

'REACHING THE REC CENTRE'



COMMUNITY MOBILITY LINKAGES TO PROMOTE RECREATIONAL ACCESS IN THE UPPER SKEENA REGION

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The work of the SCARP Planning Studio could not have been possible without the input of several key community champions from the Upper Skeena region. Firstly, we would like to acknowledge the tremendous leadership of our primary project liaisons, Dr. Peter Newbery and Sandra Harris. Their local knowledge and expertise is invaluable, and without them, the project could not have gained the trust and input of the wider community.

In addition, there have been a significant number of community members and leaders who have shared their stories and experiences with us, they are listed here in alphabetical order:

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The above list is certainly non-exhaustive, therefore we wish to also extend our thanks to the regional community as a whole, especially the many individuals who shared their comments with us during our community feedback events held in April 2017.

Finally, we would like to thank our SCARP instructors and mentors, Dr. Maged Senbel, Dr. Jordi Honey-Rosés, and Nathan Edelson for their guidance and support. Particularly Maged, who travelled with us to the Upper Skeena on three separate occasions, your dedication and leadership have and will continue to inspire the success of this project.

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01

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

This report presents strategies to promote access to recreation in the Upper Skeena region through improved community mobility linkages and program support.

The aim of the 8-month project was to offer pathways forward for improving access to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre (USRC) through innovative mobility solutions and satellite programming. The outcomes of the project are an extensive review of existing transportation systems and opportunities in the region, as well as several community-based learnings which can be utilized to inform future decision-making.

Proposed actions have been divided into three complementary approaches to guide the future implementation of mobility and access strategies. First, the Partnership Approach assumes that there are social and financial benefits which can be leveraged through the creation of meaningful partnerships and collaborations between communities and stakeholders in the region. Secondly, the Leadership Approach recognizes the inherent complexity of true collaboration at any scale, favouring a centralized approach where partnerships are spearheaded at the level of the recreation centre. Lastly, the Creativity Approach recognizes that certain innovative tools and ideas or 'outside the box' thinking, while not solutions in and of themselves, can create progress toward the recreation centre's vision.

Some examples of scenarios which respond to these approaches include: encouraging community-oriented transportation zones, extending school bus service, sponsoring volunteer driver programs, offering USRC-owned and operated transportation services, creating a central transit booking office or ridesharing platform, and increasing harm reduction initiatives for different modes of transportation. Each of these suggestions have been informed by and respond to community-based learnings which were gleaned from feedback given during public engagement session and meetings with key informants.

These key learnings include: the need for partnerships, collaboration, and coordination, the desire to attract outside communities to the region in order to access recreation locally, the need for operational dollars to better utilize existing assets, and the need to inspire community inclusion and empowerment through recreation.

Finally, the project's key recommendations for moving forward are as follows:

1. Hire a Recreation Coordinator for the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre as soon as possible.
2. Coordinate the establishment of a Community Advisory Committee.
3. Support a comprehensive public education campaign to raise awareness and encourage a sense of ownership, pride, and excitement for the new facility.
4. Continue to gather data on the existing transportation and recreation assets of the region.
5. Encourage the development and piloting of dedicated transportation routes to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre via new partnership agreements and existing community assets.
6. Set priorities and continue to concretize an action plan for providing outreach and satellite programs to the outlying communities.
7. Monitor and evaluate whether the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre is adequately meeting its mandate of ensuring equal participation from the regional community.

Figure 1: Skeena River seen from Gitwangak. Photo credit: Ernette Post



02

CONTEXT

Introduction
The Upper Skeena Region
The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre
Transportation in the Upper Skeena

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2015, hockey practice came to an abrupt halt at the Ken Trombley Memorial Arena, as occupants were told that the roof of the indoor skating rink was being condemned, effective immediately. A gathering place for the regional community, the 'old arena' was able to regain its function following the removal of its roof, which allowed the space to live on as an outdoor rink. In response to this facility's seasonal limitations, the 'Heart of the Hazeltons' campaign was born, determined to bring a new year-round recreation facility to the Upper Skeena, with the ambitious goal of being truly accessible and inviting to each of the communities in the region.

The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre (USRC) features an innovative Owners Partnership Committee (OPC), a unique governance model which emphasizes multi-stakeholder collaboration and allows for each community to be represented in decision-making. The OPC has partnered with Master's students in the Planning Studio at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) in order to develop a range of options and approaches which will address transportation and mobility challenges in the area.

The 'Reaching the Rec Centre' report analyzes the transportation and accessibility conditions of the Hazelton, BC area in order to offer recommendations and suggestions to effectively link members of the dispersed regional communities to the programs and resources of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, the future 'Heart of the Hazeltons'.

Furthermore, the report also provides information regarding the feasibility and costs associated with the proposed actions, as well as the broader community's desires and preferences for ensuring long-term access to the USRC.

Dr. Peter Newbery is the project Director and Sandra Harris is the project liaison. Jessica Hayes, Fausto Inomata, and Ernette Post are the Master of Community and Regional Planning students who led the project. The SCARP Planning Studio instructor is Dr. Maged Senbel.

The 'Reaching the Rec Centre' report is organized as follows:

Part 01: Executive Summary Provides a brief overview of the project and its key findings.

Part 02: Context Introduces background information such as the character of the region, the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, and the existing infrastructure and services available in the Hazeltons.

Part 03: Planning Process Explains the project's methodological approach, community engagement activities, community-based learnings, and limitations. The vision, goals, and objectives of the project are also presented.

Part 04: Opportunities Describes three suggested approaches for promoting recreational access to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, as well as recommendations for short and long-term implementation.

Part 05: Next Steps Provides suggestions for ongoing communications and messaging to keep the project's progress alive and in a forward-moving direction.

Part 06: References Lists the background materials and sources which informed the project's process, analysis, and conclusions.

Part 07: Appendices Highlights high-level project inputs such as literature review and case study findings, summaries of community feedback, and other details which influenced the project outcomes.

Figure 2: From left to right: (above) Ernette Post, Sandra Harris, Jessica Hayes, Cristyn Edwards, Claudio Pareja, Dr. Peter Newbery, (below) Fausto Inomata, Hollie McKeil, and Dr. Maged Senbel.



THE UPPER SKEENA REGION

The Upper Skeena Region, also known as “the Hazeltons”, lies upon the traditional and unceded territory of the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en Nations. Located near the confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena rivers, each of the communities who make up the region are unique, self-reliant, and proficient in planning for their own communities. The traditional territory of the Gitksan is vast and covers as much as 30,000 square kilometres of British Columbia. Within this territory are two incorporated communities: The Village of Hazelton (Old Hazelton) and the District of New Hazelton (New Hazelton), as well as three unincorporated communities: South Hazelton, Two Mile, and Kitwanga. In addition, there are eight First Nation communities in the region: six Gitksan communities, including Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell (Sik-e-dakh), and Kispiox, and two Wet’suwet’en communities; Hagwilget and Moricetown. The community of Hagwilget is located within Gitksan territory, and is made up of members of both the Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en. The rugged beauty and natural splendor of this place is highlighted by the impressive backdrop of the Stekyooden mountain range.

Figure 3: Context map.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio



Figure 4: Stekyooden mountain.
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio

DID YOU KNOW?

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) have classified Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Kispiox, Glen Vowell, Gitanmaax, and Hagwilget as “Zone 2” communities, meaning that their geographic classification identifies them as being located between 50 - 350 kilometres from the nearest service centre to which there is year-round road access. As a result, these communities experience higher costs of living and transportation (Indigenous and Northern Affairs, 2016).

Figure 5: Ken Trombley Memorial Arena.
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio



Communities in the Upper Skeena region are remote and dispersed, particularly the communities of Gitanyow, Gitwangak, and Gitsegukla, which are approximately 71 kilometres, 51 kilometres, and 31 kilometres, from the future site of the USRC, respectively. Hazelton is approximately 70 kilometres Northwest of Smithers, BC on Highway 16 and 140 kilometres Northeast of Terrace, BC on Highway 16. Highway 37 also acts as a transportation corridor in the region, which leads to Alaska via Gitanyow, and intersects Highway 16 near Kitwanga. Distances such as these create complex challenges with regards to accessing and coordinating recreation and services in a way that allows each of the communities equal opportunity to benefit and participate.

Furthermore, it is important to note that discussions around transportation and access are by no means new to the people of the Upper Skeena region. Located along the so-called ‘Highway of Tears’, the 724-km portion of Highway 16 which connects Prince George and Prince Rupert, the communities which make up the area are acutely aware of the importance of developing better strategies to ensure safe and reliable transportation for Indigenous and rural communities.

The future site of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will be directly adjacent to Hazelton Secondary School, therefore, high school-aged students are expected to be a primary user group of the facility. Approximately 85% of students who attend Hazelton Secondary School are from the surrounding First Nations. Table 1 illustrates the extent to which youth in the region already commute to and from each of the First Nation communities and the high school, which, as a result, gives a baseline indication for potential users of the recreation centre.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC) have classified Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Kispiox, Glen Vowell, Gitanmaax, and Hagwilget as “Zone 2” communities, meaning that their geographic classification identifies them as being located between 50 - 350 kilometres from the nearest service centre to which there is year-round road access. As a result, these communities experience higher costs of living and transportation.³

First Nation Community	Total population (2016) ²	Distance to USRC (km)	# of students in Hazelton Secondary School ¹
Gitanyow	434	71	30
Gitwangak	430	51	39
Gitsegukla	427	31	38
Kispiox	599	16	33
Glen Vowell	236	11	30
Gitanmaax	630	05	55
Hagwilget	191	03	14
Moricetown	306	39	00
Kitwanga	not available	52	55
Total number of students at Hazelton Secondary School			328

Table 1: First Nation Communities, population and distances. Source: SCARP Planning Studio

¹ Newbery, M., 2017

² Statistics Canada, 2017

³ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2016.

THE UPPER SKEENA RECREATION CENTRE

“ The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will be the physical and emotional Heart of the Hazeltons. It will be the centre of activity; appealing, inviting, and accessible to all residents of the regional community, as well as guests and visitors, contributing to their physical and mental health, education, and economic well-being.⁴ ”

⁴ Heart of the Hazeltons: Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, 2014.



Figure 6: Upper Skeena Recreation Centre - interior Source: Hemsworth Architecture



Figure 7: Upper Skeena Recreation Centre - exterior Source: Hemsworth Architecture

⁵ Heart of the Hazeltons: Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, 2014.

The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will be developed adjacent to the existing arena and is targeted for completion by Fall 2018. The facility will be in close proximity to Hazelton Secondary School, the Hazelton campus of Northwest Community College, and the Wrinch Memorial Hospital. The lands were donated for the intended purpose of fostering better health and quality of life for the entire Upper Skeena population. An innovative joint owner-operator governance model has been established between the Regional District, local governments, and the Gitksan. To maximize its effectiveness in management and eligibility for multi-level governmental support, the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will be owned in trust by the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, and operated in concert by the local and Gitksan governments, including the Skeena Ice Arena Society (which operates the existing arena). Together, these governing agencies have established the Owners Partnership Committee to guide the capital project and ongoing operations of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre.⁵ On October 26, 2016, British Columbia’s Minister of Transportation Todd Stone announced \$12 million dollars of federal and provincial funding for the USRC, cementing the project’s reality.

TRANSPORTATION IN THE UPPER SKEENA

BC TRANSIT ROUTES

BC Transit operates two routes which make up the Hazeltons Regional Transit System⁶:

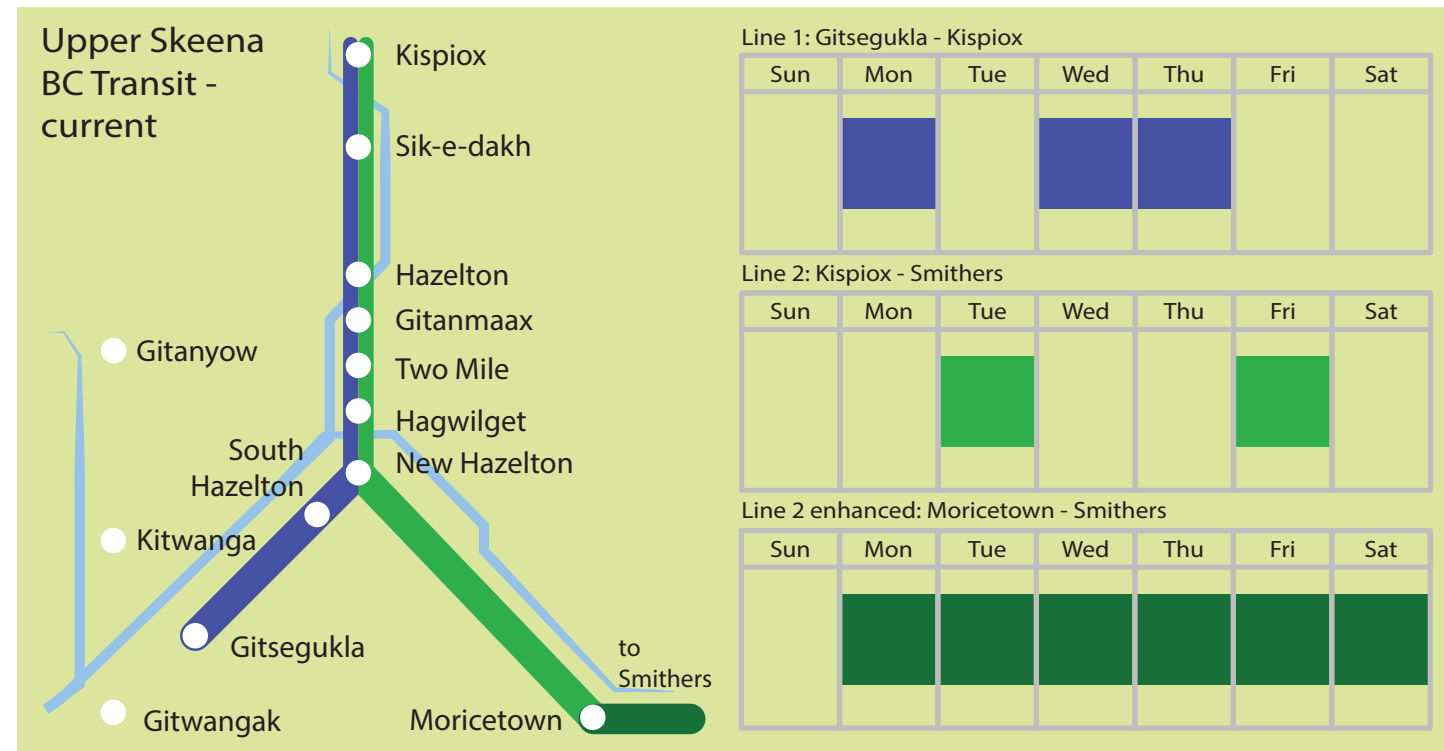
1. **Route 1 ‘Gitsegukla’** operates on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. This route connects Kispiox, Glen Vowell, Hazelton, Hagwilget, New Hazelton, South Hazelton (by request only), and Gitsegukla and makes between three and five stops per day at each location.
2. **Route 2 ‘Smithers/Kispiox’** operates on Tuesdays and Fridays. This route connects Kispiox, Glen Vowell, Gitanmaax, Hazelton, Two Mile (by request only), Hagwilget, New Hazelton, South Hazelton (by request only), Moricetown, and Smithers and makes between two and five stops per day at each location. In addition, BC Transit’s Smithers-Moricetown route, part of the Smithers Regional Transit System, was recently enhanced as a result of the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan⁷, a shared cost initiative with local government partners:

In addition, BC Transit’s Smithers-Moricetown route, part of the ‘Smithers Regional Transit System’, was recently enhanced as a result of the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan, a shared cost initiative with local government partners:

3. **Route 23 ‘Smithers/Moricetown’** operates six days per week (Monday - Saturday) with two round trips per day connecting the two towns both morning and evening.

⁶ Hazeltons Regional Transit System, n.d.
⁷ BC Transit Corporation, 2016.

Figure 8: BC Transit diagram - current schedule.
 Source: SCARP Planning Studio



COAST MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT BUS ROUTES

The Coast Mountain School District also operates a substantial bus network, which includes nine separate routes serving the Upper Skeena region:

Table 2: School Bus schedule
 Source: SCARP Planning Studio

Route	Origin	Departure Time	Destination	Arrival Time
#20 Red	Gitanyow	7:56 AM	Kitwanga E. School	8:50 AM
	Kitwanga E. School	2:58 PM	Gitanyow	4:16 PM
#21 Yellow	Suskwa	7:35 AM	New Hazelton	8:40 AM
	New Hazelton	3:05 PM	Suskwa	4:18 PM
#23 Orange	Gitanyow	7:20 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:42 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:05 PM	Gitanyow	4:42 PM
#24 Blue	South Hazelton	8:03 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:47 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:05 PM	South Hazelton	3:45 PM
#35 Purple	Gitanmaax	7:33 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:35 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:20 PM	Gitanmaax	4:20 PM
#26 Pink	Kispiox	7:45 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:35 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:22 PM	Kispiox	4:13 PM
#27 Gray	Glen Vowell	8:14 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:30 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:25 PM	Glen Vowell	3:41 PM
#28 Brown	Gitsegukla	7:54 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:20 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:25 PM	Gitsegukla	3:51 PM
#29 White	Kispiox	7:56 AM	N. Hazelton E. School	8:35 AM
	N. Hazelton E. School	3:25 PM	Kispiox	3:34 PM

Lastly, there are several independent transportation services which operate to serve specific populations and needs in the region; however, information about these services is not always readily available. For example, the Kyah Wiget Education bus allows free pickups on their route which serves the Moricetown-Smithers corridor Monday to Friday. Independent education societies and First Nation bands also typically provide specialized transportation services to their members whenever possible.

