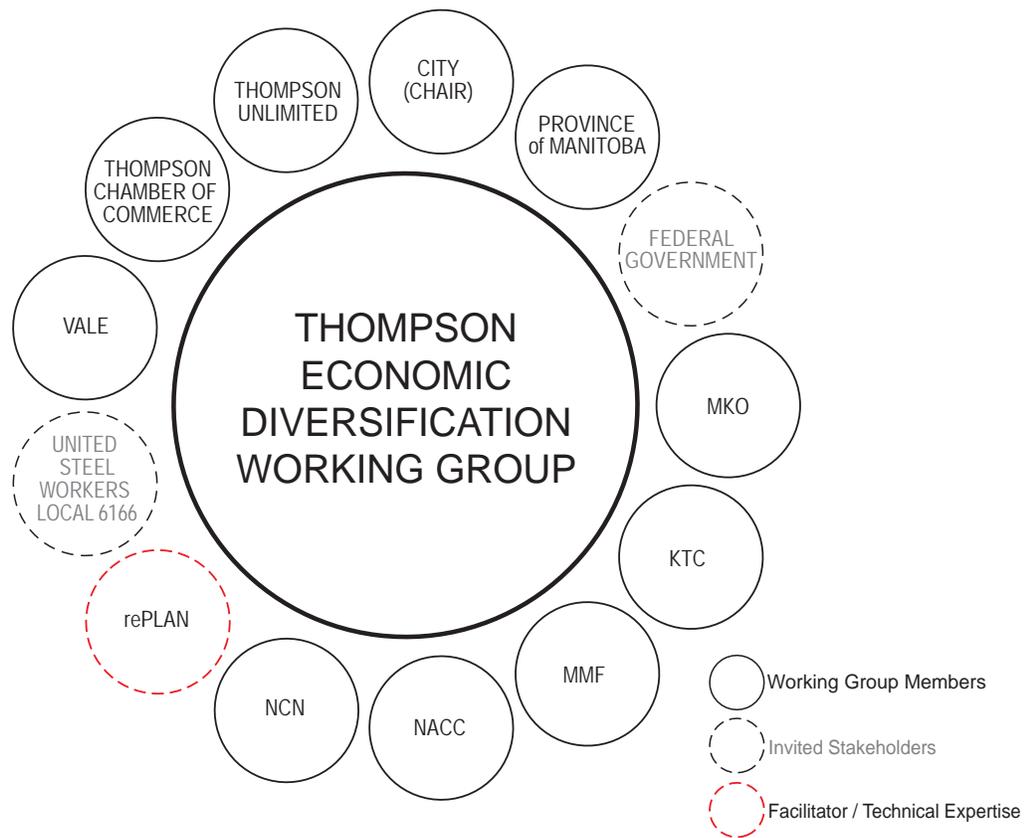


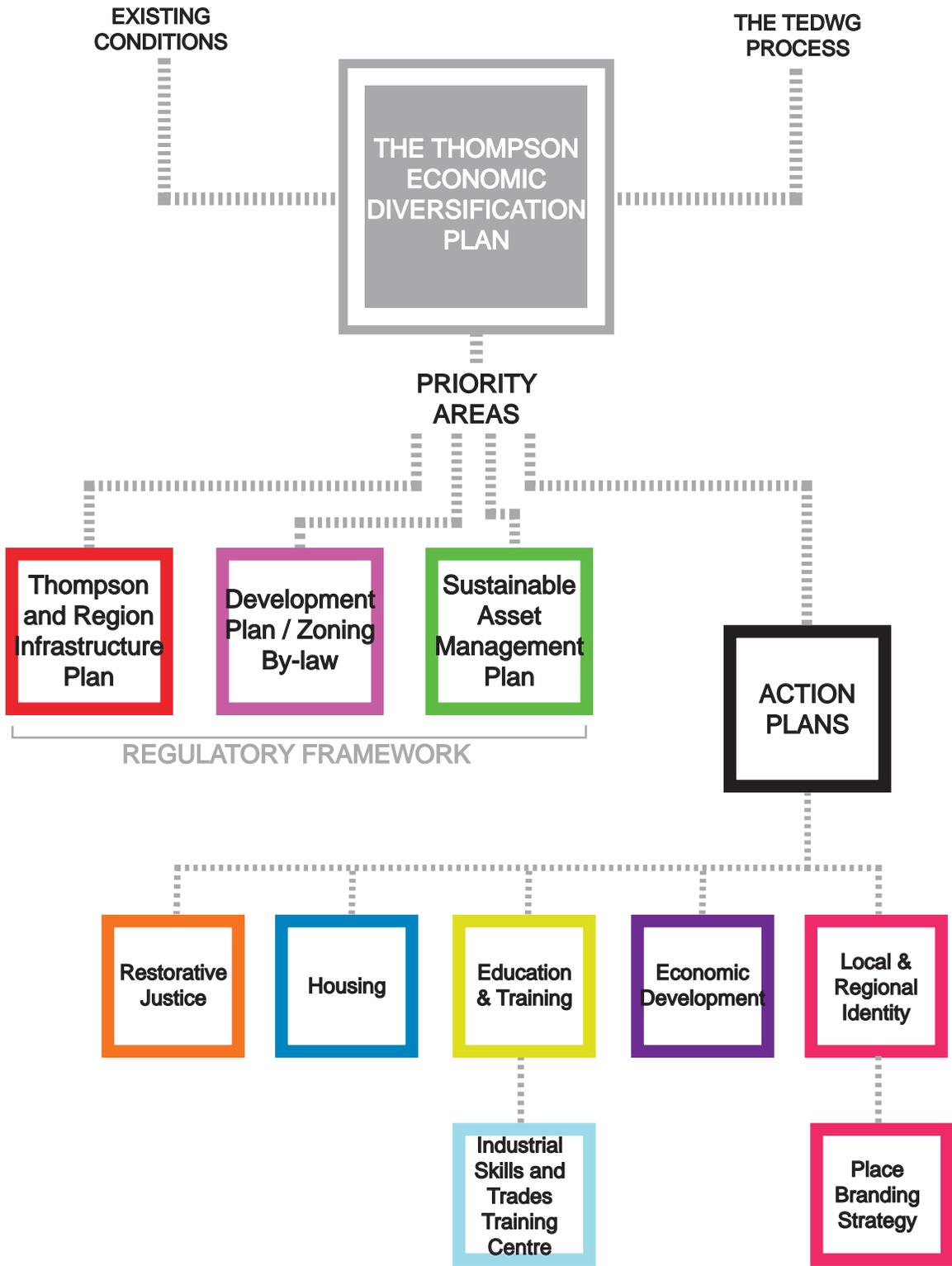
# THE THOMPSON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PLAN

THE THOMPSON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION WORKING GROUP  
June 2013









 **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>0.0 Acknowledgements</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>PART 1: THE TEDWG PROCESS</b>		<b>PART 2: OUTCOMES</b>	
<b>1.0 Summary</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Action Plan Summaries</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.0 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Regulatory Framework Summaries</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.0 Guiding Documents and Organizations</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>4.0 Identifying TEDWG Stakeholders</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>5.0 Establishing the TEDWG Terms of Reference</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>6.0 Setting Collective Planning Priorities</b>	<b>11</b>		
<b>7.0 The Importance of Baseline Data</b>	<b>13</b>		
<b>8.0 Defining the Thompson Region: The Hub and Wheel Model</b>	<b>14</b>		
<b>9.0 Developing Action Plans</b>	<b>16</b>		
<b>10.0 The Regulatory Framework</b>	<b>17</b>		
<b>11.0 Integration, Transition and Implementation</b>	<b>18</b>		



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Thompson Economic Diversification Plan would not be possible without the genuine interest and enthusiasm of a diverse range of stakeholders who are tireless in their dedication to improving the social, cultural, natural and built environments of the Thompson Region. Over a two-year period, these stakeholders have shared their experiences, ideas and expertise with one another to develop a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by Northern Manitoba's changing economic and demographic conditions. Through countless hours of participation – in meetings, workshops, public events and out in their communities – stakeholders have prevailed in creating a plan that provides a northern approach to addressing uniquely northern issues. To all who devoted their time, energy and wisdom to the process:

Thank You / Ekosani / Meegwetch

 **PART I: THE TEDWG PROCESS**

# THOMPSON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PLAN: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

