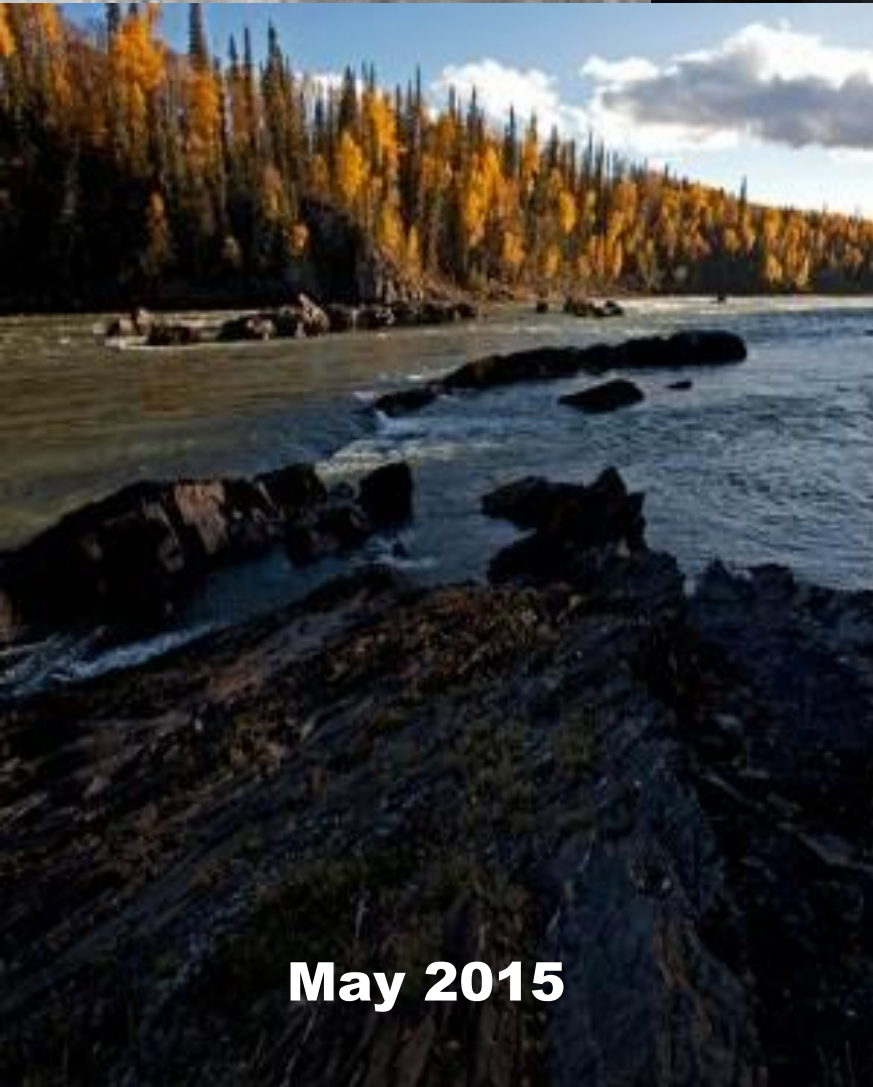




Village of Hazelton

Community Marketing Strategy



May 2015



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INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

EcoTactix was hired by the Village of Hazelton to deliver a concise, evidence-based and actionable marketing strategy for the Village of Hazelton to draw more visitors to the area and stimulate economic growth. The marketing strategy will reflect the diverse character and values of the Village and the region and fulfil the Village of Hazelton's marketing priorities of:

- Attracting businesses and business investment to the Village of Hazelton;
- Attracting families to relocate to the community; and
- Attracting more tourists and visitors.¹

The research phase of the project provided the “snapshot” of the Village's socio-economic state as of early 2015. In addition to compiling existing information available from the Village of Hazelton and the Upper Skeena region, EcoTactix conducted research using current, credible and verifiable sources of business information and tourism data. These included regional, provincial and national sources in both print and online format.

EcoTactix also conducted primary research with local tourism, arts and culture industry, business and government experts to support the objectives of this project and ensure the marketing strategy possesses a strong foundation of local knowledge fostering a “Made in Hazelton” solution. This primary research took the form of:

- Initial meeting and follow-up meetings with the Village's Chief Administrative Officer and project leader;
- Interviews with local champions/experts regarding key community promotion and economic development issues in the Village and region; and
- A six-question online survey for all community members.

Upon completion of the research phase of the project, EcoTactix prepared a summary of marketing framework recommendations for the Village of Hazelton. The purpose of this summary document is to:

- 1) Provide the Village of Hazelton with an overview of key requirements for an effective community marketing framework; and
- 2) Outline EcoTactix's recommendations for marketing the community, as well as its rationale for making these recommendations.

¹ For the purpose of this project, the tourism priority is interpreted as attracted more tourists during peak season, extending tourism into traditional off-season months, and increasing the average visit by tourists.

The recommendations are captured under six categories to support the Village's expressed priorities for this project:

- 1) Building Capacity to Build Community;
- 2) Creating Asset Inventories;
- 3) Allocating Resources;
- 4) Enhancing Communication Tools;
- 5) Identifying Marketing Targets; and
- 6) Publicizing Business Opportunities, Successes and Attractions.

These recommendations are not simply for attracting new investment, families or tourists. They can also improve the Village for residents, help retain existing businesses and showcase the Village's "can do" attitude to provincial and federal government partners and decision-makers.

Upon review of the recommendations by the Village of Hazelton, EcoTactix has drafted this Community Marketing Strategy based on the direction received from the Village.

THE PROVINCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS: SECTOR STRENGTHS AND PRIORITIES

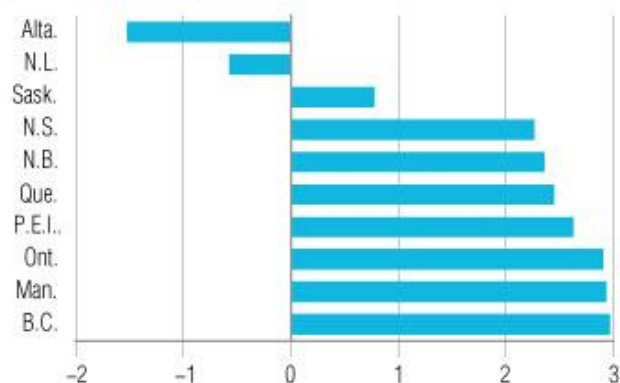
By all accounts, British Columbia's economy is among the strongest in Canada. This view is shared by provincial government economists as well as financial institutions and independent economic think tanks.

The provincial government forecasts the British Columbia economy to grow by 2.3% in 2015, 2.4% in 2016 and 2.3% in 2017. A commitment to diversifying the economy and a stronger focus on developing new export markets has helped build a healthier stable environment for BC businesses and investors.

According to the British Columbia Business Council (BCBC), lower oil prices will work to the province's economic advantage as households reap savings at the gas pump. Because BC produces little crude oil and relies heavily on imports for most of the refined petroleum consumed provincially, lower prices are an economic benefit.²

A stronger US economy supports increased exports of goods and services that should keep rising in conjunction with a rebounding US and a weaker Canadian dollar. This will also assist the job market in BC, consumer spending and housing starts, the latter of which is expected to remain stable.³

Real GDP by Province, 2015
(percentage change*)



*based on 2007 \$

Sources: The Conference Board of Canada; Statistics Canada.

The BCBC also forecasts an increase in British Columbia's real GDP by 2.6% in 2015, up slightly from 2014 and expects the province to be near the top of the economic growth rankings among the provinces.⁴ This prediction is echoed by The Conference Board of Canada, which forecasts that BC will lead economic growth in 2015.⁵

The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) forecasts that economic activity in British Columbia will accelerate in 2015 to its fastest rate of growth since emerging from the 2008–2009 recession in 2010.

² Business Council of British Columbia. *BC Economic Review and Outlook* (January 25, 2015). <http://www.bcbc.com/publications/2015/bc-poised-for-decent-growth-in-a-turbulent-world>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Conference Board of Canada. "BC economy has momentum despite LNG uncertainty." (February 23, 2015). http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/15-02-23/british_columbia_expected_to_lead_provinces_in_economic_growth_in_2015.aspx

RBC anticipates improved performance in export-oriented sectors primarily as a result of strengthening US demand combined with a weaker Canadian currency.⁶ Additionally, the bank forecasts real GDP growth 3.1% in 2015 followed by a 2.8% rate in 2016.

BC Sector Priorities for Trade and Investment

According to Trade and Invest BC, the provincial government has identified seven priority sectors for attracting investment. Two of these sectors align with traditional and current strengths of the Village of Hazelton and offer potential for growth:

1) Agri-foods

British Columbia has one of the largest and most diverse agriculture and agri-food sectors in Canada. From berries to vegetables, wine to seafood, the sector continues to grow and embrace the province's many micro-climates. The agri-food sector serves both domestic and international markets with a long tradition of exporting. Agri-food businesses benefit from BC's favourable shipping location and its existing reputation for food quality and high safety standards.

The Preface to *A-Z Guide for New Northern Farmers: Offering Simplified Insight into Agriculture in BC's Highway 16 Region* states, "British Columbia's Highway 16 region has historically supplied vast quantities of the province's agricultural product, but now, after several decades of decline, British Columbia's potential new farmers and the public at large understand little of the unique advantages that the region provides for agricultural production. With many of the province's current agricultural areas facing increasing pressure from urban and commercial development, the BC Highway 16 region offers a large and diverse land base, extensive transportation infrastructure and many other strategic advantages for the production of agricultural products."

While the Village of Hazelton does not possess a large agricultural land base with which to attract agri-food investment, it can benefit from new business development in neighbouring jurisdictions. Despite its northern location, the Hazelton area's climate is milder and wetter than the neighbouring interior plateau, due to warm Pacific air. Consequently, it has a strong tradition of agriculture production resulting from the unique micro-climate and rich river valley soils. The area is also home to almost half of the Kitimat Stikine Regional District's farms. Combined with the fertile Kispiox Valley to the north, there is significant potential for agri-food growth and investment.

The Village can also benefit from The Senden Centre. The Senden Sustainable Agriculture Resource Centre is a community development project of the Upper Skeena Development Centre. A former dairy farm, the Senden Centre is located on the main road between New Hazelton and Hazelton and provides a central site where community members can gain skills both for work and personal sustainability.

⁶ RBC Economics. Provincial Outlook (March 2015). <http://www.rbc.com/economics/economic-reports/pdf/provincial-forecasts/bc.pdf>

The Upper Skeena Development Centre intends it to be a centre for gathering, collaborating and learning. It will include a producing demonstration market garden, an approved commercial processing facility, vegetable cold storage and a retail outlet.⁷

The Village of Hazelton also benefits from its Plant Hardiness Zone classification. These Zone classifications are based on average annual minimum temperatures. The scale of hardiness zones runs from 0 to 12, with higher ranked zones experiencing warmer winter temperatures. While communities like Smithers and Prince George are classified as Zone 3, and Vanderhoof and Fort St. James are classified as Zone 2, the Hazeltons are classified as Zone 5. Of the northern communities in close proximity to the Village, only Terrace is classified higher at Zone 6. Plant hardiness zones are only relevant to trees, shrubs and perennials crops as they are based on overwinter temperatures. The suitability of annual crops to the region will be largely determined by frost-free days, heat units and soil conditions of the area.⁸

Climate change also presents potential opportunities for agriculture in BC as a result of longer growing seasons and milder winters. Arguably, such conditions could increase the range and/or diversity of economically viable agri-food crops that can be produced. These potential opportunities are mitigated by challenges such as the suitability of the soil, water supply, irrigation infrastructure and transportation distance to markets. As areas such as the Lower Mainland and the Okanagan Valley deal with increasing water issues and escalating prices for fertile land, isolated valleys of quality agricultural land become increasingly attractive.

2) Tourism

British Columbia continues to be a popular visitor destination for both domestic and foreign travellers. The provincial government has identified niche resort development as a top tourism sector opportunity for investment. British Columbia's reputation as a premiere outdoor destination, as well as its potential for increased commercial recreation and adventure tourism, aligns well with the Village of Hazelton's priorities for this project.

According to Statistics Canada, tourism spending in Canada rose 0.7% in the fourth quarter, after increasing 1.0% in the previous quarter. This was the seventh consecutive quarterly gain in tourism spending. Tourism spending by Canadians at home largely contributed to the increase.

Outlays on vehicle fuel were up 2.9%, contributing the most to the increase in spending by Canadians at home. Passenger air transport (1.0%) and accommodation (1.0%) were also higher. Spending on non-tourism goods and services such as groceries and clothing increased 0.5%. In turn, spending on travel services declined 0.9%.⁹

⁷ Upper Skeena Development Centre. <http://usdc.ca/sendin-sustainable-agriculture-resource-centre/>

⁸ Beyond the Market's New Farm Development Initiative. *A-Z Guide for New Northern Farmers* (2013).

