

Trail District – Strategic Priorities Workshop Report May 2003

The purpose of this report is to document the proceedings of a one day Strategic Priorities workshop held on Friday May 9, 2003 in Trail, British Columbia.

The agreed upon objective of the workshop was to follow a process that would enable the group to arrive a set of ‘strategic priorities’ that could ultimately be the focus within an overall strategic plan for the community.

The process logic for the workshop on strategic priorities was: a) review of the scenarios, b) identification of key elements of a Vision and some discussion on each of these elements, c) a sense for how far the community is from this desired end-state (gap analysis) leading to d) conclusions on priorities.

Scenario Review & Update

We completed a review of the Trail Community scenarios – the objective was to make revisions and to discuss insights and learnings from the scenarios. There were no suggested revisions from the group. Observations regarding the scenarios:

Metals & Innovation

- ❖ The scenario leverages the strengths of the community
- ❖ It indicated the need to be competitive in other areas as well
- ❖ What will be the motivation to move toward this scenario?
- ❖ Where will the capital investment come from?

Survival by Default

- ❖ A sense of complacency permeates throughout this scenario
- ❖ Resistance to change is strong and people are typically looking for someone else to do something
- ❖ Many are happy with the ‘status quo’

No Smoke To Eat

- ❖ Also a scenario where there is an expectation that someone else will do something or initiate something e.g. the provincial or federal governments

Phoenix Rising

- ❖ A driver of this scenario is the crisis mindset without the crisis – this was the mindset that resulted in much of the progress made prior to the actual crisis brought on by the closure of the smelter

- ❖ Emphasized the need to focus on the vertical axis of our scenario framework i.e. innovation and adaptability and the importance of changing the culture and mindset within the community

Vision Framework

The next step in the process was to establish the elements of a vision framework – the group was asked if they were describing the desired end state (10 years out) for their community – what would be the major elements or descriptors?

A brainstorming session produced a number of ‘elements’ which were then grouped into the following major categories:

- ❖ Infrastructure
- ❖ Lifestyle
- ❖ Growth – people/population numbers
- ❖ Growth – economic diversification, ‘we are open for business’
- ❖ Governance and Structure
- ❖ Physical or ‘built environment’
- ❖ Social well being
- ❖ Culture & Mindset – a sense of self-determination, confidence and a sense of control
- ❖ Leadership

Infrastructure – discussion

- ❖ Air access – 98% reliability
- ❖ N-S corridor and a 24 hour border crossing
- ❖ Rail improvements
- ❖ Regional public transport
 - Connections to Spokane
- ❖ Physical presence for higher education – bricks & mortar
- ❖ Tourism infrastructure involving:
 - River
 - Red Mountain
 - Spas
 - Golf
 - Marketing
- ❖ Communication/technology – broadband/wireless, etc.
- ❖ Water/waste mgt./sewage/power
- ❖ Hospital & health

Leadership

- ❖ Progressive and proactive
- ❖ Not reactive

- ❖ All types of leaders required
- ❖ Empowered
- ❖ Leaders for the long term
- ❖ Committed
- ❖ Leaders who have a sense for the future
- ❖ Inclusive approach
- ❖ Capable of public relations and communication
- ❖ Positive
- ❖ Built on a sense of trust
- ❖ Leadership translating into a reputation for the community

Governance and Structure

- ❖ Working better together
- ❖ Representative governance
- ❖ Administrative efficiency
- ❖ Cooperation and coordination
- ❖ More regional control of taxes, education and health
- ❖ Trust and respect

Lifestyle

- ❖ Recreation
- ❖ Leisure opportunities
- ❖ Green space
- ❖ Senior assets
- ❖ Youth assets e.g. skateboard parks, daycare facilities etc.
- ❖ Arts & culture
- ❖ Range of housing options
- ❖ Environmental stewardship – target of zero waste
- ❖ Shopping facilities

Social Well Being

- ❖ Knowing your neighbour
- ❖ Health and wellness
- ❖ Safety and policing
- ❖ Community pride
- ❖ Learning
- ❖ Community network of services that are integrated
- ❖ Good education and health facilities
- ❖ Adequate planning of neighbourhoods as opposed to ad hoc unplanned growth

Growth – people/population

- ❖ Sustainable increases in population
- ❖ Retain retirees
- ❖ Attract more young families
- ❖ A balanced community- ethnic diversity
- ❖ Embrace new-comers

❖ Entrepreneurs

Growth – economic

- ❖ ‘Positive’ growth – reflects diversity of opinions on how much growth is good!
- ❖ Embrace new entrepreneurs
- ❖ Expansion of existing businesses
- ❖ Diversification – attraction of new businesses – establish small number of new ‘niches’
- ❖ Medium and high value (rather than cost)
- ❖ More jobs
- ❖ ‘open for business’ mindset
- ❖ incentives and or breaking down of barriers to new business
 - local taxation
 - approval process
 - availability of serviced land
 - business expertise support – required to support business start-ups/expansions
- ❖ New businesses from local people and new entrants to the community
- ❖ Expanded Red Mountain
 - 4 seasons with Columbia River
 - access important
 - enhanced snow making
- ❖ Centres of Excellence/Innovation