 Direct Relationship  
 Oversight & Advisory Role

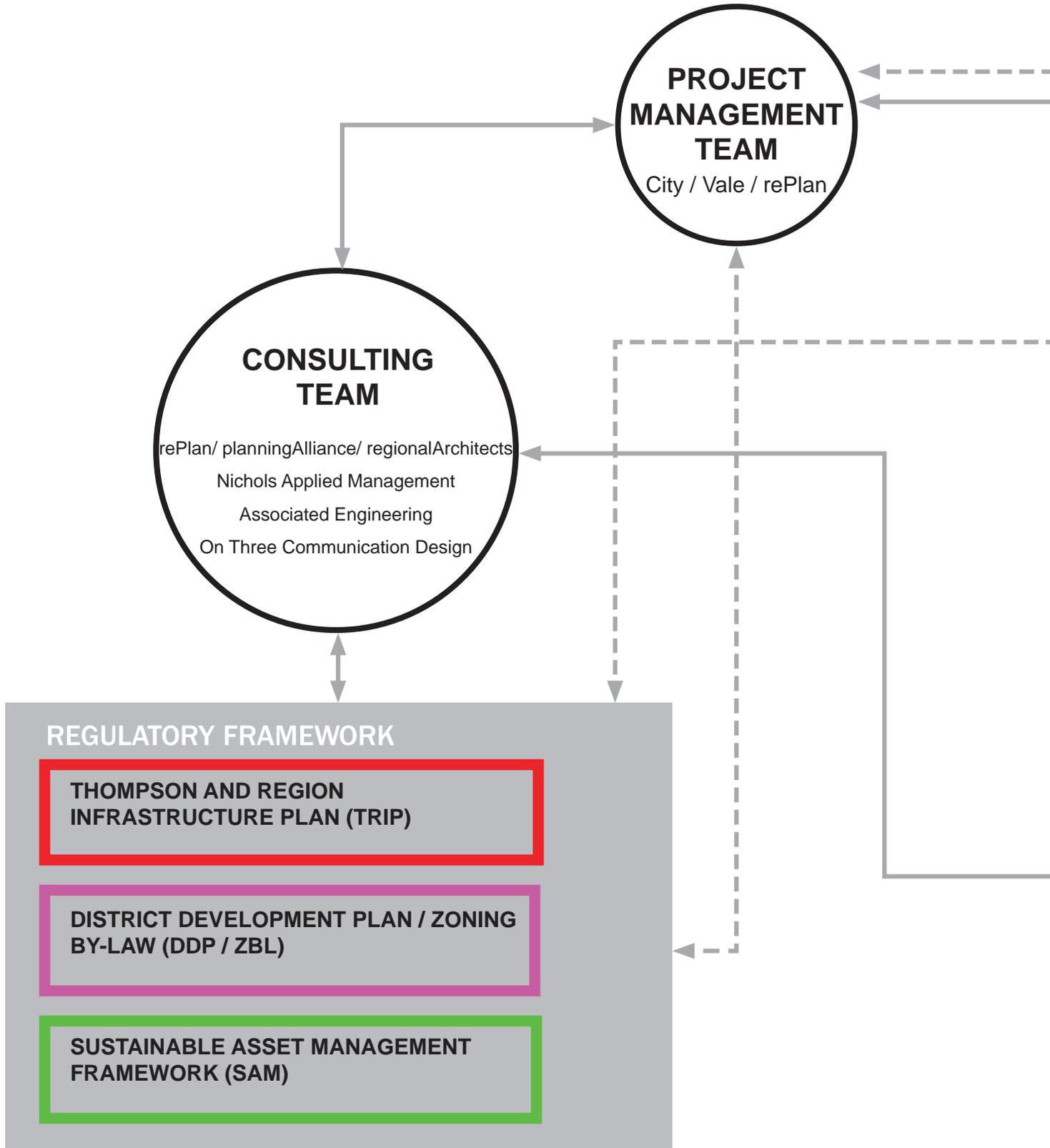
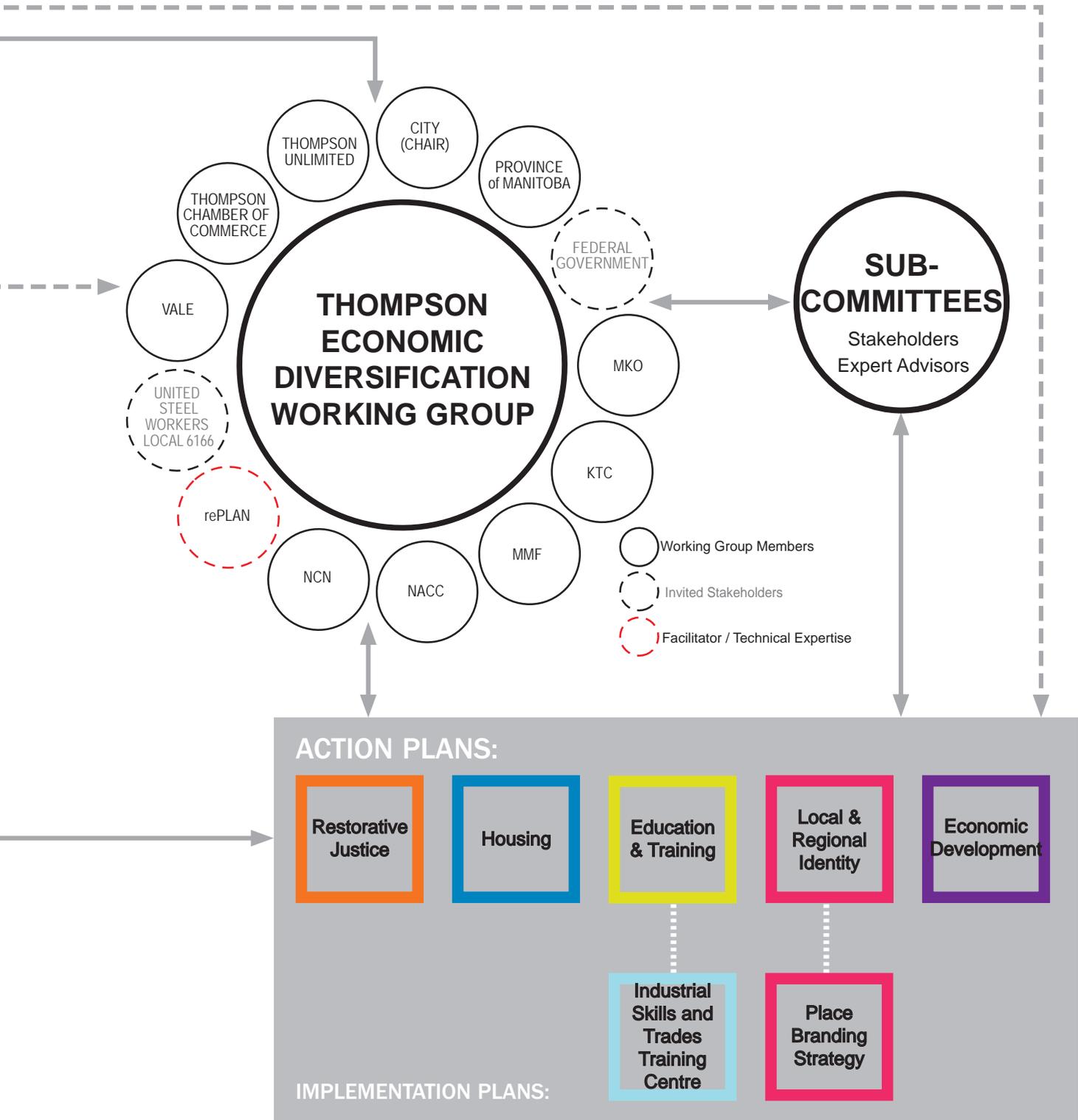


