

Summary report Prince George Urban Aboriginal Strategy stewardship development January to March 2005

On January 25 and 26 the urban Aboriginal community of Prince George came together in an Open Space meeting to set priorities and move forward on projects to meet the needs of the urban Aboriginal community. These projects and this work is being supported with funding from Western Diversification Canada through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

Twenty projects were created on January 26, each with “project champions” who took responsibility for getting these projects off the ground. With the priorities set and the projects set in motion, it was time to turn to the question of how the strategy was to be developed and stewarded over the next two years.

At the outset of the project the open space planning group, who initiated the project, agreed that the project champions would be invited to a follow up meeting to engage in this work.

The needs

Western Diversification has few requirements for this project. They are putting forward \$500,000.00 over two years to support projects as well as program management resources and operations and maintenance funding to support community ownership and direction for the strategy. WD’s major expectation is that the community finds a way to steward the process and recommend projects and funding levels to Western Diversification.

February 15, 2005

With this need in mind, the follow up meeting was scheduled for February 15 to develop a community stewardship model. Thirty three people were invited to that meeting, comprising the project champions and the open space planning group members who had stewarded the project to that point.

There were three pieces of work to complete on the day. First, participants connected along sectoral lines to find deeper connections between their projects and explore ways of working together. Groups formed in the areas of:

- learning, literacy and education
- employment and business development
- communications and connections
- health and healing
- life skills and social housing support

After that the group took time to identify the needs of the community with respect to a stewardship model. A list of these needs is attached.

Finally, the group turned its attention to developing a model. Several ideas were proposed and discussion, but the issue remained unresolved at the day's end. The group agreed to meet again on March 6 to complete their work

March 6, 2005

On March 6, 26 people returned to work through the issues and needs discovered in the February 15 meeting. The group went through a process of collecting perspectives on the question of the stewardship model, discussing and integrating various perspectives and deciding on a model that could be implemented immediately. A copy of the records of the perspectives is attached.

Following that conversation the group arrived at a stewardship model that rests the control over funding decisions in the community while using existing organizational resources to support that work. The model itself was developed in open dialogue and reflects a model that meets virtually all of the diverse perspectives shared in the initial conversation. It embraces community, diversity and vision while ensuring that accountability and administrative and development capacity can rest within existing structures that work well. It is a remarkable achievement, balancing many interests while meeting many needs.

The stewardship model

The stewardship model consists of two bodies. The Project Champions Council is the group that represents the community and holds it's voice in the process. It is composed of the people actually doing the work on advancing the strategy. The community entity is basically a partnership between PGNAETA and the Aboriginal Business Development Centre. It supports the work of the council and the community by handling an administrative and capacity building requirements and by facilitating communications and networking between the project champions.

Project Champions Council

- Composed of the project champions pursuing the work in the community. Initially, this group is drawn from the list of project champions compiled from the January Open Space, and invited to the subsequent follow-up meetings. The group will be open to other project champions from future community events.
- This group will undertake the following activities:
 - Hold the overall vision of the UAS in Prince George
 - Support and assist with project development, partnership and linkages
 - Determine the overall direction of the UAS, including holding further community gatherings.
 - Deciding on how the UAS program funding will be allocated to projects in Prince George, and provide these decisions as recommendations to Western Diversification Canada.
 - The primary mode of working for this group is as an ongoing conversation between project champions with some decision making around funding level recommendations and overall strategic direction for the UAS.

Prince George UAS Community Entity

- Composed of both Aboriginal Business Development Centre and PGNAETA

- Acts only on the direction of the Project Champions Council.
- Helps to facilitate community gatherings, communications, project development and management and administration of projects.
- Role of ABDC:
 - Handles communications for the PCC.
 - Organizes gatherings, PCC meetings and keeps records of decisions
- Role of PGNAETA:
 - Assist in project development with project champions that require capacity assistance
 - Oversee the administrative requirements of the project funding, thereby saving project partner organizations from an administrative burden.

Western Diversification will provide project funding at \$500,000 over two years to support the establishment of these projects. Projects in the community will draw largely from partnerships and other resources in the community. Western Diversification will also provide operations and management funding to the entity partnership for support of the projects.

Appendix 1: Community needs

This list was compiled in a dialogue session on February 15, 2005 focused on the question of “what does the community need from a stewardship model?”

- values health and well being
- has high ethical standards
- transparency (no hidden agendas)
- mutual respect
- inclusive
- holistic
- open-ended membership process
- terms of reference (strong-solid)
- utilize existing resources or agencies in place
- non-political process
- support
- structure
- accountability
- dedication
- unbiased
- conflict of interest guidelines
- strength based approach
- fair process
- community approach
- good track record/evaluation process-reputation
- culturally sensitive philosophy should come from an
- Aboriginal Family community perspective
- value identification
- creative empowering innovative
- measurable objectives
- promotes capacity building
- funding
- accountability
- prompt decisions-action oriented
- constitution or T of R
- membership (?) representative of community, elders, youth
- method of healing/informing people/other organization's hurt feelings towards
- the process for administering funding
- new separate body with odd number membership
- voter or consensus process? open process (publishers reasons for decisions)?
- ability and authority to disperse funds (i.e. - locally)
- nomination process for membership
- integrity
- community oriented rather than institutional oriented
- Aboriginal/meaningful participation/leadership
- unbiased and non-political/ non-territorial
- credible
- trustworthy/trustful
- sustainable
- open communication with community
- i.e. - newsletter to partners monthly

- project report process
- i.e. - pre, during, and post outcomes
- reliable and respected
- link these projects to other community agencies
- i.e. - advocacy and liaison person
- acknowledge the diversification of Aboriginal Person
- in PG and how they can work together
- remain focused on the primary goal
- -co-operation (broad based)

Appendix 2: Collected perspectives on the work on the stewardship model

This list of perspectives comes from every voice present at the March 6 meeting, where people were invited to contribute their perspectives on the stewardship body:

- Looking to community: what do they want to see
- Representative of the community
- Involve key stakeholders
- Non-political, inclusive of volunteers, supportive of partnerships.
- Community led and community driven and composed of community leadership
- Help project connect with a community entity
- Start small and build from a solid foundation
- Include everyone's perspectives
- Be good stewards of passionate enterprise and provide supportive care.
- Needs of community vs. needs of organizations, conserve energy and build on the energy of the open space meeting.
- Avoid the fighting that sometimes goes on.
- Organizational representation in a community-driven model
- Accountability role
- Build on existing successful models
- Accountability for community empowerment
- Unity principle: serve the community well with limited funds, use experience
- Work with an existing partnership model
- New outcomes from new solutions
- Support community – issue funds in an honest way
- Steward funds in a different way
- Involve project champions
- Functional, not too cumbersome, transparent, accountable and non-political.
- Build on what's in place and make it better
- Entity model
- Acknowledged the best of what has happened in this urban community
- Encompass vision, development and administration
- Support the big change
- Community based, accountable and transparent
- Deal with diversity and support work on these priorities
- Build on existing models to leverage additional funds
- Representative of community and get going as soon as possible
- Build on what we have, reflect change and flexibility
- Not clear on the role of the stewardship model
- Can we move beyond an RFP model towards non-competition?
- Sounds like the Urban Aboriginal Working Group is a community body