

Sector Development Action Plan

Agriculture | Health and Wellness | Hospitality

Grand Forks and Area D

April 2023



Presented by:





Acknowledgments

No significant community development efforts occur without strong leadership, commitment to participation, and collaboration with community. This project achieved all three key components from a variety of organizations and individuals. We want to recognize Sandy Elzinga, and the Community Futures Boundary organization, for their leadership.

We also want to extend recognition to the business owners and business support organizations who participated in countless conversations, surveys, and interviews to provide key insights into the development of Grand Forks and its key sectors.

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1.0 Introduction

There are numerous ways in which a community may approach developing its key sectors. One universal truth within these approaches is that communities can generate momentum when they simply start, and initiate tactics aligned with the needs of the players within the sector. All too often, communities wait for the perfect circumstances in order to get started when the reality is that small key steps over time are more often conducive to building the necessary momentum that leads to comprehensive and impactful development efforts. With this in mind, the following sector development action plans have been created based on the input and needs of Grand Forks and Area D. These tactics and actions can be implemented in a strategic and incremental manner by various players within the sector that aim to ultimately lead to the growth and sustainability of these sectors. It is important to note that this sector development action plan is not meant to act as a strategy, but instead as a set of well-prepared actions that were informed by comprehensive community engagement.

Project Goal

The purpose of this action plan is to create a broad framework for future sector development tactics that players and stakeholders within the community and sector can implement to strengthen the local/ regional economy.

Objectives

The objectives of these sector development action plans are to:

1. Identify the needs of the players within each of the three sectors (Agriculture, Hospitality, and Health and Wellness)
2. Engage the community and various stakeholders in sector development
3. Provide tangible and manageable sector development tactics relevant to Grand Forks and Area D

Key Sectors

For the purposes of this initiative, three sectors (Agriculture, Hospitality, and Health and Wellness) were identified as a primary focus for the community due to their economic contributions and potential growth opportunities within Grand Forks and Area D. Descriptions of these sectors are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptions of the three sectors for which sector action plans were created

Key Sector	Description
Agriculture	This sector contains a multitude of players including but not limited to value-added agriculture, food processing, food production, agri-tourism, commercial farming, hobby farming, and food coops.
Hospitality	This sector is an amalgamation of all retail, accommodations, recreation, food services, and outdoor experience industries in Grand Forks.
Health and Wellness	This sector represents healthcare facilities and clinics in the area as well as all complimentary healthcare, recreational fitness facilities and services, health food stores, and more.



Approach

There are several planning approaches and frameworks, which could be used to develop an action plan of this nature. However not all approaches are equal, or even practical, to address this complex topic. The approach used for developing these plans focused on the inclusion and energizing of players within the three sectors along with the service providers that support these sectors. It is also tailored to the context of the region and the major players that will ultimately be responsible for implementing these action plans. For this reason, Lochaven Consulting, working with the Community Futures, have organized the engagement as follows:

- Premised on an open and ongoing *collaborative & consultative process*;
- Based on *participatory planning*;
- Build from communities *past efforts and future aspirations*;
- Look for *implementation* opportunities along the journey;
- *Innovatively* respond to the unique needs of the community.

The multi-stage approach outlined below is in essence a high-level overview of the project.

