



**An Assessment of the Investment Climate in Invest
Kootenay Partner Communities**

October 2009

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Invest Kootenay Overview

The Invest Kootenay Partnership is a regional initiative focused on attracting, retaining and expanding investment in the Kootenay Region. This regional partnership model is based on trust, open communication, shared decision-making and strong local partnerships. Local partners for each participating community include representatives from municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations and Communities Futures. These strong local partnership arrangements form the foundation of the regional partnership model and ensure a coordinated local protocol is in place to welcome new investors and effectively service existing investors. The Invest Kootenay Advisory Group builds on the strengths of these partnerships to guide decision-making with at least one representative from each community attending quarterly meetings. Successful implementation of Invest Kootenay activities continues to rely on the participation of all community partners on an ongoing basis.

The Invest Kootenay partnership recognizes due to processes related to globalization rural communities are under increasing pressure to diversify their economies to remain competitive in the global market place. By working together regionally, our rural communities can pool limited resources and grow our communities in the eyes of the investor. The Partnership also recognizes that our rural communities can be proactive as opposed to reactive; we can shape as opposed to respond to investment. Invest Kootenay outreach presentations to local business networks and community groups highlight this need to attract, retain and expand targeted investment and the proactive role our communities can take.

The Invest Kootenay Partnership began in Nelson and Castlegar in September 2004 with federal and municipal funding support. Research from Phase 1 of the Invest Kootenay Partnership was conducted from September 2004 to March 2005 and was aimed at understanding how to best attract and retain out of area investment locally and regionally.

The research indicated the majority (>70%) of out of area investors /new business people came to the area originally as tourists or to visit family and friends.¹ While the untapped investment opportunities available in the Kootenay region were widely recognized by this pool of investors, many did not pursue these opportunities. Interviews with investors and high end tourism operators revealed a number of interested investors were continuing to slip through the cracks simply due to miscommunication or inconsistent, non-existent information. Research also revealed the Internet was being used as the primary source of information on communities whether it was to visit or to potentially invest. This research was the genesis of the Invest Kootenay Partnership.

With this knowledge in hand, a number of local contributors expressed enthusiasm at moving the Invest Kootenay Partnership from research to action, including a willingness to work together to promote investment regionally. The Town of Creston and electoral areas B & C joined Invest Kootenay in 2006 and the Cities of Revelstoke and Grand Forks joined in 2007 alongside continued support from the Cities of Nelson and Castlegar. In 2008, Kootenay Boundary electoral areas C, D, and E joined the partnership in conjunction with Grand Forks to form our first 'Boundary' pilot rural delivery model. Under this model, Grand Forks and electoral areas

¹ Detailed findings are presented in the 'CISP Investment Promotion Report' available at www.InvestKootenay.com on the Resources and Supports page.

C, D, and E pool their resources under a joint-membership arrangement. And most recently, in the Spring of 2009 the community of Kaslo joined the partnership. It is also important to note that core funding is provided through annual membership fees ensuring long-term sustainability of the Invest Kootenay Partnership.

Research Overview

In order to ensure Invest Kootenay activities remain informed by the changing investment climate of the region, investors from partner communities are interviewed annually. The purpose of these investor interviews is to better understand the investment climate and investor support needs in Invest Kootenay partner communities. More specifically, investors are asked what made investing in the area easy, what made it difficult, how can our communities better support potential and existing investors, and what target sectors our region should be focusing on. Between October 2008 and March 2009, eighty-six investors from Revelstoke, Grand Forks and the Boundary Area, Nelson, Castlegar, Creston and Kaslo were contacted to participate in this research study. Thirty-nine of eighty-six investors (response rate of 45%) were interviewed² for the purpose of this research with interviews lasting between 15 minutes and 1 hour. Due to the limited number of respondents from each community, the names of interview participants are not included in the appendix in order to ensure respondents remain confidential and non-identifiable. It should be noted that the majority of interviews were undertaken in the Fall / Winter of 2008 during or immediately following municipal elections resulting in some findings related to speculation over what municipal change-over would bring.

In addition, four focus groups were held in partner communities including focus groups in Kaslo in September 2008 (13 participants), Creston in October 2008 (13 participants), Boundary in July 2009 (12 participants), and Castlegar in August 2009 (9 participants). A cross-section of stakeholders participated in these focus groups, including investors, representatives from economic development and business support agencies, and elected officials. Their perspectives are integrated into the findings below with a more detailed summary of each focus group included in the appendix.

Table 1. Investor Response Rate

Community	Investors Contacted	Investor Respondents	Investor Response Rate
Creston	11	7	64%
Nelson	17	8	47%
Boundary	19	8	42%
Castlegar	13	5	38%
Revelstoke	17	2	12%
Kaslo	9	9	100%
Total	86	39	45%

² four of the seven investors from Creston provided feedback through a focus group and nine of nine investors from Kaslo provided feedback through a focus group

In addition to interview and focus groups, research included a literature review of relevant research (including findings from past IK studies and strategic planning sessions), an analysis of Invest Kootenay website and database statistics, and informal interviews with Invest Kootenay partner representatives in an effort to identify regional sector targets and international geographic targets. It is anticipated that geographic and sector targets will better inform future inbound and especially outbound marketing initiatives. This report presents findings from interview and focus group data, provides an overview and rationale for international geographic targets and regional target sectors, and presents recommendations focused on improving the investment climate in the region.

Investor Perspectives

Findings from investor interviews revealed a number of investment strengths, limitations, investment opportunities and target sector recommendations, and recommendations for investment climate improvements. Strengths and challenges primarily focused on real estate availability and affordability, lifestyle / recreation opportunities, climate and environmental considerations, population size and labour force, the people and uniqueness of Kootenay communities, transportation and access to markets, natural resources, and investor supports & government services. Recommendations focused on the same thematic areas in addition to a sub-theme dealing specifically with promotion and community engagement.

Strengths, Limitations and Recommendations for Investment Climate Improvements

Investors indicated *real estate* in the region is both affordable and available, including residential, commercial, and light industrial properties. The exception was limited availability of property in Nelson with one investor noting that they have been looking for a larger building for some time and unfortunately this larger commercial building with parking *just doesn't exist here*. Some concern was expressed from an investor in Creston regarding the lack of available zoned land and an investor from Castlegar indicating limited availability of industrial areas that ensured low impact on residential areas. Investors recommended that communities (and the region as a whole) work to establish a land use plan and inventory and that municipalities provide or support some property development including adequately serviced industrial and high technology parks.

