

# REDESIGN RUPERT RECHARGE

## Final Report



Prepared for Redesign Rupert  
Prepared by the Community Development Institute  
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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Prince Rupert is a vibrant community with a rich history and exciting future of possibilities. Over the past several decades, the community has faced economic and social challenges that have been created due to economic instability. Recently, Prince Rupert has begun to prepare for the possible introduction of new industries and expansion of existing sectors. To prepare Prince Rupert for the potential investments and economic changes, a need for support and action was identified to anticipate and take action on opportunities and challenges to build a prosperous future.

These initiatives will be delivered through Redesign Rupert, a civic engagement process in partnership with the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), the City of Prince Rupert and Community Futures of the Pacific Northwest. The purpose of Redesign Rupert is to develop and implement strategies for economic diversification and community resilience in Prince Rupert. This project has been designed to:

- Identify and build upon economic assets and opportunities;
- Engage organizations and individuals to pursue opportunities to build community capacity and enhance quality of life; and
- Create a strong and adaptable foundation to allow Prince Rupert to anticipate and adjust to changing issues and opportunities.

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

Since the official launch in January 2016, Redesign Rupert has been engaging the community to identify assets and opportunity that will create a vision for a resilient and diversified Prince Rupert. This process started through a community mapping process that engaged residents to explore what makes Prince Rupert a great place to live and what they would like to see in the future. Through the discussions and data collected, five major themes emerged:

- Children, Youth, and Families
- Community Culture and Heritage
- Economy and Livelihoods
- Housing
- Public Spaces

To build upon these themes and engage in more robust discussions on actions that will support economic and social development, Redesign Rupert hosted a half day community workshop titled Redesign Rupert Recharge on October 22, 2016. The event was organized into table discussions on each identified themes with three 30 minute facilitated sessions. Participants were invited to join one or more of the table discussions. Throughout the course of the event, 150 participants actively engaged in the facilitated discussions consisting of two questions:

- “What is the current state of <specific theme>”; and
- “What actions can we take to improve <specific theme>”.

These questions were designed to have participants consider and discuss the existing assets and services, opportunities to build on what is currently exists, and new ideas that will support the goal of creating a more resilient community.

## IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS

The information collected during Redesign Rupert Recharge was analyzed to identify actions aimed to foster a more resilient community with a strong, diversified economy.

### Children, Youth, and Families

#### **Eliminate barriers to participation in child and youth programs and activities.**

- Offer free programs or provide subsidies for lower income families.
- Locate programs so as to be accessible via public transit.
- Strengthen communications and awareness about what exists using a variety of channels including Facebook, signage, flyers, and more.
- Offer activities that engage both parents and children, such as Saturday morning family swim at the pool.

#### **Increase after-school programming options and hang out spaces for young teens (aged 11-15 years) and older youth (18-20 years) that focus on empowerment and skills development.**

- Establish youth-based programming that takes advantage/builds awareness of local sites, for example Coal Terminal, Old Forts, etc.
- Increase opportunities for skills development and training linked to developing industries.
- Establish a youth camp, similar to those offered in Hartley Bay and Metlakatla.
- Promote the Youth Council (with the City of Prince Rupert) to build awareness about politics and government.
- Utilize school spaces for extracurricular and after school programs.

#### **Build capacity within local service/volunteer organizations to provide and maintain child and youth programming.**

- Support volunteers and workers involved in programming for children and youth.
- Facilitate networking and resource sharing between family service organizations.
- Strengthen relationships with the Province (Ministry of Children and Family Development)

#### **Establish an outdoor public space (with some covered area) that is safe, easily accessible and suitable for child and youth-based structured and unstructured activities, i.e. community gardens, outdoor water park, or walking track.**

- A central space that is accessible outside of the 9-5 timeframe.

## Community Culture & Heritage

**Develop a greater awareness and appreciation within the local community about the diverse array of arts and cultural assets in Prince Rupert, for example, local carvers.**

- Engage the community in local arts and cultural activities through free events, such as markets, block parties, multicultural nights in schools.
- Create more opportunities for community to experience local cultures.
- Offer programs to learn local arts and cultural practices, such as carving, canning and preserving, etc.
- Enable all members of the community to access and engage in local arts and cultural activities, regardless of income.

**Strengthen efforts to promote and showcase local arts and culture to tourists and visitors.**

- Establish a tour bus or walks of key historical and cultural sites.
- Begin a “Taste of Prince Rupert” festival – showcasing local music, dance, food and art.
- Encourage open public markets to promote local arts, cultural cuisine, clothing etc.
- Create permits to enable artists to sell off the docks.
- Redesign the logo/signage for Prince Rupert to reflect local culture and heritage.

**Expand the number of spaces available for arts and culture groups and activities.**

- Make better use of existing spaces (such as Westview School, Lester Centre of the Arts, Kwinitsa Station, Long House, large kitchens) in the community by opening them up after hours, making them available to cultural groups, and offering diverse programming.
- Improve the stock of rental space available.
- Create a new cultural centre with rehearsal and performance space, accessible space as well as outdoor, covered areas.
- Establish a permanent space for practice and jam sessions.

**Extend efforts to publicize and coordinate local arts and cultural events/ opportunities.**

- Improve promotion of local events utilizing existing event calendar platform (website and Facebook page) and consider the introduction of a community events flyer.