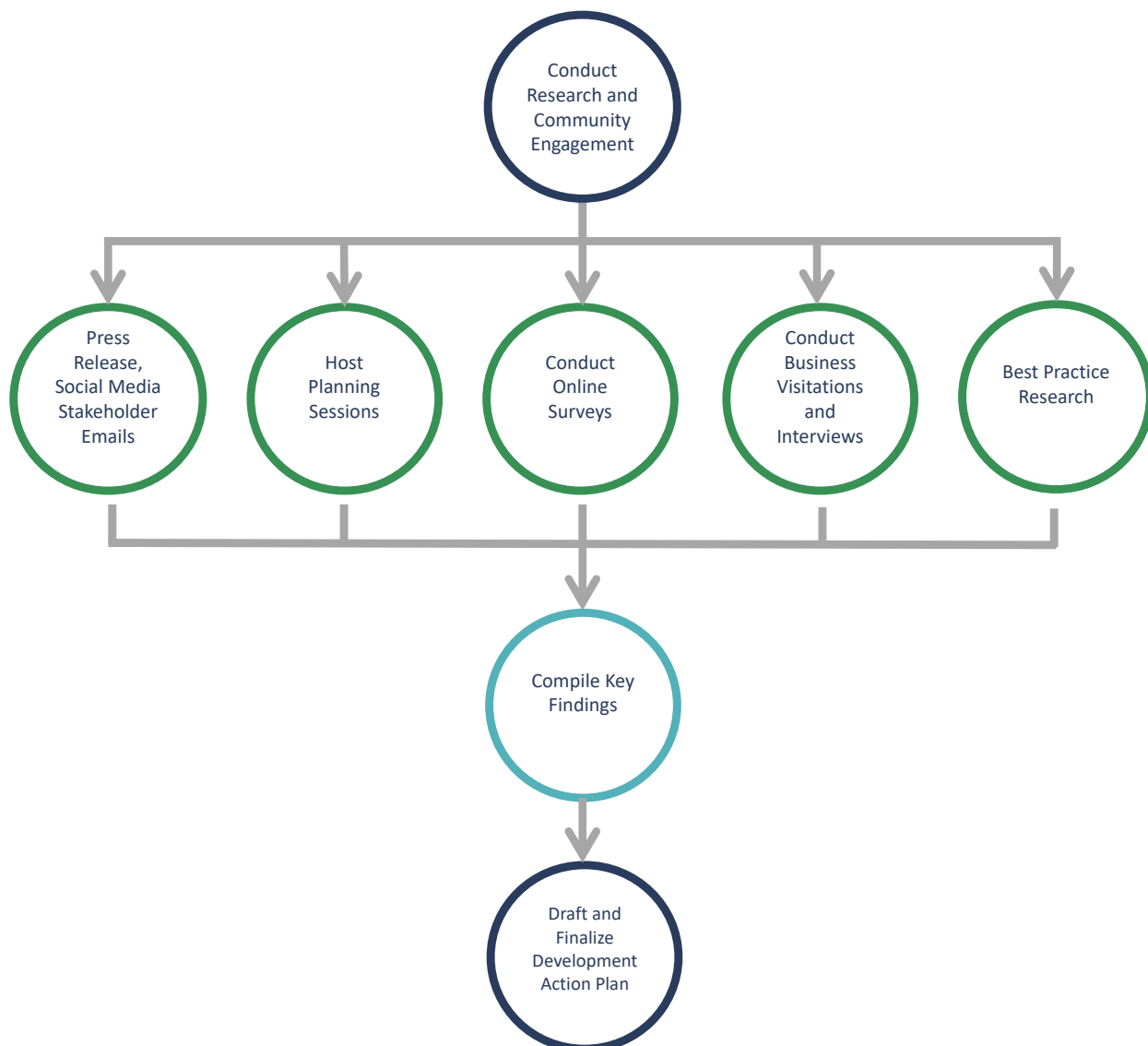


Figure 1: Approach to developing sector action plans

Community Engagement Efforts

Throughout the process of developing the sector action plans, the following community engagement efforts were conducted:

1. Communication efforts to spread information on the project:
 - a. Press Release
 - b. Direct Email Participation Invitations
 - c. Social Media Posts
2. Business Interviews
 - a. 20 in person businesses
 - b. 4 in person discussions business service providers
 - c. 1 roundtable session with healthcare providers
1. Survey Responses – Total 50
 - a. Healthcare – 12
 - b. Hospitality – 18
 - c. Agriculture – 11
 - d. Business Service Provider – 9

The above-mentioned approach is the result of several adjustments throughout the project. It demonstrates Community Futures' commitment to ensuring that each plan is relevant and tailored to the specific (and dynamic) contexts of the region, as well as the players within the region that will ensure the successful implementation of each plan to achieve desired results.

The strategic use of Sector Development Action Plans (SDAP's) within a region is that they can act as the catalyst to significant economic growth and regional prosperity. SDAP's provide the foundation for developing partnerships that will allow the region to employ quick actions that will build momentum and further develop key partnerships. Without these action plans, an inherent lack in informed decisions would drive actions as well as the present and future use of local resources within a community.



2.0 Major Themes in Sector Development

Through the community engagement efforts, four major themes arose pertaining to the future growth and development of the three sectors (Agriculture, Hospitality, and Health and Wellness) within the Grand Forks and Area D region. These themes were identified as items that must be addressed in order for all sectors to have the ability to grow, attract new businesses, attract investment, and increase their overall sustainability.

1. Increasing Capacity of Business Owners

Throughout the engagement efforts, business owners and managers were seeking resources, programs, courses, and training opportunities to improve their abilities and capacities as business owners to operate their businesses. A variety of functionalities emerged as common themes such as marketing, human resource management, and financial management.