Furthermore, most communities will cover the costs of patient transportation for medical or specialist appointments. The First Nations Health Authority Health Benefits Program helps provide coverage for health services to support BC First Nations, including access to medical transportation benefits through their home community's health service office. Existing programs also include Northern Health Connections, which is a travel service program for patients who need to travel for out-of-town medical appointments in Northern BC.

Future improvements for public transportation in the region are currently anticipated, including proposed BC Transit service between the Hazeltons and Terrace, which would add additional service reaching beyond Gitsegukla. Furthermore, on March 22nd, 2017, the BC government announced that Gitanyow, Gitanmaax, and Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society would be receiving community vehicle grants as part of the BC government's Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan.⁸ Based on the individual needs of the community, the grant program will pay up to 70% or more of both the purchase price of a vehicle (such as a van, mini-van, or bus) and its operation (wages, gas, insurance and maintenance of the vehicle). The resources provided through this program can be used to provide much-needed connections for community-led transportation initiatives. For example, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre in Smithers, BC will use the grant to create a new service called 'community connections', which will purchase an SUV to support access to services and driver education.⁹

⁸ Latkowski, B., 2017, March 22.

⁹ Bakker, M., 2017, April 5.



Joshua Antonio Alfred

Joshua Antonio Alfred lives in Moricetown and works at a convenience store in Smithers, 30 kilometres away. In a January 2017 CBC News article, he described his morning commute as having to wake up every morning at 5 a.m. to hitchhike alongside Highway 16. Occasionally, he has spent the night in a Smithers shelter in order to avoid having to hitchhike prior to his early morning shifts. As a result, the twice-daily BC Transit bus run introduced between Moricetown and Smithers as part of the provincial government's Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan has greatly improved access work and opportunity.

Source: Kurjata, 2017, January 27



Figure 9: Highway 16 sign - Girls don't hitchhike on the Highway of Tears.
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio



Figure 10: School bus (shuttle).
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio



Figure 11: Upgraded bus stop - BC Transit.
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio

	Elementary School	High Schools
Public Schools (Coast Mountain School District 82)	New Hazelton Elementary (K-7) Kitwanga Elementary (K-7) Majagaleehl Gali Aks Elementary (John Field Elementary) (K-7)	Hazelton Secondary School (8-12)
Independent Schools	Gitanyow Independent School (K-7) Gitwangak Elementary School (K-7) Gitsegukla Elementary School (K-7) Kispiox Community School (K-7) Moricetown Elementary and Secondary School (K-12)	First Nations High School/Adult Learning Centre (GED) Moricetown ICOUNT High School (8-12)

Table 3: Schools in the region.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

03

PLANNING PROCESS

Vision, Goals & Objectives
Methodology
Community Engagement
Considerations

VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The project vision, goals, and objectives have been defined by the SCARP Planning Studio in partnership with the USRC Owners Partnership Committee, and validated through the participation of key community members who have anchored the project's purpose and relevance to the region. The USRC aims to be the 'Heart of the Hazeltons', therefore, it is intended to be more than just a structure - rather, it will be a meeting and gathering place that is welcoming, open, and accessible to residents from each of the communities in the region. What is more, the USRC will provide a central hub from which recreational activities will be supported and developed in the outlying communities. The vision, goals, and objectives outlined below reflect this desire, and strengthen the idea that in order to achieve this, there will need to be a plan in place which will allow for greater mobility between villages and the USRC, as well as programming that is itself mobile and accessible to these communities.

VISION

“ The USRC Community Mobility studio project will offer innovative strategies to effectively link members of dispersed villages to the programs and resources of the future recreation centre. Recommendations will contribute to local capacity-building and facilitate continued recreation planning within communities. ”

GOALS

The following three goals aim to move the project towards the realization of the above vision statement and inform the project's measurable objectives. They are rooted in the understanding that enhanced mobility for the region will be a key driver of success for the new recreation centre. The goals are further rooted in the understanding that the USRC should provide access to recreation through means that go beyond the provision of enhanced transportation solutions, therefore supporting distinct community visions for recreation in a variety of creative ways.

1

Offer innovative approaches for improving transportation and access to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. This report has developed a range of approaches which respond to the region's transportation challenges while taking into account community-based visions for enhanced transportation services. Transportation solutions will consider operational costs and effective partnerships that are contextually informed and sustainable (logistically, socially, and environmentally). Enhanced transportation services will be crucial to the success of the USRC, while also benefitting the region more broadly.

2

Support communities in the successful implementation of their own visions for recreation programming through a hub-and-satellite model. When offering approaches and recommendations, this project has been mindful of suggesting ways in which increased mobility can also enable 'satellite' resources to be brought directly to dispersed villages from the USRC, as well as ways in which the USRC can act as a resource hub to support communities in the successful implementation of their own local recreation programming.

3

Establish a strong foundation of information and knowledge which will support community capacity-building. This project has ensured that by taking into account the community's feedback, it is offering solutions that can be community-driven and sustainable, offering the potential for future capacity-building and scalability over time.

OBJECTIVES

The project objectives expand upon and respond to its overarching goals, and have been informed by community input. Proposed approaches aim to package several actions and strategies that together would meet all or most of these objectives.

1. Provide enhanced transit and mobility services
2. Maximize partnerships and collaboration to create more effective transportation solutions
3. Increase opportunities for recreation in the local area while reducing the need to travel long distances to access recreation
4. Promote empowerment and inclusivity through access to recreation
5. Highlight the need for operational dollars to achieve sustainable mobility solutions

Figure 12: Morning school bus
Photo Credit: SCARP Planning Studio



METHODOLOGY

Local knowledge has been the primary source of data collection for this project, which has been supplemented by background research and analysis of grey literature and academic literature. The mixed methods approach used to inform the findings of this report has incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data including the following knowledge sources:

Local knowledge & lived experience

Through content analysis of notes and observational data obtained over the course of community meetings and site visits, the project has identified key learnings which have contributed to informed research outcomes and recommendations which are tailored to community needs and desires. Results of public engagement activities, focus groups, and key informant interviews are key sources of knowledge for the project. Furthermore, as a result of preliminary meetings with key community partners, significant data acquisition and analysis activities were put into place, for example, a Community Asset Mapping exercise with high school students which was facilitated by a community champion (see Appendix C).

Academic literature review

A review of the academic literature which informed the project is provided in this report (see Appendix A). Academic literature has been categorized thematically, and evidence to support the project's planning process, vision, goals, and objectives is provided.

Document review and assembly of baseline information

In order to provide suggestions rooted in the current and actual needs of the region, an extensive review of related documents was conducted by the SCARP Planning Studio. This includes previous community planning documents (Comprehensive Community Plans), existing transit systems and plans, and administrative information such as costs, financial statements, and budgets.

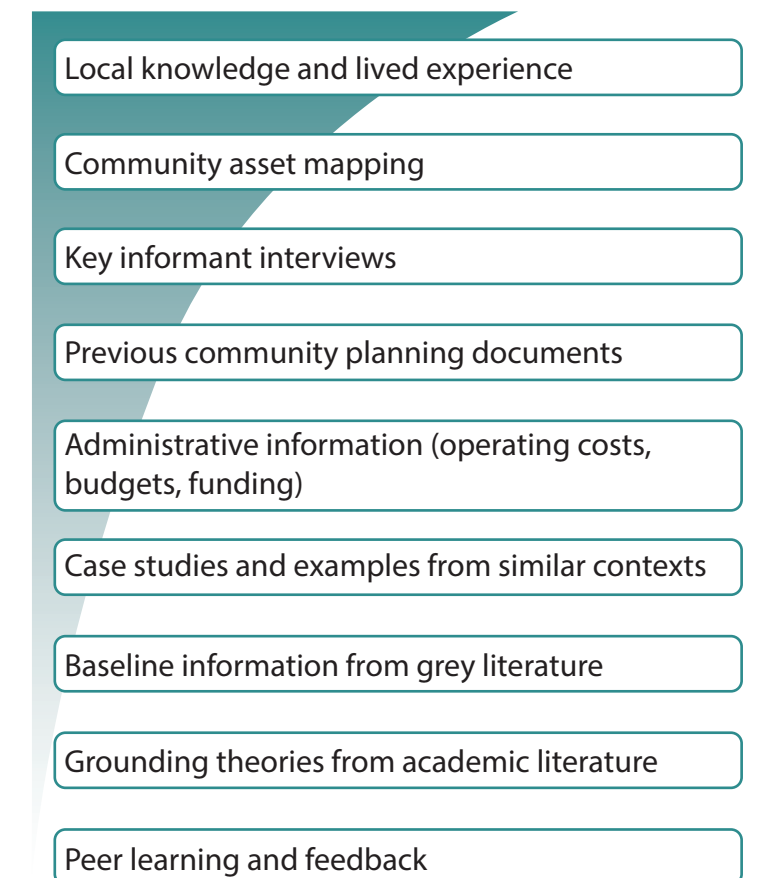
Case Study

The case study method has been used in this project in order to illustrate and derive best practices and applicable strategies for improving mobility and access to recreation. Case study will also provide a framework for readers of the report to analyze complex mobility

and access situations and potential pathways forward. A number of case studies pertaining to innovative solutions for rural transportation and hub-and-satellite approaches to recreation programming have been consulted. Relevant and applicable examples have assisted in developing approaches to mobility challenges related to the USRC. A detailed description of these case studies and key takeaways of each have been summarized. (see Appendix B).

Based on these project inputs, the below figure (Figure 13) provides a summary of data prioritization for the project.

Figure 13: Knowledge priority diagram.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio



¹⁰ Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987.

Furthermore, the methodological approach used in this research has emphasized a model called Appreciative Inquiry¹⁰, which highlights the wealth of knowledge that is embedded within communities, for example by uncovering its strengths through storytelling and relationship-building. Using Appreciative Inquiry as a data collection and engagement method, the SCARP Planning studio was able to facilitate dialogues and exchanges which allowed community members to identify and highlight what is crucially important to the community in terms of mobility, transportation, and accessibility.

Although the SCARP Planning Studio set out specific intentions for each community visit, the planning methodology allowed space for the community to lead and participate in ways that best suited them. This is one of the key characteristics of Asset-Based Community Development¹¹, another methodological approach which was considered when gathering information and arriving at conclusions to best serve the community.

¹¹ Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993.

Lastly, the planning process benefitted from a methodological approach that was iterative and malleable, which allowed research questions to be shaped by on-the-ground learnings and realities throughout the project's timeline. Some primary research questions which have guided the project include:

- Which groups have used the Ken Trombley Memorial Arena in the past? Who has been left out of recreation opportunities, and why?
- What are the unique transportation and mobility challenges faced by communities and individuals?
- What needs exist for connectivity between communities and community spaces?
- What resources exist and what visions for connectivity do each of the communities have? What needs to be in place for villages to develop and share a common vision?
- Can satellite programming and resource support encourage remote villages to better meet their own recreation visions and objectives?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The SCARP Planning Studio students travelled to the Upper Skeena region during three separate visits in October 2016, January 2017, and April 2017, each of which included several community engagement activities.

Key community leaders and citizens from the following villages were directly engaged with in their respective communities over the 8-month project timeline: Gitanyow, Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell, Village of Hazelton, District of New Hazelton, Hagwilget, and Moricetown. A total of 11 in-depth community meetings and engagement sessions have taken place, with a total of 118 individuals consulted (see Appendix C).

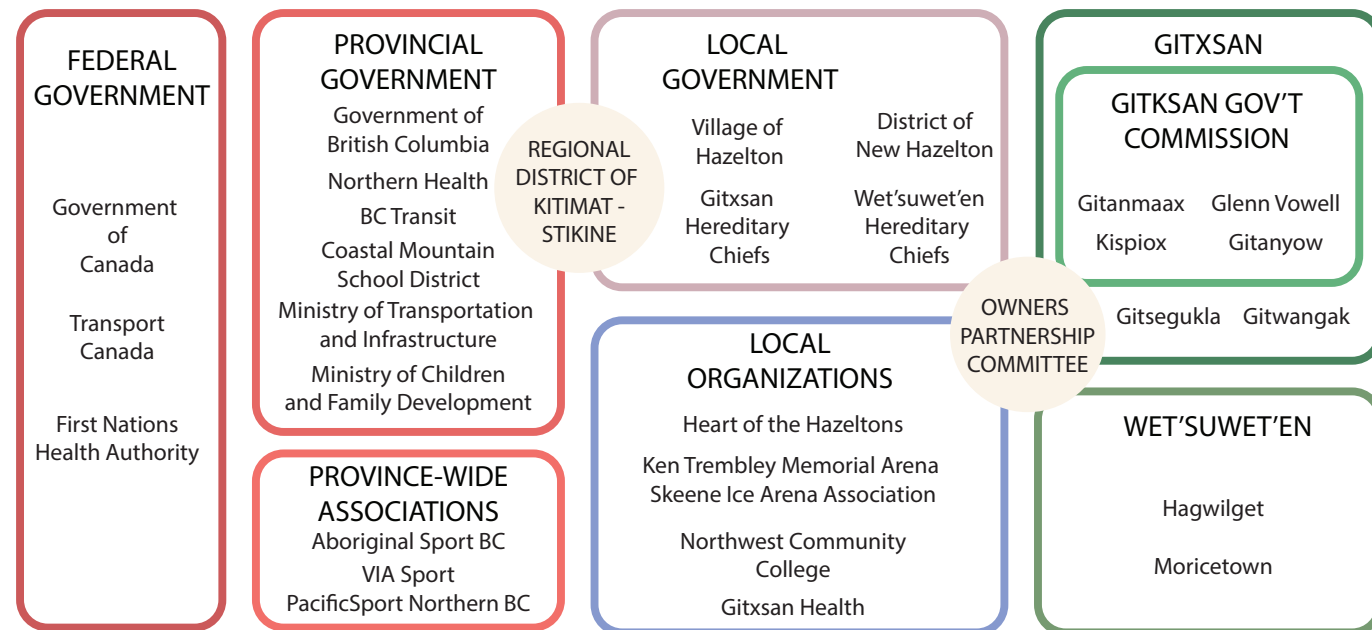
The community engagement which informed this project occurred at two levels (see Appendix C):

1. **Quality introductions:** During the first and second visits to the region, the primary objective was to have a quality introduction to key community members and leaders in each of the communities in the region (unfortunately we were unable to meet with community members in Kispiox). The main intention for these initial meetings was relationship and trust building, as well as local knowledge gathering. During these initial visits, special interest groups were also consulted, including high school students, members of the Wrinch Memorial Foundation, the First Nations Health Authority, and parents and stakeholders of the Ice Arena Association.
2. **Follow-up and community feedback:** The third visit to the region featured three open house style community feedback events which were advertised to the public and had the intention of reporting back to the community in order to validate the approaches which had been created based on our initial engagement with community members. Through these sessions, feedback and comments were gathered and analyzed in order to refine the project's recommendations.

Furthermore, the project employed several community engagement techniques in order to gather information and feedback from the community. These included

community asset mapping, youth focus groups, a survey questionnaire, and open written responses to thematic questions during open house events. The results of these have informed the report's findings and are compiled in Appendix C.

Figure 14: Upper Skeena Regreation Centre Stakeholder Map.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio



COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNINGS

A particular challenge in the region is to enable youth and elders to partake in programming hosted by the recreation centre. Currently, youth living in several of the eight Indigenous communities surrounding Hazelton are unable to participate in extracurricular sports activities due to the constraints of the existing school bus service. Moreover, elders in these communities are isolated and relatively inactive because they do not have access to safe, reliable, and economical transportation services. These issues are exacerbated during the long winter months when transportation becomes even more tenuous.

The learnings given below provide a snapshot of the baseline conditions of the area's transportation needs, and have allowed the project to move towards proposed strategies for improving community mobility linkages between the dispersed villages which are aligned with what community members have vocalized. The key learnings from these in-person meetings, which have greatly informed our approaches and recommendations, are summarized below:

Community-based learning #1: Partnerships, collaboration, & coordination *"We need to find people who can coordinate across communities and encourage planning that isn't so inwardly focused."* - Chief Fred Johnson, Gitwangak Band

Residents expressed that communities in the Upper Skeena area will need targeted support to coordinate at the local level in order to collaborate effectively and to create relevant satellite programming which will support community priorities. It was often suggested that there could be a collaborative arrangement made with current buses/vans owned by the individual communities, but that this would require some leadership and relationship-building between Bands. The hiring of recreation coordinators and the development of recreation plans in each village were seen as potential actions that could prove to be productive steps towards aiding coordination and cooperation across communities.

There was already some anecdotal evidence of transportation partnerships happening in the area, for example a mention of a former regional cost-sharing system for bus operation which was paid for by the

Gitksan Government Commission (GGC), as well as school districts and villages who were sharing the costs of operating school buses.

The suggestion of a transportation consortium between villages was well received in several community meetings. Overall, there was a sense that bringing people together to collaborate is essential, particularly with regards to addressing transportation challenges. It is apparent that the community itself holds many of the solutions, but requires logistical support in order to coordinate and realize multiple visions.

Community-based learning #2: Attracting outside communities & accessing recreation locally *“The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will be a lighthouse for the community, with programs that go out to the people.”* - Alice Maitland, Mayor, Village of Hazelton

Several community members mentioned that the USRC would provide greater opportunities to play sports locally and to attract teams from outside communities to the region, therefore lessening the burden on families to travel in order to access recreational opportunities and to participate in competitive sports. In addition, the presence of the USRC was seen as a way to inspire local communities to kickstart their own sports teams and to play against one another, again lessening the need to travel, which is a barrier for many families due to costs, winter driving challenges, access to vehicles, etc.

