



Working Together for Strong Communities

Strengthening the Fundamentals ...

OUR CAPSTONE OBJECTIVES

Our region exists on a foundation of abundant productive land and natural resources, but we need to create the right set of circumstances if our citizens and the rest of the province are to continue enjoying the potential benefits. We call these fundamental requirements our “**Capstone Objectives**” – the things that connect and strengthen our ability to succeed.

By having all sectors working together within the region, and in partnership with neighboring regions, senior governments and others, we can strengthen the framework upon which our future success will be built. Achievement of the following long-term goals will provide strength and resilience across all sectors and communities in the region.

- 1. By 2025, we will have the most highly educated and skilled citizenry of any rural region in Canada.**

Background work on the sector strategies suggests that education and skill levels in the region are lacking, both when compared to the level of education in other regions and the skills demanded by employers. For the most part, this does not appear to be an issue with quality, as many excellent institutions and educators are located in the region. However, widely dispersed communities, changing demographics, socio-economic barriers, and limitations on educational resources all contribute to this challenge. Research consistently shows that education raises people’s productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. The solutions, while requiring help from senior governments, can also be found within the region if all sectors make a commitment to contribute and make this objective a high priority.

- 2. By 2020, community members throughout the region will be connected to each other and to the global community in a manner that allows the exchange of information and ideas as effectively as anywhere in Canada.**

Information and communications technology is changing the way people learn, share information, and do business. The small, dispersed population in the central and northern parts of the British Columbia have made it appear less economical to install and operate the necessary infrastructure (hard and soft). This has constrained the ability of the region to connect internally, and risks leaving it behind the rest of the province and the global economy. However, when viewed as one of a few well placed strategic investments that will turn the trend in community sustainability, focused effort by all sectors will pay big dividends through this objective.

3. **By 2025 we will be known as a model region for delivery of quality, equitable, coordinated, relevant and cost-effective services to small and rural communities.**

Accessing health care of all kinds and various other social services has particular challenges in small, rural and remote communities. Many geographic, scale, and socio-economic challenges come into play. While it is unlikely that there will ever be a day when certain highly specialized services are available outside major population centers, there are still opportunities to: a) make the very best possible use of resources that are currently available; b) attract more resources through assistance from senior governments; and c) find innovative solutions for citizens needing to access services and facilities located in major centers.

4. **By 2020 the region will be served by an integrated infrastructure network that enables businesses and citizens to be competitive locally and in the broader marketplace.**

A fundamental component for business growth and competitiveness is the availability of dependable, efficient, affordable and accessible infrastructure. This has been well demonstrated in the region previously, and continues to be true. Enterprises, whether they are large or small, public sector or private sector, require: a) transportation by road, rail, air and water; b) communications at high speed and capacity, including wireless; and c) energy. In order to diversify the economy and encourage a variety of goods and services producers, infrastructure will have to support and enhance competitiveness.



By building a strong framework through

**EDUCATED AND SKILLED CITIZENS
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES
ACCESSIBLE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
and EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

***we will become one of the most desirable rural regions in
the country in which to live, visit and invest***