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REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA
Thursday, January 9, 2014

<u>PAGE NO.</u>	<u>REPORT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
2-20	Corrine Swenson, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Regional Skills Gap Analysis – Approval of Strategic Actions	Recommendation (Page 2)

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
SUPPLEMENTARY - Committee of the Whole
January 9, 2014**

To: Chair Miller and the Board of Directors
From: Corrine Swenson, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: January 8, 2014
Regarding: Regional Skills Gap Analysis – Approval of Strategic Actions

Please find attached the Strategic Actions from the Regional Skills Gap Analysis Project Report. The Final Report will be available for adoption at the January 23rd Board of Directors Meeting.

Please review the Strategic Actions and provide feedback for the consultant to address any changes when submitting the Final Report.

RECOMMENDATION:	(All/Directors/Majority)
1. That the RDBN Committee of the Whole recommends to the Board of Directors that the Strategic Actions for the Regional Skills Gap Analysis Project be adopted in the Final Report.	



Regional Skills Gap Analysis:

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

January 9, 2014



A Strategic Approach to the Regional Skills Gap

The inter-relationship between workforce and economic development has never been more evident as communities and regions place increasing emphasis on attracting and retaining talent to meet the skill needs of employers. This report presents evidence that validates the current and projected labour force situation within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. This section offers a regional strategic approach to address these labour force gaps, and reflects the importance and necessity of recognizing the influence and impact at the regional and community level. The RDBN spans over 73,000 square kilometres, includes eight municipalities and 13 First Nations. The goals and actions reflect and respect the unique qualities and assets, to strengthening a climate grounded in relationships and connectivity of communities, people, services, technology and planning.

Four key themes have emerged around which to frame recommendations. These themes are based on an understanding of national, provincial and regional trends, the responses from the stakeholder consultations, and the current and potential economic conditions within the region. The following themes represent puzzle pieces that can be properly positioned to create a collective whole. Each theme and its related goal will require initiatives that work both independent of each other as well as collectively.

Theme	Goal Statement
Collaborate	Increase collaboration between and among key stakeholder groups and communities to strengthen opportunities and impact at both the local and regional levels
Prepare	Ensure that the labour force is skilled, resilient and aligned with local labour market needs, supporting retention, participation and economic development
Promote	Regional and local assets and quality of life strengthen capacity to attract and retain talent
Inform	Empower evidence-based decision making through reliable, current and relevant information

A final set of actions has been generated to address issues related to fly-in/fly-out work arrangements in the Regional District. While the actions suggested under the fly-in/fly-out theme cross over those reflected more broadly, these issues and actions are targeted at those employers and communities that employ and host (or are in proximity to) fly-in/fly-out workers. It is for this reason they have been placed in under their own goal statement. Many of these are also reflected in



Appendix B which contains ideas that influence labour force planning but generally fall outside the scope of a targeted labour force strategy.

It is important to recognize that this strategy must be “owned” by the regional stakeholders that influence and inform local labour market planning. It is not suggested to be the sole responsibility of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako regional government and as such actions will require buy-in and support across the region to ensure effective implementation and impact.

The following goals and strategies are designed to support the actions of RDBN and its partner organizations, providing a framework to guide the collective activities within the region. Here is a definition of some of the terms within the table:

- **Prospective Partners:** The organizations identified here have not been approached regarding each recommendation; the pairing of organizations with actions is made based on the suggestion of the Project Management Committee and a basic understanding of the mandate and ongoing initiatives of the group. As the implementation of the Regional Skills Gap Analysis begins, these potential partnerships will be further investigated.
- **Timing:** The time periods in which the recommendations take place are noted as short, medium or long term or a combination of these. Short terms actions are expected to take place within a year, medium term actions from one to three years, and long term actions from three to five years. Ongoing actions are recommended on an ongoing basis. If an action begins in the medium term and then continues beyond the medium term, for example, it would be indicated as “medium term and ongoing”. In turn, if an activity begins in the short term and is expected to end in the medium term, it would be marked short term to medium term.

Given the urgency of the stated actions, and to ensure the momentum created through the public engagement activities completed through the Regional Skills Gap Analysis project is not lost, it is important to clarify which actions the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako are positioned to advance and which actions are best led by other organizations within the region.

It is clear that without a concerted joint effort, involving shared responsibility on the part of the identified regional organizations, the goals, strategies and recommended actions listed below are not likely to be achieved in an efficient and timely manner. While the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako can play an important part in facilitating the workforce strategy, there are specific types of actions where RDBN is best suited to lead. As a neutral regional organization, RDBN is well suited to bring organizations together and provide avenues for regional groups to take ownership and lead implementation.