2. Workforce Development

As is true for many communities across Canada, the ability to attract and retain a skilled and committed workforce is currently top of mind across all sectors.

3. Collaboration of Key Players

It was identified that further efforts to bring together government, private sector, service providers, and other players is required for sustainable sector development. These partnerships are integral to increasing the total resources devoted to the development of the sector.

4. External Promotions

Communicating the features, advantages, and unique aspects of each sector within Grand Forks through external promotions has the ability to increase growth potential. Additionally, Grand Forks' has an opportunity to leverage previous planning efforts as Community Futures and the Boundary County Regional Chamber of Commerce, have created an inbound investment, citizen attraction, and tourism development promotional plan. This plan contains multiple actionable items that were the result of extensive research and community engagement.

These four themes were used to frame specific actions within each sector.

3.0 Action Plans

Based on our current needs analysis of Grand Forks and Area D across each of the three sectors, (Agriculture, Hospitality, and Health and Wellness) it was clear that a new framework is needed to better prepare the region to capitalize on existing and evolving challenges, opportunities, and demands through a three-year action plan. To this end sector specific action plans have been developed. These action plans are based on the region developing partnerships to operationalizing and implementing these actions. It is critical that these actions do not rest with one agency to implement but rather, it requires a significant level of private-public partnerships in order to be successful in any private sector development effort.

Principles of Partnerships

The following are five key principles in developing partnerships conducive to further sector development efforts:

Cross Sector/ Regional Buy-in

Use strong cross sectoral (private, public and quasi-government) regional buy-in to ensure the initiatives and programs embody the needs of the entire region. While working on this assignment the representatives of cross sectors were engaged and have the vested interest of the entire region as the primary focal point.

Collaborative Effort

As with the planning process so should the implementation encourage the active participation of the private sector.

Communication and Transparency

Planning deliberations will be communicated regularly with the community and senior leadership will make strategic decisions in a timely, open, and transparent way.

Equitable Engagement Process

The partnership designs engagement processes that allow all members of the players a reasonable opportunity to contribute and develop a balanced perspective.

Commitment

The partners commit resources to engagement processes to ensure engagement activities are effective.

Action Selection Criteria

While a large list of activities could easily be found and listed, this would not provide Grand Forks and Area D with the most effective and relevant initiatives for long-term growth and sustainability. Rather, activities presented within the sector action plans have been carefully selected and distilled through the application of various criteria; shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptions of the criteria used to select the most impactful action items

Criteria	Description
Actionable	The actions are based on the foundation that players can operationalize the recommended action and it can be successfully executed.
Impact	Based on potential impact of economic contribution to Grand Forks (i.e., new businesses, jobs created, businesses grown etc.)
Needs Based	Activities are based on the community's needs identified through community engagement.
Timeline to Implement	The activity must be able to be completed or have generated sustainability within a reasonable timeline. As these are two-year action plans, the implementation timelines of activities were measured as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short Term (Less than 6 months)• Medium Term (Between 6 and 18 months)• Long Term (More than 18 months)
Budget	The activity's budget must be reasonable to be completed by community stakeholders. Please note; budget's contained within the action plan are estimates and placeholders only. Upon implementation of an activity, budget should be more accurately assessed and rendered based on the scope of the action.



Agriculture Sector Development Action Plan

Grand Forks and Area D

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4.0 Agriculture Sector Action Plan

Agriculture has long been a staple within Grand Forks due to arable lands, plenty of year-round sunshine, and a strategic location between the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan, the Kootenays, and the North-West United States. This environment has developed a diverse sector which includes varied production, value added agriculture, agri-tourism, food processing, and much more. Through this diversity, there is opportunity for growth in a variety of areas. The following explores background information on the sector, its critical issues and opportunities, as well as a sector action plan.

Background

In determining realistic tactics in the development and growth of the agriculture sector in Grand Forks, it is first imperative to understand the context of the sector in the region. The following information was gathered through all community engagement.

- Having been present in Grand Forks for many decades, agriculture is a well-established and mature industry in the region. This is evidenced by:
 - High product and service differentiation between livestock farms, orchards, gardens, apiaries, and value-added activities
 - The presence of established businesses and supply chain infrastructure
- This industry accounts for approximately 11% of Grand Forks/Area D workforce
- Top four uses of farms/farmland are:
 - Hay
 - Vegetables
 - Beef Cattle
 - Horse and Equine Production
- Grand Forks has 22,000 acres designated as Agriculture Land Reserve.
- Grand Forks has a moderate presence of organic and sustainable farms.
- Agri-tourism is being embraced by multiple farms and agriculture businesses in the region but has further opportunity for growth.
- There is a significant presence in the value-added agriculture sector that has further potential to grow. Opportunities such as the Kettle River Food Coop, multiple farmers markets within Grand Forks, and access to surrounding farmers markets offers the ability for consumers to interact with the sector.
- The transportation networks and proximity to multiple markets make Grand Forks attractive for all businesses within the value chain.
- Grand Forks has higher than the average amount of sun hours in BC at around 2000-2100 hours per year, or 167-175 days per year.

