it is my hope that it will be of assistance to northern communities working towards sustainability. Because the three parts have different purposes and audiences and two of them are documents in and of themselves, they have different styles and separate reference lists.

The first objective of this MDP, to examine the concept of sustainable community and the sustainable development approach in a northern context, was achieved through review and analysis of the literature. The second objective, to develop an appropriate process for sustainable community development in the north, was completed by drawing from the literature, personal experience and the experience of others, including Bill Perks, Peter Redvers, Kathy Coyne, Bob Page, Jack Van Camp, Janelyn Kotaska and Judy Campbell. The results are discussed for different audiences in different parts of this document. There is a discussion of the concept of northern sustainable community development for the

Faculty of Environmental Design and other academic audiences in Part I (pages 3 to 8). In Part II (page 2 and 4), there is a brief introduction to the concept of sustainable development and a brief overview of the planning process for the community of Fort Smith. There are longer discussions of sustainable community development, northern sustainable communities and sustainable development planning for a northern audience in Part III (pages 2 through 30).

The third objective of this MDP, to test the process by undertaking a sustainable development planning project with a northern community, was completed in the community of Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories between July 25 and November 26, 1993. Part II is the final report of that project.

The fourth objective of the MDP, to reflect on the experience and share the conclusions with northerners and academics, is achieved in Parts I and III. Part III is written for a northern audience and is presented to both northerners and academics. Part I (pages 8 to 13) is written for an academic audience.

## **NORTHERN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Through the course of my studies, I have decided to focus my attention on work at the community level for personal and philosophical reasons. It is important that work also be done at the level of the individual, teaching values and empowering people and at regional, national and international levels, developing standards and policies. For me, however, work at the community level seems most significant. At the level of community, many problems are most evident, motivation is strong, action can be quick, and results are tangible (B.C. Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1991). Community projects involve a lot of people and there are enough resources to make them significant, yet they are not so big that they get lost in bureaucracies and political promises. Communities are directly affected by both positive and negative actions in their area, and they can see the results of change.

Sustainable community development is grounded in the 'different ideology' referred to in the opening paragraph. It grows out of various approaches to development and planning, combining goals and methods to become an approach

to development of its own. It is precisely this combining of goals that makes the approach holistic, broadening the focus of development to include aspects of the community other than the economy. There is further discussion of the concept of sustainable communities and their development later in this MDP (pages 2 to 8 in Part III: *Sustainable Community Development: A Guidebook for Northern Communities*).

## **Sustainable Development**

The 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, can be credited with making the term 'sustainable' popular by coining the term 'sustainable development' to mean development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). However, the word 'sustainable' arises earlier in the literature, in the late 1970s with discussions about building a 'sustainable society' (Knelman, 1978 and Hayes, 1978). Concerns about human destruction of the environment have been around for centuries (Mellor, 1992) and concerns about local economies began at least as early as 1934 with Mahatma Gandhi (Pretes and Robinson, 1989). It is not until 1989 that the term 'sustainable community' is used (Rees, 1989).

Since 1987, there has been wide use, and often misuse and overuse, of the word sustainable. One should be wary of the oft-used term 'sustainable growth', which Daly (1991) argues is, in fact, impossible. Underneath the loud discussion and corporate and political promises of sustainable development, there is intelligent discussion of just what sustainable development and sustainable community should mean. Sustainable development is evolving to mean more than fitting the economy into the constraints of the environment. The term is being used more and more to describe development with a holistic perspective. Boyce (1995) argues that sustainable development will fail unless concern for intergenerational equity is matched by a comparable concern for intragenerational equity and social justice.

For me, sustainable development has come to mean development that is holistic and leads to the achievement of social, environmental, economic, cultural and



political goals. It is development that truly and equitably meets the needs of local people, maintains or restores the environment to a healthy state, builds a local economy which serves people and communities, grows out of and enhances local culture and allows people and communities to regain control of their lives.

There are many commonalities between the goals of sustainable development and the values and goals of many First Nations people. Berger (1988, p. 8) describes the goals of northerners by saying, "They are engaged in a search for self-determination and in the development of new political institutions. As well, they have undertaken the defence of the northern environment." These are goals common with sustainable development. The Special Committee on the Northern Economy (1989, p. 44) reports, "Of the many issues raised by residents in our community visits, no issue evoked more concern and interest than the environment." In Fort Smith, respondents to the community questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed with the principles of sustainable development and felt that future development in Fort Smith should focus on sustainability.

## **Sustainable Community Development**

Sustainable community development combines the process of community development with the goals of sustainable development. Community development seeks to empower community members through, among other things, meaningful participation in the planning and development process. It is development that is relevant because it is development which local communities initiate and in which they participate. As Lotz (1987) relays, in 1955 the United Nations defined community development as "a process designed to create economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest reliance upon the community's initiative." Boothroyd (1991) broadens the focus in his definition of community development as "organizing, learning and mandating practices which increase capabilities not only to reach existing goals, but also to work toward a broader range of goals." That 'broader range of goals' can include the environmental, economic, social, cultural and political goals of a holistic view of sustainable development and a definition of sustainable community development emerges.

Both the process of community development and First Nations people stress the importance of all people within a community. Some traditional values of First Nations people which come out strongly in the testimony of the participants in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry are: all community members have a right to use the land; everyone is involved in decision-making; people are interconnected; cooperation is important; and elders are respected (Berger, 1977).

For any particular community, the actions necessary to achieve sustainable community development need to be determined. It is through planning that these actions are determined. In order to meet the objectives of the community development approach, community members have to be involved in all aspects of the planning process. For the planning to achieve sustainable development, it must seek to achieve goals in all areas of community life.

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is a method of planning that is well suited to sustainable community development. It is not a strictly linear approach which draws on the past to determine what should be done in the future. Instead, it involves visioning and then creating a future. Mintzberg (1987) prefers to use the term 'crafting strategy' as opposed to planning strategy. He feels that it evokes a feeling of intimacy and harmony with the issues at hand, developed through long experience and commitment. This image sits well with community-based strategic planning as it is community members who have long experience with and commitment to local issues.

As Atkinson (1995) states, strategic planning is a process which recognizes that a community is a complex system of related parts. Perks (1990) demonstrates this by showing how strategic thinking was used by the Crowsnest Pass community to create economic and human development, social services and the conservation and renewal of architectural resources.

Strategic planning works well with community participation, as community members are not forced into a rigid program. Diverse views and ideas can be accommodated and people can have input at different stages in the process. It is

also a process which fits logically with the idea of sustainable community development. Although the specifics of a community vision need to be worked out by each community, a general idea of goals and a vision exist in the very idea of sustainable community. More detailed information on strategic planning is provided later in this MDP (pages 19 through 21 in Part III: *Sustainable Community Development: A Guidebook for Northern Communities*).

## Northern Development

For the Dene and Inuit, many changes have occurred since European contact. Some things that have been introduced into the north include a cash economy, permanent settlements, Christianity, western medicine, and foreign languages and education systems. In the past, some of these changes were forced upon northerners, creating many cultural, social and economic problems. Early attempts to reconcile these problems included exploitation of non-renewable resources and provision of social services. Neither really benefited northerners much; neither addressed the desire of and need for northerners to regain control over their destiny. This is made very clear by Berger (1977) in his report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. He documents the destruction of the northern way of life, the failed attempts to introduce a new way of life by creating jobs and the resulting social pathology, and concludes that "the evidence is clear: the more the industrial frontier displaces the homeland in the North, the greater the incidence of social pathology will be" (Berger, 1977, p. xxii).

There are parallels between the principles of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and those of sustainable community development. Page (1986) comments that "the revolutionary thing about the Berger Report was that it put environmental and social values on an equal plane with the economic considerations."

In the last two decades, aboriginal people have gained more political control in the north, leading to changes in the nature of northern development (Dickerson, 1992). In their 1989 report, the Special Committee on the Northern Economy (SCONE) debunks the 'Great Canadian Myth' that the key to northern economic development lies in the development of non-renewable resources. They go on to

say: "Our domestic economy has sustained our people for generations and it shows no signs of suddenly dying away. It is one of the great strengths of our economy and we must continue to support it" (SCONE, 1989, p. 31).

The SCONE report also lays out nine guiding principles for an economic development strategy in the north which are very similar to the components of sustainable community development described in this MDP. For example, some of the guiding principles are: development must be sustainable, economic development must be community-based and reflect community values, the economic development strategy must be based upon integrated strategic planning at all levels of the economy, community awareness and personal development are essential to all economic development and an economic development strategy must be based upon the ability to mix various options and approaches.

The parallels between the values and goals of northerners, the current direction of northern development and sustainable community development lead to the conclusion that sustainable community development is not something that has to 'be applied to the north' or taught to northerners—it is already there in many ways. As part of this MDP, I offer a holistic concept of and participatory process for sustainable development in the north. My hope is that it provides ideas and/or structure for those wanting to initiate or sustain local community development in the north.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE FORT SMITH PROJECT**

The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project was significant because it combined sustainable development with community development. The project and resulting plan are sustainable development because they address environmental, economic, social, cultural and political issues. They ensure that no one issue is focused on at the expense of the others, assisting the community to truly develop toward sustainability. The process used during the project was community development because the community initiated the project and participated in all stages of the planning process, the process was designed to create progress for the whole community, and the project allowed the community

to consider a broader range of goals than would usually be addressed in a plan of this type.

I evaluate the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project in two ways. First, through information gathered by speaking with people from the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Committee, Town of Fort Smith, and South Slave Research Centre, I look at where Fort Smith is today, one and a half years after the completion of the planning project. Although it is impossible to determine which achievements are, in part, a result of the planning project, it is an interesting exercise. Second, I reflect on the successes and failures of the planning process used in Fort Smith.

### **Fort Smith Today**

*The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan* is being widely read and is receiving attention both in and outside the community. It was recently mentioned in the campaign platform of the new Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for the Fort Smith area. Also, other communities in the north have expressed interest in and requested copies of the plan. In the words of Dennis Bevington, the Mayor of Fort Smith, "The Sustainable Development Plan is very much alive." For me, this is an indication that my work in Fort Smith was valuable, that the plan is not sitting on a shelf somewhere collecting dust. Although the search for funds and a full time facilitator for the implementation of the plan have been put on hold, there has been movement forward on a number of the key community issues and recommended actions in the plan.

There has been significant progress on Issue 1 in the Executive Summary of *The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan* (Part II, page ii), improve cooperation among different groups in the community. The leadership of the various organizations in the community have regular meetings and keep the issues in the sustainable development plan on the table. The issue of cooperation was also mentioned in the platform of all but one of the MLA candidates in the recent election. Issue 2, address alcohol addictions, is being addressed in the community health project, a needs assessment being done by the South Slave Research Centre. There has been progress on three of the actions recommended to create jobs—

3.2, promote the expansion of Arctic (now Aurora) College, 3.6, develop the recreation and tourism industry, and 3.7, use surplus power from the Taltson River dam. The new wing of the college has been built, there are Japanese tourists arriving to view the northern lights—Fort Smith is considered the best place in North America to view northern lights, and the Town is looking into using surplus power for district heating, supplying the schools, college, new recreation complex and potentially downtown as well. There has been continued work on improving the town's appearance, Issue 7, with additions of gardens, lights, and boardwalks and trails along the river.

Ideally, work stemming from *The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan* would follow a formal implementation plan with the constant focus of a facilitator. However, if the planning process leads informally to the achievement of the objectives, it is significant. The most important factor is that the process creates positive change within the community.

### **Process Evaluation**

The process for the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project was implemented as proposed, on budget, but not on time. The final report was completed in April 1994 as opposed to October 1993. This was partially because the community process began two months later than proposed.

The objectives of the project were:

- to involve community members of all ages in examining the concept of sustainable development and in considering the value of sustainable development principles in guiding the future development of Fort Smith;
- to examine existing Town planning documents and make recommendations with respect to changes required to meet the goals of sustainability;

- to prepare a sustainable development plan for Fort Smith with maximum involvement of the residents and stakeholder groups in the town of Fort Smith; and
- to contribute to the study of sustainable development for northern communities.

All of these objectives were achieved during the course of the planning process. In reflecting on the process, some important points need to be discussed.

The process was successful in involving a large number and wide range of community members. In addition to the over 22 organizations that were directly involved, members of the community at large were directly involved through the open house, school programs and interviews. A wide range of ages was involved, from elementary school children to elders. Participants were balanced with respect to ethnicity and gender.

Achieving this kind of participation is not an easy task. As a southerner, it was important to demonstrate my credibility to a community suspicious of outsiders who come into their community to take jobs or impose agendas and then leave. I overcame this by living in the community for six months and stressing my role as simply that of a facilitator for the determination and advancement of community goals. It was by using a wide variety of methods and putting a great deal of effort into organizing events and programs that I was able to involve such a large number and wide cross section of people. Events, programs and tools were specifically geared to particular audiences to ensure participation of those groups. Sometimes it was only with great persistence on my part that I was able to arrange interviews with representatives of some organizations.

Another challenge to meet when working in a small community is to remain unaligned with groups involved in community politics. There are often divisions between groups in a community and being seen as allied with one of them may hinder one's chances at significantly involving other groups. I was able to remain relatively removed from community politics in Fort Smith by maintaining a neutral position on issues and providing all groups an opportunity to be significantly involved in the whole planning process.

In reflecting on the information gained from community members with each of the particular participation tools I used, there are a few points to mention. These tools are also discussed in Part III, Chapters 3 and 4. The open house held for the community at large was very successful and a lot of fun. Information was presented in a variety of ways and there were many opportunities for the participants to record their ideas and opinions in interesting ways. Many of the steps in the planning process were completed by Sustainable Development Committee members during two successful workshops. By following up the questionnaire sent to representatives of organizations with interviews, I had a 92% return rate for the questionnaire. Three out of four interviews with elders were successful, bringing an important perspective and significant information to the process. The fourth interview was unsuccessful because the elder was hearing impaired and it was very difficult to communicate. It is important to find out as much as possible about the people who will be interviewed so that these situations can be avoided.

The elementary and high school programs were only partially successful. They were valuable in determining the issues that youth felt were most important and some ideas for solutions. Although the visioning exercise was valuable with adult participants, it did not provide useful information when conducted with the students. In their ideal vision of Fort Smith in the year 2020, most students saw Fort Smith become Edmonton or a similar sized city. With more time and discussion, we might have been able to determine which aspects of a large city were desirable to the students and applied them to Fort Smith in a realistic way.

There is one step in the planning process which should have been completed while I was in Fort Smith. In the Sustainable Development Plan, actions are recommended for the Town of Fort Smith and the Sustainable Development Committee. However, the preparation of implementation plans containing information such as tasks involved, person responsible for each task, timeline, budget, and sources of funding, was not included in the scope of the project. Although the preparation of implementation plans needs to be done by the community itself, in future projects, I would facilitate that process to ensure that it happened effectively and efficiently.



## CONCLUSION

Through my work on this MDP, I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge, experience and understanding. I have read, discussed, analyzed and learned a great deal about strategic planning, community development, sustainable development and the north of Canada. My experience in the north taught me about northern life, people and culture. It also allowed me to develop skills and demonstrate that I could plan, organize and facilitate a large community project. Because of this experience, I have built a concept of sustainable community development in the north and have both a practical and theoretical grasp on that concept.

I am happiest when my work is applied. Through the process of the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project and the writing of *Sustainable Community Development: A Guidebook for Northern Communities*, I have attempted to make my work beneficial to others. So many people helped me in the pursuit of my goals; I hope this work has and will help others in the pursuit of theirs.

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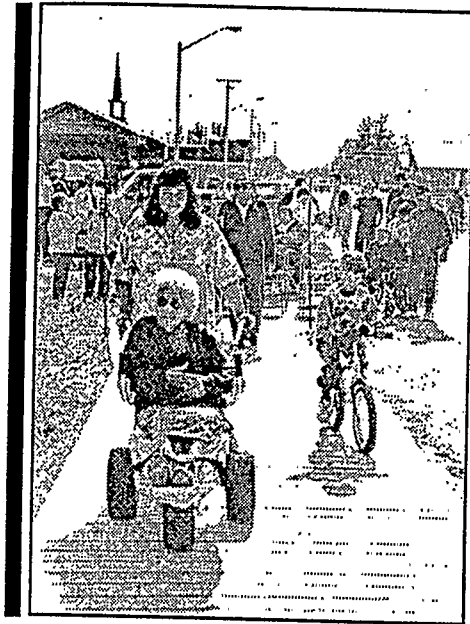
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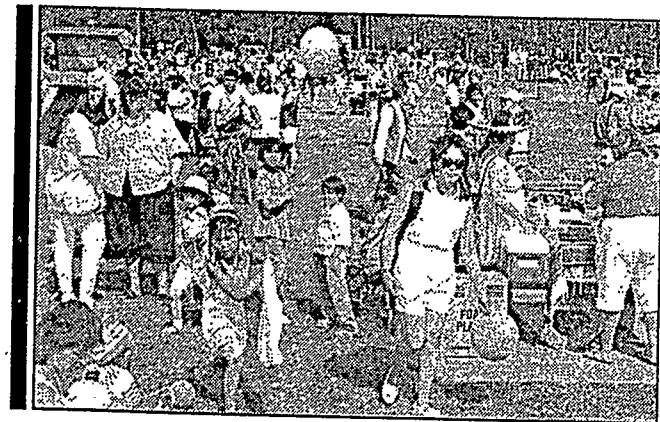
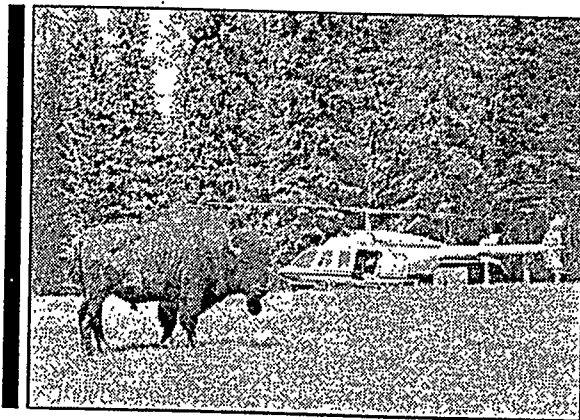
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**Part II**

**THE FORT SMITH  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN**



# *The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan*



*Written by Jana Kotaska  
Presented by the Sustainable Development Committee  
April 1994*

## *Acknowledgements*

*Financial and/or logistical support for this project was provided by the South Slave Research Centre, Arctic Environmental Strategy Community Resource Management Program of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), Town of Fort Smith, Department of Social Services of the GNWT, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the University of Calgary Faculty of Environmental Design. Thank you to Professor Bill Perks from the Faculty of Environmental Design for his assistance during the project. We would especially like to thank all the community members who took time to get involved and share their ideas and insight —it would not have worked without you.*

## **Executive Summary**

The Sustainable Development Planning Project involved the community of Fort Smith in a strategic planning process. The community identified key sustainable development issues and determined ways to address those issues. A wide variety of ages and sectors of our community were involved in the planning process through participation in workshops, interviews, group discussions, school programs and an open house. It is the ideas of our community, all those involved in the process, that are presented here. The following actions are considered most important for the Town to undertake.

### **1. Improve cooperation among different groups**

**...page 7**

- 1.1 Highlight and build on positive examples
- 1.2 Recognize individuals who have had a role in building cooperation
- 1.3 Create a think tank with members from key community groups, to build consensus around issues

### **2. Address alcohol addictions**

**...page 7**

- 2.1 Encourage community organizations to work towards creating a healing centre, having a full-time psychologist in town, setting up bush camps, improving awareness and education and having more 'dry' events

### **3. Create jobs**

**...page 8**

- 3.1 Build an all season road south
- 3.2 Promote the expansion of Arctic College
- 3.3 Create an aircraft maintenance centre
- 3.4 Market locally produced food and products
- 3.5 Attract small-scale manufacturing and distributing companies
- 3.6 Develop the recreation and tourism industry
- 3.7 Use surplus power from the Taltson River dam



**4. Improve the reputation of Fort Smith**

**...page 11**

- 4.1 Improve the hospitality of our service sector
- 4.2 Spread our good news through press releases, State of the Town reports, communications with college alumni, regional events and proud community members

**5. Develop more activities for youth**

**...page 12**

- 5.1 Assist in the organization of a youth committee to identify needs and access funding
- 5.2 Assist the youth committee to address identified needs, for example the creation of a youth centre and development of programs for youth to go out on the land with elders

**6. Develop a strategy to decrease garbage production and improve the town dump**

**...page 12**

- 6.1 Decrease garbage production through education, positive reinforcement, a pay per bag system, office policies and prevention of incoming garbage
- 6.2 Improve the dump by stopping the burning, moving the dump and turning the dump into a recycling and reuse centre

**7. Improve town appearance**

**...page 13**

- 7.1 Pass a bylaw on property standards
- 7.2 Have tougher enforcement of existing bylaws
- 7.3 Provide incentives for improving property condition
- 7.4 Continue to revitalize our downtown

**8. Develop more effective public participation in decision-making**

**...page 14**

- 8.1 Increase awareness of issues through a newsletter and weekly phone in show on cable T.V.

The next step toward implementing this plan is for the Town to hire a full time sustainable development coordinator. The coordinator and the Sustainable Development Committee need to further examine and develop the suggested actions and write and follow a multi-year action plan. The focused attention of the Sustainable Development Committee and a coordinator will ensure that the issues identified by the community during this project are addressed. Community members will be satisfied that their participation is worthwhile and that their voices are heard. By undertaking this planning project, Fort Smith has started down the road to becoming a sustainable community. By implementing the plan and establishing a process whereby community progress is monitored and new issues are identified and addressed, we will reach that goal.



