

newgold™ | **Blackwater Project**

# Turning ideas into action: Citizens Forums

May 6, 2013 | Vanderhoof

May 7, 2013 | Fraser Lake

May 8, 2013 | Burns Lake

May 13, 2013 | Fort St. James

# Turning ideas into action: Citizens Forums

What do you love about your community?  
Where would you like to see it in 5 years? In 15 years?  
What resources already exist in the community?  
What support do you still need?

These were the questions New Gold's Blackwater Project asked about 40 citizens of Vanderhoof, Burns Lake, Fraser Lake and Fort St. James at Citizens Forums held in each community.

Called Turning Ideas into Action, the Citizens Forums provided an opportunity for citizens, including youth, to share their aspirations and discuss community resources and community needs. The Citizens Forums were a partnership of New Gold's Blackwater Project and the College of New Caledonia.

*"We were happy to support the forums. With all the projects in our region over the next few years, it is important that we all work together to identify employment, training, and community development opportunities and approaches."*

– College of New Caledonia Regional Director, Maureen Mallais

Mayor Gerry Thiessen opened the first Citizens Forum in Vanderhoof by sharing a photo of his family at a nearby lake. Mayor Luke Strimbold opened the Burns Lake Citizens Forum, Mayor Dwayne Lindstrom and Councillor Kerry Jantz provided introductory remarks at the forum in Fraser Lake and Economic Development Officer Emily Colombo introduced the Fort St. James Citizens Forum. Each presented a photograph of something they valued in their community and then worked with forum participants to create a photo collage featuring photos people brought as well as meaningful words and images. The photo collages, along with completed wall charts identifying future goals, resources that currently exist in the community and supports required to achieve future goals were displayed at community Open Houses held later that evening in each community. Open House participants were invited to add comments of their own.

*"We learned a lot about each community. Learning more about what each community values and where it sees its future will help us design and operate the project in a way that maximizes benefits to the local region."*

– New Gold Blackwater Project Community Manager, Kathie LaForge



## Lakes, natural beauty and friendly people

When asked **“What do you love about your community?”** all groups stressed the importance of the natural beauty of their environment, the opportunities to fish and swim outside their back doors and their connection to family and friendly neighbours. “I love the lake and I love the mountains,” said one participant. “It’s a great place to live.”

When asked **“What would you like to see in 5 years? In 15 years?”** responses referenced support for youth and an aging population, the importance of environmental sustainability, sustainable energy, economic diversification, increased opportunities for education and training and improved infrastructure.

These responses reflect five Regional Economic Objectives identified in previous work completed by the Blackwater Project’s Community Liaison Committee and local and regional government Economic Development Officers.<sup>1</sup> The table below summarizes Citizens Forum participants’ five year and fifteen year goals according to the five Regional Economic Development Objectives.

Regional Economic Objectives (as identified in work sessions with the project’s Community Liaison Committee and local and regional government economic development officers)		What would you like to see in 5 years? 15 years? (as identified by participants to Citizens Forums in Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake and Fort St. James)
I	Enhance local and regional economies, for example:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New businesses attracted to commercial development areas</li> <li>• New residential homes constructed and occupied</li> </ul>
II	Enhance workforce stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New families arrive because of new jobs</li> <li>• College and industry work together to strengthen local workforce</li> </ul>
III	Contribute to the health of communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New facilities for seniors, youth and families</li> <li>• Assisted living and extended care facilities built for seniors</li> </ul>
IV	Support local and regional government cooperation and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College of New Caledonia expanded to meet industry and community needs</li> <li>• College continues to expand in key communities</li> </ul>
V	Enhance environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nechako Watershed strategy completed</li> <li>• Increased focus on environmental sustainability in industry and community services</li> </ul>

■ 5 year goals | ■ 15 year goals

## Passionate, committed people

When asked **“What resources already exist in the community to help you achieve your goals”** participants across the four communities identified passionate, committed people; a ready labour force; natural resources; the College of New Caledonia; existing infrastructure, funding and government support; and public enthusiasm as key resources that already exist in the community. These existing resources help position the community to achieve its future goals.

