

Sustainable CHURCHILL

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Interim Report



The Town of Churchill Local Steering Committee

and

The Institute of Urban Studies,

University of Winnipeg

June 1st, 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Interim Report reports on a series of public consultations with residents in the community of Churchill as a part of the Sustainable Churchill initiative, which is a partnership between the Town of Churchill and the University of Winnipeg, and administered by the Institute of Urban Studies. Between the summer of 2008 and summer 2009, the partnership involved researchers from the University of Winnipeg and students reviewing existing plans and scientific studies, visiting the community on several occasions, meeting with residents and conducting informal interviews. The first of these engagements took place in March of 2009; an online survey was mounted between March and June 2009; and interviews and public meetings were hosted in late August and the first week of September, 2009.

The Interim Report sets out in detail the methods used for each of these engagements before reporting on the inputs received. The findings from each event and instrument will be summarized. Finally it draws conclusions on key findings that will inform sustainability planning for Churchill, and which will be elaborated upon in the final Sustainability Plan.

These consultations were oriented to asking residents, What would a sustainable Churchill look like 5, 10, 20 years into the future? What measures, improvements and changes will help realize that vision? What values should guide the journey towards sustainability? The interviews and sessions were geared to identifying:

Churchill's community values: What is important to residents? What do they value in their community? What would they like to preserve? What would they like to build or create?

Churchill's sustainability principles: What would a sustainable community mean to Churchill's residents? What would a sustainable Churchill look like in the future?

Consultations took the form of in-person and online surveys; youth engagement sessions; interviews with elders; and town-hall sessions using a variety of techniques.

The results of these consultations reveal that most resident concerns centre on socio-economic issues in the community, such as overall affordability, economic diversity and sustainability, educational opportunities, and programs for youth and elders. While the community recently implemented a beautification program, the aesthetic quality of the town was also a recurring theme. Priorities emerging from these consultations may be grouped as:

- Economic development to reduce poverty and associated social problems
- Education and training to support economic development
- Affordable and nutritious food
- Improved housing stock, more housing choice, variety of tenure
- Improving health including addressing addictions issues
- Improved transportation infrastructure
- Improved waste management
- Activities and opportunities for young people
- Invigorated culture, including governance structures
- Improved aesthetics, including removal of derelict vehicles and tearing down derelict buildings.

The findings of these various engagements point to a pronounced awareness of the challenges facing Churchill, as well as a wealth of ideas for how these challenges might be addressed. Clearly, in order for Churchill to become a more sustainable community, all three pillars – the Social, Environmental and Economic – must be planned for in a holistic and cohesive manner. There is a marked interest among locals in improving the community over a long-term period, and many identified opportunities for doing so.

In the next report, the Sustainability Plan, the wide range of inputs reviewed above will be more systematically refined and analyzed within the context of a useful planning framework. This process will enable the research team and the Steering Committee to identify a community vision for Churchill, as well as top priorities and potential projects with which to address them. This planning framework in the Sustainability Plan will be based on established planning principles as well as precedents in other communities. It will allow Churchill and its academic partners to logically translate priorities into practical outputs, by identifying assets in the community and elsewhere that will enable potential barriers to be identified and overcome.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document reports on a series of public consultations with residents in the community of Churchill as a part of the Sustainable Churchill initiative. Launched in August 2008, this initiative is a collaboration between the Town of Churchill and the University of Winnipeg, with funding provided by Omnitrax Inc. It is overseen by a steering committee of Churchill residents and University of Winnipeg faculty and staff. It is being managed by the staff of the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) and involved the contributions of faculty and students at the University of Winnipeg. Certain elements related to transportation were prepared in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Transportation at the University of Winnipeg, which shares offices with IUS.

The Town of Churchill and the University of Winnipeg signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a Sustainability Plan on September 22, 2008. The Sustainability Plan under development will identify ways to enhance the quality of life in the town by identifying ways of improving the ecological, economic and social conditions of Churchill. The Plan is geared towards asking, how can Churchill be planned in such a way as to provide the highest quality of life for all of its residents, and for the long term?

The goals of the initiative are to produce a Sustainability Plan that:

- represents the aspirations of Churchill residents;
- is practical and feasible, and can lead to fundable initiatives;
- is based on sound scientific and policy research;
- will contribute substantially to the revision of the Town's official Development Plan; and
- can serve as a model for other northern communities.

The intended outcomes of the Sustainability Plan are:

- to enable the people of Churchill to make positive changes to the ecological, social, and economic aspects of their community;
- to provide learning opportunities for both the residents of Churchill and faculty and students of the University of Winnipeg; and
- to contribute to the long term goal of moving conceptual elements of the Project toward implementation

To help meet these objectives, between the summer of 2008 and summer 2009, the partnership involved researchers from the University of Winnipeg and students reviewing existing plans and scientific studies, visiting the community on several occasions, meeting with residents and conducting informal interviews. The first of these engagements took place in March of 2009; an online survey was mounted between

March and June 2009; and interviews and public meetings were hosted in late August and the first week of September, 2009.

An Interim Report based on public consultations was submitted in draft in December of 2009, and a revision based on committee feedback was completed in April of 2010. This Interim report sets out in detail the methods used for each of these engagements before reporting on the inputs received. The findings from each event and instrument will be summarized. Finally it will draw conclusions on key findings that will inform sustainability planning for Churchill, and which will be elaborated upon in the final Sustainability Plan. In addition, and as a major component of the project's capacity-building function, University of Winnipeg students also prepared a series of shorter papers.

1.1 Purpose and Methods

This document reports back on the initial findings from the community engagement activities and offers broad conclusions about some of the issues facing the town; priorities for addressing these issues; and visions for the community's future. These consultations utilized themes previously identified by the local Sustainability Committee (see Discussion Paper). The statements organized below are to the best of our abilities reproduced verbatim; they should not be interpreted as the researchers' conclusions about local conditions but rather the inputs as we received them. These findings will then be more thoroughly and systematically analyzed in the subsequent report, the Sustainability Plan.

The document reports on the following engagements:

Planning with Youth

On March 27th, 2009, researchers met with students from the Duke of Marlborough School. The youths at that session worked on maps as well as offered comments regarding assets and challenges in the community.

Community Livability Survey

Data collection for this element involved two methods. The primary source of information focused on a community survey (see Appendix A). Administered to 55 Churchill residents between March 25 and 29, 2009, this survey canvassed a range of aspects related to existing community strengths and opportunities for community development. Participants were asked to prioritize specific social, environmental and ecological elements that should direct community development over the next twenty years. In addition to the survey, informal comments were gathered from two convenience samples at local community events, (25-29 March and 15-22 of June, 2009). The results of these conversations (and photographs taken by the researchers) are used to augment the findings of the survey. Where relevant, supporting literature is also cited.

Online Community Livability Survey

The same questions from the Livability Survey (see Appendix A) were also administered in an online format. Twenty-eight individuals responded over a three-month period. Unlike the results from the in-person survey described above, the findings from this survey are reported without reference to additional qualitative inputs.

Transportation Study

Given the town's isolation and unique role in facilitating both ground and marine transportation, transportation issues touch on almost every aspect of Churchill's social and economic life, and have extensive implications for environmental sustainability as well. For these reasons, this theme was studied separately through a partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Transportation. The findings from the public consultation concerning transportation are summarized in Section 2.5.

Public Engagement Sessions

In the last days of August and early September 2009, the researchers from the University of Winnipeg returned to Churchill for several engagements, including informal interviews spread over several days, and two public meetings. The methods included:

- Community conversations with Aboriginal Elders held in association with Winnipeg Elder Thelma Meade (see Section 2.4);
- SWOT Analysis: This looked at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the community as perceived by residents;
- The Money Game: Using play money, this exercise sought to place a proxy "value" on certain key aspects of the community;
- "Planning for Real": This exercise used two maps, one of the town site and one of the region, to identify local assets and challenges; and
- Regional map: To identify travel modes and sites of significance.

Sample Sizes

The events and engagements reported on below involved 233 participants:

- March surveys: 55
- Online survey: 28
- August – September 2009 Public Engagement Sessions: 150

Given that the population of Churchill is less than 900 people, this represents a substantial proportion of the population owing to multiple engagements and multiple interviewers, the sample of 233 should not be considered at face value, for some participants will have been contacted more than once, or, having been interviewed, then attended the public consultation sessions.

2.0 FINDINGS

2.1 Survey Results

As noted above, data collection focused on administration of a survey. The surveys were administered over three and a half days in March, 2009 from Gypsy's Bakery, where most townspeople were presumed to visit on a regular basis so as to capture a random sampling of residents. To add incentive for respondents, a coupon was offered upon the completion of the survey valued at \$5 of Gypsy's products (dine-in or take-out). In addition, ten surveys were left at the Town Center for residents to fill out and several were passed out to key informants during interviews. The response rate was 55, which represents 5.8% of the total population in Churchill.

Results were triangulated through direct observation and semi-structured interviews. The following Section outlines the results of that activity.

In total, 33% of respondents were female, 65% male, and 2% undeclared. Note that this number does not represent the community statistics as a whole, where 51% of residents are female and 49% male. This may be attributed to timing (surveys were administered from 9 a.m. to 12 or 4 p.m. daily) and location of survey administration. There were generally more working-class men who entered the bakery during the day (on coffee or lunch breaks).

Table 1 identifies the age group of respondents. There is a small representation of participants less than 19, however youth were not the focus of this activity. A separate youth engagement at the local high school was undertaken during the visit to capture this demographic (See Section 2.3). The under-19 demographic is therefore excluded from the following demographic comparison. The age 20-34 and 65+ categories are both significantly underrepresented in the response rate while the 35-49 age category is overrepresented. With a difference of only 1%, the 50-64 age group is most accurately represented.

The survey featured a question about how long people have lived in the community, as data on length of residence may reveal differing expectations, or suggests more intense place attachment over time. Thus it is important to know how time of occupancy impacts perceptions of Churchill. Table 2 shows the results of this question.¹

1. Due to specificity of categories, it is not practical to compare this data to that of Statistics Canada, however the 2006 census data does say that 25% of the population moved within one year of census.

Table 1. Responses separated by age. The percent of responses is also noted, contrasted with that percent of the town population.

Age Group	# of Respondents	% of responses	% of population
Under 19	1		
20 – 34	14	26%	30%
35 – 49	22	42%	34%
50 – 64	13	26%	25%
65 +	3	6%	15%
Undeclared	1		

Table 2. Length of Residence: “How long have you lived in Churchill?”

Time Interval	# of Respondents
Less than 1 year	10
1 – 3 years	11
4 – 10 years	7
11 – 20 years	9
Over 20 years	15
Undeclared	3

2.1.1 Community Strengths and Opportunities

The first set of questions asked respondents to check off as many qualities they thought answered the question “what do you like best about your community?” The top five responses are shown in table 3. Most participants (35) identified sense of community as one of the best qualities of Churchill. The connections people have with the community, and other community members for that matter, also became evident in some of the closing remarks on the survey. For example, one participant noted that “when you walk through the store or complex and you can say hello and know most of the people there, it makes you feel like part of the community.”