Investor interviews supported previous Invest Kootenay research findings that suggested *lifestyle advantages, year-round recreational opportunities, and climate* continue to attract and retain investors and workers. Recent data highlights the Kootenay region as a desirable place to live, visit and retire with abundant recreational opportunities, a moderate climate and four distinct seasons. Other strengths included respect for the environment, ideal agricultural growing conditions, and access to water and timber. Concerns included non-favourable meteorological conditions causing limited industrial emissions to escape (Boundary area) and difficulty in competing with the Okanagan region which has a more favourable agricultural growing season (Boundary). Recommendations included encouraging non-motorized lakes, improved promotion of parks and recreation opportunities, reinstatement of government incentives awarding timber sales to value-added businesses, and agricultural sector strengthening focused on diversified agriculture and agri-tourism.

In terms of *Kootenay residents, communities and labour force*, investors described the people who live in the Kootenay region as culturally interesting, educated, successful, talented, sophisticated, resilient and entrepreneurial. Kootenay communities were described as possessing ‘hidden wealth’ (Nelson), family-friendly, safe allowing independence for children, well-established, possessing abundant community spirit, offering a high number and diverse social and recreational activities, rich in arts and culture, and had effectively undertaken community beautification efforts (Creston, Nelson). The labour force was described as diverse and talented with good access to employees despite a limited labour pool especially in trades and manufacturing. It should also be noted that investors indicated the lifestyle advantages of the Kootenay region serve to attract a diverse workforce to the area (especially in research and technology sectors). Concerns related to fear of investment on the part of some residents, a perception of high taxes, small local markets associated with limited population, non-balanced workforce due to an aging population, and limited availability of skilled trades people³. Recommendations focused on the need to maintain community beautification efforts, attract new residents by continued improvements to community and services, improve regional collaboration, educate residents on the benefits of investment to counter negative perceptions, and engage community members and businesses in setting a vision for investment at the community and regional levels.

Investors also indicated a number of strengths related to *transportation, location and access to markets* including central transportation routes (roads, rail), proximity to U.S. markets, Internet technologies addressing challenges associated with rural location, and the Castlegar airport. Concerns related to out of area shopping (especially cross-border), higher shipping costs due to rural location, the geographic disbursement of communities, inconsistent air travel (especially during winter months), and limited travel and shipping due to winter road conditions (i.e. mountain passes). Recommendations focused on the need to improve airports (reliability of Castlegar flights, extended runway in Nelson, better utilization of Grand Forks airport), and further improve rail and road transportation links.

Strengths related to **investor support and government services** highlighted the effectiveness of Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (KAST), training and financing offered by Community Futures, accessible lending provided by Credit Unions, and business support and networking provided by Chambers of Commerce, the Business Exchange and Rotary clubs. Concerns expressed were related to limited financing options (particularly larger lending institutions), high development costs (similar to Kelowna without the population base and potential rental income), cumbersome and costly development costs and application processes, and disengaged / limited support from municipal governments. It should be noted post-municipal election interview and focus group data suggested that perceptions related to the business friendliness of municipal councils has subsequently improved.

Recommendations related to improving investor supports included the need to expand and diversity training offered by Community Futures, improve in-service community service of larger lending institutions, improve expansion support from business support organizations and municipalities (locating larger buildings, improving organizational capacity), decrease taxes / tax incentives, and streamline / improve development application processes and costs.

³ this was a conflicting finding, some investors indicated trades people were available while others reported lack of availability

Recommendations related to promotion and community engagement include improved municipal web pages, more aggressive marketing of the region, the provision of a Kootenay regional profile, buy local campaign, encourage downtown shopping by removing parking meters (Nelson), engage communities in land use planning (and in investment visioning), engage key stakeholders in setting target sector strengthening strategies, and address investment ‘fears’ by educating communities on the benefits of investment.

Investment Opportunities and Target Sectors

Investor interview data highlighted to need to diversify local economies in light of the recent decline of the forestry sector. Specific investment opportunities and target sectors identified through interview and focus group data included: accommodations / conference facilities (Creston, Boundary, Castlegar), facilities / services for seniors (Creston, Nelson, Boundary), improved health care / hospital services (Creston, Nelson, Boundary, Castlegar), education / trades training / employment opportunities for youth (Nelson, Boundary), affordable housing / student housing (Nelson, Boundary), improved social services (Nelson), (eco and agri) tourism (Nelson, Boundary, Castlegar), e-commerce / high tech / software development / high tech research (Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke), agriculture / farming / grape growing (Creston, Boundary), alternate energies / environmental industries (Boundary, Castlegar), light industry / production industry (Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke), service businesses (Boundary), value-added manufacturing (Boundary, Castlegar, Revelstoke), marketing (Nelson), mining / natural resources (Castlegar, Revelstoke), shoe store (Castlegar), and arts and culture (Boundary, Revelstoke).

Regional Geographic Targets

It is recommended that outbound marketing targeted at direct foreign investment focus on countries that recognize the ‘rural’ lifestyle advantage, have high unemployment but good labour pools with transferable skills, and countries that already attract immigrants to Canada and interest from investors. Provincial research⁴ indicates very recent immigrants (n=890) relocating to the Kootenay region between 2001-2006 included: United States (230), Western Europe (145), Eastern Europe (125), United Kingdom (115), and Oceania including Australia and New Zealand (80).

According to Invest Kootenay Research and detailed in Table 2, the highest number of hits to the Invest Kootenay website over the last six months were generated by visitors from Canada (69,133), the United States (53,776), Mexico (5025), Germany (4681), Saudi Arabia (3141), China (2985), Lithuania (2752), Indonesia (2752), Romania (1693), Great Britain (1494), Sweden (1441), and France (1183). As outlined in Table 3, the highest number of hits to the Invest Kootenay CONNECT website (connecting investors with investment opportunities) over the last six months were generated by visitors from Canada (13,025), the United States (8,455), Great Britain (280), Germany (257), France (234), the Netherlands (167), China (151), Poland (104), and Japan (100).

⁴ BC Ministry of Attorney General, Multiculturalism & Immigration Branch. (2006). Profile of Immigrants in BC Communities: Kootenay Region.