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# Community Vision

It is the year 2020 and Fort Smith has become a sustainable community. We meet regularly to resolve issues and determine new goals and courses of action. Past differences have been addressed and groups within the community are working together cooperatively. With the success of the Treaty Entitlement and Metis Claim processes, Aboriginal people have been compensated for past injustices and have jurisdiction over land and resources.

Community members are healthy and active. All abuse within the community has been dealt with. People take care of each other; youth and elders are valued, respected and involved. There are more opportunities to socialize: at the recreation complex, youth centre, theatre and bowling alley, and at cultural events and live performances. Cultural values, activities and lifestyles remain. There is a new Native education and cultural centre.

The town itself looks great. The abandoned buildings and junk have been cleaned up, there are lots of trees, the Cathedral is still standing and the streets are well lit. There is more and improved housing. The town uses only renewable energy sources, including the excess power from the Taltson River dam. The environmental awareness in Fort Smith is high. People sort their garbage for recycling, so the dump has little, but efficient use. The river bank has been stabilized and there are areas for picnicking and proper boat launching. Around Fort Smith, the environment remains pristine.

The population has grown and stabilized at 3500, thereby supporting a greater variety of businesses and services. People buy locally and Fort Smith has become much more self-sufficient. The economy has strengthened and diversified with everyone who wants to work working. Education is still a focus: the new university is a leader in distance education. Cottage industries, environment-based industry, hydro-related projects and small manufacturing businesses have developed. We are producing food for the region and export. Tourism has increased and expanded, focusing on culture, wilderness, hunting and fishing. There is some environmentally sound harvest of resources such as timber and minerals. With the new road south, we have better access to markets for our products and tourists have better access to Fort Smith.

Fort Smith is a model sustainable community. Communities in the territories, nationally and internationally recognize the achievements of our community—our story helps other communities to achieve similar success:

*Every community member who participated in the Sustainable Development Planning Project was asked about their vision of Fort Smith in the year 2020. This was written from their ideas.*

# Introduction

In February 1991, the Town of Fort Smith made a commitment to sustainable development, transforming its Economic Development Board into a Sustainable Development Committee (SDC) and beginning to explore various sustainable development options. Because the existing town plans did not address the new commitment, the SDC began a sustainable development planning project in July 1993. The project was coordinated by the South Slave Research Centre and facilitated by Jana Kotaska. Glenn Bourke was the research assistant.

## What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development focuses on achieving five goals: meeting human needs, maintaining a healthy environment, maintaining a viable economy, establishing community control and enhancing cultural richness. It is development that is holistic and takes into account all aspects of a community. The idea of sustainable development comes out of the realization that undertaking economic development in isolation will not produce long term benefits to the community. For any proposed economic development, a community must examine the potential effects to the environment, the social benefits and costs, their own control over the development and whether the development builds on or is detrimental to local culture.

## Project objectives

The Sustainable Development Planning Project was designed to involve the community in all stages of a strategic planning process. The objectives of the planning process were to:

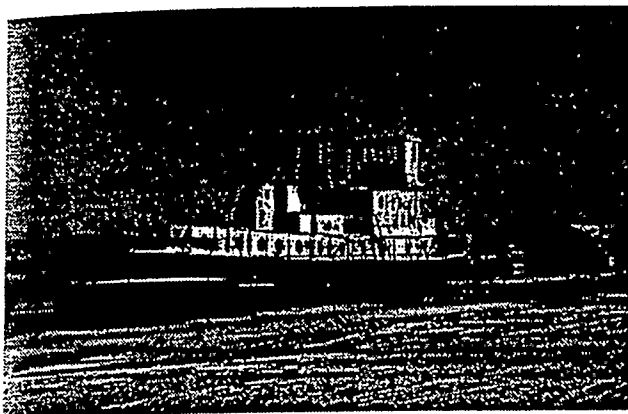
- identify the key issues facing the community
- develop strategies for addressing the key issues
- produce a plan that will guide the development of the town
- involve all groups and ages in the process
- raise community awareness of sustainable development and the SDC

Members of the SDC, representatives from organizations and businesses, students, elders and the general public participated in workshops, interviews, surveys, school programs and an open house. The resulting plan is based exclusively on community goals and ideas.

# Our Community

## History

The only serious obstacle for travellers on the waterway from Fort McMurray to the Arctic Ocean is the set of four rapids on the Slave River where it



crosses the 60th parallel. In the past, Aboriginal people would portage here and sometimes camp at either end of the set of rapids. In 1874, the Hudson's Bay Company established a post at the north end of the rapids and called it Fort Smith. (Grade six students of Joseph Burr Tyrrell School under the direction of Dennis G. Siemens, 1974)

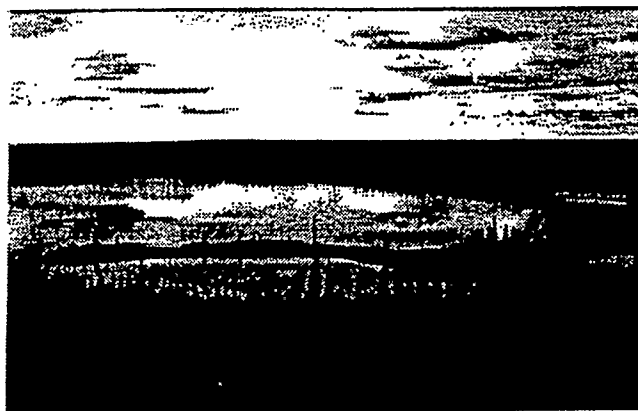
## Present Community

Fort Smith has gone through many changes over the past 120 years, growing with the arrival of the Catholic Mission, government personnel and others. Over the years, Aboriginal people also moved to Fort Smith from the traditional settlements of Salt River and Smith's Landing. For the past 20 to 30 years, Fort Smith's population has remained quite stable. Our present permanent population is 2,480, of which 53% are of Aboriginal descent—Dene, Metis or Inuit (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 1993). Arctic College students also make up a community within the larger community of Fort Smith. In the

1993-94 school year, there were 485 full time students, of which 379 are from out of town (Coyne, 1994). As there are many different community level political bodies—the Town of Fort Smith, the Salt River First Nation Band Council, the Fort Fitzgerald Dene Band Council, the Metis Nation Local Executive—it is difficult to coordinate activities and work together. However, when we have pulled together, we have been very successful at our achieving our goals.

## Environment

As a small isolated community with little industrial activity, Fort Smith has relatively few environmental concerns.



However, there are some areas that need attention. The issues of garbage creation, recycling and dump condition need to be addressed. Although Fort Smith's electricity is from the Taltson River dam and is renewable and "clean", a lot of heating is still from non-renewable polluting sources. The rate of renewable resource use, such as trees and wildlife, at present is low. It is important that the rate of use remains lower than regeneration rates, therefore at a sustainable level. Environmental awareness is quite high in Fort Smith; however, as in any community, environmental education could be improved.

## Economy and Development

Fort Smith began its role as an administrative centre for the north in 1911 with the arrival of a federal agent.

With the establishment of Wood Buffalo National Park in 1922, this role expanded. Although Yellowknife was named the territorial capital in 1967, the regional headquarters remained in Fort Smith. Adult education became a focus in 1968, when the Adult Vocational Training Centre opened (Arctic College, 1993). In 1981, AVTC became Thebacha College. At present, the economy in Fort Smith remains based on regional and park administration and education, with some activity in lumbering, forestry, sand and gravel operations, construction, tourism, trapping and market gardening. With 82% of employment in the government service

sector (NWT Health, 1992) and therefore controlled externally, there is a need to diversify the economy. In addition, Fort Smith has an overall unemployment rate of 15%, with a 27% unemployment rate for Native people (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 1989). Jobs need to be created.

Fort Smith's last Economic Development Strategy (RT & Associates, 1988) identified nine opportunities for economic development: road development, government devolution, tourism, arts and crafts, gravel products, fuel wood, college expansion, fur farming and market gardening. Attention has been and continues to be given to some of these areas, especially road development, tourism and college expansion. New opportunities are constantly being sought and discussed.

## **The Planning Process**

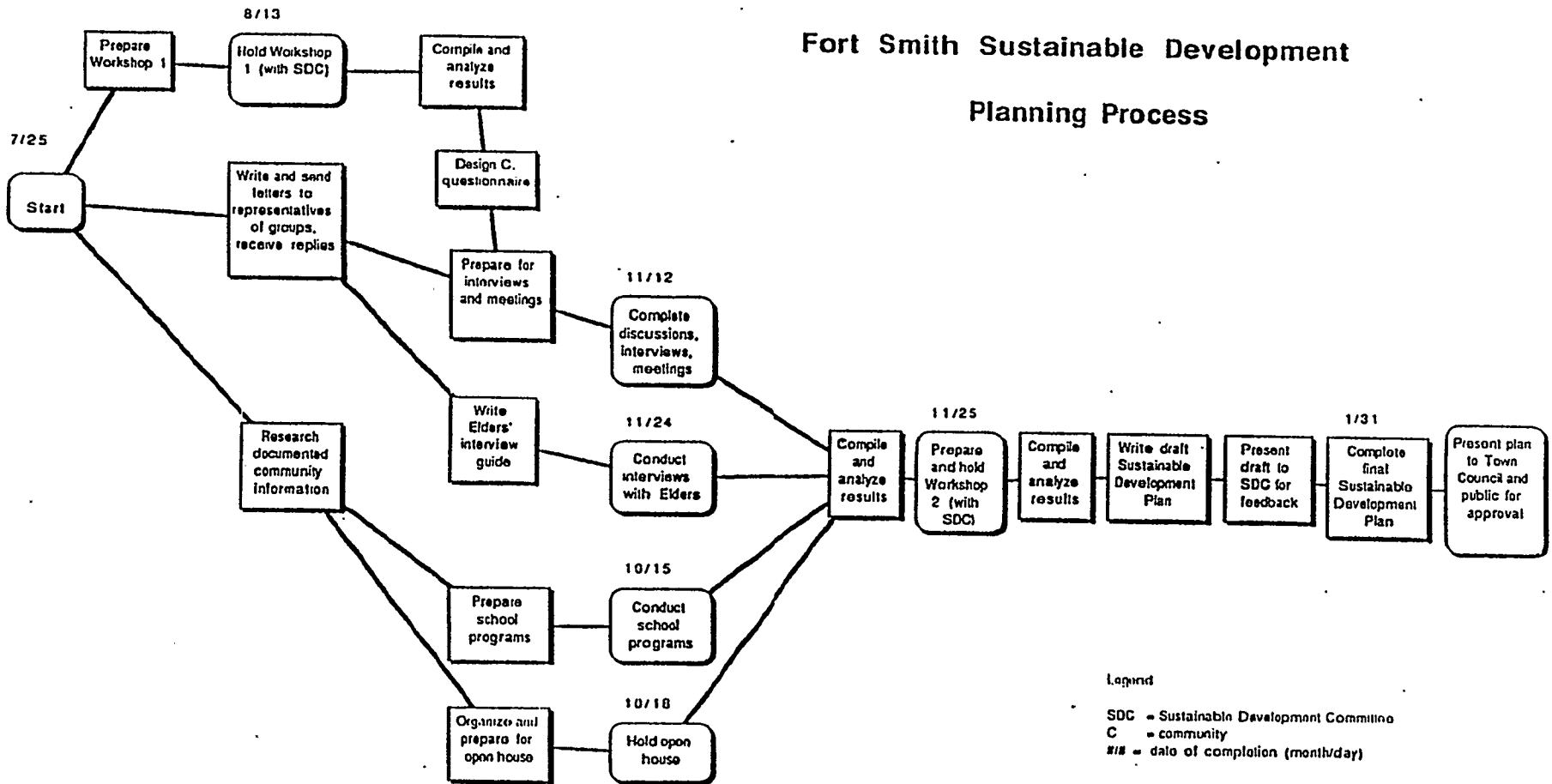
The sustainable development planning process took place between July 25 and November 26, 1993. Figure 1 shows the steps that were taken to complete the planning process. The process can be broken down into three basic stages.

1. Workshop 1 was held with the SDC to identify sustainable development issues that need to be addressed in Fort Smith.
2. Meetings with community members and groups were held to identify community values, which sustainable development issues are most important to address, possible solutions to issues and a future vision of Fort Smith.
3. Workshop 2 was held with the SDC to determine actions Fort Smith can take to address the key sustainable

development issues.

Summaries of the workshops and community meetings were prepared for the SDC during the project. These summaries, or 'briefing notes', are included in Appendix A to report in detail the methods and results of the sustainable development planning process undertaken. Appendix B lists all the community members that participated in the sustainable development planning process. Appendix C is a copy of the "Community Questionnaire" used to gather information from representatives of community organizations in step 2 above (see Briefing 2 in Appendix A for further explanation). Appendix D contains copies of the completed "Job Strategy Forms" used in Workshop 2, or step 3 above (see Briefing 3 in Appendix A for further explanation).

Figure 1

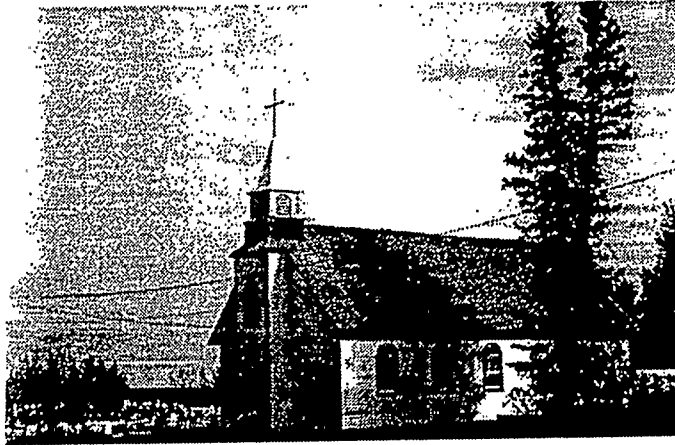




# Community Values

Our community agrees with the principles of sustainable development and feels that future development in Fort Smith should focus on sustainability. For example, 100% of the respondents to the community questionnaire

agreed that "development should be holistic and address all areas of human life" and that "development should build on our community knowledge and way of life". Ninety-five



percent of respondents agreed that "if an economic development project will harm the environment, we should not pursue it." Ninety percent of respondents agreed that "we should strive to produce our own

goods rather than import them from the south" and "major economic and political decisions should be made at the community level." (see Briefing 2 in Appendix A)

## The Plan: Recommendations

This Plan lists those issues the community feels are most important to address and community suggestions for actions to address those issues. The issues are loosely ranked from more important to less important. Different methods of calculation lead to different rank orders; this is a combination of different methods (for more detail see Briefing 2 in Appendix A). The key community issues are:

- Improve cooperation among different groups
- Address alcohol addictions
- Create jobs
- Settle Aboriginal claims
- Improve the productivity of the work force
- Improve sewage treatment
- Improve the reputation of Fort Smith
- Develop more activities for youth
- Improve telecommunications
- Develop a strategy to decrease garbage production and improve the dump

- Improve town appearance
- Develop more effective public participation in decision-making

Actions we can take to address these issues follow. Some of these issues are currently being addressed by community groups (see Edwards, 1993). The actions suggested here are meant to be implemented alongside these efforts, so that there are more of us working toward the same goals. Also, some of these issues cannot be addressed by the SDC or Town Council and will therefore not be addressed here: the Treaty Entitlement is being pursued by the Salt River First Nation Band Council, the Metis Claim is being pursued by the Metis Association and telecommunications are under the control of Northwestel. Due to lack of time, strategies were not developed for two issues: improve productivity of the work force and improve sewage treatment. In the future, the SDC should use the same planning methods

to identify strategies for these remaining two issues.

#### Improve cooperation among different groups

*...We meet regularly to resolve issues and determine new goals and courses of action. Past differences have been addressed and groups within the community are working together cooperatively...*

This issue came out on top for most people and groups. Although the main groups that were identified as needing to improve cooperation were the Town Council, Dene Band Council and Metis Nation Executive, other groups within the community, for example Arctic College, were also identified. It was noted that there are positive examples of everyone pulling together and working toward a common goal. We need to highlight and build on these positive examples.

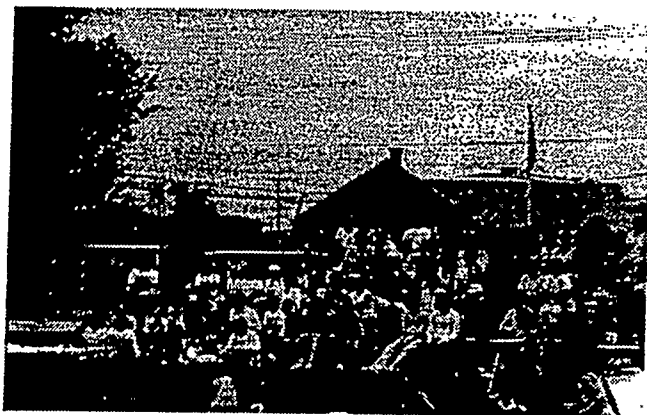
One strategy for addressing this issue is the creation of a "think tank" with membership from the key groups within the community. This group would hold a retreat every year where members discuss and build consensus on issues and recognize achievements. Meetings between retreats could be held when necessary.

Another suggestion is to recognize positive community builders within the community. Community members that have had a role in building cooperation would receive awards.

#### Address alcohol addictions

*...Community members are healthy and active. All abuse within the community has been dealt with...*

The community feels alcohol addictions are a top issue. Although there is an Alcohol and Drug Program at Uncle Gabe's and various support groups dealing with addictions, there is always room for more work in this area. It is important that programs developed to help people heal from addictions have a wholistic approach and are linked to the culture of the individual. One suggestion for dealing with addictions



is to encourage the creation of a "healing centre" in Fort Smith, open to all members of the community. Other suggestions that could be incorporated with a healing centre or implemented on their own are: having a trained psychologist in town, setting up bush camps and improving awareness and education. Many people suggested having more places to socialize without alcohol.

## Create jobs

*...The economy has strengthened and diversified with everyone who wants to work working. Education is still a focus: the new university is a leader in distance education. Cottage industries, environment-based industry, hydro-related projects and small manufacturing businesses have developed. We are producing food for the region and export. Tourism has increased and expanded, focusing on culture, wilderness, hunting and fishing. There is some environmentally sound harvest of resources such as timber and minerals. With the new road south, we have better access to markets for our products and tourists have better access to Fort Smith...*

A large percentage of employment in Fort Smith is a direct result of government (68% in 1987: see RT & Associates, 1988). This dependence on a single "industry", controlled externally, leaves us in a vulnerable economic position. A diversified economic base that is locally controlled is sustainable in the long run. In addition, 15% of the population is unemployed (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 1989). We need to develop and pursue options that will create jobs and diversify our economic base.

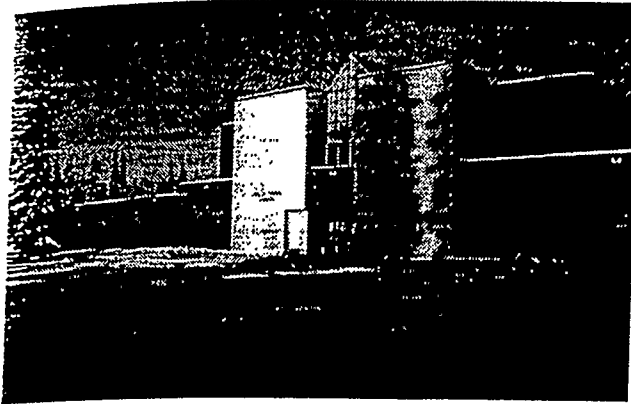
Community members have many ideas for creating jobs. These ideas are listed in Briefing 3, Appendix A. Seven of these ideas are discussed below. The remaining ideas should also be considered and developed by the SDC and Town in the future. When considering an economic development option, we must analyze the potential effects on our environment, culture,

political control and ability to meet human needs. If there are potential negative effects, we must determine if we can mitigate them, and if not, decide whether we will pursue the development or not. Appendix E shows, for each of the seven job creation ideas, whether the development will likely have a positive, a negative or no effect on our environment, culture, political control and ability to meet human needs. The effects are explained in text below the graphic.

### *Build an all season road south*

An all season road south would make the distance by land to and from Fort Smith much shorter. This would decrease the cost of transporting export items from Fort Smith south and would improve access to Fort Smith for tourists. The new road would also create a loop trip for tourists, allowing them to see Fort Smith on at least one leg of a trip to the Northwest Territories. There are two potential routes for the road south: one links Fort Smith to Fort McMurray, the other links us to Fort Vermillion. A clear understanding of the pros and cons of each option needs to be developed before a route is chosen.

The benefits to Fort Smith residents in terms of jobs would be high. RT & Associates (1988) estimated that road construction would provide 49 summer jobs and 28 annual jobs. The maintenance of the road would create 9 full time and 9 summer positions. More importantly though, there would be many permanent jobs created through the resulting increase in tourism, production of goods and transportation.



### *Expand Arctic College*

College expansion is an obvious focus for economic development in Fort Smith. As the college will be splitting with the division of the Northwest Territories, the college is beginning the process of developing a new strategic plan. It remains to be seen what will be the focus of this new plan. Thebacha Campus will soon be replacing some of its more run down buildings and bringing many programs under one roof in a new building. This will also provide room for growth.

The search for ways to expand the college is ongoing. Although it is the president, Board of Governors and local advisory committee of the college who are directly responsible for development, the college is responsive to suggestions. The Town can therefore play a role by identifying possible areas of expansion. In addition to general suggestions such as offering more programs and courses, attracting more students, raising standards and increasing the amount of active research that is based at the college, the idea of creating a Summer School of the Arts and/or a Northern Environmental Research Centre was put forward. The concern that there is a need for management skills in the Native population could be addressed with a leadership program taught by

traditional people at Thebacha. Market studies, political support and expansion of Town infrastructure would be required for any significant college expansion.