Key Findings – Critical Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were taken from community engagement efforts from both businesses and support organizations heavily involved in the agriculture sector.

Issues

1. Lack of abattoir/butchers means livestock farmers need to ship animals for slaughter.
2. Frequency of flooding, fire and other disaster leaves agriculture production, food processing, and value-added agriculture vulnerable in Grand Forks.
3. Lack of trained and untrained staff is creating a labour shortage in the region. Many businesses are short-staffed limiting their ability to grow.
4. Rising land and equipment costs are increasing barriers for agricultural start-ups such as food production.
5. Inspiring the next generation to stay in rural areas and participate in the agriculture sector has been identified as becoming increasingly challenging.
6. Succession planning is not often undertaken by business owners. This leaves business owners who want to exit in a difficult situation and may cause them to simply close the doors of the business, thereby impacting the business ecosystem in Grand Forks.
7. Increasing competition from new large-scale players in global markets.
8. Agri-tourism is a budding sector in Grand Forks, but the sector requires increased marketing efforts to grow.
9. Supply chain issues continue to affect businesses through rising cost of supplies via inflation, and logistic issues.
10. Exchange rates between CAD and USD currencies make it difficult to purchase necessary supplies and equipment from the US suppliers.

Opportunities

1. The location of Grand Forks and Area D allows for access to markets in Alberta, Okanagan, the Lower Mainland and in the US.
2. Increased immigration in coming years may strengthen the workforce in Grand Forks.
3. Food Coops and Farmers Markets increases the opportunity for consumers to interact with the agriculture sector.
4. There are ample Agri-tourism related opportunities in Grand Forks.
5. There is an ever-increasing demand for food and food related services.
6. Advances in technologies allow for potential new products and services.
7. Food and beverage processing is on the rise in Canada and has yet to be fully taken advantage of within Grand Forks.
8. Over a quarter of Canadian farmers are over 65 years old, there is opportunity for businesses to be purchased by other businesses or the younger generation.

Action Plan

The following actions do not constitute a formal strategy, but rather a carefully selected list of actionable items. While a list of activities is often the outcome of such exercises, it is crucial these activities are carefully selected work to gain momentum in developing the sector.

Table 3. Agricultural sector action plan (Theme 1 and Theme 2)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	Timeline to Implement	Budget
Theme #1: Developing Capacities of Business Owners							
Equipment Sharing Program for Operators	A formal equipment lending program or equipment co-operative program to increase affordability of key equipment.	Credit Union, Financial Institutions, Private Sector	Medium	Medium	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Professional Services Sharing Program	Sharing of marketing, accounting, and legal assistance can increase affordability and access to professional services.	Community Future Boundary, Financial Institutions, Professional Services Incorporation	Medium	Medium	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Succession Readiness and Awareness	Offer workshops and other educational resources to assist in increasing awareness of succession planning. Based off interest, develop program more fully in the region.	Community Future Boundary	Low	High	High	Short Term	\$5,000
Peer Mentorship Groups	Business owners can benefit greatly from learning from their community in peer mentorship formats.	Private Sector, Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium	High	Short Term	\$5,000
Theme #2: Workforce Development							
Local Food Education and Awareness Program	Inspire the next generation of farmers by educating all on the role of food and food processing in Grand Forks.	Agri-Tourism and Value Added Agriculture	Medium/High	Medium		Short Term	\$2,000
Sector Profile - Inbound Investment and Citizen Attraction	Include Agriculture Profile within Inbound Investment and Citizen Attraction Efforts.	Community Futures (Economic Development function)	Low	Medium/High	High	Short Term	\$2,500
Identify Specific Skilled Training Labour Gaps	In order to better identify how to address current labour issues, specific gaps must be identified.	Coalition of Business Support Organizations and Private Sector	Low	Medium/High	High	Short Term	\$2,500