Figure 1.1 - Organizational Chart for the Thompson Economic Diversification Plan



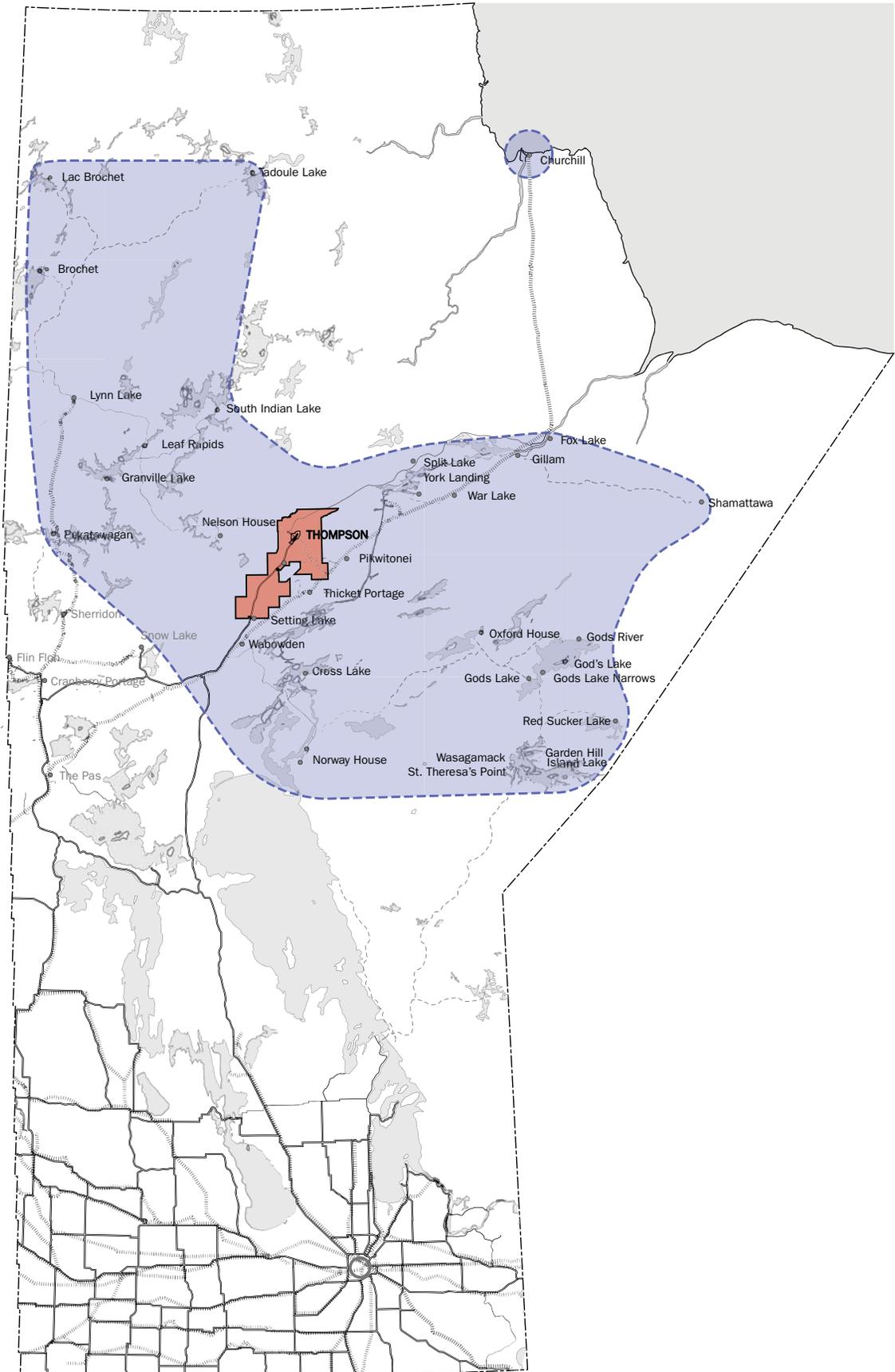


Figure 1.1 - The Thompson Region

## 1. SUMMARY

The Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group (TEDWG) process and outcomes highlight the need for economic diversification, economic development and community planning that is inclusive of a broad range of regional stakeholders as proponents of structural change, particularly in Canada's northern urban centers.

The population of Canada's northern regions is growing, spurred on by the growth of Aboriginal communities. The shifting demography of the Thompson Region in Northern Manitoba is consolidating the role of the City of Thompson as a regional service center, providing a range of economic opportunities to regional residents. Northern Manitoba's rapidly changing demographic landscape requires local and regional stakeholders to set clear, collective priorities and form trusting, mutually-beneficial partnerships. The TEDWG process emphasized the importance of such involvement in the design of stakeholder engagement activities, ensuring that the input provided was meaningful and effective and accountability for implementation was shared.

The direct and indirect outcomes of the TEDWG process – including genuine participation, practical plans and immediate implementation – reflect the power of partnerships and common purposes between municipal governments, Aboriginal peoples, local business organizations, and the resource sector. The profound participation and practical plans achieved by the TEDWG process are direct responses to the challenges of Canada's northern urban centers and opportunities for sustainable economic growth.

### 1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document details the Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group's unique model of stakeholder engagement, along with the regulatory and strategic planning outcomes the TEDWG has achieved. The TEDWG process represents a best practice in both procedural and technical capacity building in Northern communities with large urban and regional Aboriginal populations to ensure both local and regional stakeholders can fully engage in planning for the long-term sustainability of their community.

This document comprises two parts. Part I provides an overview of the TEDWG process, including the broader regional context, stakeholder relationships, previous economic and community planning initiatives, the terms of reference for the process, and the group's collective priorities.

Part II provides two-page summaries for each of the Action Plans and Regulatory Framework documents undertaken through the TEDWG process. These summaries provide an introduction and rationale for the project, a discussion of project implementation and a summary of the project's economic impact on the Thompson Region.

### 1.2 TEDWG Overview

TEDWG members represent 10 stakeholder groups including Aboriginal organizations, two levels of government, industry, and local business. The City of Thompson chaired the TEDWG and Vale funded the process, providing significant financial resources for community engagement and technical planning. Stakeholders made significant in-kind contributions including staff time and administrative resources. rePlan (and sister firms planningAlliance and regionalArchitects) led the consulting team comprising Nichols Applied Management, Associated Engineering, and On Three Communication Design (see Figure 1.1 on the previous page for an organizational diagram).

In recognition of the breadth of the Thompson Region's economic opportunities, the TEDWG has undertaken a comprehensive set of plans that, together, form the Thompson Economic Diversification Plan. The Plan better defines Thompson's area of influence within the region and the relationship of regional Aboriginal communities to Thompson; identifies a long-term growth management strategy; and updates the City's governance framework. The Plan includes two streams: a series of Action Plans that provide strategic direction in supporting areas such as Housing and Education and Training (see Section 9) and a Regulatory Framework (see Section 10).

To access full versions of the TEDWG Action Plans and Regulatory Framework Plans, please go to: [www.thompson.ca/TEDWG](http://www.thompson.ca/TEDWG)



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 The City of Thompson and its Region

Located on Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation's Traditional Territory in north central Manitoba, the City of Thompson has evolved as a diverse urban center, functioning as a regional service hub for approximately 65,000 people. While Aboriginal peoples have inhabited the area for thousands of years, the townsite of Thompson was established in the late 1950s after the International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO) discovered an ore body in what is now known as the Thompson Nickel Belt. Thompson's more recent history as a mining town parallels its current role as one of Canada's largest per capita urban Aboriginal settlements. According to the most recent Census, 47% of City of Thompson residents identify as Aboriginal, with anecdotal evidence suggesting a significantly higher proportion (see Figure 2.1).

### 2.2 The Thompson Region's Economic Transition

The Thompson Region hosts a nationally significant resource extraction economy with particular strength in mining and hydro-electric generation. Historically, other resource sectors such as forestry, fishing and fur trading have also been strong. More recently, the City of Thompson has become a regional service center, providing a range of goods and services to regional communities, including retail, education, health, and other government services.

Economic volatility coupled with the November 2010 announcement that Vale, the world's second largest mining company and Thompson's largest private-sector employer, will transition from full operations, including smelting and refining, to mining and milling in Thompson by 2015 underlined the need for the City of Thompson and regional partners to work together to define the Thompson Region's economic future. The Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group was formed to spearhead this effort.

Instead of the Provincial Community Adjustment model that is typically applied to communities experiencing resource sector transitions, the TEDWG model prioritizes the voices of local and regional stakeholders through action-focused engagement and consensus-based decision-making.

To support the Thompson Region's strong economic future, the TEDWG identified an approach to planning for economic transition based on the following:

- **Community and Regional Planning:** Building on the Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan, ensure a strong municipal base from which to support other areas critical to the diversification and future success of the economy of the city and region.
- **People:** Support the development of the local workforce to drive the economic success of the city and region.
- **Economy:** Identify and foster the development of new or existing economic sectors to strengthen Thompson's role as a regional service center with a strong mining pillar.
- **Engagement:** Establish a credible and rigorous process that engages the local and regional communities and gathers input in a way that builds on existing and future diversification initiatives that enjoy meaningful local and regional support.

### 3. GUIDING DOCUMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

#### 3.1 The Thompson Aboriginal Accord

In 2009, the City of Thompson signed the Thompson Aboriginal Accord, a document that outlines an approach to Community Development, Economic Development and Communications based on the values of honesty, respect, and mutual sharing and contribution. Through close collaboration with the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy (TUAS) steering committee, the City of Thompson developed the Accord to affirm its commitment to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal governments and peoples.

The co-signatories of the Accord include the leadership of five Aboriginal organizations active in Northern Manitoba, including Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC), Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN), and the TUAS which has representation from all levels of government, Aboriginal organizations, community organizations, community members, business, industry and educational institutions.

The Accord is a living document. As such, signatories and partners have an ongoing responsibility to report their successes and goals on an annual basis. Since the Accord was adopted, new partners have pledged their commitment to achieving the collective social, spiritual, economic and physical goals of the Accord.

#### 3.2 The Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan

The City of Thompson adopted the Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan (SCP) in April 2010. The SCP was developed through broad consultation with community members and regional stakeholders. The Plan provides a comprehensive framework for the growth and development of Thompson over the long-term across five pillars of sustainability, including:

**Economic:** The City will support local entrepreneurship, the development of new jobs and job retention in order to enhance its role as a regional service center.

**Social:** The City will implement the Thompson Aboriginal Accord and work closely with regional partners to

address both local and regional demand for social programs including affordable housing and recreational opportunities.

**Cultural:** The City will foster a sense of belonging and provide opportunities to enjoy the 'Northern Lifestyle' by supporting local cultural initiatives and artists.

**Built and Natural Environment:** The City will plan for future growth through implementation of sustainable development patterns and ongoing infrastructure development, guided by a Sustainable Asset Management Strategy. A mix of uses, including high-quality green and public spaces will be encouraged.

**Governance:** The City will provide strong and inclusive leadership to guide the growth and development of the City. Community consultation will inform the City's decision-making on key issues.

The Sustainable Community Plan includes close to 150 specific recommendations across the five pillars described above. Implementation of the Plan is now closely integrated with the outcomes of the TEDWG process.

#### 3.3 The Northern Manitoba Round Table and Thompson and Area Round Table

The Northern Manitoba Round Table was convened by the City of Thompson to ensure better communication and coordination between the City and regional stakeholders Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) and the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC). The Round Table established a partnership approach to key issues facing Northern Manitoba, including education and training and infrastructure development. This approach provided a precedent for collaborative strategic planning in Thompson. During the course of the TEDWG process, the Northern Manitoba Round Table evolved into the Thompson and Area Round Table, a political strategy and advocacy group comprising representatives from the City of Thompson, MKO, KTC, MMF, and NACC. Due to their complementary objectives and membership, the TEDWG reported on its activities to the Round Table. Going forward, the Round Table will advance the outcomes of the TEDWG process through continued collaboration and political advocacy.

