



Media Release

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Business Case Reveals Immense Horticulture Potential of North Peace Region and Strategy for Economic Growth

FORT ST. JOHN, British Columbia, September 29, 2017 - The North Peace Economic Development Commission (NPEDC) released the findings of its horticulture sector business case and marketing strategy this week, revealing the great work already occurring in the region, as well as the untapped potential for growth, investment and increased food security.

For the past four months, economic development consulting firm EcoTactix worked with the Commission to formulate an evidence-based business case assessing the commercial viability of the sector. The project engaged horticulture stakeholders in the region to identify opportunities and challenges and recommend specific initiatives to support growth of the horticulture sector throughout the North Peace, as well as improve food security in the region.

Recommendations from the project include the formation of a business-led organization that coordinates the horticulture sector priorities, builds relationships with government and institutional partners, and advocates on behalf of the sector for increased local training opportunities and skills development.

“We have great people here doing great things but there is a lack of coordination,” states Hudson’s Hope Mayor Gwen Johansson. “Focusing on the priorities for growing the horticulture sector, from seed to sale, will have significant economic and social benefits for the North Peace region.”

The business case revealed that, with an agricultural land mass exceeding that of the Lower Mainland and the Okanagan as well as long daylight growing hours, the region’s potential for growing diverse horticultural crops is largely untapped. Equally, important, the infrastructure required to process and distribute horticultural commodities from the North Peace must be developed.

According to Rob Fraser, Chair of the NPEDC and Mayor of the District of Taylor, “We have abundant, affordable land for both field crops and greenhouse production. Our production potential needs to be matched with an ability to get local products to regional and provincial markets.”

Local and regional officials presented the study to Provincial Cabinet Ministers at the UBCM Convention in Vancouver.

Paper copies of the report can be picked up at the Regional District offices in Dawson Creek or Fort St. John, or a PDF can be downloaded from Engage on the PRRD website (<http://prrd.bc.ca/engage>). Contact the office if you would like a report mailed to you.

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