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EAST SIDE PLANNING INITIATIVE

Island Lake, Manitoba

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Consultation and Communication

We currently don't even know what is going on, on the East side.

All Weather Road

The businesses in the area don't expect much change. They are prepared to do whatever they have to to survive. The freight hauling industry, for example, is prepared to cut its operation and change to hauling by truck from the city. The lodge doesn't expect much change and is not concerned. Increased access may be provided by the road but there will be people who will continue to fly in. The airline industry doesn't expect much change either.

The reserve is concerned about alcohol coming in. It would be a long road in any event and the people here are handling it mildly.

Cost of living in this area is high - \$4/litre for milk and \$12 for cabbage. It is hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle. People are out of the habit of eating healthy since it is cheaper to buy junk food. Local stores can make big profits by taking advantage of the price of freight and mark ups are high. An all-weather road would bring the prices down to be competitive with the cities. During the winter, there are bus-loads which go out for shopping. There are safety hazards associated with this practice as many don't prepare for emergencies and some have been stranded. There are fatalities on the winter road every year.

An all-weather road may increase access to economic development if exclusive on tourism. The traffic may increase and others may get involved.

Environmental Issues

There is a lot of waste and raw sewage being dumped or scattered in the community and the surrounding area. There needs to be initiatives to curb this huge problem with waste disposal in the north.

Recommendation: Environmental Issues

- Design and implement a comprehensive recycling program that would create jobs while cleaning up the environment. The program needs to include an education component and links between communities. An advisory committee needs to include elders from the First Nation.

Community Planning

There is no community plan in place but it is difficult when you are remote. There is water all around and not very much of the land can be developed. There may be potential for tourism.

Most of the area is reserve and First Nation. We don't have too many rights up here. The reserves are ruled by federal laws. Although there are 6% registered MMF, the politics is disorganized.

Economic Development

People are ready to adapt to development. With an increase in economic activity there will likely be an increase to the population. There are lots available but not enough employment to build. Most people are in this community are temporarily here for two – three years such as the RCMP, teachers and nurses. If there were more development, jobs would be created and people would stay longer.

Mining

There is potential for mining everywhere but it is not economically feasible without road access. There were two mines in operation on the islands. If the mines were developed, there would be a boom type situation. To service the mine in God's Lake, there had been a power plant and a village developed on Island River, but they have been deserted.

Forestry

Forestry isn't accessible because of a burn and there is not much mercantile timber left.

Fishing

It is not expected that fishing will be affected much. In the past 4 years, commercial fishing has met their quota – 240,000 # of pickerel. Fish are flown out because they are perishable. Rules and regulations are being tightened up and they need to be followed.

Hiring Policies

Recommendation: Economic and Employment Development

- As development occurs, there should be a policy to target a certain number of local people. Industry and government could provide training and sponsorship for education ahead of time in preparation for the work force required.
- As development occurs, environmental restrictions and regulations should be fully adhered to and enforced.