Table 2. Country of Origin of Invest Kootenay Website Visitors (Jan-June 2009)

Top 25 Visitor Locations	Hits	Files
Canada	69133	64066
United States	53776	47396
Mexico	5025	4845
Germany	4681	2877
Unresolved / Unknown	4596	3978
Saudi Arabia	3141	2991
China	2985	2474
Lithuania	2752	1038
Indonesia	1820	1268
Romania	1693	1664
Great Britain	1494	1402
Sweden	1441	1088
France	1183	947
Poland	949	884
Algeria	896	829
India	727	697
Australia	565	519
Iran	489	465
Netherlands	450	417
Italy	323	311
Russian Federation	263	200
Bulgaria	241	226
Japan	233	220
Morocco	233	216
Spain	227	222

Table 3. Country of Origin of Invest Kootenay Database Visitors (Jan-June 2009)

Top 25 Database Visitor Locations	Hits	Files
Canada	13025	11747
Unresolved / Unknown	12166	11938
United States	8455	7697
Great Britain	280	244
Germany	257	244
France	234	203
Netherlands	167	104
China	151	127
Poland	104	60
Japan	100	95
Australia	59	57
Nigeria	57	57
Ukraine	48	47
Singapore	27	27
Finland	25	22

Sweden	24	22
Lithuania	21	21
Iran	20	20
Spain	19	19
Mexico	19	19
Ireland	17	17
Peru	16	16
Thailand	16	16
United Arab Emirates	16	16
Iceland	15	15

Also of interest, translation languages included on Invest Canada and Invest BC websites include French, Spanish, Dutch, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Italian and Portuguese. Informed by research, the following geographic targets are proposed for the Kootenay region:

- the United States,
- Europe (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western), and
- Oceania (New Zealand, Australia).

Local and Regional Target Sectors

It is important to note, that while a number of partner communities have identified local sector targets these efforts are somewhat outdated. Recent Invest Kootenay investment climate research has attempted to re-engage communities in refining local sector targets through focus groups, although additional efforts will be necessary. The local sector target information presented below represents an initial list of target sectors.

Boundary Sector Targets

- agriculture & wineries
- manufacturing (light and resource-based niche)
- mining & quarrying
- tourism (including agri-tourism)
- micro-brewery
- renewable energies
- technology-based businesses
- secondary food processing

Castlegar Sector Targets

- hospitality & tourism
- call centres
- value-added wood products / resource-based niche manufacturing
- high technology
- micro-brewery
- high energy-dependent industries

- light manufacturing
- renewable energies

Creston Valley Sector Targets

- agriculture & wineries
- value-added wood products / resource-based niche manufacturing
- secondary food processing
- tourism
- arts & culture
- health services

Kaslo Sector Targets

- tourism & hospitality
- arts & culture
- mining & forestry
- resource-based niche manufacturing
- agriculture
- technology-based businesses

Nelson Sector Targets

- construction
- technology
- manufacturing
- tourism & recreation
- arts & culture
- education
- health & wellness

Revelstoke Sector Targets

- tourism
- forestry
- transportation (primarily rail)
- government
- retail and services

Regional Sector Targets

Based on community level research in addition to recent interviews and focus groups with investors and economic development stakeholders, the following *regional sector targets* have been identified and will form the basis for future sector strengthening and marketing efforts:

- tourism and hospitality,
- arts and culture,
- mining and forestry (value-added),
- health and life sciences,
- agriculture and wineries,
- renewable energies, and
- resource-based niche manufacturing.

Recommendations

Regional Marketing

- continue to follow ‘tourist to investor’ inbound regional marketing strategy by utilizing high traffic tourism locations, recruiting support from tourism operators, and pursuing tourism-focused joint-marketing opportunities
- continue to improve resources available on the IK website, including the provision of a regional profile (in addition to updated community-specific profiles), updated investor success stories, target sector profiles and translated information (based on geographic targets)
- continue to refine and promote the unique lifestyle and opportunity advantages available in the Kootenay region with print materials designed to steer investors to the resource-rich IK website
- outbound marketing focused on identified regional target sectors and geographic targets that recognize the ‘rural’ lifestyle advantage, have high unemployment but good labour pools with transferable skills, and countries that already attract immigrants to Canada and interest from investors
- undertake more aggressive marketing of investor-opportunities database both within and outside of region
- undertake more proactive approach in seeking out opportunities to be listed on investor-opportunities database (including outreach to accountants and realtors)
- host sector specific events at the BC Showcase in Vancouver
- send an Invest Kootenay team to sector-specific trade shows
- develop a quarterly e-newsletter to be distributed to partners, local support networks and interested investors

Engaging Local & Regional Networks / Creating Welcoming Communities

- focus agricultural sector strengthening on diversified agriculture, secondary food processing, agri-tourism and wineries
- attract new investors by continued improvements to community and services (especially health, education and affordable housing) – work closely with Regional Immigration Group’s initiatives aimed at creating welcoming communities

- educate and engage community members and businesses in setting a vision for investment at the community and regional levels, including refinement of community-level sector targets
- support transportation improvements (air, road, rail) and promote the availability of telecommunications infrastructure
- engage communities in land use planning with the goal of creating local and regional land use inventories and recommendations (i.e. development of light industrial and technology parks, zoning)
- engage key stakeholders in setting target sector strengthening strategies for the following regional sector targets: tourism and hospitality, arts and culture, mining and forestry (value-added), health and life sciences, agriculture, renewable energies, niche manufacturing
- address investment ‘fears’ by educating communities on the benefits of investment and / or launching an awareness campaign
- improve regional collaboration by bringing stakeholders together around sector target strengthening, joint-marketing, and Invest Kootenay promotional events
- work with partner communities to build capacity related to handling investment inquiries and servicing investors (especially smaller communities with limited resources) through the provision of ongoing training for Ambassadors, Community Contacts, and First Point of Contact representatives
- Host appreciation / networking events for Ambassadors, Community Contacts and investors

Outreach to New & Existing Investors

- provide or support property development including adequately serviced industrial and high technology parks (based on local and regional land use plans)
- expand and diversity training offered by Community Futures and other support organizations focused on existing businesses
- work with Chambers of Commerce to identify specific needs / conduct a needs assessment related business retention and expansion support and training
- advocate for improved community-level service and business-friendliness of larger lending institutions
- improve expansion support from business support organizations and municipalities (locating larger building, improving organizational capacity) – based on identified needs

- work with municipalities to ensure business-friendly processes and development costs are in place (i.e. decreased tax / offer tax incentives streamline / improve development applications)
- ensure follow-up protocol is in place for electronic and non-electronic investor inquiries (including initial contact with newly registered investors and investment inquiries)