Table 4. Agricultural sector action plan (Theme 3 and Theme 3)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	Timeline to Implement	Budget
Theme #3: Inclusion of Key Sectors in Planning							
Host Annual Sector Roundtable	Convene a roundtable with Agricultural leaders identify key issues and opportunities. With this real world current intelligence provide advice to levels of government and service providers as to what is needed to help drive growth and success within the Agriculture Sector.	Community Futures (Economic Development function)	Low	Medium/High	High	Short Term	\$2,000
Explore Appetite for Culinary/Agri-Food Tourism Strategy	Agri-Food tourism is an opportunity for Grand Forks to capitalize on. A formal strategy to increase tourism would assist in these efforts, but an important first step is to understand appetite of key players to participate in the planning and implementation of such a plan.	City of Grand Forks, Community Future Boundary, Private Sector	Medium	High		Long Term	\$2,500
Explore Appetite for Agri-Food Investment Plan	Agri-food development is a key area for growth in Grand Forks. An important first step is understanding appetite of key players to participate in the planning and implementation of such a plan.	City of Grand Forks, Community Future Boundary	Medium	High	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Theme #4: External Promotions							
Local Food Map	Create an online tool to allow for potential tourists to see view experiences in the region such as wineries, unique restaurants, Agri-tourism destinations and more.	Community Futures in partnership with private sector	Low	Medium/High	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Sector Promotional Video	Using local media partners, create a promotional video for the local agriculture sector.	Community Future Boundary, Private Sector	Medium	Medium	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Business Profiles on Invest Grand Forks	Create online profiles celebrating the success of ag businesses in Grand Forks and Area D.	Community Future Boundary, Private Sector	Medium	High	High	Long Term	\$2,500



Hospitality Sector Development Action Plan

Grand Forks and Area D

April 2023



5.0 Hospitality Sector Action Plan

Hospitality sector represents an amalgamation of a variety of entities in Grand Forks and Area D including but not limited to retail, accommodations, events, recreational services, and products. The following explores background information on the sector and its critical issues and opportunities before presenting the action plan.

Background

In determining a realistic plan in the development and growth of the hospitality sector in Grand Forks, it is imperative to first understand the current context. The following information was gathered through business interviews, surveys, community group round tables, conversations with multiple community leaders, and secondary research.

- The hospitality sector within Grand Forks is in the growth-maturity phase of the industry lifecycle:
 - Though the industry has been present within Grand Forks for decades, there is still opportunity for overall growth, the establishment of long-standing key players, and product and service differentiation.
 - There are consistently new players in the sector who seek to capitalize on demand in the region such as Grand Forks Brewing.
- Industrial activity in the area such as forestry and construction keep accommodation and retail active throughout the year, particularly in shoulder seasons and winter months.
- Other than the tourist activity in the peak summer months, there is limited economic draw from outside the region for hospitality services such as retail and restaurant services.
- Over the previous two years there have been some significant additions to the hospitality sector that has provided increased patronage that extends into the evenings.
- The hospitality sector in Grand Forks has always experienced a continuous turnover of businesses in its downtown core.
- A combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and a flood that affected much of downtown, hurt the downtown retail and restaurant sector immensely. However, the sector continues to develop and is recovering well. A majority of hospitality business owners gave feedback that 2021 and 2022 was one of the most successful years in Grand Forks history in terms of vibrancy, community participation, and sales.
- As shown with the recent flood, the downtown businesses are vulnerable to natural disasters, and it has greatly impacted business activity in the past. Though improvements have been made to the river, this remains a key concern for many business owners who seek to open businesses.
- Evolution and natural growth of the sector is evident in the continuous differentiation of products and services.
- The ability to attract/retain workforce has been an increasingly significant issue. Business owners are having a hard time finding the required staff for both part time and full-time work.
- The businesses with the strongest workforce have built this base through 1) communication, 2) respect, and 3) efficient business operations, stating the “individuals want to be a part of our success”.
- As stated by many business owners, there is a tendency for businesses to support each other within Grand Forks, either through customer referrals or joining the Downtown Business Association. However, these business groups require reimagining to increase effectiveness.
- Hours of hospitality business are inconsistent in the downtown sector, often leaving only a few businesses open in the evenings.

Key Findings – Critical Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were taken from community engagement efforts from both businesses and support organizations who are involved with Hospitality on a daily basis.