### *Create an aircraft maintenance centre*

The building of the air tanker base in Fort Smith will create jobs: temporary jobs in construction and training and permanent jobs in aircraft maintenance. It has been estimated that at least 20 permanent jobs will be created (Slave River Journal, September 15, 1993). Attention is being given by the GNWT to hiring NWT labour as much as possible.

This development will probably be neutral with respect to social and cultural issues: no real negative or positive effects. As far as environmental concerns, it will be important that petroleum products, other potentially harmful substances and wastes are dealt with in an environmentally conscious manner—recycled or incinerated at an appropriate facility. This development is government related, but may create associated non-government jobs.

### *Market locally produced food and products*

Locally produced items such as country foods, garden vegetables and crafts could be marketed in Fort Smith for locals and tourists and exported to other areas. Interest in cottage industry products is high and if marketed correctly, they can be sold at good prices. The new Native Craft Store has seen a lot of local business; this can be expected to increase in the tourist season.

Creating a public market for producers

would facilitate the sale of local products and would attract local and regional consumers and tourists. The market could be held once a week in the summer and once a month in the winter. It would also decrease our reliance on imported food items. Economic Development and Tourism funding might be available to help set up the market.

The opportunity to sell items will encourage people to start production. The interest shown in the South Slave Arts and Crafts Society is evidence of community members' interest in producing items. Marketing these items is sustainable development: it fits in with the local way of life, allows people to work out of their homes and keeps traditional activities alive.

The South Slave Research Centre is currently involved in a project related to local food production. They are undertaking an aquaculture study to investigate the feasibility of using the old water treatment facility to grow arctic char for regional and export use.

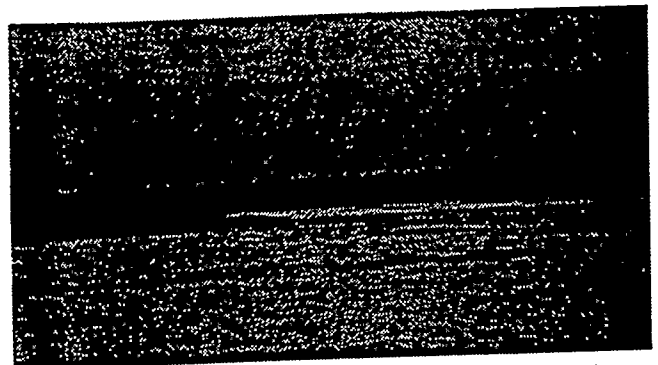
#### *Attract small-scale manufacturing and distributing companies*

Fort Smith could promote itself to small scale manufacturing industries or distributors that can locate anywhere. This would involve the assembly of a marketing package and the identification of meetings, trade shows and exhibitions where potential businesses are likely to be found. We could also advertise our community as a potential location for manufacturing and distributing in magazines, for example in the 'Opportunities North' section in News North. Companies locating in Fort Smith would bring employment, outside money and perhaps more people into the

community. Such development has the drawback that it is not community controlled. With an appropriate selection process however, it could be ensured that companies hire locally, are environmentally sound, are committed to remaining in the community and fit with the way of life of the community.

#### *Develop recreation and tourism industry*

Fort Smith is well positioned for tourism development. Tourism development could focus on seeing or experiencing northern and Native culture, nature and wildlife, historical attractions, adventure or specific activities like hunting, fishing, golfing, mountain biking or kayaking.



The Town's role in the development of tourism would be supportive, helping to organize local businesses and recreation-related groups and identify and secure funding for their projects, perhaps from Economic Development and Tourism. We need to assess the opportunities and markets, develop facilities, establish excellence in our service, coordinate the various actors, and promote and advertise our attractions.

Tourism can build on our local way of life, enrich culture by keeping alive and taking pride in traditional skills, value the environment in its natural and

healthy state, create jobs and bring capital into the community. One idea is the creation of a Dene village in the summer. The village would appeal to tourists, provide employment, give workers knowledge of traditional skills and respect for their heritage, and enable seniors and youth to work together and get to know each other.

#### *Use surplus power from the Taltson River dam*

Since the closure of the mine at Pine Point, there has been a surplus of power produced at the Taltson River hydro-electric dam. The SDC has been looking into various ways to use this power. A feasibility study for the use of electrolytic hydrogen to produce hydrogen peroxide and methanol has been completed (Ouellette et al. 1993). These two possibilities would provide high quality jobs and produce environmental alternatives to pollution problems: the use of chlorine in pulp mill bleaching processes and the burning of fossil fuels. The SDC is awaiting a commitment from the Power Corporation to provide the necessary power at a reduced cost before a marketing study is undertaken. Another suggested use of the hydro-electricity is as a clean source of energy for heating buildings currently heated by oil.

We cannot consider uses of the Taltson River dam without addressing concerns that in its creation injustices have been committed against the traditional users of the land. The dam was built in 1968 without proper consultation with or permission from the Native people who live on the land. Following a Water Board Hearing in September 1993, the NWT Power Corporation was instructed to collaborate with Treaty 8 representatives to study the impacts of

the dam. Clearly, the outcome of the study will direct future use of the power system.

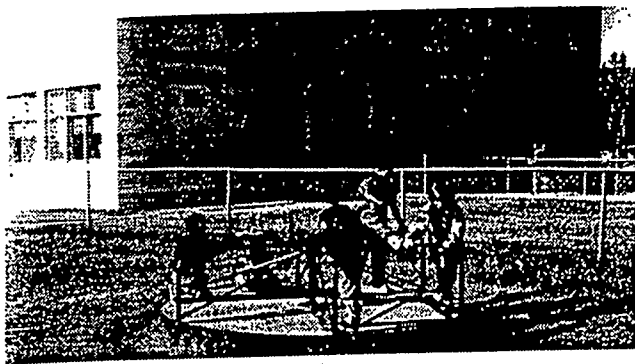
At the hearing, the Lutsel K'e Dene Council called for an effective consultation strategy, money to do research into the effects of the dam and ways to enhance the Taltson River system, and involvement in environmental monitoring. These requests must be addressed by the Power Corporation, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and other bodies responsible for decision-making. (For further information refer to the transcript of the Water Board Hearing: Taltson River Dam, September 8, 1993.)

#### Improve the reputation of Fort Smith

Fort Smith's reputation in the rest of the north was identified as being a problem. Although our community is considered pretty, some people are put off by community politics. We need to get our good news out to the rest of the north by writing press releases on our achievements, establishing and maintaining contact with college alumni, and through the State of the Town reports. We could host more events like the Friendship Festival, which would bring people in from out-of-town to see the community working and having fun together. Hospitality training for employees in the service sector could be initiated through the Chamber of Commerce or the Career Development Centre. Also, if we remind community members of the beauty and positive aspects of Fort Smith, we will develop a sense of pride and spread the word ourselves.

### Develop more activities for youth

*...People take care of each other; youth and elders are valued, respected and involved. There are more opportunities to socialize: at the recreation complex, youth centre, theatre and bowling alley, and at cultural events and live performances. Cultural values, activities and lifestyles remain...*



Both the need for a place for youth and more activities for youth were identified as problems within the community. Youth themselves linked their drinking and use of drugs to this issue. The way to address this issue is to set up a committee composed of a broad range of youth and representatives from the Band, Town, Metis and Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre. This committee could then identify needs and access funding to address the needs.

The youth centre could be a place where activities and events could take place or youth could just "drop in and hang out". There could also be an equipment swap, so youth who do not have the necessary equipment for sports or other activities could borrow equipment and take part. The organization and management of the centre could be linked to business courses at the high school, so youth could receive formal training and credit for their work at the centre.

Most of the elders felt it was important for youth to spend time on the land and learn traditional Native skills and way of life. They suggested that students go out on the land with elders a few times a year as part of their schooling.

### Develop a strategy to decrease garbage production and improve the dump

*...The environmental awareness in Fort Smith is high. People sort their garbage for recycling, so the dump has little, but efficient use...*

As this issue is multi-faceted, we need to develop an overall strategy that addresses it from different angles. To start, we must examine the quantity and type of garbage that we produce. We can then determine ways to decrease both the toxic or non-biodegradable substances and the total garbage going to the dump. Suggested strategies for achieving these goals are to:

- hold workshops for businesses and the general public on waste management,
- hold an "environmental contest" and give out "garbage management awards",
- establish a system whereby citizens pay per bag of garbage,
- establish policies on office environmental issues, and
- set an example and make the community aware of what the Town is doing.

Assuming that regardless of efforts to curb the production of garbage, there will be garbage produced, we must examine the way we deal with that garbage. It was suggested that the collection and management of garbage be tied together; the contractor would



then be responsible for sorting the collected garbage for reuse. In order to achieve this, the Town must review its bylaws and existing contracts and educate contractors about garbage management. Formal recycling of most waste items is not currently available in Fort Smith. A feasibility study to determine the economics of various recycling options should be undertaken. Presently, many items that go to the dump are reused by other citizens. This practice is to be commended and could be facilitated with sorting. A community compost could also be set up at the dump site. In order to facilitate reuse of items and accommodate recycling and composting, the dump itself has to be reorganized. (see Timoney, 1993 for details)

In addition, there are serious concerns about the present burning and leaching of toxic substances at the garbage dump (Timoney, 1993). To stop the burning in the short term, Timoney suggests locking the dump except during regular established dump hours, educating citizens about the hazards of fires and enforcing the fire protection bylaw. In the long term, it is suggested that the dump be moved farther away from the Slave River and that it be turned into a recycle and reuse centre as opposed to a "dump".

#### Improve town appearance

*...The town itself looks great. The abandoned buildings and junk have been cleaned up, there are lots of trees, the Cathedral is still standing and the streets are well lit...*

Community members are pleased with ongoing efforts to revitalize the downtown area. We should continue this effort with costs being shared by

businesses and the community. Some suggestions for physically improving the town include: building more trails and bicycle paths; amalgamating the various visitor information centres; continuing the upgrade of the river park, including areas for proper boat launching and picnicking; continuing beautification projects such as the work around the Cathedral; maintaining the forested and greenbelt areas and vacant lots around town; improving street lighting; maintaining the undeveloped nature of the river bank; addressing the smell of the sewage lagoon; constructing a recreation complex; and cleaning up the junk at Bell Rock and Fort Fitzgerald.

The presence of abandoned buildings and junk around town was raised again and again in meetings with community members. To address this issue, a bylaw must be passed on property standards. Other actions would be: having tougher enforcement of existing bylaws by coordinating with outside agencies, such as fire and health; establishing a development agreement policy; and providing incentives for improving property or building condition.

#### Develop more effective public participation in decision-making

It was suggested that public participation in decision-making could be improved by increasing community groups' and members' awareness of issues through direct contact. A newsletter or monthly community meetings would keep people better informed and more involved with Town issues. A weekly phone in show on cable TV would provide another medium for involvement by people who might not come out to a meeting.



## Steps to Ensure Implementation

As the general community has been involved in the identification of issues and solutions that led to this plan, it is very important that the plan be actively implemented and the whole community made aware of the progress. This way, community members will gain confidence in their ability to create change and will be motivated to be involved in future projects. The following are recommendations to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

- 1) The plan be written and presented in a manner that will engage the community, for example with visuals and concrete examples.
- 2) The SDC present the plan to the Town Council, meet regularly to evaluate progress and bring up the plan regularly in meetings.
- 3) To increase awareness of the plan within the general community, the SDC formally present the plan to the community and send it to all participants in the planning process and all other businesses and groups within the community.
- 4) Bylaw #448, the bylaw to establish the SDC, be reviewed, especially with respect to the membership of the SDC.
- 5) The Town hire a full time sustainable development coordinator to implement the plan. Possible sources of funding for this position include the GNWT Arctic Environmental Strategy, the Economic Development Agreement (a Federal-Territorial arrangement) or a secondment from Economic Development and Tourism.
- 6) The sustainable development coordinator and the SDC develop a multi-year action plan with a budget, reviewed at least annually.
- 7) A similar planning process be used in five years to identify and address new environmental, cultural, economic, social and political issues.

## Conclusion

The community of Fort Smith believes that future development in Fort Smith should be holistic and take into consideration all aspects of community life. Sustainable development is development that does just that. It is development that works towards social, cultural, environmental, economic and political goals. This planning project invited community members to reflect on the past, examine the present and create the future of our town—to value and build on our community culture, to determine the present problems and develop solutions to those problems, and to envision and work toward the future we want for our community. This Sustainable Development Plan is the result of that process. It is a collection of community solutions to problems and a vision of the future. With the continued enthusiasm and commitment to our community that was displayed during this project, we will create our collective vision.

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Water Board Hearing: Taltson River Dam, September 8, 1993

**Appendix A:**

**Briefing Notes**

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## RESULTS OF WORKSHOP 1

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In attendance: Sustainable Development Committee members: Dennis Bevington, Don Ellis, Rosalind Mercredi, Sam Ransom, Jack Van Camp  
Facilitators: Jana Kotaska, Glenn Bourke

Workshop 1 was held on August 13, 1993. The main purpose of the workshop was to identify sustainable development issues that need to be addressed in Fort Smith. Next, these issues will be 'tested' to determine if they match with community concerns. Finally, the key issues will be used to generate strategic options for the Town, the basis of the sustainable development plan.

To begin the workshop, the project, the planning process to be used, and the Committee's role in that process were reviewed, discussed and accepted. During the remainder of the workshop, the Sustainable Development Committee brainstormed the strengths and weaknesses of the community, identified sustainable development issues in Fort Smith, identified driving forces in the world beyond Fort Smith and wrote a mission statement for the Committee.

This briefing contains four sections:

- A. Building on Strengths and Addressing Weaknesses
- B. Driving Forces in the World Beyond Fort Smith
- C. Mission Statement for the Sustainable Development Committee
- D. Results of Questionnaire 1

## A. Building on Strengths and Addressing Weaknesses

Community strengths and weaknesses, as well as some actions, were identified. Those strengths and weaknesses without actions are listed first.

### Strengths:

- Wood Buffalo National Park (international destination for visitors)
- reasonable building and development costs, solid building industry, surplus land
- mature municipal infrastructure
- good public sector and political skills
- traditional roots structure, people with roots
- clean air and water
- undeveloped hinterland, forest
- ethnically diverse and integrated
- good agricultural conditions
- business communication infrastructure, service sector, second generation business community
- lots of capital and income in community
- arts community
- proximity to Alberta
- Pentecostal Bible School, Cathedral, Mission Park
- centre for fire control activity
- good seniors infrastructure
- leaders in social services, Territorial care institutions, nongovernmental organizations, handicapped access
- capital works projects ahead
- low rate of taxation
- population growth ahead
- volunteer sector strong
- hwy 5, good air transport
- aesthetically pleasing, desirable place to live
- patterns for community cooperation

### Weaknesses:

- few functions geared to elders
- few traditional events, little exposure to traditional activities, limited access to traditional knowledge, lack of arts and crafts
- lack of retail facilities (eg. clothes)
- limited hunting areas because of the Park
- poor condition of dump
- land slide zone
- too close to Alberta
- few hotels and restaurants
- unsettled land claims
- 'cliquey'
- gas and services expensive
- need to improve downtown and clean up garbage along Hwy
- need more cooperation between groups
- need to improve recreational facilities
- need better control of government spending
- need to develop a positive Native identity
- need to develop a conserving lifestyle
- need better regional cooperation on economic issues
- poor relations between game harvesters
- don't have services to deal with the college population

These sustainable development issues and actions were identified:

Issue	Action
sewage stinks	develop tertiary treatment
potential for country foods	increase commercial sale and availability
surplus power from the hydroelectric dam	utilize (and develop other local energy sources)
Slave River	improve river bank for access and recreation
historic resources	retain, upgrade
youth	create jobs, activities, programs for youth
access to community	all season road south
college, research centre	solidify role, increase community education, organize interagency workshops.
government dependency of economy	develop primary production for trade, build small saw mill, develop environmental retail, export knowledge and technology to north and third world, create more entrepreneurs in tourism, build information age economy
poor work ethic, low work force productivity, unfriendly service industry	be more demanding; support efforts to upgrade; develop training, business and service attitude
quiet, unadventurous business community	drive for local involvement in upcoming projects, pull Chamber of Commerce into SDC, strengthen Chamber
capital outflow	Chamber/Town/ED&T promote and highlight investment and development opportunities, get people to spend more money in Fort Smith, replace major imports with local products
alcohol abuse	address addictions
hospital/health focus	seek better collaboration with Hay River, surplus from increased efficiency to be available for increased services
poor telephones	improve telecommunications
well known in rest of north, but bad reputation	develop public relations strategy
opportunity to become model community	establish identity as a sustainable community
noisy dogs	enforce bylaws



## B. Driving Forces in the World Beyond Fort Smith

- deficit reduction
- land claims
- free trade
- environmental industry increasing
- division of the NWT
- eco-tourism increasing
- money is cheap, interest rates low
- primacy of information
- importance of education increasing
- aging population
- climate change
- developments in resource management
- decreasing significance of distance
- physical transport less important
- moving people easier (tourism)
- overcrowding
- pollution
- strength of Canadian dollar
- Canadian population movement
- federal political situation
- world food economy
- commodity futures (more \$ made)
- import/export market
- animal rights movement
- customized and micro technologies

## C. Mission Statement for the Sustainable Development Committee

The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Committee represents and serves the community and advises Town Council. We are committed to the principles of sustainable development, a healthy and happy population and our home place. Our goal is to direct the development and growth of Fort Smith to a sustainable future by: building consensus around a vision and plan; developing and pursuing new ideas for creating positive change; increasing awareness of issues; promoting cooperation; and building confidence in the community, internally and externally. The stakeholders include: future generations; our environment; local and regional businesses, institutions and political groups; and landholders.

## D. Results of Questionnaire 1

The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the Sustainable Development Committee members with regard to the community and the potential for sustainable development here.

1) Most workshop participants strongly agreed that "people are concerned with the quality of life here" and "development should be holistic and address all areas of community life".

Most or all participants agreed that "people are concerned about the state of the environment here", "people in this community are interested in community planning", "this community is divided on ethnicity", "this community is divided by how long people have lived here", and "people don't know what sustainable development is".

Most participants disagreed that "people are more concerned with jobs than quality of life" and "people are busy and don't have time for one more study".

Participants were divided on "development means economic growth" and "this community is divided by people's education level".

2) Three of the participants were optimistic, but not highly optimistic, about the potential of the Town Council to effect change with the addition of a sustainable development plan. Two participants were neutral.

3) Participants varied in their opinions about which area needs the most attention in Fort Smith: two chose social, two chose economic and one chose cultural concerns.

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## RESULTS OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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Community meetings were held in Fort Smith between October 6 and November 24 to identify community values, which issues the community feels are most important to address, possible solutions, and a future vision of Fort Smith. This information will be used in Workshop 2 with the Sustainable Development Committee, where we will identify strategies for the Town to address the issues.

This briefing contains five sections:

- A. Community Questionnaire and Interviews
- B. School Programs
- C. Open House
- D. Group Meetings
- E. Interviews with Elders

## A. Community Questionnaire and Interviews

Representatives from organizations and businesses in town were asked to participate in the sustainable development planning process by filling out a questionnaire and being interviewed. Of those who participated, 71% had lived in Fort Smith for more than 10 years, 40% were Native, 44% were female, and 63% were over 40 years of age. The following organizations and businesses were involved.

Aboriginal hunters and trappers  
Alcohol and Drug Program  
Arctic College  
Career Development Centre  
Fort Smith Housing Authority  
Fort Smith Society for Disabled Persons  
Health Board  
Kaeser's Stores Ltd.  
Martselos Services Ltd.  
Metis Association Local 50  
Northern Stores

Parks Canada  
Public Health, GNWT  
Roman Catholic Church  
Salt River First Nation Band Council  
Slave River Journal  
Sustainable Development Committee members  
not involved in Workshop 1  
Town of Fort Smith  
Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre  
Youth Justice Committee

### Results from the Community Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine community values, the importance of particular issues in Fort Smith and possible solutions to issues. The respondents were almost unanimous in their agreement with the following statements. Numbers in brackets indicate the percentage who agreed.

- If an economic development project will harm the environment, we should not pursue it. (95%)
- We should strive to produce our own goods rather than import them from the south. (90%)
- Development should be holistic and address all areas of human life. (100%)
- Development should build on our community knowledge and way of life. (100%)
- Major economic and political decisions should be made at the community level. (90%)

The quality of life in Fort Smith was rated on a scale from 1-5, one being very good. Fort Smith received a 2.27, between good and neutral.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 30 community issues on a scale from 1-5, one being most important. Using mean score to rank them, the top issues were as follows. Numbers in brackets indicate mean score.

- Improve cooperation among different groups (1.27)
- Address alcohol addictions (1.32)
- Use surplus power from the Taltson River dam (1.48)
- Create jobs (1.57)
- Settle land claims (1.57)
- Resolve conflicts over land use (1.62)
- Decrease our dependence on government for jobs and money (1.64)
- Build an all season road south (1.68)
- Improve productivity of the work force (1.71)
- Improve sewage treatment (1.76)
- Improve reputation of Fort Smith (1.76)

In addition, the following three issues ranked highly using different methods: percent of respondents choosing two or higher and percent choosing one.

- Develop more activities for youth
- Improve telecommunications
- Produce less garbage and set up recycling

Some solutions to community issues were suggested.

