



LOOK NORTH

NORTHERN MANITOBA ECONOMIC MOVEMENT

DRAFT
WORKSHOP REPORT
CHURCHILL

6 APRIL 2017

INTRODUCTION

This report is a distilled version of workshop outcomes from the Look North Workshop undertaken in April 2017.

The objective of the workshop was to develop an understanding of economic development needs, issues and opportunities at a community level to:

- Inform the development of a wider Northern Manitoba Economic Strategy.
- Foster local thinking and ownership of economic development – with a view to communities developing their own solutions to their own needs and opportunities.

WHAT WE DID AT THE WORKSHOP

We captured whatever was ‘front of mind’ for workshop participants in regards to the local economy and community. We used that as a basis on which to explore local needs, unearth insights, define challenges and develop ideas to respond to those challenges. Each group took an idea through to a proposal for presentation to a ‘Dragons Den’ as a ‘fast track’ creative process for testing ideas.

We also had some presentations from Look North Task Force members and the local community.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Outcomes from workshops, ‘roundtable’ meetings, meetings with key people and industries, along with desktop research, will all contribute to the development of a wider Northern Strategy which will be released in June or July 2017 as a ‘living document’ to enable further engagement and consultation over summer.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Some key themes emerged:

- Issues with local engagement
- External competition
- Disconnect between what Churchill wants and needs, and what others think Churchill wants and needs.
- Lack of responsiveness by City employees to business needs.
- A lot of local passion for development, but isolated from others.
- First Nations are not participating in these forums and need to be for their voice and ideas to be heard.
- There are some barriers to small business that could be addressed through change in policy and investment in support.

WORKSHOP CAPTURE

The following pages illustrate a distilled version of what was captured and shared at the workshop, including:

- Community Enterprise (social enterprise and NGO sector)
- Local Enterprise (start-ups and small local business) was considered alongside Commercial Enterprise (large business / industry)
- Government: Issues arising for government attention.
- Ideas presented by groups.

NEEDS:

- Community engagement in understanding needs and developing solutions.
- Free up people to participate.
- Indigenous community needs.
- Removing structural barriers to participation in the economy.
- Free up people capacity to invest in community development – turn draining voluntary effort into paid effort.
- Youth engagement.
- Indigenous and Language based education needed to span all members of the community.
- People need to be given voice – they feel their voice is suppressed by a few dominant characters.
- Trade school.
- Decrease cost of living.

INSIGHTS:

- There is small group of the same people who turn up and contribute to economic and community discussions, whilst others do not – there is a need to rethink how we engage.
- A sense of internal competition limits collaboration and progress and opens the door for external competition and others to exploit local opportunities.
- It is hard to maintain momentum with a small group of volunteers trying to create engagement.
- There is a general inability to develop as a hub of the north.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

Make it Local & Make it Work

IDEAS:

- Paid community economic development coordinator – providing support to local community and businesses.
- Junior Indigenous Rangers for the environment – involved in protection and management of natural resources.
- Coffee Group
- Childcare services provided for meetings and events.
- Use Chamber to act as independent convener to overcome internal politics.
- Mentorship program for entrepreneurs.
- Develop local investment and ownership models to compete against outside competitors.
- Reconciliation approach to indigenous interest in development.
- Survey locals on patterns of behavior of public servants to seek improvement.

CHALLENGES:

How might we:

- Have better engagement with the community in developing our local economy – particularly First Nations.

NEEDS:

- Collaboration
- Thinking beyond the Port
- Rail infrastructure needs clarity and resolving – 2 contenders in motion without local information.
- Public servants need to serve the public e.g. Clearing roads to ensure access to business – they are often directed by City but don't actually do it when needed.
- Scientific research.
- Address population 'leakage' to increase the tax base.
- Need local tradespeople for local housing – they come in and have no long term interest – not enough being done.
- Community based focus – more emphasis needed on what the community needs and wants vs what 'outsiders' see and want to exploit.