Issues

1. Grand Forks does not have adequate event space for events such as special events, dinners, galas, and festivals with commercial kitchen space.
2. There is a severe lack in hospitality trained and untrained labour in the region.
3. Operating hours of business are inconsistent, and not complimentary to each other, particularly in the downtown sector. This decreases the ecosystem effect that can be generated by a strong retail sector.
4. While there is a Downtown Business Association it has had difficulty in creating sustainable change within the community.
5. Many businesses reported having struggles creating and implementing digital marketing strategies including social media and website.
6. Some businesses reported capacity challenges in moving to incorporate online sales in both their own skill and having the proper staff infrastructure to maintain an online store.
7. Retailers are optimistic about revenue growth but concerned about margin erosion due to rising cost of materials due to supply chain-based inflation.
8. Many business owners looking to sell or transfer ownership are not well equipped or resourced to effectively handle the situation.

Opportunities

1. Despite economic uncertainty, Grand Forks has business owners and individuals investing in businesses showing a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the community.
2. Despite continued inflation and rising interest rates, consumer spending remains high across Canada.
3. The digitization of their business is becoming increasingly important to business owners specifically regarding online sales and marketing efforts.
4. Grand Forks has overwhelming local support providing sustainability for their local business environment.
5. Consumer knowledge and education is ever increasing, creating more individuals driven to support local, high-quality goods and wares.
6. While vibrant, the Grand Forks hospitality sector presents multiple gaps that offer opportunities for new entrepreneurs and investors to capitalize on.
7. Business owners are open and willing to participate in the development of Grand Forks including being a part of different groups and improving their own skills.

Action Plan

The following actions do not constitute a formal strategy, but rather a carefully selected list of actionable items. While a list of activities is often the outcome of such exercises, it is crucial these activities are carefully selected work to gain momentum in developing the sector.

Table 5. Hospitality sector action plan (Theme 1 and Theme 2)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	"Timeline to Implement"	Budget
Theme #1: Developing Capacities of Business Owners							
Peer Mentorship Group	Peer mentorship groups can be powerful for a variety of reasons and can help to build capacity within business ecosystems.	Community Futures Boundary, Private Sector	Low	Medium	High	Short Term	\$2,000
Reverse Trade Show to Market Local Business Supports to Region	Host reverse tradeshow with all local business support organizations to market services, thereby increasing awareness of programming to local businesses.	Business Support Organizations	Medium	High	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Digital Marketing and Online Sales Training	To address business owners ability to effectively market and sell online, it is suggested that training and programs are offered to increase their capacities in this regard.	Business Support Organizations	Medium	Medium/ High		Short Term	\$3,500
Succession Readiness and Awareness	Successful business transition can be vital to economic health and the success of new owners. Increase awareness of succession planning can be a step to furthering readiness.	Business Support Organizations	Medium	Medium/ High		Medium Term	\$5,000
Further Support Business Advocacy Group (Chamber & Downtown Association)	Business advocacy groups can act as the voice of the business community in planning sessions and can advocate for improving gaps and limitations of the industry.	Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium		Medium Term	\$5,000
Theme #2: Workforce Development							
Customer Service Workshops	Increase capacity of existing workforce to service customers through workshops.	Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium	Low/	Short Term	\$2,500
Identify most Critical Gaps in Labour Force	Working with the private sector more information needs to be obtained to identify the specific gaps in the labour force both skilled and unskilled.	Private Sector, Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium/ High		Short Term	\$2,500



Table 6. Hospitality sector action plan (Theme 3 and Theme 3)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	Timeline to Implement	Budget
Theme #3: Collaboration of Key Sectors in Planning							
Host Annual Sector Roundtable	Convene a roundtable with Hospitality leaders identify key issues and opportunities. With this real world current intelligence provide advice to levels of government and service providers as to what is needed to help drive growth and success within the Hospitality Sector.	Community Futures (Economic Development function)	Low	Medium/ High	High	Short Term	\$2,000
Disaster Preparedness for Businesses	Developing a high-level disaster preparedness plan toolkit. A plan should be in place for what businesses can do and what programs they can access should they encounter disaster.	City of Grand Forks, Government of BC, Private Sector Development	Medium/ High	Medium/ High		Long Term	\$7,500
Identify Product/ Service Gaps	Within a coalition, the most crucial gaps or fruitful opportunities in Grand Forks should be identified in order to create further strategy to fulfill these gaps.	Private Sector, Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium/ High		Short Term	\$5,000
Theme #4: External Promotions							
Sector Promotional Video	Create sector promotional video for hospitality businesses.	"Community Futures Boundary, Private Sector"	Medium	Medium	High	Medium Term	\$5,000
Create "Experience Grand Forks" Packages for Tourists	Create packages of multiple key businesses in Grand Forks and offer it as a package to increase tourism and activity to these businesses.	Destination Grand Forks, City of Grand Forks	Medium	High	High	Long Term	\$5,000



Health and Wellness Sector Development Action Plan

Grand Forks and Area D

April 2023



6.0 Health and Wellness Sector Action Plan

The health and wellness sector in Grand Forks includes such entities as include hospitals, clinics, complimentary health care services, recreational facilities and services, and health food stores. The following explores background information on the sector and its critical issues and opportunities before presenting the action plan.