Community-based learning #3: The need for operational dollars *“In order to support transportation, it feels like we are stealing from participation, because the operational funding needs to come out of programming dollars.”* - Mary-Jane Maitland, Finance Officer, Glen Vowell Band

It was largely understood across groups and communities with whom we spoke that although many of the communities had access to buses and vans, this would not translate into solutions without also having access to the operational and maintenance dollars needed to sustain the service. Some of the concerns included the costs of gas, maintenance, vehicle winterizing, training, and staff. Similarly, many people mentioned that their communities have access to halls and spaces, but often lack the maintenance dollars or resources to activate these spaces in ways that are meaningful to the community.

According to residents, an important objective is to emphasize that capital dollars provided by the provincial and federal government to purchase buses are not effective unless paired with operational dollars and



WANDA GOOD

Wanda Good has long been an advocate for enhanced services and opportunities for her community. She has played a pivotal role in working with the BC government to bring bus service to Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert in order to better connect northern communities with safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options, in particular for women and teenage girls. As a community leader and public servant, she is committed to communicating the needs of her constituents:

“We live the farthest west of the Gitksan communities and our community has a number of high school students attending Hazelton Secondary School. Each day they are up at the crack of dawn and on their way to Hazelton. One of their main challenges is being involved in extracurricular activities - many are living in low-income homes that have some transportation challenges - either the family doesn’t have a vehicle or doesn’t have access to a vehicle. Our community members also have a challenge of getting to Hazelton for hockey or any extra community activities. Particularly in the winter time it is a challenge to get out there, or the cost of transportation to get there is a barrier for families.”

Given these challenges, Wanda has a clear vision for the ways in which improved transportation and accessibility solutions could improve her community’s ability to benefit from a new regional recreation facility:

“In our community we have conducted a Comprehensive Community Plan and our finding is that accessibility to amenities is one of the highest challenges or barriers, whether it be to healthcare, shopping opportunities, or recreation. If there were an option of having transportation to the recreation facility it would greatly benefit the community, especially for our young people who are eager and looking forward to this new facility. Having transportation to and from would make a great difference. Right now we have youth who are at risk because after extracurricular activities they are standing outside waiting for a ride or hoping for a ride. This will provide safety for one, and certainty for another, for parents who want to have their children involved in extracurricular activities, and better health outcomes for community members who want to come participate in activities.”

sustainable transportation planning and support.

Community-based learning #4: Community inclusion & empowerment *“The people have been the least valued of the resources in the community - we need to change this perspective to see their intrinsic value.”* - Linda Pierre, Electoral Area B, Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine

Many communities agreed that moving toward the shared goal of obtaining funding for the construction of the USRC has been a unifying experience thus far, but that there is typically skeptical interest from residents in projects of this nature. Therefore, part of the challenge has been convincing the community that the vision is possible and achievable, and that they themselves are worth the investment. Health workers in the communities have expressed that many residents lack the confidence and self-esteem to leave the house and participate in activities as engaged citizens, and that an inclusive centre would necessarily have to reach out to these people to foster this involvement.

Furthermore, community members expressed that, often, the more distant communities of Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, and Gitwangak feel left out of regional planning efforts, and that many of the Gitksan communities, because of their strong sense of autonomy, don't always tend toward collaboration. Moricetown, an equidistant Wet'suwet'en community, also felt as though inclusion and celebration of all cultures would be an essential requirement for ensuring their community's sense of belonging to the centre.

An important result of this community-based learning is to continue identifying who the programs are for, what the communities' needs are, and how mobility linkages can support individuals and groups in order to get them involved in the programs.

Community-based learning #5: There are specific challenges within the community which create complex transportation barriers

Some of the primary challenges affecting community mobility that were resoundingly heard throughout community meetings were the following:

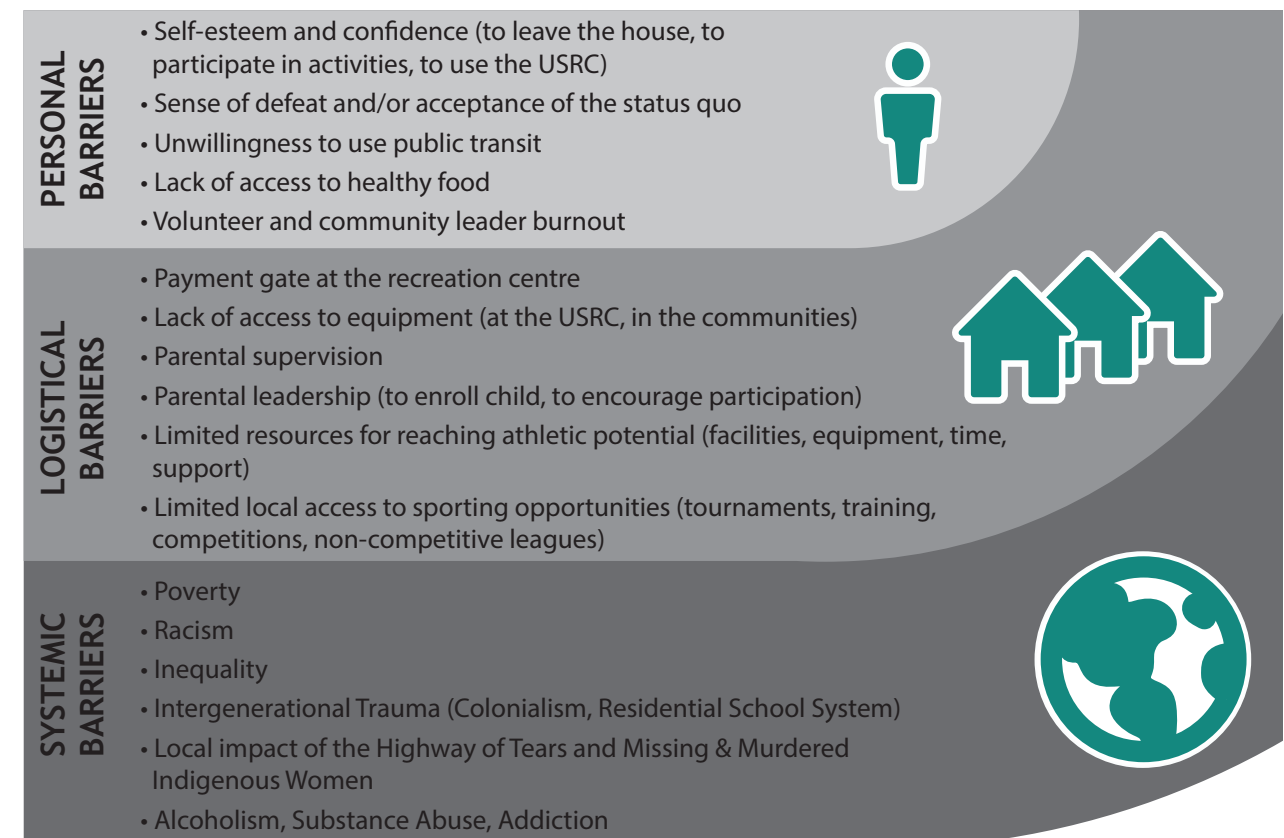
- Health and wellbeing
- Individual and family poverty
- Underfunding of services
- Safety concerns

- Affordability and access to services
- Certain active parents taking on the transportation burden and transporting youth in private vehicles
- There are many people without driver's licenses or access to a private vehicle
- People want to participate but can't find transportation
- Many people rely on social media (for example Facebook) to find rides and carpools
- There is a lack of regular transportation that services every community every day
- Many parents work camp jobs (mining, oil & gas, etc.) and are often away from home (not able to transport their children, not able to sign consent forms, not able to supervise children, not able to be volunteers in the community, etc.)
- High school students want more recreation, more ways to get around safely, more access to volunteer opportunities

These barriers, which have been validated through conversational and observational information during visits to the communities, are intended to give a snapshot of the many complexities and challenges which exist in the Upper Skeena region (Figure 18).

An awareness and recognition of these barriers is essential to making actionable recommendations for improved access to recreation which are grounded in the realities of the place. Personal barriers include a lack of self-esteem and confidence to leave the house, sense of defeat, unwillingness to use public transit, lack of access to healthy food, and volunteer and community leader burnout. These barriers are typically faced at the individual level, but a community- and regional-based approach is needed to address these barriers. Logistical barriers are those faced at a community and regional level, and have the potential to derail efforts made by the USRC to promote access to recreation, and should therefore be considered during the recreation centre's planning phases. Finally, systemic barriers are deeply rooted within the communities, and have a long intergenerational history that makes them very difficult to fully resolve. Through recreation, it is hoped that some of these more complex barriers may be relieved and improved.

Figure 18: Barriers faced at personal, logistical, and systemic levels. Source: SCARP Planning Studio



CONSIDERATIONS

There are two significant limitations to the information presented in this report. Firstly, as outsiders to the community, and as academic researchers who are of non-Indigenous ancestry, our own positionalities are an important limitation which can prevent us from fully understanding many of the local specificities and planning protocols which will inform the feasibility and appropriateness of our recommendations.

Secondly, as a result of the project scope, only three short community visits could be accommodated, which impacted the depth of community engagement that was attainable. An effort was made to visit each of the communities in the region, however, we were unable to meet with representatives from the village of Kispiox. Overall, the project was able to gather rich insights and feedback from community champions and interested residents; however, it was unable to sufficiently engage hard-to-reach populations, such as children, elders, and other marginalized groups.

04

OPPORTUNITIES

Approaches
Exploring Costs and Benefits
Recommendations

APPROACHES

The following section of the report will explain three approaches to improving community linkages to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. These include a Partnership Approach, a Creativity Approach, and a Leadership Approach (see Figure 20), which have been designed using the learnings from each of our research inputs (see Figure 19). Each of these approaches comes with their own set of specific actions and costs (both social and economic). The actions presented with each approach are not exclusive to that approach and can easily be mixed and matched between approaches. Together, they aim to respond to the following question:

“Based on the SCARP Planning Studio’s community-based research, what are possible strategies and actions for improving mobility and access to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre?”

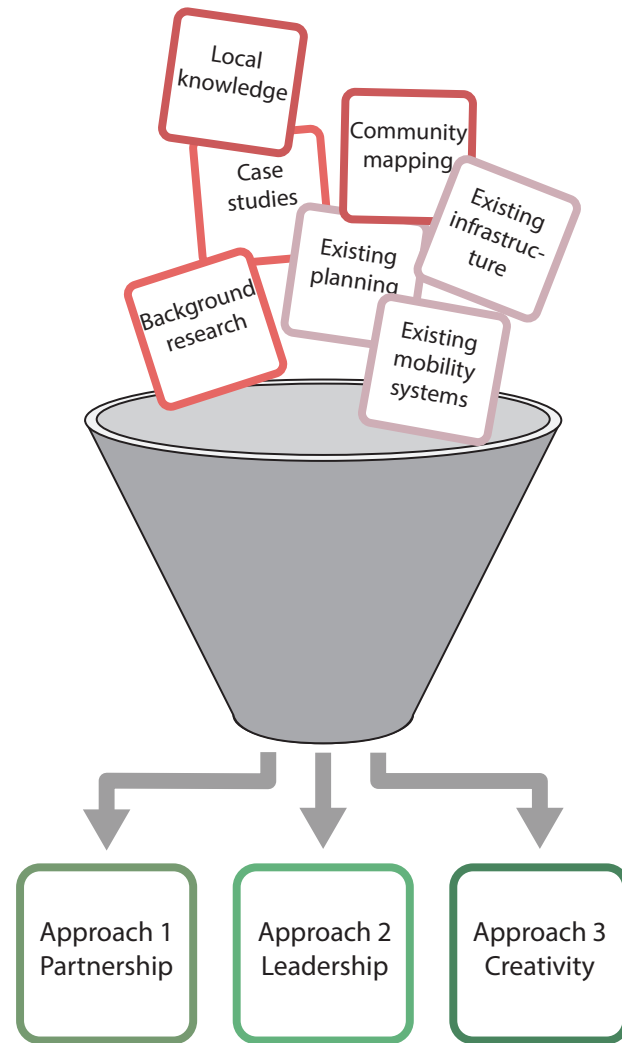


Figure 19: Approach making diagram
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

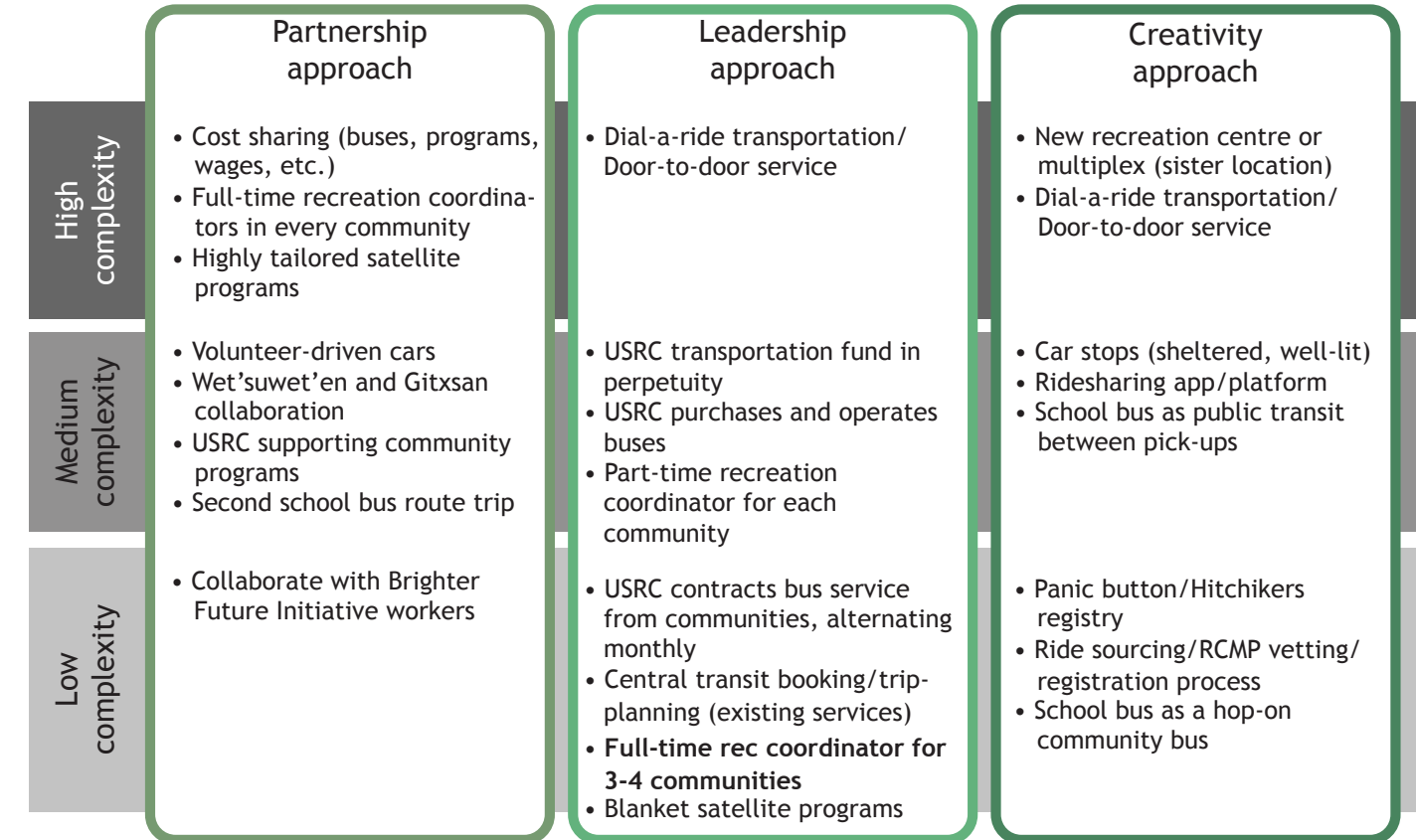


Figure 20: Partnership, Creativity, and Leadership approaches
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The Partnership Approach assumes that there are social and financial benefits which can be leveraged through the creation of meaningful partnerships and collaborations between communities and stakeholders in the region. The SCARP Planning Studio has identified several individual actions which would encourage partnerships in support the project vision.

Some high complexity initiatives which fit into the Partnership Approach include cost-sharing initiatives, collaborations and partnerships at multiple scales, highly-tailored satellite programming which would require direct and ongoing liaising with each community, and the creation of recreation coordinator positions in each community (i.e. full or part-time positions in each village).

In terms of collaborative models to support mobility and accessibility to the USRC, there are multiple scales and configurations which could constitute such partnerships. Some preliminary examples are as follows:

1. Ways of cost-sharing between communities through the Cost-sharing arrangements between communities:

- Shared operational costs of vans/buses through the creation of regional transportation consortium(s)
- Shared costs of creating and running recreational programming
- Shared contributions to wages for bus drivers and/or recreation coordinators

2. Collaborations and partnerships at multiple scales:

- Geographic arrangements (i.e. east/west)
- Varied number of participant communities (i.e. partnerships between two, three, or four neighbouring communities)
- Region-wide (i.e. all communities participate)
- Age groups (i.e. shared transportation for all Grade 8's)
- Activity groups (i.e. shared transportation for all students who play a sport on Tuesday/Thursday evenings)

- Multi-sectoral (i.e. collaborate with external stakeholders such as Gitanmaax market, school board, FNHA)

Some initiatives with a medium level of complexity which fit into the Partnership Approach include a coordinated system which relies on volunteer-driven cars, collaboration amongst Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan communities to encourage the creation of a welcoming and inclusionary space, and the streamlining of existing community planning with future USRC programming to avoid overlap of existing services.

