

District of Fort St. James

Community Vision

Forum

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Held at David Hoy Elementary School, Fort St. James BC
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Summary of the Vision

The following is an overall summary of the main points raised in both the small group and whole group discussions about the vision of Fort St. James

“When we think about a better town of Fort St. James 10 years from now, this is what we want it to look like...”:

- ❖ **A community with many different opportunities and options for all residents, including**
 - **Career choices**
 - **Recreation choices**
 - **Education choices**
 - **Housing choices**

- ❖ **A community that we are safe and secure in, with low crime rates, good health care, and a friendly atmosphere**

- ❖ **A community that is visually attractive, that is clean, and pleasant**

- ❖ **A community that celebrates it’s diversity, including:**
 - **A variety of people from different backgrounds**
 - **People of all ages**
 - **Economic and business diversity**
 - **A wide variety of shops and services**

- ❖ **A community that has great self esteem, community pride, “small town friendly feel”, fantastic customer service, and an overall welcoming place to live and visit**
 - **We promote ourselves and celebrate our community**

- ❖ **A community that has leveraged and developed the tremendous advantages it has always had:**
 - **World class lake frontage**
 - **Nature!**
 - **Small size**
 - **Recreation opportunities**

Summary of the group discussions and conclusions.

The following information was paraphrased directly from the notes pages handed in from each group. The numbers in the brackets at the end of some of the points indicate the number of times these points were repeated by the groups.

Vision

When you think of a better town of Fort St. James in 10 years from now, what do you want it to look like in terms of:

Quality of Life:

- ◆ *Greater infrastructure (e.g. community complex) for lifestyle/recreation choices: (X7)*
 - *Some examples of what could be included are.....*
 - *Swimming pool*
 - *Arts center*
 - *Skateboard park*
 - *Upgraded medical facilities*
 - *Other recreation development/choices*
 - *Lots of community events*
- ◆ *We already have a good quality of life here (in some areas), and we want to maintain what we already have (X6)*
 - *Improve what exists, strengthen what we already have*
- ◆ *Keep it a safe place to live, so we can have peace of mind to raise our families (X5)*
- ◆ *All ages need to be included in a good quality of life – young, middle and older age residents (X4)*
 - *Includes more opportunities for young people*
 - *More reasons for seniors to stay here*
- ◆ *Residents need options for lifestyle and career choices (x3)*
- ◆ *Good relationships and partnerships with RCMP, First Nations, etc. (X3)*
- ◆ *A positive and happy “feel” to the community – residents and visitors being happy to be here (X2)*
- ◆ *Remain affordable and relatively uncrowded (X2)*
- ◆ *Keep our sense of ‘tight knit community’, with friendly people and people supporting and helping each other*
- ◆ *More local educational opportunities*

Vision

When you think of a better town of Fort St. James in 10 years from now, what do you want it to look like in terms of:

Business & Economy:

- ◆ *Visually appealing downtown business area as well as the whole community (X9)*
 - *Tidier entrance to community*
 - *Cleaner downtown area that is visually appealing*
 - *No spitting or urinating or littering, etc.*
 - *Use the Lake as the centerpiece for some businesses*
- ◆ *A more diversified economy (X6)*
- ◆ *Healthy competition, with new businesses locating here (more local businesses, such as restaurants, groceries, radio/newspaper, cosmetics, co-generation plant, hotels, etc.) (X6)*
- ◆ *Greatly improved personal customer service, with more people shopping locally. (X5)*
- ◆ *An accessible town that is positive, vibrant and thriving with a good selection of businesses, services, etc., while keeping our small town feel (X4)*
- ◆ *Thriving tourism with more businesses geared towards tourism (X4)*
- ◆ *A greater range of job opportunities (X3)*
 - *Encourage young people to return to work*
 - *Encourage older workers to stay to work*
- ◆ *A community business plan that we are living by (X3)*
- ◆ *Better business infrastructure, such as Internet upgrades, marketing plans, “a global attitude”*
- ◆ *Local ‘cheerleaders’ who are taking the lead in developing businesses (e.g. Ski Hill, golf course, etc)*
- ◆ *Welcome Wagon service for newcomers*

Vision

When you think of a better town of Fort St. James in 10 years from now, what do you want it to look like in terms of:

Environment

- ◆ *Clean water and clean air, good garbage management (X6)*
- ◆ *Eco friendly, with residents being proud of our environment (X4)*
 - *Incentives/guidelines/standards to keep us 'green & clean'*
 - *Recycling facilities and education*
- ◆ *The Lake should be the focus of our town (X2)*
- ◆ *Being known as a good place to “play” outdoors*
- ◆ *Positive future for our forest lands, and best possible use of old pinewood*
- ◆ *Bypass road so big vehicles don't drive right through our downtown.*
- ◆ *Public transportation*

Threats

What are some real issues you personally see that could threaten or undermine the kind of community you desire in terms of:

Quality of Life:

- ◆ *Lack of communication between our various people and groups (X5)*
- ◆ *Drug/alcohol abuse (X4)*
- ◆ *“Ugly” community – both business and residential areas not looking attractive or without a good “feel” to them (X3)*
 - *No theme or look to downtown...just random buildings*
- ◆ *Not being proactive enough – being too short-sighted, and remaining stagnant (X3)*
 - *Not having a community plan, and/or not following the community plan*
- ◆ *Non-affordable products, houses, etc. (X2)*
- ◆ *Unstable government funding (X2)*
 - *Being overlooked by government leaders*
- ◆ *Loitering /public intoxication/pan handling (X2)*
- ◆ *Loss of hospital*
- ◆ *Loss of mills*
- ◆ *Lack of decent health care*
- ◆ *Speed of logging/industry trucks moving through town*
- ◆ *Economy slowing down*
- ◆ *People not feeling safe – increased crime, etc.*
- ◆ *“Class system” still existing in our town*
- ◆ *Negative people who do not support (attitudes and money) our positive outlook and initiatives*

Threats

What are some real issues you personally see that could threaten or undermine the kind of community you desire in terms of:

Business and Economy :

- ◆ *Lumber Prices & poor forestry business (X4)*
 - *Pine beetle*
 - *Government tenure policy limiting opportunities*
- ◆ *Big business : Lack of diversity; remaining a one industry town that is vulnerable (X4)*
- ◆ *Lack of infrastructure : Rec. Center, hospital, schools, daycare, etc. (X4)*
- ◆ *No good job opportunities (X3)*
 - *Losing our young people as they leave to look for work elsewhere*
- ◆ *Non-resolution of land negotiations (X2)*
- ◆ *Lack of students in the schools – declining population (X2)*
- ◆ *Businesses closing*
 - *Due to lack of interest*
 - *Due to lack of business (\$)*
 - *Due to roadblocks preventing them from staying or coming, such as government regulations, lack of insurance, etc.*

Threats

What are some real issues you personally see that could threaten or undermine the kind of community you desire in terms of:

Environment:

- ◆ *Dead trees (X5)*
- ◆ *Lack of community support for environmental issues (X3)*
- ◆ *Hydrology changes over large areas*
- ◆ *Forest fires*
- ◆ *Global warming*
- ◆ *Lack of cleanliness – poor appearance of town*
- ◆ *Vandalism*
- ◆ *Complacency*

Top 10 priority projects that should be undertaken to achieve our vision

These are the top 10 projects, listed here in priority and in order in terms of the number of times groups suggested these projects.

It is highly likely that some of these projects will require additional input/planning; for example, #1, #2 & #3 are potentially huge projects and they probably need further planning/prioritizing before they can be accomplished.

- 1. Downtown & community revitalization project, including signage, appearance, beautification, and developing the lakeshore/ bringing the lake into the forefront (X8)**
- 2. A recreation/community facility including a pool & a multi-use hall**
 - community museum and gallery (X8)
- 3. Development of trails: walking trails, historic information, boardwalk at Sowchea Swamp, recreational trails for hikers & bikers, self guided walking path, etc. (X7)**
- 4. Develop a community Plan, which would include branding, themes, lake shore development, business plans, economic diversification etc. (X6)**
 - Also include an inventory of “what we already have”
 - Coordination of “who’s doing what”, so it’s not all happening hap hazardously
- 5. Market Fort St. James to the outside world (re: business, tourism, etc.) (X4)**
 - Also market FSJ to ourselves!
- 6. Upgrade the ski hill (X3)**
 - Snow making
 - Chairlift
- 7. Recreation coordinator to assist with the integration/development of all community services, events, etc.: paid staff position (X3)**
- 8. Enhanced education opportunities (X3)**
- 9. Attract another restaurant, and another hotel (X2)**
- 10. Eco-tourism/tourism promotion in general (X2)**

These were other ideas for projects that were brought up during the group discussions, and are not listed in any particular order as they were not brought up by more than one group.

- **Recycling program**
- **Wildlife Park**
- **First nations pre-contract village**
- **indoor/outdoor amphitheatre for community events and concerts**
- **Settle Land Claims & improve communications with First Nations**
- **Welcome Wagon program**
- **Mackenzie/Fort St. James highway**
- **Improved infrastructure and services for seniors**
- **Chamber/tourist office located between Sitka Inn and Old Village office/library**
- **Develop a high end spa/resort**
- **More crown land released**
- **Outdoor hockey rink that can also be used year round for lacrosse, ball hockey, etc.**
- **Skateboard park**
- **Encourage partnerships among resource groups: e.g. mining, forestry, recreation, coordinated development (e.g. roads), etc.**
- **Create an information data base, for awareness of economic situations/people/companies/networks. This would be done through the economic development office**
- **Co-generation plant, to produce energy from wood fibre. (Offer energy subsidies for new businesses; tax incentives for businesses)**
- **Attract international events (e.g. speed skating, dog teams, hockey)**
- **Stock Stuart Lake with fish, to increase sports fishing**
- **Upgrade the hospital**
- **Leave the Old District office: conserve and promote our heritage**
- **Create a community radio station**
- **Create a fish hatchery**
- **Bottle our own water to sell (and build a treatment plant)**
- **Community Garden**
- **Promote the Teardrop Logo**
- **High end Bed & Breakfast**

Question #1

Group Leader: Please get your whole group to discuss this and record the main points on this page. Try to keep people on track, and allow everyone a chance to talk. Try to build as much consensus as possible.

“When you think about a better town of Fort St. James in 10 years from now, what do you want it to look like in terms of:”

Quality of life

Businesses and economy

Environment

Question #2

What are some real issues you personally see that could threaten or undermine the kind of community you desire in terms of:

Quality of Life

Business and Economy

Environment

Question #3:

As a group, try to develop consensus on up to 10 projects that you think should be undertaken to achieve your desired vision.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.