INSIGHTS:

- The constraints on Manitoba Housing is constraining the economy e.g. inability to run home based business and management of housing stock and seasonal demand is effecting local supply.
- There is a disconnect between what 'outsiders' think Churchill needs, and what Churchill residents see as their needs e.g. whilst 'others' see an All Weather Road to Churchill as a solution – Churchill does not.
- Residents need to be adequately consulted but consultation is difficult – what then happens is other s assume what the community wants.
- There is an evident disconnect and lack of accountability between public servants and their directors and accountability to community.

LOCAL & COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE

Make it Start
Make it Smart
Make it Grow

IDEAS:

- Look to different future scenarios to test community resolve and thinking e.g. with and without port.
- Privatize Manitoba Housing Units to increase equity in community and allow for home based enterprise.
- Introduce an income cap for MB Housing tenants to encourage home ownership.
- Attract year round trades people into community to care for homes and infrastructure.
- Attract online businesses that are not geographically dependent.
- Develop 'stone building' business space.
- Change regulation so can operate home based business from MB Housing homes.

CHALLENGES:

How might we:

- Overcome barriers to progress; uncertainty, physical, communication (no internet or cable) and internal / people e.g. self worth, skills & knowledge etc.
- Ensure opportunities are exploited by locals, not outsiders.

GOVERNMENT

Make it Local & Make it Fits

We did not focus specifically on Government as a focused agenda, rather we identified points of note for Government arising from group workshopping the other agenda i.e. Community Enterprise, Local Enterprise (small biz) and Commercial Enterprise (large Biz).

FINDINGS:

COMMUNITY (SOCIAL & NGO) ENTERPRISE

- Need to invest in local and resident solution providers rather than use of outside contractors, and where such is not available incentivize their relocation to Churchill.
- Need to support a coordinator role to engage community in better understanding needs and developing solutions.
- Need to ensure accountability of city employees for community responsiveness.

LOCAL (SMALL) ENTERPRISE

- Need to incentivize start-ups and small biz.
- Need to remove constraints for developing home based enterprise e.g. MB Housing not allowing home operated business.

COMMERCIAL (LARGE) ENTERPRISE

- Need to support due diligence and business case development of local opportunities as well as support development of equity sharing models and partnerships.



Show & Tell Churchill

Groups rose to the challenges they identified and the ideas they generated to advance and present their ideas through a 'show and tell'.

Coffee Groups

Plan to use 'coffee groups' as a means of engaging community in conversations about local issues, economy and opportunity.

Provides a 'soft approach' to engagement that is more personal and friendly.

Chamber could be coordinating and supporting entity.

Bring a plate / shared breakfast / child friendly.

Post Port Possibility Program (through public private partnerships)

A range of new ideas:

- Privatize tank farm
- Rehabilitate landing lake for float planes
- Local businesses to teach business at local schools and follow up co-op programme
- Micro-Hydro dam on Churchill river using the weir - private equity offer when you purchase shares and get paid
- Peat Moss Plant
- Barge company created through equity offering
- Develop a co-op for new entrepreneurs

Some key themes

COLLABORATION:

There was an evident need for better engagement and collaboration to be able to develop solutions to local needs and exploit local opportunities.

EXTERNAL COMPETITION

There was recurring discussion about competition coming from outside and that outsiders are often quicker to exploit opportunities and yet do not have a long term vested interest in Churchill and do not reinvest their profit in the community.

MB HOUSING CONSTRAINTS

The limitations placed on use of Manitoba Housing for home business is killing opportunity when the scale of community does not make standalone premises viable. This is a simple matter of policy change to open up opportunity.

CITY ACCOUNTABILITY

Churchill is reliant upon access and infrastructure being functional for business to be viable. There seems to be a lack of accountability of city employees in this regard, for ensuring the smooth and continuous operation of local business.

POST PORT ENTERPRISE:

There is a wide range of potential opportunities that could be realized if effective engagement and support is provided.

DISCONNECT

There is a general disconnect between what 'others' think Churchill needs and what Churchill actually wants.