Research & Development

- develop land use plans and inventories at community and regional levels (as outlined above)– provide overview on Invest Kootenay website
- lobby provincial and federal government to reintroduce policies encouraging value-added forestry businesses and address ALR limitations related to secondary food processing
- expand target sector profiles and resources – feature on Invest Kootenay website
- continue annual interviews with investors and key economic development stakeholders with findings and recommendations presented in an annual report
- continue annual strategic planning
- continue to track investment inquiries, website and database visits, and investor follow-up through quarterly reporting

Appendix A. Summary of Investor Interview Data

INVESTMENT-RELATED STRENGTHS

Availability / Affordability of Real Estate

- affordable housing prices (Creston, Nelson, Revelstoke)
- affordable commercial / light industrial properties (Boundary)

Lifestyle / Year-round Recreation

- desirable place to live / visit / retire / second home (Creston, Nelson, Castlegar, Revelstoke)
- abundant recreational opportunities (Nelson)
- Revelstoke Mountain Resort (Revelstoke)

Climate / Environment

- moderate climate (Creston, Boundary)
- respect for environment (Nelson)
- ideal water and temperature for agriculture (Boundary)

Population Size / Labour Force

- diverse and talented labour force (skilled trades, artisans, craftsman, designers) (Nelson, Boundary)
- good access to employees despite limited labour pool (Nelson)
- lifestyle / culture / location / recreation opportunities attract labour force (Nelson, Boundary)
- population base of entire Kootenay Region (Castlegar)
- small population results in effective word of mouth advertising (Castlegar)
- small population makes it easy to get involved with community (Castlegar)

The People / Community

- effective beautification efforts (Creston, Nelson)
- culturally interesting (Nelson)
- educated / successful / talented / sophisticated individuals relocating from elsewhere (Nelson)
- high number of entrepreneurs (Nelson)
- hidden wealth in Nelson (Nelson)
- family-friendly community / cohesive (Nelson)
- well-established community (Revelstoke)

Transportation / Location / Access to Markets

- central for transportation (Creston, Castlegar)
- proximity to the US, including rail transportation (Creston, Boundary)
- the remoteness doesn't really affect us for shipping etc. (Nelson)
- great location (Nelson)
- location limitations have been helped by the Internet (Nelson)
- Castlegar airport (Castlegar)

Natural Resources

- access to timber (Creston, Nelson)
- access to water supply (Boundary)

Government / Support Services

- hopeful that change in municipal leadership will be more business friendly (Creston, Boundary)
- Credit Union offers progressive financing options (Nelson)
- effective support of KAST, NEC, Community Futures (Nelson)
- Community Futures offers wage subsidies for youth employees (Boundary)
- Communities Futures financing (Revelstoke)
- Chamber of Commerce, Business Exchange and Rotary in Grand Forks (Boundary)

Other

- community is attractive to service or non-industrial businesses (Boundary)
- relatively stable economy over time (Castlegar)
- BC Hydro and Downie Street Timber are larger employers in Revelstoke (Revelstoke)
- diverse industry (Revelstoke)

INVESTMENT-RELATED LIMITATIONS

Availability / Affordability of Real Estate

- initially no available land with proper zoning (Creston)
- limited availability of real estate/property (Nelson)
- limited industrial areas available to ensure low impact on residential areas (Castlegar)

Climate / Environment

- misconception that this area is cold and remote, when in fact there is virtually no difference in weather and proximity to large metropolitan centers than the area from Summerland north (Creston)
- non-favourable meteorological conditions – limited emissions escape (Boundary)
- competition with Okanagan that has more favourable growing season (Boundary)

Population Size / Labour Force

- high property taxes due to limited population (Creston, Nelson)
- relatively small population / limited local market (Creston, Boundary)
- non-balanced workforce due to aging population (Boundary)
- forced to recruit and train trades-people at own cost (Boundary)
- decreased in number of employees due to economic downturn (Boundary)
- limited number of young families(Castlegar)
- ensure labour force is available for interested investors (Castlegar)
- lacking skilled trades (Revelstoke)

The People / Community

- only those individuals/groups that really want to be here survive (Creston)
- urgent need to maintain community beautification efforts (Nelson)
- Castlegar residents reluctant to part with their money (Castlegar)
- lack of regional communication (Castlegar)
- lack apathy, lack of participation and fear of growth on behalf of citizens in region (Castlegar)
- businesses must be self sufficient and resilient due to remote location and limited population (Creston, Revelstoke)

Transportation / Location / Access to Markets

- inconsistent air travel (Nelson)
- higher shipping/ freight costs due to remote location (Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke)
- out-of-area / cross-border shopping (Creston, Boundary, Castlegar)
- geographically dispersed (Castlegar)
- winter road conditions limit travel and shipping (Castlegar, Revelstoke)

Government / Support Organizations

- cumbersome development application processes serve to turn away interested businesses (Creston, Boundary)
- limited financing options (Nelson)
- Nelson's Tech Task Force was ineffective – all talk, no action (Nelson)
- mill rate drives up property tax level – among highest in BC (Boundary)
- easily accessible 'regional' profile is unavailable (Castlegar)
- high development costs (currently similar to Kelowna without population base and potential rent income) (Castlegar)
- disengaged / limited support from municipal government (Creston, Boundary)

Other

- lack of technical support to service hardware / machinery (Nelson)
- few strengths for investment (Creston)
- limited communication networks (Boundary)
- lack of power to run manufacturing facility (Boundary)
- economic uncertainty (Boundary)
- perception that the Kootenay region is not open for business (Boundary)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE INVESTMENT CLIMATE

Availability / Affordability of Land

- provide property development (Creston)
- ensure land use plan and inventory is in place / zone land (Creston)

Lifestyle / Year-round Outdoor Recreation

- encourage non-motorized tourists on Kootenay Lake (Nelson)
- promote parks and recreation facilities (Castlegar)

Population Size / Labour Force

- draw new residents by improving community and services (Creston)

The People / Community

- maintain city beautification efforts, hire summer students and offer incentives to building owners (Nelson)

Transportation / Location / Access to Markets

- improve airports (extend Nelson runway, increase Castlegar flights) (Nelson)
- offer airport shuttles for small groups (Nelson)
- improve rail and road transportation systems (Nelson, Revelstoke)

Natural Resources

- re-instate BC government program awarding timber sales to value-added businesses (Nelson)

Taxes / Applications

- streamline / improve development application processes / less red tape (Creston, Boundary)
- lower taxes / lower property taxes for small businesses, commercial and light industrial / reduction of mill rate / offer tax incentives / reduce development costs (Creston, Nelson, Boundary, Castlegar)