Physical or Built Environment

- ❖ Downtown revitalization
- ❖ Compact communities with green spaces
- ❖ Not urban sprawl
- ❖ Neighbourhood revitalization
- ❖ Compatible resource practices

Culture and Mindset

- ❖ Innovative adjustment/change
- ❖ Entrepreneurial
- ❖ Optimistic outlook
- ❖ Personal responsibility
- ❖ Value diversity
- ❖ Flexible
- ❖ Cosmopolitan
- ❖ Change orientation

.....this framework may prove to be useful as a vehicle for discussion and dialogue with the community with regard to the desired end state or vision.

Gap Analysis

The group was asked to consider each of the vision elements in terms of the desired end state vs. the current state = the gap between 'where the community wants to move and the current situation'

For each element, participants were asked to consider the gap in terms of: a) the sheer magnitude or size of the gap – how far apart are we? b) how challenging will it be to close the gap and c) how important is it for the community to close the gap. Participants were asked to vote for their top three choices. Table 1 summarizes the results:

Table 1 Gap Analysis

Vision Element	Magnitude	Challenge	Importance
Infrastructure	11	11	13
Lifestyle	0	0	1
Growth – people	10	8	3
Growth – economic	20	20	19
Governance	10	9	8
Physical or built environment	0	0	1
Social Well Being	0	0	0
Culture & Mindset	9	13	14
Leadership	4	1	4

Strategic Priorities

Consistent with the prioritization theme throughout the day, the above gap analysis pointed toward 4 areas for further discussion. A discussion of each of Infrastructure, Growth, and Culture and Mindset followed. The question of governance was not considered further.

Infrastructure – discussion

Infrastructure – sub components	Prioritization – number of votes
Air access – 98 % reliability	13
N-S corridor and 24 hour crossing	10
Rail improvements	0
Regional transportation – link to Spokane	0
Physical presence for higher education	5
Tourism	12
Communication/technology –	15

broadband/wireless etc.	
Water/waste/sewage/power	1
Hospital and health	5

....it was determined that the three most important infrastructure priorities for the community should be to improve air access, expand/develop communication links including broadband and wireless and further develop the region's tourism capacity, including Red Mountain

Growth – economic

- ❖ 'Positive' growth – reflects diversity of opinions on how much growth is good!
- ❖ Embrace new entrepreneurs
- ❖ Expansion of existing businesses
- ❖ Diversification – attraction of new businesses – establish small number of new 'niches'
- ❖ Medium and high value (rather than cost)
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 - access important
 - enhanced snow making
- ❖ Centres of Excellence/Innovation

These elements were synthesized down to seven components:

Economic Growth – sub components	Prioritization – number of votes
Expansion of existing business	7
Diversification – focus on niches	9
Medium & high value business	1
More jobs – numbers of jobs	0
Incentives / removal of barriers	7
Tourism	9
Centres of Excellence	5

....it was concluded that the top two areas of focus regarding economic growth are: 1) diversification of the local economy 2) expanding the tourism capacity of the region

Mindset and Culture

The group had a clear sense of what this means – the focus of the discussion was on how to begin to change the mindset and culture within the community toward the desired state. The following ideas were tabled:

- ❖ We need to be vigilant in dispelling rumors
- ❖ Each person needs to look for the positive – to talk positively (especially critical for leaders within the community to do so – i.e. the champions need to ‘walk the talk’)
- ❖ Nurture confidence within the community – share success stories
- ❖ ‘Do not cloud the issue’
- ❖ Develop a plan to communicate success stories
- ❖ ‘Get the media onside’
- ❖ Communicate and discuss the Vision (framework) and draft Strategic Plan
 - seek support throughout the community
 - dialogue
 - feedback
- ❖ Create the crisis mindset without the crisis – now is the time to act on these priorities before the real crisis (should it occur)
- ❖ Establish a set of guiding principles and shared values – as to how people should interact with each other throughout this process

Conclusions – Strategic Priorities

The planning team concluded the 3 strategic priorities for the community going forward should be: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Diversification of the local economy and 3) Creating a new mindset and culture

More specific objectives or goals within these 3 priority areas were determined as:

Infrastructure

- improve air access to the region
- improve/develop communication links – broadband/ wireless etc.
- improve infrastructure to support a greater tourism capacity

Economy

- diversification of the local economy by focusing on attracting new businesses to the community – either local people starting new businesses or through attracting new people to the region.

- expand the tourism capacity of the region – make the region a four season destination place with expansion/development of Red Mountain a key component of this strategy
- create and market an ‘ open for business’ attitude

Mindset and Culture

- it was determined that an underlying critical success factor for the community was a turnaround in the overall mindset, attitude and culture of the community - to one that is more confident where individuals are prepared to act and attempt to influence the outcome vs. relying on others to do something. One step in the right direction is for the leaders within the community to begin to ‘walk the talk’