CHARTING BC’S ECONOMIC FUTURE
100 COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

CAMPBELL RIVER
JULY 30 2013
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HOPES AND CONCERNS FOR BC’S ECONOMY

Hopes

• Continue to use BC’s resource base, but begin to build value added. Need to continue, and increase, manufacturing local products.
• Improve stewardship of resources.
• Everyone within BC’s borders begin to learn to collaborate more with one another, including all perspectives and walks of life.
• Hope that children have good access to good education.
• Salmon farming in BC could be a world leader.
• Hope (and concern): that there’s a long term vision, and approach to social and economic issues in BC.
• Diversification in the economy; innovation, technology, knowledge-based economy and incorporating these into smaller communities.
• Building upon the existing assets in communities, as opposed to a top-down approach.
• Hopes for a more diverse economy, more value added.
• More diversity in the economy, more innovation.
• To see a more decentralized model whereby smaller communities share in the growth of knowledge-based and creative industries.
• Develop better understanding within communities as to what tourism can do for their community.
• Want children to be able to grow up in a great community, go to a good college locally. [hope and concern]
• More local infrastructure investment in the next 5 years.
• “We have everything here in Campbell River.”
• Many opportunities for growth and development involving the local First Nations.
• Knowing how to present ourselves to the rest of North America—many opportunities, having local residents take advantage of them.
Concerns

- Jobs/Employment to enable families/children to stay in Campbell River.
- Jobs/Opportunity for locals.
- Spread that we’re seeing between wealthy and the poor, particularly in terms of housing. We are losing the middle class.
- Vancouver is recognized more than BC. We need recognition for the province as a whole, as opposed to a Vancouver-centric perspective.
- Many people let others make decisions, and don’t get involved = dangerous precedent.
- Overall standard of living, watching it decline, and how this relates to overall productivity.
- Need to incorporate innovation to better stimulate economies. Conversations that take place in urban centres don’t take into account rural realities.
- For Vancouver Island—always doom and gloom, despite the good stuff going on, and the diverse economies that are already out there.
- Equity for all— if everybody cannot participate in the economy, there will be many missed opportunities. Shift in perspective required.
- Economic disparity between North/South and Island/Mainland
- Tourism promotion to reflect the entire province, not just the Lower Mainland. Better funding/clear funding model for tourism from the province.
- Concern that after growth, and infrastructure investment, there is a bust, and local economies decline.
- Becoming a ‘second cousin’ to Vancouver.
- We don’t sell or celebrate everything that Campbell River has to offer.
SWOT ANALYSIS FOR BC’S ECONOMY

STRENGTHS

- People want to live here
- Creative-hub of talent and business to draw from for entire province to grow
- Food production sector and food security
- Fastest growing cohort of First Nations youth in BC
- Natural Environment

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of a culture (corporate) of collaboration and cooperative competition
- Lack of open discourse on perceived inequality between job creation and environmental concerns
- Poor track record of commercialized new products and technology due to overly heavy reliance on science/engineering vs. business acumen, and difficulty for new businesses to obtain adequate patient financing
- Poor transportation connections (access on the West Coast)
- Access to high speed (fiber digital lines), cloud and data storage throughout the province
- Lack of understanding in general of “Aboriginal rights and title”
- Lack of investment and venture capital
- Urban/rural divide
- Government moves at a glacial speed on reforming policies and regulation
- Apathy/reluctance to get involved
- Distance from “seat of power”
- Lack of control of resources—primarily fisheries
- External knowledge of BC; are we known outside of Canada, North America, or worldwide?
OPPORTUNITIES

• Increased research and commercialization capacity
• Opportunity to attract new immigrants to more knowledge-based industries in rural communities
• Utilization of diverse skills
• Aboriginal economic development
• Industry collaboration with other sectors
• Expansion of aquaculture [shellfish-finfish] near rural/remote communities
• Create our own Intellectual Property
• Utilize BC’s commodity wealth to generate new sustainable value added processing and manufacturing markets