⁹ Statistics Canada. "National tourism indicators, fourth quarter 2014." <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150327/dq150327a-eng.htm>

Spending by international visitors in Canada edged up 0.1% in the fourth quarter, following a 1.5% gain in the previous quarter. Tourism spending increased for food and beverage services (0.4%), recreation and entertainment (0.5%) and non-tourism goods and services (0.6%). Those increases were largely offset by a 0.8% decline in passenger air transport. Overnight travel from abroad increased in the fourth quarter. However, overnight travel to Canada by plane was down.¹⁰

Tourism gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 1.1% in the fourth quarter, continuing an upward trend that began in the third quarter of 2009. By comparison, national GDP increased 0.6% in the fourth quarter.¹¹

Among tourism industries, accommodation (1.6%) and transportation (0.9%) contributed the most to the gain in tourism GDP. Tourism GDP in non-tourism industries increased 1.5%.¹²

Tourism employment rose 0.6% on strong gains in the air transportation industry (3.7%). Travel services (2.1%) and recreation and entertainment (1.0%) also contributed to the employment rise. Jobs in accommodation decreased 0.2%.¹³

According to Destination British Columbia's *Regional Tourism Profile* for Northern British Columbia, overnight tourism in the region generated over 1 million person-visits and \$393 million in related spending in 2012.¹⁴ Northern British Columbia is the province's largest tourism region and covers 569,000 km² of the province, well over half of the total area. In addition to numerous communities and First Nations that host attractions or serve as popular vacation destinations, it comprises more than 60 provincial, national and marine parks, and wildlife refuges.¹⁵

British Columbians comprise the largest share of overnight visitation (69%) and spending (55%) in Northern British Columbia. The top five markets of origin are:¹⁶

Market of Origin (2012)	Share in Northern BC	
	Visitation	Spending
British Columbia	69%	55%
Alberta	13%	20%
Alaska	2%	1%
Germany	1%	2%
California	1%	4%

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Destination BC Corp. *Regional Tourism Profile: Northern British Columbia*. (January 2015).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Same-day travellers – those who enter and leave the region within 24 hours - accounted for 47% of visitor volume and 16% of visitor expenditures in Northern British Columbia. The main purposes for travelling to Northern BC in 2012 were:

- Leisure (38%);
- Visiting friends and relatives (32%);
- Business (13%); and
- Other (16%).

With over 1200 tourism sector businesses in Northern BC employing over 6900 people and generating over \$327 million in accommodation revenue in 2012¹⁷, the Village must ensure it is positioned to capitalize on this market and make the most of its tourism assets. In 2013, 79,872 travellers came through the airport in Smithers, a two percent increase over 2012. Between June and December 2013, another 824 tourists travelled Highway 16, a six percent increase over the previous year. The Village can reach many of these visitors with well-placed promotional material.

The remaining five sectors are low priorities based on the Village of Hazelton's current assets and competitive advantages. These include:

3) Forestry

British Columbia is one of the world's largest exporters of wood products (wood, pulp, timber, lumber and other forest products). It has established export markets around the world with a current emphasis on the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea. According to Trade and Invest BC, the forest industry has attractive investment opportunities in mills, forestry operations, the manufacturing of high-quality forest products and value-added wood products, and biofuels.

With the exception of niche operations delivering value-added products (millwork, containers, doors and window frames, etc.), forestry opportunities are limited for the Village of Hazelton.

4) Mining

Despite recent turmoil in the province's mining sector, BC remains a globally-recognized centre for mining activity. The province possesses abundant mineral, coal and gas resources. In addition to natural resources, BC's mining sector includes world-geoscientific expertise, sophisticated geological technology and an investment-friendly business environment with a predictable regulatory regime.

The mining sector does not offer significant business investment opportunities to the Village of Hazelton. While it could serve as a base from which supplies, services and support are delivered to mining operations, there are numerous communities that offer better positioning from both a geographic and logistical perspective.

¹⁷ Ibid.

5) Natural Gas

Similar to the mining sector, recent conflicts over LNG development have combined with a more volatile energy markets to create uncertainty in the natural gas sector. The provincial government continues to promote opportunities for investment in Canadian natural gas and LNG.

Despite the excitement and rhetoric regarding development opportunities in northern communities and potential partnerships with large-scale energy players, direct and indirect benefit from LNG projects are an unknown quantity at this time. Based on the Village of Hazelton's location and the influence of First Nations, attracting investment related to the natural gas sector is not a viable option for the community.

6) Technology

The term technology does not clearly align with a single industry or sector. It is a catch-all word to encompass the province's technology innovation and cluster strength in information and communications, clean technology, film, television and digital media and life sciences.

Based on its location, population and infrastructure, the Village is unlikely to develop a technology sector, sub-sector or segment cluster; however, with the arrival of high speed Internet, the potential to attract individual teleworkers or Internet-driven micro-businesses is greatly increased.

7) Transportation

BC Trade and Investment promotes investment opportunities for building and maintaining transportation infrastructure in the province; however the focus is primarily on public-private partnerships (P3s) on a scale exceeding the capabilities of most small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Additionally, investment opportunities in priority areas such as aerospace and marine manufacturing fall outside the positioning strengths of the Village of Hazelton.

Building a Local Economy One Small Business at a Time

Every community dreams of securing that one large employer who brings a range of well-paying jobs that can be filled by the local labour force. This is an unrealistic expectation and rarely happens in larger urban centres, let alone communities the size of the Village of Hazelton. The Village is best served by focusing its business and investment attraction efforts on small businesses and entrepreneurs looking to start their own businesses.

British Columbia has more small businesses per capita than any other province in Canada, with 83.5 small businesses per 1000 people.¹⁸ This far surpasses the national average of 69 and speaks to the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in British Columbia.

Approximately 98% of businesses in the province meet the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training's definition of small business: one with fewer than 50 employees, or a business operated by a person who is self-employed, without paid help. That is 385,900 businesses employing an estimate 1,032,700 people – approximately 55% of the private-sector workforce.

These businesses generate approximately 26% of British Columbia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and account for \$12.2 billion in exports (about 42% of the province's total exports).

Micro-Businesses in B.C.

An estimated 82 percent of British Columbia's small businesses are "micro businesses." These are businesses with fewer than five employees.

Source: BC Stats and Statistics Canada

"Between 2007 and 2012, the accommodation and food services industry was the largest provider of new small business jobs in British Columbia. Employment in this industry climbed 5.2 per cent creating approximately 4,600 net new jobs over the five-year period.

The health care and social assistance sector also added a substantial number of jobs from 2007 to 2012, increasing its employment by 5.6 per cent and creating nearly 3,300 new jobs."

Source: BC Stats using data supplied by Statistics Canada

While the majority of small businesses are owned by men, 38% of British Columbia's small businesses are owned by women. This is higher than the national average.

The distribution of small businesses mirrors the population distribution in the province, with the bulk of small businesses in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and the Okanagan.

The North Coast and Nechako Region accounts for 1.8% of small businesses (approximately 7,000). This was a 9.5% decline from 2007.

¹⁸ Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training. *BC Small Business Profile 2013*.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

The Village of Hazelton is located at the junction of the Bulkley and Skeena Rivers in northern British Columbia. It is the last of a number of small communities along a 10 kilometre corridor west from Highway 16 and beginning with New Hazelton.

The community is adjacent to Gitxsan First Nations' territory, which encompasses approximately 33,000 square kilometers of land, from the basin of the Upper Skeena River at Legate Creek to the Skeena's headwaters and its surrounding tributaries.¹⁹ Hagwilget, a Wet'suwet'en First Nation community, is also close to the Village.

All of the communities share a positive level of social and cultural interaction and the general region is frequently referred to as "The Hazeltons". The communities also share a severe degree of socio-economic hardship far higher than provincial averages in terms of employment, income, education and other common statistical measures of quality of life. According to the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT), the main economic activities within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine include mining, forestry, energy, fishing, and transportation.²⁰ With the exception of tourism-related fishing, these resource-related activities are not direct economic strengths in the Village of Hazelton.

Employment in the community is supported by government, education, healthcare, commercial retail and to a lesser extent, other professional services jobs. Outdoor recreational activities and the spectacular natural setting also support a modest tourism industry.

Statistics Canada and BC Stats offer little value in terms of economic and labour data specific to communities of this size. What little data they offer is aggregated from large geographic regions and typically three or more years out of date. Equally significant, neither the federal nor provincial governments invest adequate economic development resources into the region and the Village of Hazelton.²¹

For the last two decades, scarce employment and unsuccessful economic regeneration have defined the Upper Skeena's economy, including the Village of Hazelton.

¹⁹ Northern Development Initiative Trust. <http://www.northerndevlopment.bc.ca/explore-our-region/success-stories/feasibility-study-highlights-opportunities-for-gitxsan-nation/>

²⁰ <http://investnorthwestbc.ca/community-test/comm-map/kitimat-stikine-regional-district>

²¹ For the purpose of this report, "economic development" refers to resources and initiatives that foster a climate for attracting relevant and complementary business investment; assist with the retention of existing businesses; provide relevant information tools to help businesses succeed in their environment; and promote the community as a place to live or visit.

As far back as 1999, community leaders identified five strategies to promote community economic development:

- Increase the involvement of citizens;
- Strengthen natural ecosystems;
- Put more local money back into the local economy;
- Support community enterprise; and
- Build local capacity.²²

The bulk of economic development and tourism promotion occurs at the regional and local level. Funding (and decision-making) for these activities resides primarily with the Regional District of Kitimat- Stikine and specifically with its Economic Development Commission. This body comprises the Regional Board Directors for the six electoral areas and municipalities of Stewart, Hazelton and New Hazelton. According to the Regional District's website, the Commission focuses on policy affecting economic development in the region and has some funds for economic development research and marketing. Recent priority funding areas have included tourism, mineral industry servicing and location filming. Additionally, applications for NDIIT funding are made through the Commission.

The 2015 Regional District economic development budget for the entire region is \$136,000.00; however, it includes a surplus of unused funds from the previous year. The Commission has proposed annual budgets of \$77,500.00 for all economic development projects, administration and Board expenditures for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Based on the projects identified, the Village of Hazelton receives direct benefit from the Hazelton Tourism Annual Contribution line item (\$10,000.00 annually for the Hazeltons combined) as well as modest benefit from the funding for the Invest Northwest website (\$2,500.00 annually). Arguably, the Highway 37 tourism advertising activities are too distant from the Village to generate measurable economic benefit.

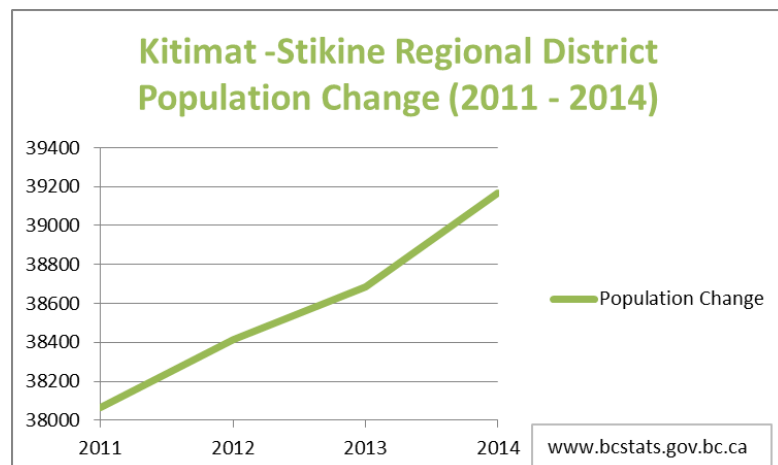
At the time of this report, it is understood that the Village of Hazelton and the District of New Hazelton are partnering on the NDIIT's Small Town Love program to create a "Love the Hazeltons" initiative.

The resources available to the Village for marketing and promotion are modest by any measure; however its greatest asset is people in the community. Local leaders in business, government, the arts and the services sectors will be the primary force behind the Village's health and prosperity. A healthy local population creates a critical mass of ideas, innovation and actions to sustain a community. A community needs people to attract people.

²² Anne Docherty & Doug Donaldson, Storytellers' Foundation. "Beyond 2000: Creating Our Future, Setting socioeconomic priorities in our communities." Village of Hazelton: Upper Skeena Development Group, March 1999.