The second most frequented response was access to outdoor activities (34 responses). When asked what they like about their community, residents generally speak quite highly of the feeling of ‘openness’ and proximity to wildlife and the outdoors. The Churchill Weir, for example, is regarded as an important location for recreation.

Table 3. Best Qualities of Churchill: “What do you like best about your community?”

Factor	# of Respondents
Sense of Community	35
Access to Outdoor Activities	34
Safety	31
Employment Opportunities	29
Family or Historic Ties	18

Safety was selected by 31 as being one of the best qualities of the town. Several participants responded that they liked Churchill because of “the safe environment” and because it is a “great town to have kids grow up in”.

Twenty nine participants selected employment opportunities as one of the best qualities of the town. However, it is interesting to note that employment opportunities were also identified in the top five aspects of Churchill that residents would like to improve.

Finally, 18 residents said that family or historic ties rank among the best qualities of Churchill. This finding is particularly interesting, because 24 of 55 (43%) respondents cited having family that lives in Churchill. Respondents were given the same list of issues and asked to identify as many that applied to the question “what aspects of Churchill do you think should be improved?” Perhaps not surprisingly, the most frequently selected response (38) was affordability. Residents report very high prices for fruits and vegetables. This is a systemic problem: Whereas the price of alcohol is regulated in the entire province (and thus sells for the same price in Churchill as it would in Winnipeg), the price consumers pay for groceries is currently unregulated (personal communication). For example, the price of 4 litres of milk is more than \$8, compared to around \$4 in the south (personal observation). The local steering committee has discussed affordability issues surrounding commodities.

The second most frequented choice, educational opportunities, is an issue pervasive in the North. At the high school level, the small class sizes and teaching population mean there is less course variety offered to students. Beyond high school, most opportunities require moving south with less opportunity to return for weekend visits.

Programs for youth and elders formed the third and fourth highest choices. Addressing problems with youth smoking, drinking and drugs was the fourth highest priority of sustainability identified by residents. As the aging baby boomer generation approaches retirement, attention is needed to develop programs to ensure adequate resources and support for seniors.

Finally, the fifth most frequent choice was employment opportunities. Community meetings highlighted

that “[i]t is important to develop jobs that attract families versus mainly single people”.

Interestingly, “employment opportunities” figures prominently in the lists of both the strengths and weakness. It is also important to stress the interrelationships between these points. Employment opportunities can contribute to overall affordability, but the ability to secure them is also linked to the level (and quality) of one’s education.

2.2 Online Survey Results

The Community Livability Survey was posted online using the Survey Monkey service, and advertised on posters and through a link on the project’s Blog (which has since been replaced with a Facebook page). Our review of these inputs shows that the results of the online version of the community livability survey are consistent with and reinforce the findings of the in-person survey conducted in March of 2009.

The response rate of the online survey was 28 respondents, or 3% of Churchill’s population; however if the online survey was merged with the in-person survey it would represent 83 participants, or 9% of the total. It is worth noting that the online survey was completed by twice as many women as men, where the in-person surveys were quite opposite. When the gender data are merged, we see a better representation of the Churchill population (51% female, 49% male) with 41% (34) of all survey respondents being female, and 52% (43) being male and 7% (6) undeclared.

Combining the data of the online and in-person surveys is helpful as it is more representative of the local population.

The age cohorts that responded to the online survey followed a standard distribution, just as the in-person questionnaire did, with 42% of respondents between the ages of 35-49, and the age groups of 20-34 and 50-64 each representing 25% of the total sample. Although consistent with the in-person study, it should be reinforced that this distribution over represents the 35-49 age group and underrepresents the 20-34 and 65+ age groups. Respondents of the in-person survey reported a diverse mix in terms of length of residency in Churchill, which is reflected in the different perspectives on and values in the community. However a large majority of respondents to the online survey (46%) reported having lived in Churchill for over 20 years.

Reasons for this concentration of long-term residents participating online could be related to a desire for anonymity: given the small size of the community, an anonymous survey may be more appealing for long term residents who may be more acutely aware of the impacts of speaking up in a town where everyone knows everyone.

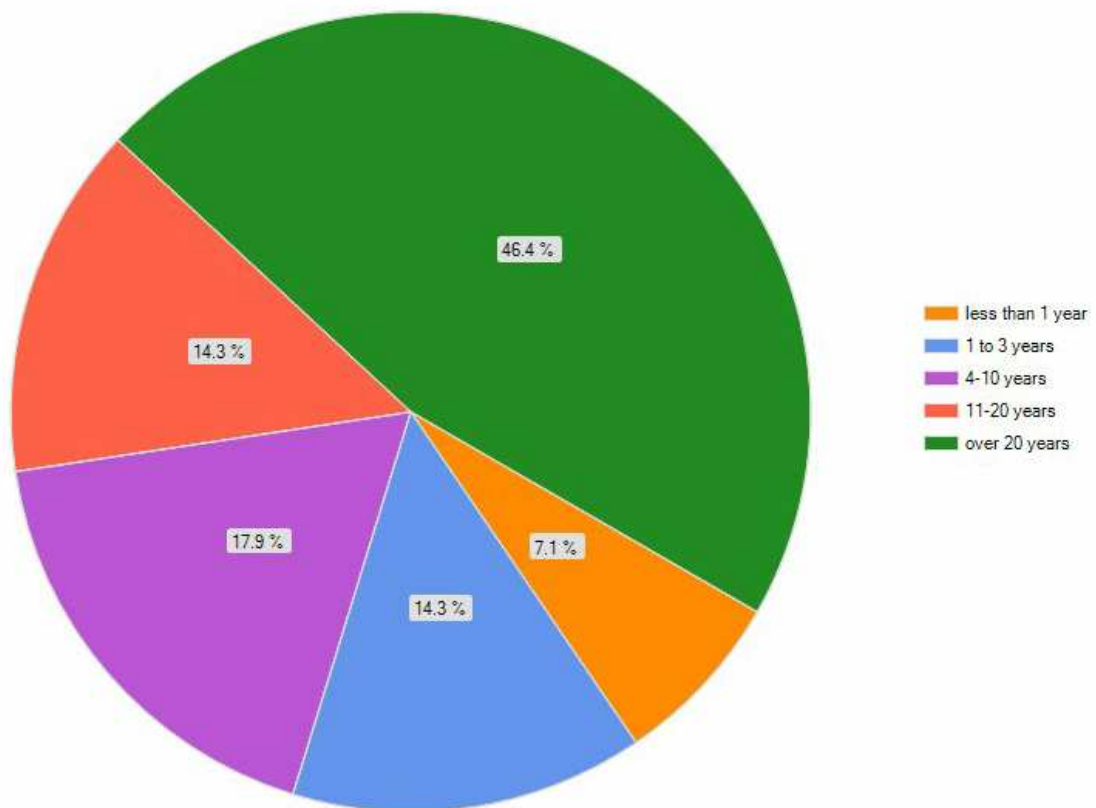


Figure 1. Q: How long have you been in Churchill?

When asked what they like the most about Churchill, respondents were rather consistent with their responses. Access to outdoor activities, and safety were cited by 62% of respondents as being among the best part of their community. These were followed by 54% of participants offering sense of community, as well as employment opportunities (54%). Family or historic ties were also considered by 43% to be a preferred characteristic of Churchill. These five qualities were also identified by the in-person study as the best characteristics of the community, although the preference order was slightly different.

Examining the local characteristics needing improvement, the results from the online survey echoed the in-person findings. Educational opportunities (77%), programs for youth (69%), and affordability (69%) were the three primary areas where respondents sought improvement. The issue of affordability is an intuitive top priority for residents, as any goods that arrive in Churchill must come by rail, air, or sea. These forms of shipping, especially given the long distance they must travel, are quite expensive for residents. Given the town's declining population, it is not surprising that "educational opportunities" and "programs for youth" rated high on needing improvement. Residents are aware of the importance of keeping their youth active and engaged in the community, and the need to keep young people in Churchill after high school (see Figure 2).

Aspects of Churchill to be Improved

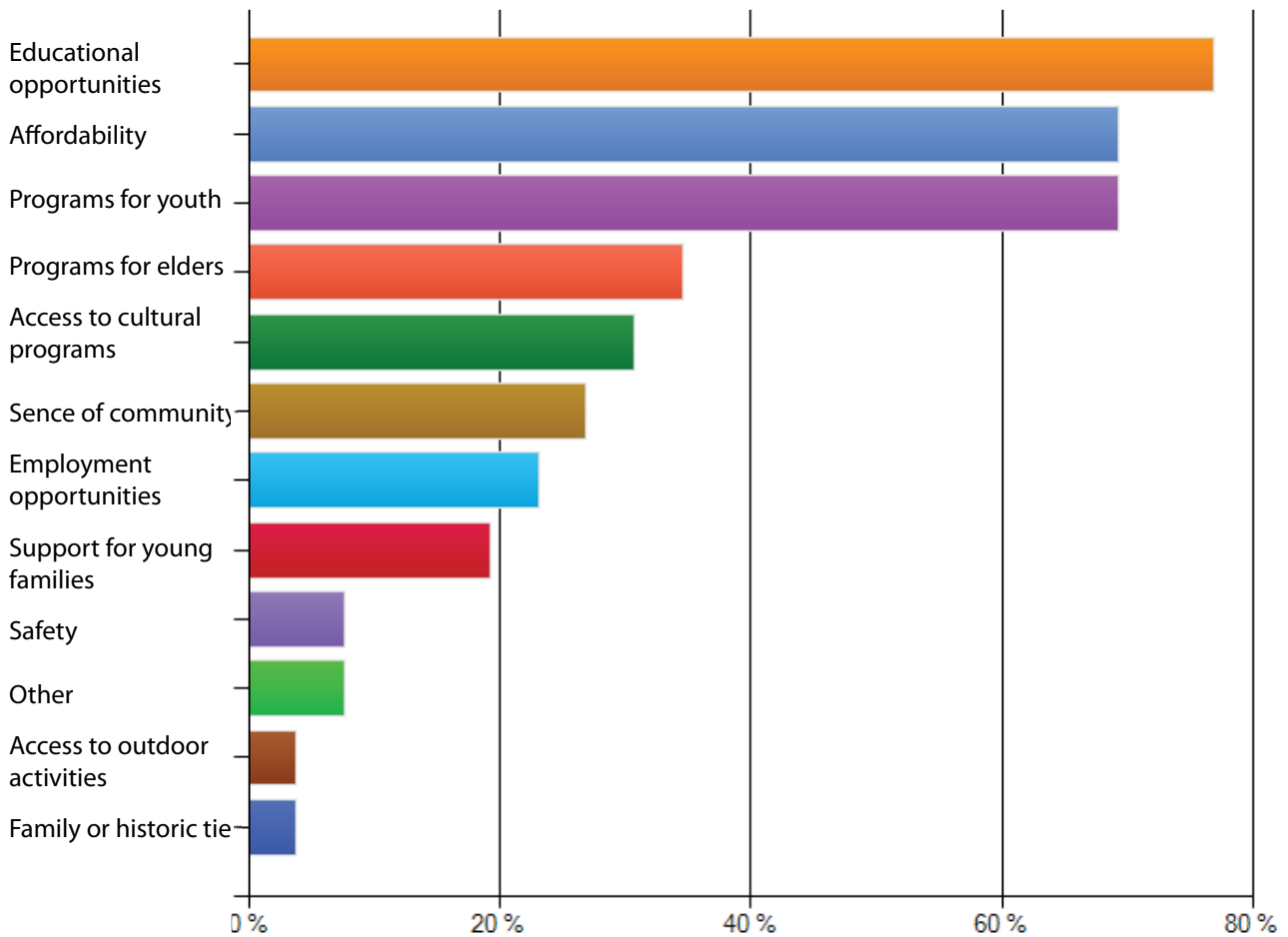


Figure 2. Q: What aspects of Churchill do you think should be improved?