To celebrate the importance of the creation of this strategy, and to strengthen ongoing engagement and understanding, a strategy launch will be held following final approval of the strategy by the Project Management Committee and the Board of Directors of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. This event will create the opportunity to present to the broader





stakeholder group and to engage participants to identify their role in implementing, supporting and leading the strategy actions. The ultimate success of the implementation of the Regional Skills Gap Analysis rests with every organization that informs and influences workforce and labour market planning within the region.

In the course of community engagement, a number of important areas were highlighted that are not directly relevant to a workforce development strategy, but are in any case critical to its success. These items are listed in the Parking Lot in full in Appendix B.

The Project Management Committee identified that although the following issues are more complex than can be addressed through the Regional Skills Gap Analysis, they strongly influence the ability of the district to attract retain and build talent. The most critical issues include;

- Infrastructure for Internet Access (Broadband)
- Housing shortages in some areas of the region
- Public transportation

While not addressed in the following recommendations, it is strongly suggested that consideration be given as to how these areas may fit into other strategic planning processes or may become independent initiatives.

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1.1 Recommended Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal Statement: Regional and local assets and quality of life strengthen capacity to attract and retain talent

Strategy #1: Promote the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako as an opportune and welcoming employment destination

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Document and promote community and regional assets to increase awareness of lifestyle benefits and quality of life attributes.	Chambers of Commerce, RDBN, Municipalities	Short term
Initiate a social media strategy that profiles local employment opportunities and showcases business success stories. Monitor and communicate changes in new business start-ups, by number of businesses, growth, sector, and generated revenues and employment (aggregated) to demonstrate RDBN as an entrepreneurial climate.	Chambers of Commerce, CFDCs, Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC), Municipalities	Short to medium term
Review ongoing initiatives to create a regional job bank that promotes employment opportunities in a centralized manner and ensure that the proposed or active models are fully used by the region's business community and facilitate dual career family employment barriers for families looking to relocate to the region.	NDI, WorkBC, BLNDC, SWOT	Medium term



Strategy #2: Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to address human resource needs and future planning

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Support ongoing initiatives to inform small business on succession planning strategies and practices, providing tools and resources to facilitate linkages between seller and purchaser.	CFDCs, Chambers of Commerce, (Venture Connect)	Short to medium term
Create and make available a comprehensive resource for businesses regarding training programs and employer incentives that support experiential learning for students and new hires, ongoing professional development for staff and other training.	Employment Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, CNC, NWCC, Industry	Medium term
Engage with industries proactively to identify existing and emerging professional development/training needs for staff and link with the appropriate methods of delivery (contract training, tutoring, continuing education, Mooc – Massive Open Online Courses, etc.). Contact North is an example of a remote training model that combine computer labs with support staff in rural regions to deliver online courses in northern Ontario.	CNC, NWCC, Learn Now B.C., SD54, SD91, PGNAETA	Short term and ongoing
Support workshop development and delivery that introduces the business community to new thinking and accessibility practices to strengthen talent attraction, retention, engagement and productivity – particularly for groups that were reported to face specific challenges in seeking and maintaining employment, such as people with disabilities, youth, new Canadians and others.	CNC, NWCC, CFDCs, Chambers of Commerce, PGNAETA	Medium term

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Goal Statement: Ensure that the labour force is skilled, resilient and aligned with local labour market needs, supporting retention, participation and economic development

Strategy #1: Prepare Local Labour Force through Career Engagement, Learning and Skills Development

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Support access to ongoing professional development and shorter-term targeted programs that increase opportunities for individual life-long learning, life skills, and career readiness.	CFDCs, Employment Agencies, United Steel Workers (Northern Skills Training),	Medium term
Promote longer-term career planning through development of a business case targeting those that did not complete high school, to validate long term benefits of high school and post-secondary completion.	Employment Agencies	Medium term
Encourage entrepreneurship skills and opportunities through mentorship and education, using a program such as that innovated by the Medicine Hat College Entrepreneur Development Centre.	CNC, NWCC, CFDCs, Employment Agencies	Short term
Investigate continuing education courses with a focus on high demand business opportunities such as agricultural management, perhaps by partnering with other B.C. institutions. Create learning pathway for individuals looking to enter into the agriculture sector as farm owners/managers – curriculum delivery needs to be flexible and part-time to support access and participation.	CNC, NWCC, Beyond the Market	Medium term
Encourage more structured information-sharing between training institutions and the business community to strengthen program alignment and skills demand and to promote opportunities for corporate support for capital investment or access to technology, equipment, to strengthen program curriculum.	CNC, NWCC, Chambers of Commerce, CFDCs	Medium term