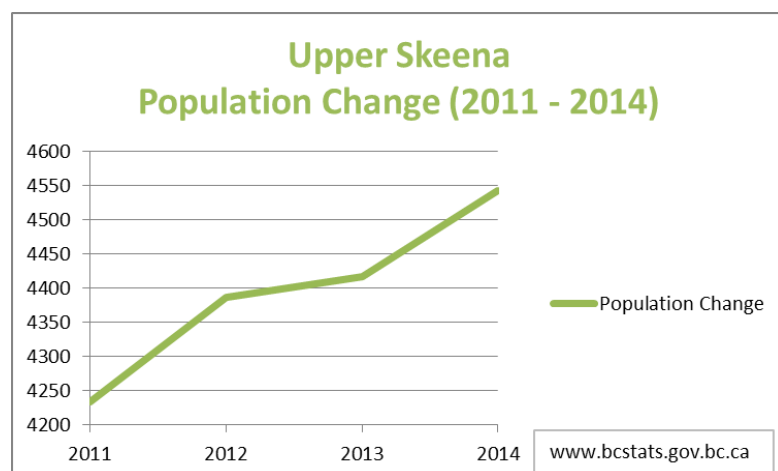
POPULATIONS SHIFTS: REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRENDS

Population shifts at the regional level reveal slow growth in the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District and the Upper Skeena between 2011 and 2014.

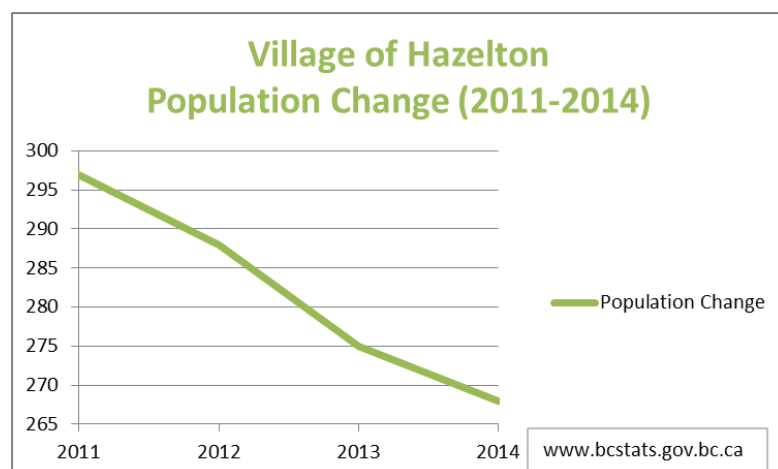


The Regional District's population increased from 38,066 to 39,169 during this period. The modest growth rate increased slightly between 2013 and 2014, reaching 1.2% after a low of 0.7% from the previous year.

In comparison, the provincial growth rate from 2013 to 2014 was 1.06 percent.



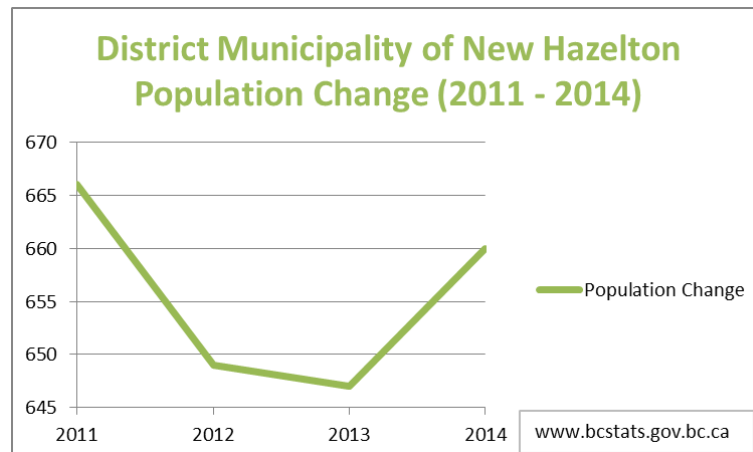
The Upper Skeena experienced a population increase from 4,234 to 4,543 from 2011 to 2014. Much of this population increase is attributed to First Nations populations growing at a faster rate than British Columbia's overall population. The overall population in the Upper Skeena grew 7.3 percent between 2011 and 2014.



There is discrepancy regarding the population count for the Village of Hazelton. The provincial government data for the Village is significantly higher than the data collected by McElhanney Consulting Services as part of the *Local Survey and Inventories 2014* project.

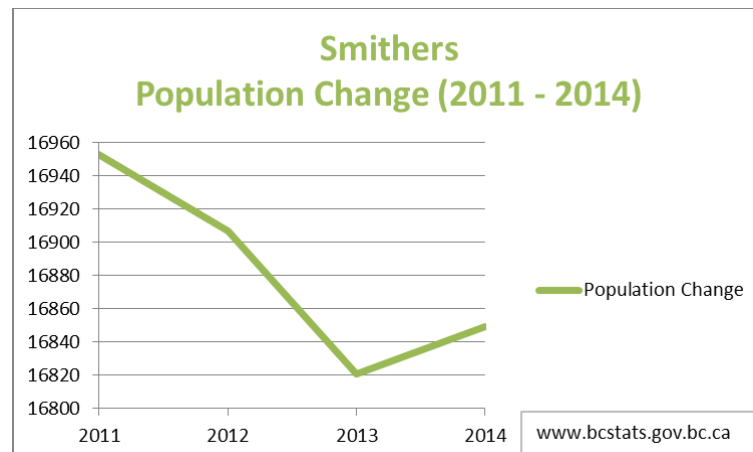
The author of the report concludes that, “the total population of Village of Hazelton is estimated at 197. The National census put the population in 2006 at 293 and in 2011 at 270. This represents an 8% decline in 5 years, or 0.16% per year between 2006 and 2011. Our numbers suggest a decline of 27% or 9% per year.”²³

The data does share a common theme: the Village’s population is experiencing negative growth and has been declining for at least four years. Some of this decline may be offset by population growth in Gitxsan communities near the Village. These people may choose to remain in the area and participate in the local economy.



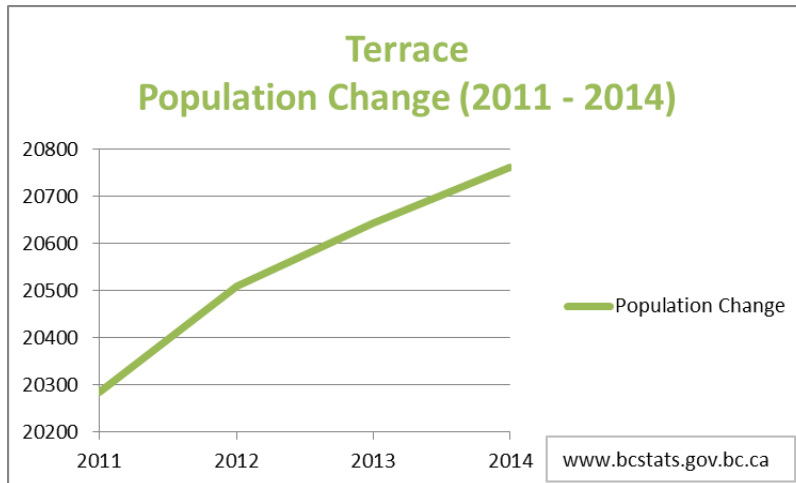
In contrast – and possibly at the expense of the Village -- the District of New Hazelton experienced a slight population increase from 2013 to 2014 after two years of decline; however, the 2.2 percent increase did not bring the population back to 2011 levels.

The population shifts in the District of New Hazelton are mirrored in Smithers, the closest urban centre to the Village, located approximately 60 kilometres southeast on Highway 16.



After two years of consecutive declines, Smithers’ population grew between 2013 and 2014. The city is relevant to this project because it is identified as a source of significant economic leakage from the Village of Hazelton.

²³ McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. *Local Survey and Inventories 2014*. Final Draft January 10, 2015.



In contrast, the City of Terrace has experienced continual population growth between 2011 (20,284 people) and 2014 (20,442 people).

Terrace is located approximately 140 kilometres southwest of the Village and is also implicated in economic leakage from the community.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Research on this project has revealed that the Village of Hazelton is a small, closely-knit community with a strong sense of itself and a welcoming atmosphere. It experiences a high level of social, economic and cultural integration with nearby municipalities and First Nations communities. It also shares in the considerable economic hardship that has plagued the area for many years.

While this document is a Community Marketing Strategy, the Village's priorities ensure the document possesses a significant business and investment attraction component. Consequently, the Strategy includes a more comprehensive economic development component than most community marketing strategies.

People and Nature

The Village of Hazelton's strongest assets are people and the natural environment. Preservation of both is critical and the latter is a powerful driver to attract the former. The people who choose to live and work in the Village are adventurous spirits with above-average self-reliance. Attracting more of these people will only benefit the community. Marketing efforts to attract people and investment must be geared to self-starters, entrepreneurs, adventurers and outdoor enthusiasts. Similarly, marketing efforts to attract tourists can use the stunning nature surrounding the Village to evoke excitement and adventure in potential visitors.

Culture and History

Culture and history originate with people and nature. The Village offers this rich combination of assets that will appeal to many tourists and also speak to potential businesses or families looking for a new location. The Village and its neighbours must not underestimate the social and economic value of the local assets that showcase both First Nations and early settler contributions to the area. It is easier to retain the symbols of local culture and history than to re-create them. The Village should actively explore collaborative initiatives that keep cultural and historical assets vibrant and accessible (through active promotion) to visitors and locals alike.

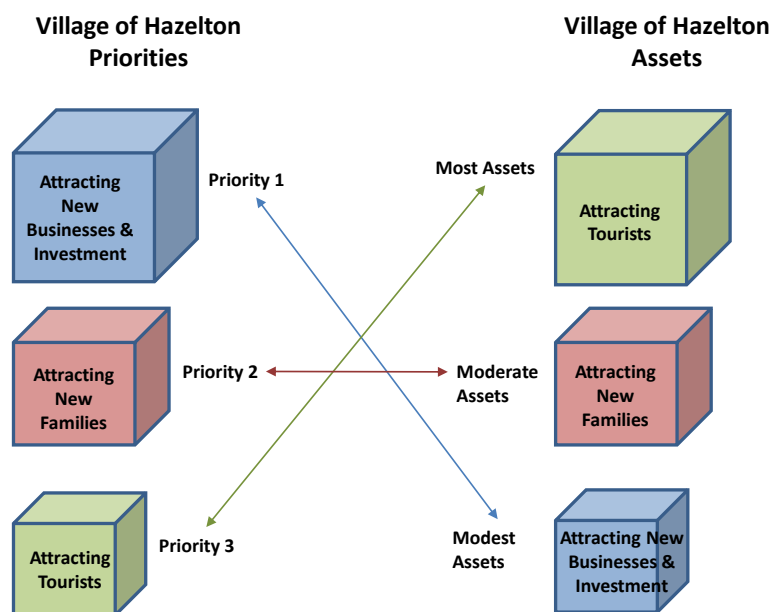
Cost of Living/Cost of Business Start-up

In contrast to most communities in British Columbia, the Village's "big ticket" expenses for families and/or businesses are low. Land, housing and commercial property prices are extremely competitive in contrast to other communities in the province. The primary challenge is the inventory of real estate for both residential and commercial use. Strategies to address these challenges are identified below and will enable the Village to promote this advantage to prospective families and business owners.

Alignment of Asset Strengths and Project Priorities

The Village of Hazelton identified three priorities for its Community Marketing Strategy. The top priority was identified as attracting new business and business investment to the Village. The second priority was identified as attracting new families to the community. Attracting tourists was the third priority for the project.

Based on the analysis of the Village's existing assets and competitive advantages, the current marketing and promotion potential is inversely aligned with the established priorities for the project. Based on the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified as part of this project, the Village of Hazelton has the most potential to attract tourists through its marketing and promotion efforts. The potential to attract families exists, but not to the same degree as visitor expansion. Finally, the type of assets and competitive advantages that the Village possesses are less aligned with the goal of securing new businesses and business investment for the community.



**Community Marketing Strategy
Current Priorities vs. Existing Assets**

Despite this inverse relationship, the Village can successfully promote itself based on its established priorities. Equally important, the community and local government can make positive change to the existing environment to further support specific objectives.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS

Every community attracts individuals, families, entrepreneurs, businesses and visitors. If each of these investor-types was asked why they chose the community in which they live or do business, there would be a broad range of responses. Understanding why people and businesses locate to, or leave, a community can provide insight into its competitive advantages and disadvantages.

Competitive advantage is a business theory advanced by Harvard professor Michael Porter in the mid-1980s. Porter's theory suggests that a company can gain advantage over its competitors by developing or acquiring an attribute (or attributes) that allows the company to outperform its rivals. Cities and towns apply Porter's theory by assessing existing attributes and determining whether these attributes are advantages that help the community stand out among other towns and cities that are vying for investment opportunities. It sounds simple; however advantages may be difficult to articulate.