The next section of questions is broken down into three parts, examining the top five priority areas for environmental sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability.

When asked to select their top five environmental sustainability priorities, respondents to the online survey mirrored the in-person participants. Waste management issues, such as improving the recycling program, upgrading waste services, and implementing a compost program were all at the top of the list, mentioned by 64%, 50%, and 41% of the informants, respectively. Community infrastructure, specifically improving water infrastructure services also rated high, mentioned by 50% of respondents, while protecting environmentally sensitive areas was supported by 55%. These areas, which represent the top five environmental priorities of online participants were also the highest priorities for the in-person surveys (see Figure 3).

Top Five Environmental Priorities

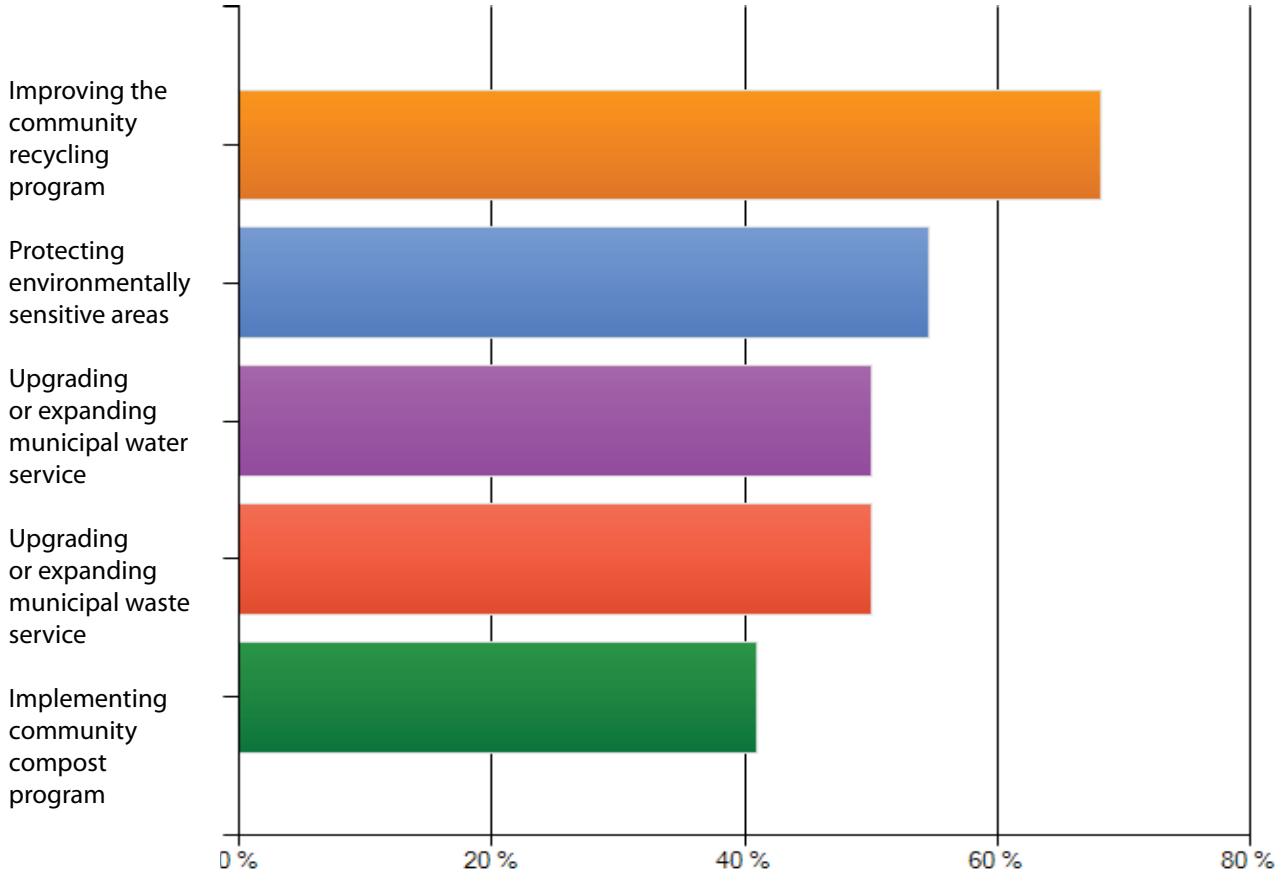


Figure 3. Environmental Priorities

Social priorities, again were in line with the in-person survey results – the overwhelming majority of informants (73%) indicated that the food security issue of access to affordable and healthy food was essential. Preserving community character and heritage, as well as addressing youth smoking, drinking and drug challenges were both listed by 55% as a top social priority. Also ranking high overall was the desire for recreational and active transportation infrastructure, as well as more diverse and affordable housing options. Both of these social priorities were identified by 50% of the online survey respondents. Each of the top five social priorities, ranked consistently with their in-person survey counterparts, with food security as the highest of the high social priorities, followed by housing (see Figure 4).

Top Five Social Priorities

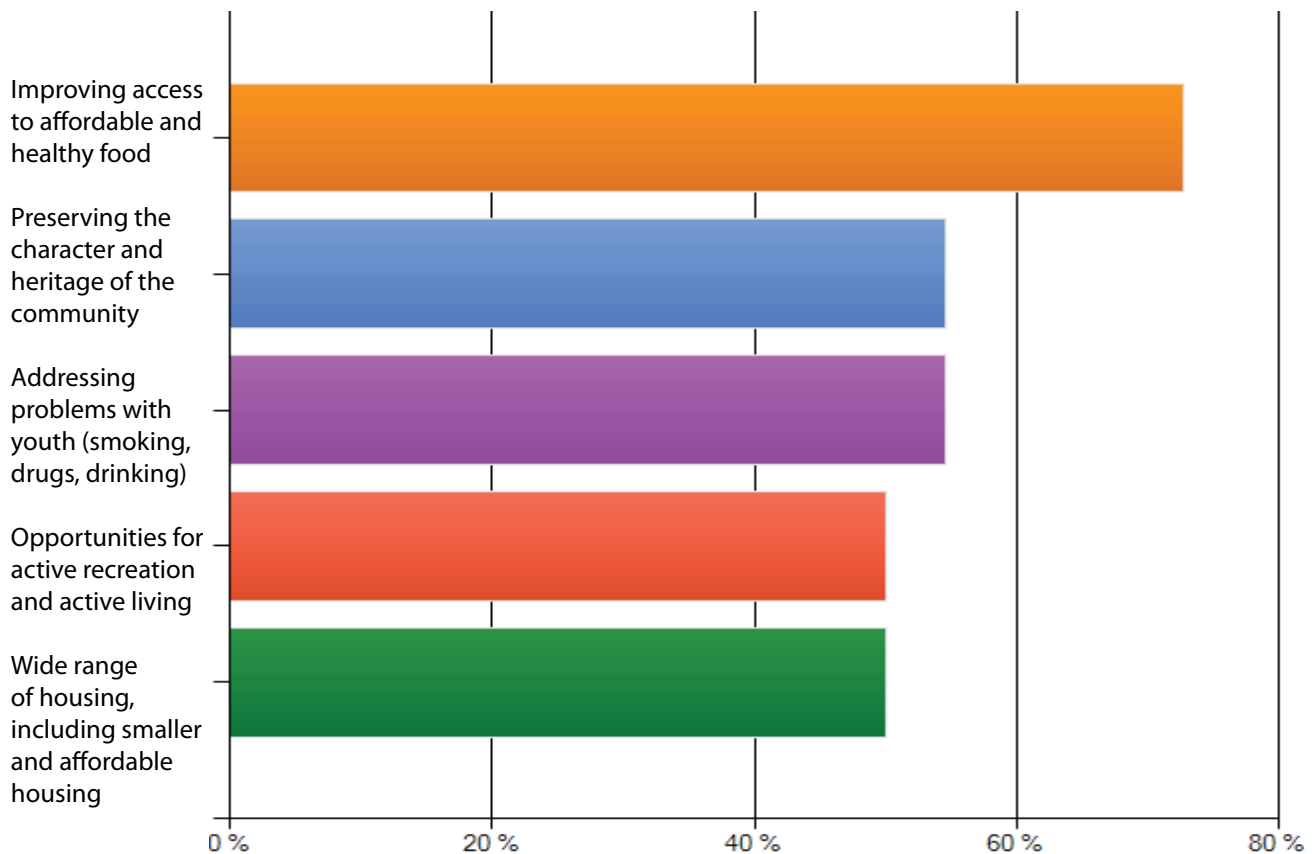


Figure 4. Social Priorities

The single most cited priority in the online study addressing economic sustainability was a desire for greater investment in transportation infrastructure (65%). In addition to roads, this includes rail lines, Port of Churchill and air line infrastructure. Several priorities were listed by just over half of respondents as being in their top five economic priorities. These included supporting local entrepreneurs through education, training and business mentoring; providing grants or tax incentives to help businesses stay and survive in the area; reducing poverty and unemployment; and developing existing economic sectors, such as international shipping and northern transportation hub. Compared to the in-person fielding of this study, the online version shares similar findings. Transportation infrastructure is a high economic priority, while all other priorities have broadly distributed support and tend to be of medium priority (see Figure 5).