#### 4. IDENTIFYING TEDWG STAKEHOLDERS

Shortly after Vale’s November 2010 announcement, the company entered into discussions with the Province of Manitoba, the City of Thompson and the United Steel Workers Local 6166 focused on job creation. The need to address the local and regional barriers to job creation and economic diversification more generally prompted Vale and the City of Thompson to refocus their efforts on engaging stakeholders in the Thompson Region to establish a Working Group.

In order to leverage and strengthen the relationships enshrined in the Thompson Aboriginal Accord, the signatories of the Accord were invited to participate in the TEDWG process. The leadership of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC), Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) met individually with the City of Thompson and the consulting team to discuss the terms of their participation and set collective expectations.

Due to their role in supporting the economic diversification of Thompson, the Thompson Chamber of Commerce and Thompson Unlimited (the City of Thompson’s economic development corporation) were identified as TEDWG stakeholders.

The Government of Canada, through the Department of Western Economic Diversification (WD), and USW Local 6166 were also identified as potential stakeholders. Initial discussions with these stakeholders pointed to the importance of their engagement in the implementation stage over direct involvement in strategic planning. The City of Thompson agreed to provide regular updates on the TEDWG’s progress to both potential stakeholders and to identify opportunities for WD and USW Local 6166 to partner with the TEDWG in the implementation of its plans.

In November 2011, the Province of Manitoba, through the Economic Development Initiatives branch of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, appointed a representative to the TEDWG.

The composition of the TEDWG was reflective of the community of Thompson at both the local and regional scale. The significant relationships established by the Thompson Aboriginal Accord set the stage for an inclusive process that deepened existing partnerships

in the community and, in some cases, facilitated new partnerships.

#### THOMPSON ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION WORKING GROUP STAKEHOLDERS:

- City of Thompson – Chair
- Vale
- Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)
- Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC)
- Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF)
- Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC)
- Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN)
- Thompson Chamber of Commerce
- Thompson Unlimited
- Province of Manitoba

## 5. ESTABLISHING THE TEDWG TERMS OF REFERENCE

Through facilitated discussions, stakeholders defined their shared interests at a local and regional level, and developed a formal terms of reference to reflect them. The terms of reference built on the values espoused by the Thompson Aboriginal Accord, with a focus on shared responsibility and contribution, consensus-based decision-making, and equality of voice among stakeholders regardless of factors such as political influence or financial resources. The following principles guided all activities and outcomes of the TEDWG:

*Fairness* – All stakeholder groups will be treated fairly;

*Openness* – All stakeholder groups will undertake their activities in an open and transparent manner;

10 | *Mutual Respect* – All stakeholder groups will treat each other with respect;

*Cooperation* – All stakeholder groups will strive to develop plans that best meet the needs of all parties;

*Collaboration* – All stakeholder groups will work together in a collaborative manner towards the development of plans;

*Egalitarian* – All stakeholder groups will be afforded equal input into the process;

*Agreement Seeking* – All stakeholder groups will seek to develop plans using consensus-based decision-making processes; and

*Informed Participation* – All stakeholder groups will ensure the transfer of information to and from the communities they represent.

Developed over a six-month period, the terms of reference required extensive engagement with stakeholders. This period was critical to trust-building. The shared ‘win’ of creating a contextually-sensitive and empowering terms of reference also propelled the group into their first collective task of setting planning priorities, as described in Section 6. Key components of the terms of reference are outlined below.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

In addition to the TEDWG Terms of Reference, a number of other documents helped to define and support the TEDWG process. These include:

- The TEDWG Communications and Engagement Strategy
- The TEDWG Action Plan Funding Policy
- The TEDWG Sub-Committee Policy

### 5.1 Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

The terms of reference clearly identified the responsibilities of each stakeholder group. Each stakeholder was equally responsible for providing leadership, strategic direction and support to the project and ensuring cross-stakeholder coordination and collaboration. Leaders of each stakeholder group took on the role of championing the work of the TEDWG by promoting and communicating its goals, objectives and outcomes to constituent groups. Importantly, stakeholders agreed to represent and act as decision-makers on behalf of their organizations in setting the strategic direction of the TEDWG and in the development of plans. In order to facilitate decision-making, stakeholders allocated appropriate resources (in-kind) to ensure the Working Group’s success, including participation of leaders as well as staff and members in sub-committees, stakeholder workshops and public meetings.

### 5.2 Decision Making

To put the principles outlined above into practice, TEDWG stakeholders determined that all decisions of the group would be consensus based.

### 5.3 Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders in the City of Thompson, the surrounding region or elsewhere that are potentially impacted or have an impact on economic diversification and community growth were also included in the TEDWG process on a project-by-project basis. Other stakeholders identified and engaged over the course of the two-year

## 6. SETTING COLLECTIVE PLANNING PRIORITIES

process include:

- Utility providers (e.g. Manitoba Hydro)
- Transportation providers (e.g. OmniTrax, Thompson Regional Airport Authority)
- Service providers (e.g. Manitoba Housing, Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, Northern Regional Health Authority, etc.)
- Economic Development Agencies (e.g. Community Futures North Central Development, Communities Economic Development Fund, Metis Economic Development Organization, etc.)
- Provincial and Federal Government Ministries and Departments not directly engaged on the TEDWG (e.g. Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Justice, Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trades, Apprenticeship Manitoba, Correctional Services Canada, etc.)

### 5.4 Management Oversight and Reporting

The terms of reference included a Project Management Team (PMT), comprising representatives from the City of Thompson, Vale and the consulting team to provide oversight for process and resource management. The PMT met weekly for the duration of the project. As noted in Section 3.3, the TEDWG also reported on its activities to the Thompson and Area Round Table. As Section 11 describes in more detail, integration with and transition of TEDWG outcomes to the Round Table is imperative to successful implementation of the TEDWG Action Plans.

### 5.5 Sub-Committees

In order to provide opportunities for more in-depth discussion and research on specific topics related to the Action Plans, the Working Group struck a number of sub-committees. Working Group members, their constituents, other stakeholders and members of the public with expertise or an interest in a given topic were invited to participate on sub-committees. Sub-committees reported to the TEDWG on their activities and progress on a monthly basis.

The TEDWG's primary purpose was to identify and pursue opportunities to help Thompson and the surrounding region diversify its economy and strengthen its position as an economic contributor in Northern Manitoba. Building on the recommendations of the Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan, early discussions focused on the social barriers to economic participation and prosperity that many regional communities and Thompson's urban Aboriginal population face. The priority areas defined by TEDWG stakeholders speak to the need to address these systemic social barriers through an economic lens. Priority areas include:

- Restorative Justice
- Education and Training
- Housing
- Local and Regional Identity
- Economic Development

In addition, TEDWG stakeholders advocated for improved infrastructure, including both physical infrastructure and a renewed governance framework at the municipal level.

All of the priorities established by TEDWG stakeholders impact both the City of Thompson and communities in the surrounding region. In setting and tackling collective priorities, TEDWG stakeholders reinforced the importance of working together to address common challenges and advance a unified vision for the Thompson Region.