The Village of Hazelton can also differentiate itself from other communities to establish or maintain a competitive advantage over other investment-hungry communities. Two obvious ways in which the Village differentiates itself from other British Columbia communities are: the affordable residential and commercial real estate; and a full-service, welcoming community located in a beautiful natural setting – ideal for recreation and adventure-minded professionals and teleworkers. Promoting these and other unique local strengths in combination with regional and provincial advantages creates compelling business cases for prospective investors.

The Conference Board of Canada undertook a study in 2012 that examined the determinants of foreign direct investment. Many of these determinants are the same for domestic investors as well. The study concluded that, in addition to global determinants like market size, geography and language, there are nine regional policy factors that influence investment attraction:

- Education;
- Innovation ;
- Information and communications technology (ICT) penetration;
- Strong regional clusters;
- Infrastructure;
- A well-functioning investment promotion agency;
- Regional economic strategies;
- Foreign Direct Investment incentives; and
- Immigration.²⁴

²⁴ *The Role of Canada's Major Cities in Attracting Foreign Direct Investment* (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 2012)

The Conference Board studied revealed that large Canadian cities outperform the rest of Canada on only four of these determinants, namely education, innovation, ICT penetration, and immigration. Similarly, *The fDi Report 2014* also provides useful insight into the motivation of businesses that invest in foreign markets. The publication recorded the motivations of decision-makers for 2898 investment projects in 2013.

The top motivation was access to the domestic market and its growth potential (45 percent of projects), while improving proximity to regional markets and customers was the second most cited reason (33 percent). The top 11 motivations were:

Domestic market growth potential	45.4%
Proximity to markets or customers	33.0%
Regulations/business climate	20.6%
Skilled workforce availability	17.7%
Infrastructure and logistics	8.5%
Industry cluster/critical mass	6.4%
Attractiveness/quality of life	4.8%
Investment Promotion Agency/government support	4.0%
Technology or innovation	3.1%
Lower costs	2.5%
Other motive	10.5%

While both studies above focused on foreign direct investment, the motivations of domestic investors from British Columbia or other areas of Canada will be similar. These assessments reveal areas in which the Village can focus to make the community more investment-ready.

VILLAGE OF HAZELTON: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

EcoTactix analyzed the documented insights of eight Village of Hazelton business and community leaders interviewed for the community marketing strategy project. EcoTactix compiled the insights with additional primary and secondary research and analysis and categorized the output into themes. The issues from each theme were extracted and assessed as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats.

The individual interviews were transcribed and appended to this document. The identity of each interviewee is not revealed based on requests from a number of the individuals.

Local business environment: Local leaders are generally positive about the future but acknowledge that the local economy is vulnerable at this point in time.

- Individual outlook – STRENGTH
- Reality of economic vulnerability – WEAKNESS
- Gaps in the local business community (product and services) - OPPORTUNITY

Recent or current business investment: There is virtually no awareness of business investment taking place in the Village.

- Lack of awareness – WEAKNESS
- Actual absence of business investment – WEAKNESS

Resources Sector: A sense that energy (and LNG development in particular) is being touted as the “new forestry” for Northern British Columbia is balanced with more realistic expectations that the Village of Hazelton may be able to capitalize on service and support segments within specific energy sub-sectors.

- Location relative to operational or proposed energy sector developments – STRENGTH
- Unrealistic expectations of economic benefit of energy sector development – WEAKNESS
- Building capacity to service the sector from the Village – OPPORTUNITY
- Uncertainty of provincial, corporate and First Nations influence on energy sector development (regulatory and infrastructure) – THREAT

Agriculture Sector: Research supports local recognition that agriculture can grow and diversify from its traditional roots to capture investment and expand the sector.

- Growing season and micro-climate – STRENGTH
- Availability of land for agriculture and agri-food businesses – STRENGTH
- Established, active regional support system – WEAKNESS
- Import replacement and regional export markets – OPPORTUNITY
- Crop/livestock diversification - OPPORTUNITY
- Perception of low return on investment in many agriculture segments – THREAT

Tourism Sector: There appears to be potential to grow tourism assets in the Village of Hazelton and the region. The knowledge of the sector and its potential to attract new investment varied among those interviewed.

- Natural beauty of the Village and the Upper Skeena – STRENGTH
- Distance from other tourism destinations – WEAKNESS
- Dearth of tourist attractions - WEAKNESS
- Perception of local tourism as a “one-season” and/or part-time business – WEAKNESS
- Absence of cohesive tourism support framework – WEAKNESS
- Assets to attract eco-tourists, heritage and adventure tourism – OPPORTUNITY
- Perception of tourism businesses as low wage, low return – THREAT

Education Sector: Local leaders acknowledge that education assets in the community can play an active role in attracting families and business investment.

- Northwest Community College Campus in Hazelton – STRENGTH
- First Nations Education Centre -- STRENGTH
- Hazelton Secondary School -- STRENGTH
- Majagaleehi Gali Aks Elementary School.– STRENGTH
- New Hazelton Elementary School – STRENGTH
- Capacity for partnerships with industry and government – OPPORTUNITY
- Tailored programming to local/regional economic needs and/or provincial economic priorities - OPPORTUNITY

First Nations: There is recognition of the growing influence of First Nations in economic development opportunities and future investment in the Upper Skeena region and across the province.

- Business-minded Gitksan leadership – STRENGTH
- Current and planned business developments - STRENGTH
- Current economic capacity of Gitksan communities – WEAKNESS
- Adequacy of infrastructure in Gitksan communities – WEAKNESS
- Potential for collaboration and cooperation with Gitanmaax and other Gitksan communities – OPPORTUNITY
- Treaty negotiations and related legal issues and claims – THREAT

Transportation and road infrastructure: While the upgrades to the provincial highway system have made access to the Village safer and easier, the community is still defined as “the end of the road” and its location away from Highway 16 is viewed as a deterrent for visitors

- Good north/south route within close proximity to the Village – STRENGTH
- Seven kilometres off of highway 16 – WEAKNESS
- Good west route to Kitimat and Prince Rupert – STRENGTH
- Transportation from north to southern markets - WEAKNESS

Terrace and Smithers: The proximity of the larger urban centres facilitate economic leakage and create competitive disadvantages for the Village of Hazelton with respect to investment attraction; however, the strengths (and weaknesses) of the larger centres can be used to the Village's advantage.

- Promote the strengths of Smithers and/or Terrace as regional strengths of the Village of Hazelton - OPPORTUNITY
- Perception that Smithers and Terrace will naturally attract more prospective private investors that the Village of Hazelton – WEAKNESS
- Travel options to/from (air) and around (car rental) the region are easier in Smithers and/or Terrace – WEAKNESS
- Presence of big-box and discount retailers in Smithers and Terrace – THREAT
- Smithers and Terrace have numerically larger political representation and influence at the provincial level – THREAT
- Potential acquisition/relocation/absorption of Village of Hazelton businesses to other communities – THREAT

Labour force: The capacity and skills of the local labour force are not sufficiently aligned with perceived opportunities for business investment and job growth.

- Existing base of employment skills - WEAKNESS
- Attracting and/or retaining skilled workers – WEAKNESS
- Diverse skill sets (business, technology, etc.) limited in local economy – OPPORTUNITY
- Retaining skilled local high school and college graduates – THREAT
- Perceived income limitations related to self-employment and business start-up opportunities - THREAT

Entrepreneurship: While the Village of Hazelton is home to successful entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial spirit is not the norm. Historical reliance on resource sector jobs or indirect employment supported by the resource sector may make the Village less entrepreneurial-minded than many other communities.

- Low cost, low barriers to starting a local small business – STRENGTH
- Competitively-priced industrial and commercial land – STRENGTH
- Competitive lease rates – STRENGTH
- Small inventory of land or buildings for commercial development -- WEAKNESS
- Entrepreneurial thinking is not actively promoted in schools – WEAKNESS
- Collective mindset more focused on getting a job than launching a business – WEAKNESS
- Self-employed individuals often dependent on regional industries – WEAKNESS
- Potential to fill gaps in the local economy exist – OPPORTUNITY
- Strong entrepreneurial role models exist in the Village - OPPORTUNITY

Quality of life: The consensus is that the Village of Hazelton is a great community in which to live. It is also a great place to raise a family if structured activities (sports, dance, theatre, etc.) for children are not a necessity.

- Prevailing community attitude is positive and progressive – STRENGTH
- Affordable real estate - STRENGTH
- Enjoyable four-season climate - STRENGTH
- Good educational institutions – STRENGTH
- Full-service community with amenities and attractions – WEAKNESS
- Lack of economic diversification – THREAT

Provincial Government: Issues were not raised regarding the province’s “investment” in the Village and surrounding communities relative to other centres in the province.

- Competing effectively against other provinces for investment - WEAKNESS
- Good municipal – provincial relationship – OPPORTUNITY
- Provincial influence in natural resources sectors – THREAT
- Provincial allocation of government resources (human, financial, etc.) to other regions and population centres – THREAT

Technology and information and communications technology (ICT): The Village does not possess a strong technology base or ICT infrastructure at this time but expects to have access to high-speed Internet by mid- 2015.

COMMUNITY MARKETING STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The plan recommendations flow from the objectives established by the Village of Hazelton, including the interviews, surveying and community engagement event dedicated to the community marketing strategy.

Based on its research and analysis of the economic, social, cultural, environmental and governance factors currently influencing the Village of Hazelton, EcoTactix recommends the following actions to build a sustainable community marketing framework. These recommendations encompass both the economic development elements of community marketing, as well as ongoing community marketing and promotion. The recommendations flow from the main asset categories represented in the Village:

Social Assets: The local government and the community as a whole includes many civic-minded, experienced and talented individuals who recognize the strengths of the Village and serve as champions in promoting it to people outside the community. Additional organization and direction could harness these assets to fulfill an objective or objectives related to this strategy. As cultural anthropologist and writer Margaret Mead stated, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Cultural Assets: The Village of Hazelton is blessed with two rich cultural traditions. It has represented the value of First Nations and non-First Nations heritage better than many communities in British Columbia and must continue to celebrate this achievement. Economic gain from the promotion of cultural assets must be an indirect benefit secondary to respectful, experiential learning and sharing.

Environmental/Natural Assets: The location of the Village is difficult to surpass in terms of natural beauty. For those who love the outdoors, the Village and surrounding area provides pristine forest, mountains and waterways that are increasingly difficult to find anywhere in the world, let alone British Columbia. Few places have “Main Street” views like those found in the Village. As more people and families become disillusioned by life surrounded by concrete and asphalt, the Village’s natural assets will attract those looking for temporary escapes or permanent transitions from urban lifestyles that have become unsustainable.

Economic Assets: Currently, the Village’s economy is not driven by a sector (i.e. forestry) or a large private-sector employer; however it must not overlook its small but passionate business community and institutional employers. These players in the local economy can also be used to promote the Village. They can collaborate on initiatives to build and strengthen the local economy and help drive positive opinion of the Village beyond the community (to suppliers, partners, customers, visitors, etc.). The limited size and resources of the Village require partnership development at the regional and provincial level to capitalize on additional resources for promoting the community. Adopting a “think regional, act local” philosophy can help the Village capitalize on the strengths of nearby communities for both local and regional benefit.

Built/Infrastructure Assets: The Village continues to improve infrastructure in the community and is working with neighbouring communities on a case-by-case basis. Roads, water and wastewater, utilities and land use are important factors for all forms of investment in a community. Other built assets, such as information and telecommunications networks and commercial or residential buildings are typically private assets. Once they are approved by local government, their significance to a community is driven by market forces. The Village does own built assets that could be used to support local business growth through short-term competitive leases to new businesses or as an incubator to help new entrepreneurs develop and launch their business concepts.

The six community marketing recommendations are:

1.0 Build Capacity, Build Community

The Village of Hazelton must identify creative ways to build capacity for marketing and promoting the community. Based on the stated priorities for this project, capacity-building is needed for both economic development and marketing. While economic development activities typically include a degree of marketing, individuals who understand the essentials of economic development are not necessarily creative-types that specialize in innovative and unique branding and promotion.

There are individuals at the regional, provincial and federal level who are paid to help attract investment or stimulate tourism to Canada and British Columbia. Developing these relationships and capitalizing on these partnerships increases the resources available to the Village. Equally important, the Village must be able to clearly articulate its marketing and promotion objectives to partners for the relationships to be profitable.

The importance of these relationships above is equalled by solid partnerships with local businesses, neighbouring communities and the local arts and cultural sector. Many of these individuals are well-connected outside the community and have frequent opportunities to champion the Village and surrounding area to non-residents.

The Village of Hazelton is tentatively positioned to secure part-time economic development expertise in 2015. This individual could be tasked with implementing the economic development-specific recommendations in the Community Marketing Strategy.

The Village is also engaged in joint marketing initiatives to promote The Hazeltons. These activities present opportunities to build capacity in the community by engaging local residents and businesses, sharing knowledge with them and increasing their participation in building the economic health and resiliency of the Village.