Top Five Economic Priorities

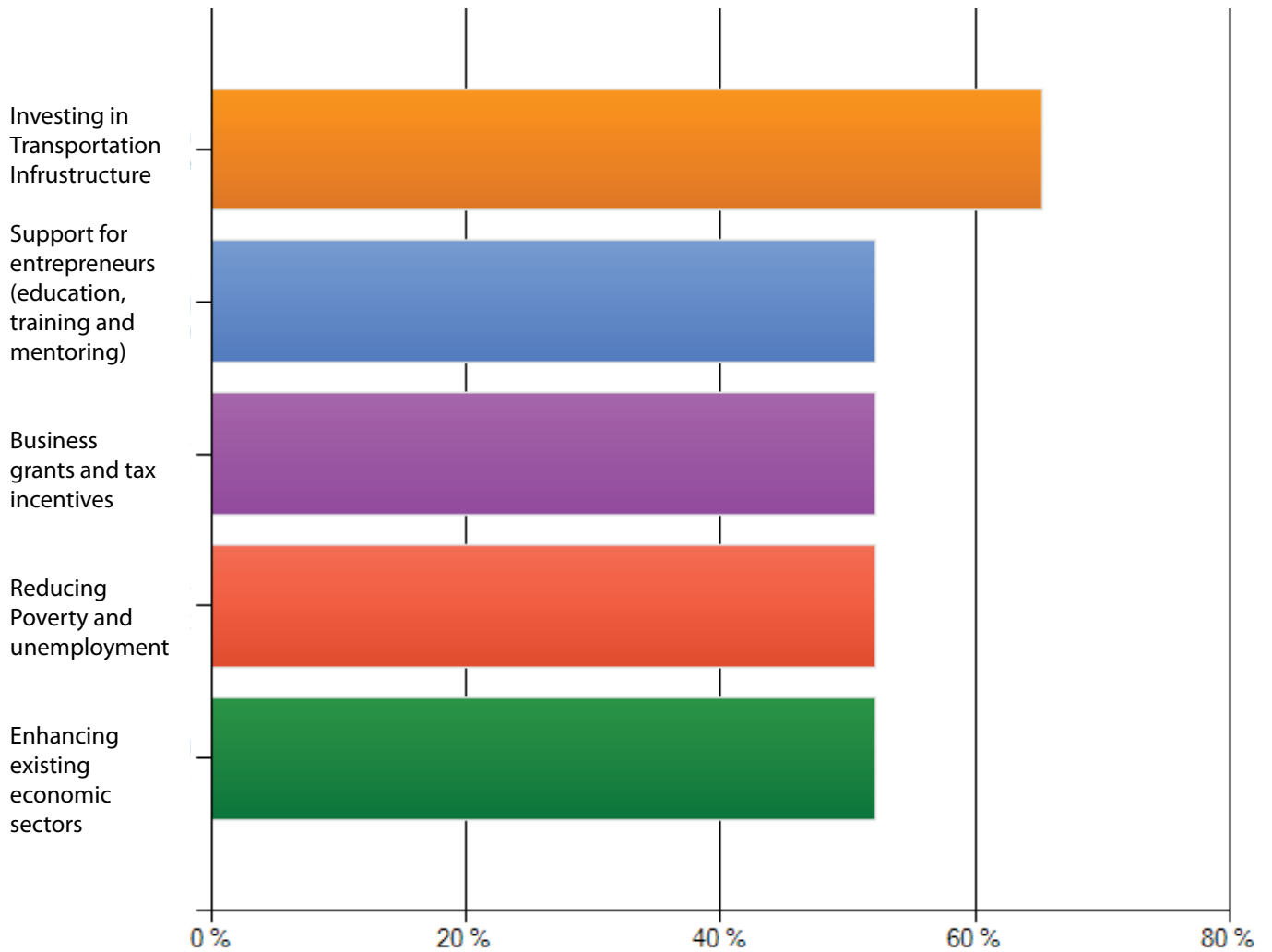


Figure 5. Economic Priorities

Overall, the results from the online administered survey reinforce and are consistent with those of the in-person study conducted in the spring of 2009. Both surveys find broad interest in greater educational and economic opportunities, greater affordability and improved food security, as well as improvements in transportation and waste management. One area where results differed was the respondent demographics, with a high percentage of women responding; when combined with the largely male participants of the in-person study the total sample is more representative of the Churchill population as a whole. The other contrast in findings surrounds the online survey participant's length of residency in Churchill, with the large majority (46%) of respondents having lived there for over 20 years.

2.3 Youth Engagement

On March 27th, 2009, researchers met with students at the Duke of Marlborough School in Churchill. There were two sessions, the first with approximately 22 students and four teachers from grades seven to nine, and the second with approximately 19 students and four teachers from grades 10 through 12. The purpose of the engagements was to:

- Introduce and explain the Churchill Sustainability Planning initiative;
- Gather input on the key issues facing youth and their effects;
- Prepare youth for long-term engagement in terms of future youth-oriented projects; and
- Generate ideas and begin the visioning process

Students from both groups were given an introduction to the project. The partnership between Churchill and the University of Winnipeg was discussed, as were the objectives to enhance the quality of life in the town by improving the ecological, economic and social conditions of Churchill. It was explained that the project was about creating the Churchill the students wanted to live in 20 years from now. Future steps and a timeline for the project were also provided.

2.3.1 Youth Engagement Session #1: Grades 7 to 9

All students were given a copy of the “Sustainable Churchill” brochure, and everyone participated in a general introductory discussion about the project (Who are we and what are we doing here?). Students were told that they were the experts, and were asked to name their favourite thing about living in Churchill. Answers included ski-doing, four-wheeling, polar bears, the elevator, Trapper John’s, the navy base, the “green building,” and paint-balling.

This was followed by a general discussion around the concept of sustainability, including the concept of “the three pillars” of sustainability. A general definition was provided: “Forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 2009)

After the general discussion, the students were broken into small groups of four or five students each, and each group was given an 8.5x11” map of Churchill. Students were asked the question: “What areas should we know about if we want to make Churchill sustainable?” Students were given approximately ten minutes to work, and then asked to report the places they had marked on their individual maps, and to mark them with a post-it note on the larger map of Churchill on the wall.

Answers varied from places that were very personal, to those that played more of a role in community life:

- the old dump – should be turned into a sno-cross/dirt-cross racing track
- the complex – (it is important because) a lot of people go there; hockey arena, gymnasium spend all our time here, playground, sense of gathering, the whole community can get together
- Gypsy's is where lots of people can go eat
- Northern Store – it's the only place to get food
- the bay – go there in summer, swimming, it's a good thing
- "Ladoon's castle" – it's a half-built hotel made of rocks
- the Flats – it's where people used to live in Churchill before it was Churchill
- the Anglican church – it's where we go to church
- the water treatment plant
- the house of the "cookie lady" – (a location many people identified with, a woman who apparently gives out free cookies to children)
- Goose Creek – good place to hunt geese and hang out
- "the boat" – (an abandoned boat on the shore that is used as a teen hang out)
- graveyard
- the river
- the train station

The mapping activity was followed by a quiz on the subject of sustainability. Finally, the concept of an ecological footprint was explored with an online activity.

2.3.2 Youth Engagement Session #2: Grades 10 to 12

The same process was followed with the older students as with the previous group. Instead of being asked what areas we should know about if we wanted to make Churchill sustainable, students were asked to tell us something they liked, or did not like, about living in Churchill.

Likes:

- It's away from the city
- It's calm and quiet
- There's a lot of open space
- Fresh air compared to the city
- The good tasting water
- The freedom and the geography
- The partying

Dislikes:

- It is isolated
- The small community
- No shopping
- There's not enough people – too small
- The prices at the Northern Store
- Need mail boxes

Following this, students were led through the same mapping exercise as in the first session. Places identified by people as important within the community include:

- The “party house” – apparently well-known location for parties.
- Trapper John's
- MB housing authority
- Liquor mart
- Beach
- The law – RCMP
- Complex
- Navy base – for paint ball
- Old dump – scrap metal
- Airport – so you can leave

While these places were indicated as being important to the youths, it was difficult determining for what reasons, and if these associations were entirely positive or negative. However, the youth consultation does highlight the different ways in which young people use and see their community. It is interesting to note, for example, that the places of interest for recreation or just “hanging out” (the boat, the graveyard, the dump, the treatment plant, the “party house” the “cookie lady” house) are unusual and probably not perceived as such by most adults. These locations speak to different environmental needs of young people – for novelty, for identity, for places to associate with others. As well, it is striking that the associations appear to be mostly positive – that the young people we spoke with appear to enjoy the open spaces, clean air and natural setting of the town. At the same time, some expressed frustration with the small size and isolation of Churchill.

The youth engagements demonstrate that there is a strong sense of place among Churchill's young people, and that further planning efforts will need to include them.

During the August-September consultation, Winnipeg Elder Thelma Meade and IUS Research Associate Susan Mulligan met with members of the Aboriginal/Inuit/Dene community in Churchill, most of whom were Elders.

Much of the consultation with community Elders related to the potential for an assisted living home with light housekeeping, medical attention, a common room and security. The main concern behind it was that something needed to be done for the elders who have special needs and who can't live at home alone anymore, but have no place to stay. As a result, some elders find themselves at the hospital for months at a time. A local committee is looking for a suitable building in which to house such a facility, and want to go to government for funding to renovate, but weren't able to find help so far.

Thelma advised them to do a Needs Analysis to determine how many people they needed to accommodate. Is life expectancy increasing? How long would people need such a residence? Then the committee would be in a better position to go to the federal government to see if they have a funding source for smaller communities.

The main question is whether or not there is the potential for cost-effective renovation within the community. Renovating an existing space with government funding will also likely require meeting government sustainability goals be part of the plan. Culturally-oriented programming should also be built in – the facility could have other uses, such as storytelling, youth and museum programming, for example.

A regional perspective might be necessary to make such a facility economically viable, as Churchill might not have sufficient numbers of seniors to justify the expense. It would need to service First Nations, Dene, Inuit, Aboriginal as well as non-native residents.

Another important issue in the consultation was getting Aboriginal residents more involved in community affairs. Thelma heard that youth seem disconnected, not so much from direct racism but from intergenerational apathy arising from discrimination. Indigenous cultures have largely been lost, but the young people don't express much concern about this; on the bright side, they mix with other young people well.

The participants reflected on the roots of this. Aboriginal, Dene and Inuit people were discriminated against for a long time, so they withdrew from the larger community, and had no sense of belonging. They have lived with a long history of being dominated by huge institutions – army, rocket base, and now Manitoba Housing. At a superficial level they became assimilated within mainstream white society,

but many don't have sufficient writing and communication skills to feel equipped to participate, and as a result don't feel equal. And they have to be able to feel they are able to participate.

Again, the major ethnic-racial groups within the community get along fairly well – but that's because the Aboriginal community doesn't really stand up for anything. Underlying tension will need to be addressed and reconciliation pursued before the community can move on to the future.

One of the major sources of this tension is the waterfront area known as the Flats. The Flats came up a lot. This area was once home to many Aboriginal families and the local whaling industry, and there is a sense that it still belongs to the community as a special place. Once families were evicted from the land in the 1970s, many people became alcoholic. Regaining legal access to the Flats is seen by many as an important part of restoring a greater sense of Indigenous culture.

Similarly, when Dene people were picked up from Tadoule Lake in the 1950s/ 60s and relocated into Churchill, they lost everything. They had been trappers, but then started drinking. Many died of disease and alcoholism, but survivors didn't know where their loved ones had been buried. When, years later, Dene people tried to find their loved ones to bury them properly, they needed to get oral history from someone who had been sober enough at the time to remember. The revival of the cemetery is seen as very significant.

One frequently-mentioned strategy for engaging youth is education and training, but it appears that many young people don't see the purpose for advanced education when there are no jobs for them in Churchill. There have been training programs that funded students and even paid them to attend. Still there was almost no interest. This was explained in terms of not only a lack of jobs, but the fact that, since there is lots of social housing, why bother getting a job? You don't need one to get into housing.

The sense that Thelma and Susan heard from their contacts is that young people can't see a picture of the future, so they don't participate. It's not that they're actually "content" with the way things are, but since their parents learned to become apathetic, it has become intergenerational. One of the results is that there is a very strong mentality of dependency in the local culture.

To address this culture of dependency, Aboriginal leaders would like to see more participation and a return to a stronger sense of cultural identity and political structures.

Indigenous economic development was another strategy mentioned. That is, if Aboriginal people can't be seen as equal by the mainstream society, they'll strike out on their own with their own ventures, as was the case in The Pas, where efforts have been so successful that now non-Aboriginal businesses want to participate.