- Address alcohol addictions: need a trained psychologist in town; need more "dry" activities in the community; improve education and awareness; support treatment for staff; work with the justice system; Metis must fund raise other than bingos and dances.
- Develop a more positive Native identity: more emphasis on Native history and language in school curriculum; bush camps to teach skills; joint ventures with Dene and Metis working together; community think tank to discuss solutions.
- Dump/recycling: need political will; move dump; set up recycling; need single recycling site in South Slave Region; set up a second hand store.
- Build an all season road south: strong lobby of Federal Government; Arctic College training programs to commence construction from north end (will help to increase tourism and give better access to outside markets)
- Improve cooperation among groups: need to create a system where everyone has a say about what goes on, community votes rather than leaders deciding everything, majority pushes ideas and projects ahead

Some ideas for sustainable development projects were put forward.

- Grow our own food: small scale vegetable operations, chickens, rabbits; hydroponic gardening
- Dene village set up at Fort Fitzgerald or Bell Rock in the summer: would appeal to tourists, provide employment, give workers knowledge of skills and respect for their heritage, enable seniors and youth to work together and get to know each other
- A NWT post-release "half-way" centre for young offenders whereby they can be integrated into a working community outside the home/community environment where they got into trouble; a ranch or farming effort may be suitable
- "Northern Hemispheric Environmental Research Centre" would tie in with Fort Smith's status as the education centre of the NWT
- Develop tourism, generate hydrogen, use electricity for heating, develop a fish hatchery, produce heavy water, produce pre-fabricated log houses, become a forest fire training centre, set up a School of the Arts, become a Federal corrections centre
- Buffalo ranching: replacement of herd, meat and skins
- Process furs and produce garments here

## B. School Programs

I facilitated a short school program in four classrooms at J. B. Tyrrell Elementary and four classrooms at P. W. Kaeser Secondary. The classes that were involved are:

Mr. Harding	Gr. 5	Ms. Bohnen	Gr. 8
Mrs. Holtorf	Gr. 6	Mr. MacDonald	Gr. 8 and 9
Ms. Murrell	Gr. 7	Mr. Walsh	Gr. 10
Ms. Goodall	Gr. 7		

The students were asked what they think are the good and bad things about Fort Smith. Numbers in brackets indicate number of classrooms that listed the item.

### Good things

- stores (8)
- new theatre (8)
- arena, hockey (5)
- landslide area, river (5)
- scenery, nature, wildlife (5)
- restaurants, hotel (5)
- Wood Buffalo National Park (3)
- school (3)
- swimming pool (3)
- not run down, looks nice (2)
- not as polluted, clean (2)
- curling rink (2)
- Uncle Gabe's (2)
- gardens
- hunting and fishing
- church, Bible school, Extended Hand
- museum
- new fire hall
- no crime
- people
- water treatment plant
- Friendship Festival
- library

### Bad things

- too much drinking, drugs, drunks (8)
- nowhere to go with friends/nothing to do (eg. no arcade, mall, rec. centre, carnivals, amusement park, skate boarding ramp, community events, not enough sports) (8)
- restaurants too greasy, not enough (6)
- bars, liquor store (4)
- not enough stores, no sports shops (5)
- not enough people, too small (4)
- swimming pool closed in winter (3)
- garbage, dump (3)
- school (2)
- not enough jobs for youth (2)
- no big cities nearby (2)
- cost of things
- smoking
- crime, stealing, fighting
- too much tree cutting
- sewage lagoon
- front of the Pinecrest
- cable
- town curfew
- snobby

After the students brainstormed the good and bad things about Fort Smith, they discussed how some of the bad things might be solved. Generally, the students thought that problems with drugs and alcohol could be solved by generating more activities and places for youth. Many ideas for these were given, from malls and restaurants to a recreational complex. When garbage or the dump were identified as issues, students suggested starting recycling programs and having volunteers clean up the town. For attracting people to Fort Smith, the students suggested having more places to live, more stores, tourism, and more to do.

### **C. Open House**

An open house was held October 18, 1993 to involve the general public in the project. More than 42 people attended, ranging from children to seniors. The open house consisted of displays with opportunities for participants to give their ideas and views. The first display gave an overview of the project and the concept of sustainable communities. The next three stations allowed participants to explore the past, present and future of Fort Smith.

### Reflect on the Past

The display documented a brief history of Fort Smith with text and pictures. Participants were asked to record what should be kept from the past and what should be left in the past.

### Keep

- history of exploration
- coming together of Aboriginal and European culture
- values of caring, sharing, creativity, independence, work ethics
- document names and stories of people
- greenbelt areas including individual trees

### Examine the Present

Slides taken in and around Fort Smith showed its beauty and culture. A map of the area was posted asking participants to write what they like and dislike about Fort Smith on it. This was a popular activity.

### Like

- downtown is looking good (4)
- trails at Axe Handle for everyone, winter and summer (2)
- fish plant
- eat more river fish
- no development along river bank
- the historic park idea
- the new stores
- the flower gardens
- sidewalks
- the rocks and pelicans
- whitewater park has great potential for sightseers and paddlers
- lookout and proposed walk along riverbank
- green belt areas around town
- friendly community with lots to do
- tie the college to town
- Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre

### Leave

- destruction of habitat

### Dislike

- abandoned, rundown buildings (9)
- improve/move the dump, educate re: use (4)
- lack of facilities along river bank (2)
- we need trees around the new water treatment area, downtown (2)
- no sign to indicate distance to Wood Chopper's Monument
- no park at Mountain Portage
- need improved street lighting
- lack of proper boat launching
- development on either side or middle of the river. Keep it wild!
- lack of recycling program
- improve school sport facilities, esp. the track
- do something about the smell of the lagoon
- waste of Taltson power—lower rates and get off oil for heating
- disappearance of forested and vacant lots scattered throughout town
- repair window at front of arena

Each participant was asked to choose from a list of 30 issues the three issues most important in Fort Smith. These are the issues that came out on top. Numbers in brackets indicate number of participants who chose the issue.

- Improve cooperation among different groups (12)
- Produce less garbage and set up recycling (10)
- Build an all season road south (7)
- Address alcohol addictions (6)
- Become a pioneering sustainable community (6)
- Settle land claims (5)
- Decrease dependence on government for jobs (5)
- Develop more activities for youth (5)

Participants were asked how the issues could be solved. These are their answers.

- start a country foods store
- create a "Road South Motorists' Association" to attract investment dollars to (a) maintain winter road and (b) build a permanent road.
- begin a comprehensive recycling program, thereby (a) solving problem at dump and (b) creating employment (use empty trucks back to Edmonton)
- plan and construct a recreation complex
- set up a Native cultural and education centre
- develop better liaisons between existing groups

#### Create the Future: Fort Smith Vision 2020

The written and drawn visions of the students from JBT and PWK schools were displayed. Participants were asked to list what would be in their vision.

### **D. Group Meetings**

#### Senior Citizens' Society

I attended a meeting of the Senior Citizens' Society on November 7, 1993 to ask the members' views about important issues in Fort Smith and their vision of the future. Those present at the meeting were: Edith Bassingthwaite, Archie Bevington, Al Bohnet, Tony Clements, Peter Fraser, Sean Mageean, and Rene and Jack McCullough. The issues that the seniors felt need to be addressed include:

- dogs
- recreational complex with adequate area for seniors
- junk around town should be removed—send warning, then remove it
- use excess power from Taltson
- T.V. bingos should be modified for hard of hearing
- bingos are tied to one organization; others should get turns (GNWT: Consumers' Affairs)
- better control of ATVs and skidoos
- better control over issuing of business licenses
- more effective public participation in decision-making
- politicians should be more accountable
- remove old arenas, stop patching pool and get new one
- disabled access to Town Hall and library
- equitable heating subsidies for seniors
- work for welfare

What should we keep from or leave in the past?

#### Keep from the past

- heritage (eg. Cathedral)
- respect for teachers
- discipline

#### Leave in the past

- disharmony
- false advertising

### Fort Fitzgerald Dene Band Council

I attended a meeting of the Fort Fitzgerald Dene Band Council on November 22, 1993. Present at the meeting were: Chief Magloire Paulette, Gabe Sepp, Eileen Tourangeau, Fred Tourangeau, Howard Benwell and Gilles Paquin. The issues and solutions they identified are:

- no recreation or place for youth: they need a place to go at night
- no cultural training: have back to the land programs and teach traditional skills and languages in and out of school
- dump: need a recycling depot
- junk at Bell Rock and out at Fitzgerald: clean it up

### **E. Interviews with Elders**

Four elders of the Salt River First Nation were interviewed in November 1993. They were: Mr. Frank Laviolette, Mr. Dan MacDonald, Mrs. Eleanor McNeill and Mrs. Mary Norwegian. The issues and solutions they identified are:

- alcohol: people have to help themselves to get away from alcohol; problems both in non-Native and Native population; set up bush camps where people learn the "fundamentals of clean living"
- not enough jobs: train Native women to sew parkas, moccasins; Parks should hire Native people; short term work leads to better employment; start making pre-fabricated frame buildings; hire people to teach traditional skills in the schools; beautify landslide
- not enough for youth to do: cultural training (in school); 2-3 times a year, go out on the land; elders to give presentations in schools; environmental education needs to start in school
- fighting between groups: in past, elders would solve problems, people shared; have general meetings of all parties; make Metis qualified to same benefits as Dene
- need management skills in Native population: should be a leadership program at Thebacha taught by traditional people; need to get rid of petty jealousies
- sewage lagoon: should be moved closer to Alberta border, on the other side of the heavy equipment lot
- dump: need to berm it so that natural filtration takes place
- improve telecommunications: need a land line or fibre optics
- road south: lobby the government
- other environmental problems: pollution, Bennett dam; forest fires; pulp mills; animals don't come back like they used to; creeks drying up; fewer birds; the Northern River Basin study will bring out truths
- leadership/decision making: doing a good job; need to involve elders, people who have the experience; leaders need to go to the people instead of having private meetings
- housing



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## RESULTS OF WORKSHOP 2

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In attendance: Dennis Bevington, Jason Lepine, Rosalind Mercredi, Sam Ransom, Roy Scott, Geoff Stock, Jack Van Camp, Jana Kotaska (facilitator)

Workshop 2 was held with the Sustainable Development Committee on November 25 and 26, 1993. The purpose of the workshop was to find solutions for the issues that the community felt were most important to address.

To begin the workshop, we revisited and adopted the mission statement generated at Workshop 1. The vision, "Fort Smith in the Year 2020: A Sustainable Community", and the key issues resulting from the community meetings were presented. The rest of the workshop was spent finding solutions to the key issues. Both the solutions generated at this workshop and those collected in the community meetings will form the basis of the Sustainable Development Plan.

This briefing contains three sections:

- A. Solutions to Key Community Issues
- B. Options for Creating Jobs
- C. Implementation of the Plan

## A. Solutions to Key Community Issues

In small groups, the participants used strategic planning methods to develop strategies for addressing some of the key issues facing Fort Smith. They analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the Town Council and Sustainable Development Committee and the opportunities and threats presented by the community in relation to the issues. Then, they developed objectives that built on the strengths and opportunities and negated the weaknesses and threats. Strategies were developed to meet the objectives. The issues and strategies are listed below.

### Improve cooperation among different groups in the community

- Create a think tank and have a retreat every year where members discuss and build consensus on issues and recognize achievements.
- Recognize positive community builders with awards focusing on cooperation.

### Develop more activities for youth

- Start a youth committee with membership from Band, Town, Metis, UGFC, youth to access funds, address needs.
- Create a centre for youth, perhaps in the recreation centre, where they can just drop in and hang out. Include an equipment swap.

### Produce less garbage, set up recycling, improve dump

- Hold a workshop for businesses and public on waste management.
- Re-evaluate garbage collection: tie collection and management together (collectors sort for reuse), review bylaw and contracts, educate collectors about management.
- Start "garbage management awards".
- Share responsibility of surveillance between Town and contractor.
- Establish policies on office environmental issues and make community aware of what Town is doing; set an example; start an "environmental contest".
- Stop burning.

### Do something about abandoned buildings and junk

- Pass a bylaw on property standards.
- Have tougher enforcement of bylaws. Coordinate with outside agencies such as fire and health.
- Establish a development agreement policy.
- Re-vitalize the downtown with cost shared by business and community.

### Develop more effective public participation in decision-making

- Contact local groups to increase awareness of issues and decisions.
- Start a newsletter or monthly community meetings to keep people informed and involved.
- Have a weekly phone in show on cable TV.

### Improve reputation of Fort Smith

- Get good news out to rest of north through press releases and State of the Town reports. Create a policy statement on press releases. Establish direct communication with college alumni.
- Have more events like Friendship Festival.
- Make sure that this community sees the brochures to help develop a sense of pride.

## B. Options for Creating Jobs

The need to create jobs and thereby decrease our dependence on the government for jobs was addressed separately from other issues. The participants were asked to add to a list of economic development ideas compiled from the community meetings. This is the complete list of economic development ideas.

- grow food for here/export
- half-way centre for young offenders
- Northern Hemispheric Environmental Research Centre
- develop tourism
- forestry-related projects: small sawmill, pre-fabricated log houses
- School of the Arts
- forest fire training centre
- hydro-related projects
- build an all season road south
- upgrade services
- develop the mining industry
- aircraft maintenance
- expand the college
- land development (housing/infrastructure)
- enhance the cottage industry
- wood pellet plant
- public market
- natural gas infrastructure
- home-based services
- recreation industry
- attract manufacturing, distribution
- manufacture furniture
- traditional Dene village
- country foods store
- buffalo ranching
- process furs and produce garments

Some of the projects were grouped and participants were asked to rank the projects, considering both the ease of achievement and benefits of each project. These are the top six projects.

- Build an all weather road south
- Expand the college
- Become a centre for aircraft maintenance
- Grow food/set up a market
- Develop the recreation industry
- Attract manufacturers and distributors

Participants further developed these top six projects using 'job strategy forms'. The completed forms are in Appendix D

### C. Implementation of the Plan

The workshop ended with a discussion of ways we could ensure that the Sustainable Development Plan is implemented and does not just collect dust on a shelf somewhere. These are some of the ideas.

- Develop a multi-year action plan with a budget and annual reviews.
- Increase the awareness of the plan within the community: Committee to present the plan to the community; send it to participants, organizations and businesses.
- Hire a full time coordinator to implement the plan.
- Sustainable Development Committee to present the plan to the Town, meet regularly to evaluate progress and bring it up regularly.
- Plan to be written and laid out in a manner that will engage the community: with visuals, concrete examples, etc.

**Appendix B:**  
**List of Community Participants**

### Representatives of Organizations

Athron, Greg	Public Health, GNWT
Hilyer, Gail	Arctic College
Holtorf, Ron	Arctic College
Hudson, Ken	Aboriginal hunter and trapper
Jaque, Don	Slave River Journal
Kaeser, Paul Jr.	Kaeser's Stores Ltd.
Father Labat	Roman Catholic Church
Laviolette, Maureen	Fort Smith Housing Authority
Lepine, Jason	Métis Association Local 50
Levadnuk, Betty	Youth Justice Committee
Martselos, Frieda	Health Board
O'Sullivan, Sydney	Career Development Centre
Paulette, Jerry	Salt River First Nation Band Council
Poitras, David	Alcohol and Drug Coordination
Rawlyk, Roger	Friendship Centre
Schaefer, Jimmy	Aboriginal hunter and trapper, business person
Scott, Roy	Town of Fort Smith
Sister Sutherland	Fort Smith Society for Disabled Persons
Weninger, Josie	Parks Canada

### Sustainable Development Committee Members

Dennis Bevington	Peter Martselos
Jack Van Camp	Rosalind Mercredi
Don Ellis	Sam Ransom
Arnold Labrentz	Dave Smart
Jason Lepine	Geoff Stock
Sonny MacDonald	

### Groups

Seniors' Society: Edith Bassingthwaite, Archie Bevington, Al Bohnet, Tony Clements, Peter Fraser, Sean Mageean, Rene and Jack McCullough

Fort Fitzgerald Dene Band Council: Chief Magloire Paulette, Gabe Sepp, Eileen Tourangeau, Fred Tourangeau, Howard Benwell and Gilles Paquin

High School classes: Mr. Harding (5), Mrs. Holtorf (6), Ms. Murrell (7), Ms. Goodall (7)

Elementary School classes: Mr. MacDonald (8 and 9), Ms. Bohnen (8), Mr. Walsh (10)

### Elders

Mr. Frank Laviolette, Mr. Dan MacDonald, Mrs. Eleanor McNeill, Mrs. Mary Norwegian

### Open House Participants

Terence Benwell  
Dennis Bevington  
Glenn Bourke  
David Burke  
John Desjarlais  
Laurie Dexter  
Gerald Doucet  
Rob Doupe  
Bryan Edwards  
Shelley Gellatly  
Glen Godt  
Libby Gunn  
Patty-Kay Hamilton  
Tony Hoare  
Anna B. Hodgkins  
Tracey Hutton  
Janna Jaque  
Sandra Jaque  
Ken Kingdon  
Rae Kingdon  
Ib S. Kristensen

June Lysaght  
Lorraine Mabbitt  
Nathan Mabbitt  
Frieda Martselos  
Peter Martselos  
Doug McLachlan  
Rosalind Mercredi  
Marisa Monchuk  
Anne Nicol  
Ronda Norrad  
Sydney O'Sullivan  
Michael Quinn  
Sam Ransom  
Roger P. Rawlyk  
Barry Roste  
Dave Smart  
Richard Van Camp  
Odiel Vandenberghe  
Chris Wanamaker  
Ann Ward  
Don Webb

## **Appendix C**

### **Community Questionnaire**



## Sustainable Development Planning Project Community Questionnaire

The Town of Fort Smith wants to direct the development and growth of Fort Smith to a sustainable future. In order to achieve this goal, we have asked the South Slave Research Centre to undertake a sustainable development planning project. The project is being facilitated by Jana Kotaska, a Master's student from the University of Calgary, and will also serve as a case study for her thesis. This project will result in a plan that will guide future development in Fort Smith.

As a part of the planning process, we want to determine the issues that community groups feel are most important to address. The views of community members are important because the plan is meant to serve the community. This questionnaire will ask you about your views on development, the importance of particular issues, and ways to solve problems. The information you give will be anonymous; your name will not be recorded. If any question is uncomfortable for you, you do not have to answer it. If you are willing to participate, please continue.

### Community Views

1. In this question, we would like to find out how community members view development. For each of the statements listed below, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about the statement.

Scale: 1 = strongly agree      2 = agree      3 = disagree      4 = strongly disagree      5 = unsure

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Jobs are more important than quality of life   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. The Town should pursue any development that will provide jobs for Fort Smith residents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. If an economic development project will harm the environment, we should not pursue it  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. We should strive to produce our own goods rather than import them from the south       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Development means economic growth  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Development should be holistic and address all areas of human life                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Development should build on our community knowledge and way of life                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Major economic and political decisions should be made at the community level           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. In your opinion, how does the quality of life in Fort Smith rate?

Very good      1      2      3      4      5      Very bad

## Community Issues

3. The five general goals of sustainable development are listed below. For each goal, a number of specific Fort Smith issues are listed. Please circle the number that best describes each goal or issue's importance in your view. There are spaces for you to add any other issues that you feel are important.

Scale: 1 = very important      3 = somewhat important      5 = unsure  
2 = important      4 = not important

<u>Goal:</u> Enhance cultural richness and diversity	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Develop a more positive Native identity	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the number of traditional events	1	2	3	4	5
Retain and upgrade historic resources	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Goal:</u> Establish community control	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Settle land claims	1	2	3	4	5
Improve cooperation between different groups	1	2	3	4	5
Resolve conflicts over land use	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Goal:</u> Improve the condition of the environment	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Improve sewage treatment	1	2	3	4	5
Improve condition of dump	1	2	3	4	5
Improve the appearance of downtown	1	2	3	4	5
Produce less garbage and set up recycling	1	2	3	4	5
Improve river bank for access and recreation	1	2	3	4	5
Create an integrated resource management plan	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

Scale: 1 = very important      3 = somewhat important      5 = unsure  
2 = important      4 = not important

<u>Goal:</u> Maintain a viable economy	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Increase commercial sale of country foods	1	2	3	4	5
Decrease our dependence on government for jobs and money	1	2	3	4	5
Use surplus power from Taltson River dam	1	2	3	4	5
Strengthen the Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4	5
Improve telecommunications	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce capital outflow	1	2	3	4	5
Build an all season road south	1	2	3	4	5
Improve productivity of the work force	1	2	3	4	5
Improve reputation of Fort Smith	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the number of retail facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Become a pioneering sustainable community	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the population	1	2	3	4	5
Other:_____	1	2	3	4	5
Other:_____	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Goal:</u> Meet individual human needs	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Address alcohol addictions	1	2	3	4	5
Develop more activities for youth	1	2	3	4	5
Develop more activities for seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Create jobs	1	2	3	4	5
Improve recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Address needs of the college population	1	2	3	4	5
Other:_____	1	2	3	4	5
Other:_____	1	2	3	4	5

4. What do you think is the single most important issue that needs to be addressed in Fort Smith? \_\_\_\_\_

### Solutions

5. For this question, we would like you to propose solutions to a few of the issues above. For three of your most important issues from Question 3 and 4, please give us a specific way that it might be addressed and solved.

Issue 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Issue 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Issue 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have any ideas for sustainable development projects that the Town could seek or promote? (opportunities, business ventures) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Which individuals or groups in this community do you feel will be most instrumental in creating the necessary change? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Data

In order to determine whether our sample is representative and if there are differences between groups, we would like you to answer some personal questions. Again, you have the choice to answer or not answer any of these questions. Please check or fill in as appropriate.