1.1 Provincial Partnerships

The Village must build a stronger relationship with the Government of British Columbia. The provincial government offers various channels of support related to the Village's community marketing priorities. Specifically, its resources are directed to community economic development, investment attraction and tourism promotion. The Village is engaged with the province, most notably through the regional economic development trust; however, there are additional opportunities to capitalize on the resources provided by the province.

The Economic Development Division of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training²⁵ provides primarily online support for building economic development capacity in communities.²⁶ It also manages the recently-created Rural Advisory Council that is mandated to provide advice on rural economic development, including rural access to capital and business development support for rural entrepreneurs and businesses.²⁷

The Ministry also established the regional economic trusts, including the Northern Development Initiative Trust, as well as the Community Transition Services. The latter is intended to mobilize support and services to resource based communities experiencing significant job loss impacts, such as a result of the closure or downsizing of the community's primary employer or industry.²⁸

The Ministry of International Trade is also responsible for Trade and Invest British Columbia, which promotes investment opportunities in the province's key sectors and industries, including tourism.²⁹ The Ministry is also responsible for promoting communities and maintains a searchable database of communities in each region of the province; however, it does not have a profile for every community, including the Village of Hazelton.³⁰

At the federal level, Western Economic Diversification (WD) "contributes to community economic development in urban centres and rural areas through initiatives that capitalize on opportunities for growth and development, and enable communities to adjust to challenges that hinder competitiveness and quality of life."³¹ The agency also serves as the western delivery agent for national programs offered by the federal government such as infrastructure programs.

²⁵ This Ministry is also responsible for labour.

²⁶ Government of British Columbia.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=F55AB7AD236F43F1A70AA683C5B5F8DE>

²⁷ The Council will also advise on rural community capacity building, including the Rural Dividend.

²⁸ Government of British Columbia.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=9658BDAAF819467CBFCA2E69A8CA5280>

²⁹ Government of British Columbia. <http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/invest/index.aspx#.VRCdeuGulOY>

³⁰ At first glance, it may appear that only larger communities are listed but this is not the case. Sayward (population 317) has a link on the searchable database.

³¹ Western Economic Diversification. <http://www.wd-deo.gc.ca/eng/106.asp>

According to the federal government, WD priorities supporting community economic development (and relevant to the Village of Hazelton) include:

- Encouraging regional approaches to economic development through partnerships with communities and non-profit organizations;
- Helping rural communities identify and capitalize on new sources of economic growth and employment;
- Increasing the capacity of rural communities to undertake value-added processing and encourage new opportunities for skilled employment;
- Enhancing Aboriginal participation in the economy;
- Designing and delivering regional and community development programs to help western Canadian communities make a successful transition into the 21st century economy; and
- Investing in infrastructure to sustain rural communities.³²

The Village must capitalize on the resources, support, services and funding available through these organizations. Additionally, the Village should consider developing an “Economic Opportunities Action Plan” that outlines its strategy for building a diversified and resilient local economy. This plan can be presented to the Premier and key Ministers at the UBCM Convention in September 2015.³³

1.2 Regional Partnerships

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC), such as Community Futures 16/37 office that serves The Hazeltons out of its Terrace location, deliver business and support services to entrepreneurs and small business. A creation of Western Economic Diversification, they are independent, non-profit Corporations run by a volunteer Board of Directors and supported by staff.

The CFDC can be a valuable ally because they also partner and work with federal/provincial governments, banking communities, potential and existing entrepreneurs, band and tribal councils, municipalities, government agencies and local organizations (such as Northern BC Tourism Association, Chambers of Commerce, local colleges, and all community economic development organizations).³⁴

The Village is currently dependent on regional economic development decision-making and funding through Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine’s Economic Development Commission.

³² Ibid.

³³ According to the Ministry of Finance, the meeting request system for the 2015 UBCM Convention will go live June 15, 2015 at 8:30am. The information contact is Tara Zwaan at the Premier's Vancouver Office (604-775-1600). <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ubcm/>

³⁴ Community Futures 16/37. http://www.1637cfdc.bc.ca/about_us/

The Village is represented on the Commission which is beneficial; however, the vastness of the region ensures that available resources for promoting communities are spread fairly thin. This is the challenge with regional economic development models: “thinking regionally and acting locally” offers greater return on investment when communities are geographically closer.³⁵

The Village should initiate discussions with adjacent communities and First Nations regarding a collaborative approach to economic development and tourism promotion. This approach may begin with a single project or occur on a case-by case basis but the essential element is a willingness to actively participate in activities that produce direct or indirect benefits for all those involved. This is the inherent nature of regional economic development – one project’s benefit may be directed primarily at Gitanmaax with indirect benefit to The Hazeltons while another initiative may occur in the Village with indirect benefit to Gitxsan communities and New Hazelton. Over time, all communities within close proximity experience benefits from their investment in this collaborative approach.

1.3 Local Partnerships

Local government and the business community can also partner to support the economy and enhance the attractiveness of the Village as a place to invest, visit or relocate. In a community as small as the Village, it is critical to identify and work together on shared objectives for community health and prosperity. While the motivations may differ depending on the individual involved, the ultimate goal is to create a more resilient community and a stronger local economy.

Based on the current size of the Village’s business community, there is little competition for the sale of goods and services. There are also identifiable gaps for business opportunities in the local economy. Investment attraction strategies can be developed with the support and participation of local business owners. Additionally, business start-up training/mentoring and business incubation activities can be undertaken with a small investment from the Village and assistance from regional and/or local partners (CFDC, College, Upper Skeena Development Centre, First Nations Education Centre, retired business people).

Bringing new businesses and more people to the community is one half of the economic equation. Research for this project reveals that the Village experiences considerable economic leakage related to consumer goods and services, primarily to Smithers, Terrace and New Hazelton. Business goods and services are also imported from these and other locations, as well as online. Reducing these imports requires the attention of both local business merchants and residents of the Village.

³⁵ Examples include the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (a mix of government and private-sector Directors) and the Calgary Regional Partnership (Calgary and 12 smaller municipalities).

There are many successful “buy local” initiatives and best practices that the community can implement to keep local dollars in the Village. Merchants that survey customers to determine buying preferences; promote competitive prices; create an online presence with e-commerce capabilities; and champion the local buying cause are the frontline against economic leakage from the Village.

Well-written, researched articles in local media or as a community mail-out can reach a wide audience and help educate residents of the positive impacts local purchasing can have in the community. Simply put, the more dollars circulating in the Village, the greater potential for local investment and economic health.

The following diagram simplifies the role of these factors in the flow of income in and out of the Village.



2.0 Create Asset Inventories

Attracting investment is identified as a priority for this strategy. Consequently, the Village's infrastructure is an important component to attract new investment. While infrastructure is not one of the Village's current strengths, the community must be able to articulate and sell its competitive position for serviced land, available commercial and industrial properties, utilities, water, transportation linkages and reliable broadband communications.

2.1 Tourism Assets

The Village needs an accurate account of current tourism businesses in operation, including their services and marketing and promotion capabilities. Additionally, the Village needs to compile a list of relevant tourist destinations (scenic areas, trails, landmarks, etc.) within 50 kilometres of the community for promotional purposes.

2.2 Land available for development

The Village needs a publicly-available, current account of land that is available or potentially available for (industrial, commercial, residential, mixed use). Since the inventory of available land is small in the Village, this may be a "shared benefit" opportunity for collaborative promotion with an adjacent community or communities.

2.3 Land available for agriculture

Survey results for this project suggested that agricultural investment opportunities exist within close proximity of the Village. Current, verifiable information on agricultural potential and land availability will help market the Village to farming families and promote the area to other types of agriculture and agri-food investors.

2.4 Properties available for commercial use

Even though the number of properties is low, the Village needs an accurate inventory of buildings or spaces for lease that are available for commercial and/or industrial tenants and/or redevelopment.

2.5 Housing statistics

Low cost housing is a competitive advantage for the Village of Hazelton. An accurate depiction of housing cost and availability is a promotional tool for the community. Families and young people looking to purchase a home for the first time may be surprised at the price differential between the Village and other areas of British Columbia, including nearby larger communities.

3.0 Allocate Resources

The marketing framework recommendations above require an investment in resources, both to implement and maintain. As the Village moves from marketing preparation to active community marketing and promotion, the investment will increase. The Village should establish a budget dedicated to community marketing and promotion.

3.1 People

People will always be the Village's greatest asset. Every resident and business owner can be a champion promotor of the community to visitors and potential investors. Dedicated marketing and promotion activities, however, will likely be the responsibility of the local government. It may enlist the support and participation of partners but will be accountable for fulfilling the marketing strategies it approves as part of this project.

The Village will need to identify employees, contractors or capable volunteers to implement the community marketing strategies. These include, but are not limited to, investment attraction, media relations, graphic design, social media and visitor experience professionals. It is unlikely that one individual possesses such a broad skill set.

3.2 Funds

The Village of Hazelton must identify the financial resources available for implementing a marketing strategy. This project is focusing on low- to medium-cost solutions for promoting the community yet it is unlikely that funding the Village receives from the Regional District's existing economic development/tourism budget will be sufficient to both implement and maintain an effective marketing strategy. Additional sources of funding will need to be identified.

3.3 Time

A successful marketing strategy does not yield results overnight. Its implementation is ongoing with frequent assessment of performance and results. The Village must be prepared to allocate not only people and dollars, but time for the various campaigns and promotions to take hold. Repeated exposure to any marketing message is required before consumers (including families, tourists or investors) act.

The Village must determine if it has the resources to invest in a marketing strategy for multiple years. This will also impact the composition of the Community Marketing Strategy.

4.0 Enhance Communications Tools

Marketing is about effective communication. The Village has existing channels for communication, such as its website, mail-outs and local media. It needs to develop communications tools in the form of print and electronic materials emphasizing the assets and competitive advantages of the community.

These communications tools should be clearly identifiable as part of the Village's "brand." They need to possess a common and professional look and feel with cohesive messaging.

4.1 Village Website

The Village needs to complete www.hazelton.ca content related to its community marketing priorities and ensure search engine optimization (SEO) of the site and each page.³⁶

4.2 Business Opportunity and Sector Profiles

The Village should develop business opportunity/sector profiles (print and electronic) to attract new business investment. These one or two-page profiles can be available in PDF format for download from the website or sent to prospects as part of a targeted direct mail investment attraction campaign.

4.3 Tourism Brochure

The Village should invest in new or updated professional tourism brochures (print and electronic). It must also ensure efficient distribution of print brochures provincially. The electronic version should be available as a downloadable PDF document on the Village's website.

³⁶ EcoTactix will be developing content for the economic development/business page as part of this project.

5.0 Identify Targets for Marketing

The Village of Hazelton must identify specific targets for marketing within its three project priorities. A shotgun approach to marketing and promotion will consume significant resources with negligible return on investment.

If business investors, families and tourists are defined as three segments of the population, the Village must identify specific sub-segments in each that align with the community's assets and competitive advantages.

5.1 Business Investors

In the absence of diversified sector strengths, the Village should focus on attracting the following types of investment:

- Businesses that fill gaps in the local economy and can be supported by the local economy, including established businesses from other locations as well as new business ventures from existing residents or relocating residents;
- Professionals (with or without families) who can “live anywhere” while conducting their work and have an affinity for nature and outdoor recreational pursuits;
- Tourism sector businesses that complement, rather than compete, with established tourism businesses; and
- Agriculture and agri-food businesses that align with the specific growing conditions available in the area.

The Village will require specific messaging and media for each of these targets. Despite the additional expense, there is an important place for print promotion and advertising in an investment attraction strategy. This is also true of personal marketing and targeted marketing at events with investment decision-makers.

5.2 Families and Individuals

The interviews and survey conducted for this project revealed significant pride in the Village of Hazelton as a place to live. Tapping into this community spirit will create strong messages to attract new residents. This is arguably the broadest audience that Hazelton is trying to reach with its community marketing strategy. Initially, the Village should focus on:

- Promoting the area's natural and environmental advantages to residents of urban areas as well as outdoor/nature/recreation publications (print and online);
- Promoting the value proposition and low real estate costs to neighbouring urban areas, as well as Lower Mainland, Okanagan, Vancouver Island and Central Alberta communities;
- Promoting (in conjunction with the business investment strategies) opportunities to “be your own boss” to young entrepreneur-types who dream of starting their own business but believe it is cost-prohibitive;
- Promoting an alternative to the “rat race” that defines the life of many British Columbians and Canadians.

5.3 Tourists

The importance of maintaining, enhancing and sustaining the Village' current cultural and natural tourism assets (as well as those in neighbouring communities and First Nations) cannot be overstated. These attractions are significant drivers of the local economy and the anchors for additional growth in the tourism sector. They provide the Village and the Gitxsan Nation with an excellent point of departure for joint marketing and promotion efforts that ultimately benefit both communities. The key focus areas are:

- Nature and outdoor recreation tourism visitors from British Columbia;
- Cultural and heritage tourism visitors from British Columbia; and
- Day trippers from regional communities, including Smithers and Terrace.