Furthermore, there are some low complexity initiatives which could be implemented under the Partnership Approach, for example, measures to formalize a partnership with the Brighter Futures Initiative, an existing program which employs a Brighter Futures worker in each community. This person could strategically utilize their positioning within the community to liaise with the USRC on an ongoing basis to communicate the recreation needs of the community. Similarly, the USRC could maintain a relationship with these community champions in order to ensure that the centre's programming is meeting the needs of the communities and supporting their existing initiatives and vision.

CASE STUDY - MOVING AROUND PENDER

Moving Around Pender is one example of a volunteer driver program on Pender Island, British Columbia. As part of this program 26 signs for "lift stops" have been installed around the island, which are essentially bus stops for hitchhikers. The signs at these stops clearly define the liabilities of using the service, but also encourage drivers to pick up people and share their ride. Money is not exchanged in this model; rather it is based upon the good will of people. The program has been rolled out in several phases by a dedicated group of volunteers, with the latest phase being a creation of a map of lift stop locations along with the installation of donated benches at stops.

Figure 21: Car stop in Pender. Source: Best hike | <https://besthike.com/2016/07/16/cycle-hiking-pender-island/>



LEADERSHIP APPROACH

The Leadership Approach recognizes the inherent complexity of true collaboration at any scale, favouring a centralized approach where partnerships are spearheaded at the level of the recreation centre. This approach therefore imagines the USRC as a leader in terms of facilitating access to the centre as well as for coordinating the regional delivery of satellite programming.

Some initiatives with high levels of complexity which fall under this approach include a dedicated bus route operated by the USRC, dial-a-ride services, and door-to-door services. These actions have proven to be successful in other regions, but require a significant level of initial investment to implement successfully. The SCARP Planning Studio has identified two ways in which the USRC could carry out these transportation solutions (regular route, dial-a-ride, or door-to-door); (1) the USRC purchases and operates its own bus, or, (2) the USRC contracts an existing bus owned by a community and operates a transportation service using a community-owned vehicle. In the second example, the USRC can additionally contract community-owned buses on an alternating basis, for example using a different community's bus every month, or making locational arrangements (i.e. the USRC contracts one bus to make pick-ups in Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Kitwanga, and Gitanyow).

Actions under the Leadership Approach which command a medium level of complexity include the establishment of a USRC mobility fund (dollars raised through grants and donations to fund transportation and recreational access efforts in perpetuity), which is relatively straightforward to establish, but can be unsustainable over the long-term as it requires continuous fundraising efforts. In the Partnership Approach, the establishment of positions for full-time recreation coordinators hired in each community was discussed as a high complexity action. In this approach, the establishment of recreation coordinators is also a potential action; however, these employees would be hired directly by the USRC, which would have a lower level of complexity than the establishment of new community-level positions. As employees of the USRC, recreation coordinators could be established as part-time positions in each community, or as two to three full-time positions serving multiple adjacent communities. Lastly, a medium complexity

initiative under the Leadership Approach is the establishment of an advisory body which would work at arm's length to the Owners Partnership Committee. This advisory committee should ensure representation from each of the villages in the region and ideally select a candidate who is dedicated and committed to improving recreational opportunities in their community and the region. The advisory committee should also possess a certain level of knowledge about the ongoing recreation initiatives in their individual communities in order to allow them to advise the OPC on how to best coordinate regional service delivery initiatives and satellite programming.

There are also initiatives which fall under the Leadership Approach that could be considered as having a low level of complexity in terms of implementation. As one of the project goals, satellite programming and resources to support the vision for recreation in distinct communities was described in the Partnership Approach as an action which would encourage direct liaison with each of the communities in order to offer highly-tailored programming which meets the specific needs of the village in question. In this approach, the same intention becomes more centralized at the level of the USRC, therefore resulting in satellite programming that still reaches each of the communities, but is perhaps less individually tailored to the specific needs of communities. In other words, the same goal would be met through more universal program and resource offerings. An additional low-barrier initiative would be to establish a central transit booking office or phone line located at the USRC which could consolidate existing services and assist with trip planning and booking as appropriate. Lastly, as the OPC explores donations of equipment and building materials, it should further consider the needs of the dispersed communities, for example, the SCARP Planning Studio has learned of the need for a basketball hoop in Gitsegukla and additional wood to build the boards for a hockey rink in Gitanyow.

CASE STUDY - DIAL-A-RIDE

The City of Kawartha Lakes Dial a Ride program operating in the Kawartha Lakes district in Ontario. This blended service has two buses that run a fixed route in two different directions, with 10 stops along the route. Registered customers can also request specific stop locations as long as they are within 150 metres of the scheduled route. The program is open to anyone and the most common reasons for using the service are to get to appointments, go shopping, and to visit friends and families. Some riders simply enjoy taking a scenic ride around the lakes. The program is funded partly by the \$5 fare that is charged per ride, and the provincial gas tax program.

Figure 22: Dial-a-ride bus in the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Source: Rural Ontario Institute | <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=cfe64fad-4277-4981-9f9d-8ba0f3bbc529>



CREATIVITY APPROACH

The Creativity Approach recognizes that certain innovative tools and ideas or ‘outside the box’ thinking, while not solutions in and of themselves, can create progress toward the vision. By combining actions from this approach with others from the Partnership and Leadership Approaches, more holistic solutions can be achieved.

A high complexity idea which falls under the Creativity Approach would be the future construction of a sister recreation centre to serve the Gitxsan West area (Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanyow). Though outside the scope of this project and the current vision of the USRC Owners Partnership Committee, such an action could begin to address some of the mobility challenges in the region through the removal of barriers to recreational access. This initiative could be established as a long-term goal, perhaps by encouraging the alignment of visions for future construction in these communities with that of the USRC. For example, if either of these more distant communities were anticipating the construction of a new capital project (i.e. a school or administrative building) in the near or far term, such a project could be reimagined as a multiplex or multi-use building which could also provide recreation space, therefore leveraging and linking to the existing resources available from the USRC, and facilitating greater access. Aligning the service models and program offerings for two centres within the region could result in more inclusive access to recreation. Several existing multiplexes and multi-use regional recreation have been explored by the SCARP Planning Studio, further illustrating the potential applicability of such a model in the Upper Skeena (see Appendix B).

Some medium complexity initiatives categorized under the Creativity Approach include the implementation of actions to improve existing realities, for example the establishment of enhanced car stops (sheltered and well-lit), a hitchhiker’s registry, or a vetting process for vehicle operators through a registration system with the RCMP (i.e. with visible identifiers to affix to vehicles). Furthermore, the Upper Skeena region could establish a localized ridesharing app or online platform (i.e. drivers and passengers share rides), or a ridesourcing app (i.e. passengers charter private vehicle operators, mirroring

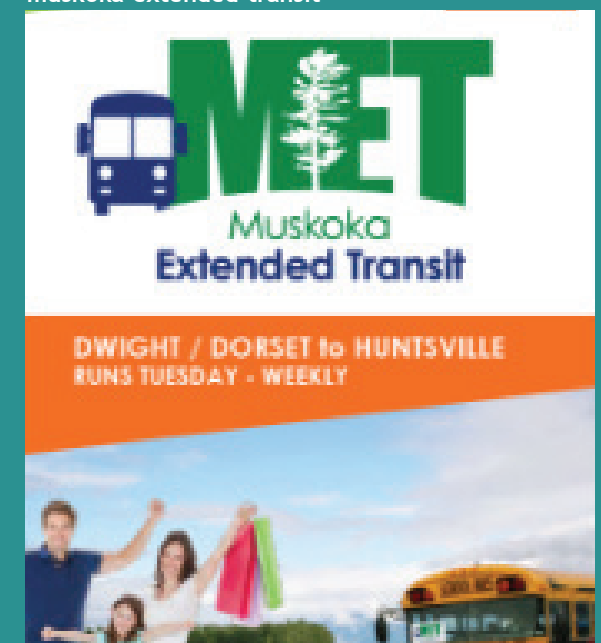
the ‘Uber’ platform within a local context). An additional medium complexity initiative is to employ school buses as community buses, as done in the Muskoka Extended Transit case study (see Appendix B). This can be accomplished in two ways, either by scheduling additional transportation services using the same school bus between pickups, or by allowing community members to hop aboard the school bus at any point when space is available, which is a lower-barrier technique.

Lastly, a low complexity action within the Creativity Approach includes the creation of a region-wide system where vehicle passengers and operators could obtain portable radio frequency-enabled panic buttons when travelling in shared private vehicles. There is also the future landscape of autonomous vehicles and autonomous transit which could be considered as a low complexity action to implement under the Creativity Approach in the long-term.

CASE STUDY - MUSKOKA EXTENDED TRANSIT

Muskoka Extended Transit is an example of an innovative public transit model that uses school buses as public transit buses between drop-offs and pickups of students. Eight scheduled routes in total are operated, each being up to 45 kilometres in length, and connect rural Muskoka towns with larger centres. Fares range from \$2 to \$5 for return trips. The program is open to users of all age groups and enables users to access services that would otherwise be inaccessible due to long travel distances. This is a pilot project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Figure 23: Muskoka extended transit folder. Source: Muskoka Community | <http://www.muskokacommunity.ca/key-initiatives/met-muskoka-extended-transit>



EXPLORING COSTS AND BENEFITS

The following section illustrates multiple scenarios which expand upon and provide greater detail and analysis of several of the actions described in each of the above approaches. Approximate purchasing and operating costs are summarized in Table 4, along with the estimated benefits of each, and suggestions for monitoring and evaluation measures. Furthermore, Appendix D summarizes initial feedback received from the Owners Partnership Committee, based on preference and perceived feasibility. These scenarios are intended to further demonstrate the ways in which actions from each of the suggested approaches (Partnership, Leadership, Creativity) could be implemented.

Table 4: Scenarios table with estimated costs, benefits, and potential evaluation measures. Source: SCARP Planning Studio

	Scenario	Associated Purchase and Operating Costs	Estimated Benefits	Monitoring & Evaluation Measures
Partnership Approach	1) Community-oriented transportation zones a. Gitxsan West Zone & Gitanyow Connector b. Gitxsan North Zone c. Central Zone d. Moricetown Connector	- Approximate cost to run a shuttle bus is between \$3.30 and \$4.90 per km (Gitanmaax Band Council, 2016)	Improved access to USRC and between communities	Framework for evaluation should be developed and implemented by the USRC and/or communities.
	2) School Bus Extension	- If all buses run once more every school day) - \$208,000 to \$390,000 per year (\$800 - \$1,500 per day * 260 days) (Coast Mountains School District, 2017)	Improved access to USRC and between communities	Ridership
Leadership Approach	3) Volunteer Driver Program	- \$55,000 per year (assuming drivers have their own car) + liability insurance (Better at Home, 2017)	Improved reliability in transportation systems	Number of youth and elders using the service
	4) USRC-Owned and Operated Service	- \$60,000 Purchase price - Operating costs: \$3.30 to \$4.90 per km (includes gas, insurance, repairs) - Driver cost: \$22.50/hour (Langley School District, 2017)	Improved ease of access to USRC, particularly for after-school activities. Less pressure on community leaders.	Ridership
	5) Central Transit Booking Service	- One-time equipment cost (computer, telephone, desk, software): \$5,000 - Telephone service cost: \$1,200 annually - 1 Full-time wage: \$45,000 annually - Office space rental: \$400/month	Improved coordination across transportation systems	Number of calls received
Creativity Approach	6) Harm Reduction Initiatives	- Bus shelters = \$25,000 each, including installation and electrical connections (City of Richmond, n.d.) - Personal alarm devices cost approximately \$130 CAD each (React Mobile, 2017; Revolar Inc., 2016)	Improved sense of safety and security	Decrease in missing persons cases
	7) Ridesharing & Carpooling Platforms	- Approximately \$25,000 to develop and host a cellphone app	Improved reliability in transportation systems	Increase in carsharing. Decrease in ad hoc hitchhiking

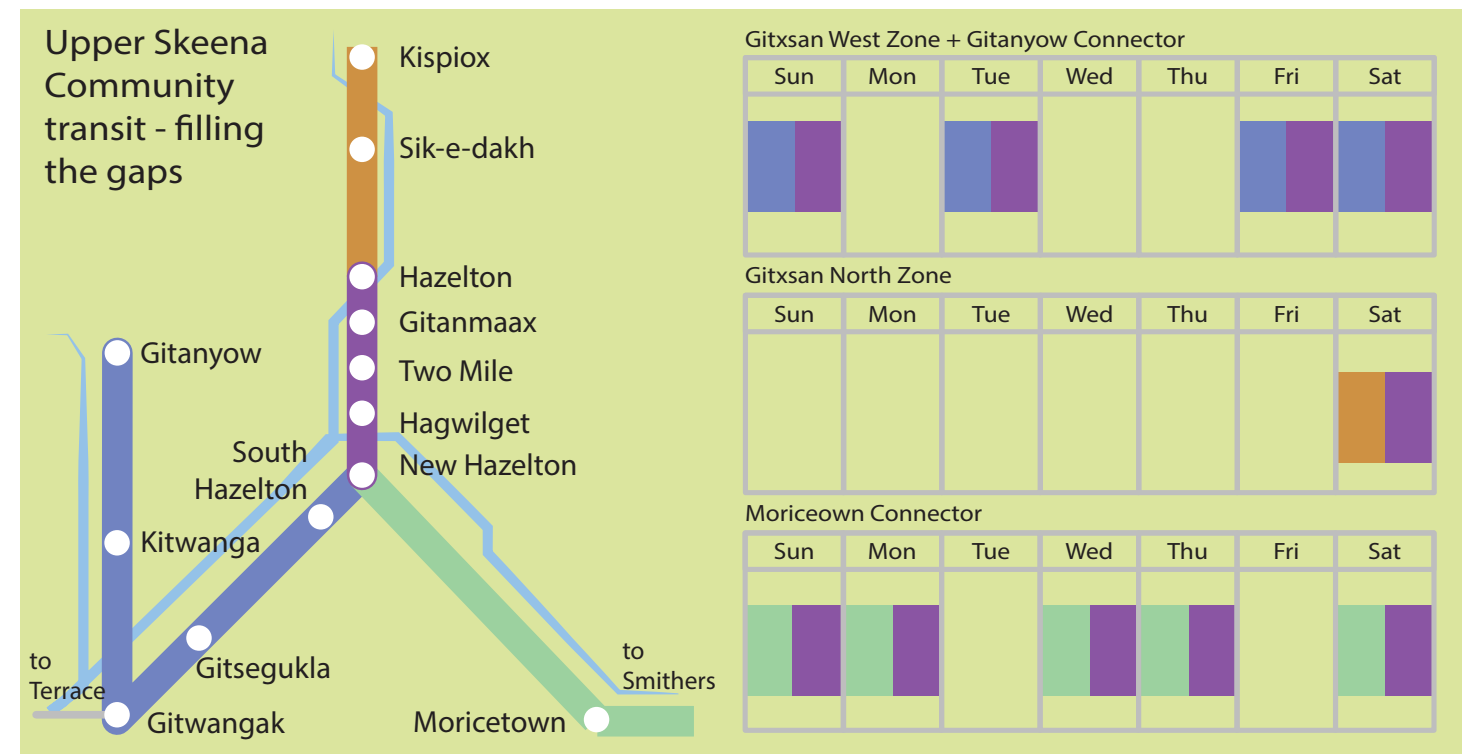
Scenario 1: Encouraging community-oriented transportation zones

These cost-sharing transportation zones represent the most logical arrangements for partnerships and cost-sharing collaborations in the region. Each of the zones identify potential community partnership arrangements for providing linkages between the communities and the USRC. These transportation zones are simply designed to be illustrations of the most effective and feasible geographic partnerships, which would require the minimum amount of cross-coordination for collaboration. Furthermore, they address concerns expressed by community members who have indicated that transit riders at the 'end of the line' can often not be accommodated on transit buses when the route serves multiple communities with infrequent service¹².

The operational costs for these transportation zones could be paid for or supplemented by the USRC, or from pooled band resources of participating communities. Such a service could also make additional pick-ups in communities closer to the USRC if there is space remaining (and depending on where the funding for the service is being generated). If such a scenario were to be implemented, coordinators should be mindful of basing this new service on existing services, in order to fill gaps in existing public transportation. For example, it would be beneficial to run a service between Gitanyow and Gitwangak since this route is currently not serviced by BC Transit, or to supplement the current three days per week of BC Transit service with additional trips on days which aren't already included in the service schedule (see Figure 24).

¹² Kurjata, 2017, January 27

Figure 24: BC Transit current schedule and proposed schedule. Source: SCARP Planning Studio



The SCARP Planning Studio has identified four possible transportation zones; however, funding structures and logistical factors will need to be carefully considered when encouraging supplementary transportation solutions in each of these zones. Such logistical and coordinating functions further reinforce the need for a locally-informed advisory body or recreation coordinator to spearhead these efforts.

Gitxsan West Zone & Gitanyow Connector^{13, 14}:

- Linkages between Gitanyow - Kitwanga/ Gitwangak - Gitsegukla - South Hazelton - USRC using 25-passenger van owned by Gitanyow Band (see Appendix ?: **community transportation cost data), with the potential for being subsidized by the USRC.
- 'Gitanyow connector' service could complete the leg not serviced by BC Transit (from Gitsegukla to Gitanyow) on the days when the existing service is offered.



Figure 25: Map of Transportation Zones - Gitxsan West & Gitanyow Connector.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

Central Zone:

- Linkages between New Hazelton - Hagwilget - Two Mile - Gitanmaax - USRC - Old Hazelton using shuttle van or bus owned by one of the bands (details unknown), with the potential for being subsidized by the USRC.
- Central Zone could have more frequent pick-ups and drop-offs because of proximity to the USRC.
- Could be combined with Gitxsan North Zone communities for a larger partnership agreement.