8. How long have you lived in Fort Smith?

\_\_\_\_\_ years (or born here \_\_\_\_\_ )

9. How long have you lived in the Northwest Territories?

\_\_\_\_\_ years (or born here \_\_\_\_\_ )

10. Are you a Native person? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes: How do you define yourself?

\_\_\_\_\_ Dene \_\_\_\_\_ Métis

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you female or male? \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

12. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

College or Trades Program: \_\_\_\_\_

University Program: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D:**

**Completed Job Strategy Forms**

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

## JOB STRATEGY

TITLE: ATTRACT MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

93.11.25

**1** What is it? (Describe in "action terms")

Start date:

The Town must promote itself to small scale manufacturing industries, service industries that can locate anywhere

**2** Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)

Chamber of Commerce  
Town of Fort Smith

Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?

Both

**3**

What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)

Town should assemble a promotional marketing package

Identify meetings and exhibitions where these types of businesses are likely to be found

**4**

Funding needed from:

- Economic Dev.
- Local businesses

How much?

\$ 50,000

How many jobs will be created?

Target 10-100

**5**

How long will it take to set up?

Promotional strategy - 6 months  
Relocation of industry - 5 years

**6** Who should take charge? Names:

Chamber, Don Webb  
Mayor, Dennis Bevington

**7**

Are there other benefits? problems?

Tax base increase, population increase,

More infrastructure requirements, bigger schools, etc.

Up & running by:  
1994

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY		TITLE: COLLEGE EXPANSION	93.11.25
<div> <div>Start date:</div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>What is it? (Describe in "action terms")</div> <div>Attracting more course ideas, more students, raising standards, more programs, active research</div> </div> </div>			
<div> <div>2</div> <div>Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)</div> <div>           College administration            Students            Alumni            GNWT            Gov't of Canada            Community interests         </div> </div> <div> <div>Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?</div> <div>Supportive role</div> </div>	<div> <div>3</div> <div>What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)</div> <div>           Employment requirements            Demography            Market areas for students            Lifestyle education            Identify research requirements in the North         </div> </div>	<div> <div>4</div> <div>Funding needed from:</div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNWT</li> <li>Gov't of Canada</li> </ul> </div> <div>How much?</div> <div>\$ ongoing</div> </div>	
	<div> <div>5</div> <div>How long will it take to set up?</div> <div>Ongoing</div> </div>	<div> <div>How many jobs will be created?</div> <div>Many</div> </div>	
<div> <div>6</div> <div>Who should take charge? Names:</div> <div>           President, Arctic College            Board of Directors            Local Advisory Cttee         </div> </div>	<div> <div>7</div> <div>Are there other benefits? problems?</div> <div>           Town infrastructure expansion            Political support         </div> </div>		<div> <div>Up &amp; running by:</div> </div>



# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY		TITLE: ATTRACT MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS		93.11.25
<div> <div>Start date:</div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>What is it? (Describe in "action terms")</div> <div>The Town must promote itself to small scale manufacturing industries, service industries that can locate anywhere</div> </div> </div>				
<div>2</div> <div>Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)</div> <div>Chamber of Commerce Town of Fort Smith</div> <div>Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?</div> <div>Both</div>	<div>3</div> <div>What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)</div> <div>Town should assemble a promotional marketing package</div> <div>Identify meetings and exhibitions where these types of businesses are likely to be found</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Funding needed from:</div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Dev.</li> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul> </div> <div>How much?</div> <div>\$ 50,000</div> <div>How many jobs will be created?</div> <div>Target 10-100</div>		
	<div>5</div> <div>How long will it take to set up?</div> <div>Promotional strategy - 6 months Relocation of industry - 5 years</div>			
<div>6</div> <div>Who should take charge? Names:</div> <div>Chamber, Don Webb Mayor, Dennis Bevington</div>	<div>7</div> <div>Are there other benefits? problems?</div> <div>Tax base increase, population increase, More infrastructure requirements, bigger schools, etc.</div>	<div>up &amp; running by:</div> <div>1994</div>		

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY		TITLE: AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CENTRE		93.11.25
<p><b>1</b> What is it? (Describe in "action terms")</p> <p>Create an aircraft maintenance and forest fire suppression facility</p> <p>Start date: Now</p>				
<p><b>2</b> Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)</p> <p>GNWT: Renewable Resources Fire Centre Econ. Dev't Transportation Federal Government Native organization Training Centres</p> <p>Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?</p> <p>Supportive role</p>	<p><b>3</b> What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)</p> <p>Infrastructure, other provincial systems, training centres, industry, local resources</p>	<p><b>4</b> Funding needed from:</p> <p>• GNWT • Federal Gov't</p> <p>How much?</p> <p>\$ 10,000,000</p>	<p>How many jobs will be created?</p> <p>90 seasonal 40 full time</p>	
	<p><b>5</b> How long will it take to set up?</p> <p>Six months</p>	<p><b>6</b> Who should take charge? Names:</p> <p>Local contractors</p>		
<p><b>7</b> Are there other benefits? problems?</p> <p>Local improvements, more money in community, jobs More people may lead to more social problems, more services needed</p>		<p>Up &amp; running by:</p> <p>May 94</p>		

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY		TITLE: ALL WEATHER ROAD SOUTH		93.11.25
<div> <div>Start date:</div> <div> <div>1 What is it? (Describe in "action terms")</div> <div>Build an all weather road access to southern transportation</div> </div> </div>				
<div>2 Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNWT, Canada, Alberta</li> <li>Wood Buffalo National Park</li> <li>Town of Fort Smith</li> <li>Fort Chipewyan</li> </ol> <div>Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?</div> <div>Supportive role</div>	<div>3 What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick the route</li> <li>Preliminary engineering and road design</li> <li>Environmental impact</li> </ol>	<div>4 Funding needed from:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal Government</li> <li>Alberta Government</li> </ul> <div>How much?</div> <div>\$ 50,000,000</div>	<div>How many jobs will be created?</div> <div>Construction: 50 person years</div> <div>Spinoffs?</div>	
	<div>5 How long will it take to set up?</div> <div>Three years</div>	<div>6 Who should take charge? Names:</div> <div>Ethel Blondin, MLA</div> <div>Dennis Bevington, Mayor</div>		
<div>7 Are there other benefits? problems?</div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wood Buffalo National Park</li> <li>No money</li> </ol>		<div>up &amp; running by:</div> <div>1997</div>		

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY		TITLE: GROW FOOD, SET UP MARKET, COTTAGE INDUSTRY	93.11.25
<div> <div>Start date:</div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>What is it? (Describe in "action terms")</div> <div>           -produce for our use and/or export            -work towards self-sufficiency            -make products accessible         </div> </div> </div>			
<div> <div>2</div> <div>Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)</div> <div>           -local people            -potential producers            -consumers            -entrepreneurs            -government agencies            -craft groups         </div> </div> <div>Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?</div>	<div> <div>3</div> <div>What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)</div> <div>           -potential markets (eg. wild rice, crafts)            -consumer demands         </div> </div>	<div> <div>4</div> <div>Funding needed from:</div> <div>           • Economic Dev't             • Renewable Resources         </div> <div>How much?</div> <div>\$ ? _____</div> </div>	
	<div> <div>5</div> <div>How long will it take to set up?</div> <div>Immediately</div> </div>	<div> <div>How many jobs will be created?</div> </div>	
<div> <div>6</div> <div>Who should take charge? Names:</div> <div>Interested groups</div> </div>	<div> <div>7</div> <div>Are there other benefits? problems?</div> <div>           1. New products for community            2. Tourism enhancement            3. Transportation industry            4. Work for local people            5. Location         </div> </div> <div>up &amp; running by:</div>		

# Fort Smith Sustainable Dev't Plan

JOB STRATEGY

TITLE: RECREATION INDUSTRY

93.11.25

Start date: **1** What is it? (Describe in "action terms")

Includes white water kayaking, adventure tourism, golfing, baseball, dog racing, mountain biking, Northern cultural experiences, (Friendship Festival)

**2** Who needs to be involved? (key actors, groups, gov't)

- local recreation groups
- Town of Fort Smith
- Chamber of Commerce
- Dene/Metis
- schools
- Big River Travel Assoc.

Is the Town the main actor or in a supportive role?

Supportive role

**3** What more do we need to look into? (research, estimates...)

- opportunities
- coordination
- promotion/advertising
- facilities
- promoting excellence/expertise

**5** How long will it take to set up?

Varies depending on activities

**4** Funding needed from:

- Town of Fort Smith
- G.N.W.T.

How much?

\$ depends

How many jobs will be created?

Many jobs could be created

**6** Who should take charge? Names:

- different clubs
- Recreation Board

**7** Are there other benefits? problems?

up & running by:

## **Appendix E**

### **Potential Side Effects of Job Creation Options**

## Appendix E: Potential side effects of job creation options

Option	Environment	Culture	Community Control	Human needs
Road south	-	o	o	+
College expansion	o	+	-	+
Aircraft maintenance	-	o	-	o
Market local products	+	+	+	o
Attract manufacturing	?	o	-	o
Tourism	+	+	+	o
Use surplus power	+	o	o	o

+ = positive effect

- = negative effects

o = no effect

**Road South:** Road construction always causes some environmental change and the presence of the road may disturb wildlife. Human needs will be more easily met through improved access to services.

**College Expansion:** If cultural programs are included in the expanded offerings, culture could be positively affected. Assuming that funding to expand the college comes from outside the community, our ability to control this type of development is limited. If the expansion were to pay for itself, community control would not be negatively affected. College expansion would improve access to education, thereby helping to meet human needs.

**Aircraft Maintenance:** This type of service produces waste. However we currently have 'state of the art' technology handling the waste at the base in Ft. Smith. It will also increase air traffic and thereby increase air pollution. This development and the jobs produced are government related and are externally controlled.

**Market local products:** Marketing and consuming local products will decrease the amount of fossil fuel used to transport items to Fort Smith. Providing a market for arts, crafts and traditional foods helps to keep these activities alive. This type of development is community controlled.

**Attract manufacturing:** Whether the manufacturing will negatively or positively affect the environment depends on the product being manufactured. If companies from outside Fort Smith are being attracted, the control of the development lies outside the community.

**Tourism:** As long as the development is sensitive to environmental concerns, tourism can positively affect the environment by giving economic value to wilderness. If tourism development focuses on culture, it can increase awareness of cultural activities and beliefs, build pride within the community and give economic value to cultural activities. This type of development would be community controlled.

**Use surplus power:** As the dam is already built and it is surplus power that will be used, there are no direct environmental effects. Using this power as opposed to non-renewable polluting sources would have positive environmental effects. If we produce methanol for fuel or hydrogen peroxide to replace bleach in pulp processing, there will be indirect positive effect.

**Part III**

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**A Guidebook for Northern  
Communities**



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## INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide northerners with information and ideas about how to plan for holistic development in their community—about sustainable development planning. Chapter 1 introduces the idea of sustainable communities and their development. Chapter 2 looks at sustainable communities in a northern context. Chapter 3 discusses sustainable development planning: the process in general, a planning project undertaken in Fort Smith, and the applicability of the process to small, isolated communities. Chapter 4 is a step by step guide to sustainable development planning for northern communities. At the end of the document there is a list of resources that could provide communities with more detailed information about certain aspects of northern sustainable development planning.

## Chapter 1

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

All over the world, small communities are facing crises because development focuses only on economics. The long term effects of development on local culture and the environment are rarely considered. Human needs are not adequately addressed by those in power—governments and corporations—and people have lost control over their own lives.

In Latin America and Africa, for example, farmers are encouraged to grow specialized cash crops for North American or European markets. This pulls them into the cash economy, making them dependent on selling their products to foreign markets in order to buy their own food. Hunger, as well as other social, environmental and cultural problems have resulted from communities' loss of control over their lives and livelihood.<sup>1</sup> In North America, many small communities have become dependent on single industries, single crops and frequently, single companies for their jobs and the local economy. Without diversity, these communities cannot survive when product prices fall, when resources are poorly managed or when companies decide to mechanize or shut down.<sup>2</sup>

In the north of Canada, permanent settlements and the cash economy are relatively recent phenomena. Their beginnings were with fur trading and commercial whaling; they continued to expand because of government policies to move Native people off the land.<sup>3</sup> Until very recently, northern economic development has focused mainly on non-renewable resource development, which has not directly benefited northerners to a great extent. For example, although the average personal income in the Northwest Territories was the highest in Canada in 1988, the incomes in resource-based towns were about three times higher than those in predominantly Native communities. Also, the rate of unemployment for non-Native residents was 5%, while for Native residents, it

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<sup>1</sup>Unklesbay, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>Clement, 1988.

<sup>3</sup>Hall, 1986.

was 30%.<sup>4</sup> Northern communities are experiencing hardship in all areas of community life—economic, social, cultural, environmental and political.

Many communities, in the north, the rest of North America and beyond, are struggling to regain control over their lives and land, meet the needs of community members, rebuild local economies, restore and protect environments and strengthen local culture. They realize that development must focus not only on economics, but must take into account social, cultural, environmental and political issues. This new holistic way of approaching development has been termed sustainable community development.

Sustainable community development seeks to address issues in an integrative way; that is, not allowing a focus on one area or sector of community life to create more hardship in other areas. Sustainable community development is also guided by the community, making sure that the importance of each issue and the solutions to issues are decided by the community. After all, it is community members who know the most about their community and it is they who will live with the consequences of the decisions.

## DEFINITIONS

To understand what sustainable community development is, one can look to the meanings of the three words. When something is described as **sustainable**, it simply means that it will exist or be maintained into the future. Therefore, sustainable agriculture employs methods that will not deplete the soil or require expensive and damaging chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Sustainable forestry maintains a healthy forest while removing only selected trees for sale. Generally, sustainable practices require that people look at things from a holistic perspective—they look at the whole, as opposed to individual parts. Sustainable development, in turn, looks at all aspects of development, not just economics. It involves making sure that development that is undertaken can be maintained indefinitely. Thus, sustainable development does not necessarily involve economic growth; growth is not sustainable in a finite world.

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<sup>4</sup>Dickerson, 1992.

The word **community** can be used in different ways, but a relevant definition is: a group of people that interact personally and are guided by collective decisions<sup>5</sup>. Thus, a community could be a small town, a neighbourhood within a city, or a group of people with a similar interest. In the context of sustainable community development, a community must be spatially defined as well; the community is a group of people living within a defined area. Thus, the boundaries of development are more defined—the people and the place.

**Development** in the context of sustainable community development is qualitative and could best be defined as progression or change in a direction deemed positive by the community. Thus, the definitions of these words give a clear indication of three concepts: sustainable community, community development and sustainable community development.

## **GOALS**

A sustainable community is one that can survive into the future—the community's activities can be maintained indefinitely. A sustainable community continually works toward five goals:<sup>6</sup>

- maintaining a healthy environment;
- meeting human needs equitably;
- enhancing cultural richness;
- building and maintaining an appropriate local economy; and
- establishing community control.

### **Maintaining a Healthy Environment**

In order to maintain a healthy environment, a sustainable community limits the use of non-renewable resources and uses renewable ones only at rates that allow those resources to replenish themselves. Community members and businesses produce only recyclable or biodegradable waste and only to the extent that it can

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<sup>5</sup>Boothroyd, 1991.

<sup>6</sup>Nozick, 1992.

be dispersed—by reuse in the case of recyclables and absorption and break down by either the natural ecosystem or an enhanced natural system in the case of biodegradables. Community members are aware of and minimize their resource use in daily life. The community takes into consideration these ecological limits when deciding which economic activities are appropriate, whether to create jobs or earn import revenues and incomes. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, trapping, hunting or other resource use is done in a sustainable manner—without toxic chemicals and by always maintaining a healthy ecosystem within the area. Some examples of ecosystems that should be maintained in a healthy condition are: the soil in agriculture, the forest in forestry, and the ecosystems of animals that are harvested. Industry does not produce toxic waste or other waste at a level that cannot be absorbed by local ecosystems. Construction practices take into consideration the efficient use of local materials, energy efficiency, placement of buildings for aesthetic and practical purposes, and building design that fits in with the local culture and natural surroundings.

### **Meeting Human Needs Equitably**

Human needs are varied and complex. In addition to meeting such basic physical needs as food, air, water, shelter and health care, we must also ensure that the community environment enables mental, emotional and spiritual needs to be met. These include policies that enable: political and spiritual freedom, respect for human rights, peace, a sense of belonging and connectedness, affection, and access to education, meaningful work, recreation, social support and natural environments.<sup>7</sup> All members of a sustainable community are able to meet these needs. Planning for sustainable community development begins with determining which of these needs are not being met within the community and which community members suffer from lack of access or opportunity; the shortcomings are then addressed and resolved. If there are insufficient resources to address all shortcomings simultaneously, the community at large must decide priorities.

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<sup>7</sup>For discussions of human needs, see Nozick, 1992, Chapter 6 and Gardner and Roseland, 1989.

## Enhancing Cultural Richness

Cultural goals within a sustainable community may include: ensuring that all community members are free and enabled to express themselves culturally; supporting and maintaining traditional activities; using and teaching traditional languages; celebrating diversity and learning from one another; eradicating all forms of racism and prejudice; building and/or maintaining a distinctive 'community culture'; and ensuring that development is rooted in that culture.

'Community culture' grows out of the unique way of life, history and natural history of a community. It means rejecting media-promoted mass culture.<sup>8</sup> It does not mean choosing and highlighting one cultural heritage, but rather determining what draws people together in the community and nurturing that process. Sustainability requires that there is continuity between past, present and future. One way to find local solutions to some of our present problems is to look to our communities' pasts; another is to imagine how we want our future to be.

## Building and Maintaining an Appropriate Local Economy

A sustainable community has control over its local economy—the global economy and outside interests do not control the community. After all, economies should be built by people to serve people, not *vice versa*. The economic activities in a sustainable community do not negatively impact its people, culture or environment. Likewise, the community must not be damaging or degrading to other communities or areas. A sustainable community is self-reliant and has a diverse and stable economy. It decreases its dependence on outside forces by producing as many goods and services as possible within the community, keeping jobs and money within the community as well. Businesses are locally owned and controlled, helping to ensure that local interests are served. This goal of self-reliance does not mean that a community must live in isolation or give up modern technology. It means that there should be a minimum of material exchange between communities; information exchange can be maximized.<sup>9</sup>

A diverse economy enables a community to respond to change. For example, if

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<sup>8</sup>Nozick, 1992.

<sup>9</sup>Korten, 1984.



the price of a particular export product falls or a crop has a poor yield, other prospering economic activities can be expected to pull the community through. Although an economically depressed community may initially need a period of economic growth, a sustainable community has a stable economy. Because "the economy is an open subsystem of the earth's ecosystem," sustainable economic growth is impossible.<sup>10</sup>

Communities can also address economic issues by looking to alternative systems of exchange. Bartering systems such as LETS (Local Economic Trading System)<sup>11</sup> are local systems of accounting for work traded between individuals in a community. They can assist in keeping people working and trading, especially in economically depressed times.

## Establishing Local Control

Local control means that decision-making about all of the preceding four goals occurs at the community level. Ideally, all cognitive members of the community have a general understanding of community issues and participate in making community decisions. Practically, as many members as possible are informed and have the opportunity and are empowered to participate. When community members make decisions about local development, those decisions are more likely to lead to culturally appropriate development. If more people are to participate in decision-making than at present, communities must be "human-scale."<sup>12</sup> Human-scale is small enough that there are some personal ties between most people and all community members can be involved and feel that they have some influence on the community's direction. One million people living in a city cannot practically be involved and in control of decision-making. Small towns and neighbourhoods within a large city are human-scale.

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<sup>10</sup>Daly, 1991.

<sup>11</sup>Linton and Greco, 1990.

<sup>12</sup>Gilman, 1991.

The process of sustainable community development reflects this goal of establishing local control. It strives to involve all community members in the planning process in a meaningful way. Community members themselves write a vision, identify and analyze issues, determine solutions, write and follow action plans and evaluate and repeat the process. A sustainable community is dynamic, constantly evaluating and improving its performance on the five goals.

## Chapter 2

### NORTHERN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

As stated earlier, the purpose of this guidebook is to provide information and ideas to northern communities to help them create a sustainable development planning process that is uniquely suited to their community. For the purposes of this document, a northern community is defined as one with: a small population; an isolated location; a 'northern climate' of long, dark and cold winters; a partially or wholly First Nations population; and relatively undamaged natural surroundings. Thus, northern communities in Canada would include most communities in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, and communities in the northern, isolated parts of some provinces. However, this document may also be useful to northern communities that do not fit this definition, such as temporary non-renewable resource-based towns and the capitals of the territories. Those communities that do not fit the definition might need to be more selective of information and more creative in adapting ideas.

### IMAGINING NORTHERN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Sustainable communities, wherever they are, have certain common characteristics. However, each sustainable community will look different and will have different activities taking place within it. These differences arise from differing cultures, natural surroundings and climate of communities.

What will a sustainable community in the north be like? Again, they will all be different. However, northern communities have particular characteristics that will shape their development towards sustainability. For example, northern communities are often made up of predominantly Aboriginal people with a cultural tradition of living off the land. In a sustainable northern community, hunting, trapping and fishing would continue to be important activities and country foods would still be important in the diets of many northerners. By living off the land, people obtain food locally, are not as dependent on making money in order to eat and keep traditional cultural activities alive. Another characteristic of northern communities is their long, cold and dark winters.

These winters requires high energy use and sustainable northern communities will have to determine the best local sources of renewable energy.

Figure 2.1 is a vision of a northern sustainable community. During the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project in 1993, community members were asked to describe their ideal vision of Fort Smith in the year 2020. Their ideas were compiled into a common vision for the community.

## **NORTHERN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

Although sustainable communities the world over have the same broad goals, the key issues in each individual community differ. Northern communities as a group deal with many of the same issues. They also have many of the same strengths and opportunities for dealing with them. The next section discusses sustainable community development problems and strengths common to northern communities. They are grouped according to the five focus areas of sustainable community development: environmental, economic, cultural, social and political.