Promotion

- improve city's web page (Nelson)
- more aggressive marketing of the region (i.e. trade / home shows) (Creston, Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke)
- provision of 'Kootenay Region' profile (Castlegar)
- work to diversify economy especially with declining forestry sector (Revelstoke)
- encourage downtown shopping by removing parking meters (Nelson)
- limit number / type of new investors we attract (Nelson, Revelstoke)
- promote and market shopping local (Castlegar)
- educate community on benefits of investment and create welcoming communities (Boundary, Castlegar)

Engagement

- municipality to engage community in developing a collective investment vision and land use plan (Nelson, Boundary)
- engage key stakeholders in setting and strengthening sector strategies – tourism, education, retail, construction (Nelson)
- long-term thinking / municipality to start working with / improving relations with the business sector (Boundary, Castlegar)
- municipal / Chamber representative to take more proactive role in meeting with businesses and working to expand their investments / market area (Boundary, Castlegar, Revelstoke)

- work together as a region instead of towns competing with one another (Castlegar)
- create an investors advisory / sounding board to inform interested investors of the differences between communities, market dynamics, provide assistance evaluated investment opportunities (Nelson)

Development

- follow through with high-tech park (Revelstoke)
- offer incentives to businesses owners to build ethically and sustainability (Nelson)
- build a descent industrial park (Boundary)
- provide industrial power (Boundary)

Services

- expand and diversify training / financing services offered by Community Futures (Nelson, Boundary)
- support organizations to assist with expansion (i.e. locating larger building, improving organizational capacity) (Boundary)
- improved in-community service of lending institutions (Nelson)

SECTOR TARGETS / INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- accommodations / conference facilities (Creston, Boundary, Castlegar)
- facilities / services for seniors (Creston, Nelson, Boundary)
- improve health care / hospital services (Creston, Nelson, Boundary, Castlegar)
- education / trades training / employment opportunities for youth (Nelson, Boundary)
- affordable housing / student housing (Nelson, Boundary)
- improved social services / systems (Nelson)
- (eco) tourism (Nelson, Boundary, Castlegar)
- e-commerce / high tech / software development / high tech research (Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke)
- agriculture / farming / grape growers (Creston, Boundary)
- alternate energies / environmental industries (Boundary, Castlegar)
- light industry / production industry / small factories (Nelson, Boundary, Revelstoke)
- service businesses (Boundary)
- value-added manufacturing (Boundary, Castlegar, Revelstoke)
- marketing (Nelson)
- mining / natural resources (Castlegar, Revelstoke)
- shoe store (Castlegar)
- arts and culture (Revelstoke, Boundary)

Appendix B. Summary of Creston Focus Group Data

Date and Location: Monday, October 6, 2008 at the Creston Valley Development Authority Board Room

Participants: Erika Woker (Community Futures), Beth Kastelan (CV Business Association), Larry Binks (Area C Candidate), Alfie Deidl (businessman), Tom Mann (RDCK Area C Director), Cindy Kozak-Campbell (Interior Health), Richard Dalon (CF Wildlife Management Area), Don Tilling (TB Contractors), Terry Rendek (TA Rendek & Assoc. Ltd.), John L. Kettle (RDCK Area B Director), Robert Louie (Yaqaan Nuki Peoples' Heritage Society), Alan Burt (Creston Valley Economic Development Authority), Judy Edge (Creston Valley Development Authority)

Uniqueness

- the people (talented, resilient)
- arts community
- affordable real estate
- Creston Valley Wildlife Management
- lifestyle – work / life balance
- moderate climate
- effective beautification efforts
- misconception that this area is cold and remote, when in fact there is virtually no difference in weather and proximity to large metropolitan centers than the area from Summerland north
- businesses must be self sufficient and resilient due to remote location and limited population

What Makes Investing Easy?

- affordable power
- proximity to U.S.
- central for transportation
- access to timber

What Makes Investing Difficult?

- ALR limitations
- varying attitudes on investment attraction
- select labour pool (especially trades)
- limited availability of land (zoned, without ALR restrictions)
- lack of coordination and communication
- higher property taxes due to limited population
- relatively small population / limited local market
- fear of investment / fear of change as new residents move to area (fear quality of life will diminish, some tension between new and long term residents)
- improve infrastructure / traffic flow
- out of area shopping / cross-border shopping
- cumbersome development application process

Recommendations to Improve Investment Climate

- work together to address ALR limitations to secondary agricultural processing
- need to attract and retain labour force
- attract new residents by improving community and services
- need to ensure investment protocol is in place
- regional vision for investment
- ensure land use plan and inventory is in place

- ensure timely response to development inquiries and applications from municipality / improve business friendliness of municipality
- service existing investors – be proactive not reactive
- buy local
- address sewage treatment plant
- educate community on benefits of investment – communicating in the right way
- offer tax incentives / reduce development costs
- more aggressive marketing of the region

Desired Investment / Investor and Related Assets

- agriculture, agri-tourism, wineries and food processing
- IT sectors – utilize fibre optic infrastructure
- industries associated seniors / health care
- tourism – accommodation is needed
- higher education Centre of Excellence associated with Creston Wildlife Management Centre
- value-added resource based manufacturing
- set realistic targets – focus on what the community already does well

Appendix C. Summary of Kaslo Focus Group Data

Date and Location: Friday, September 5, 2008 at Selkirk College, Kaslo Campus

Participants: Rick Hewat, S Honora Cooper, Rae Sawyer, Sarah Moffatt, Andy Le Couffe, Sally Hughes / Geoff Beer, Dawn Lang, Suzan Hewat, Debra Hamilton, Kevin Hoffart, John Addison, Jan McMurray, Jim Holland

Uniqueness

- the people (friendly / helpful)
- Jazz Fest
- heritage
- lifestyle (recreation/family friendly)
- lake and mountains
- K-12 school
- health (air/water quality)
- climate
- affordable
- self sufficiency
- limited regulation
- downtown core is like an open mall (unique opportunities)
- CSS Moie
- arts and culture
- trail system
- Class 2 airport (development potential)
- Selkirk College
- Government Agent Office
- only hour away from other government offices
- arena for sports and recreation
- tennis courts
- skate park
- golf course
- hot springs

What Makes Investing Easy?

- strong desire to invest
- friendly and welcoming community
- small community making it easy to find what you need

What Makes Investing Difficult?