Figure 26: Map of Transportation Zones - Central Zone.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

Gitxsan North Zone:

- Linkages between Kispiox - Glen Vowell - USRC using shuttle van or bus owned by one of the bands (details unknown), with the potential for being subsidized by the USRC.
- Potential to make additional pick-up at Gitanmaax Market (Gitanmaax Market could contribute to operational costs).
- Could be combined with Central Zone communities for a larger partnership arrangement.



Figure 27: Map of Transportation Zones - North Zone.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

Moricetown Connector:

- Linkages between Moricetown and the USRC using shuttle bus or van owned by Moricetown Band (details unknown).
- Operational costs could be paid by Moricetown band or subsidized by the USRC.
- Frequency should be based on existing service (i.e. any new service should fill gaps in existing public transit).



Figure 28: Map of Transportation Zones - Moricetown Connector.
Source: SCARP Planning Studio

Scenario 2: School Bus Extension

This scenario proposes that regular school bus routes make a second round of after-school dropoffs, particularly to distant communities, to allow students to visit the USRC and participate in recreational activities after school, while still being able to return home safely following extracurriculars (see Appendix E: Local Transportation-Related Financial Data).

Scenario 3: Volunteer Driver Program

The creation of a volunteer driver program would improve the reliability of transportation services in the region given the limitations of public transportation, particularly if it were to maintain a significant and active database of volunteers. This scenario could solicit the assistance of a USRC-sponsored recreation coordinator or committed community champion/volunteer to coordinate the service.

Scenario 4: USRC-Owned and Operated Service

This scenario would involve the USRC purchasing its own vehicle and creating its own regional service schedule. One vehicle cannot provide the needed service, therefore, this scenario would simply be an additional service to supplement transportation services offered by the school system, regional transit system, and other nation-owned vehicles. This service should be especially attentive to providing access to after-school activities for children living in the most distant communities, in order to promote equitable access to recreation.

Scenario 5: Central Transit Booking Service

This could be a relatively low-barrier initiative that would establish a central transit booking office or dispatch, which could consolidate existing services and assist residents with trip planning and booking. There is the potential to limit costs if office space and administrative support for the transit booking service is provided by the USRC.

Scenario 6: Harm Reduction Initiatives

Installing new bus shelters, and improving those which already exist could ensure that using public transit or waiting for rideshares is a safer and more enjoyable process for residents. BC Transit has recently established a provincial procurement strategy and capital upgrade program to assist municipalities in acquiring bus shelters. The program includes designs and configurations which incorporate the use of natural materials and energy efficient LED lighting, as well as a "harsh climate" shelter model that features higher protection from wind, rain and snow. There are two purchase options for these shelters:

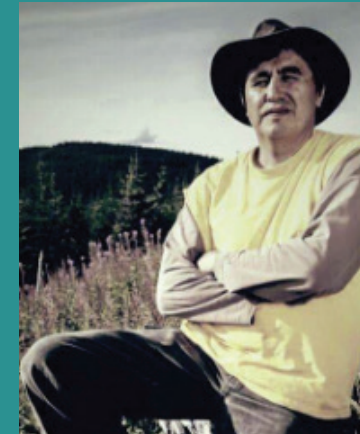
(1) participation in the BC Transit capital upgrade program, which requires a shared funding model whereby the asset is owned by BC Transit and the municipal partner is responsible for all maintenance, or (2) the municipal partner can purchase the shelter through the program directly, whereby they incur all costs and are responsible for all maintenance.¹⁵

¹⁵ City of Prince George, 2015.

In addition, personal alarm or safety devices could be selectively given out to high-risk hitchhikers, in order to provide an increased sense of security. These devices are relatively expensive and a possible solution could be for local governments to own several personal alarm devices that could be loaned to those in need.

Scenario 7: Ridesharing and Carpooling Platforms

The USRC could implement a community-based ridesharing app or carpooling platform (i.e. Upper Skeena ‘Uber’), which could provide improved reliability in transportation systems. USRC staff could spearhead and coordinate such a service, which could include an element of RCMP vetting of individuals at the time of registration for the service. This service could offer improved safety and security for both drivers and passengers.



JOHN OLSON

John Olsen is intimately aware of the ways in which transportation and accessibility challenges affect the Upper Skeena region and its multiple communities. His various roles as a youth worker and community champion for recreation and sport mean he is well-versed in the challenges, needs, and strengths of the region. Furthermore, his role within the Gitksan Health Society has shown him the power and potential of increased access to services:

““Transportation in the Hazelton area and Gitksan territory has long been a problem. In a time where we have activities that we want to participate in, we are often at a loss here - many of our people cannot participate because they do not have transportation. Be it because of economical means or other circumstances, there is inadequate transportation in this place. For example, the communities of Gitwangak and Gitanyow do not have access to daily transportation into Hazelton, where a lot of the amenities are. If we did have transportation between communities I could see very successful recreational and cultural programs being run. Health services would be more accessible, and community wellness would improve.”

John has been an enthusiastic proponent of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, and is optimistic about the impact that the facility will have on his community:

“If we have our youth participating in structured programs where they find a connection, they find their place in this world, they find a sense of belonging, I believe that we will produce young adults and human beings that are an asset to their communities and they will bring something to the table when it comes to community wellness. If there is a proper transportation and programming system in place, I could see our youth participating in a lot more recreation programs. The level of education and academics would also improve because there would be transportation to stay after school and participate in homework clubs.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer action-oriented solutions which have been designed as ideal and reasonable pathways forward for the region and each of its communities. Furthermore, the recommendations are intended to provide some clarity on the order of the steps which could be implemented in the Upper Skeena. Lastly, the validity of these recommendations are confirmed by their rootedness in information and feedback which has been gained from community members and key informants throughout the planning process.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hire a Recreation Coordinator for the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre as soon as possible.

This key staff position should be filled by someone who already has well-established relationships with all or most of the outlying First Nations. The Recreation Coordinator will play a key role in communications and resource coordination between the USRC and the villages, therefore, they could greatly contribute to the anticipatory planning of the facility.

2. Coordinate the establishment of a Community Advisory Committee.

A Community Advisory Committee should ensure representation from each of the First Nations and regional communities. Each committee member should be a motivated and informed community advocate for recreation and sport, and have an in-depth understanding of the existing recreational opportunities and initiatives in their respective communities. The committee will advise the OPC and act as a resource with regard to the needs and assets of each community, helping to coordinate and identify collaborative opportunities for resource-sharing.

3. Support a comprehensive public education campaign to raise awareness and encourage a sense of ownership, pride, and excitement for the new facility.

The success of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre will rely on its ability to engage the regional community in order to create a space where everyone feels welcome and motivated to participate. In order to inform hard-to-reach populations, an inclusive public education campaign and communications strategy will need to be implemented, as many residents, particularly in the more distant communities, are still unaware of the USRC or what it can offer them.

4. Continue to gather data on the existing transportation and recreation assets of the region.

In order to leverage existing resources to support the success of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, the USRC should complete an in-depth inventory of existing assets, including the number of nation-owned vehicles available for transporting members of the public, the number of parents who currently drive youth in the region to schools near the centre, or to extracurricular activities, and the types of organized recreation activities and resources available in each community (i.e. basketball hoops, soccer fields, sports teams, youth programming, etc.). This knowledge will assist in the development of additional mobility solutions to enhance current offerings, as well as with the development of successful and responsive satellite programming.

5. Encourage the development and piloting of dedicated transportation routes to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre via new partnership agreements and existing community assets.

Community-owned vehicles can provide added transportation frequency and target specific gaps in the current BC Transit and school bus offerings, for example, by providing safe and reliable transportation for youth to access after-school recreation opportunities. The USRC should explore the potential for piloting shared funding structures between the centre and/or several outside communities in order to contribute toward the cost of operating dedicated trips to and from the centre at strategic times. For example, Gitanyow has expressed interest in using its existing shuttle bus for this purpose as part of a shared arrangement with other Western communities, such as Gitsegukla and Gitwangak.

6. Set priorities and continue to concretize an action plan for providing outreach and satellite programs to the outlying communities.

The interest of community members in the dispersed villages can be further captured by solidifying the scope of satellite programming and resources which will support and enhance the visions for recreation within the individual villages. Communities should be encouraged to consider future links to the USRC in their own recreation planning in order to build trust and commitment toward a continued relationship.

7. Monitor and evaluate whether the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre is adequately meeting its mandate of ensuring equal participation from the regional community.

This could be accomplished by recording the home communities of all participants in recreation centre programs, as well as through tracking mechanisms such as customer satisfaction surveys. Should actual participation fall short of meeting this mandate, the USRC should consider lending greater support to the provision of dedicated transportation solutions, for example by committing to some of the higher complexity initiatives identified in the report's Leadership Approach.

PATHWAYS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Action	Responsibility	Level of priority
Recruit and retain a new Manager of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre (USRC) as soon as possible	OPC	High
Establish USRC Community Advisory Committee	OPC, Manager	High
Create Terms of Reference for the Owners Partnership Committee (OPC) and USRC Community Advisory Committee	OPC, Community Advisory Committee	High
Recruit and retain a Recreation Coordinator to begin outreach services as soon as possible	OPC, Manager	High
Build ongoing relationships with sport and recreation leaders in each community (i.e. Brighter Futures workers)	Recreation Coordinator	High
Create a targeted communications strategy which considers culturally-relevant and community-specific ways of relaying information	Manager, Recreation Coordinator	High
Retain all other staff in the months before the USRC nears completion	Manager, Recreation Coordinator, Community Advisory Committee	High
Explore creative opportunities for material and resource donations (i.e. extra donations of wood from the construction of the USRC to build hockey rinks in communities, vehicle/shuttle van donations from car dealerships, etc.)	OPC	Medium
Explore interest in collaborative transportation partnerships and/or Regional Transportation Consortium	OPC, Manager, Recreation Coordinator, Community Advisory Committee	Medium
Establish youth learning, volunteer, and work opportunities during construction and operation of the USRC	OPC, Recreation Coordinator	Medium
Advocate for expansion of school district bus routes which could facilitate access to after school programming	OPC, Manager	Medium
Explore models of mobile recreation programming that periodically bring new experiences into rural communities	OPC, Manager, Recreation Coordinator	Medium
Identify funding sources for dedicated transportation and mobility solutions to connect community members to the USRC	OPC, Manager	Medium
Celebrate important milestones such as the USRC opening, one year anniversary, etc. and ensure that all residents can access these events	Manager	Medium
Identify calls for proposals and granting opportunities which could support satellite programming and regional recreation opportunities	Recreation Coordinator	Low
Identify next steps for partnership with SCARP Planning Studio	OPC	Low

05

NEXT STEPS

Communications Plan
Conclusion

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The following section encourages the identification of strategic target audiences and messaging to keep the project's progress alive and in a forward-moving direction. In community meetings and community engagement activities, particularly those held within the more distant communities (Gitanyow, Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Moricetown), it was not uncommon to find that members of the public were unaware of plans to construct the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. This is a clear indication of the need to continue public engagement efforts already underway by the Owners Partnership Committee, SPARC BC Upper Skeena Recreation Plan, and SCARP Planning Studio.

Better representation of distant communities on decision-making or advisory bodies could help increase awareness of the facility, however, there is also a need to consider targeted communications which reach beyond local leadership and community champions to inform those not easily engaged.

There are a number of steps that should be taken in order to improve communication, beginning with the development of an official communications strategy, as mentioned in the recommendations. However, the SCARP Planning Studio recommends the following quick start initiatives to increase communication:

- Improve internal communications amongst primary stakeholders by circulating monthly reports, SPARC BC Upper Skeena Recreation Plan, SCARP Planning Studio reports, and other important documents to ensure that key participants remain informed as forward movement is made.
- Increase social media and traditional media presence through regular project updates to the public.
- Target community-specific communications methods such as Band newsletters, door-to-door campaigns, and phone-out lists with information and updates about the recreation facility and its programs.
- Discover mechanisms which will allow off-reserve community members or community members living outside the region to provide input on the project.
- Begin to donate draw prizes to community events which will generate enthusiasm about the facility's opening (i.e. free one-month membership).
- Sponsor a community event, such as an information feast, which ensures participation from a wide range of residents, and introduces community members to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre's vision and objectives.
- Explore public advertising campaigns such as the Cowichan Valley Regional District/BC Transit pass-for-entry campaign to generate participation once the recreation facility is operational (see Appendix B).
- Provide ongoing mechanisms to gather community feedback about the how mobility and access to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre could be enhanced.

CONCLUSION

¹⁶ Heart of the Hazeltons: Upper Skeena Recreation Centre, 2014.

The Upper Skeena Recreation Centre has a unique opportunity to become a prominent central hub of community activity and collaboration. By encouraging cross-cultural and multi-stakeholder partnerships, the centre can facilitate access to recreation while fostering meaningful community connections. In an area which has often been defined by its immense challenges; high rates of family poverty and unemployment, poor high school graduation rates, high rates of diabetes and obesity, mental health crises, alcohol abuse, social and geographic isolation, and a suicide epidemic - it is due time to invite the transformational changes which will continue to shift these narratives toward positive outcomes. As the centre's impact grows over time, its influence has the potential to create a ripple effect throughout the broader region, improving available services and resources, and as a result, the health and wellbeing of the people of the Upper Skeena. The demands generated by the facility will reveal new needs and opportunities, therefore the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre should continue to work with key stakeholders to influence decisions about the future of mobility and access in the region. Better mobility solutions and connections to programming are concrete actions which can realize the 'Heart of the Hazeltons' vision: to provide a safe, creative and welcoming place for all people of the Upper Skeena to gather, to address educational, health and social needs, and to utilize the platform of wellness, recreation and sport as a catalyst for dialogue, hope, and action.¹⁶

06

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07

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Literature Review and Case Studies
Appendix B: Community Feedback and Activities
Appendix C: Owners Partnership Committee Feedback
Appendix D: SCARP Planning Studio Transition Report
Appendix E: Local Transportation-Related Financial Data

APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

Planning and Community Engagement Principles

Previous community recreation planning resources have emphasized the importance of engaging with the people who live in an area in order to ensure that the planning accomplished will be relevant to the people who live there.¹⁷ Community-based and iterative planning approaches are equally important to ensuring the buy-in of a local population.^{18,19} A community-based approach is, for example, a process that gets the whole community involved rather than placing responsibility for recreation programs and services solely on the shoulders of local government or the authorities for recreation.²⁰ Community engagement with regards to recreation helps to identify opportunities and strengthen participation in local activities.²¹ Working in isolation often leads to duplication and ineffective approaches to community issues. Improving access to recreation requires a collaborative model.²²

Participatory planning is an engagement principle that is proven to be more effective than simple community consultation. Rather, it is a process which implicates citizens and provides undeniable advantages when compared to conventional planning processes managed solely by professionals. Since citizens are in their communities every day, they can provide observations and knowledge that are different from experts, thereby enriching the analysis. Professionals can then supplement the information provided by the community members. Listening and being open to everyone's input are key ingredients for the mutual understanding of issues and for successful participatory planning.^{23,24} This type of planning and engagement involves deep listening and inquiry, assessing a community's strengths and assets, making decisions about the future, and determining a strategy for how to move forward collectively.^{25, 26, 27} Furthermore, building in participatory principles such as community advisory committees has been shown to be an effective tool for ensuring fairness in participatory decision-making and encouraging initiative and leadership from the community.^{29,29} Engaging in participatory planning processes takes time because it is based in relationship-building, trust and honesty.³⁰ By integrating citizens' observations, concerns and aspirations from the start, and throughout the project, all participants

- ¹⁷ Government of Yukon, 2016
- ¹⁸ Cook, 2009.
- ¹⁹ Kliewer, 2010.
- ²⁰ Government of Yukon, 2016.
- ²¹ Government of Yukon, 2016.
- ²² Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.

- ²³ Kliewer, 2010.
- ²⁴ Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, 2015.
- ²⁵ Government of Yukon, 2016.
- ²⁶ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2012.
- ²⁷ Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987.
- ²⁸ Cook, 2009.
- ²⁹ Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, 2015.
- ³⁰ Government of Yukon, 2016.

- ³¹ Montréal Urban Ecology Centre, 2015.
- ³² Cook, 2009.

- ³³ Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993.
- ³⁴ Cook, 2009.
- ³⁵ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2012.
- ³⁶ B.C. First Nations Data Governance Initiative, 2016.
- ³⁷ Cook, 2009.
- ³⁸ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2012.

- ³⁹ Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Hureau, 2010.
- ⁴¹ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (2015).
- ⁴² Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.
- ⁴³ Reid, 2009.
- ⁴⁴ Rich et al., 2014.

- ⁴⁵ Gitanmaax Band Council, 2012.
- ⁴⁶ Gitanyow Band Council, 2012.
- ⁴⁷ Kispiox Band Council, 2012.
- ⁴⁸ Sik-e-dakh Band Council, 2012.
- ⁴⁹ Village of Hazelton, 2015.
- ⁵⁰ BC Transit, 2016.

can contribute to creating solutions that meet the community's true needs and increase buy-in from the outset of a planning process.^{31,32}

Local knowledge and lived experience is often described as the knowledge that people in a given community have developed over time. This knowledge is based on experience and intimate knowledge of the history of a place and its assets, and can be highly valuable when creating an informed and inclusive planning process, which is the primary motivation for adequately engaging community members.^{33, 34, 35} The importance of maximizing youth and elder involvement, Nation-based planning, and local empowerment when working with Indigenous communities have also been highlighted in the literature as important ways to increase trust, and as a result create plans that reflect the community's needs and lead to successful planning outcomes.^{36,37,38}

Prior studies have found that marginalized populations are unlikely to participate in community recreation, even if it is low cost or free, unless they are aware of these opportunities and understand the benefits of participating.^{39,40,41} In fact, the Ontario Ministry of Health's Policy Framework "Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians" specifies that participation in recreation activities is not a case of 'build it and they will come'. Rather, individuals and families need to feel welcome and understand programs in a way that is non-stigmatizing and simple for the client to navigate. Input from families and community organizations into the kinds of outreach approaches, fee assistance processes and program opportunities available is necessary to building an inclusive system of services and supports.⁴² Research indicates that there is a strong connection between a rural community's recreation resources and the community members' sense of belonging and wellbeing in their community.^{43,44} Participatory and collaborative planning and engagement principles are essential to reaching this potential.