### **Environmental Issues**

Northern communities present fewer environmental issues than southern communities. For the most part, the vast land area of the north has been comparatively undamaged. This leaves only the task of maintaining and conserving that state rather than restoring environments. That task is made relatively easy because the population is small and dispersed. Also, both culturally and practically, communities in the north have a better understanding of and greater connection to the land.

Environmental issues in northern communities are of three categories: waste, pollution and resource use. Waste management is an issue everywhere, including in the north. Although there are fewer people and less industry, garbage is still produced and must be managed effectively. At present, garbage is usually collected, dumped and burned, producing harmful airborne pollution. Solutions include: producing less garbage; sorting out reusable, compostable and recyclable

**Figure 2.1 Vision of Fort Smith in the year 2020, written by participants in the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project**

### **Sustainable Community Vision**

It is the year 2020 and Fort Smith has become a sustainable community. We meet regularly to resolve issues and determine new goals and courses of action. Past differences have been addressed and groups within the community are working together cooperatively. With the success of the Treaty Entitlement and Metis Claim processes, Aboriginal people have been compensated for past injustices and have jurisdiction over land and resources.

Community members are healthy and active. All abuse within the community has been dealt with. People take care of each other; youth and elders are valued, respected and involved. There are more opportunities to socialize: at the recreation complex, youth centre, theatre and bowling alley, and at cultural events and live performances. Cultural values, activities and lifestyles remain. There is a new Native education and cultural centre.

The town itself looks great. The abandoned buildings and junk have been cleaned up, there are lots of trees, the Cathedral is still standing and the streets are well lit. There is more and improved housing. The town uses only renewable energy sources, including the excess power from the Taltson River dam. Environmental awareness in Fort Smith is high. People sort their garbage for recycling, so the dump has little, but efficient use. The river bank has been stabilized and there are areas for picnicking and proper boat launching. Around Fort Smith, the environment remains pristine.

The population has grown and stabilized at 3500, thereby supporting a greater variety of businesses and services. People buy locally and Fort Smith has become more self-sufficient. The economy has strengthened and diversified, with jobs for all who want them. Education is still a focus: the new university is a leader in distance education. Cottage industries, environment-based industry, hydro-related projects and small manufacturing businesses have developed. We are producing food for the region and for export. Tourism has increased and expanded, focusing on culture, wilderness, hunting and fishing. There is some environmentally sound harvest of resources such as timber and minerals. With the new road south, we have better access to markets for our products and tourists have better access to Fort Smith.

Fort Smith is a model sustainable community. Communities in the territories, nationally and internationally recognize the achievements of our community—our story helps other communities to achieve similar success.

items; and ensuring that burning does not occur. Due to the small, isolated nature of most northern communities, recycling is difficult. At present, recycling facilities require a large population to be economically feasible. Transportation of recyclables south to facilities or to a central facility in the north would be possible for communities that have road access, but difficult for fly-in communities. Arrangements could be made, however, to refill with recyclables the trucks or planes bringing supplies to the communities.

Again, due to small populations in the north, air and water pollution may not seem to be issues. However, air and water pollution are global issues and all people should minimize their pollutant contribution. Air and water pollution are connected and their widespread effect is demonstrated by high concentrations of heavy metals found in hair samples of Inuit.<sup>13</sup> These heavy metals are most likely from industrial pollution entering the food chain and concentrating in the top predators, humans.

Generally, the main sources of pollution are energy production, industry and sewage. In the north, energy use is high; long, cold and dark winters and transportation of goods and people over long distances require large amounts of energy. Also, there is a reliance on carbon-based energy in many areas: oil, gas, diesel and wood. Communities should work towards using only sustainable forms of energy: those that are locally produced, not limited in supply and do not cause environmental problems. Examples include wind and solar power. Hydro power can be very environmentally destructive if it requires the construction of a dam, but small scale hydro and hydro from existing dams could be considered sustainable. Northern communities should also evaluate their sewage treatment and the emissions of any industry that might be present. These are not key issues for most northern communities at the present time. However, potential health and environmental risks need to be considered when making decisions about future development.

In the past, northern development has focused primarily on the extraction of resources. Resource extraction is alluring because it is lucrative. However, the environmental, social, cultural and political consequences of resource extraction

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<sup>13</sup>Hall, 1987.

need to be considered and weighed before choosing that development route and mitigated if that route has already been chosen. Although the environmental consequences of resource extraction such as mining, forestry, petroleum exploration and hydro-electric development are well known, other impacts may be more elusive. First, consider who is in control of the development, the money and the restoration. Do they care about the people, economy and environment of the area they are 'developing'? If local people are in control, the odds are that they care a lot more than a large multinational corporation. Second, consider who benefits, how much they benefit and for how long they benefit. If the development has a net positive effect on the local population for a long period of time, then it is probably a good development to pursue.

## **Economic Issues**

Building and maintaining an appropriate local economy takes analysis and effort at many different levels. Individual community members make choices about which businesses to support, starting new businesses and their own education and training. Local governing bodies make decisions about which businesses will be supported and what kind of industry to attract in their economic development strategies. At higher levels of government, decisions about allocating funds, resource use and developing training programs are made.

One important factor in building a sustainable local economy is to increase the diversity of the economy. The more diverse an economy, the more it will withstand changes in conditions such as markets or the availability of resources. Towns that are dependent on a single industry will die if that industry fails for some reason. For many northern towns, increasing the diversity of the local economy is a key sustainable development issue.

Another important factor in developing sustainable community economies is local control of the economy. If an economy is locally controlled, it is more likely to remain appropriate and sustainable. The effects of decisions and activities on the local people, culture and environment are considered by people who live in and are attached to the community. In order to become sustainable, northern towns

that are dependent on large externally controlled corporations or government for employment need to focus on creating more locally controlled jobs.

One way to increase local control and improve employment and prosperity in a town is to focus on meeting as many needs as possible locally. The more times a dollar moves from hand to hand within the community before leaving to pay for an imported item or service, the better. Consuming locally produced goods and services also ensures that people and natural areas in faraway places are not being exploited. In the north, meeting some needs locally is easier than in the south, whereas meeting others is more difficult. For example, most northerners have at least some traditional skills for meeting basic needs, such as hunting, trapping, collecting country foods, tanning, sewing and building. These skills and their products are still traded in the north, creating an informal local economy that should be maintained and expanded if possible.

People living in developed countries have become accustomed to many imported items. In most parts of Canada, we enjoy fresh produce and tropical fruit all year long. We drive cars and use computers built in other countries. Generally, we have no idea where the products we consume were made or who made them. We need to make an effort to find out where products are made, find locally made alternatives to imported items, do without some items if alternatives cannot be found or start producing alternatives in our home towns. In the north, agriculture is difficult, if not impossible, in many places. In those places where it is possible, it could be very lucrative as food prices and demand are high. Greenhouses could be used in areas where temperatures and soil conditions make outdoor agriculture impossible.

There are major problems with producing some items, such as cars or computers, in the north. It is impossible to compete with transnational corporations in a global market. These corporations have the advantages of an 'economy of scale' and cheaper labour and overhead costs in less developed countries. The concept of economy of scale simply means that the more items a company produces, the cheaper it is to produce one item. Therefore, the larger the market for an item, the more cheaply it can be produced. Thus, some items will always have to be imported, meaning cash has to come into the community from somewhere else to balance the books.



Although northern communities have the constraints of small local markets and large distances to markets, they have some unique economic development options. Eco-tourism development, focusing on cultural and natural history, could bring a lot of capital into northern communities. There is a growing market for adventurous educational travel experiences. Art and crafts, which already bring capital into some communities, can be lucrative. The sustainable use of natural resources is also an economic opportunity. If resources are made into products in the north, not just exported in their raw form, they will bring more capital and more jobs to the north.

Another characteristic of northern communities is a lower average level of formal education than southern communities. This can be a constraint in the information-intensive, post-industrial 'next' economy.<sup>14</sup> In order to participate in this often computer-reliant economy, attention needs to be given to increasing the graduation rate from high school and promoting post-secondary education and training. However, as discussed earlier, the higher level of informal education in traditional and survival skills can compensate by providing unique opportunities for starting small businesses.

## **Social Issues**

In the formation of a sustainable community, one needs to ensure that all community members can meet their basic physical needs and their mental, emotional and spiritual needs. Inequities that exist within the community based on gender, ethnicity, age, ability or sexual orientation need to be addressed. Finally, these needs must be met within the community as much as possible. A community may need the assistance of outside people and funding during a period of recovery and rapid change, but should work towards meeting needs locally in the future. Smaller communities, however, will not be able to have all resources available locally, such as hospitals or specialists.

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<sup>14</sup>Robinson and Ghostkeeper, 1987. The term 'next economy' comes originally from Hawken, P. 1983. The Next Economy. New York: Ballantine Books. 242 pp.

Many social issues in the north are also issues in the south. Basic physical needs are not being met. Adequate shelter, meaning housing with heat, water and electricity, is not available to all. Health care, although theoretically equally available to all, meets the needs of some better than others. Health care is often centralized, disruptive, intrusive and Western-based. There needs to be less reliance on distant medical services, more patient education and control and integration of traditional and Western-based medicine. Slow changes are being made, but there needs to be continued pressure to change.

Emotional, mental and physical needs are not being met. The need for meaningful work must be addressed through creative, culturally and environmentally positive local business ventures. Recreation facilities must be available for all, especially youth. There needs to be equal access to and support for education for all community members. Elimination of violence in the home and the community must be achieved for a healthy, sustainable society. Eliminating violence is a huge and multi-faceted project. It starts with personal healing and addictions treatment. People have to find inner strength and power, not gain strength from exerting power over others. We must take a new look at what constitutes a family, and the power relations within a family.

## **Cultural Issues**

A sustainable community has a strong local culture. It accepts and celebrates cultural diversity. Northern communities have a definite advantage in becoming sustainable because they generally have strong local cultures rooted in long histories. Because of their strong sense of place and ties to family and the land, northerners are more likely to remain in their home community and commit themselves to improving conditions there. There is a unity of northerners to oppose southern interests and cultural influx, especially by supporting northern achievements. In southern communities, it is often more difficult to determine what is unique about the local way of life, history or natural history. People often do not feel tied to the communities they were born in and move around trying to find somewhere that feels like home. It is more difficult for southerners to reject mass culture because they are more integrated into it.

All this said, many northern communities undertaking sustainable development projects might pinpoint preserving and enhancing culture as a priority. The tendency of the dominant industrial culture to overpower and destroy traditional cultures needs to be tempered. This is being achieved in many communities by recording and teaching indigenous languages, traditional knowledge and traditional activities. In addition, northern television and radio productions are competing successfully with southern programming.

The issue of racism and division of communities along the lines of ethnicity needs to be addressed in almost every community worldwide. Awareness of the forms of racism, personal and policy analysis, education and interaction between ethnic groups all help to overcome racism. By overcoming racism on a large scale, we will diminish violence and war.

## **Political Issues**

For a community to be sustainable, it must be in control of its own destiny. It must be able to make the decisions that will affect its future. Community members need to be aware of decisions that are being made and empowered to participate in the process. There needs to be cooperation among various community members and groups.

In the north, traditional decision-making structures were damaged by outsiders who came in and set up new political structures. Canadian politics, though more democratic than some, do not allow much room for the participation of the general population. This leaves people disempowered and disinterested. Creative new local structures need to be set up to increase citizens' awareness, interest and empowerment. One way this is being done is by re-establishing traditional decision-making structures, such as the use of consensus by the elected representatives in the Government of the NWT.<sup>15</sup> Another possibility suggested in the Fort Smith study was to have a talk back show on community television. When it comes to increasing participation in decision-making, northern communities have the advantage of being small. Political awareness is generally

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<sup>15</sup>Dickerson, 1992. pg. 190

higher in small communities because there is more casual social interaction and people care more about local issues.

Although northern communities generally have small populations, there are many political bodies that need to coordinate their activities and cooperate to address community issues. At the local level there can be First Nations, Metis associations, town councils and community groups. There are also both territorial and federal levels of government involved in the daily functioning of a community. Lack of cooperation can make these bodies inefficient or ineffective. However, when groups pull together, they can achieve great things.

A key sustainable development issue in the north is the settlement of comprehensive land claims and treaty entitlements. The issue of jurisdiction over land and resources and reparation for past injustices is important for political, cultural, environmental, economic and social reasons. It will change the political scene in the north dramatically, for example with the separation of the Northwest Territories. These changes are positive in that new, more participatory structures can be developed from the beginning—there does not have to be the slow, painful shifting of power that takes place in well established systems.

## Chapter 3

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

This chapter discusses a sustainable development planning process. The process is based on strategic planning principles and community participation tools. First, I will present the strategic planning process upon which the sustainable development planning process is based. Next, I will discuss the theory behind community participation. I will then outline the process used for the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project and its relationship to strategic planning. Finally, I will look at the sustainable development planning process in light of the small, isolated nature of northern communities.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

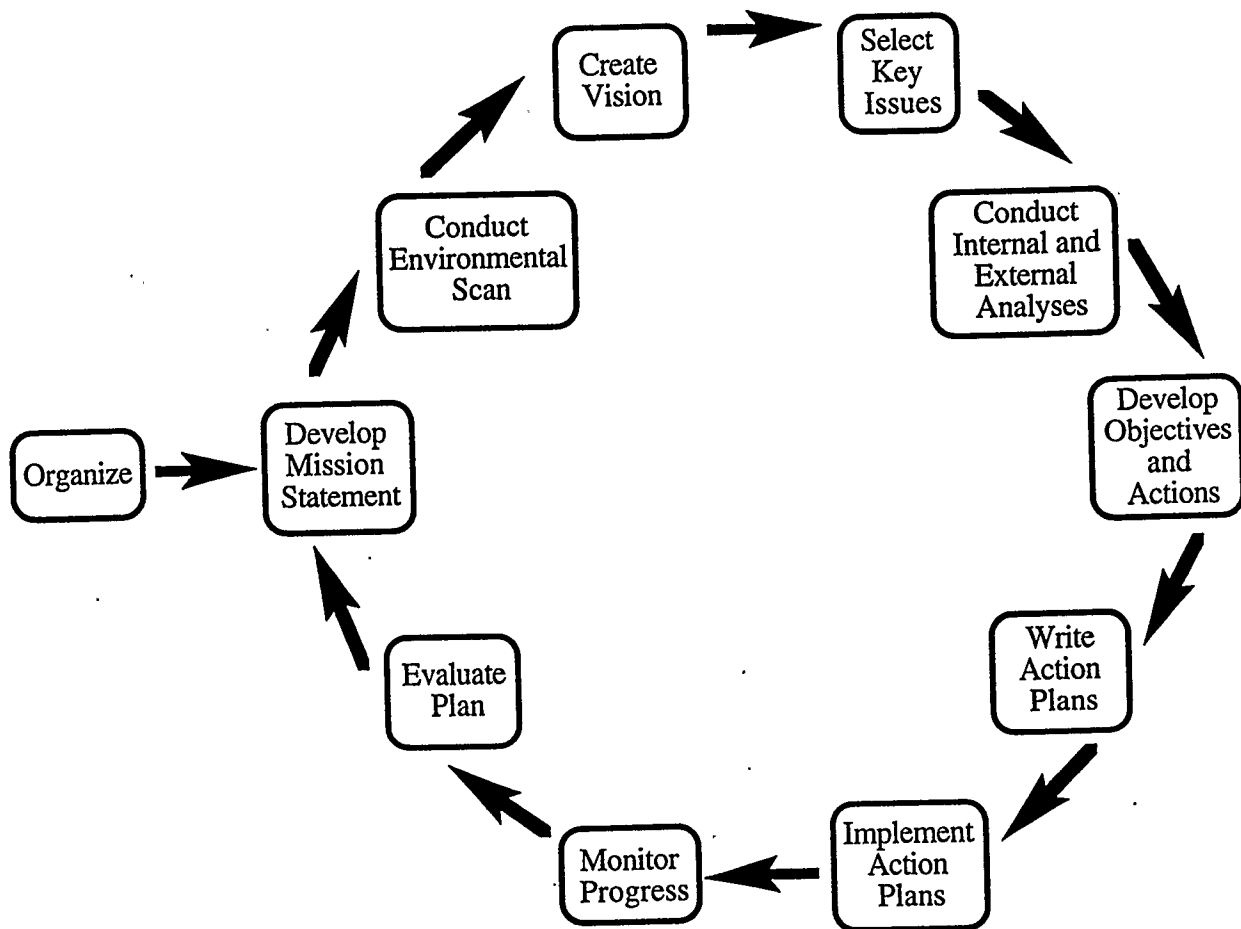
Strategic planning is different from other types of planning, essentially because it does not assume the future will be fundamentally like the past. Also, strategy presupposes that communities can use their capacities to shape the future. Thus, instead of reacting to conditions, strategic planners are proactive and they plan based on how they imagine the future can be. They work towards a vision, by first assessing the community's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats presented by forces at work in the outside world, then setting goals and determining specific actions for achieving those goals. Implementing the actions, monitoring the progress and evaluating the outcomes complete the planning process.

Figure 3.1 diagrams a strategic planning approach.<sup>16</sup> After organizing, the planning group develops a mission statement for itself. The group then does an 'environmental scan' to identify all possible issues for them to address in the plan. A vision is created which helps the participants imagine the future to determine possible ways to get there. From the complete list of issues identified in the environmental scan, key issues are chosen. For each key issue, an internal and external analysis is completed. The internal analysis involves determining what

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<sup>16</sup>This approach is drawn from Public Technology Inc., (no date available) and Perks, personal communication, 1992.

**Figure 3.1 Diagram of Strategic Planning Approach**



are the strengths and weaknesses of the planning group and, in most cases, the organization for which the group is doing the planning. The external analysis involves determining what are the opportunities and threats presented by the world outside the planning group (SWOT analysis<sup>17</sup>). Next, for each key issue, objectives and actions are developed. Action plans are written and implemented. Finally, progress is monitored and evaluated, leading to an identification of new issues to address. The planning cycle begins anew. This approach is discussed in more detail in the step by step description of the sustainable development planning process given in Chapter 4.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It seems unnecessary to discuss the importance of community participation in a guidebook written for communities. However, it is always helpful (and usually difficult) to put underlying principles into words. Participation of citizens in processes and decisions which affect them is the cornerstone of democracy.<sup>18</sup> Community participation has three main goals: it increases the success of a project; it builds local capacity or self-reliance; and it empowers community members and the community as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Community participation increases the success of a project by improving the likelihood that the project is relevant to the community and the community supports and is committed to the project. By participating in, understanding and guiding all stages in the planning process, local capacity and self-reliance are strengthened. Finally, the community and its members are empowered in a process which allows them to take control and see the results of their own action.

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<sup>17</sup>This is often referred to as a SWOT analysis. S and W stand for strengths and weaknesses, O and T stand for opportunities and threats.

<sup>18</sup>Arnstein, 1969.

<sup>19</sup>Paul, 1987.

## **FORT SMITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROJECT**

Fort Smith is located on the southwestern bank of the Slave River where it crosses the Alberta border into the Northwest Territories. Figure 3.2 shows the location of Fort Smith within the South Slave region. Figure 3.3 is a map of the town of Fort Smith. Fort Smith is a medium-size northern community with a stable population of around 2500, among whom 53% are First Nations—Dene, Metis or Inuit.<sup>20</sup> The students of Aurora College, previously the Thebacha campus of Arctic College, make up about 20% of the population. The Fort Smith economy is based on regional and park administration and education, with some activity in lumbering, forestry, sand and gravel operations, construction, tourism, trapping and market gardening.

### **Beginnings**

In February 1991, the Town of Fort Smith made a commitment to sustainable development. They transformed their Economic Development Board into a Sustainable Development Committee (SDC) and began to explore various sustainable development options. Because existing town plans did not address this new commitment, the SDC began a sustainable development planning project in July 1993. The project was designed to involve the community in all stages of a strategic planning process. The objectives were to:

- identify key issues facing the community;
- develop actions for addressing the key issues;
- produce a plan that would guide development of the town;
- involve all groups and ages in the process; and
- raise community awareness of sustainable development and its potential benefits to community life.

The Town of Fort Smith and the South Slave Research Centre put together a proposal for the project and sought funds from the Environmental Citizenship

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<sup>20</sup> NWT Bureau of Statistics, 1993.



Fund and the Arctic Environmental Strategy. In-kind contributions were provided by the Town of Fort Smith and the parent organization of the South Slave Research Centre, the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories. An outline of the project budget and income are provided in Figure 3.4. It is important to note that the student honorarium in no way represents the actual cost of a facilitator for six months work.

## **Planning Process**

The Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project used a variety of methods to involve people in the strategic planning process. These were carried out in three basic stages following the process outlined in Figure 3.1:

1. 'Mission Statement and Environmental Scan'—Workshop 1 with the SDC to identify sustainable development issues that need to be addressed in Fort Smith;
2. 'Key Issues Selection'—Meetings with community members and groups to identify the sustainable development issues most important to address, possible solutions and a future vision; and
3. 'Analyses, Objectives and Actions'—Workshop 2 with the SDC to determine actions Fort Smith could take to address the key sustainable development issues.

Figure 3.5 shows the steps within these stages that were taken to complete the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation are not included in Figure 3.5 as they follow the approval of the plan.