THREATS

• Pursuit of foreign investment, particularly from Asia, has pushed the cost of living too high in many communities. I.e. Homes are out of reach for many
• Aging entrepreneurial base and poor succession planning
• Lack of youth engagement, particularly voting and decision making
• Lack of social license to operate a resource based economy
• Federal influence on Provincial decisions [i.e., LNG, First Nations relationships, skill development]
• Foreign ownership of our businesses and resources
• Environmental capacity for resources-based activity
• BC debt management
• Recruiting skilled labour and talent vs. training our own
• Under-funding education
• Short cycle of government
TOP ACTIONS FOR BC’S ECONOMIC FUTURE

GROUP #1
Number of Participants: 4

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

1. Develop a sustainable succession planning process to preserve the small business community.
   - How to finance
   - How to integrate and welcome new entrepreneurs

2. Develop more Aboriginal entrepreneurs and develop the growing Aboriginal youth demographic.
   - How to provide education and financing to Aboriginal entrepreneurs
   - How to change cultural perceptions of Aboriginal entrepreneurs

3. Create shared value: connection between not-for-profits and for-profits.
   - Corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets/programs should be built in such a way that the company has a vested interest. CSR would be integrated with the company’s business (e.g., showing farmers how to create co-ops, run a business, imparting the skills so that when the company is gone, locals can build business and further develop the economy)

4. Politicians enforce barriers to economic segregation.
   - Political will to eliminate real estate speculation, which drives up housing costs and removes ability to purchase affordable housing- provincial economy pressured by global economy

5. Engage young people to make community decisions.
   - Encourage youth to run for office and contribute to social policy change
   - Engage youth to assist with succession planning
   - Support young innovation, provide access to venture capital/start-up funds
GROUP #2

Number of Participants: 4

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

1. More conversations (such as this)
   - Include different people with different backgrounds to share perspectives and success stories
   - Social equity—living wage for all members of the community, across all backgrounds
   - Economic prosperity for Aboriginal communities—create a standard template for urban reserves; dialogue between First Nations and communities to identify reserves

2. Create more pro-active health care.
   - Focus on proactive healthcare solutions, and look at local resources and Aboriginal approaches to address healthcare needs, to avoid spending dollars on pharmaceuticals from elsewhere

3. Diversification of BC Hydro; promote new and diverse technologies.

4. Incentivize BC ownership and operations.
   - More cautionary approach to foreign ownership/investment

5. Strengthen our food policy.
   - Incentivize local ownership/operations. Decentralize food processing process, which in result, diversifies the food products that are available to local residents.
GROUP #3

Number of Participants: 4 (one had to leave early)

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

1. Educational opportunities.
   - Available through multiple avenues; public education, post-secondary, succession planning for small business
   - Act as a mechanism to give families/youth the tools to take over small businesses (e.g., Business sponsored opportunities to educate youth, companies train employees/youth, etc)

2. Transportation.
   - More efficient transportation connections to and within smaller communities

3. Innovative use of communications.
   - To keep small towns current, communication standards, knowledge, and infrastructure need to be current and leading edge

4. Working together with Aboriginal peoples.
   - This is an international phenomenon that will become increasingly important

5. Engage the youth—they are the driving force for the change and the future.
GROUP #4

Number of Participants: 3 and then 4 (late arrival)

Top Actions to Create Wealth:

   - Bridge the gap between newly graduated students/trainees with the need to have experience—avoid going overseas to obtain skilled employees.
   - Give tax credit to businesses who hire newly graduated students
   - Create a development fund accessible by BC companies to create and publish BC owned intellectual properties
   - Provincial treasury would benefit from the tax revenue of successful BC creative business

2. Food/Energy systems.
   - Province take a strong stance to food and energy policies
   - Look at new technologies in each community to address food and energy needs on a micro scale—permaculture vs. monoculture to addressing food needs [e.g., Biomass/food sources—farms use food/grain—straw goes to biomass recovery systems and heats schools, hospitals, lights on streets, etc.]
   - Diversify the carbon tax and lower the rate, increase the spread to everything that utilizes carbon

3. Address barriers to trade, marketing and promoting BC products within BC and abroad.
   - Reduce trade barriers between provinces [licenses, tariffs, regulatory barriers]
   - Provincial government to market externally to other provinces and USA
   - Send BC industry experts to promote BC industries rather than BC government representatives that are not educated/skilled to represent
   - Provide BC residents with direct input into tax dollar allocation
   - Collection and distribution of current survey information, make collection locally based, housed out of BC [BC Bureau of Statistics]