- no clearing house for information investors need
- no welcome wagon or investor package (print or online)
- no economic development officer
- no paid Chamber of Commerce staff to support investment inquiries
- no Ambassadors in place to showcase community to investors
- some investors are not welcome by residents due to fear

Services for Existing Investors

- some attention to Official Community Plan – land use / zoning, re: commercial and home business
- Chamber of Commerce could assist with investment attraction and retention efforts

- Regional District has a role to play – there is an opportunity for smaller communities to pool funds to hire an Economic Development Officer, ie. shared person one day / week
- need for funds to support investment attraction / retention efforts through Invest Kootenay – proposal to be submitted to CBT, WD to offset municipal contributions

Desired Investment / Investor and Related Assets

- good telecommunications infrastructure
- attract those who want to ‘unplug’ – short term work elsewhere and return for work-lifestyle balance
- holiday properties – double edge sword with respect to benefits to community (pro – can bring capital to existing business; con- absentee home owners / drive up cost of housing), creative solutions are needed to control amount of holiday properties to ensure accommodation of service workers (affordable housing), maintaining volunteer pool with limiting number of absentee home owners
- mining potential – ensure community readiness\
- new young entrepreneurs (small and medium sized businesses) – need to ensure affordability, business supports, some concern exists over high density
- land availability offers development possibilities – planning is being addressed
- agriculture
- government services – mid level bureaucratic opportunities, ie. regional government office
- tech industries and businesses using web / information and computer technologies
- year round recreation industry – opportunities exist for recreation in the shoulder and winter seasons (i.e. motorized recreation considerations, linking to back-country skiing operations), need to ensure management plan is in place to protect the backcountry
- community forest offers opportunities in niche-based manufacturing, make community forest available to local businesses
- industrial and commercial opportunities
- trades opportunities
- limited health care – encourage investment in health facility

Appendix D. Summary of Boundary Focus Group Data

Date and Location: Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at Cascade Golf Course, Christina Lake

Participants: Dave Marshall – Owner Boundary Appraisal Services /Realtor for 34 years/Chair Community Futures Boundary, Rob Ogloff – Owner Sunlife Financial/Life long resident, Michael Strukoff – Superintendent SD51, Gene Robert – City of Grand Forks Council Member/Long time resident, Dennis Thome – Employment Counsellor – Community Futures Boundary long time resident/volunteer, Marguerite Rotvold – Village of Midway council member/past mayor/Chair – Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, Darla Ashton – employee SD51 – Greenwood resident/Rotarian/long time resident, Justin Darbyshire – Christina Lake Chamber of Commerce/long time resident/youth, Brian Taylor - Mayor City of Grand Forks/long time resident, Christopher Stevenson – City of Greenwood Councillor, Jennifer Wetmore – CED Coordinator Community Futures Boundary/BEDC, Sarah Winton – CED Community Futures Boundary

Uniqueness

- the people (community spirit, involvement, resilient, supportive, collaborative, volunteers, tolerant, welcoming, long term residents)
- good transition of new residents – fitting in with existing community with new ideas also welcomed
- affordable and available real estate (especially agricultural land – although highly fractured land base, i.e. either small or large parcels)
- untapped opportunities
- very low population density (even for rural area)
- location – remote due to mountain passes but close proximity to U.S. and Okanagan
- varied geography within Boundary
- room to grow while keeping small town feel
- moderate temperatures throughout all 4 distinct seasons
- peaceful with low crime, safety allowing independence for children
- trail system allows for walking, biking and wildlife viewing
- low use recreation opportunities (i.e. you're the only one there)
- 47 km paved road into wilderness
- rich arts & culture tradition (growth sector)
- abundant social activities / event (theatre, Rock Creek Fall Fair, Baseball Tournament, GF Fall Fair)
- accessible visible history (i.e. rail grades, mining towns, museums) / heritage corridor
- available workforce (especially trades and manufacturing)
- good K-12 school system
- Selkirk College and access to online programs
- large number of tourists passing through the Boundary Area
- trickle effect from Vancouver / Okanagan Region
- 24/7 hospital / medivac with airport
- accessible year round airport (opportunities for development)
- rail transportation (ensure it remains)
- fibre optic infrastructure (municipality and schools)
- small town / personalized customer service
- approachable / business friendly municipal government and support organizations
- 4 easily accessible provincial parks and campgrounds
- active grassroots groups with municipal support(i.e. agriculture, arts & culture)
- growing organic farming sector and new food / meat coop supporting agriculture

What Makes Investing Easy?

- different identity than East Kootenay to be celebrated
- abundance of opportunities / lack of competition especially medium to large sized businesses

What Makes Investing Difficult?

- lack of affordable rental housing to match available wages including higher density / turnover
- transportation and poor road conditions (i.e. mountain passes)
- political bureaucracy (federal, provincial), ministry regulations / lack of ministry representation within region

Recommendations to Improve Investment Climate

- transportation between communities
- succession planning support
- improved cell phone coverage for business communications
- attract younger families by providing employment opportunities
- attract doctors
- ensure investor point person and relevant information is in place
- improved promotion / identity of Boundary Region (consider renaming Boundary)
- improved promotion of all recreation opportunities
- being tenacious at getting provincial / federal elected officials to recognize the region / better lobbying
- increase openness to investment
- improved direction / visioning of investment by engaging residents and businesses – create a road map to future investment

Desired Investment / Investor and Sector Targets

- home-based businesses addressing local needs (including some resulting from downsized forestry industry)
- power generation – water, wind, clean and green energies
- senior related business to address this growing demographic
- ICT businesses utilizing fibre optic infrastructure
- secondary food processing
- secondary and tertiary lumber manufacturing and processing / value added
- light manufacturing industry
- diversified agriculture / agri-tourism
- micro-brewery

Appendix E. Summary of Castlegar Focus Group Data

Date and Location: Thursday, August 20, 2009 at CBT Community Forum, Castlegar

Participants: Chris D'Arcy (Castlegar & District Heritage Society), Deb McIntosh (Castlegar & District Heritage Society), Trish Chernoff (Retired Resident), Lorne Imeson (Scotties Marina), Brian Miller (Castlegar Golf Course), Lawrence Redfern (Parks & Trails), Andre Buss (Castlegar Financial Officer), Phil Markin (City of Castlegar Development Society), and Pamela McLeod (Castlegar & District Chamber of Commerce)

Uniqueness

- central within region (hub)
- close proximity to transportation routes and U.S. border
- four distinct seasons
- friendly people
- effective branding
- working on sustainability
- untapped potential of water ways (underutilized / not crowded)
- relatively inexpensive (i.e. compared to Kelowna)
- affordable marina
- good parks and trail systems
- rural living with most amenities still accessible
- relaxed pace / lifestyle 'Kootenay time'
- beautiful scenery
- abundant green space
- municipality is 'open for business'
- unique culture (i.e. Dukabour history)
- availability of recreational facilities
- Selkirk College offers wide range of programs including renowned aviation program
- gaming centre
- Shopper's Drug Mart
- Castlegar 'as a destination' is still undiscovered

What Makes Investing Easy?