Figure 3.2 South Slave Region

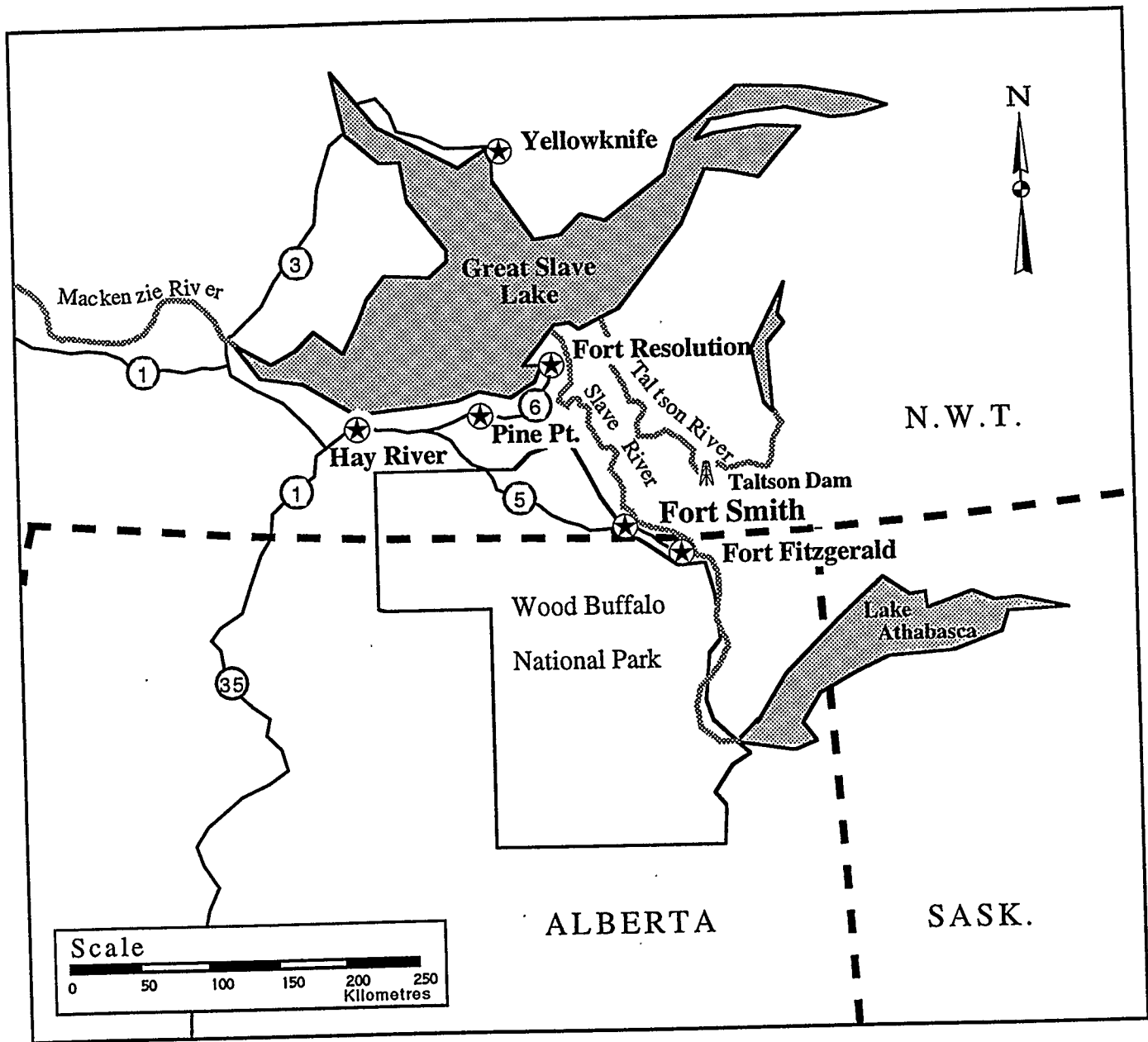
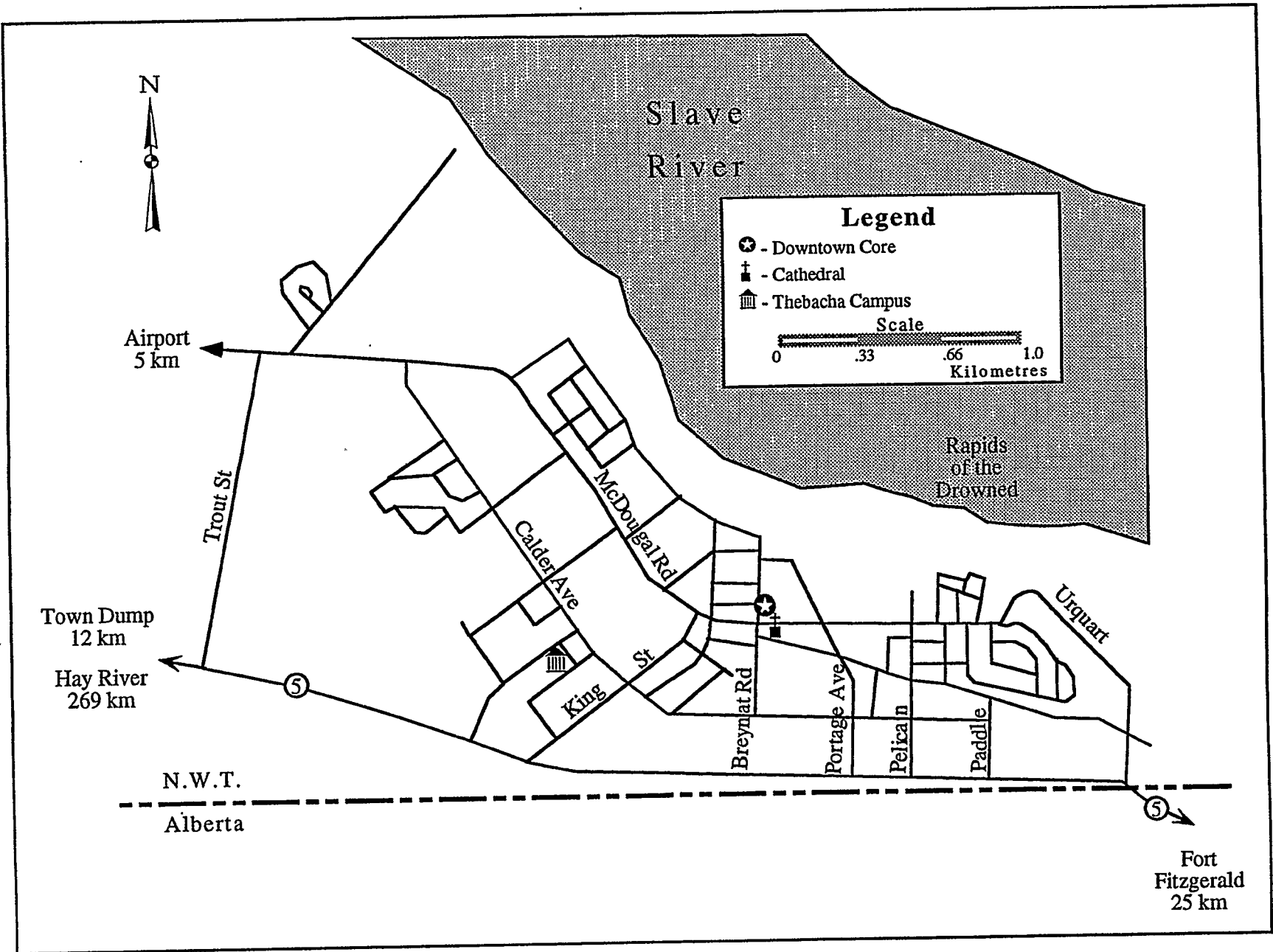


Figure 3.3 Fort Smith



**Figure 3.4 Budget for Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project**

**EXPENSES**

**Wages**

Project Coordination:	15 days @ \$200/day =	3000
Student Honorarium:		5000
Research Assistant:	10 weeks @ \$400/week =	4000
	Employee benefits	400

**Travel**

Calgary to Fort Smith: 3 trips @ \$666.67 =	2000
Accommodation:	10 days @ \$100/day = 1000
Per Diem:	10 days @ \$55/day = 550

**Other Expenses**

Telecommunications	500
Document Printing	1000
Advertising	800
Resource Materials	400
Interpretation	500

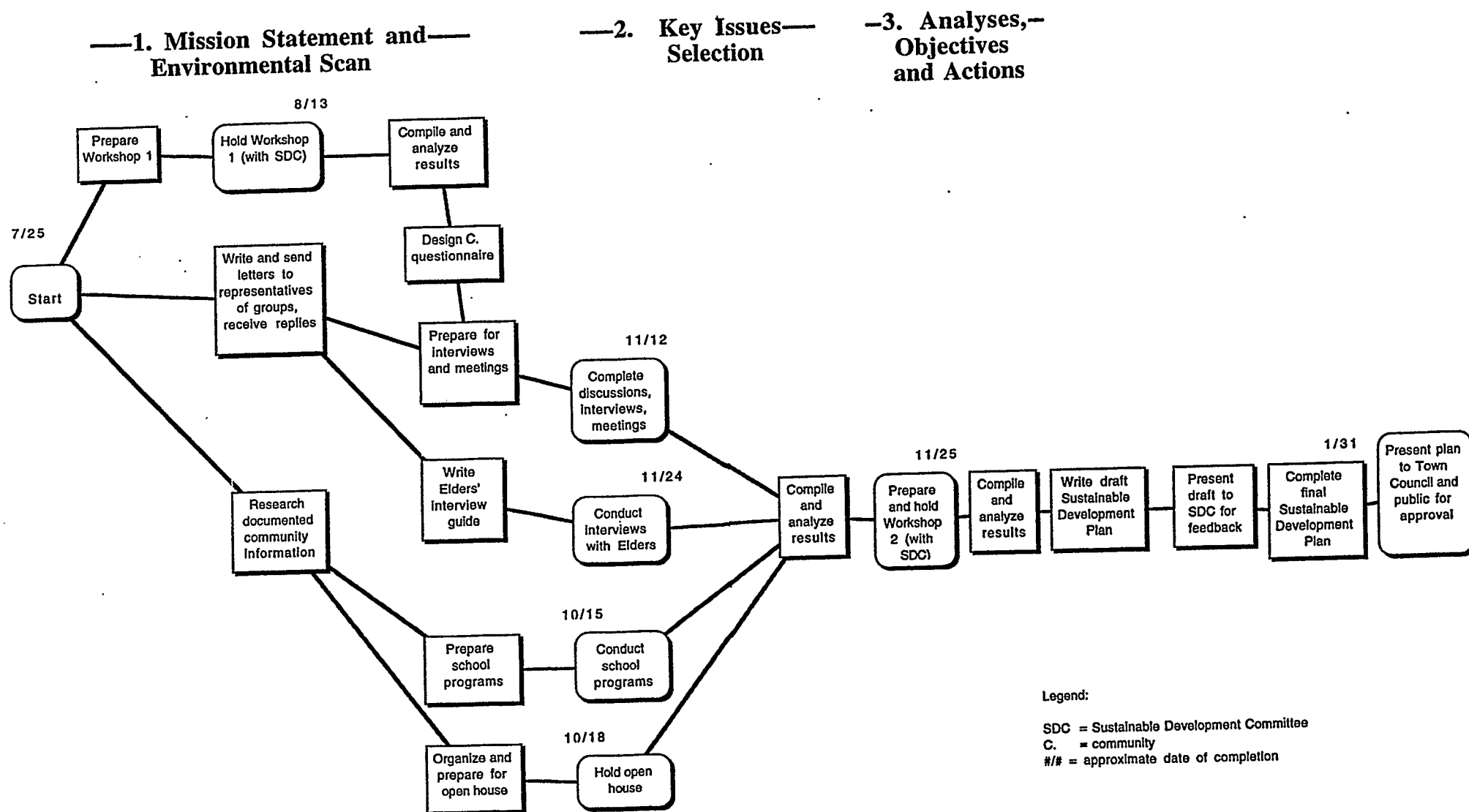
<b>Total</b>	<b>19150</b>
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**REVENUE**

Arctic Environmental Strategy	8300
Environmental Citizenship Fund	8300
Town of Fort Smith (in-kind accommodation)	1550
Science Institute of the Northwest Territories (in-kind administration)	1000

<b>Total</b>	<b>19150</b>
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**Figure 3.5: Flowchart of Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project**



## Resulting Sustainable Development Plan

Responses to a questionnaire confirmed that community members agree with the principles and goals of sustainable development. Individual community members' visions contained common threads that are consistent with the goals of sustainable community development.

The Sustainable Development Plan that resulted from the Fort Smith project consists of a set of goals and actions to be taken by the SDC or Town Council to work toward the goals. Figure 3.6 lists the goals and related actions. There are political, social, environmental, economic and cultural goals. Each of these goals and actions is discussed in the Sustainable Development Plan. A copy of the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan may be obtained from the Town of Fort Smith, P.O. Box 147, Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0.

Starting with their initiation of the project, the Fort Smith process was strategic planning with the community's participation at all stages. The process followed the strategic planning steps in Figure 3.1. Goals were set at the outset: the five goals of sustainable community development described in Chapter 1. An initial community assessment ('environmental scan') was conducted at a workshop with the Fort Smith SDC. The SDC brainstormed and produced a long list of community sustainable development issues and a Committee mission statement was drafted. Subsequently, at various community meetings, the twelve most important sustainable development issues were determined. These were taken to a second workshop conducted with the SDC, where the Committee conducted the internal and external analysis. For each issue, they determined the strengths and weaknesses of the Town Council and SDC and the opportunities and threats presented by the community. They then set objectives which either built on the strengths and opportunities or negated the weaknesses and threats. Actions were developed to fulfill the objectives. These actions are the basis of the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Plan. Fort Smith is now in the process of securing funds to provide a budget and salary for a full time person to focus on the implementation of the plan.

**Figure 3.6 Summary of Goals and Related Actions from the Fort Smith Sustainable Development Planning Project**

1. Improve cooperation among different community organizations and groups
  - 1.1 Highlight and build on positive examples of cooperation
  - 1.2 Recognize individuals who have had a role in building cooperation
  - 1.3 Create a think tank with members from key community groups, to build consensus around issues
2. Address alcohol addictions
  - 2.1 Encourage community organizations to work towards: creating a 'healing centre', having a full-time psychologist, setting up bush camps, improving awareness and education, and having more 'dry' events
3. Create jobs
  - 3.1 Build an all season road south
  - 3.2 Promote the expansion of Arctic College (now Aurora College)
  - 3.3 Create an aircraft maintenance centre
  - 3.4 Market locally-produced foods and other products
  - 3.5 Attract small-scale manufacturing and distributing companies
  - 3.6 Develop the recreation and tourism industry
  - 3.7 Use surplus power from the Taltson River dam to develop new industries
4. Improve the reputation of Fort Smith
  - 4.1 Improve the hospitality of our service sector
  - 4.2 Spread our good news through press releases, State of the Town reports, communications with college alumni, regional events and proud community members
5. Develop more activities for youth
  - 5.1 Assist in the organization of a youth committee to identify needs and access funding
  - 5.2 Assist the youth committee to address identified needs; for example, the creation of a youth centre and development of programs for youth to go out on the land with elders
6. Decrease garbage production, improve the town dump
  - 6.1 Decrease garbage production through education, positive reinforcement, a pay per bag system, office policies and reduction of the amount of incoming garbage
  - 6.2 Improve the dump by stopping the burning, moving the dump, and turning it into a recycling and reuse centre
7. Improve town appearance
  - 7.1 Pass a bylaw on property standards
  - 7.2 Have tougher enforcement of existing bylaws
  - 7.3 Provide incentives for improving property condition
  - 7.4 Continue to revitalize our downtown
8. Develop more effective public participation in decision-making
  - 8.1 Increase awareness of issues through a newsletter and weekly phone-in show on cable TV.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND SMALL, ISOLATED COMMUNITIES**

It is the small community that can make truly collective decisions, envision the future and work towards realizing that vision. In small communities people often have similar values, problems are more easily identified, motivation is strong, action can be quick and results are tangible.<sup>21</sup> Community projects involve enough people and resources to make them significant, yet they are not so big that they are lost in bureaucracies and political promises.

The sustainable development planning process used in Fort Smith is well suited to small communities. In a small community, a large proportion of the community can be involved in the process. Thus, less time needs to be spent making sure that a representative sample of the population participates. The community participation tools target the whole community and the facilitator needs only to make sure that those who participate are fairly representative of the community's mix of gender, culture, religion, income and age.

The specific community participation tools used in Fort Smith work in small communities. The open house was successful because it was easy to inform everyone of the event, a large number and cross section of people came and people gave useful input because the issues are immediate and important to them. In a small community it is easy to identify elders to interview. If there is only one elementary or secondary school, it is easy to determine which schools to go to.

Isolated communities function differently than communities that have neighbours, especially larger neighbours. People must meet most needs within their community and trips out of the community are rarer. This works to their advantage in becoming sustainable communities. It is easier to develop and maintain a local economy, establish local control and maintain and enhance local culture. The sustainable development planning process described in this guidebook assumes that the community is fairly autonomous and leaders from other communities do not need to be involved. It assumes that political, environmental and economic decisions can be made locally for the most part.

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<sup>21</sup>British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1991.



## **Chapter 4**

# **GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR NORTHERN COMMUNITIES**

This chapter is intended to guide a community through the sustainable development planning process. The process has been broken down into nine steps, with a detailed description of each one. Further detail can be found in the documents listed in the 'Resources' section.

The process begins with an individual or group within a community becoming aware of the need for a holistic approach to development. Once the links between various community problems are realized, it is obvious that solutions must take into consideration all aspects of the community. For example, if there are environmental problems within the community, it is important to determine how they are linked to the economy, culture, politics or social issues within the community before determining solutions. Or, if a community is deciding whether to pursue a particular economic development project, it is important that citizens consider whether they do or can control the development and what will be the environmental, social and cultural impacts of it.

The individual or group then has a responsibility to work at increasing awareness of and support for sustainable community development. This can be achieved by making presentations to various community groups, such as the First Nations, Metis association, town council and economic development board. Once there is enough support to start the project, the sustainable development planning process can begin.

### **1. ORGANIZE A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The first step is to organize a committee that is interested in guiding and being continuously involved in the complete planning process, from the environmental scan through to implementation and eventual evaluation. I will refer to this committee as the Sustainable Development Committee (SDC). It should have representatives from as wide a cross section of community groups as possible; it

should be large enough to adequately represent the people and interests in the community; it should provide a diversity of knowledge and opinion. However, it should not be so large as to be inefficient and unmanageable. Depending on the size and diversity of the community, a committee of seven to nineteen would be feasible.

In Fort Smith, the SDC had representation from political bodies, the college and businesses. If an already-existing group decides to take on the project, initiating the project is easier. However, the membership of a pre-existing committee may not represent all appropriate community sectors and the committee's purpose may not be sufficiently focused on sustainable community development; these deficiencies would have to be remedied by enlarging the group.

## **2. SECURE FUNDING FOR THE PROCESS**

Funding the sustainable development planning process should, in itself, work toward the goals of sustainable community development. The funding for the planning process should have a diverse base, making it resilient to change and as sustainable as possible. It should be controlled by the community and should assist the community in maintaining or improving the local environment, meeting the needs of its members, enhancing community culture and making the local economy work for the community.

The funding for the sustainable development planning project can be obtained by an existing organization or a new organization can be formed to fulfill this function. In Fort Smith, there was an existing community organization, the South Slave Research Centre, whose purpose was to identify community research needs and to facilitate and coordinate that research. The Centre secured the services of a graduate student and funding for the planning project from government-based grants. Other communities may follow a similar route or choose to develop a new organizational structure whose purpose it is to secure continual funding for community projects. Or, the two can be combined if an existing organization initiates the project and a new organizational structure evolves to fulfill more complex roles later on.

The new community organization can take many forms, each of which has its particular strengths and weaknesses. Which organizational structure a community chooses depends on local conditions and the specific goals of the organization. The organization may be a non-profit community development association or a community development corporation, which combines for-profit and not for-profit ventures. It may start simply, as a non-profit society, and develop into a more complex structure if its initiatives become more complex. More detailed information on these structures and examples of how they can work can be found in the 'Community Economic Development' and 'Success Stories' resources at the end of this Guidebook (page 46).

The resources which the community organization secures can come from its own for-profit ventures, other civil society<sup>22</sup> or 'third sector' activity, government grants and loans or donations from corporations or foundations. The 'third sector' fills the space between government and profit-oriented free enterprise, including such activities as growing one's own food, providing services for others through ventures such as soup kitchens, and fund-raising for causes.<sup>23</sup> Resources from any of these sources can be in the form of money, voluntary assistance, or donations of equipment, supplies or space.

Ideally, the community organization will be self-sustaining, using the earnings from its for-profit ventures to finance its not-for-profit community function. However, situations are rarely ideal or usually take a long time to approach that state. In the meantime, funding from outside sources and donations of time and other resources can maintain the activity of the organization.

### **3. HIRE A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR**

Once funding has been secured, it is usually desirable and necessary to hire a facilitator. The facilitator's job is to guide the SDC and the community through the planning process. She or he has many tasks: writing grant proposals; budgeting; hiring and training assistants; organizing and facilitating meetings and workshops with the SDC; keeping records of decisions made; organizing and

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<sup>22</sup>Dahrendorf, 1990.

<sup>23</sup>MacLeod, 1986.

facilitating meetings with community groups; interviewing elders and representatives of organizations; developing and delivering school programs; organizing and facilitating open house meetings; advertising the project and public events; analyzing data; writing reports; implementing action plans; monitoring progress; and evaluating results.

The facilitator would customarily be someone skilled in planning, generating action and facilitating meetings and discussions. She should have a good knowledge of community and sustainable development and the involved issues. She may be a community member or an outsider. A community member would have an advantage of knowing people and issues within the community; on the other hand, she would have a less objective view of the community and might be seen to be too involved in community politics. A person from outside the community—but a northerner—would have the advantages of understanding northern issues and being more distanced. When the facilitator is from outside the community, it can be beneficial to hire a local resident to serve as research assistant. The assistant can advise the facilitator about the community as well as receive training.