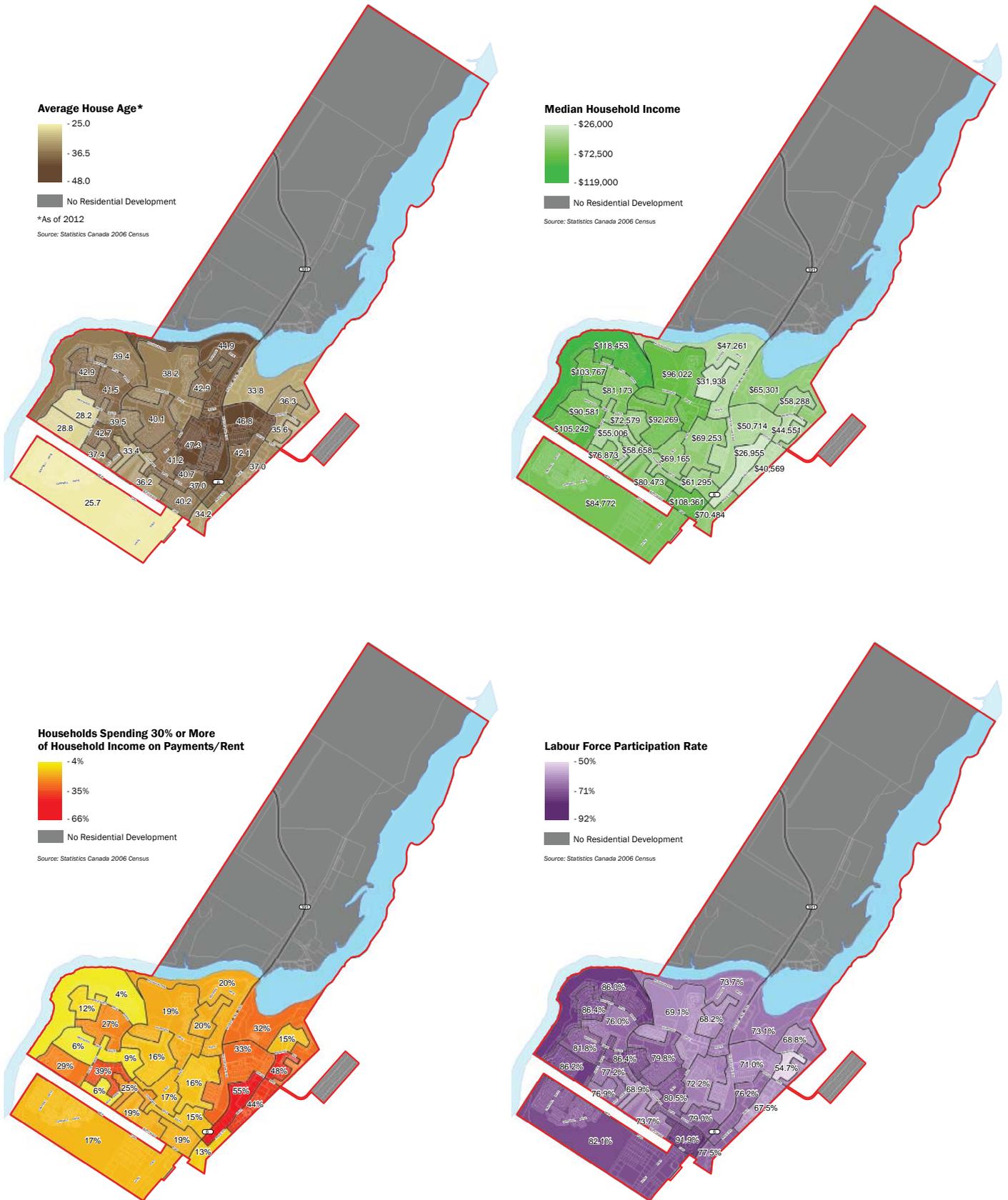


Figure 6.1 - Neighbourhood level demographic analysis for the City of Thompson.

## 7. THE IMPORTANCE OF BASELINE DATA

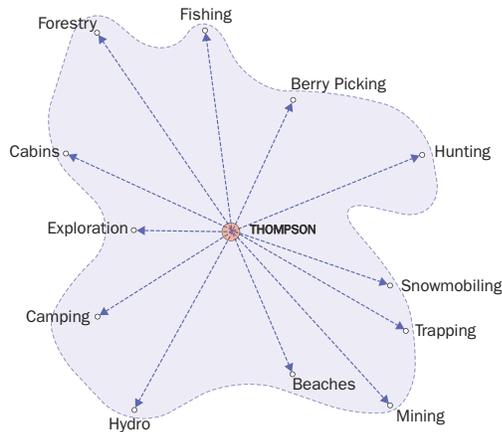
With collective planning priorities in place, TEDWG stakeholders were eager to develop Action Plans and a Regulatory Framework to address systemic issues.

Stakeholders provided a wealth of anecdotal or qualitative evidence to support the development of plans.

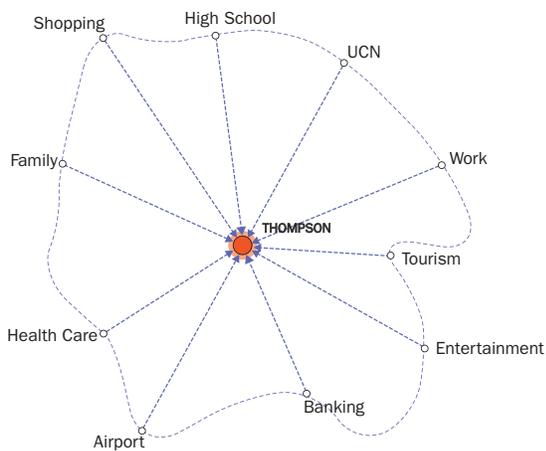
To verify and support this experiential data, the consulting team focused its efforts on building quantitative data sets from a wide range of sources. Analysis and testing of this data enabled the development of planning rationales for planning priority areas. To compile this data, the TEDWG convened sub-committees with broad membership across all TEDWG stakeholder groups, Provincial government staff, and representatives of community and regional organizations. Sub-committee and TEDWG members were empowered to discuss the specific projects they saw as providing the greatest impact in each planning priority area.

The presentation of baseline data in each of the planning priority areas changed the way many TEDWG stakeholders understood their community and region, and sometimes in dramatic ways. For instance, spatial representation of Census of Canada data across neighbourhoods in the City of Thompson highlighted correlations between ethnicity, education level, employment level, median income and quality of housing (see Figure 6.1). Clarifying causal relationships through data analysis helped TEDWG stakeholders rationalize the scope of work for each Action Plan.

**8. DEFINING THE THOMPSON REGION: THE HUB AND WHEEL MODEL**



14 | The Wheel provides economic and recreational opportunities to the Hub



The Hub provides economic opportunities and essential services to the Wheel

The geographical context for addressing all TEDWG priorities is the Thompson Region, as shown in Figure 1.1. Defining the Thompson Region through an iterative, stakeholder-driven process, complemented by other data sources, resulted in new understandings of the reciprocal nature of relationships between a ‘hub’ city and its region.

**8.1 The Hub and Wheel Model**

The relationship between centers and their surrounding regions can be described using the ‘hub and wheel’ model. The center is typically a place of activity, both social and economic. It provides jobs, housing, education and training opportunities, and health care services to its residents and residents of the region. The communities that surround the center, forming a ‘wheel’ around the ‘hub,’ are both influenced by and shape the activities of the center (see Figure 8.1). The ‘hub and wheel’ model used to define the Thompson Region follows these key principles:

**Reciprocal relationships:** The hub and wheel are interdependent. The success, health and sustainability of one depends on that of the other.

**Multiple areas of influence:** The hub has varying areas of influence in the region, particularly across different types of infrastructure (e.g. roads, housing, education and training). The area of influence for one type of infrastructure may be stronger or more extensive than others.

**Planning across multiple scales:** Numerous political organizations and administrative boundaries are present in Northern Manitoba. Changing demographic and economic dynamics in the hub and wheel affect local, regional, provincial and national priorities and strategic planning.

In some areas, the relationship between the center or ‘hub’ and communities in the ‘wheel’ that surround that center is well-defined. In some cases, the relationship is legislated, typically by the Provincial government.

Northern Manitoba is often understood as a single region, with a land area covering the majority of the Province north of Grand Rapids. However, an analysis of the demographic, economic and infrastructure characteristics

Figure 8.1 - Illustrating the relationship between Thompson and regional communities.

of 'hub' cities across Northern Manitoba reveals the practical limits of each hub's influence and suggests that distinct regions exist within the broader umbrella of Northern Manitoba. Other centers within Northern Manitoba, including Churchill, The Pas, and Flin Flon, have some regional influence in addition to specific intra-regional relationships with Thompson.

**8.2 Shaping the Thompson Region**

The Thompson Region took shape through discussions with TEDWG stakeholders, mapping analysis of the current administrative and political boundaries of stakeholder and other organizations, and an inventory of existing infrastructure across Northern Manitoba. The Thompson Region shown in Figure 1.1 is the final of three iterations. The diagrams in Figure 8.2, show the iterative process through which the boundaries of the Thompson Region were defined.

Stakeholder workshops to determine the area of Thompson's influence within the region revealed significant movement between Thompson (the hub) and regional communities (the wheel) for everyday needs. Regional communities typically access Thompson by road and air for a variety of reasons, including health services, education and training, family connections, access to goods and services (particularly retail), employment, and sports and recreation. Dialogue and collaboration between TEDWG stakeholders when defining the Thompson Region resulted in a better understanding of the spending power and economic potential of the communities surrounding Thompson and the influence the communities have over Thompson's growth and long-term sustainability. Recognizing the lived experience and traditional knowledge of Aboriginal stakeholders in regional mapping also generated buy-in to the planning process, particularly by organizations and communities who are often geographically excluded despite their economic relationship to a 'hub' city like Thompson.