Governance was also an important theme. The civic government is dominated by non-aboriginal members. There needs to be an Aboriginal champion for these issues, perhaps someone from outside of Churchill.

2.5 Public Consultation, August - September 2009

At the end of August, a team of researchers from the University of Winnipeg returned to Churchill for several public events and one-on-one interviews. These events were oriented to asking residents, What would a sustainable Churchill look like 5, 10, 20 years into the future? What measures, improvements and changes will help realize that vision? What values should guide the journey towards sustainability? The interviews and sessions were geared to identifying:

Churchill's community values: What is important to residents? What do they value in their community? What would they like to preserve? What would they like to build or create?

Churchill's sustainability principles: What would a sustainable community mean to Churchill's residents? What would a sustainable Churchill look like in the future?

The researchers based this consultation on themes previously identified by the local Sustainability Committee (see Discussion Paper):

1. Arts, Culture & Heritage
2. The Natural and Built Environment (including housing)
3. Education, Training & the Economy
4. Energy & Solid Waste
5. Health & Social Sustainability (including food security)
6. Transportation
7. Water quality & security
8. Recreation, Tourism & Leisure

Local residents were informed about the consultation through the distribution of a Sustainable Churchill newsletter in every mailbox, as well as radio ads and posters which were hung in key spots around town by municipal staff.

The opening night session introduced participants to the Sustainable Churchill initiative and its principles, as well as to the structure of the events to come. The full day Wednesday was devoted to an "open house" at the Town Centre Complex, as well as interviews held throughout the town. On a rotating basis, researchers were situated at Gypsy's and the Seaport restaurants with gift certificates, while others

walked through the town engaging passersby in interviews on a convenience basis. Wednesday also saw the researchers taken on a walking tour of the town.

Wednesday evening the researchers held the Community Visioning exercise, which was comprised of three major pieces: two “money games” in which participants prioritized issues using play money; a SWOT exercise identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats; and two mapping exercises. However, before describing the findings from these events, the report will outline the key themes emerging from interviews.

2.5.1 Interview Results

On both Tuesday and Wednesday, interviews were conducted in several locations, including the Town Centre Complex, the two restaurants and in various locations throughout the town. Participants were asked, What does sustainability mean to you? What do you like best about your community? What in your opinion are the most important issues facing the town? What would a sustainable Churchill look like 5 years from now? 10 years? 20 years?

The findings are classified and discussed below according to the previously identified major themes. They are presented verbatim as recorded and have not been rephrased, so it should be understood that they represent the opinions of Churchill residents and not the authors of this report. Note that the transportation theme is being dealt with separately in Section 2.6

Arts, Culture & Heritage

- History is an asset to the town; more Churchill history could be taught in schools
- The town could have been nothing, but the history and culture makes it.
- The military helped shape the town, now with the threat on arctic sovereignty, it may be prudent to bring them back.
- More arts/crafts, do-it-yourself programming is needed.

The Natural and Built Environment (including housing)

Natural Environment

- Need to create a culture of sustainability
- Environmental concerns regarding the quarry on the coastline of the bay
- Natural beauty an asset to Churchill - the land and the lifestyle keeps me here
- Challenges exist with wildlife and animals (i.e., polar bears)

- Many wild, harvestable berries in the region: crowberries, gooseberries, black currants, blueberries, cranberries, linden berries, strawberries, bear berries, cloud berries, buffalo berries.
- Tundra Buggy is working towards turning the Harbour Board Ponds into a birding area.
- Install dimmer switches on the streetlights in order to view the stars and northern lights.
- MB Hydro controls the river levels, which affects fish populations.

Built Environment

- Rich built heritage – many buildings in the community are left derelict when they could be a source of pride. But the old school needs to be torn down.
- Zoning and conservation regulations are inconsistent with each other, sometimes conflicting.
- There is a lot of space, but restrictions are imposed by town and prevent flexibility with uses.
- Land use regulations that do exist are not enforced.
- While there has been significant improvements in beautification, the Town still has poor aesthetics.
- Military facilities need to be reused.
- Have the facilities for a much larger town. Much potential for development.

Housing

- We need more private housing; there are not a lot of lots available.
- The income-based rent is unfair, making those with full time jobs pay more for the same housing as the underemployed.
- Private housing is too expensive. The cost of a bed and breakfast is speculated into every house
- There is no incentive to NOT live in subsidized housing.
- Condition of many Manitoba Housing units is poor; there is mold in some units. There needs to be renovations to the majority of the MB housing, both major and minor.
- A third of the housing is vacant.
- It is cheaper to live in our own house, and we can renovate to suit our needs.
- We need to tear down abandoned MB housing units and open them for private ownership.
- There needs to be better/more appropriate housing for seniors. Seniors are leaving because they have no services, housing.
- Transition housing is needed, as new residents are sometimes without housing because of the waiting period for MB Housing and lack of private options.
- If you build condos, people will have equity in their housing. More stable residency.

Education, Training & Employment

- Need for more local mentoring and teaching from community members.
- Expansion of skills training would be useful, especially in practical areas. This includes health care training (nurses), or trade skills (plumbers).
- There is a poor quality of education for young adults. People leave because of a lack of opportunity, or higher education. We need more educational opportunities.
- Lots of high school students leave to go elsewhere. There isn't the capacity for sporting teams and athletic training.
- We need meaningful jobs. People would like to see some more trade jobs; Year round work, not just seasonal.
- There are lots of jobs for people but they go unfilled. Business owners have to do a lot of the work themselves. One business owner said, "I have concerns about the work ethic and dependability of the local workforce".
- People leave because of the high cost of living or lack of higher education opportunities.
- Offering vocational trades training is a huge opportunity for the community. Make Churchill a hub for trade schools in the north, servicing northern MB and Nunavut. E.g., carpentry, electrical and plumbing.
- We try to hire locals, but sometimes not enough or appropriate locals to fill the jobs.
- Make northern Manitoba more accessible to students; very few researchers at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre are from MB.
- Qualifications for daycare are unrealistic and financially crippling. Some people have to stay at home until they get services, then lose their job during the wait.
- Need to attract families, not just single workers.
- There is an opportunity to create a marine biology lab on stilts in the harbour.
- Possibility to offer scholarships that would ensure workers came back to Churchill for 4 years, contracts.
- Open some sort of training program in Churchill where students in Churchill and other northern communities can go to learn how to do those trade jobs listed above. They get hands-on experience by working on old buildings and housing complexes in Churchill. Once finished the program the people from other northern communities return and are able to fix and maintain the housing complexes in their own towns.
- More jobs for kids.
- Need local skills, so experts do not need to be flown in. Professionals that come should host seminars / training nights to help teach the skills that they bring to the town.

Economic activities

- Big opportunities if a hydro line is developed off Baker Lake.
- Having a book store would be nice.
- People would also like to see a marine biology lab built on Hudson bay.
- No cell phones -- keep it that way.
- Businesses should not charge inflated prices; more business competition (i.e. Northern Store) to drop local prices. More commercial business would be good. There needs to be more incentives for creating a new business/moving up to Churchill.
- Challenges with small tax base and assessments – big break for Omnitrax, but none for residents; wonder where the money is going.
- Lobster/crab fishing industry remains untouched.
- The old naval base could be used as a fish farm for arctic char, pike, etc.
- High cost of living – should rewrite northern living allowance for private companies to even the playing field. (i.e. – private company employees should qualify for northern living allowance).
- Churchill has recently dropped below a sustainable population threshold.
- A free community freezer for meats would be appreciated. 10% of the meats could go to the elders.
- Free port. No taxes for holding. Port of Churchill could be used for imports, rather than just grain exports.
- Passenger cruise ships to Port of Churchill.
- Develop the waterfront. Possibility for a hotel.
- Old navy base: make it into a fish farm for local and commercial export, use the lake in the area for a fish farm and pump water from the river into the lake, and back out. Types of fish: jack, pickerel and char.

Energy & Solid Waste

Energy

- Government has acted as a barrier to using wind power, historically dismissing its use.
- The price of fuel is too high. Gas gets shipped once a year, so the price is fixed for that entire year. The quality of gas needs to be monitored. If there is a contaminated batch, it can ruin all of the cars in town.
- There is a potential for both solar and wind power in Churchill. Sell back to MB hydro.
- Since utilities are included in rent, there is no incentive to save energy.

Solid Waste

- Much of the town is left in a mess but doesn't have a solution. Clean up some of the junk around the town.
- Public works building and other high profile residents' properties are slowly spreading garbage across the region. Opportunity to follow example of Tundra Buggy by cleaning up their vehicles and other unused materials.
- The dump is a big issue. All of the waste from the rail line ends up in Churchill (Palettes, boxes, etc.). Town money is wasted on the dump and recycling. There is little confidence that the town is actually treating garbage and recycling differently.
- Construction of a bike dump may be an option for recycling and for children's activities. An in-town bike dump would be much safer, then having the kids leave town.
- More needs to be done to encourage composting.
- Put dimmers switches on the streetlights in Churchill so when the northern lights are out you can dim them.

Health & Social Sustainability (including food security)

Social dynamics and community character

- We moved back to Churchill for the closeness and community. Locals do not feel isolated, they enjoy the remoteness. It is a very safe community due to no roads coming into the community. Low instances of crime because of the low population and difficulty of access.
- Can always find money for projects and initiatives – there is good financial support from the community. The volunteer pool is too small. There is a lack of respect or recognition for volunteer contributions.
- There is an aversion to change in the town. There is a fear of being the first one to do something new. Churchillians are their own worst enemy; they don't believe in the opportunities around them and have a negative attitude towards change.
- This is a good place for a young family to start.
- We need a better gender balance in the town.
- Gossip is a problem, especially in winter when people stay inside more. Gossip drives people out.
- Churchill is quiet and has a slower pace than the city. We enjoy the seclusion.
- People come into town with pipe dreams and want to change everything.
- Everybody is the same here; there are no class distinctions, everyone is a neighbour.
- When the military was in town, it was horrible for the locals; the army thought they owned the place.
- The people and sense of community are big strengths in Churchill.

- Churchill appeals to newcomers and is friendly to new residents. But it can take years before someone is considered a local. People don't forge relationships with those who might leave.
- There is a sense that the large families control everything in the town. The Ladies Club, council and home ownership are considered real status symbols.

Governance and Leadership

- There is a need for greater cooperation between all levels of local organization, especially from council.
- There is a disconnect between council and the community. The political will to get things done is weak.
- We need for a new slate on council – but good people get ridiculed.
- Council doesn't listen and will call people stupid.
- We are lacking leadership for ideas. There is a reluctance for the leadership to try new ideas in fear that they will fail. Feeling that if one is critical of government (any level) that you'll get nothing from them.
- Local attitudes and sense of responsibility are low. The lowest participation is from those who are the biggest complainers.
- There is a high level of apathy because its always the same old thing – lots of talk without action.
- Churchill has a lot of people who will just get up and do what needs to be done, and do it persistently. Those who are involved, are involved in many things and often spreading themselves thin. The ambitious are overloaded.
- Accountability for past mistakes a concern (i.e. environment, health, military leftovers)
- We really need to enforce seat belts, driving safety, vehicle registration.
- In general, there needs to be slightly better law enforcement in the town.