Enhancing Rural Transportation

Transportation and recreation opportunities at both a local and regional level have been identified as key priority areas in official planning documents in the Upper Skeena.^{45,46,47,48,49} Reports covering a broader scale have found that in general, recreation opportunities are lacking in First Nation communities and that it is important to make transportation safer and more reliable, so as to improve wellbeing.⁵⁰

Rural transportation challenges and solutions continue

to be understudied aspects in the field of transportation planning, however, certain urban transportation tools may be useful and transferable to rural environments. For example, ‘universal design’ has been successfully applied as a transportation solution for meeting the needs of vulnerable groups including the young and old, physically or mentally disadvantaged, or minority groups whose needs are not met with conventional transit systems.^{51,52,53} Another system to improve transportation for people who are economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged is ‘demand-responsive transit’, which typically offers greater accommodation and flexibility in routes and scheduling.⁵⁴

Specifically related to rural transportation, previous studies have found that collaborative and partnership-based solutions are beneficial for promoting recreation programming and transportation in rural areas.⁵⁵ Some of these approaches could include multimodal transportation, active transportation, carpooling, vanpooling, and efficient driving.⁵⁶ Strategies to improve active transportation in the winter include grade-separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists, wind screening, improved lighting, and barriers to protect pedestrians from auto spray.^{57,58}

Prior research has also paid particular attention to some of the unique complexities relating to rural transportation, for example the gendered implications of public transportation design⁵⁹, or winter conditions which become an important consideration for rural transportation planning in order to deliver year-round services.

Traditional cost-benefit analyses may not adequately capture the realities of transportation planning in rural areas, therefore, cost-benefit methodology which considers holistic costs including financial, social, and environmental may be better suited to these planning contexts.⁶⁰

Enhancing Rural Access to Recreation

Rural community residents report participating in less physically active recreation activities than their urban counterparts.^{61,62} Furthermore, access to recreation considerably encumbers individuals and families with lower incomes, who typically have fewer opportunities for recreational experiences due to costs associated with transportation, equipment, activities, and facility rental.⁶³

Parks and Recreation Ontario (2010) defines the barriers to affordable recreation in two broad categories:

⁵¹ Audirac, 2008.
⁵² Lheidli T’enneh First Nation et al., 2006.
⁵³ Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2015.
⁵⁴ Yim and Khattak, 2004.

⁵⁵ Rural Recreation Association, 2015.
⁵⁶ Transport Canada, 2009.
⁵⁷ Coleman, 2001.
⁵⁸ Urban Systems, 2000.

⁵⁹ Vajjhala and Walker, 2010.

⁶⁰ Buller, 2004.

⁶¹ Brooke et al., 2015.
⁶² Wilcox et al., 2000.
⁶³ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2015.

⁶⁴ Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.
⁶⁵ Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.

⁶⁶ Hureau, 2010.

⁶⁷ Hureau, 2010.
⁶⁸ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2007.
⁶⁹ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2008.

⁷⁰ Dowda et al., 2009.
⁷¹ Gordon-Larsen et al., 2006.
⁷² Sallis & Glanz, 2006.
⁷³ Sallis et al., 2000.
⁷⁴ Allison et al., 2005.
⁷⁵ Dwyer et al., 2006.
⁷⁶ Humbert et al., 2008.
⁷⁷ Brooke et al., 2015.
⁷⁸ Goodwin, 2010.

⁷⁹ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2015.

demand-side barriers faced by low-income Ontarians in gaining access to recreation programs and facilities, and supply-side barriers faced by municipalities and local organizations in providing affordable access to recreation programs and facilities.⁶⁴ Each of these barriers are amplified in rural areas by lack of transportation and community-based infrastructure, transportation and equipment costs, and the lack of structured, culturally sensitive, and accessible programs.⁶⁵

Prior literature has explored the effectiveness of offering incentives to improve access to recreation in general, for example by providing physical activity passes free of charge to a targeted age group (i.e. Grade 5 or Grade 10 student cohorts), however, results suggest that providing free access may be insufficient to enable adolescents to use recreation facilities, particularly when accessibility is being impacted by multiple and complex intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors.⁶⁶

That being said, increasing access to recreation facilities by eliminating facility user-fees for youth eliminates cost as a barrier and begins to promote equal access in productive ways. Thus, these strategies can be useful so long as there is a recognition of the fact that there are several factors that inhibit individuals from using recreation facilities; even when cost is eliminated as a barrier.^{67,68,69}

Importantly for rural recreation planning, research has continuously shown that distance to recreation facilities is a strong predictor of physical activity among youth.^{70,71,72,73,74,75,76,77} Furthermore, concerns about rural road safety can have an impact on access to recreation for rural populations, and particularly rural children, who do not have the same opportunity to access recreation by using active modes of transportation.⁷⁸

Benefits of Satellite Programming

One of the primary goals identified in the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s (2015) Framework for Recreation in Canada is ‘Inclusion and Access’, which is defined as equitable participation for all, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, culture, race, Aboriginal status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or geographic location.⁷⁹ At the same time, research has shown that Canada’s rural and remote areas face particular challenges in recreation due to small and decreasing population levels, lack of funds and infrastructure, threats to the natural environment and traditional

ways of life, increasing pressure on small numbers of volunteers to lead in many areas, and challenges related to transportation and distance.⁸⁰

Opportunities to participate in recreation are shaped by aspects such as culture, geography, interests and resources.⁸¹ It is widely reported that opportunities to participate in physical activities and access social services can be more limiting in rural communities due to the isolation that limits residents' access to facilities and amenities.^{82,83} Proximity matters in access to recreation, nature, and increased physical activity. Living in rural areas often means great distances between important locations, unlike in urban settings where providing appropriate access to recreation takes proximity into account. Some literature suggests that mobile and satellite recreation programming can improve access by closing this gap in proximity to services.⁸⁴

Particularly if an environment is not conducive to physical activity, for example because of a lack of sidewalks or green space, community members are less likely to be active.^{85,86} The link between physical activity and available resources and amenities is well documented, therefore, it is possible to infer that the provision of services and amenities for recreation in rural communities typically leads to communities that can be more active and have fewer health concerns.⁸⁷

In order to maximize opportunities for participation, it is important to maximize the use of existing community spaces, such as schools and community halls for multiple purposes.⁸⁸ Recreation providers depend on the affordable use of such space, especially in rural and remote areas. Collaborative partnerships and reciprocal agreements are essential to facilitating community access to community spaces.⁸⁹

Recreation is also a significant economic driver and public recreation facilities provide a valuable source of quality and consistent employment, training and volunteer opportunities, therefore, bringing recreation to remote communities can often have significant impacts on isolated communities and their residents.⁹⁰

⁸⁰ Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2015.

⁸¹ Government of Yukon, 2016.

⁸² Buchanan and Buchanan, 1987.

⁸³ Huston et al., 2003.

⁸⁴ Goodwin, 2010.

⁸⁵ Goodwin, 2010.

⁸⁶ Wilcox et al., 2000.

⁸⁷ Shores & West, 2010.

⁸⁸ Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.

⁸⁹ Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, 2010.

⁹⁰ Outdoor Industry Association, 2012.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND MODELS

Public Transport Provision in Rural and Sparsely Populated Areas in Norway

There are a number of regionally-coordinated transportation systems in rural Norway that have benefitted communities by providing better transportation services. These transportation systems work well through collaboration between multiple communities, and by using school buses for multiple user types, thus allowing for improved service at lower costs.

Key Points:

- The same buses are used for school transportation, healthcare appointments, sports teams, and other transportation services. Non-students are permitted to ride on school buses during regular school routes, if there is space on the bus.
- Sports teams in these areas have adjusted their schedules to accommodate the public transportation offerings and schedule.

Demand Responsive Transport and Citizen Experiences: Insights from Rural Norway

This book chapter discusses various Demand Responsive Transportation (DRT) Systems in rural Norway and describes some of the benefits and challenges related to these types of systems. A major challenge is that DRT is extremely costly, and Rural Transportation grants in Norway which previously existed are not all available now. Some DRT systems in Norway function on fixed routes, while others function on door-to-door routes.

Key Points:

- The Half Past transit system in Tolga, Norway is a Demand Responsive Transportation service that has enabled better social connections and independence, particularly for youth who can use the service without a guardian.
- In Vaagaa, Norway, school buses are made available to other users during regular school routes, based on bus capacity.
- All the Demand Responsive Transportation systems in Norway require enormous public investment and funding, but offer benefits to all demographic groups.

Muskoka Extended Transit

Muskoka Extended Transit in Ontario is a program that offers fixed-route transit services using school buses, in between school pickup and dropoff times. Several different routes, each up to 45 km in length, connect rural Muskoka towns with larger centres for nominal user fares. This is a pilot project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Key Points:

- School buses are used as public transit vehicles in between regular school pickup and dropoff times.
- Several fixed routes are offered in the area, each up to 45 km in length.
- A challenge is that this service is only provided to communities one day per week, and the buses are not accessible to people with mobility limitations.

Better at Home

The Better at Home program is directed towards seniors and is tri-fold: transportation, home maintenance and friendly visits. They use mostly (but not exclusively) volunteer drivers and their cars in order to make health-oriented trips. The program is funded by the Province of BC, but also tries to offset part of the cost by donations. The report cautions against the overusing and overburdening of volunteers, especially in small communities where volunteers tend to be the same individuals across initiatives.

Key Points:

- The program uses volunteers as drivers in their personal vehicles to transport seniors to health providers.
- The program requires a dispatcher that matches volunteer time and availability to the requests.
- The program has recently released a pilot program in Northern BC that takes into account the bigger distances and smaller populations in rural communities.
- There is acknowledgement of the fact that volunteers typically consist of a small group of individuals that must be protected from burnout.

North Shore Go Bus

The Go Bus program for seniors on Metro Vancouver's North Shore is a semi-fixed route and door-to-door service intended for recreational outings and shopping trips. This service supplements the services offered by HandyDART and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of seniors by connecting this underserved group to resources that they would otherwise be unable to access.

Key Points:

- The Go Bus connects several communities with flexible and fixed-route transit using a shared bus shuttle.
- This service complements the provincial service by offering trips that are outside the public transit route.

Rural Transportation Association

Nova Scotia's RTA is a non-profit organization committed to providing affordable door-to-door community-based transportation services on a pre-booked basis in rural N.S. communities. The RTA relies on partnerships between member organizations (non-profits, charitable organizations, healthcare providers, local businesses and municipal governments) to address the increasing need for rural transportation, with strategic support from the Province through the Department of Municipal Affairs. This model is supported by the Nova Scotia Positive Aging Strategy and the Nova Scotia Poverty Strategy, which show the significant impact transportation can have on social, economic and wellbeing in a community.

Key Points:

- Multi-sectoral and multi-scale partnerships are coordinated through this program in order to maximize rural transportation and access, there are 14 member organization who offer transportation services under this umbrella association.
- This transportation service is low-cost, fully-accessible and provides enhanced safety as it is a door-to-door service.
- The services are pre-booked and require that users book one business day in advance.

Antigonish Community Transit

The Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS) is a non-profit society focused on responding to the town of Antigonish and county residents' limited access to services, programs and community activities by facilitating more effective and sustainable transportation options for community members. The service is based on a "flex-route" transit system model. This form of system is able to cover a large area of ground

while still being reliable and cost effective. When used, it is also better for the environment than dial-a-ride systems as it does not make so many trips without people in the vehicle.

Key Points:

- Flex-route transit service that combines fixed-route transit service with elements of demand-responsive transit service, and is emerging as a viable transit option to address the travel needs of residents in rural and low-density areas.
- One of ACTS's key objectives is to respond to people's limited access to services, programs, and community activities by facilitating more effective and sustainable transportation options for community members in the Antigonish area.

Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions: Ten Community Case Studies from Ontario

EasyRide near London, Ontario is a collaborative transportation service that offers booked transportation services for seniors, and adults with cognitive disabilities. The Deseronto Transit system offers a conventional bus service with fixed schedules and stop locations, but provides flexibility for riders to be picked up closer to their home, when requested. Community Care Northumberland is an alternative to hitchhiking that offers booked rides to residents in a volunteer-driven personal vehicle.

Key Points:

- EasyRide near London, Ontario is a collaboration between seven agencies which provides a booked transportation service for seniors and adults with cognitive and physical disabilities. The agencies have found that combining their services is more efficient.
- The Deseronto Transit system offers a conventional bus service with set schedules and stop locations, but also provides the option for riders to be picked up closer to their homes.
- Community Care Northumberland is a collaborative program supported by various municipalities which offers a volunteer-run transportation service by personal vehicle. The elderly, and people with disabilities can contact the organizing office to book a ride. This provides a safer alternative to hitchhiking.

Haliburton Ridesharing

Haliburton Ridesharing emphasizes the importance of building on existing resources. Even though ridesharing is gaining traction in urban areas, rural communities could benefit from similar types of transportation solutions. One example of a systematized ridesharing method is the one developed on Pender Island, where there are designated "Car Stops" where hitchhikers can get a ride.

Key Points:

- Ridesharing could be accomplished via the development of mobile apps or social media platforms; technologies that could lead to real-time ride matching between riders and drivers.
- Car sharing can also be achieved more informally through designated car stops or pickup locations.

nuTonomy Autonomous Taxi

In Singapore, nuTonomy is testing Autonomous Taxis and will gradually extend its area of travel to urban Singapore. Using a smartphone, travelers select their location and destination, and an Autonomous Vehicle travels to them for pick up. The technology is currently only able to request pickup from predetermined locations.

Key Points:

- Autonomous vehicles are said to be safe alternatives to ridesharing or ridesourcing services and could become a popular transportation innovation of the future.
- There are also some advances being made with regards to autonomous shuttles and buses.

ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Red Fox Society

This is a program that engages Aboriginal youth in traditional recreation, food, and culture activities with volunteers in order to teach leadership skills and facilitate access to employment opportunities. The program provides youth with positive role models and mentorship opportunities.

Key Points:

- The program uses recreation to improve aboriginal youth leadership skills and increase their employability.
- Partnerships are created in order to offer internships and practicums for youth transitioning from school to work environments.

Helping Create An Age Friendly London: Creation of the City of London Seniors' Satellite Programs

The Seniors' Satellite programs in London are funded by the City of London and from membership fees. This hub-and-satellite recreation programming for seniors is run in partnership with several organizations who provide spaces for activities, storage space for equipment, and tables and chairs for activities. With nominal membership and activity fees, the program has had some difficulty in ensuring the delivery of services due to lack of funding.

Key Points:

- The initiative offers hub-and-satellite programming, delivered in collaboration with several partnering organizations. The program offers recreation programming for seniors at nominal rates (\$10 per year membership fee, and \$1 fee per session).
- A Senior Neighbourhood Advisory Committee is responsible for determining community needs and program offerings.
- Some challenges include staffing and volunteer recruitment and ongoing program scheduling to meet members' needs and interests, as well as ensuring that membership fees are sufficient to cover ongoing costs.

Halton Our Kids Network

Halton has created a network using schools and community organizations (i.e. community halls, places of worship, etc.) as hubs to promote integrated social services and health care.

Key Points:

- Schools act as hub locations in communities, from which satellite programming is delivered. These satellite programs help to avoid service overlap.
- These hub-and-satellite models support parents and caregivers by increasing their involvement in the community, and enables youth to participate in a wider variety of programs.

San Francisco Recreation & Parks Mobile Rec Program

The primary goal of the program to introduce youth to recreational activities that are fun, challenging, and encourage them to "Get out and Play" now and during their entire lives. Activities include a mobile rock-climbing wall, skateboarding/BMX on Fresh Park equipment (ramps, rails and manual pads), disc golf, and sea kayaking. Equipment for these activities is transported to Recreation Centers, Parks and Playgrounds all over San Francisco on Saturdays throughout the school year. In addition, fifteen afterschool enrichment programs are visited on Wednesday afternoons for a special Mobile Recreation Program specifically designed for a variety of SF youth. The San Francisco Parks Alliance and the Coca-Cola Foundation have provided funding support for the program.

Key Points:

- The mobile recreation model brings resources to existing recreation facilities and public spaces in order to increase and facilitate access to recreation.
- Similar programs exist in multiple US cities, for example New York City Parks' Mobile Recreation Vans, City of Boise Mobile Recreation, and Oakland County Parks Mobile Recreation programs.

Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System Pass-for-Entry Program

BC Transit and the Cowichan Valley Regional District have partnered on a campaign which entitles customers at participating recreation facilities to get one free swim or skate admission per month from September 2016 to March 2017 when presenting the previous month's Cowichan Valley Transit bus pass to customer service attendants. Participating locations include: Cowichan Aquatic Centre, Cowichan Lake Sports Arena, Frank Jameson Community Centre, Fuller Lake Arena, Island Savings Centre and Kerry Park Recreation Centre.