- receptive / business-friendly council / less micro-managing
- the area sells itself- untapped and beautiful
- Bizpal launched by the city
- airport servicing the region
- affordable and available land / availability of developable land
- good highway infrastructure
- free parking
- effective downtown revitalization / aesthetic improvements made by business owners – demonstrates community pride
- affordable power

What Makes Investing Difficult?

- lack of reliability of transportation in winter (airport / mountain passes)
- non-supportive attitude of long-term residents / fear of investment / want to keep the status quo
- lack of recognition of importance of tourist dollars and relationship to investment (may be spin off of reliance on major industry creating 'don't need them' attitude)
- high development costs (rates are necessary due to infrastructure costs / upgrades)

Recommendations to Improve Investment Climate

- improved advertising / improved promotion of assets (i.e. fishing, visit the lake, Syringa Creek Provincial Park)
- capture tourists driving through (route visitors through downtown, expand way finding signs)
- community education (on benefits of investment) and engagement in setting future vision for investment
- utilize local media to promote community assets in an effort to educate residents on what the community has to offer and recruit investment support
- proactive articulation of rationale behind perceived high development costs
- advocate for expansion of Syringa Creek Provincial Park (i.e. more camp sites)
- moving Destination Marketing forward despite recent disbanding of Tourism BC
- Tourism sign at Highway 3 East

Desired Investment / Investor and Sector Targets

- technology-based business
- home-based businesses
- hospitality & tourism – including convention business (although limitations noted for tourist buses on ferries and mountain passes)
- revisit OCP recommendations from 2006/7
- light / small manufacturing (to take advantage of affordable power)
- renewable energies
- clustering (i.e. existing auto-dealers)

Appendix F. Recommendations from 2005 Investment Promotion Strategic Report

Coordination, Research & Planning

- Establish a joint-community IPA (Investment Promotion Agency)⁵ or ensure an IPA function in each community, prioritizing on-going collaboration
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track investor leads, actions and follow-up (ensure joint-community collaboration)
- Implement a consistent, revised New Resident Survey in both Castlegar and Nelson to collect more demographic information in a sub-regional and regional database format
- Commit long term funding (five years plus) to any investor attraction plan – engage Regional Districts
- Undertake a joint-communities skills analysis to inventory where area may have too few people (i.e. trades) or an excess supply (i.e. geographers, teachers, biologists) to potentially market to attract shortages & to attract investors to where they may be able to utilize overcapacity
- Establish a coordinated skill development program based on skills analysis
- Develop and refine consistent investment protocol for consistently dealing with and following up with leads from investors including tracking and reflexivity in presenting shifting community and business opportunities (i.e. community business wants to find investor to expand, sell out) – ensure joint-community collaboration if this is a local function
- Continue to identify and prioritize joint-community investment opportunities (education, high technology, tourism & hospitality & eco-tourism) on a yearly basis at a minimum (i.e. joint-community opportunity identification session, build on existing networks to gather data on on-going basis)
- Inventory available property – serviced or developable, ensure updated and available through IPA
- Coordinate business **databases** – present data regionally as well as sub-regionally
- Implement Regional District business licenses – compile and include business information in regional database

Marketing

- Develop and market a Castlegar – Nelson brand (or ‘West Kootenay’ brand) aimed at investment attraction and retention (complementary to community-specific branding initiatives)
- Develop a Castlegar – Nelson joint-marketing strategy (targeting investors, linking marketing efforts of complementary businesses / services)
- Expand Ambassador Program to include an extended network of ‘first points of contact’ (i.e. ski and fishing tour operators, museums) – educate network on protocol, provide investment packages for distribution, and track informal inquiries (could be function of IPA)
- Feature investors as success stories in web, print, local and international media, etc.
- Invest Castlegar - Nelson web-site – ensure web-site content and links are current and effective

Community Awareness

- Develop & implement a Citizen Ambassador Program (in collaboration with regional initiative)
- Implement a Super Host Program/Hospitality 101 especially focusing on points of entry & contact for visitors to area – commit to having a region wide initiative that creates notoriety for region
- Engage businesses and community in any attraction effort through sustained communications strategy (press release every 6 weeks with a story/element of this report) & presentations through local business and community service associations (Chamber, etc.)

⁵ Possibly within an existing organization, establish a clear mandate, goals, vision, resources (Immigration, Permanent Residence rules, personal links to Invest BC, etc.), and tracking and monitoring processes & links to a regional and similar community-specific initiatives under which many of the recommendations could be implemented and properly evaluated

- Create a joint-community new resident or investor referral incentive program where community member who has made a referral to a new resident and/or investor is eligible for yearly draw prizes (has name going into draw for prizes on a yearly basis)
- Educate community on investment – why it is important, status of current initiatives, success stories (could be tied into communications strategy)

Capacity Building & Brokering

- Securing support for proposed investment attraction strategy (could be ties into communications strategy)
- Engage joint-community contributors through an ongoing investment attraction committee to oversee attraction efforts (build on existing Advisory Committee to include public & private sectors, Olympics committee representation, and important community spanning organizations like Selkirk College in efforts)
- Participate in Invest BC – ensure current links & contacts, ensure regional and provincial strategies are complementary
- Regular training for those who will come in contact with investors including politicians, Chambers, CFs, City staff on issues like best practices, new resident information, opportunities, the typical investor story, etc. (to incorporate networking, training should be incorporated jointly between municipal officials, Ambassadors, and ‘first points of contact’ network)
- Host joint-community sector-specific sessions⁶ to identify growth strategies (i.e. health / wellness, education (building on Summer of Learning), high-tech)
- Establish an Angel Network

⁶ A first step may be to prioritize sectors to focus on in terms of joint-community promotion efforts

Appendix G. Recommendations from 2007 Strategic Planning Session

Inbound Marketing Recommendations

- Investor-Investment Opportunities database – ensure tie in to existing databases
- focus on quality of inbound before going outbound
- logo recognition
- website – continued upgrades
- strategy to disseminate promo material (part of relocation package, ski and golf clubs, pubs, realtors)
- local publications – (even feature just the logo)
- use municipal correspondence to feature logo
- continue success stories
- identify key sectors and develop sector profiles
- feature marketing materials at key points of entry (BC highways, ferries)
- bumper stickers

Outbound Marketing Recommendations

- Kootenay Rockies (Chris Andrews, logo in their material)
- post card (with post to send back)
- targeted publications
- IK on back of current business cards
- IK logo beer cases (i.e. NBN, Columbia Brewery)
- disseminate marketing materials via conferences in our area
- connecting with others already doing outbound – tourism group
- continue reciprocal links
- Wikipedia to steer traffic
- customizable investor package
- holistic community profiles (include health, education, etc.)