<sup>1</sup> New Gold worked with local and regional governments to form a Community Liaison Committee in 2012. The committee, which is made up of representatives from educational institutes, social service organizations, local and regional governments and the community, meets regularly to look at ways to maximize opportunities to create jobs in the local region and to help build stronger and more diverse communities. In February, 2013, the Blackwater Project team met with local and regional government economic development officers to learn more about regional economic priorities and identify opportunities for joint action.

## Government, education and industry partnerships

When asked **“What support do you still need?”** participants to the Citizens Forum said achieving their goals for the future requires continued or new support from governments, and partnerships with local industry and educators.

For example, Vanderhoof participants said the completion of the Nechako Watershed strategy requires collaboration with government and First Nations, support from industry and partnerships with the University of Northern British Columbia and the College of New Caledonia. Fraser Lake participants said support from federal and provincial governments, Northern Health Authority and industry is required to build a new facility for seniors. Building a local meat production industry in the Burns Lake area requires new regulations and partnerships, according to Burns Lake forum participants. Developing an innovative, environmentally friendly water and sewage system in Fort St. James requires research and development work at the university and college and support from all levels of government.

## A great place to live

Recognizing that recruiting a diverse workforce is an important element of achieving key community goals, participants highlighted some recruitment themes and approaches. These included:

- Land of recreation, land of opportunity
- Affordable homes, affordable waterfront
- Affordable serviced commercial development areas
- A place to build lifelong friendships
- Living in a four season recreation area on or close to lakes
- A safe place to raise a family

## Integrating forum results into planning

The information from the four Citizens Forums will be shared with New Gold, integrated into the design and operations of the Blackwater Project, and used to inform its community development direction and approach. The information will also be used by the College of New Caledonia to support its continued efforts to link communities and industry through education and training. Regional Districts and local governments have also expressed interest in the results of the forums, particularly as they relate to building a diversified and sustainable economy and stable workforce.

The Blackwater Project plans to hold another Citizens Forum in the fall, focused on synthesizing regional priorities and identifying actions for 2014 and beyond.

All Citizens Forums will continue to be open to the public. Detailed comments from each Citizen Forum are provided on the following pages.

# Turning ideas into action

Vanderhoof | MAY 6, 2013



Using their own photographs, words and images, Vanderhoof residents created wall-sized collages showing what they love about living in Vanderhoof. They also shared future goals for their community and talked about ways to turn ideas into action.



The Vanderhoof Citizens Forum represents the creativity and enthusiasm of the following people: The event was open to all Vanderhoof residents.

- Mayor Gerry Thiessen
- Maureen Mallais, College of New Caledonia
- Jeremy Blattner
- Jerry Petersen
- Christine Quinlan
- Michelle Roberge
- Wayne Salewski
- Vince Terstappen
- Shannon Weg

**“Anything is possible if we do it together.”**

– Citizens Forum participant



# Turning ideas into action

Vanderhoof | MAY 6, 2013



What I want to see in 5 years	Resources that exist in the community (these directly relate to each of the items on the left)	Supports required (these also directly relate to each of the items on the left)
Region announces completion of Nechako Watershed strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passion</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Potential funding</li> <li>• UNBC research credibility</li> <li>• Government and community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity of funding</li> <li>• Support from industry</li> <li>• Collaboration with and leadership from government and First Nations</li> <li>• Partnership with UNBC and CNC</li> </ul>
New youth centre opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing infrastructure</li> <li>• Community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff</li> <li>• Funding and land space</li> <li>• Local business support</li> </ul>
New College of New Caledonia opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government and community support</li> <li>• Community champions</li> <li>• Working groups (in progress)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure funding</li> <li>• Identification of education and training needs from industry</li> </ul>
What I want to see in 15 years		
Nechako Watershed certified sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry buy-in</li> <li>• Resources and skills</li> <li>• Cooperation of land and water users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recognized sustainable certification process</li> <li>• Watershed research projects</li> </ul>
Vanderhoof builds 100 unit assisted living complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three existing seniors facilities</li> <li>• Airport in town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff</li> <li>• Funding, land space and appropriate zoning</li> <li>• Community champions</li> <li>• Industry buy-in</li> </ul>
Vanderhoof celebrates fifth anniversary of cultural centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community arts council</li> <li>• Cultural centre</li> <li>• Provincial youth camps</li> <li>• Public enthusiasm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community support</li> <li>• Government buy-in</li> <li>• Increased priority of arts and culture at municipal level</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul>

## Next steps

- Identify stakeholders and build relationships
- Raise awareness
- Create a working group that includes youth and seniors
- Develop a framework for project management
- Build relationships

Watch for the next Citizens Forum later this year.