Key Points:

- The program improves the value of using public transit for its customers.
- The pass-for-entry program is an example of BC Transit and local partners working together to build healthier communities and encourage active transportation.

REGIONAL AND MULTI-USE RECREATION FACILITIES

Metlakatla First Nation Recreational Facilities, Metlakatla, BC

Metlakatla First Nation has combined band offices and recreational facilities into an innovative multi-use space.

Key Points:

- Anticipating the need for new band offices as well as added recreational space in the community led to the creation of a multi-use building.

Peace Regional Recreation Centre, Peace River, AB

The Town of Peace River, AB is currently building a community centre to serve the 24,000 people who make up the region. In order to maximize the potential of the new facility, the project relies on intermunicipal cooperation between the Town of Peace River, the Municipal District of Peace, the County of Northern Lights, and Northern Sunrise County. Neighbouring municipalities have collaborated on a Regional Recreation Needs Assessment, fundraising, and design.

Key Points:

- The Peace Regional Recreation Centre has been in the planning stages and soliciting input from the public since December 2012. A public event was held to showcase the design in November 2016. This project has experience in terms of planning and engagement for a regional recreation centre.
- The Peace Regional Recreation Centre will contain one NHL-sized rink, one multi-use field house, a three lane walking track, fitness room, and an indoor children's play space. The facility will allow space for concerts and large-scale community events.

Northern Rockies Regional Recreation Centre, Fort Nelson, BC

The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality is a former regional district now governed by a single municipal government and located in the Northeast corner of British Columbia. Its total population is 5,290 and includes the communities of Fort Nelson, Fort Nelson First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Tetsa River, Toad River, and Muncho Lake.

Key Points:

- The recreation centre serves an expansive region which includes several target First Nations and non-First Nations communities.
- The centre is designed as a central gathering place and focal point for the community, offering services for everyone aged 6 months - 106 years.

Pomeroy Sport Centre, Fort St. John, BC

Housed in the Pomeroy Sports Centre, the Energetic Learning Campus (ELC) is a branch of North Peace Secondary School opened in 2011. The campus enrolls approximately 160 students, mainly in Grade 10. Students of the ELC have access to community members and facilities at the Pomeroy Sports Centre. The ELC does not have traditional classrooms, but uses flexible learning spaces; students can decide where they study or learn, utilizing any area of the campus they choose. The ELC's learning program is non-traditional and follow a primarily project-based curriculum; students have the opportunity to train and learn in fields including plant maintenance, ice-making, and other skill-training areas.

Key Points:

- Partnership between the City of Fort St. John and School District 60 increases recreational access for high school students.
- The centre and school district are located in the City of Fort St. John, but also serve surrounding areas like Buick, Taylor, Baldonnel, Charlie Lake, Hudson's Hope, Wonowon, and Prespatou.

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND ACTIVITIES

This Appendix highlights some of the key information and feedback gathered from community members throughout the project, with particular emphasis on the feedback gained from the three open house style sessions held in April 2017. The numbers reflected in the 'Age' and 'Place of residence' sections are approximate as not everyone who attended the events was able to respond to these questions.

APRIL 2017 ENGAGEMENT EVENTS IN HAZELTON, GITANYOW, AND MORICETOWN

Community	Biggest health issue: Physical	Biggest health issue: Mental	Biggest health issue: Spiritual	Comments	Will you attend the new Recreation Centre? YES	Will you attend the new Recreation Centre? NO	Will you attend the new Recreation Centre? MAYBE	Comments
New Hazelton	4	4	4	Substance use	12			
Gitanyow	4	4	2	Substance use: 2	6	2		3 void responses
Moricetown	7	9	8	Elders' Care	13	4	1	
Online (Two Mile)		1			1			
Subtotal	15	17	14					0
	(+ 1 for elders' care)	(+3 for substance use)						
Total Responses	16	20	14	Total: 50	32	6	1	
% of Responses	32%	40%	28%		82%	15%	3%	

Community	Total participants	Biggest Strength: Pride	Biggest Strength: Governance	Biggest Strength: Resources and Land	Biggest Strength: Economy	Biggest Strength: Culture	Biggest Strength: Support	Biggest Strength: Skills	Other:
New Hazelton	12	3	1	6	1	6	6	1	The scenery and people are great
Gitanyow	11	2		4		6	2		Diversity
Moricetown	18	2		2	1	11	6	2	History (Stories)
Online (Two Mile)	1			1					
Total Responses	41	7	1	13	2	24	14	3	Total: 64
% of Responses		11%	1%	20%	3%	38%	22%	5%	

April 2017 Engagement Events in Hazelton, Gitanyow, and Moricetown

Age (self-reported):

- 0-9 years old: 2
- 10-19 years old: 6
- 20-29 years old: 4
- 30-39 years old: 2
- 40-49 years old: 4
- 50-59 years old: 6
- 60-64 years old: 2
- 65+ years old: 10
- Total: 36

Place of residence (self-reported):

- Smithers - 1
- Moricetown - 8
- Two Mile (Moricetown) - 2
- New Hazelton - 4
- Two Mile (Hazelton) - 4
- Hazelton - 3
- Gitanmaax - 3
- Gitsegukla - 1
- Gitanyow - 14
- Glen Vowell - 2
- Total: 42

SURVEY TEMPLATE



Upper Skeena Recreation Centre Survey

Q: What do you consider to be your community's biggest strength?

Please select one:

- A:** Pride Culture & traditional practices
 Governance Support and togetherness
 Resources & land Skills and knowledge
 Economy Other _____

Q: What do you consider to be the most important health issue in your community? Please select one:

- A:** Mental health Spiritual and cultural wellness
 Physical health Other _____

Q: Do you plan to go to the new Recreation Centre?

- A:** Yes No
 Explain why or why not. _____

Q: Do you currently own or have regular access to a private vehicle for daily transportation purposes?

- A:** Yes No
 Explain, if desired _____

Q: Have you used public transit in the Upper Skeena region in the past?

- A:** Yes No
 Explain, if desired _____

Q: If 'No', would you feel comfortable riding public transportation if it met your needs?

- A:** Yes No
 Explain, if desired _____

 Enter for your chance to win!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

CENTRAL EVENT - 2 APRIL 2017

Total: 12 Survey responses

What do you consider to be your community's biggest strength? (12 responses)

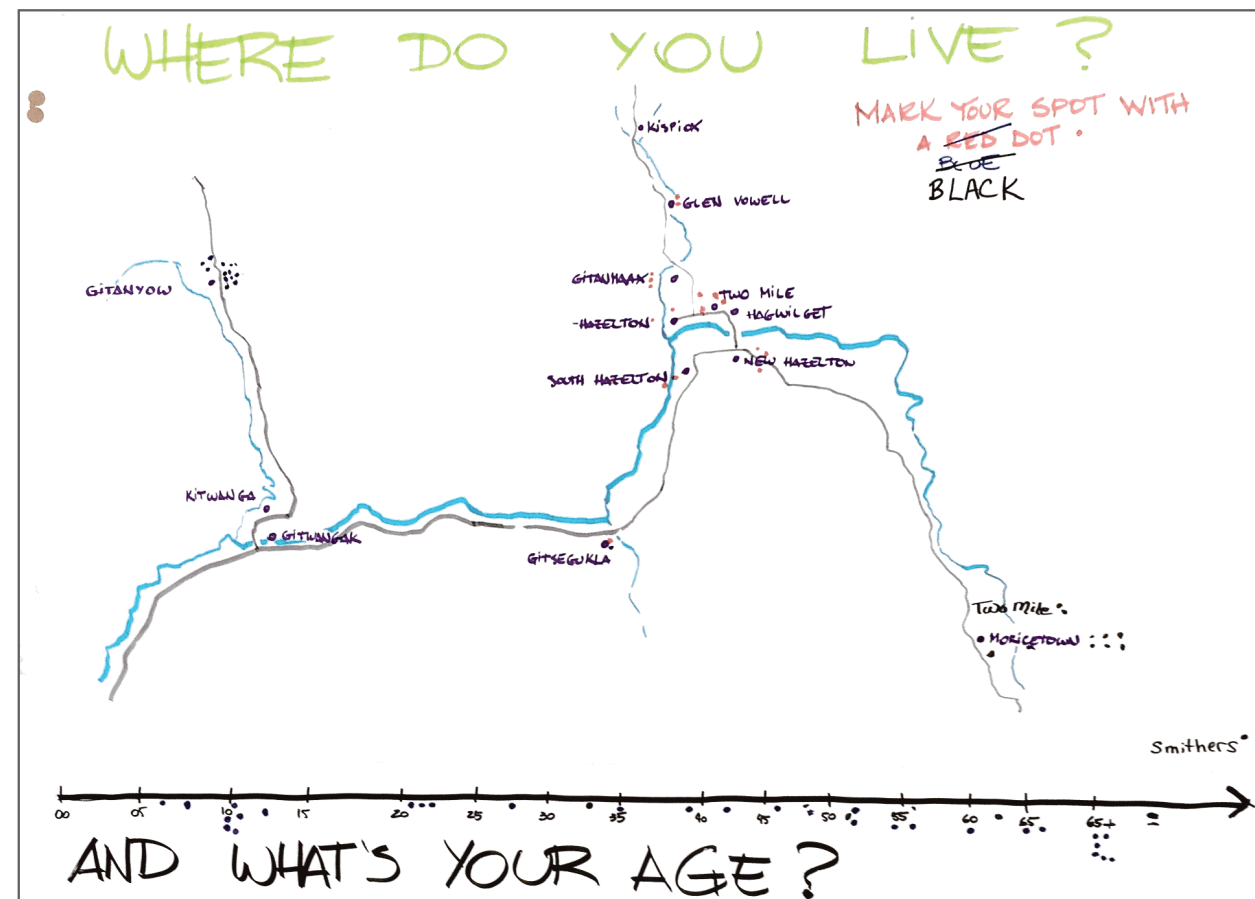
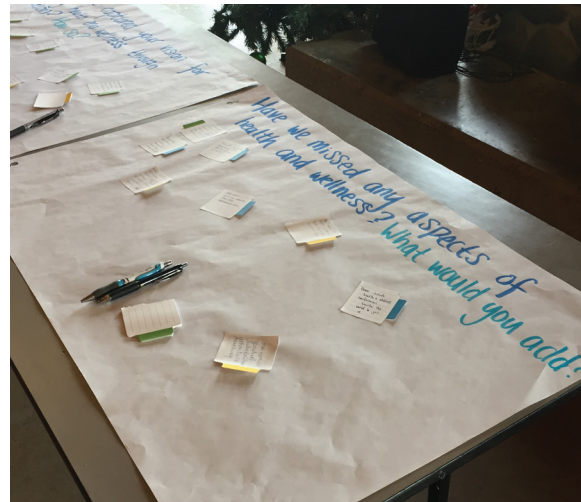
- Pride: 3 (25%)
- Governance: 1 (8%)
- Resources and land: 6 (50%)
- Economy: 1 (8%)
- Culture and traditional practices: 6 (50%)
- Support and togetherness: 6 (50%)
- Skills and knowledge: 1 (8%)
- Other (scenery and people are great): 1 (8%)

What do you consider to be the most important health issue in your community? (11 responses)

- Mental health: 5 (45%)
- Physical health: 4 (36%)
- Spiritual and cultural wellness: 4 (36%)
- Other (substance abuse): 1 (9%)

Do you plan to go to the new Recreation Centre?

- Yes: 12 No: 0
- 3 people mentioned the recreation centre as being a place where they can meet people and build community
- 3 people mentioned that they would use the rec centre because it's a place for recreation and sports.



Do you currently own or have regular access to a private vehicle for daily transportation purposes?

Yes: 11 No: 1

Have you used public transit in the Upper Skeena region in the past?

Yes: 6 No: 6

2 people mentioned trips to Smithers as a reason for using public transit.

If 'No', would you feel comfortable riding public transportation if it met your needs?

Yes: 4 No: 2

One person mentioned "germs" as a reason for not using transit.

GITANYOW EVENT - 3 APRIL 2017

Total: 11 Survey responses

What do you consider to be your community's biggest strength? (11 responses)

- Pride: 2 (18%)
- Governance: 0 (0%)
- Resources and land: 4 (36%)
- Economy: 0 (0%)
- Culture and traditional practices: 6 (55%)
- Support and togetherness: 2 (18%)
- Skills and knowledge: 0 (0%)
- Other (diversity): 1 (9%)

What do you consider to be the most important health issue in your community? (11 responses)

Mental health: 4 (36%)

Physical health: 4 (36%)

Spiritual and cultural wellness: 2 (18%)

Other (substance abuse): 2 (18%)

Do you plan to go to the new Recreation Centre?

Yes: 6 No: 2

3 people said they would go to the new rec centre to access equipment and be active

1 person said they would be too busy to go

1 person said they wouldn't go because they don't have transportation

Do you currently own or have regular access to a private vehicle for daily transportation purposes?

Yes: 8 No: 3

Have you used public transit in the Upper Skeena region in the past?

Yes: 1 No: 10

- 2 people commented that they don't use public transit because it doesn't come to Gitanyow

If 'No', would you feel comfortable riding public transportation if it met your needs?

Yes: 8 No: 1

MORICETOWN EVENT - 4 APRIL 2017

Total: 18 Survey responses

What do you consider to be your community's biggest strength? (17 responses)

Pride: 2 (12%)

Governance: 0 (0%)

Resources and land: 2 (12%)

Economy: 1 (6%)

Culture and traditional practices: 11 (65%)

Support and togetherness: 6 (35%)

Skills and knowledge: 2 (12%)

Other (History/stories): 1 (6%)

What do you consider to be the most important health issue in your community? (18 responses)

Mental health: 8 (44%)

Physical health: 7 (39%)

Spiritual and cultural wellness: 7 (39%)

Other (elders care): 1 (6%)

Do you plan to go to the new Recreation Centre?

Yes: 14 No: 4

- 3 People said they wouldn't go because it's too far or they don't have a ride

Do you currently own or have regular access to a private vehicle for daily transportation purposes?

Yes: 11 No: 7

Have you used public transit in the Upper Skeena region in the past?

Yes: 4 No: 14

If 'No', would you feel comfortable riding public transportation if it met your needs?

Yes: 10 No: 4

Feedback from community members when asked specific questions about transportation and health

Have we missed anything that would make the USRC more accessible to you? What would you add?

- Would like to see community leaders and mentors for upcoming leaders and mentors
- Accessibility includes large enough print, clearer print on uncoloured background, and losing the jargon
- Create mock schedules with community youth/wellness workers. Have the people actually see what can possibly take place through collaborations.
- Is there a plan for testing some of the recommendations?
- (x2) Transportation/more buses
- Accessible to everyone, not only the wealthy. Don't pay for everything all the time.
- Games
- Monthly and weekly calendars and notices for special events. Good communication

Which recreation programs in your community could be supported by the USRC?

- Satellite instructors. Yoga, tai chi, step
- Walking program for elders
- (x3) Fitness classes/programs other than organised sports (including yoga, tai chi, dance, step)
- More soccer. Favourite thing with soccer teams is kicking the ball really hard
- Community sports
- All equipment/teaching tools for all ages/families for family engagement.
- For mom and tots
- (x3) Sewing/mending class
- Visits from athletes and motivational speakers

Have we captured your vision for improving mobility and access to the USRC? How so?

- Critical to link after school activities to transportation. We have the majority of 13-18 year olds next store.
- Absolutely. With a recreation transit and scheduling genius I foresee community wellness thriving at USRC!
- (x3) I like the idea of dedicated transportation, ie. a rec bus!
- Transportation! Huge barrier for families, youth, adults, elders.

Have we missed any aspects of health and wellness? What would you add?

- I think recreation should include music and the arts
- Should include archery
- Hopefully it would include a tourism, visitor, transient and homeless component
- More active groups (men and women's groups). We need strong leaders
- Include: quilting, sewing, food prep opportunities
- All ages and more culture activities with the community
- Please include health and wellness conferences. Invite the world to join us.
- Our own FN spiritual beliefs as Gitxsan activities and teachings
- Traditional trails

Have we captured your vision for improving health and wellness through recreation? How so?

- All ages, all levels or abilities
- (x2) Definitely involve culture and multigenerational programs
- Yes, definitely what our community needs.
- Yes, giving kids something to do after school
- Give everyone equal rights to access including bus rides to and from destination
- (x2) The community aspect is good; including everyone is paramount.
- Tying recreation to what is already functioning and building on it. Plus recreation and health attached to the land.
- Designated area for cultural teaching after hours for sports. Better fit and better equipped tools for all hands on learning.
- Hiking, berry picking, hunting and trapping. Skills teaching
- Not only captured the vision, but expanded it to include cultural and traditional activit

COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (FALL 2016)

Below is a summary of key information that was provided by high school students when asked about the various resources and assets available in their community. Students were asked to identify assets under the following categories: Built Assets, Natural Assets, Social Assets, Economic Assets, and Service Assets. The purpose of this data collection activity was primary to create an inventory of the existing assets in each of the villages, as this information is not always readily available online, and can include informal assets such as convenience stores in private residences, or activity groups and sports teams without an online presence. This exercise seeks to leverage the strengths within communities in order to find strategies and satellite programming that will be supported by a community's existing resources and opportunities, rather than parachuting solutions into a community which do not mobilize these assets.

Hagwilget

- "There are not many jobs in my community that I'm aware of, other than the band office and halls."
- "Gyms are very old, out of date, and small."
- "People don't always have their own vehicles, buses make it easier to get around."

Gitanyow

- "Once every three months the health centre does a trip for youth to movies, mall, or bowling."
- "Gitanyow traditional dancers are very important to the community."