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Strategy #2: Empower youth through increased career awareness and experiential learning opportunities, supported by the business community

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Encourage local businesses to participate in college and university internship and support programs throughout BC as a means of attracting educated talent to the area.	Chambers of Commerce, B.C. Post-Secondary Institutions	Short term and ongoing
Create direct interaction opportunities between pending graduates and local employers as a means of retaining graduating talent, and inventory existing programs to support working experiences for youth (Mentor me, Bladerunners, cooperative education, practicum).	CNC, NWCC, Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Employment Agencies,	Short term and ongoing
Work collaboratively with secondary and post-secondary institutions to develop career profiles and pathways to employment, for occupations experiencing labour force gaps, such as the certified trades.	SD54, SD91, CNC, NWCC, Trade Unions	Short term

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Goal Statement: Increase collaboration between and among key stakeholder groups and communities to strengthen opportunities and impact at both the local and regional levels

Strategy #1: Foster a culture of collaboration between and among stakeholder groups and communities

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
<p>Introduce the findings of the Regional Skills Gap Analysis to communities and stakeholders and launch the implementation of recommendations.</p> <p>A launch event is hosted by RDBN to present the strategy to the communities and organizations involved in workforce development.</p> <p>Distribute the strategy widely with a power point presentation and fact sheet to be shared by email and on the RDBN website. Visit stakeholders in person to solidify involvement as needed.</p>	<p>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Regional Skills Gap Analysis Project Management Committee</p>	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Create a SWOT (Strategic Workforce Opportunities Team) with representatives from partner organizations centered on the collaborative implementation of the Regional Skills Gap Analysis, including new initiatives and the alignment of existing supports to advance opportunities.</p> <p>A quarterly meeting of this group with a rotating location (in addition to the bi-annual forum proposed below) is recommended. Partner organizations support involvement through in-kind contributions of staff time and travel expenses.</p>	<p>Post-Secondary Institutions, Chambers of Commerce, First Nations, Employment Service Providers, RDBN</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing</p>
<p>Convene bi-annual forum with economic development, employment offices, chambers and other intermediary groups, and post-secondary and training institutions to evaluate skill and occupation needs in the region; promote awareness of ongoing services and initiatives; create a neutral space for information sharing and promote regional collaboration. Synergies can be sought with the existing annual business forum.</p>	<p>SWOT, First Nations, CNC, NWCC, Chambers of Commerce, RDBN</p>	<p>Short term and ongoing</p>



Strategy #2: Embrace cultural diversity and recognize it as a competitive advantage

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Work with existing industry based First Nation liasons to increase engagement in all activities.	Industry based First Nation liasons	Short term
Increase cultural awareness within the RDBN business community by connecting First Nation advocates and industry based First Nation liasons with the business community with the goal of increasing the number of practical work experience placements for Aboriginals and their success.	Chambers of Commerce, PGNAETA, Bladerunners, Industry based First Nation liasons, First Nations Education Coordinators, Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, CNC, NWCC	Short term and ongoing
Co-create initiatives with First Nations communities and organizations, with the leadership of the SWOT.	First Nations, SWOT, Chambers of Commerce, PGNAETA, Bladerunners, Industry based First Nation liasons, First Nations Education Coordinators, Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Society, Office of the Wet'suwet'en	Medium term and ongoing

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Goal Statement: Empower evidence-based decision making through reliable, current and relevant information

Strategy #1: Inform to Strengthen Decision-Making

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Encourage more structured information-sharing between training institutions and the business community to strengthen program alignment with skills demand, and to promote opportunities for corporate support for capital investment or access to technology, equipment, to strengthen program curriculum. Encourage ongoing development and updating of a local training and post-secondary program inventory to support labour market development.	CNC, NWCC	Short term and ongoing
Review ongoing activities to develop business case to validate the return on investment for local business to participate in apprenticeships and support the dissemination of relevant information through the SWOT.	SWOT, Industry (New Gold), Nechako Valley Secondary Education Working Committee, RDBN	Short term

Strategy #2: Support Community Engagement with Fly-in, Fly- out Workforce

Recommended Actions	Potential Partners	Timing
Assemble and publish relevant cost of living information. This should be updated quarterly and could be posted on a regional job portal as well as the RDBN website. Promote the regional District website as a means of informing fly-in/fly-out workers and their families of regional amenities.	Chambers of Commerce, CFDCs, NDI, WorkBC, RDBN	Medium term and ongoing
Create opportunities to engage fly-in/fly-out workers to participate in sporting and social gatherings, including current residents who travel for work and non-residents who are working in the region. Some sport teams have allocated joint spaces to these workers allowing at least one person to participate when they are available to do so. This example could be celebrated and shared through communications.	Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce	Short term
Collaborate in designing and delivering a 'get to know your region program' for fly-in/fly-out workers. This program might include coupons to visit stores, restaurants and recreational facilities or a guided tour of the local community. This could be an expansion of the current, "Small Town Love" program.	Chambers of Commerce, Industry partners,	Short to medium term