6.0 Publicizing Opportunities, Successes and Attractions

Research for this project revealed that the Village of Hazelton is difficult to find through regular channels used by travellers or investors. The community suffers from low visibility and must take steps to increase its exposure with positive publicity.

Continuous, sustained marketing and promotion is required to make a potential investor remember a specific location or site. This can be time and energy intensive; however, the availability of online networking tools and social media integration gives the Village more low-cost tools than ever to elevate the profile of the community. Websites, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and other online and social media tools can be used to deliver relevant and consistent messaging.³⁷

6.1 Local, Regional and Provincial Media

The Village of Hazelton must explore the potential for positive exposure through traditional media outlets. Creating effective, news-worthy media releases on business-related successes is a small investment in time and can provide free exposure to the community in local, regional, provincial and national newspapers (or their online equivalents). The Village should consider media communications training for key spokespeople.

6.2 Municipal website

The Village's website requires additional content to enhance the visitor experience and provide the necessary information travellers, families or tourists are seeking. In addition to the economic development content mentioned earlier, the Village should consider adding a media section or "In the News" page to report on positive developments taking place in the community. This would be separate from the "News and Notices" section of the site that addresses municipal governance matters relevant to the community.

³⁷ For example, EcoTactix will be developing a community profile for both www.BestPlaceinCanada.com and www.BestPlaceinBC as part of this project.

6.3 Partner websites

As part of this project, EcoTactix will take actions to improve the Village of Hazelton's visibility and quality of promotional information on relevant online websites. Many of these sites are linked to partners identified earlier in this report. The Village will want to ensure a mechanism is in place to keep this information current and to disseminate new developments further promote the community.

6.4 Social Media

The widespread use of Facebook, Twitter and professional focused networks like LinkedIn illustrate the reach and influence of social media networks. Social media gained strength as a channel for personal expression and sharing; however, 89 percent of marketers are currently using social media for engaging customers.³⁸ It is among the top five tactics for customer acquisition (12.5 percent) and retention (10.4 percent) in Business to Customer (B2C) relationships.³⁹

Social media is becoming increasingly popular among Business to Business (B2B) relationships, allowing prospects to see successful interactions with existing clients or customers and, in the case of the Village, existing businesses prospering in the local economic environment and showcasing the Village's advantages to prospective investors.

The Village should consider integrating Facebook and Twitter, as a minimum, into its online presence for the purpose of reaching a wider audience with community and promotional messages. It may also want to consider sponsoring two workshops for local businesses: building a simple and effective online presence; and using social media for business promotion.

Organizational Recommendations

The Village of Hazelton's local government is leading the Community Marketing Strategy. Its success will depend on the people, tools and funding available for sustained, targeted marketing and promotion.

People

Council members and Village staff are the primary champions of the Community Marketing Strategy. Currently, these dedicated people wear many hats from economic development to public relations. Developing volunteer committees led by community members with skills specific to the committee function can help ease the burden at the local government level. The Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development is an excellent model of "Community Development for the Community by the Community."⁴⁰

³⁸ *Target Marketing Magazine*. "Media Usage Forecast 2013"

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ www.oldsinstitute.com.

Alternatively, the Village can explore the use of contractors to deliver elements of the strategy that require specialized skills or expertise. External funding may be available for specific economic development or tourism development initiatives.

Tools and Training

The Village may consider additional training in areas such as economic development, communications and media relations to support the Community Marketing Strategy. Both elected officials and staff can benefit from these learning opportunities.

Equally important, the Internet has become the most valuable marketing and promotion channel for communities. Maximizing the effectiveness of the Village web site and integrating social media marketing tools is a cost-efficient option for boosting the community's visibility.

Funding

This strategy has identified funding constraints for implementing community marketing strategies, including the absence of economic development funding at the local level. The Village must explore available avenues for funding from federal, provincial, regional and local levels of government.

COMMUNITY MARKETING PRIORITIES AND TACTICS

The Marketing Mix: One Size Does Not Fit All

The diagram on the next page illustrates the marketing mix (Product, Place, Price, People and Promotion) as it applies to the Village of Hazelton. Each marketing effort by the community will draw on one or more specific strengths identified in the mix that best positions Hazelton based on the community's objectives. Promotion is broken down further into specific categories of actions that are available to the Village. Regardless of the marketing and promotional campaign, it is important to consider:

- Audience
- Goals
- Angle
- Message

The Audience

The tactics to appeal to a decision maker in the energy sector may be markedly different than the tactics to appeal to a relocating family...even if they are both interested in the competitive advantages the Village of Hazelton offers. Trying to “be all things to all people” is rarely as successful as taking a targeted approach to appeal to a qualified audience. The primary focus of a marketing strategy is to position the community in the best light on a case-by-case basis.

Goals

Before promoting the Village's strengths, the goals of each campaign must be considered. For example, is the campaign encouraging entrepreneurs to choose the Village as the ideal location for their start-ups? Is the goal to attract more tourists after the September long weekend? Different campaigns are required to meet unique goals.

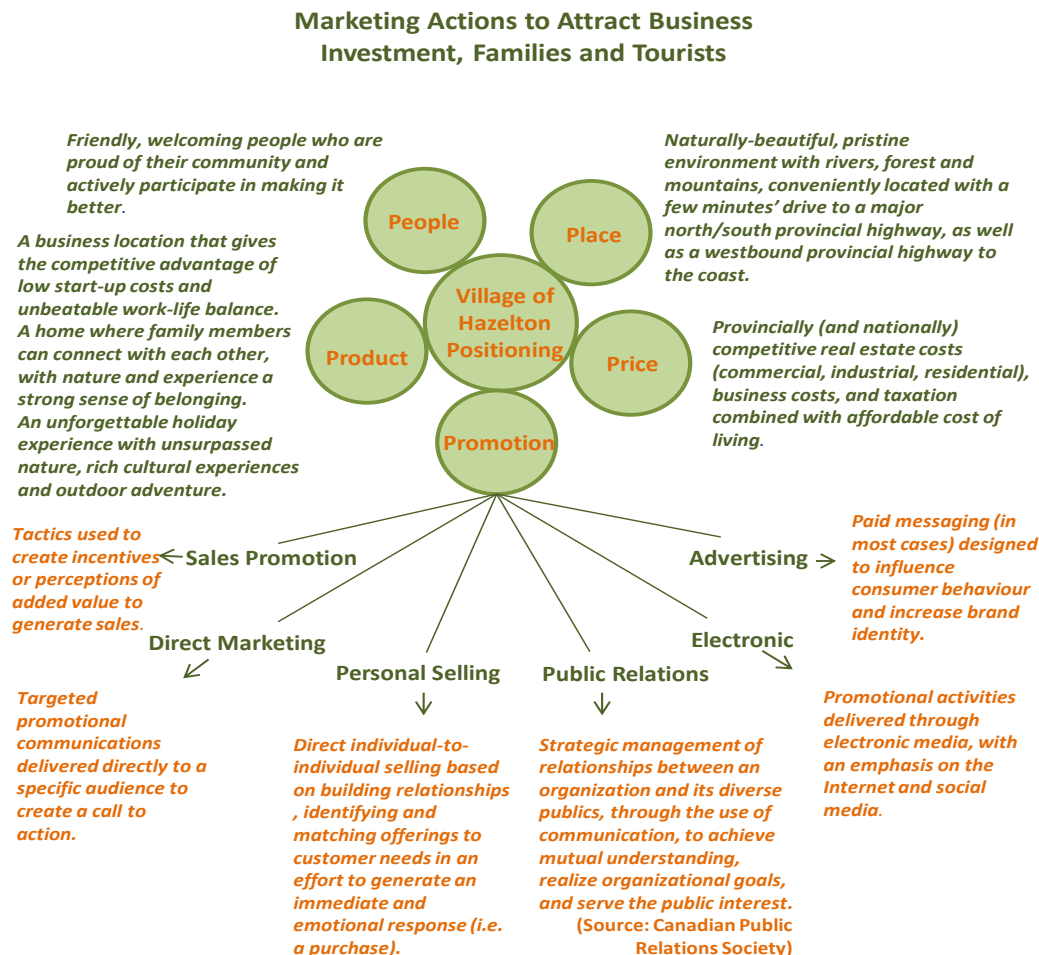
Angle

Before finalizing the message the Village wishes to convey about the community, the organization must determine the “angle.” For example, if it is submitting a news release to a journalist, he or she wants to know what makes this release newsworthy or unique. Journalists are inundated with news releases and it is the Village's responsibility to spotlight the compelling and newsworthy story. The same is true when communicating with business people. Today's business decision-maker is overwhelmed with information. It is important to effectively articulate the Village of Hazelton's advantages.

Message

Once the angle is established, the message can be crafted. The target audience needs a concise and compelling statement illustrating the advantages relevant to them. For example, if the Village of Hazelton is creating a promotion directed at families, it will develop messages from the marketing mix that are different than promotions directed at tourism.

Both target audiences (families and tourists) will respond favourably to certain messages (i.e. natural beauty); however messages regarding cost of living and community spirit will be less relevant to tourists. The Village must match its marketing strengths to its target audience.



Recommended Promotional Tactics for the Village of Hazelton

- 1) Direct marketing (medium cost);
- 2) Electronic: Internet and social media (low cost); and
- 3) Advertising (high cost).

The Village of Hazelton should consider applying the three tactics identified above for its marketing activities. They can be used individually or in combination to achieve the desired outcome and to respect the resources available for marketing activities.

Community Marketing - Development Objectives

The primary development objective of community marketing is to nurture marketing and promotional skills and create additional capacity within the community and the local government. As the name implies, the Village is developing resources, partners, contacts, channels and tools to further its marketing goals.

Community Marketing - Branding Objectives

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), branding is defined as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers. In the case of community branding, the "seller" is the Village of Hazelton and "other sellers" are other communities.

A good community brand helps ensure a community is chosen over other communities (for the purpose of investment, relocation or a holiday, for example). A great brand makes the target audience or audiences believe there is no other choice.

A great brand possesses the following qualities:

- It delivers a clear, concise message;
- The message is credible;
- It evokes an emotional response;
- It motivates the target audience; and
- It begins to build loyalty among the target audience.

The Village of Hazelton brand is a promise to people and businesses that are learning about the community or experiencing the community for the first time.

Community Marketing - Positioning Objectives

As the name implies, positioning is about determining where your product or service fits in the marketplace. This is an important component of a community marketing strategy because it is about perception. If the Village of Hazelton does not position itself, other communities or outside elements will decide the Village's position, which will undoubtedly be weaker and will limit the community's choices and opportunities.

In order to keep the Village Hazelton "first in mind," it must answer the following questions:

"What is the one best offering from the community?"

"What is unique about the community?"

Attracting New Business Investment

There are many valid reasons for the Village of Hazelton to pursue business investment. The goal could be as broad as building a resilient, 4-season tourism sector that encompasses cultural/heritage, First Nations and outdoor/adventure tourism segments. The goal could be as specialized as targeting skilled and specialized tradespeople or information technology professionals to immigrate and set up small businesses in the community – as much for the type of life the Village offers as the pure economic benefit these new investors can derive.

Investment attraction initiatives can help a community sell commercial or industrial properties. It can grow the number of businesses within a community and help grow the client base for existing businesses. The investment attraction direction the Village decides to pursue requires a sustained commitment and effort. Communities across British Columbia and Canada are competing for the same investments to enhance their local economies. The community that presents the most compelling rationale to prospective investors and builds a relationship based on trust and support will prevail. Ultimately, the Village of Hazelton's competition is not only a few kilometres down the highway. It is around the world.

What Are Business Investors Seeking?

While there are many advantages business investors look for when they decide on a location, they can generally be captured in six categories:

- 1) Market support for their product or service.** This includes access to a new or expanded customer base, as well as the capacity to compete successfully within the new environment. Setting up a new location must give the company sufficient leverage to make the investment worthwhile.
- 2) Infrastructure to support the investment.** Most companies will need access to transportation (road, rail, air), utilities (water, sewer, power, etc.), land or buildings, communications (telephone, Internet) and other infrastructure to support the investment they will be making. Existing development in these areas will be more appealing and reduce the risk and expense for the investor.
- 3) Access to natural resources.** Based on the region's traditional strengths in forestry and the growing base of mining activity, access to natural resources will be significant to many investors. Whether it is one of these resources sectors, agricultural land for crop production or access to water for industrial processing or manufacturing, the Village must understand the role existing natural resources play in attracting investment, as well as the potential impact of natural resource intensive investment in the area.