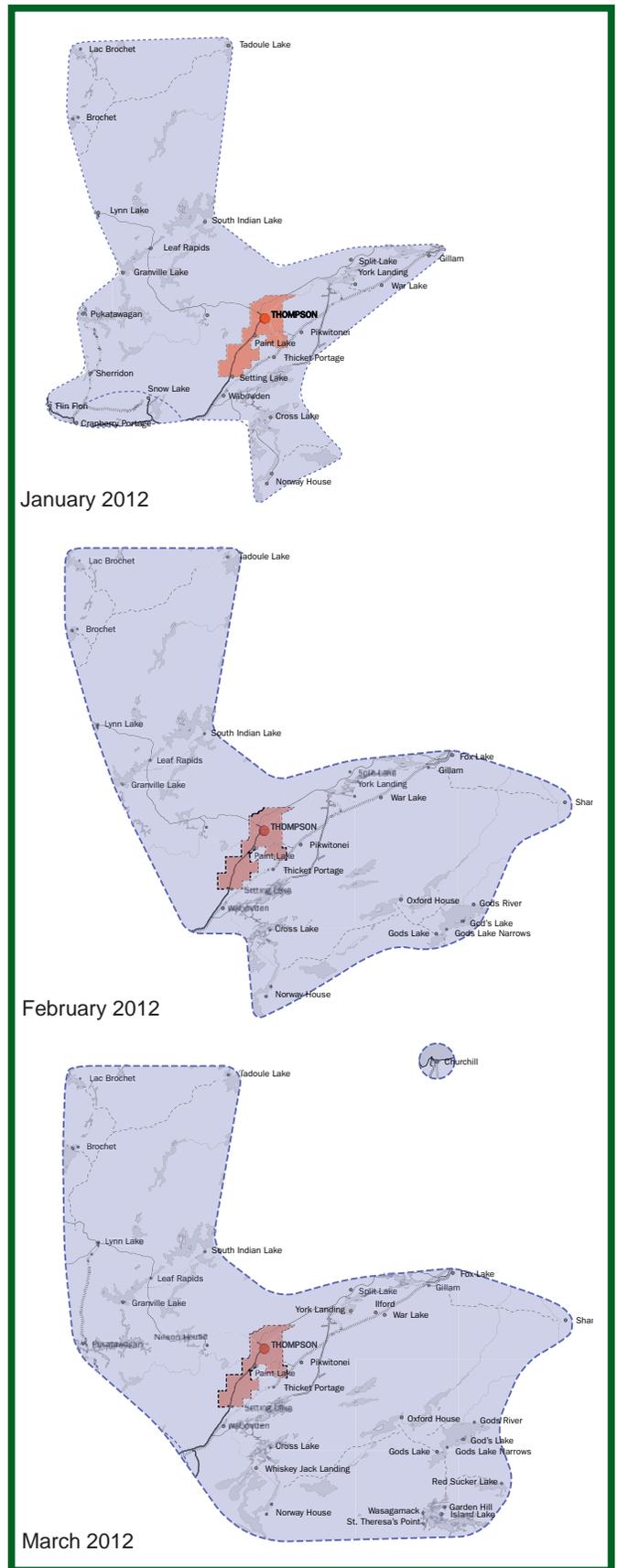
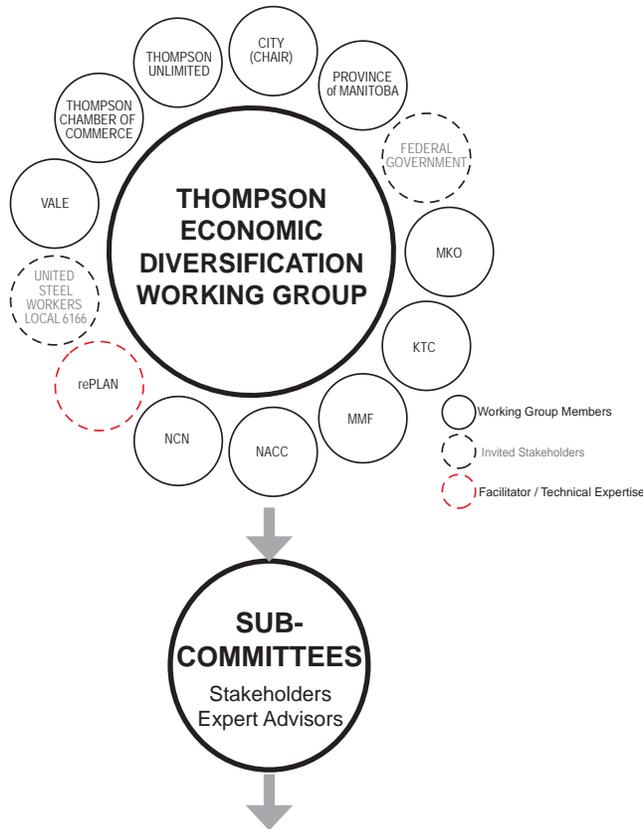


Figure 8.2 - Defining the Thompson Region



## 9. DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

TEDWG stakeholders developed an Action Plan to address each of the planning priority areas outlined in Section 6. In some cases, additional work was completed to support or implement the plan. The Action Plans and their associated implementation plans are shown in Figure 9.1.

As noted in Section 5.5, to ensure the Action Plans represented the interests, needs and goals of community members, a sub-committee was formed to address each planning priority. Sub-committees advanced and directly shaped the content of each Action Plan.

The Action Plans resulting from this sub-committee-driven process include the following components:

**Baseline Study:** The Baseline Study provides an up-to-date analysis of the areas of greatest need within a given priority planning area and is intended as a guide for stakeholder groups as they implement and adjust the Action Plans.

**Evaluation Matrix:** Sub-committee members developed evaluation criteria in workshop sessions. These criteria were applied to a long list of potential priority projects in order to yield a more focused set of priorities.

**Priority Project Descriptions:** The Action Plans include scopes of work for the priority projects emerging from the evaluation matrix.

**Implementation Plans:** These plans detail the partnerships required to act on priority projects, along with a timeline for implementation.

An executive summary of each Action Plan, including planning rationale, key facts and figures, and the implications of plan implementation for the Thompson Region's economy, is included at the end of this document.

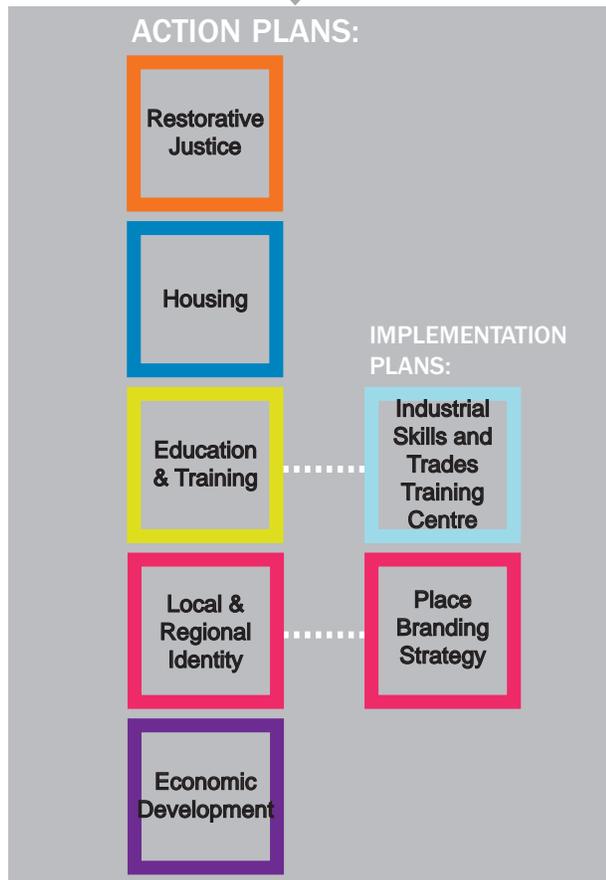


Figure 9.1 - The Action Plans and priority project implementation plans developed by TEDWG Sub-Committees.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

Some Action Plans and the plans developed to implement them required additional technical expertise to complete. Special committees were formed to focus on the following:

**The Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre Master Plan:**

This detailed Master Plan implements the first priority project described in the Education and Training Action Plan. Representatives from University College of the North (UCN), Northern Manitoba Sector Council (NMSC), Vale, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), and Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC) convened a Project Implementation Team (PIT) to provide technical oversight for the plan.

**The Thompson Unlimited Mandate Letter:**

The Economic Development Action Plan focuses primarily on the "re-tooling" of Thompson Unlimited, the City of Thompson's economic development corporation. A Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) was formed to provide input into a new Mandate Letter for the organization. The TIC included TEDWG stakeholders, Thompson Unlimited Board members and staff, and staff from other regional economic development agencies.

**The City of Thompson Place Branding Strategy:**

Early in the process, the Local and Regional Identity Sub-Committee identified the need for a Place Branding Strategy for the City of Thompson. The Strategy was developed by a dedicated Advisory Committee comprising TEDWG and sub-committee members as well as interested members of the public.

**10. THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

While Action Plans provide strategic direction in specific priority planning areas, the Regulatory Framework lays the groundwork to support the implementation of Action Plans. This series of regulatory documents, when taken together, links land use planning, infrastructure development and economic development, ensuring the physical growth of the City and surrounding region positively impacts regional prosperity. The Regulatory Framework includes:

**The Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan (TRIP):** The Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan identifies potential population growth and economic development opportunities in the Thompson Region and determines what infrastructure will be needed to support growth in the future.

**The Thompson and Planning District Development Plan:** The updated Development Plan establishes a framework for land use decision-making within the Planning District.

**City of Thompson Zoning By-law:** The Zoning By-law is a companion document to the Development Plan. Both documents are critical to guiding the future growth and development of the City.

**City of Thompson Sustainable Asset Management Framework (SAM):** The Sustainable Asset Management Framework is closely linked to the City's other regulatory documents. The SAM identifies the critical relationship between infrastructure spending, land development and economic development.