Local Networks Recommendations

- work with existing success stories to disseminate marketing materials and spread the IK message
- integrate into business retention and expansion
- educating our local support networks via Ambassador Program and Local Support Networks
- communicating back to communities via local media and newsletters
- tie into succession planning (database of investor-investment opportunities)
- employment for spouse – link to regional job board on IK website
- tie IK training into existing training i.e. Super Host

Regional Cooperation / Partnership Expansion Recommendations

- minimal standard across partner communities (consistency of product and servicing)
- proposal for SIDTI to expand partnerships – also CBT, WD
- could link to regional Pine Beetle manufacturing and technology project – potential to tie in database
- work out fee structure – leverage so low cost to join partnership
- inform larger companies – retention – get their support (part of Skills Council work)

Appendix H. Recommendations from 2008 Strategic Planning Session

Capacity Building and Local Networks Recommendations

- Ambassador training
- Training front-line staff to ensure investors are welcomed, information is provided and protocol followed – incorporate into Super Host training
- Ensure presentations are made to business networks in each partner community at least once a year
- Distribute a quarterly e-newsletter to investors, Ambassadors and members of the local support network including evidence of success
- Consider implementing business welcome wagon in partner communities (modeled after Nelson)
- Host appreciation / networking events for Ambassadors, local support networks and investors

Marketing Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy with a focus on the database, including inbound (targeted to opportunity holders) and outbound (targeted to investors) efforts
- Database marketing strategy to include outreach to realtors, accountants, lawyers, bankers and other relevant professionals
- Proactive seeking out of opportunity holders to populate the database
- Improved engagement of local support networks utilizing existing business networks
- Partner organizations to print and display opportunity listings from database
- Develop power point presentation for trade shows to supplement print materials
- Link marketing efforts to Destination Marketing
- Feature community videos on website (resulting from Olympics marketing efforts)
- Feature Invest Kootenay information at conferences and events in our region
- Consider interactive marketing (i.e. kiosks in Vancouver / Calgary hotels)
- Continue to ensure website is prioritized in search engines, consider Google ads
- Post cards / e-post cards (Castlegar VIC has experienced an 80% return rate)
- Feature Invest Kootenay information at the 2010 Commerce Centre
- Links to Selkirk and School District website from IK website
- Continue to foster joint-marketing relationships (i.e. ski hills, golf courses)

Research and Development Recommendations

- Improvements to database to include
 - search terms for opportunities (i.e. sector, community, investment type),
 - a 'sold' marking on opportunities that have secured investment,
 - clear link from opportunity teaser to registration,
 - lengthen opportunity teasers,
 - inclusion of commercial office space, and
 - print function for selected opportunities
- Outsource duties related to populating the database – identifying businesses for sale in newspapers and contacting businesses to recruit their listing
- Combine IK community profiles with local profiles – make different profiles available to new residents versus interested investors
- Follow up with Bruce Hardy re: Angel Network

Appendix I. Strategic Actions 2008-2009

Implementation of regional marketing plan

- Inbound marketing
 - o Continued ‘tourist to investor’ strategy
 - o brochures featured at local businesses and Chambers of Commerce
 - o signs at transportation points and high traffic tourism sites
 - o local advertising
- Outbound marketing
 - o targeted advertising
 - o trade show missions and linking with other outbound efforts
 - o translation of marketing materials and website
- Utilizing Internet technologies
 - o Continued development of www.InvestKootenay.com including updates to community profiles, success stories, recent news, and revisions related to partnership expansion
 - o Promotion of **CONNECT database** connecting investors with opportunity holders

Partnership expansion

- open invitation to municipalities
- pursuing funding to offset membership costs for smaller communities
- formalizing governance structure

Engaging local & regional networks

- presentations to local business networks
- Ambassador training & support
- coordinating with regional networks and opportunities

Outreach to existing investors

- Identify investor needs
- Tap into networks to identify new investor leads
- Recruit support for CONNECT Database

Research & development

- Identify target sectors
- Identify target geographic areas
- Articulate our competitive advantage

Appendix J. Strategic Actions 2009-2010

Focus Area	Strategic Actions ⁷
MARKETING & PROMOTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue inbound ‘tourist to investor’ marketing (development and implementation) *PRIORITY ACTION* • database marketing (investors and opportunity holders) • outbound marketing based on geographic & sector targets • regional showcasing events • reciprocal links / logos on partner correspondence & advertising • continue linkages to Invest BC and Invest Canada
COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarterly e-newsletters *PRIORITY ACTION* • quarterly press releases *PRIORITY ACTION*
ENGAGING LOCAL NETWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community education & investment visioning *PRIORITY ACTION* • improve synergies with cross-section of stakeholders (public, private, community)
PARTNERSHIP EXPANSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreach to partner organizations across the region (partners to assist) • presentations to municipal councils, RDs, community stakeholders, Chambers • collaborating on a project requiring regional coordination (affordable housing) *PRIORITY ACTION*
INVESTOR OUTREACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist with succession planning research and supports • assist with or conduct training and supports needs assessment for businesses / investors *PRIORITY ACTION* • presentations to business networks, realtors, accountants (recruit as IK supporters) *PRIORITY ACTION*
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue annual investment climate research • work with other groups to compile local and regional land use plans and inventories *PRIORITY ACTION* • produce regional and sub-regional profiles *PRIORITY ACTION* • quarterly evaluation (will continue on an ongoing basis) – improve tracking via FPC
SECTOR STRENGTHENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further clarify sector targets at the local level *PRIORITY ACTION* • assist in the development of regional sector strengthening strategies • develop more comprehensive sector profiles for website

⁷ the scope of work to be undertaken in the upcoming year (2010) will be dependent on the additional funding over 2 years requested from Community Futures of BC / Western Economic Diversification (decision expected in October 2009) – the advisory group has agreed to identify activities, stakeholders, timelines and performance indicators for short-term strategic priorities at the January 2010 Advisory meeting

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