South Hazelton

- "Bus routes are important because when needed you're able to travel to the surrounding communities."
- "Public transit has a weekly schedule and is open to everyone. This system is often used by the elders of our community."

Kispiox

- "The school provides education and allows children to go to school without having to go to Hazelton."
- "The feasts are used to bring the community together and share. Sports are used to keep people fit. Tutoring groups are used by people who need help."

Sik-e-Dakh (Glen Vowell)

- "Soccer field, ice rink, and playground are run down."

Two-Mile

- "The park is very beneficial in the winter for sledding, and a good sport for horse riding whenever."
- "We have nothing for transportation or education."

Gitsegukla

- "The school is very old and rough looking not only on the outside, but in the inside."
- "The stores in town are good for people who can't go to other towns."

Gitwangak

- Top 3 service assets: Health Centre; Youth Centre; Education Building.
- "The built assets are all we have in the community and we would like to keep them there."

Gitanmaax and Old Hazelton

- "The bus is for people who don't have effective transportation (although they should run it more often)."
- "People use mountains and trails to keep in shape."

ENGAGEMENT WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON 5 APRIL 2017

The following responses highlight answers provided by students when responding to questions about what makes them feel healthy, how they would like to use the recreation centre, and how they plan to get to and from the new recreation centre.

- "Exercising/health eating make me feel healthy"
- "Volunteering, if I have the time"
- "I would like to help out any way I could, raise money, volunteer for anything."
- "Keeping active and eating right and helping family, friends, and other stay healthy. Also, having good relationships with people is healthy."
- "Drive, fly, bus, get a parent to drive."
- "Participating in sports and volunteering. Maybe help coach or reffing."
- "Fundraising with some students who really want this new rec centre."
- "What makes me feel healthy is when I go for walks, or even a run. Eating healthy is good."
- "I would like to use the rec centre to have an opportunity to experience/learn new sports/activities, have community events such as sports games or concerts, and have a place to interact with the community."
- "I would like to be involved by being able to put input into what events or activities take place, and possibly help organise those events."
- "The most important aspect of health and wellness to me is the effect it has on my daily life, my mood, mental wellness, and how I feel physically."

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF OWNERS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Partnership Approach					
Action	1 (least feasible)	2	3	4 (most feasible)	Comments
1. Cost-sharing initiatives, collaborations, and partnerships at multiple scales. For example, shared operational costs of vans/buses, shared cost of creating recreational programming, shared contributions to wages for bus drivers/recreation coordinators, etc.		1 response	3 responses	5 responses	
2. High-tailored satellite programming which would require direct and ongoing liaising with each community	2	2	3	2	
3. The creation of recreation coordinator/community liaison/community champion positions in each of the villages (could be paid or volunteer).	2		5	2	
4. Formalise a partnership with the Brighter Futures Worker in each village who could strategically utilise their positioning to liaise with the USRC on an ongoing basis and to communicate the recreation needs of the community.		1	2	6	
5. In your opinion, what is the feasibility of each of these types of partnership arrangements?					
5a. Geographic arrangements (ie. East/West)		2	6	1	
5b. Varied number of participant communities (ie. partnerships between two, three, or four neighbouring communities)		3	3	3	Traditionally not a lot of partnerships between villages.
5c. Region-wide (ie. all communities participate)		1	4	4	Ideal
5d. Age groups (ie. shared transportation for all Grade 8s)		3	3	3	
5e. Activity groups (ie. shared transportation for all students who play a sport on Tuesday/Thursday evenings)		1	6	2	
5f. Multi-sectoral (ie. collaborate with external stakeholders such as Gitanmaax market, school board, FNHA)		3	3	3	
6. A coordinated transportation system for accessing the USRC, which relies on volunteer-owned and driven vehicles.	1	3	4	1	Would work as long as there are no fees attached.

Leadership Approach					
	1 (least feasible)	2	3	4 (most feasible)	
1. Dedicated bus route (USRC-owned and operated bus).	5	1	1	2	
2. Dial-a-ride and door-to-door transportation services to the USRC, bookable in advance.	4	4	1		Labour-intensive
3. The USRC contracts an existing bus owned by a community and operates a transportation service using a community-owned vehicle.	4	2	3		
4. Establishment of a USRC mobility fund (dollars raised through grants and donations to fund transportation and recreational access efforts in perpetuity).	2	2	4	1	
5. Establishment of a USRC-based central transit booking office to consolidate existing services and assist with trip planning and booking as appropriate.	2	4	2	1	Labour-intensive
Creativity Approach					
	1 (least feasible)	2	3	4 (most feasible)	
1. Future construction of a sister recreation centre to serve the Gitwsan West area (Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanyow).	5	3		1	Cannot afford
2. Harm-reduction strategies, a hitchhiker's registry, or a vetting process for vehicle operators through a registration system with the RCMP.	2	5	1	1	Agree, with sheltered stops only.
3. Establish a localised ridesharing app or online platform, or a ridesourcing app.	2	3	3	1	Vetting is a concern
4. Additional school bus run to distant communities to allow high school students to participate in after-school recreation.	1		3	5	Cost is a concern; an additional \$300K for an additional bus run is too costly.

Comments:

- The after school bus would be immediately effective.
- Satellite programming will empower youth; accessible without the need for transportation.
- Supported transportation could consist of local vans and ridesharing services in each village
- My biggest concern is that the villages will not step up to the plate. We need them to shoulder part of the responsibility for getting their residents to the Centre. The annual operating costs are going to be all that we are going to be able to shoulder.
- To provide programming that is based on serving the scattered community.
- I see the OPC as encouraging communities to figure out how they can use this ongoing facility plus inclusive programming.
- (x3) Ownership of a bus at this point should be taken off the table. Every community has busses and vans. We need to build cooperation. If down the road we see that it is a need, then it could be considered. Trust the communities to take responsibility and organize according to their needs.
- Cost-sharing with villages, municipalities, and Regional District is most practical, minus the effort to coordinate this.
- I think we should encourage use of the current transit system (hopefully it will be expanded in the next few months) and supplement with buses from the villages or community groups to make programs more accessible and allow recreation between communities.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meeting & Key Findings - October 30th, 2016

Council Chambers Riverboat Building
Attendees: 6

Mobility, Social and Health General Information

- Poverty, crime, health & mental health are primary issues in the community
- Transit services are inefficient
- Cost is a barrier to recreation and better transit services
- Local government is underfunded
- Importance of the inclusion of Gitanyow in community initiatives

Expectations from USRC

- Education as the key to improving community issues
- Volunteers and partnerships needed
- Attract teams for tournaments
- Satellite programming to meet the needs of each community
- Dedicated programming for elders
- Value people in the community

Glen Vowell (Sik-e-dakh)
Attendees: 6

Mobility, Social and Health General Information

- Transit services are inefficient
- Cost is a barrier to better transit services
- Safety issues around transportation
- There is no school in Glen Vowell, most kids go to Kispiox
- Importance of the inclusion Gitxsan West communities (Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak)

Expectations from USRC

- USRC as health promotion, instead of disease treatment
- Diverse programming
- Support aboriginal sports
- Satellite programming to meet the needs of each community
- Dedicated programming for elders and youth
- Dedicated for language recovery

Meeting & Key Findings - October 31st, 2016

Ken Trombley Memorial Arena
Attendees: 9

Mobility, Social and Health General Information

- Lack of volunteers due to out-of-town work commitments
- Current transit system is unreliable
- Affordability and access are major issues
- Kispiox, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Kitwanga, and Gitanyow have accessibility issues
- Communities need support to find funding for transportation

Expectations from USRC

- The USRC could house a Centre for Excellence in Aboriginal Sport / All-Native tournaments
- The Rec Centre could own and operate a bus
- Should also hold events in the space (i.e. tournaments, concerts, etc.)
- USRC could offer programs that the high school can't necessarily offer because of liability issues, etc.

Gitwangak Band Office
Attendees: 10

Mobility, Social and Health General Information

- Gitwangak could use a gym in the community
- Transit services are inefficient
- Transit, health & mental health are primary issues in the community

Expectations from USRC

- Mobile practice targets for archery
- Archery competitions
- USRC will need all three legs to be successful: design, song, and dance
- Attract events and concerts to the area
- Wellness programs
- Dedicated programming for elders and youth

Meeting & Key Findings - November 1st, 2016

The Meeting Place,
Hazelton
Attendees: 3

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Some folks access medical services outside the community (i.e. in Smithers)
- Gitwangak is applying to Education Infrastructure Fund for new school/multiplex
- Each of the schools have a bus, some communities have a shuttle (Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax don't have shuttles)

Moricetown Multiplex
Attendees: 5

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Importance of being inclusive of different Nations
- Most high school students attend in Smithers
- Moricetown has several 15 passenger buses/vans
- Have a Brighter Futures coordinator (Henry Mitchell) who is titled as our Recreation Coordinator

Expectations from USRC

- Have an outdoor fitness centre, and indoor fitness centre
- Space for more community-based activities is always a positive thing

Meeting & Key Findings - April 2nd, 2017

Ken Trombley Memorial Arena
Attendees: 18

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Resources and land, culture and traditional practices, and support and togetherness are considered the biggest strengths of the community
- There is a need for more transportation and buses

Expectations from USRC

- Space for meeting people and building community
- A place for recreation and sports
- Would be nice to have fitness classes and programs other than organized sports that are supported within each community

Meeting & Key Findings - April 3rd, 2017

Gitanyow Gym
Attendees: 13

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Resources and land, and culture and traditional practices are considered the community's biggest strengths
- Can't use public transit because it doesn't serve Gitanyow
- Need to involve far-reaching communities in regional planning

Expectations from USRC

- Visits from athletes and motivational speakers
- Like the idea of dedicated transportation, such as a rec bus
- Give everyone equal rights to access the USRC, including bus rides to and from destination
- USRC will be a place to access equipment and be active

Meeting & Key Findings - April 4th, 2017

Morictown Multiplex
Attendees: 20

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Culture and traditional practices, and support and togetherness are considered the community's biggest strengths
- Some people won't be able to go to the USRC because it's too far or they don't have a ride

Expectations from USRC

- Involve culture and multigenerational programming
- Important for the USRC to be inclusive for all ages and cultures

Meeting & Key Findings - April 5th, 2017

Hazelton Secondary School
Attendees: 16

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- Keeping active and eating healthy are ways to stay healthy
- Having good relationships with people is healthy
- Transportation is difficult in the region

Expectations from USRC

- Volunteer opportunities are important
- Students would like to be involved by giving input into what events or activities take place, and help organize these events
- USRC is a place to experience and learn new sports and activities
- Would like to help the USRC with fundraising

Council Chambers Riverboat
Building
Attendees: 12

**Mobility, Social and Health
General Information**

- It is important to trust the communities to take responsibility and organize according to their needs
- Satellite programming will empower youth because it will be accessible without the need for transportation
- The after school bus would be an immediately effective solution

Expectations from USRC

- Provide programming that is based on serving the scattered community
- Cost-sharing with villages, municipalities, and the Regional District
- Encourage use of the current transit system and supplement with buses from communities
- Inclusive programming

APPENDIX E: LOCAL TRANSPORTATION-RELATED FINANCE INFORMATION

The following questions were asked of communities regarding the costs of transportation:
 What are the annual transportation-related costs in your community?
 What are the annual budgets for tc.), driver (training, wage, etc.)
 Approximately how many trips/kilometres do the band-owned vehicle(s) take per year?
 Do you collaborate with any other communities or organizations to offer transportation services (i.e., BC Transit, school board, other bands, education societies, etc.)

Gitanyow⁹¹:

Annual insurance costs for their bus: \$1,583
 Fuel for 2 monthly bus trips: \$2,240 annually
 Repairs and maintenance: \$1,950

Approximate annual costs: \$5,773

Rental rate: \$150/day (driver and fuel costs are separate)

Gitanyow First Nation has additionally expressed interest in using their nation-owned bus to transport community members from Gitanyow and surrounding communities to the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre. As a result, the band would be interested in exploring cost-sharing agreements with other communities to operate their bus for this purpose.

Expenditure	2016	2015
Fuel	\$371	\$1,151
Insurance	\$3,035	\$3,007
Repairs and maintenance	\$5,552	\$5,417
Wages and benefits	\$193	\$253
Total	\$9,151	\$9,828

Gitanmaax^{92,93}:

Gitanmaax owns a 24-passenger shuttle bus, two 24-passenger school buses, and one 30-passenger school bus. The shuttle bus travels approximately 2,000 to 3,000 kilometres annually, depending on how often it is rented. Coast Mountains School District⁹⁴:

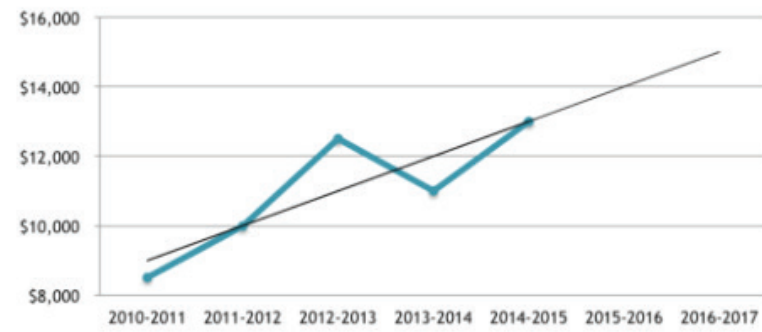
Hazelton Secondary School owns and operates a sports bus for its sports teams. The bus is replaced approximately every 10 years, so the purchase price of \$38,000 is prorated over a 10-year period.

⁹² Rubinato, P., 2017, February 8.

⁹³ Gitanmaax Band Council, 2016.

⁹⁴ Newbery, M., 2017, February 4.

Hazelton Secondary School sports bus annual operating costs



EVALUATION OF APPROACHES BY OBJECTIVE

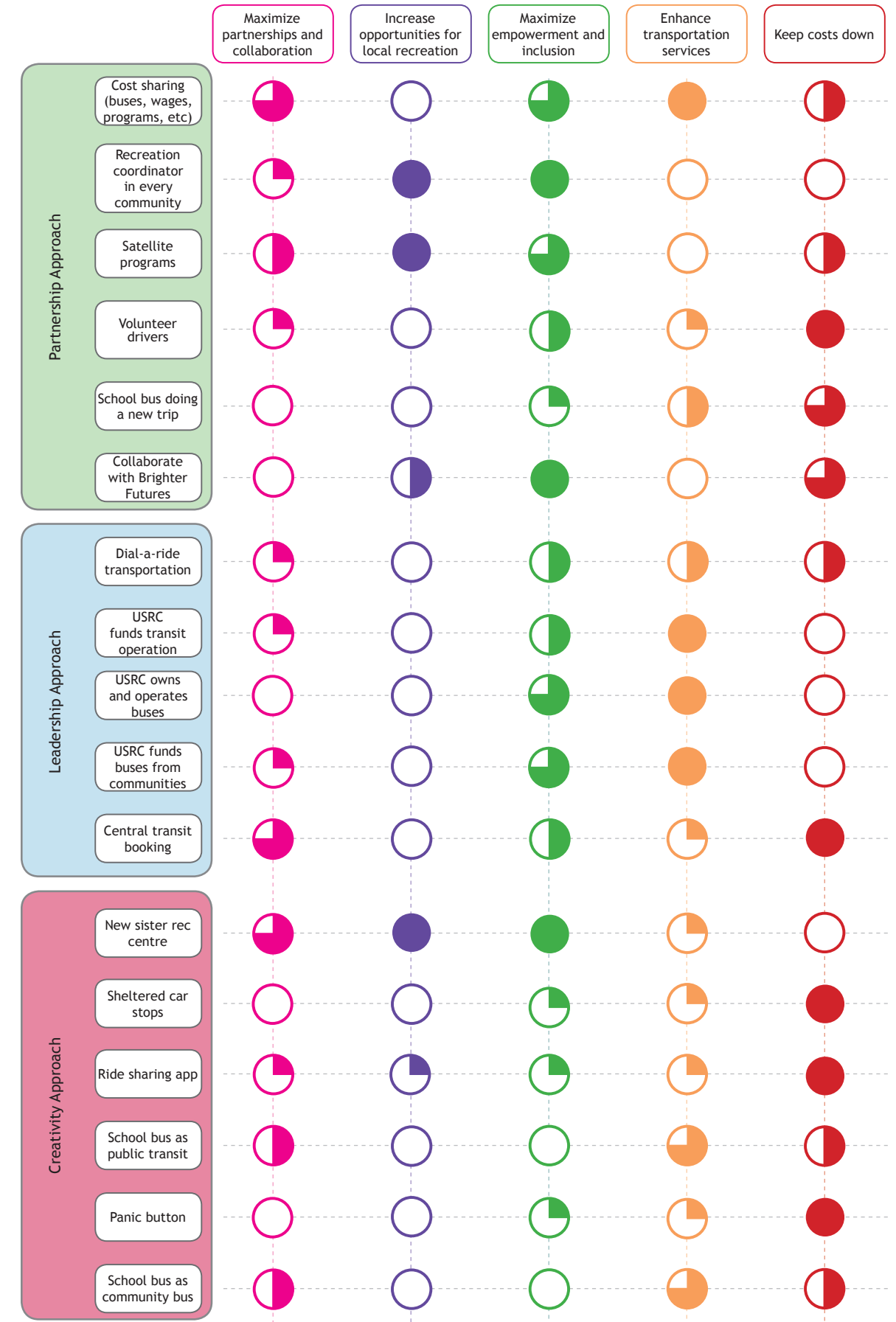


Diagram of approaches, actions, and qualitative assessment of action towards objectives. Source: SCARP Planning Studio



HEART OF THE HAZELTONS
upper skeena recreation centre