Health Care

- Quality of health care is an asset. Health care itself is good, and RHA sets good example by promoting their employees to their highest ability. However, prevention is not given enough attention.
- Need for improved health care, especially more family doctors. Medical supports and services should be permanent rather than rotating through town.
- There is no dentist here.
- Churchill has gotten used to poor services. Drugs and alcoholism are bad problems. MLCC needs to enforce cutoffs.
- High levels of cancer might be linked to chemical spraying in the 50s and 60s.
- Mental health cases are under diagnosed in town.

- Many cases of S.A.D. And many more people get sick in winter because they are contained inside.
- We need more family doctors.
- No more drugs!

Food Security

- Food is too expensive, especially for basic goods; they say it is because of shipping costs, but they (Northern Store) also have a monopoly, and do not provide a lot choice.
- Bottle of rye the same price across the province, but a bottle of milk is double or triple the cost. Alcohol prices are the same as in Winnipeg, but milk is four times the price.
- We need better food in the stores; fruit is always too ripe; need different choices.
- The quality of produce right now is atrocious. Needs better/cheaper ways to import. Much more junk food in store than healthy food. "It's cheaper to eat out than buy groceries."
- Competition for Northern Store is needed – but Northern does deserve credit for keeping things open.
- Sustainability would involve growing own food. Especially if the young were involved, as the older couple who grow their own food are getting old and won't expand.
- Is there a possibility for a large scale public greenhouse? Diane's greenhouse is a good size. Starting a co-op grocery store has been discussed a lot by community, but has not been tried.
- Community freezer: local people use a freezer for their meats to cut them up and freeze them. This would be a non profit organization, and 10% of your meat has to go to the elders.
- The biggest problem is cheaper and fresher produce. Healthy food is just too expensive. Pop and chips are cheaper so that's what people buy for food.

Water quality & security

- Water quality is fantastic. The sewer system needs work.
- Maintaining what we've already got is an issue, such as sewage and water; issues are ongoing and not dealt with quickly. Why are we putting rocks on the street, but not dealing with the real infrastructure issues.
- We have water main breaks for long periods of time without repair

Recreation, Tourism & Leisure

Recreation & Leisure

- Scouting programs continue since 1940s, despite ebbs and flows of participation.

- Supported by cooperative efforts between many agencies.
- In-kind contributions of reused materials, buildings from different donors from across the US, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- Supported by community fundraising, and foundations.
- Many recreational opportunities available, and highly cooperative and the ground level (i.e. hockey, skating, scouting).
- Unless one is already involved in an activity, there is little active support from the community.
- Need for improved recreation. For children and youth: more community activities, more kids programs, reopen the ice-cream store, and have a late night location where kids can just hang out and play, pinball etc...
- The culture of sporting has declined – there is no traveling for sports anymore – kids are getting used to doing nothing.
- The bowling alley upgrade is exciting, but when will it happen?
- The town had its highest level of community activity during last Liquor Commission strike.
- We are limited in our activity choices.
- People like the idea of the new Churchill Northern Studies Centre.

Tourism

- Opportunity for an outdoor, walkable community museum telling the history of the community (i.e., 'crimson route').
- There are way too many people during bear season; the town caters to tourists more than the townsfolk during tourist season. Tourism really hasn't changed in the past 20 years. Need fancier/ 5-star hotels for tourists. Quality standards for bed & breakfast industry would be beneficial. Opportunity to embrace tourism by 'serving ourselves in order to serve the world'; improving our town for ourselves will serve tourism.
- A lot of things done in this town are done for tourists, but not for residents. Town not put together for local people, but for tourists. Everyone (tourism operators) wants to do everything rather than work together; everyone thinks they know everything. Everyone cuts into each other.
- Tourists don't act safely – don't respect boundaries of bears/skidoos/etc.
- There is a divide between the 'elite' and 'ma & pa' tourism.
- Tourism pays for the rest of the year that I love, including winter.

Indigenous Knowledge

- Immense knowledge of brewing, making juices, and creating preserves such as jams, etc.

- All cultures need to be shared.
- When people were evicted from the flats back in the 1970s, they lost touch with their traditions. The people who live on the Flats now are non-status.
- People seemed to be pretty engaged with arts, culture.

2.6 Transportation

Given the Town's remote location, transportation issues touch almost every aspect of the Town's social and economic life. Between linkages to the south, freight, air, rail and personal local travel, Churchill residents had many observations on a number of issues and how these could be addressed.

2.6.1 Fuel Prices

Participants mentioned a number of affordability issues related to transportation. Residents are typically dissatisfied with high gas prices. As of early September 2009 diesel fuel prices in Churchill were fifty-two to sixty-seven cents higher per litre than in Winnipeg. It is not unheard of for shipments of fuel to arrive which are incompatible with vehicles in the area – possibly due to high water content – causing engine problems. One possible solution was the addition of a CO-OP gas station and grocery store to the Churchill business community. This business would add diversity to the local business community while offering small levels of competition for food and gas prices.

2.6.2 Port of Churchill

Several of the comments related to the condition of the Port, which was constructed some 80 years ago. Much of the glasswork in the buildings could be replaced. Many of the Canadian Wheat Board's grain hopper cars are old and empty. These cars have traditionally been saved for bumper crop seasons. It is when these grain cars are used for shipping to Churchill that many of the derailments occur. The dredging of the Churchill River immediately around the Port would allow for a deeper draught of boats to enter the channel, potentially broadening the market served. The collection and storage of grain generates a significant amount of dust. While this waste can be shipped back to farmers as feed, the cost of this is prohibitive as the track owned by Hudson's Bay Rail Way ends at the Pas. The wetting of this dust with vegetable oil would mean that it too could be shipped abroad or to other Canadian Ports.

When Port of Churchill was shipping vast quantities of grain with little automation, additional workers required housing near the facilities. Full automation and reduced shipping amounts has meant that these facilities are left vacant. Five of the portable units have been recycled for a work camp at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre. The retrofitting of staff houses and portable housing units is a potential source of new facilities in Churchill. Small amounts of grain are left over from every shipment – could this residual grain be utilized for local bakery production?

Indeed, many residents of Churchill recognize the Port as a large asset for the town. Several residents hope for greater use of the port which in turn would benefit Churchill. There is a hope that more and more of the ships entering the port arrive loaded with goods, not just departing with grain.

2.6.3 Air Travel

Air travel was another area of concern. Similar to the experiences of many northern communities, Churchill suffers from high air travel costs. Residents are dissatisfied with rising air fares from Churchill to Winnipeg over the past few years. Individuals who reside in Kivalliq region communities like Arviat or Rankin Inlet can spend hundreds of dollars commuting every month. Fortunately, medical-related travel expenses for all Churchill residents are covered by the Northern Patient Transportation Program. More affordable air fares would allow these older residents to remain in Churchill. To mitigate the high cost of transportation residents stated their wish, in addition to subsidized housing, for subsidized transportation costs.

2.6.4 Rail Travel

Residents recognized the importance of and their essential dependence on the Hudson Bay Railway. One community member stated that there was no sense in promoting tourism without a quality rail line to ship supplies or passengers. Some residents were critical of the rail line and its operation. There appears to be some dissatisfaction with the rail line and port being under foreign ownership. Some residents complained that “the rail line is a joke as it is always broken” and to certain Churchill residents it appears that Federal subsidies have not gone towards upgrading the railway. Residents commented that improved freight lines would allow for larger pool car operations and greater transport capacity. Throughout consultations residents also remarked that the lack of support of the Canadian Wheat Board from the Progressive Conservatives has hurt grain shipping to Churchill.

2.6.5 Freight

The ability to get affordable goods shipped into Town plays into many other social and economic issues. Community consultations indicated that reasonable food prices depend on the interplay between the three key freight businesses. As stakeholders in the Churchill shipping industry Omnitrax, Gardewine North, and the Northern Store are seen to have undue control over the prices of goods. While increases in pricing structures on the part of individual stakeholders associated with shipping may be small, increases by all three stakeholders have the combined impact of rising food prices dramatically. Due to limited competition for shipping in Churchill, some residents were sceptical of Gardewine North’s relative control over the shipping of goods into the region.

Many residents wish that basic supplies were more affordable. Items like toilet paper display inflated prices associated with the costs of shipping space-intensive, light-weight products. Discussions with residents of Churchill also highlighted that there is a seven day cycle when ordering food supplies. If a train is delayed – derailed or stuck in snow - the perishable goods on board will go bad. Thus there is a two-week turn around for new perishable goods to enter the Churchill market; a significant amount of time for residents to be without fresh foods. These shortages may be exacerbated by hoteliers and restaurants when large quantities of these perishable goods are bought during these periods of scarcity.

One resident proposed the idea of using large military planes, or dirigibles, for shipping goods to Churchill which would free the railway tracks to focus on grain transportation.

2.6.6 Active Transportation

In terms of active transportation (AT), residents purchase bicycles both locally or online, while some youths build their own bikes using parts found around the town. Many of the young people we spoke to were excited about the concept of a facility where old bikes could be stored, disassembled, and have parts reused. It was stated that while there are many used bikes at the dump, many of these frames and wheel rims are bent beyond repair. A better, simpler storage facility closer to town would allow the used bicycles to stay in better condition while being more accessible to the younger segments of the population. A visual survey confirms that most people do not lock their bikes up.

Consultations explained how pedestrian accessibility and town walkability is significantly affected by northern conditions. As the polar bear capital of the world, pedestrian activity in Churchill is influenced and confined by the presence of these large predators. Automobiles doors and homes through Churchill are left unlocked to give residents shelter should a polar bear come through town. Manitoba Conservation officers patrol the perimeter of Churchill to ward off bears. The fear of polar bears appears as a determinate for residents' travel patterns. What could be short walking trips around the region are made instead by personal vehicles. Travel through the sub-arctic country side by foot is frowned upon unless you have access to a firearm. Nuisance flies and mosquitoes also limit the appeal of walking.

2.6.7 Personal Vehicles

In addition to cars and trucks, many people get around locally using all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or snowmobiles. Informal consultations indicated that many residents of Churchill do not feel the need to license these vehicles. Complaints were made by some residents regarding the high number of abandoned and dilapidated vehicles left throughout the community. There was a desire from these residents to create a waste scrappage or pick up program which would take these vehicles out of the immediate vicinity of the town.

2.6.8 Road Development

Public consultations in Churchill highlighted the town's interest – both positive and negative – in a new road connecting Churchill to Gillam. There appears to be a slight generational divide in how the road is perceived. Younger residents favour road construction while older residents are more sceptical of the benefits. All residents we spoke to held either positive or negative opinions about road construction.

Criticisms of a new road take several forms including: logistical, environmental impacts, safety, and quality of life issues in Churchill. Regarding logistics, it is argued that a new road would cross too many waterways making large demands on construction costs and time spent conducting environmental impact assessments. Moreover, Churchill would lose its Northern Remote Allowance once it is connected by road to Gillam. Safety issues could be encountered along the road with tourists not knowing how to properly interact with wildlife, particularly polar bears. Any new road construction must therefore seek ways to mitigate harm to sub arctic ecosystems. A new road would also make the region around Churchill more accessible to hunters. Finally there are concerns over a road making Churchill more vulnerable to gangs and drugs.