Depending on funding, the facilitator could be hired for the whole or a portion of the project. In Fort Smith, the facilitator worked only until the completion of the written Sustainable Development Plan. It is the responsibility of the community, the SDC and the Town Council to implement and evaluate the Plan. If it is possible for a community to hire a permanent facilitator, the continued focus of that person on the plan would help to insure that action plans are implemented.

In collaboration with the SDC, the facilitator decides the details of the planning process to be used for the project, for example: appropriate community participation tools; each task that needs to be completed; the person(s) responsible for a task; timelines; and the budget.

#### 4. HOLD FIRST WORKSHOP WITH THE SDC

At the first workshop, the SDC brainstorms community sustainable development issues; they identify the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect to generating and implementing sustainable development projects or plans; and they write a mission statement for the SDC. Many tools are available for working with groups. Experienced facilitators will have collected a set that they find effective. Brainstorming is one technique that will probably be used by most groups. The following are four rules to follow when brainstorming:

- List everyone's ideas,
- Do not discuss (at this stage),
- Do not question or judge, and
- Repetition is okay.

After all the ideas have been put forward, the facilitator can lead the group through a discussion of the ideas.

Throughout the planning process, it is important to focus and build on the community's strengths as well as identifying weaknesses that need to be acknowledged and/or remedied. This not only makes sure that all issues are addressed, it keeps community members feeling good about their community and its future. In addition to determining strengths and weaknesses, workshop participants can identify sustainable development issues and potential solutions. These are identified according to the wisdom and experience of the members of the SDC. The strengths, weaknesses and issues identified at this first workshop will be used to create a list of community issues. The community members will later select the most important issues to be addressed in the further planning stages.

Writing a mission statement is an important exercise: it clearly defines the general philosophy of the group—who they are; what they are committed to; who they serve; what are their goals; and how they are working to achieve those goals.<sup>24</sup> A mission statement should be of memorizable length. Also involved in

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<sup>24</sup> Perks, W.T. 1993. EVDS 699 Course Book.

this process is the writing of a clear definition of sustainable development that can be expected to satisfy the particular situation, circumstances and environmental context of the community. All committee members should agree on the definition; when discrepancies about the committee's role and focus occur, the group can refer back to it. A group might want to start forming the definition of sustainable development for their community from the five goals discussed earlier in Chapter 1.

The facilitator completes reports of the purpose, methods and results of each phase of the planning process. These reports can be in the form of 'briefing notes' distributed to the SDC at each stage. For the Fort Smith project, three sets of briefing notes were produced—one after the first workshop, the next after the community meetings and a final set following the second workshop. The briefing notes are usually included as appendices in the final plan document.

## **5. HOLD COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Community meetings are held to increase awareness of sustainable community development, to inform community members of the project and to gather the ideas and opinions of community residents at large. Meetings can take many forms, for example: interviews, school programs, open houses, and selected group discussions. Questionnaires can also be used to gather input from larger numbers of people.

In Fort Smith, representatives of community organizations completed questionnaires and were interviewed by the facilitator. A wide cross-section of organizations participated, including band councils, the Metis Association, the Youth Justice Committee, hunters and trappers, the Roman Catholic Church, the Friendship Centre, and various local businesses and government agencies. On the questionnaire, respondents rated the importance of various social, cultural, economic, environmental and political issues; and they suggested solutions to the issues. The list of issues presented to them was compiled from the workshop and from the facilitator's knowledge of sustainable development issues. The Fort Smith questionnaire is shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Fort Smith Community Questionnaire**

Sustainable Development Planning Project Community Questionnaire					
<p>As part of the planning process, we want to determine the issues that community groups feel are most important to address. The views of community members are important because the plan is meant to serve the community. This questionnaire will ask you about your views on development, the importance of particular issues, and ways to solve problems. The information you give will be anonymous; your name will not be recorded. If any question is uncomfortable for you, you do not have to answer it. If you are willing to participate, please continue.</p>					
<b>Community Views</b>					
<p>1. In this question, we would like to find out how community members view development. For each of the statements listed below, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about the statement.</p>					
<p>Scale: 1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = disagree 4 = strongly disagree 5 = unsure</p>					
a. Jobs are more important than quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
b. The Town should pursue any development that will provide jobs for Fort Smith residents	1	2	3	4	5
c. If an economic development project will harm the environment, we should not pursue it	1	2	3	4	5
d. We should strive to produce our own goods rather than import them from the south	1	2	3	4	5
e. Development means economic growth	1	2	3	4	5
f. Development should be holistic and address all areas of human life	1	2	3	4	5
g. Development should build on our community knowledge and way of life	1	2	3	4	5
h. Major economic and political decisions should be made at the community level	1	2	3	4	5
<p>2. In your opinion, how does the quality of life in Fort Smith rate? Very good 1 2 3 4 5 Very bad</p>					
<b>Community Issues</b>					
<p>3. The five general goals of sustainable development are listed below. For each goal, a number of specific Fort Smith issues are listed. Please circle the number that best describes each goal or issue's importance in your view. There are spaces for you to add any other issues that you feel are important.</p>					
<p>Scale: 1 = very important 2 = important 3 = somewhat important 4 = not important 5 = unsure</p>					
<u>Goal:</u> Enhance cultural richness and diversity	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Develop a more positive Native identity	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the number of traditional events	1	2	3	4	5
Retain and upgrade historic resources	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Goal:</u> Establish community control	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Settle land claims	1	2	3	4	5
Improve cooperation between different groups	1	2	3	4	5
Resolve conflicts over land use	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Goal:</u> Improve the condition of the environment	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Issues:</u> Improve sewage treatment	1	2	3	4	5
Improve condition of dump	1	2	3	4	5
Improve the appearance of downtown	1	2	3	4	5
Produce less garbage and set up recycling	1	2	3	4	5
Improve river bank for access and recreation	1	2	3	4	5
Create an integrated resource management plan	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Goal:</b> Maintain a viable economy	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Issues:</b> Increase commercial sale of country foods	1	2	3	4	5
Decrease our dependence on government for jobs and money	1	2	3	4	5
Use surplus power from Taltson River dam	1	2	3	4	5
Strengthen the Chamber of Commerce	1	2	3	4	5
Improve telecommunications	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce capital outflow	1	2	3	4	5
Build an all season road south	1	2	3	4	5
Improve productivity of the work force	1	2	3	4	5
Improve reputation of Fort Smith	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the number of retail facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Become a pioneering sustainable community	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the population	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Goal:</b> Meet individual human needs	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Issues:</b> Address alcohol addictions	1	2	3	4	5
Develop more activities for youth	1	2	3	4	5
Develop more activities for seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Create jobs	1	2	3	4	5
Improve recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Address needs of the college population	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4. What do you think is the single most important issue that needs to be addressed in Fort Smith? \_\_\_\_\_

**Solutions**

5. For this question, we would like you to propose solutions to a few of the issues above. For three of your most important issues from Question 3 and 4, please give us a specific way that it might be addressed and solved.

Issue 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Issue 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Issue 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed solution(s): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have any ideas for sustainable development projects that the Town could seek or promote? (opportunities, business ventures) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which individuals or groups in this community do you feel will be most instrumental in creating the necessary change? \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Data**

In order to determine whether our sample is representative and if there are differences between groups, we would like you to answer some personal questions. Again, you have the choice to answer or not answer any of these questions. Please check or fill in as appropriate.

8. How long have you lived in Fort Smith? \_\_\_\_\_ years (or born here \_\_\_\_\_ )

9. How long have you lived in the Northwest Territories? \_\_\_\_\_ years (or born here \_\_\_\_\_ )

10. Are you a Native person? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**If yes:** How do you define yourself? \_\_\_\_\_ Dene \_\_\_\_\_ Métis \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you female or male? \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

12. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

    College or Trades Program: \_\_\_\_\_ University Program: \_\_\_\_\_



During the interviews, people were asked questions about their organization, its goals and methods of achieving those goals; and they were asked to tell about their personal vision of Fort Smith in 25 years. The information on the organizations was used to gain an understanding of how the community was already addressing issues and which areas might need more effort. For example, it was determined that there are organizations which have alcohol and drug programs or job training, but there is a lack of focus on activities for youth.

Youth were consulted through school programs developed for elementary, secondary and college classes. All the programs involved an introduction to the project, but they differed in the complexity and detail of the information depending on age level. The secondary and college programs also presented an introduction to the concept of sustainable communities. The elementary and secondary programs included a listing of good things and bad things about the community, and some brainstorming of ideas about solutions to the bad things. The students then wrote or drew their visions of Fort Smith in the year 2020. The college students were led through the whole planning process: they identified the key sustainable development issues, did the internal and external analysis, and determined objectives and actions.

Elders were interviewed to determine what they felt were the most important problems in the community and some solutions to those problems. Specific questions were asked about issues that were deemed important in other community meetings. Questions were also asked about the past and about their vision of the future.

An open house was held for the community at large. The first display introduced participants to the project and the concept of sustainable communities. The other three displays were: Reflect on the Past; Examine the Present; and Create the Future. Reflect on the Past documented a brief history of Fort Smith and asked participants to record what should be kept from the past and what should be left in the past. Examine the Present started with a slide show of present day Fort Smith. There was also a large map of the Fort Smith area on which participants recorded what they liked and disliked. Each participant was asked to choose from a list of 30 issues the three issues they felt were most important. They were also asked how the issues could be solved. At Create the Future, the written and

drawn visions from the school programs were displayed and participants were asked to list what would be in their vision.

These are just examples of the ways different community participation tools can be used to involve a variety of community groups. Different methods will work with different groups in each community. This can be the most enjoyable part of the community process. Be creative and have fun.

After the community meetings are complete, the data is analyzed to determine which issues are most important. There can be any number—however many seems manageable in each case. There were twelve in the Fort Smith project. The ideas for solutions to the issues are compiled and can be used either by the SDC in determining actions at the second workshop or by the facilitator when writing the plan. Also, a community vision can be written from the community members' ideas.

## **6. HOLD SECOND WORKSHOP WITH THE SDC**

At the second workshop, the SDC looks for solutions to the sustainable development issues the community found were most important in step 4. The participants use the strategic planning methods outlined earlier. They analyze the strengths and weakness of the internal environment, their organization, and the opportunities and threats within the external environment, the community, in relation to each issue. This step may seem inconsequential, but it is the basis of strategic planning—analyzing the situation to create the best fit between the organization and its environment.

After finishing the analysis, each group then determines objectives for addressing each issue. The objectives are concrete, definable goals which build on the strengths and opportunities and negate the weaknesses and threats determined earlier. Actions are determined that will achieve the objectives for each issue.

Action plans need to be drawn up for each action. Each action plan should contain specific information about the tasks necessary to complete the actions, the people responsible for the tasks, the timeline and the budget. Flow charts as in

Figure 3.5 are helpful for breaking down this information. This step can be done by the facilitator or by the SDC, guided by the facilitator.

In Fort Smith, the participants completed the above steps—analysis, objectives and actions—in groups of two or three. They used tables as in Figure 4.2 to guide them through the steps and record the work in an organized way.

## **7. WRITE UP, VERIFY AND PRESENT PLAN TO COMMUNITY**

If, after each step in the planning process, the facilitator writes briefing notes reporting the results, the writing of the plan is made easier.<sup>25</sup> The methods and results sections are written and the document will need an executive summary, introduction, discussion of the actions, action plans and conclusion. The executive summary should contain a brief overview of the project, the key issues, the actions for addressing each issue and the overall budget and timeline.

The plan should be verified with and adopted by the SDC. It can then be presented to the community at a public meeting. Copies of the plan should be readily available so that awareness of the plan and its recommendations is high. The implementation plan should ensure that momentum is not lost with the production of the document. The SDC and, if possible, the facilitator should oversee the project at least through the next stage.

## **8. IMPLEMENT PLAN**

If the plan includes clearly defined objectives, actions and action plans, this step has an easier beginning. As each plan will have its own components, it is difficult to generalize about this step. Most likely, funds will need to be secured for both a salary for the facilitator and a budget to implement the action plans. At this stage, the facilitator's role can include: making sure individuals and agencies responsible for completing particular action plans remain focused on that goal; completing action plans or component tasks; securing funding; revising objectives

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<sup>25</sup>Perks, W.T. 1993. Personal communication.

**Figure 4.2 Tables used to determine actions for addressing key issues during Workshop 2 with the SDC in Fort Smith**

Internal Environment: (examples: SDC and/or Town Council)

Key Issue	Strengths	Weaknesses
Issue 1: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
Issue 2: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>

External Environment: (example: The community and world beyond the community)

Key Issue	Opportunities	Threats
Issue 1: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
Issue 2: _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>

Objectives:

- Issue 1:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Issue 2:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

Actions:

- Issue 1:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Issue 2:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

and tasks within action plans; monitoring work on the plan; and keeping the community informed about progress on the plan.

## **9. EVALUATE AND REPEAT PROCESS IN FIVE YEARS**

After about five years, the community evaluates the plan and begins the planning cycle again. It is a time to celebrate the work accomplished and generate support and action for a new plan. Focus needs to be brought to reevaluating the community and determining which sustainable development issues are now most important. Some issues in the previous plan may not have been addressed, but after five years they should be reexamined. The reasons why the action plans were not implemented should be determined and new plans developed.

## CONCLUSIONS

A community needs to focus on and balance three things as it works toward sustainability: process, results and continuation. The following are conclusions about sustainable development planning which result from reflection on these three things.

- Initiation of the planning process should come from the community. This will ensure that there is commitment to the success and continuation of the project.
- The planning process must be participatory, involving as many and as wide a range of community members as possible.
- Local skills should be employed and built in the planning process, ensuring that the skills necessary to continue the process are in the community even if the facilitator leaves.
- There should be tangible accomplishments built into the planning process which are illuminated to keep interest in the project high.
- Funding for the project may initially come from outside sources, but concerted attention needs to be given to finding long term sources of funding. Securing continued funding for the process should be a result of the work done in the initial funded period.
- The process needs to achieve social, environmental, cultural, economic and political goals to be truly sustainable.
- Clear and detailed action plans need to be developed for each action decided on in the planning process. These plans should include information such as the tasks necessary to complete the action, the person responsible for each task, a timeline and a budget.
- To ensure that objectives are met and community faith in the project remains high, monitoring and troubleshooting must occur throughout the implementation phase.

- Evaluation of progress, reaffirming of goals and renewed effort in identifying new issues needs to occur at regular intervals of perhaps five years to maintain momentum toward sustainability.

Sustainable community development—holistic development guided by a community—is a process that can lead to great change. The process outlined in this document comes from personal experience in Fort Smith and is meant as a guide, to be adapted by communities as need be. My hope is that it will help communities act to create a positive and sustainable future. Combined with support at both the individual and higher political levels, we can resolve the crises we are facing and work towards positive new goals.

## RESOURCES

### BACKGROUND READING

**Ekins, Paul *et al.* 1992. *The Gaia Atlas of Green Economics*. New York: Doubleday.**

This atlas clarifies the subject of economics by presenting the fact that it cannot be considered separately from ethical and ecological considerations. It considers the consequences of the drive to amass wealth and offers some ways to redirect this drive. It is a creatively presented introduction to economics as we know it and as it could be.

**Henderson, Hazel. 1988. *The Politics of the Solar Age: Alternatives to Economics*. Indianapolis: Knowledge Systems, Inc.**

This book outlines the underlying causes of the changes that are occurring in the world today. It looks at the failure of and transformation beyond industrialism, exploring how disciplines other than economics should be used to create public policy. It also looks at how the discipline of economics itself needs to be overhauled.

**Mellor, Mary. 1992. *Breaking the Boundaries: Towards a Feminist Green Socialism*. London: Virago Press.**

Mellor pursues many of the issues facing societies today and advocates that we bring together elements of feminism, Green politics and a new kind of socialism to create a political vision for the future.



**Starhawk. 1993. *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. New York: Bantam Books.**

This is a novel set in the twenty-first century, examining a future which contains a sustainable society based on peace, democracy, feminism, ecology and freedom, and an unsustainable one based on war, authoritarianism, patriarchy, consumption and slavery. Although some may consider parts of it too 'new age', it successfully shows what a sustainable future might look like and how we might get there.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy.  
1991. *Sustainable Communities*.**

This booklet was written to stimulate public discussion and provides a good introduction to a concept of and process for achieving sustainable communities. It focuses on communities adopting ecological limitations, developing social equity goals and working toward economic viability. The British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy is located at: Suite 229, 560 Johnson Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 3C6. Their phone number is (604) 387-5422 and their fax number is (604) 356-9276.

**Nozick, Marcia. 1992. *No Place Like Home: Building Sustainable Communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.**

This book provides an important and thorough overview of sustainable communities and their development. It presents and discusses the five goals of sustainable community development referred to in this guidebook. Some of the chapters include: Confronting the Global Economy, Working Toward Self-Reliance, Harmonizing with Nature, Attaining Community Control, Meeting Individual Needs, and Building Community Culture.

**Plant, Judith and Christopher Plant (Eds.). 1992. *Putting Power in its Place: Create Community Control!* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.**

This collection of essays identifies the interests of those in power and some of the obstacles to the struggle to transform the current power structure. The contributors advocate bringing control back to the community level where people make decisions appropriate for themselves and their local environment. Also included are inspiring stories of several communities that have reclaimed their power.

**Ward-Whate, Louise and Joanne Mills. 1994. *Discovering Your Community: A Cooperative Process for Planning Sustainability.* Victoria: Harmony Foundation.**

This workbook flows from a sustainable community planning project in Nelson, British Columbia. It guides the reader through organizing, building a team, gathering and analyzing community information, reporting findings to the community, moving to action and evaluating the project. It contains an extensive resource list. The address of the Harmony Foundation is 1183 Fort St., Victoria, BC, V8V 3L1.

## **COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Canada/Yukon Economic Development Agreement. 1987.**  
**Community Economic Development Series:**

Booklet 1: *Finding Your Own Way: An Introduction to Community Economic Development for Yukon Communities*

Booklet 2: *Discovering Your Community's Operational Resources*

Booklet 3: *Building a Community Economic Development Organization*

Booklet 4: *Achieving Success: Community Economic Development Initiatives in Northern Communities*

a list of organizations and publications for further information. The second booklet shows how community economic development planning associations can be used to identify possible projects in a community and decide on priorities for action. The third booklet discusses how to develop an action plan for a community economic development project and five common options for organizational structure. The fourth booklet outlines six case studies of successful community economic development projects in northern communities. These publications are available from the DIAND Economic Development Directorate at (403) 667-3180 or from the Yukon Department of Economic Development: Mines and Small Business at (403) 667-5461.

**Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy. 1994.**  
***Community Economic Development Program: Building a Future***  
**(Status Report 1992-1993). Ottawa: Ministry of Public Works**  
**and Government Services Canada.**

This report gives an overview of DIAND's Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy, specifically the Community Economic Development Program. The Program is a source of funding for aboriginal communities wanting to undertake community economic development. The booklet also gives snapshots of First Nations community economic development organizations and projects in different regions in Canada.

**Dauncy, Guy. 1988. *After the Crash: The Emergence of the Rainbow Economy*. Basingstoke, UK: Green Print.**

Dauncy traces the emergence of a new economy based on a whole spectrum of values, including environmental, social, economic, spiritual, local community and planetary values.

**Dobson, Ross V. G. 1993. *Bringing the Economy Home From the Market*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.**

This book examines the processes by which local communities have become dependent on the global market economy. It argues that community economic development can initiate the process of rebuilding communities by bringing the economy home again.

**Wismer, Susan and David Pell. 1981. *Community Profit: Community-based Economic Development in Canada*. Toronto: Is Five Press.**

This book contains an introduction to community economic development, stories of seven community projects and information on how to get started, organize, find resources, and manage finances and people.

## **PROCESS**

**Canadian Round Tables. 1993. *Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles*.**

These guidelines emphasize the importance of process in achieving the goals of sustainable development. The booklet is written for a general audience and discusses why to use, what is meant by, the guiding principles of, and the key steps in consensus processes. Copies are available from: National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1500, Ottawa, ON, K1N 7B7. Their phone number is (613) 992-7189 and their fax number is (613) 992-7385.

**Development Indicator Project Steering Committee. 1991. *Using Development Indicators for Aboriginal Development*.**

Written in a guidebook format by a steering group directed by First Nations, this document presents a tool which can assist First Nations with monitoring, assessing and implementing development goals. It explains concepts relating to

development indicators and development planning, explains how development indicators can be used in the different stages of the planning process, and shows how aboriginal groups have used the worksheets in real life.

**Schwartz, Peter. 1991. *The Art of the Long View*. New York: Doubleday.**

Like most books on strategic planning, this book is written from a corporate perspective. However, it is written for a general audience. It introduces strategic planning and describes one method which is somewhat different from the method described in this guidebook because it involves writing scenarios.

## **SUCCESS STORIES**

**MacLeod, Greg. 1986. *New Age Business: Community Corporations That Work*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.**

This book looks at three areas which have suffered from economic difficulty and have responded by forming new structures for economic development, long-term structures which focus on community improvement. The three case studies, New Dawn in Cape Breton, J.A.L. in Eastern Quebec and Mondragon in Northern Spain, are business enterprises which help us understand community development.

**Perry, Stewart and Mike Lewis. 1994. *Reinventing the Local Economy: What 10 Canadian Initiatives Can Teach Us About Building Creative, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities*. Vernon, BC: Centre for Community Enterprise.**

This book examines ten local initiatives that combine social and economic objectives. It focuses on marginalized communities in urban settings, but can provide insight into combining these goals in other settings as well.

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