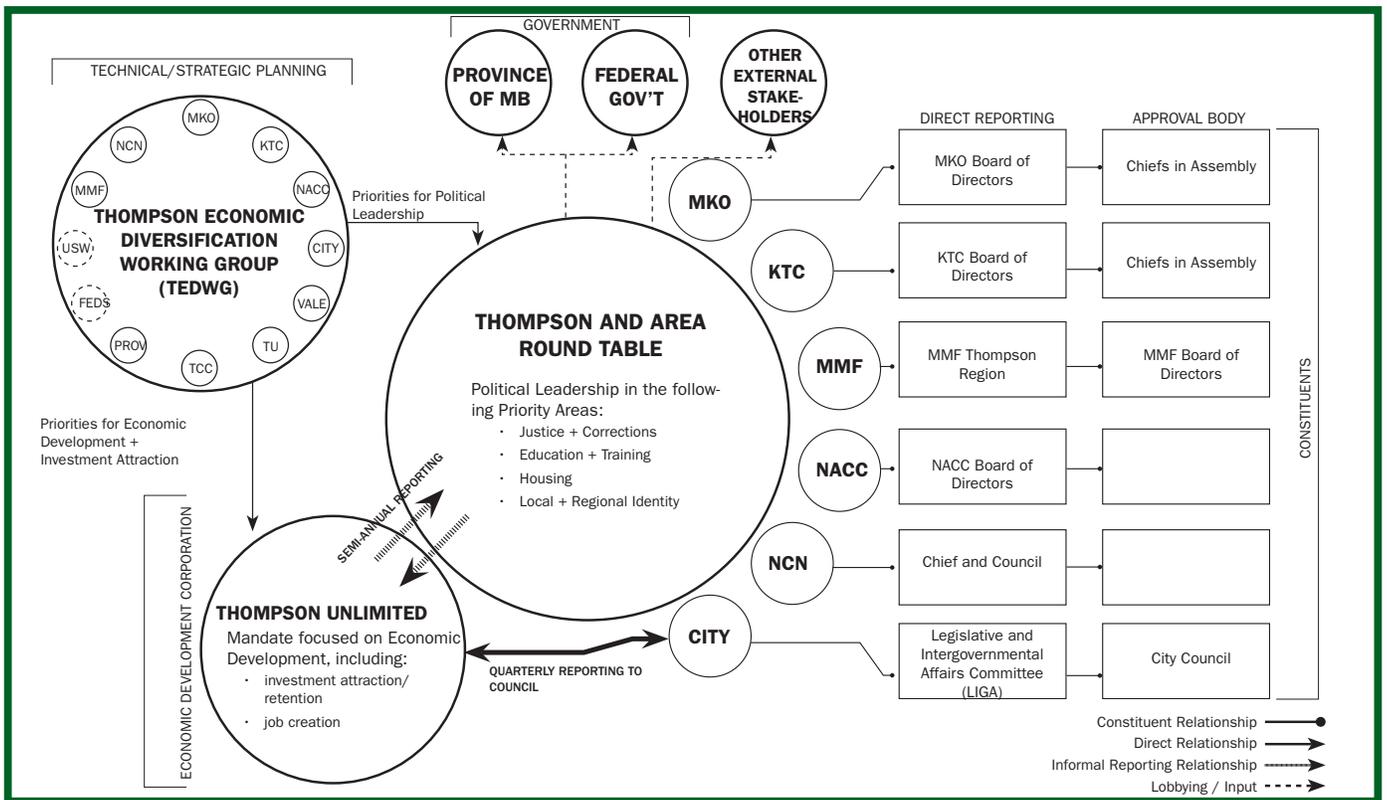


Figure 11.1 - Organizational Structure and Constituent Relationships of the TART.

18 | 11. INTEGRATION, TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The outcomes of the TEDWG Action Plans and Regulatory Framework are closely integrated. The Regulatory Framework was designed to support the implementation of Action Plan priorities and to ensure the long-term sustainability of projects implemented in the near-term. The Housing Action Plan, for instance, relies on the implementation of the Thompson and Planning District Development Plan and the City of Thompson Zoning By-law to support its implementation. For this reason, the plans should be understood and used together.

Oversight for implementation of the plans will take a number of forms, including:

**TEDWG Stakeholders and Supporting Organizations:** Each Action Plan identifies responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of priority projects. In many cases, TEDWG stakeholders and supporting organizations that participated in the development of each Action Plan have been identified as partners in implementation.

**The Thompson and Area Round Table:** The Round Table is dedicated to strengthening the relationship among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments and peoples in and around the Thompson area. The Round Table enjoys representation from many of the same stakeholders as the TEDWG, ensuring consistency from strategic planning through to implementation. The Round Table will identify priority areas for political advocacy and advance the

interests of its stakeholders based on the outcomes of the TEDWG process.

**Thompson Unlimited:** As the City of Thompson’s economic development corporation, Thompson Unlimited’s mandate is focused on job creation and investment attraction and retention. Information gathering, analysis and dissemination are key functions of the organization. As such, responsibility for keeping and regularly supplementing and updating the baseline data coming out of the TEDWG falls, in part, to Thompson Unlimited.

**The City of Thompson / Thompson Planning District:** The City of Thompson is largely responsible for implementing the Regulatory Framework, particularly those areas over which the City and/or Planning District has sole jurisdiction, including the Thompson and Planning District Development Plan, the City of Thompson Zoning By-law and the City of Thompson Sustainable Asset Management Framework.

Ongoing communication and coordination between TEDWG stakeholders and other organizations will be imperative for successful implementation of the plans. The Thompson and Area Round Table organizational diagram (see Figure 11.1) illustrates reporting relationships between various stakeholders and their constituents.

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE TEDWG PROCESS INDICATE A NUMBER OF BEST PRACTICES RELATED TO STAKEHOLDER-DRIVEN PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION**

**FOSTERING AN INFORMED MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATORY PROCESS:**

- Building trust and momentum through regular dialogue with stakeholders
- Facilitated discussion to define the process stakeholders will participate in, with terms of reference that clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each organization/individual
- Regular and transparent information sharing and opportunities for feedback in one-on-one and group settings
- Preparation and support for 'good meetings,' in which all stakeholders come to the table on an equal footing. Good meetings include a pre-set agenda, a consistent and clear format for minutes, an established dispute-resolution process and a clear understanding of the long-term work plan
- Fostering local relationships and mutual trust by adhering to the process as defined in the terms of reference

**GATHERING AND ANALYZING QUANTITATIVE AND VERIFIABLE BASELINE DATA:**

- Supporting anecdotal evidence and lived experience with verifiable data (e.g. Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, labour market studies, etc.)
- Providing quantitative data in a format accessible to all users
- Using baseline data to develop a planning rationale, identify gaps, set goals/objectives, support strategic planning, and identify opportunities for action
- Engaging stakeholders in long-term, publicly accessible monitoring of the baseline. The baseline is a 'living document'

**STAKEHOLDER-INFORMED MAPPING:**

- Learning the region from those who know it best can complement baseline data from formal sources
- Defining geographical boundaries/connections/flows through discussion about and visual representation of the lived experience of stakeholders
- Generating buy-in to the process from organizations and communities who are often geographically excluded
- Generating discussion and critique from organizations and communities not engaged in the process, resulting in a new understanding of geographical relationships

**AN OPTIONS-BASED APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION:**

- Broadening traditional definitions of economic diversification and development to incorporate structural elements that may be overlooked in a simpler model or definition
- Provide plan options that respond to a diverse economic base and multiple opportunities for individual and community development
- Distributing resources for planning and implementation across a range of plans to address the interests and priorities of multiple stakeholders
- Empowering stakeholders to prioritize their needs and take responsibility for implementation

**PRACTICAL STRATEGIC PLANS:**

- Equal focus on long-term strategic planning and near-term action to support organizations in making proactive decisions to address immediate needs
- Establishing a strong regulatory framework to support and facilitate the implementation of action-focused plans. The framework must be flexible and easily updated/replicated
- Building stakeholders' capacity to take on implementation and future planning throughout the project process. Ensure the process itself is understood by stakeholders as a technical output.
- Developing implementation strategies that take into account local resources and capacity for implementation

**ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Carrying the stakeholder relationships and trust developed through the engagement process into implementation with a few 'quick wins'
- Establishing the next phase of local engagement and relationship-building processes while facilitation support is still available to ensure a smooth transition
- Successful stakeholder partnerships can reduce dependence on government and large industrial partners for implementation



 **PART II: OUTCOMES**

# Restorative Justice Facility Action Plan

*The TEDWG identified the need to re-think the traditional correctional facility model for the Thompson Region, given its outsized impact on Northern Manitoba without comparable personal or community benefits to the Region. TEDWG stakeholders and other community partners articulated a coherent vision for a unique institution custom-fit to the patterns of behaviour existing in the north and the needs of northern communities. Local and regional stakeholders identified the links between existing systemic failures and instances of recidivism, youth and gang violence, and economic stagnation (or disengagement) across Northern Manitoba. Working together with a range of community partners, the TEDWG developed an innovative ‘northern solution by and for northerners’ whose goal is to reduce repeat offenders and prepare inmates for life outside, as productive members of society.*

## 22 | INTRODUCTION

In January 2012, following a community-wide process involving more than a dozen key stakeholders, the TEDWG presented its Restorative Justice Facility Action Plan to the Province as part of the Manitoba Adult Corrections Capacity Review. The Action Plan illustrates a program and concept design for a facility that will be a center for restorative justice, a place of healing and treatment, a place for re-pathing and cultural awareness, a center for learning and advancement, and a secure facility that implements the best practices in the design of correctional facilities. The Action Plan recommends that a new facility be constructed in Thompson.

### RATIONALE

The need to create new facilities both across Canada and in Northern Manitoba reflects the findings of several reports, most notably the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (AJI), completed in 1991, which calls for a renewed focus on community in the rehabilitation process. It suggests that creating several smaller facilities in different locations would resolve many of the problems which are by-products of the consolidated approach to which Manitoba has long been bound. Significant overcrowding exists in Manitoba’s correctional system, where a capacity designed for 1,492 currently accommodates 2,255 beds. The Pas Correctional Centre, located over 300 kilometers from Thompson and the regional communities that use Thompson as a center,

is the closest facility for many Northerners.