Background

In determining a realistic plan in the development and growth of the hospitality sector in Grand Forks, it is imperative to first understand the current context. The following information was gathered through business interviews, surveys, community group round tables, conversations with multiple community leaders, and secondary research.

- Healthcare is a well-established and mature sector within Grand Forks and Area D:
 - The first hospital was opened in 1897 and the current Boundary District Hospital has been open since 1963.
 - There are long-standing key players including Boundary District Hospital, Grand Forks Medical Centre, and multiple privately owned clinics.
 - There is significant product and service differentiation within the region from conventional healthcare to alternative and complimentary healthcare services.
- Health and wellness is a significant priority within the community evident in the:
 - Number of small/diversified services related to health and wellness.
 - Heavy interest in healthy lifestyles which embraces traditional and nontraditional healthcare services.
 - The prevalence of multiple recreation facilities indoor and outdoor (private and public).
- Due to the geographical position of Grand Forks, many citizens stay within Grand Forks for their healthcare services and there are more who travel in from surrounding communities.
- There is significant demand and limited supply for a variety of healthcare services including:
 - Biomedical healthcare
 - Mental health care
 - Physiotherapists
 - Chiropractors
 - Massage therapists
- Through local educational programs and partnerships with the local college, Grand Forks and the community is implementing tactics to develop their own workforce locally.
- As is currently being experienced provincially and nationally, Interior Health is having a very difficult time hiring and retaining staff including doctors, nurses, health care aides, and support staff.
- The aging baby boomer population in Grand Forks is putting capacity pressure on both healthcare supports and elder care homes.

Key Findings – Critical Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities were found through community engagement efforts from both businesses and support organizations who are heavily involved with the health and wellness sector in Grand Forks and Area D.

Issues

1. Boundary District Hospital infrastructure and facilities are dated or not sufficient to support the demand for healthcare.
2. Boundary District Hospital is having significant staffing issues amongst all positions, which has led to temporary closures.
3. Both staffing and infrastructure issues have limited the supply of most all healthcare supports and services including a) hospital care, b) long-term health care, and c) alternative healthcare supports.
4. With the current state of the healthcare workplace, it has been difficult to attract and retain the necessary workforce.
5. While Grand Forks has some education opportunities for healthcare training there are limited overall training opportunities.
6. There are limited local and direct supports for businesses and organizations in the sector.
7. There are limited opportunities for health and wellness sector key players to connect, collaborate, and support each other.
8. Communication and support from Interior Health organization can sometimes be lacking.

Opportunities

1. Rapidly increasing demand for biomedical healthcare is driven by an aging baby-boomer population.
2. Grand Forks has an appetite and a willingness to participate in and purchase complimentary healthcare thereby increasing demand for services such as:
 - a. Mental Health Counsellors
 - b. Naturopath
 - c. Physiotherapy Clinic
 - d. Acupuncturists
3. Communities are prioritizing preventative care and wellness to reduce their reliance on traditional biomedical healthcare professionals and practices.
4. There is significant demand for home care supports and elderly care facilities.
5. There is significant demand for end-of-life care both in facilities and in homes.
6. There is an increased adoption of a variety of technologies within all healthcare business to increase patient abilities to stay on top of monitoring, keep up with exercise, and maintain healthy diets.
7. There are unique and innovative models being pursued in rural remote regions such as health care co-operatives for rural remote practices, or community health centres offering multiple practices and departments of health and wellness.
8. Presence of post-secondary institution allows for the inclusion of training programs:
 - a. LPN Training is to be offered at Selkirk College.

Action Plan

The following actions do not constitute a formal strategy, but rather a carefully selected list of actionable items. While a list of activities is often the outcome of such exercises, it is crucial these activities are carefully selected work to gain momentum in developing the sector.