“There is a new day dawning for Vanderhoof so whatever we do must add capacity and resiliency.”

- Citizens Forum participant

# Turning ideas into action

Fraser Lake | MAY 7, 2013



Using their own photographs, words and images, Fraser Lake residents created wall-sized collages showing what they love about living in Fraser Lake. They also shared goals for their community and talked about ways to turn their ideas into action.



The Fraser Lake Citizens Forum represents the creativity and enthusiasm of the following people:

- Mayor Dwayne Lindstrom
- Councillor Kerry Jantz
- Peter Ouellette, College of New Caledonia
- Amber Carter
- Wendy Galvin
- Ken Ponsford
- Clint Mauthe
- Maureen Olson

The event was open to all Fraser Lake residents.

“Fraser Lake is a friendly, 'help your neighbour' community, that is open for business.”

- Citizens Forum participant



# Turning ideas into action

Fraser Lake | MAY 7, 2013



What I want to see in 5 years	Resources that exist in the community (these directly relate to each of the items on the left)	Supports required (these also directly relate to each of the items on the left)
School enrollment hits 800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Strong start” through grade twelve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young entrepreneur fund</li> </ul>
Southside commercial lots sold out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax incentives</li> <li>• Industry needs assessment</li> </ul>
Recreation area completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works department</li> <li>• Council support</li> <li>• Management expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired contractors</li> <li>• Council funding and grant funding</li> </ul>
New seniors facility keeps families together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandate of council in place</li> <li>• Land secured</li> <li>• Seniors society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial and federal government support</li> <li>• Industry and business support</li> <li>• Northern Health support</li> </ul>
What I want to see in 15 years		
Developer to build 100 new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District 91 trades project</li> <li>• College of New Caledonia – carpentry courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development lots</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Tax incentives</li> <li>• Industry encouraging employees to hire locally</li> </ul>
Extended care facilities completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from Northern Health</li> <li>• Financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial and federal government support</li> </ul>
Southside development filled to capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation infrastructure (road/rail/airport)</li> <li>• Municipal infrastructure (services/water/village employees)</li> <li>• Serviced land available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance from Community Futures</li> <li>• Marketing incentives</li> </ul>

## Next steps

- Achieve continuity of community vision and goals
- Secure council support
- Consult with First Nations
- Build transportation for seniors
- Locate available land
- Consult with industry
- Work with funding agencies

Watch for the next Citizens Forum later this year.

“Our lake is nature's pool that provides us with recreation twelve months of the year.”

– Citizens Forum participant

# Turning ideas into action

Burns Lake | MAY 8, 2013



Using their own photographs, words and images, Burns Lake residents created wall-sized collages showing what they love about living in Burns Lake. They also shared goals for their community and talked about ways to turn their ideas into action.



The Burns Lake Citizens Forum represents the creativity and enthusiasm of the following people:

- |  |                |                    |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Mayor Luke Strimbold                   |                |                    |
| Joan Ragdale, College of New Caledonia |                |                    |
| Kaitlin Bysouth                        | Chris Mack     | Brittanie Raasveld |
| Taylor Bysouth                         | Courtland Mack | Jericho Tracey     |
| Halley Finch                           | Bill Miller    | Annie Van Metre    |
| Kelly Friesen                          | Rick Morrison  | Shelley Wall       |

The event was open to all Burns Lake residents.