4) Favourable policies and regulations. Business investors and site selectors working on their behalf assess the potential barriers resulting from existing policies and regulations in the target market. This is especially true of foreign direct investment (FDI). There are many layers in the policy and regulatory environment, from national to local and the Village must be knowledgeable of the impact this environment may have on potential investment in the community and region.

5) Investment support within the target market. There is a broad spectrum of support offered by communities attempting to secure new businesses. These can range from creating a welcoming environment and building a relationship with the prospective investor to direct incentives (tax breaks or subsidies, for example). The Village must determine where along the spectrum of support and promotion the community is most comfortable. From that position it will be able to establish what additional support it has to offer to investors on a case-by case basis. It will also be better equipped to filter out investment proposals that extend beyond the community's comfort zone.

6) Cost of the investment. All of the factors above are directly or indirectly related to the cost of making a business investment. Ultimately, foreign companies will consider investing in Canada, British Columbia and the Village of Hazelton if the bottom line is profit.

Attracting New Residents

Quality of life indicators are excellent tools to help the Village of Hazelton measure its attractiveness to residents as well as to identify specific areas in which it can focus to make the community more attractive to prospective residents.

There are many indices available, most of which provide indicators in categories such as physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, social connection, as well as more quantitative indicators such as income levels and employment.

Typically, these indicators help measure community health and, when acted on successfully for the purpose of improvement, can be a powerful promotional tool to attract new people to a community.

For example, a group of citizens formed the Sustainable Seattle Civic Panel in 1992 to build their city's "long-term cultural, economic and environmental health and vitality, with emphasis on long-term."⁴¹

⁴¹ The Co-Intelligence Institute. <http://www.co-intelligence.org/S-sustainableSeattle.html>

After considerable deliberation, the Panel identified 99 indicators which included such diverse indicators as:

- Hours of work at the median wage required to support basic needs;
- Percentage of employment concentrated in the top 10 employers;
- Wild salmon runs in local streams;
- County population and growth rate;
- Average travel time from selected starting points to selected destinations;
- Percentage of population that gardens, and votes in primary elections; and
- Tons of solid waste generated, and recycled, per person.

By establishing and measuring “quality of life” or “community health” indicators, the Village obtains valuable information that serves purposes well beyond community marketing and promotion. It provides a road map for making the community healthier, more resilient and more attractive.

Traditional statistics paint an unflattering portrait of Hazelton’s current economic and social environment; however this quantitative data is a single chapter in the community’s full story. Traditional statistics cannot capture the spirit, friendliness, natural beauty and lifestyle potential that reside in and around the Village. These factors speak loudly to many people who are deciding where to live and are not dependent on a high paying job with an existing employer.

Attracting Tourists

The potential for tourism has been discussed in detail earlier in this report. Tourism is an economic priority for the provincial government from a business and investment perspective, as well as a provincial economic driver due to the number of travellers enjoying the province’s attractions and locations. The Village must capitalize on the existing marketing and promotion channels and activities available through this valuable partner.

While the Village does not own the majority of tourism assets in and adjacent to the community, it should take the lead on proposing collaborative, mutually beneficial tourism promotion initiatives with private-sector and First Nations partners in the area. Tourism promotion can be an expensive proposition but sharing costs on initiatives of mutual interest can pay dividends over time.

Reaching Provincial, National and International Target Audiences

The Community Marketing Strategy provides a framework for successful marketing and promotion of the Village of Hazelton. The strategies and tactics identified in this document will support the Village's efforts to gain positive exposure beyond the boundaries of British Columbia. Internet-based marketing and social media in particular will increase the Village's visibility to the world.

Initiatives to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) add an additional layer of complexity and planning to the equation. This is also true of tourism promotion directed at foreign travellers or activities intended to attract immigrants from abroad. Based on the research and analysis in this report and the resources currently available to the Village, initial marketing and promotion activities should focus on the provincial market for all three priorities: business investment; relocating families or individuals; and tourists.

BRANDING AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

A brand is not a slogan or a logo. It is a perception created by a product – in this instance, the product is the Village of Hazelton. In contrast logos and slogans are forms of marketing messages that are effective when they support the brand.

Based on its three priorities for the Community Marketing Strategy, the Village is attempting to reach different target audiences for different reasons. Although this is a wide-ranging audience, the Village's brand will be stronger if it has a narrow focus. The more specific, the more effective it will be.

Regardless of the different marketing campaigns the Village will launch based on this strategy, the community brand should remain consistent. The messaging may change to attract agri-food investment or backcountry campers, for example, but the brand remains the same.

Roger Brooks, an expert in the fields of tourism, community branding, downtown development, and destination marketing asks these three questions:

- “What do you have that the people you are hoping to attract can’t get or do closer to home?”
- “What makes you worth a special trip?”
- “What sets you apart from everyone else?”⁴²

According to Brooks, a great brand can start with a simple plan:

- What does the Village want to be known for?
- What does the Village need to own the brand?
- How will the Village tell the world?
- What goes on the ‘to do’ list?⁴³

Ultimately, the Village of Hazelton is marketing and promoting itself, whether the purpose is attracting new investment, new families or more tourists. Selling the experience of the Village first engages people, motivates them to get involved and inspires them to do something. This can be followed by promoting the assets that are relevant to the target audience in question. In combination, this approach will create an effective brand that goes a long way to building a memorable community identity.

⁴² <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/>

⁴³ Ibid.

APPENDIX A: VILLAGE OF HAZELTON ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

An online survey was created to provide additional opportunity for community members to share insights in issues relevant to the project's scope.

The Village of Hazelton distributed a 6-question Survey Monkey survey to its contact lists. The questions were intended to capture local perspectives on the Village's existing promotional strengths, as well as generate ideas regarding positive steps the community could take to promote the Village to business investors, families and tourists

The respondents were introduced to the survey with the following text:

"The Village of Hazelton is leading an initiative to promote the community to business investors, entrepreneurs, families and tourists. The Village is identifying the best approaches to market the community to each of these groups and would like your input as part of its research and analysis.

The following 6-question survey will take five to ten minutes to complete and will contribute greatly to the project. Thank you for sharing your expertise and taking the time to fill out the questions below."

The survey was launched on January 21, 2015 with an initial termination date of February 17, 2015. The survey deadline was extended to March 2, 2015 to solicit additional responses. Eight survey responses were received during this period.

The analysis of the six questions is presented below.

Question 1:

The B.C. government wants to attract business investment to the province. It focuses on eight specific sectors of the economy in which the province already demonstrates strength. In which of the following sectors does the Village of Hazelton possess attributes to attract new investment.



Additional comments (as entered by the respondents):

- environmentalism, sustainability
- market Hazelton as a town that wishes to embrace a green economy
- lifestyle, hospital, assisted living, co-housing
- beautiful location

Every survey respondent identified tourism as an economic strength for the Village of Hazelton.

Five of the eight respondents also believed that agriculture and agri-food could be described as an economic strength in the local economy. Both of these sectors can be linked to comments such as “environmentalism, sustainability”, “beautiful location” and “green economy.”

Question 2:

Business investors look at various factors before choosing their location of choice. Briefly describe the Village of Hazelton's top two general advantages that would appeal to most business investors?

Business Advantage 1	Business Advantage 2
Scenic beauty	Residents' deep connection to the land and water
Location	History
Where the Bulkley and Skeena rivers meet	Paddle wheel – pioneer history
Beautiful location to raise a family	Cultural diversity and great people
Reasonable real estate prices	“Settler” population well integrated with local First Nations population
Strong, historic First Nations population	

Respondents to Question 2 identified a wide variety of factors they felt would appeal to most business investors, including: location/natural beauty; affordability; cultural and community strength and historical factors.

Question 3:

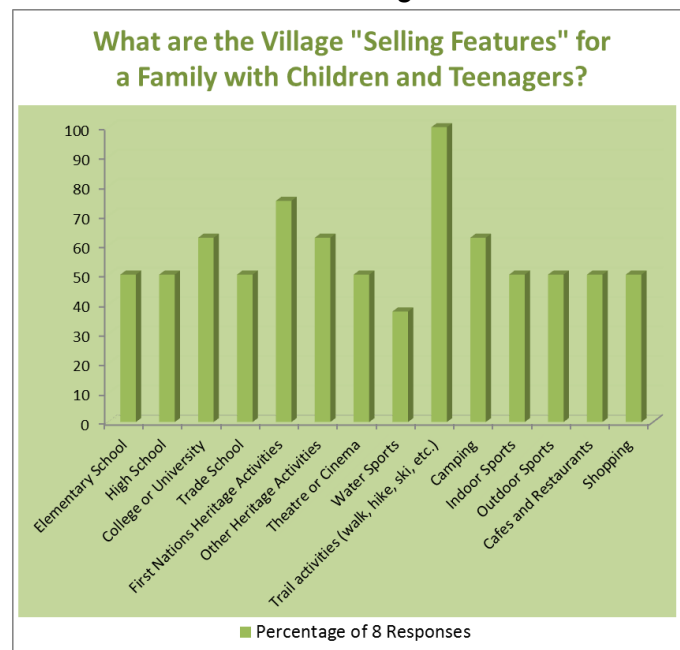
Name two business-types/industries that are not currently represented in the Village of Hazelton but that could establish a competitive position based on the existing business environment, workforce/skilled labour, infrastructure and natural resources.

Business Potential 1	Business Potential 2
Eco-tourism	Ethno-bio studies
River tours	Small structure community housing
Agri-food production and processing	Alternative energy production (small scale?)
River boat rides to various close destinations that offer hiking or something similar	Animal farm where the focus is on the horse – horse and cart rides, etc.
Eco-tourism	Historical (Barkerville West) working in conjunction with 'Ksan
Art and craft college/institute – e.g. fine woodworking/carving school	Fine dining restaurant. Local craft market, especially in the summer with all the visiting tourists

Eco-tourism and related activities (river tours, agri-tourism, craft markets) as well as historical tourism stood out as opportunities for new businesses not currently represented in the Village of Hazelton. Educational and agricultural opportunities were also identified as potential opportunities.

Question 4:

If a family with young children and teenagers were considering a move to the Village of Hazelton, what amenities/activities (cultural, educational, recreational, social, etc.) would be considered “selling features” for the Village?



Additional comments:

- natural beauty, pace of life, healthy lifestyle
- rivers, mountains, no LNG⁴⁴, salmon, a green community
- lifestyle, hospital, assisted living, cohousing

Respondents to question 4 focused on the recreational activities that take advantage of the natural environment, as well as the strong cultural/heritage assets that the community possesses. Post-secondary education was also identified by half the respondents.

⁴⁴ LNG refers to “liquid natural gas.”

Question 5:

The Village of Hazelton competes with many provincial, national and international destinations for tourists. Name two tourism strengths of the Village and surrounding area that can create compelling and unique experiences for visitors.

Tourism Strength 1	Tourism Strength 2
Generations of first nations peoples living on and from their ancestral lands	Extreme beauty in an intact ecosystem
Location	History
Beautiful setting	Easy walkable access to existing services/shops/attractions
The mountain ranges are spectacular	'Ksan Village.
Natural beauty free of LNG development	First Nations Culture
Rivers, fishing, nature, camping	First Nations history, 'Ksan poles
Fishing	Totem poles
Natural beauty and opportunity for outdoor recreation: hiking, fishing, river sports, camping, etc.	Fascinating history is evident all around: Pioneer history, paddlewheel era, First Nations culture, 'Ksan, totem poles, etc.

The tourism strengths identified by the respondents encompass three main assets: enjoying activities in the beautiful natural setting; exploring the rich history of the Village; and experiencing First Nations culture (past and present).

Question 6:

If you were asked to create one sentence to describe the Village of Hazelton in the best possible light, what would you write?

The Village of Hazelton, nestled at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers, is a unique example of a vibrant community where First Nations and non-First Nations live, work and play together, and evidence of their shared history can be seen in the architecture and culture all around the area.

A tiny northern community rich in First Nations and Colonial history nestled between the rivers and the mountains.

A place where fresh air, water, salmon and mountains and great people collide.

History meets today where the rivers meet.

Historic.

The Village of Hazelton, located in northern BC, is nestled among towering peaks, free-flowing wild salmon rivers, and celebrates an historical and contemporary blend of first nations people and pioneers.

Not sure.

So much potential with the right director- someone of vision and historical knowledge.

Respondents to this question offered a wide variety of descriptions when asked to describe the Village of Hazelton in the best possible light.

Many responses echoed the sentiments expressed in earlier questions and highlighted the scenic beauty, rich history and culture and a vibrant community spirit.

APPENDIX B: LOCAL LEADER INTERVIEWS

The following section captures the insights shared by eight local business and community leaders from the Village of Hazelton. Seven of the interviews took place by telephone and one was delivered by e-mail. The questions began with a discussion of the business environment for investment and opportunities for new business. The interviewees were then asked to discuss the natural, cultural and social attributes of the Village for people who currently live locally or those who may wish to relocate to the area. Finally, the interviewees were asked to comment on the tourism potential of the Village and surrounding area.

