



Working Together for Strong Communities

Blueprint for Action...

A SUMMARY OF OUR REGIONAL STRATEGIES

When the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition was established in late 2005 one of its first tasks was to consult with residents, business interests and community groups across the region to determine what actions would mitigate the community and economic impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, and reverse erosion of the region's economy. It was determined that several focused strategies were required – some of which are specific to a particular industrial sector (e.g., minerals and mining) and others that address broader community and multi-sector interests, (e.g., attraction and retention).

Recognizing the constantly changing nature of our circumstances, it was necessary to develop strategies that meet the needs of today, but can be adapted and improved as needed. Therefore, all the sector strategies are considered to be “working draft” in nature, and proposals to add to or change them are welcome. The strategies are expected to evolve through implementation.

Working groups made up of experts from all walks of life, including individuals from inside and outside the region, supported by staff and experienced contractors, wrote the strategies. Each of the documents follows a similar format:

Section 1. Vision – Community and Regional Aspirations for Development

Section 2. Sector Profile

Section 3. Summary of Historical Sector Development Initiatives

Section 4. Opportunity and Challenge Analysis

Section 5. Land and Resource Management Issues for the Sector

Section 6. Sector Strategy (Objectives, Recommendations and Actions)

Collectively the strategies provide a blueprint for action. They are intended to be used by governments, businesses, community organizations and others to inform decision making about policies, programs, and investments that will help our region diversify its economy and strengthen our communities.

Full details of all sector strategies are available on the web site at <http://www.ominaccoalition.ca/>. The key recommendations presented in each strategy are summarized on the following pages.



Minerals and Mining

- Recommendation 1. Local governments and First Nations governments work together to identify regional and local expectations and needs.
- Recommendation 2. Maintain and improve regional infrastructure to help mining activity and to strengthen the region overall.
- Recommendation 3. Build upon expertise to become a centre of excellence for minerals and mining post secondary education.
- Recommendation 4. Increase public education and raise awareness of mineral exploration and mining sector activities and their benefits.
- Recommendation 5. Achieve excellence in safe and sustainable mining practice, knowledge and expertise.
- Recommendation 6. Improve and streamline provincial and federal permitting processes and procedures.
- Recommendation 7. Encourage and support geoscience activities to further identify viable resources in the region.



Alternative Energy

- Recommendation 1. Remove impediments to the flow of wood fiber and other fibrous fuels to biomass energy projects.
- Recommendation 2. Conduct research on alternative energy opportunities and make relevant information readily available to industry and government decision makers.
- Recommendation 3. Provide 'Leadership by Example' alternative energy programs and initiatives at federal, provincial, and local government levels.
- Recommendation 4. Increase the regional use of alternative energy systems in order to provide overall economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- Recommendation 5. Provide training and certification for installation and systems operation to help build regional expertise in alternative energy



Integrated Regional Infrastructure

- Recommendation 1. Ensure that the region's new and existing transportation infrastructure provides for safe, cost effective, and expeditious movement of people, goods, and services.
- Recommendation 2. Establish energy and communications infrastructure elements that will attract new businesses to the region and allow existing businesses to expand.
- Recommendation 3. Establish collaborative planning approaches and innovative funding mechanisms to expedite the delivery of integrated infrastructure development solutions.



Future Forest Products and Fibre Use

- Recommendation 1. Increase the benefits that communities can rely upon from forest resources and forestry.
- Recommendation 2. Ensure that the forest sector remains a strong economic contributor to the region.
- Recommendation 3. Recognize the pine beetle killed stands as a valuable asset which should be used to full potential before their commercial value is depleted.
- Recommendation 4. Increase awareness and understanding of the long-term viability of the forest sector.



Attraction and Retention

- Recommendation 1. Continue to diversify and strengthen the region's economy.
- Recommendation 2. Market the region's considerable assets which make it a desirable place to live, work, play, and invest.
- Recommendation 3. Provide assistance to the region's young people and other residents to access training, obtain jobs and facilitate growth in self employment opportunities.
- Recommendation 4. Further identify and develop the services and amenities required to attract and retain young people, seniors, skilled workers, professionals, and others.
- Recommendation 5. Develop and implement improved service delivery models to better meet health care and education needs.



Community Social Services and Supports

- Recommendation 1. Strengthen social service delivery in the region.
- Recommendation 2. Establish responsive and flexible provincial and federal social service programs that meet rural, urban, and First Nations priority needs.
- Recommendation 3. Enable youth and adults to obtain local education and employment services that will allow them to fully participate in the region's economy.
- Recommendation 4. Realize the economic benefits of a strong social service sector.



Tourism

- Recommendation 1. Address land and resource information, planning and policy issues to increase certainty for tourism operators and potential investors.
- Recommendation 2. Improve access for travellers to and within the region.
- Recommendation 3. Increase awareness of the nature and value of, and the opportunities associated with, tourism in the region.
- Recommendation 4. Increase tourism in the region by using its features and attractions to full advantage.



Agriculture

- Recommendation 1. Develop infrastructure that supports the agricultural sector and removes barriers to its further development and diversification.
- Recommendation 2. Attract new entrants to the industry and enable access to training and education for existing and new members of the sector.
- Recommendation 3. Strengthen the industry by increasing collaboration across the sector and by forging partnerships and communication links with First Nations, local communities, governments, health and education agencies.
- Recommendation 4. Support value-added and specialized product development and the development of provincial, national and international markets for these products.
- Recommendation 5. Increase the demand for locally and regionally produced foods.



Regional Emergency Management Project

- Recommendation 1. Facilitate inter-community and regional planning and response where it will provide efficiencies and increase overall emergency preparedness.
- Recommendation 2. Provide additional resources, policy direction and information to local governments and First Nations where it is needed to improve their capacity and preparedness.
- Recommendation 3. Improve training, recruitment and retention of emergency staff and volunteers by creating synergies at the inter-community and regional levels.
- Recommendation 4. Take steps to mitigate the impacts of future threats.
- Recommendation 5. Develop local emergency preparedness awareness and education programs to ensure that residents of the region are prepared for emergencies and disasters.