**“I love that my kids can go fishing or go downtown and know everyone.”**

- Citizens Forum participant



# Turning ideas into action

Burns Lake | MAY 8, 2013



What I want to see in 5 years	Resources that exist in the community (these directly relate to each of the items on the left)	Supports required (these also directly relate to each of the items on the left)
Local entrepreneur wins BC fiber innovation award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abundance of fiber</li> <li>• Entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• New markets</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Ministry support</li> </ul>
Long-term meat production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranchers are ready to participate</li> <li>• Operational butcher shop</li> <li>• Rich grasslands</li> <li>• Existing restaurants</li> <li>• Work camps opening</li> <li>• Infrastructure (road, rail, port)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial regulatory support</li> <li>• CFIA support</li> <li>• Discussions with food operations</li> <li>• New regulations</li> <li>• Partners and buyers</li> </ul>
Biofuel energy plant opens on Southside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour force</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Agriculture wastes</li> <li>• Pine beetle kill</li> <li>• Education link (College of New Caledonia)</li> <li>• Skilled workforce</li> <li>• Forestry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-phase power</li> <li>• Industry partnerships</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Market</li> <li>• New technology</li> </ul>
What I want to see in 15 years		
Burns Lake opens new college campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school graduates</li> <li>• Partnerships and ministry support</li> <li>• Community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• New location</li> <li>• Provincial support</li> <li>• Instructors and staff</li> <li>• Industry partnerships</li> <li>• New technology</li> </ul>
Burns Lake reaches net zero energy consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals living off the grid</li> <li>• Local government support</li> <li>• Environmentalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common goals</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Incentives</li> <li>• Higher priced natural resources</li> </ul>
Healthcare, wellness and fitness complex opened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village recreation program</li> <li>• Senior programs</li> <li>• Private/public fitness centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land for construction</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Common philosophy</li> </ul>

## Next steps

- Support education and mentorship to support entrepreneurship
- Create entrepreneur incentive plans
- Develop industry partnerships
- Start telling the community story
- Achieve funding
- Begin meaningful engagement with First Nations
- Write proposals/Collect studies
- Achieve community buy-in

Watch for the next Citizens Forum later this year.

“In the end, everything comes down to the people involved in the community.”

– Citizens Forum participant

# Turning ideas into action

Fort St. James | MAY 13, 2013



Using their own photographs, words and images, Fort St. James residents created wall-sized collages showing what they love about living in Fort St. James. They also shared goals for their community and talked about ways to turn their ideas into action.



The Fort St. James Citizens Forum represents the creativity and enthusiasm of the following people:

- Michelle Boschman, College of New Caledonia
- Emily Colombo, Economic Development Officer
- Susan Barfoot
- Terry Houghton
- Eileen Johnson
- Malarie Pearson
- Rosauro Ramos
- Marti Wiltse

*“When you need someone to talk to, there's always someone there.”*

- Citizens Forum participant

The event was open to all Fort St. James residents.



# Turning ideas into action

Fort St. James | MAY 13, 2013



What I want to see in 5 years	Resources that exist in the community (these directly relate to each of the items on the left)	Supports required (these also directly relate to each of the items on the left)
Bio-energy plant opens, employs 50 full-time positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire</li> <li>• Wood waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding, employment agreements and partnerships with local First Nations</li> <li>• Wood waste agreement with local industries, license and construction companies and the public</li> <li>• Financing, corporate interest</li> </ul>
Fort St. James goes green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local knowledge</li> <li>• Expertise</li> <li>• Local silviculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local tree nurseries developed with silviculture companies</li> <li>• Greenhouse training program at CNC</li> <li>• Government funds</li> <li>• Construction and maintenance</li> <li>• Local community support</li> <li>• Plans and blueprints</li> </ul>
Fort St. James recreation centre grand opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce resources</li> <li>• College of New Caledonia</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for construction and operations</li> <li>• Lifeguards</li> <li>• Recreation experts</li> </ul>
What I want to see in 15 years		
New water and sewer system opens, innovative green system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A need</li> <li>• Lake, aquifer, lagoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNBC/UBC education research and development</li> <li>• Innovation in water system</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Support from all levels of government</li> </ul>
Fort St. James community recreation centre opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Local involvement</li> <li>• Raw materials to build</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local support</li> <li>• Committee</li> <li>• Finances</li> <li>• Long-term and local involvement</li> </ul>
Seniors complex sold out in Fort St. James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Contractors</li> <li>• Medical</li> <li>• Seniors co-op volunteers and committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Seniors gated housing for 60+ age group</li> <li>• Medical staffing</li> <li>• A business plan, feasibility and a developer</li> <li>• Resident support of seniors</li> </ul>

## Next steps

- Work with licensees to make fibre agreements
- Apply for grant funding
- Receive education
- Create a project plan
- Support community involvement
- Assess new treatment process for water
- Attain resources
- Establish committees
- Receive a down-payment for financing

Watch for the next Citizens Forum later this year.