Interview 1 Insights

One of the challenges for the Village is that many people do not buy locally. Rather, they go to Smithers or Terrace or online for daily items. There are some successes in the local business community and they include the clothing store, the coffee shop as well as new Gitanmaax market and gas bar on Band land. The Gitanmaax are also trying to add another retail component to the commercial building. In the Village, there are also some professional services linked to the hospital. “Hard scrabble” describes the existing business environment.

One of the strengths here is that people are committed to living locally. The Village population is stable while the Gitxsan Reserve is growing in population. This may create opportunities for business investment. Based on the existing assets in the Village, business opportunities would mainly be for one-person operations in trades and services.

The advantage of the geographical location is that the Village is situated in a beautiful natural setting. The town and reserve are a planner’s dream and the historic community is an advantage. The Village offers a romantic and grasping history, as well as mysticism. We also have the benefit of the Skeena River and think of ourselves as the “Upper Skeena” and the eight Nations.

With respect to the cultural and social environment, the richest belonging is the Village, First Nation and settler history. People will find that there are not many barriers to the social environment. If you are here, you belong here. For people considering a move to the area, the Village is not attractive to some families seeking “structured activities” for their kids. It is important to remember that small towns are not a barrier to development (intellectual, social, cultural, etc.) as well as building character.

On the tourism front, Gitxsan history and art brings people here. Highway 16 travellers don’t often leave the highway but those that do come back. The Village needs to work on this. When they visit, people are awed by the beauty and mysticism. I would like to see more tours, better signage and cost-effective promotion. We need to put our history together and package it better for promotion.

Interview 2 Insights

Businesses looking to invest in the area will find a strong community that has valued the land and culture over 10,000 years. Investment is not always aligned with local culture. Here, it should be centred on “land-based” and “people-based.” While it is great to capitalize on the beautiful setting, the challenge is that Hazelton is remote and it can be expensive to get things here.

By mainstream economic terms, the Village and area is poor. However, based on genuine wealth, there is great potential locally. With respect to economic leakage, people will always make their own choices about shopping in larger centres.

Based on the factors many businesses need for success, high speed Internet is on the way but there is not much land available for development. Workforce resources can be challenging because competing forces like camp jobs keep people from pursuing local jobs. Specialized skills can also be lacking - when people develop specialized skills, they often relocate.

An accommodation business may be an investment opportunity. Currently, there is no place to stay in Old Hazelton.

The advantages of the Village’s location include the beauty and diversity in the culture and the land. Micro climates abound.

While the Highway 16 upgrade means it is better maintained, getting in and out of the Village is a challenge. There is only one road in now. Re-opening the road would be beneficial as would a second bridge.

The Village possesses a rich and diverse community culture. Socially, some people go to Smithers or Terrace for entertainment. It would be good to have an “entry point” or guidance for interaction among community and culture. There is division in the community over development (pro and anti-development).

For families considering the area, land-based activities and nature are strengths but the school system and limited structural activities for kids are a weakness.

Culture, heritage and natural beauty bring tourists to the area. The local communities should organize themselves for their residents first, tourists second. Tourists are here mainly on weekend but there is not much open because locals have gone elsewhere.

Interview 3 Insights

The Village of Hazelton is a great place for businesses to operate. It is walkable, rent is cheap, and taxes are low. One of the challenges is that the bank and other services are farther away (8 to 10 kilometres). Despite these advantages, the current economic environment is tough for most businesses.

Skills for technical businesses are not readily available in Village but a retail workforce is available. Gitanmaax working with City West (out of Prince Rupert) for high speed Internet. There are a couple of properties available (store with apartments above) plus the Village owns a commercial building. There are also opportunities to negotiate with the Band on vacant properties.

The regional economy has changed in the past 15 years and industry is almost gone. Given the choice people would shop local rather than go to Smithers or Terrace if price and quality is matched.

The outdoor location is an advantage and the Village is a small, cozy place to live. While there are lots of activities available, there are few specialized one for kids (ballet, swimming, gymnastics not available, for example).

There is a great museum with arts and crafts sales. The area possesses a good sense of community. While there is a good relationship with First Nations, the communities are not collaborating on economic development.

The local education system would not convince a family to relocate here. However, there is a chance to create what you want in a community. It is a place to simplify your life.

The Village's location attracts tourists even though we are a dead end from the highway. The old historic village attracted 50,000 people but there is nothing else for visitors to do. We must develop our heritage strengths.

It would be beneficial to work with businesses in the community to package the offerings in the community. For example, fishing camps work in isolation right now rather than co-marketing or co-promotion with the Village or the businesses.

Interview 4 Insights

The Village of Hazelton possesses a beautiful downtown core. It is an eye-appealing place. Lots of folks walk.

Currently, there are so few businesses (7 in the Village), that it is not really a “business community.” The loss of the high school took students out of the Village. The college, bank, general store and drug store are no longer centrally located in the Village. The local economy is weak and struggling – it is really a suburb of Terrace or Smithers.

New businesses will find that taxes are lower and property is affordable but I am not certain what type of business the Village could attract. There is not much commercial space available, and it is hard to find employees and skilled employees. Businesses filling a unique niche might be successful in the Village (ex. the coffee shop is going well).

With respect to the community’s natural assets, it is beautiful but it is “the end of the road.”

There is a strong sense of community but the culture is changing. First Nations have stopped some businesses from going forward but have also opened new businesses. Logging, fishing and mining are struggles to get going. First Nations are the group to boost economic development.

The great outdoors is the selling feature for tourism. The ‘Ksan tour attracts people; however, the visitors don’t make it into the Village which is only half a kilometre away. Currently, I can only think of two businesses that cater to tourists.

Interview 5 Insights

The Village of Hazelton has a vibrant culture - both First Nations and ranching/settler. The historic appearance of Old Hazelton is a definite assets and the community has a good range of young and old people. It is a healthy community in a wonderful natural setting but the challenge is low population with high unemployment.

Very little has happened economically in the last 15 years but there is enthusiastic leadership in the Village, First Nations and Kispiox Valley. Collaboration depends on working on a project-by-project basis such as walking trails, events and infrastructure (ex. Recreation Centre – the whole community has come together to raise \$12 million).

Business investors will find limited land available but it is low cost and creates an opportunity to step into ownership. There are good contractors and builders in the community. There are also strong tourist attractions upon which to build a new business opportunity.

From an investment perspective, green energy, food safety and food production are of interest. There is scope for more tourism (guided tours, photography, dude ranches, etc.) and experiential attractions. There are also opportunities for work around adult education and training and legal services. With respect to commercial and retail services, people would shop in the Village over Smithers and Terrace if cost and quality is the same.

The natural setting is a large advantage, and the fascinating history is not capitalized on. The disadvantage is that Village is relatively remote from easy points of transportation. The cultural setting is amazing and has potential to re-grow. There is room for more activity and opportunities to earn tourist dollars and there is a willingness in the community to look at this.

Living in the Village of Hazelton, most appreciate the cultures and try to deal with any tensions in a creative way. Challenges exist around the sense of injustice but a significant sense of collaboration exists. New people do best when they come to the community with a desire to learn, not coming with all the answers. There is a real pride among folks in the Village. If new people have priorities like inexpensive housing, warm welcome, culturally-rich environment and are the type of people who create their own opportunities for fun and entertainment, the Village offers a great home.

In terms of promotion, more advertising as well as making an investment in highlighting community historic and cultural events would be beneficial. Theatre on the street is a possibility, as are guided tours to various First Nations destinations.

Interview 6 Insights

Business advantages in the Village of Hazelton include inexpensive real estate and low business set-up costs; however, land claims to be settled create uncertainty to start a business. Also, there is no natural gas locally.

I would describe the local business environment as a dormant economy since forestry went down. As mentioned, property and business start-up is inexpensive. The local government has buildings for competitive rents to attract businesses. Better relationships are developing with First Nations but it is a trust-building exercise. This is often affected by frequent changes among Band Councils. New business investors may find that workforce skills are lacking. Tourism-related business opportunities exist.

Geographically, the Village is off the beaten path by about 6 kilometres. From a tourism attraction perspective, native art and culture is not as big as it once was. While the Village currently lacks art and entertainment, people are trying to get things going. There is a good sense of community but the population is dropping.

Affordability is a key for families considering a move to the community. A house can be bought for \$80,000. There is not really a young crowd in the Village of Hazelton except among First Nations communities. The Village is dependent on government funding contributions which is really a huge challenge for revitalization.

A Chamber-style group is trying to boost economic development and THRIVE is trying to get entertainment initiatives going.

Interview 7 Insights

There is an abundance of town pride among the elder population. The Village's advantages include a beautiful location, incredible history, including First Nation history represented at 'Ksan. There is also the advantage of having four communities nearby and another very close.

The challenges include seasonal nature of tourism business, which is less than six months. Many new tourism-driven businesses may be seasonal in nature based on this limitation. All the local communities need to work together and be responsible spokespeople for their constituents. There are some social problems that are evident on Main Street.

The economy is not healthy at all. There was a dependence on forestry and now it is gone. There are empty houses and buildings that can be an opportunity as well. The Gitanmaax grocery store and building was a recent good news addition. The communities may have to "lightly embrace" oil and gas opportunities. If oil and gas boom comes, supply and service type business opportunities may open up.

The arrival of high speed Internet by mid-2015 is a strength for the community. The proximity to Smithers is good for families. While there is economic leakage, people can be educated on the advantages of shopping locally. Unfortunately, lots of entertainment and recreation dollars are leaving the community, as well as money for contractors and building materials. There are plenty of affordable sites but not many places to buy things. There probably is an opportunity for a "good" restaurant. Opportunities for training at the college and First Nations high school exist.

The Skeena, Kispiox, Bulkley Rivers are tourist attractions – scenic and beautiful but still seasonal. Resource development could threaten pristine nature.

There is a strong sense of community by outward appearance and a strong First Nations culture still exists. There is a good music festival in the Kispiox Valley. The weak link is for young families looking for cultural and artistic activities. They go to Smithers.

The climate is good for growing. Old town doesn't have the impact of traffic but offers immediate, great access to the outdoors.

'Ksan is "the" tourist attraction though it is experiencing some economic duress. Fishing in the summer and fall brings in short- and long-term stays and there are some guiding and rafting outfits. Some gold rush history resonates with European tourists.

The Village has fairly good signage off the highway.

Interview 8 Insights

The Village's advantages include the pristine beauty of the area and the historic charm of the Village. The disadvantages include the lack of other established businesses in the Village to help create more of a draw off the highway. The local economy could be characterized as "poor and struggling." Except for government offices and services (liquor store), everyone else is struggling.

The strengths for new business investors include affordable rents and leases. At the same time there are not many spaces available. Currently there is inadequate internet connection or quality and it is difficult to find skilled workers locally. New opportunities could include tourism-base businesses and local services (restaurants with fixed hours and open regularly), as well as tours around the area such as fishing and raft excursions. Tourists are coming to the Village but are finding there's nothing to do and nowhere to find information about the area

The northern beauty is definitely a draw but large motorhomes have a difficult time finding parking and space to turn their rigs around. There's not suitable parking for large motorhomes or trucks pulling boats. Visitors turn around at Hagwilget Bridge and won't even attempt to enter Old Hazelton because they don't want to get themselves stuck. The community has a great spirit. There are many businesses and individuals who believe in Old Hazelton and want to see it reach its full potential. The Village has pioneer history, which is of interest to visitors, but a mix of First Nations representations would add to the attraction.

With respect to attracting new families, it wouldn't be difficult. I've witnessed many young couples travelling through the region and surveying The Hazeltons as a possible relocation destination. It can be promoted as a grass-roots community with history and culture. The Village still remains affordable in comparison to Smithers and Terrace.

'Ksan museum has long been an international draw. I wish the Village and surrounding communities could band together with 'Ksan, with all of us working together to become a solid tourist destination. First Nations (Gitxsan) cultural/tourism remains a strong draw, as well as fishing, the natural beauty (the mountain + rivers) and history. Tourists love to "Do Something, Learn Something, See Something."

The Village needs a strong branding campaign to identify and promote who we are as a Village and what Old Hazelton has to offer. It can market this identity extensively through a variety of communication channels, such as print/TV/travel bureaus. Many of the "tourists" are simply residents from neighbouring towns who haven't taken the time to visit Old Hazelton or don't even know anything about the Village. Once they know about it, they make several visits and spread the word. They bring outside visitors to the Village as a proud and exciting destination point for their guests. Promotions options include Northwood Magazine ads, BC Ferries brochures, local TV and radio spots, regional Fishing Lodges, and Tourist Centres throughout BC enroute to the north.