Some feel that the isolation of the town is what makes it so special. As one Churchill resident said, "If my kid goes missing, I have two places to check...the airport and the train station."

The arguments from proponents of a new road in Churchill are centred on the associated economic opportunities and greater freedom of travel. A new road may benefit regional economic development in terms of assisting mining, the port, and increasing tourism. One Churchill resident remarked that, "People travel to Inuvik just because it's at the end of the road." The road would also increase competition within Churchill specifically in the freight shipping sector. A new road would free up the rail lines to focus exclusively on the shipping of grain. Some residents hope that this new competition would lead to cheaper food and goods prices in Churchill. Road construction would also ease transportation costs for Churchill residents as they are no longer forced to cover the high costs associated with air and rail transportation.

Many residents, both in favour and against the construction of the road, feel that it is an inevitable process that will dramatically alter the community of Churchill.

2.7 SWOT Analysis

As a group, the participants at the Visioning event were asked to identify those themes and issues that they felt represented Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats (see Figure 6). Then they were encouraged to think of ways of linking these – so to think of some opportunity to address a weakness, and if there were some potential barrier or threat to doing so.

This exercise demonstrated that there is a great deal of pride in place and confidence in Churchill, its people, its businesses and its institutions.

However, the barriers to economic, social and environmental sustainability are many, and range from a lack of financial resources to the underlying economics of doing business in the north. The means by which these barriers might be overcome (i.e., the opportunities) are equally numerous. Some of these ideas require direct government intervention to address inequities and increase levels of investment and programming (such as addressing the Northern Allowance), while others require the development of a greater level of capacity among Churchill residents.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Cultural diversity Generosity Safety Community Pride Recreation Facilities Recreation for youth	a) Lack of celebration/ awareness of indigenous people and culture b) Lack of privacy c) Community involvement	a) Stronger cultural education and indigenous knowledge in schools b) Heritage centre in school or town centre c) Engagement to get people out in the evening d) Turning off TV	

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Small population b) Shortage of labour c) Lack of skills and technology d) Lack of trades training (i.e. journeymen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) More promotion of employment opportunities b) Advertising – related to attracting population c) Federal/prov subsidies d) Lobby to increase northern allowance e) Lobby for equitably distributed northern allowance (small employers don't offer it) f) groom youth to take over – we all know each other g) Mentor h) Colleges, contract training i) Collective community training with Nunavut j) Incentives for entrepreneurship k) Mentorship for youth 	Lack of economic diversity
Existing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of diverse industry b) Lack of small businesses c) Overpriced oil market d) Too much competitiveness 		Different players blame each other for existing problems
Access to facilities	Infrastructure	Redevelopment/ renewal of town to encourage trades	
	Lack of private development/ housing	Aging housing stock redevelopment, staged incrementally, and yearly	

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Beautification - 1st impressions b) Waste management c) Junkyards d) Bugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environmental beautification b) Analysis by outsider c) Playground adoption d) Landscaping e) Town cleanup f) Buck-a-bag g) Friends of the forest h) Murals and painting sidewalks or rocks i) Beautification strategy; survey of tourists, residents on what needs improvement j) Marine tourism k) Environmental research 	Severe junk heaps
Bond with Nunavut	Cost of Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Partners north of Churchill need to be invested in business sense b) Co-op grocery 	
Geographic Location for transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accessibility of choices b) General transportation c) Airfare costs d) Condition of rail system e) Too much greed in freight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) VCN could deliver, despite low numbers b) CentrePort opportunities/ synergies with Port of Churchill c) Build all-weather road d) RV rental and spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Huge land use implications for road b) Montreal route cheaper c) Hazards of long road travel d) Potentially lose VIA if road built
RHA facility	Staff shortage in health care		

Figure 6: SWOT Analysis

2.8 “The Money Game”

The public consultation Wednesday evening commenced and concluded with an exercise known as “the Money Game.” Using stacks of slips of paper representing denominations of \$10,000, the participants were asked to distribute their allotment into envelopes representing the categories identified by the local Sustainability Committee and reproduced in the table below. While the participants were led through the SWOT analysis and mapping exercises, staff tallied the results. At the end of the evening, the game was run again, and the results compared (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Money Game: Churchill, Wednesday, September 2, 2009

Part 1 (n=17)		Part 2 (n=21)	
1. Energy & Solid Waste	\$490,000	1. Health & Social Sustainability	\$510,000
2. Education, Training & Economy	\$410,000	2. Education & Training	\$480,000
3. Health & Social Sustainability	\$320,000	3. Energy & Solid Waste	\$480,000
4. Transportation	\$290,000	4. Arts & Indigenous Knowledge	\$460,000
5. Water & Security	\$250,000	5. Water & Security	\$350,000
6. Arts, Culture & Heritage	\$210,000	6. Transportation	\$330,000
7. Natural & Built Environment	\$210,000	7. Recreation & Tourism	\$270,000
8. Recreation & Tourism	\$190,000	8. Natural & Built Environment	\$260,000
9. Indigenous Knowledge	\$170,000		
	\$2,540,000		\$3,140,000

Part of the process involved determining if the categories were appropriate. Some participants pointed out that the distinction made between Indigenous Knowledge and Arts, Culture & Heritage might have resulted in a reduction of resources to these areas. Arguing that these should be combined into a category called “Arts & Indigenous Knowledge”, participants then allocated \$460,000 to it -- \$80,000 more than had been the case for the two separate categories. This also resulted in every category seeing a substantial increase in what was allocated to it.

Interestingly, Energy & Solid Waste, which was the top priority in the first game, became the third place priority in the second game, while the former third place category of Health and Social Sustainability came in first. By contrast, “Recreation and Tourism” was consistently second-last in both games, and the “Natural and Built Environment” was similarly a low priority each time.²

2. It should be noted that \$10,000 were found to be missing in each run of the game.

2.9 “Planning for Real”

In the latter half of the session, participants were shown a Regional Map and a map of the town site. They were asked to identify those areas, places and institutions that corresponded to the scheme of the SWOT analysis.

Town Map

1. Port Outdoor Museum - Opportunity
2. York Factory FSL (Free Simple Land) – Opportunity
3. Trade school training centre – Opportunity
4. Small Businesses – Opportunity
5. Coop Store – Opportunity
6. Remove Old School Building – Weakness / Opportunity
7. Children’s Centre and Elder’s Second Stage Housing (Assisted Living) – Opportunity
8. Arts + Culture Centre – Opportunity
9. Sled Launch / Ice Climbing Wall – Opportunity
10. Mantayo Sepee Meskanow (the street where the Parks Canada’s Visitor Centre is located) – (unidentified)
11. Rail Outdoor Museum – Opportunity
12. Aboriginal Community – Flats – Opportunity
13. Wildlife Park – Opportunity
14. Cultural Centre / Heritage Centre – Opportunity
15. Housing Co-op – Opportunity
16. Historical Street Signs – Opportunity / Strength
17. Co-op Gas – Opportunity
18. Hudson Bay Helicopter should go back to the Airport; having helicopters come and go from their current location on Kelsey Blvd. is an unnecessary noise disturbance – Opportunity.
19. Hudson Bay Helicopter spent 40K+ on their building (leveling, utilities) to improve it this summer and they have also expanded their helicopter pads in recent years...Moving to the airport would actually make them decrease their business.
20. Industries – Opportunity
21. Rail View – Improve how it looks! – Opportunity / Threat
22. Walkway Covered - Opportunity
23. Natural Habitat Centre (Path) – Opportunity
24. Navy Base Removed – Opportunity / Threat
25. Find a use for navy base – Opportunity

Interestingly, almost every feature identified was seen by participants to represent an Opportunity or a Strength. The few Weaknesses or Threats were old, abandoned buildings such as the school and the old Navy base. Clearly there is a common sense of great potential and pride of place among participants.

Regional Map

Throughout the consultation, residents of Churchill were asked to label important places and modes of travel on a regional map. Figure 8 details the locations, routes, and modes of travel from residents.

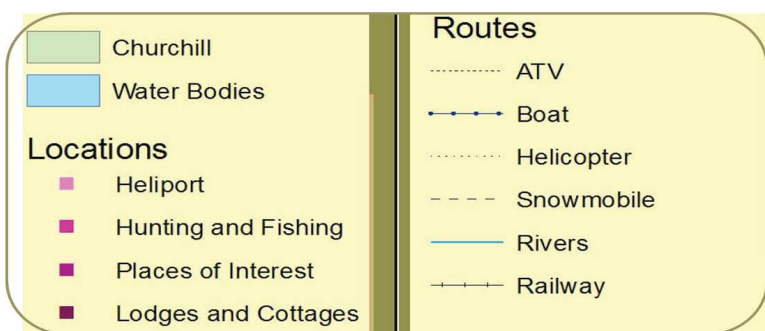
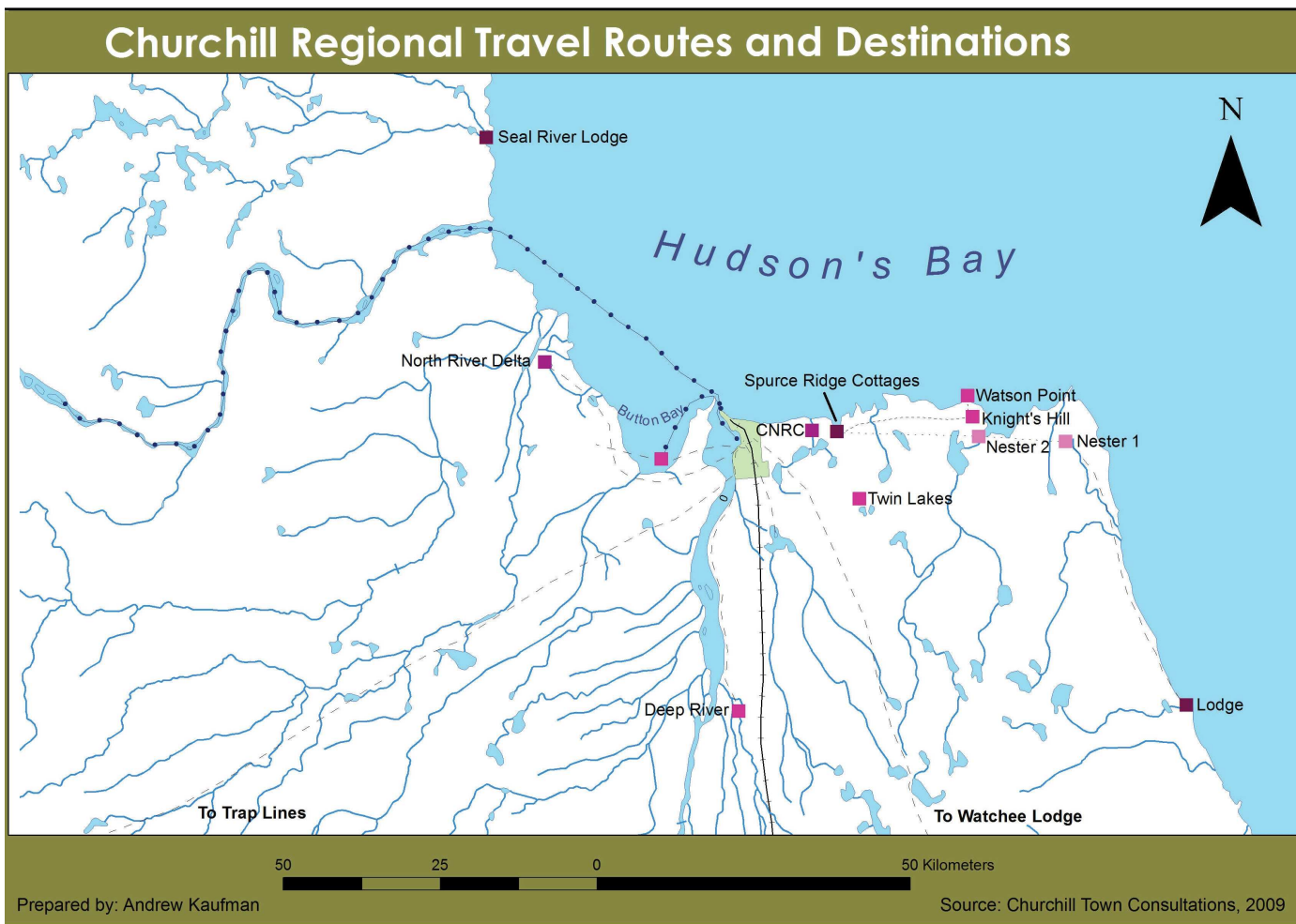