Table 7. Health and Wellness sector action plan (Theme 1 and Theme 2)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	Timeline to Implement	Budget
Theme #1: Developing Capacities of Business Owners							
Create Business Advocacy Group for Healthcare Professionals	Advocate for health care businesses and clinics to assess needs and address gaps to increase the health of the business ecosystem.	Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium/High		Short Term	\$5,000
Peer Mentorship Group for Health and Wellness Professionals	To help support the professionals in healthcare, a peer group can help professionals and business owners in the sector connect.	Business Support Organizations	Low	Medium/High		Short Term	\$2,500
Hold Training Programs Specialized in Implementation of New Technologies	To assist business owners in increasing their ability to implement and understand new technologies.	Business Support Organizations, Interior Health, Private Sector	Medium	Medium		Medium Term	\$7,500
Theme #2: Workforce Development							
Explore How to Better Attract Foreign Trained Health Care Workers	Foreign health care workers are a largely untapped workforce. Attracting them and helping them ensure that their training transfers to Canada can be a powerful tactic to increase the local workforce.	"Government of BC, Interior Health, City of Grand Forks"	High	High	High	Long Term	\$7,500
Leverage Existing Citizen Attraction Programs	Interior Health and Boundary County Hospital is currently conducting some workforce attraction strategies, explore partnership and leveraging options to increase effectiveness of actions.	Business Support Organizations, Interior Health, Private Sector	Medium/High	High	High	Long Term	\$5,000
Explore Increasing Local Access to Educational and Training Programs	While Selkirk College is offering LPN training in the near future, there are more gaps that need to be filled in the healthcare sector. Further education and partnership with Selkirk College should be explored.	Selkirk College, Business Support Organizations	Medium/High	Medium		Medium Term	\$2,000



Table 8. Hospitality sector action plan (Theme 3 and Theme 3)

Activity	Description	Potential Champion	Risk	Impact	Priority	Timeline to Implement	Budget
Theme #3: Inclusion of Key Sectors in Planning							
Host Annual Sector Roundtable	Convene a roundtable with Health and Wellness leaders identify key issues and opportunities. With this real world current intelligence provide advice to levels of government and service providers as to what is needed to help drive growth and success within the Hospitality Sector.	Community Futures (Economic Development function)	Low	Medium/High	High	Short Term	\$2,000
Identify Most Critical Gaps in Infrastructure	Key stakeholders can identify what needs to be addressed within infrastructure.	Interior Health, City of Grand Forks, Private Sector	Low	Medium	Medium/High	Short Term	\$12,500
Theme #4: External Promotions							
Actively Promote all Actions taken to Develop Sector	Health and wellness services, capacities, and availability, is top of mind for many individuals when making investment and moving decisions. All interested parties should actively promote efforts to develop the sector to increase consumer confidence.	"Community Future, Business Support Organization"	Low	Medium	Medium	"Short to Long Term"	\$-
Create Business Prospectuses to Address Service Gaps in Health and Wellness	Business Prospectuses can highlight opportunities for potential investors.	Business Support Organizations, Community Futures, Private Sector	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium Term	\$5,000
Develop Sector Promotional Video	Create promotional video for hospitality sector.	Business Support Organizations, Community Futures, Private Sector	Medium	High	High	Medium Term	\$5,000



7.0 Concluding Thoughts

The importance of developing sector specific action plans for the enhancement of community socio-economic well-being and increasing competitiveness has become progressively better understood and, unfortunately, increasingly competitive. Hence, this action plan is based on a considerable amount of research focusing on the best practice experience of other jurisdictions, as well as the unique need and sector make-up of the City of Grand Forks. It is also based on the inputs of representatives from a diverse array of stakeholder groups and the inputs of local businesses and service providers. In short, the foundation from which this action plan has been developed is comprehensive and thorough.

Importantly, this is not a “strategy”. Instead, this effort is about change, action, and moving forward, consciously. It is the intent of the action plan to instill some expectation that focused actions will have realistic expectations for success. But of course, planning and implementation are two very different things.

Even great action plans fail to deliver success if they are not well implemented. In moving forward, implementation efforts will need to satisfy the following criteria:

- Actions and efforts must be managed to gain results and achieve milestones. That is, metrics must be put in place to regularly measure the output, process, and goals of the implementation effort, while ensuring adaptability to evolve the implementation plan based on the learning achieved;
- Actions and efforts must explicitly address capacity issues by involving multiple parties throughout the process. That is, it needs to ensure key stakeholders are involved not only in the development of the strategy but its subsequent implementation. This builds ownership in the strategy, and commitment and energy to its successful implementation;
- Actions and efforts must be resourced properly, not just with money, but with the people, mandate, and commitment to make change.

At this point the emphasis must be on action. And therein arguably lies the most important organizational challenge. That is, the immediate challenge this action plan poses for the community lies in the need to be prepared and committed; to move away from analysis and introspection towards action.