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Timeline of Recommended Goals and Actions

Goal Statement: Regional and local assets and quality of life strengthen capacity to attract and retain talent

Strategy # 1. Promote the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako as an opportune and welcoming employment destination				
Recommended Actions	Timing			
	Short Term	Medium Term		Long Term
Document and promote community and regional assets to increase awareness of lifestyle benefits and quality of life attributes.				
Initiate a social media strategy that profiles local employment opportunities and showcases business success stories. Monitor and communicate changes in new business start-ups, by number of businesses, growth, sector, and generated revenues and employment (aggregated) to demonstrate RDBN as an entrepreneurial climate.				
Review ongoing initiatives to create a regional job bank that promotes employment opportunities in a centralized manner and ensure that the proposed or active models are fully used by the region's business community and facilitate dual career family employment barriers for families looking to relocate to the region.				

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Strategy # 2. Support SME's to address human resource needs and future planning				
Recommended Actions	Timing			
	Short Term	Medium Term		Long Term
Support ongoing initiatives to inform small business on succession planning strategies and practices, providing tools and resources to facilitate linkages between seller and purchaser.				
Create and make available a comprehensive resource for businesses regarding training programs and employer incentives that support experiential learning for students and new hires, ongoing professional development for staff and other training.				
Engage with industries proactively to identify existing and emerging professional development/training needs for staff and link with the appropriate methods of delivery (contract training, tutoring, continuing education, Mooc – Massive Open Online Courses, etc.). Contact North is an example of a remote training model that combine computer labs with support staff in rural regions to deliver online courses in northern Ontario.				
Support workshop development and delivery that introduces the business community to new thinking and accessibility practices to strengthen talent attraction, retention, engagement and productivity – particularly for groups that were reported to face specific challenges in seeking and maintaining employment, such as people with disabilities, youth, new Canadians and others.				

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Goal Statement: Ensure that the labour force is skilled, resilient and aligned with local labour market needs, supporting retention, participation and economic development

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Support access to ongoing professional development and shorter-term targeted programs that increase opportunities for individual life-long learning, life skills, and career readiness.				
Promote longer-term career planning through development of a business case targeting those that did not complete high school, to validate long term benefits of high school and post-secondary completion.				
Encourage entrepreneurship skills and opportunities through mentorship and education, using a program such as that innovated by the Medicine Hat College Entrepreneur Development Centre.				
Investigate continuing education courses with a focus on high demand business opportunities such as agricultural management, perhaps by partnering with other B.C. institutions. Create learning pathway for individuals looking to enter into the agriculture sector as farm owners/managers – curriculum delivery needs to be flexible and part-time to support access and participation.				
Encourage more structured information-sharing between training institutions and the business community to strengthen program alignment and skills demand and to promote opportunities for corporate support for capital investment or access to technology, equipment, to strengthen program curriculum.				

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Strategy #2: Empower youth through increased career awareness and experiential learning opportunities, supported by the business community				
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Create direct interaction opportunities between pending graduates and local employers as a means of retaining graduating talent, and inventory existing programs to support working experiences for youth (Mentor me, Bladerunners, cooperative education, practicum).				
Work collaboratively with secondary and post-secondary institutions to develop career profiles and pathways to employment, for occupations experiencing labour force gaps, such as the certified trades.				



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<p>Create a SWOT (Strategic Workforce Opportunities Team) with representatives from partner organizations centered on the collaborative implementation of the Regional Skills Gap Analysis, including new initiatives and the alignment of existing supports to advance opportunities.</p> <p>A quarterly meeting of this group with a rotating location (in addition to the bi-annual forum proposed below) is recommended. Partner organizations support involvement through in-kind contributions of staff time and travel expenses.</p>				
<p>Convene bi-annual forum with economic development, employment offices, chambers and other intermediary groups, and post-secondary and training institutions to evaluate skill and occupation needs in the region; promote awareness of ongoing services and initiatives; create a neutral space for information sharing and promote regional collaboration. Synergies can be sought with the existing annual business forum.</p>				

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Co-create initiatives with First Nations communities and organizations, with the leadership of the SWOT.				

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Collaborate in designing and delivering a 'get to know your region program' for fly-in/fly-out workers. This program might include coupons to visit stores, restaurants and recreational facilities or a guided tour of the local community. This could be an expansion of the current, "Small Town Love" program.			

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