Figure 8: Regional Travel Routes and Destinations

A number of locations were identified as 'important places' for the residents of Churchill. Twin Lakes was described by one resident as having the best cranberries and mushrooms in the area. Twin Lakes is also home to a moose calving area. Watson Point and Knight's Hill are important places some residents travel to for caribou hunting. Nester 1 and Nester 2 serve as migratory bird watching stations and fuel caches. A few residents snowmobile to Deer River and Warkworth Lake in March for ice fishing and hunting. Watchee Lodge is an area frequented by polar bear cubs, and provides opportunities for tourists to view female polar bears and their young in the wild. Button Bay is a prime location to fish for arctic char and shellfish. Residents may travel to this area by boat in the summer or by snowmobile in winter. Hunters travel to the area directly south from Diamond Lake in the spring and fall to hunt geese.

From the exercise it was determined that some residents travel up to 250km away from Churchill by snowmobile for the purposes of trapping and hunting. It appears that the majority of regional travel occurs by snowmobile or by boat. Shorter trips are made in warmer periods by ATV's. A large portion of trips made appear to relate to hunting, fishing, and trapping.

1. Coastal Scenery – Strength
2. Port History – Opportunity
3. Rail History – Opportunity
4. Aboriginal History / Traditional Land Use - Strength
5. Overkill on huge rocks all over the place. No need for excess. - Threat
6. Outdoor Museum Network – Ft. Churchill, Port, Rail-range – Opportunity
7. Train Stone Masons / Artisans to finish half built hotel – Opportunity
8. Partnering with Nunavut (up arrow) – Opportunity
9. Increased Marketing to Bird Watching – Opportunity
10. Expansion of sandpit destroying the shore line – Threat
11. Fort History - Opportunity
12. Shortage of health care professionals = no longer able to give birth in town = high costs! – Weaknesses
13. Ability of the Health Authority to perform endoscopic procedures (less invasive surgeries through scope) – Opportunity
14. RHA as model for health care in remote locations – Strength
15. Clean up Rocket Range and build museum – Opportunity
16. Wind Generation (positive and negative) – Opportunity / Threat

Again, at the Regional scale, there were many more opportunities than there are threats. However, these designations are not to be seen as reason for complacency; indeed quite the opposite. They are seen as places where something needs to be done or could be done with existing assets to make the Town better, and without such attention the place in question could easily become a weakness or a threat.

3.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The above results, and where applicable direct observation data, reveal several trends in the perceptions residents have toward sustainability in Churchill. Most resident concerns center on social issues in the community, as evidenced from the four top factors to be improved in Churchill. Affordability, educational opportunities, programs for youth and elders each relate to quality of life, which is the basis of social issues. By contrast, the SWOT analysis results were much more concerned with the Town's economic sustainability, with a lack of economic diversity and affordability emphasized. The Money Game results reflected more fine-grained results, with top priorities including health and social sustainability and arts and culture.

Just over 60 in-person survey responses prioritized developing/expanding existing industry and providing tax incentives to local businesses, suggesting a strong interest in supporting local, existing economic activity. Improving the local economy was also a significant priority in the online survey, which strongly supported greater investments in education as an economic development strategy. Similarly, interview participants called for an expansion of skills training. Given the state of the existing pool of human resources it is sometimes necessary to bring in workers from outside the community to meet the needs of the existing economy. "Almost all business in Churchill need staff. Bringing and developing young people to Churchill from out of town is necessary for the community to grow and prosper".

While the community recently implemented a beautification program, with promising results (see Figure 9), the aesthetic quality of the town is a recurring theme. One participant noted, "Clean up – All derelict vehicles and buildings gone, it brings down the look of the town").

The annual community cleanup is held at the end of June. This event fosters community beautification by rewarding town youth to pick up trash by paying them a 'buck-a-bag' Participants are also entered into draws for prizes. This year the community cleanup includes a corporate challenge.

Figure 9: Churchill Community Cleanup



Photo: P. Fitzpatrick

3.1 Preliminary Priorities

Drawing from the above sections, it becomes apparent that most of the residents in Churchill share similar concerns. These concerns may be grouped according to the following needs (which are presented in no particular order):

- Social equity planning
- Food Security
- Waste management
- Housing: quality, diversity, affordability and tenure of housing including housing for elders
- Education and training
- Economic diversification
- Placemaking: improving quality of built environment.

The consistency of the findings related to these areas is sufficiently robust that they will form the basis of the final report outlining the final Sustainability Strategy for Churchill.

The findings of these various engagements point to a pronounced awareness of the challenges facing Churchill, as well as a wealth of ideas for how these challenges might be addressed. Clearly, in order for Churchill to become a more sustainable community, all three pillars – the Social, Environmental and Economic – must be planned for in a holistic and cohesive manner. There is a marked interest among locals in improving the community over a long-term period, and many identified opportunities for doing so. With an organized vision to work toward, Churchill has the potential to set a standard for northern Canadian communities.

3.2 Next Steps

In the next report, the Sustainability Plan, the wide range of inputs reviewed above will be more systematically refined and analyzed within the context of a useful planning framework. This process will enable the research team and the Steering Committee to identify a community vision for Churchill, as well as top priorities and potential projects with which to address them. This planning framework in the Sustainability Plan will be based on established planning principles as well as precedents in other communities. It will allow Churchill and its academic partners to logically translate priorities into practical outputs, by identifying assets in the community and elsewhere that will enable potential barriers to be identified and overcome.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section 1: General Questions

1.1. How long have you lived in Churchill?

a. less than 1 year b. 1 to 3 years c. 4 – 10 years d. 11-20 years e. over 20 years

1.2. Did you grow up in Churchill? : Yes No

1.3. Do you live in the same community as your family? : Yes No

1.4. What do you like best about your community? (Please check all that apply)

- Sense of community
- Affordability
- Access to the outdoors activities
- Employment opportunities
- Safety
- Family or historic ties
- Educational opportunities
- Programs for youth
- Programs for Elders
- Access to cultural programs
- Support for young families
- Other (list) _____

1.5. What aspects do you think should be improved? (Please check all that apply)

- Sense of community
- Affordability
- Access to the outdoors activities
- Employment opportunities
- Safety
- Family or historic ties
- Educational opportunities
- Programs for youth
- Programs for Elders

- _____ Access to cultural programs
- _____ Support for young families
- _____ Other (list)_____

Section 2: Twenty years from Now....

Directions: Please share with us your vision of our community 20 years from now. Please give only one response per line, in no particular order. Example: The river will be clean enough that we may eat fish caught from it.

Vision 1:	
Vision 2:	
Vision 3:	

Section 3: Attitudes towards Sustainability

Tick off your choice for your top 5 priorities in each of the following three lists:

3.1 Environmental

- Protecting environmentally sensitive areas such as rivers, marshes and species habitat
- Upgrading or expanding municipal water services
- Upgrading or expanding municipal waste services
- Upgrading or expanding municipal sewer services
- Improving land use planning
- Helping residents on private wells and septic systems to protect water quality
- Creating a watershed management plan
- Looking for and assisting opportunities for alternative and renewable energy
- Protecting air quality and reducing greenhouse gases
- Protecting and expanding green space within the town
- Protecting and enhancing coastal areas and the marine and freshwater environments
- Adapting to climate change
- Implementing a community compost program
- Implementing a community recycling program
- Developing a community garden
- Other (please specify): _____

3.2 Social

- Preserving the character and heritage of the community
 - Fighting child and adult obesity
 - Building opportunities for active recreation (bike lanes, trails, skate parks) and promoting active living for all ages
 - Improving access to affordable and healthy food
 - Making a range of housing, especially smaller and more affordable housing, available
 - Addressing inter-city transportation problems
 - Developing public and handi-transit and/or carpooling opportunities
 - Increasing support for elderly population
 - Making the community welcoming to immigrants
 - Strengthening existing Aboriginal cultural programs
 - Improving health care facilities and services
 - Increasing opportunities for adult education to meet the needs of local economy
 - Addressing the problems with youth smoking, drinking, and using drugs
 - Encouraging volunteerism and promoting a sense of community
 - Other (please specify):
-

3.3 Economic

- More variety of shops in the centre of town
- Putting up better signage and tourist information
- Supporting local entrepreneurs through education, training and business mentoring
- Providing grants or tax incentives to help businesses stay and survive in the area
- Reducing poverty and unemployment
- Developing new and creative forms of tourism (e.g. a small craft harbour, improving access to historic sites)
- Supporting knowledge workers (e.g. IT and environmental technologies)
- Developing existing economic sectors (e.g. international shipping and northern transportation hub)
- Developing a renewable energy industry
- Investing in transportation infrastructure (roads, bridges, ferries, rail, airports etc)
- Other (please specify): _____

Section 4: Demographic information

4.1 What gender are you? : ____ Female ____ Male

4.2 Please circle your age group.

a. under 19 b. 20-34 c. 35-49 d. 50-65 e. 65+

Section 5: Final Thoughts

5.1. Please tell us about an experience you have had that made you truly feel part of your community AND/OR an experience that made you question your role in your community. (You may use the back of this sheet if necessary)

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Directions: Please use this as a general guideline to prompt participants.

- 1.) What does sustainability mean to you?

(be prepared to discuss sustainability principles as discussed in the Discussion Paper).
- 2.) What do you like best about your community?
- 3.) What in your opinion are the most important issues facing the town?

(Prompt participant to review the posters or the "Matrix" handout)
- 4.) Are your concerns addressed here? What is missing?
- 5.) What would you consider to be progress towards addressing these issues?
- 6.) What barriers might prevent such progress from occurring?
- 7.) What might help address those barriers?
- 8.) What would a sustainable Churchill look like 5 years from now? 10 years? 20 years?
- 9.) What else would you like to tell us?

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