## Economy and Livelihoods

### **Develop a local economic diversification strategy.**

- Use a community based recruitment strategy to attract and retain the professional services residents needed, such as lawyers, doctors, and health care workers. Prince Rupert should be aware the new hospital in Terrace may result in some of its health services being diverted and the impact this may have on community members.
- Strengthen business/economic partnerships with local First Nations.
- Explore economic opportunities associated with multiculturalism, tourism, alternative energy, etc.

### **Strengthen efforts to attract, support and retain retail businesses in Prince Rupert.**

- Promote the positive attributes of Prince Rupert, for example the weather, high quality of life, short commute, and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

### **Revitalization of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and other key economic hub zones led by community champions.**

- Integrate residential development into the downtown core.
- Reroute trucks from driving through downtown.

### **Expand training and apprenticeship opportunities in fields that are relevant to the local economy.**

- Improve communications and promotion of existing opportunities.
- Organize a youth job fair to engage youth and retain them in the community.
- Improve coordination around training to address situation of agencies competing with one another for training services.

## Housing

### **Expand the supply of quality, affordable rental housing.**

- Incentivize homeowners and developers to create and/or make available rental accommodations that are affordable to both workers and residents.
- Look at redeveloping existing properties in town for residential use, such as the Seal Cove School property.
- Examine opportunities for the City to develop affordable purpose-built rental housing.
- Ensure the full replacement of affordable units that are torn down or made uninhabitable.
- Examine the reasons behind the large number of vacant homes and what might be done to bring them back on the market.
- Look at promising practices in addressing affordable housing challenges that have been successful in other communities.

### **Explore options to lower the costs of residential development.**

- Explore alternative methods of housing development that reduce the cost of construction.
- Examine the potential for collective, community-based construction processes, such as the Habitat for Humanity model.

### **Establish a community-based housing group to speak as a unified voice on housing issues and to explore solutions.**

- Approach and strengthen partnerships with industry and government (including BC Housing) to address housing challenges.
- Foster industry investments in community infrastructure, including housing.

### **Expand housing options that are physically accessible for seniors to enable the growing elderly population to remain in Prince Rupert as they age.**

- Provide smaller, accessible homes that are affordable to those on fixed incomes.

### **Increase supply of supported housing.**

- Providing differing levels of care to seniors.
- Offering semi-independent living situations for youth, i.e. Autumn Home in Abbotsford.

### **Establish a standard of care for landlords to ensure that rental accommodations are safe and of acceptable quality.**

## Public Spaces

### **Foster community involvement in the use and maintenance of public spaces.**

- Support existing groups and encourage volunteer recruitment to assist with the revitalization and maintenance of public spaces, i.e. trail maintenance, clean ups, etc.
- Establish a system for coordinating and dispatching volunteers to address needs and opportunities.
- Create a dedicated fund and/or mobilize crowd funding to support public space enhancements.
- Collaborate with industry and corporate stakeholders.
- Establish grants to fund beautification efforts.
- Encourage public citizenship, community pride and responsibility with respect to public spaces: picking up after dogs, not littering, etc.
- Engage the community in the development of a trail network to connect neighbourhoods.
- Improve signage directing people to public spaces.

### **Revitalize, enhance and promote the use of existing public spaces.**

- Upgrade and maintain spaces and walkways/boardwalks to ensure safety, for example adding railings at Cow Bay Marina and redirecting traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, smooth pavement, signage to advise of lime disease risk at Butze, lighting along walking paths.
- Renovate public spaces to be fully accessible to those with mobility aids, in wheelchairs, and using strollers.
- Expand and increase walkability of the existing trail network.
- Enhance Cow Bay Marina Wharf and the Breakwater to include vibrant open-air venues.
- Refresh and enhance equipment at parks and playgrounds.
- Ensure ongoing maintenance of the library and museum and encourage greater use of these spaces by the public.
- Establish a network of garbage bins to reduce litter in public spaces.

### **Create new public spaces, including covered spaces.**

- Approach landowners about converting the covered area behind Cowpucino's and the bridge area for public use.
- Encourage the use of vacant lots by pop-up vendors and food trucks.
- Create neighbourhood parks/meeting places, particularly on the east side.
- Explore sites for a community greenhouse and/or garden, at McKay Street Park or utilizing Charles Hays greenhouse.
- Create a network of trails/staircases to connect different neighbourhoods.
- Work with CN to gain public access to the waterfront.
- Re-establish public access to Salt Lakes.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The goal of Redesign Rupert Recharge was to create conversation and dialogue to allow the residents of Prince Rupert to provide input where they saw opportunities to help create a more resilient and economically diversified community. The information that was collected through this event helped identify priorities for the community.

From the community priorities that emerged, work is underway to establish community action groups. These groups will consist of residents to develop a vision, goals, current assessment, strategies, and action plans for the priority. These groups will be encouraged and supported to mobilize to take immediate and direct action on strategies even as the plan is being developed. The Community Action Groups, supported by the Redesign Rupert team, will work to build capacity and leadership skills to take advantage of immediate and long term opportunities to create a resilient future for Prince Rupert. Action groups are beginning to be established and will start meeting in December.

The Redesign Rupert team would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers of Redesign Rupert Recharge for making the event a great success.

Further information about this topic and the project; please contact Krystin St Jean, Senior Facilitator or Marleen Morris, Co-Director at the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia:

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