At present, this small 70-person facility is significantly overcrowded and houses 166 adults inmates, many of whom are forced to sleep on the floor. Other significant and costly financial and emotional concerns include:

- Lack of space for female and youth offenders;
- Financial and emotional costs of daily movement of detainees and justice workers between The Pas and Thompson;
- Absence of officers trained to speak Aboriginal languages; and
- Lack of culturally-specific spiritual programs.

One of the most prevalent problems is that correctional facilities in Manitoba simply take offenders out of their home communities for a period of time with few programs to heal, rehabilitate, educate or train. At the same time, the system fails to recognize that the majority of inmates enter facilities with serious mental and cognitive deficiencies as well as alcohol and drug abuse issues, according to a variety of reports and studies.

Statistics have also long indicated that northerners and people of Aboriginal ancestry are overrepresented in correctional facility populations, and that the lack of services and programming to meet their specific needs is systemic.



Exterior view of the Spiritual Campus at the proposed Restorative Justice Facility in Thompson, Manitoba.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLANS**

The vision of the Restorative Justice Facility is to:

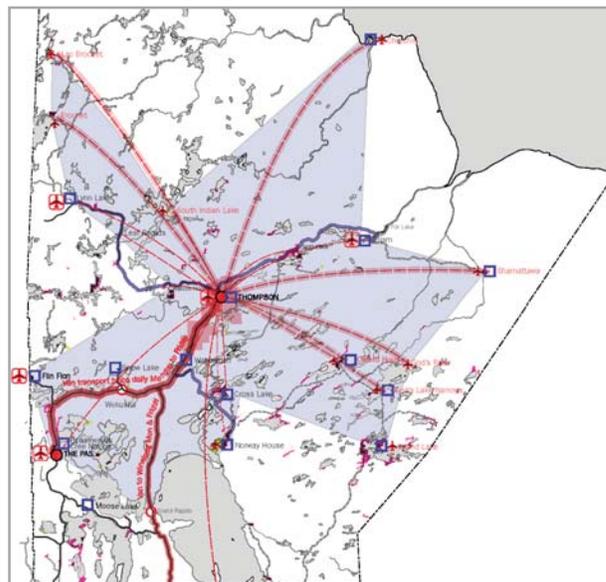
- Focus on healing and treatment;
- Assist individuals in the re-pathing of their lives;
- Provide learning and advancement opportunities;
- Offer re-connection and cultural/spiritual awareness; and
- Ensure the facility is secure and integrated into its surrounding environment.

In addition to the social and economic benefits of locating a Restorative Justice Facility in the North, the City of Thompson is an ideally situated “willing host” able to accommodate the operational and logistical requirements of such a facility. The facility itself could act as a catalyst for infrastructure development and sustainable employment in the Thompson Region. The facility requires municipal, provincial and federal government support for implementation.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The Action Plan outlines a “Northern Solution” for Manitoba with a facility located in Thompson which can serve to both reduce the financial costs to the Provincial government and the social costs borne by Northern

communities. A facility in Thompson, while reducing operating costs by limiting the movement of both detainees and justice workers, increases social value by incorporating Northerners and Northern communities into institutional programming and keeping individuals closer to home and family. The Plan also presents an important economic development opportunity for the City and regional communities in the building and ongoing operation of a Northern facility.



Map Showing Sheriff's Logistics and Access

# Education and Training Action Plan

*The TEDWG identified education and training as areas requiring dedicated action, innovation and collaboration to achieve and support economic diversification in the Thompson Region over the long term. Education and training are foundational elements of a strong northern economy; however, both students and employers cite significant shortcomings in available programming and current educational achievement. This priority area is especially pressing in the Thompson Region where high skilled labour demand and challenges to accessing high quality and relevant education and training coexist.*

## 24 | INTRODUCTION

The City of Thompson and Northern Manitoba host high-quality employment opportunities, innovative and expanding educational institutions and a rapidly growing youth population. While many local and regional residents have succeeded in this environment, many others remain excluded, with substantial barriers between them and these educational and employment opportunities.

### RATIONALE

The Education and Training Action Plan was developed to address the challenges apparent within the Thompson Region related to education and training, including:

- Long-standing low rates of funding per student, exacerbated by a growing youth population (median age of 24 compared with 38 provincially).
- Low high-school graduation rates (46% in Thompson).
- At-risk youth not engaged in current education system.
- Unfilled employment positions but also a skills gap for many prospective employees.
- An expanding role for UCN in Thompson and regional communities, including a new campus in the City and anticipated enrollment in Thompson of 1,000 students by 2020.

- Fifteen communities in the region without high-speed internet services and related access to educational and employment opportunities.
- A lack of vocational and trades programming despite matching employment needs in the region.
- A need for greater alignment and partnership between employers, educators and funders as well as students and prospective employees.
- A lack of social supports and transitional programming (e.g. childcare, housing, transportation) for those who want to study and work in Thompson.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Confronting these challenges, the Thompson Region is home to a growing group of institutions, community organizations and partnerships who have come together as part of the TEDWG to work to bridge these gaps and extend educational and employment opportunities to all residents of the North. The TEDWG Education and Training Sub-Committee members – educators, administrators, employers and political representatives – developed a short list of the most feasible, highest impact initiatives to take on together in the near term. These include immediate action on new educational programming – an Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre – with additional priority action items positioned to make an impact:



Students at Frontier Collegiate Institute's Northern Technical Centre, in Cranberry Portage, Manitoba

**Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre:** Building on and centralizing specialized industrial skills and trades training programs in Thompson in a site and curriculum suited to northern employment needs and northern stakeholders.

**Education and Training Advisory Committee:** An Education and Training Advisory Committee made up of local practitioners and experts to continue the collaboration achieved in the TEDWG process and ensure that Action Plan recommendations are implemented, monitored and complemented by further initiatives in the future.

**Youth Education and Employment Strategy:** Alignment of existing and new education and employment programs with a particular focus on linking curriculum with employment needs and tailoring learning and opportunities for disengaged youth.

**Childcare Strategy:** Coordinated efforts to address the deficit of childcare spots and increase the number of Early Childhood Educators.

**Extend High Speed Internet Service:** Extension of High Speed Internet Service across Northern Manitoba to enable residents living in regional and/or remote communities to access online educational programming and economic opportunities.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The goal of sustained economic growth and diversification in the Thompson Region put forward by the TEDWG partners must be supported by innovation in the education and training sector, both in programming and in terms of individual attainment. Action on the priority initiatives is required by all partners in order to:

- Tackle issues of funding and curriculum gaps;
- Address past exclusion;
- Link employers to educators and students; and
- Provide the necessarily broad base of educational and social supports for Northern Manitobans and the region as a whole.

**NORTHERN EMPLOYERS SURVEY RESULTS:**

- 90% of industry respondents view sending their employees outside of the region for training as a major challenge.
- There is currently a combined need to hire 75 new qualified trades persons or advance the skill sets of new apprentices to meet current or short-term workforce requirements.
- 43% indicate the majority of new hires require significant improvement to their skill sets.
- 79% of respondents indicate they would like training to be available in Thompson.

# Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre Master Plan

*The development of an Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre (ISTTC) was identified by TEDWG stakeholders as a priority project for implementation arising from the Education and Training Action Plan. A Project Implementation Team (PIT) comprising a cross-section of educational providers, industry and Aboriginal organizations led the development of a Master Plan for the Centre. The ISTTC’s mandate is to address the significant need for industrial skills and trades training in the region, provide industrial skills and trades training programs and apprenticeship training out of a new purpose-built facility in Thompson, and to reinforce and support training programs already underway in communities outside of Thompson.*

## 26 | INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Skills and Trades Training Centre Master Plan compiles baseline data on regional employment trends and availability of appropriate training and skills upgrading programs. The findings from surveys and baseline research were clear:

- Significant demand exists in northern industry for trades programming and trades-related courses;
- Community training needs are currently being addressed through initiatives organized by stakeholder groups or the communities themselves; and
- There is a ready-and-waiting cohort of potential Apprentices and trades students who will be looking for employment in a northern job market where positions for trained, skilled workers exist.

### RATIONALE

The Master Plan for the ISTTC provides an immediate response to the current needs and a flexible framework for addressing future needs of industry, communities and the northern workforce.

Importantly, the ISTTC will build on existing initiatives already being implemented by the University College of the North (UCN), the Northern Manitoba Sector Council (NMSC), Apprenticeship Manitoba, Aboriginal organizations and communities, and Northern industry,

to deliver specialized training programs in Thompson. The proposed Centre will also potentially shorten the timeline for the development of infrastructure to house the apprenticeship and skilled trades programming offered by University College of the North in Thompson.

An independent labour market survey identified an industry-derived “wish list” of market-driven programming that could be housed at the ISTTC. Programs such as machine alignment, WHMIS, rigging, and hydraulics increase the Centre’s long-term sustainability by allowing it to grow in relation to industry over time.

Key findings from the labour market survey include:

- A strong desire to hire a young skilled workforce from the north, hoping to stay in the north.
- Current workforce challenges and shortages prohibit many businesses and organizations in the north from expanding their operations in areas such as mining, truck transport, heavy equipment operations and maintenance and contracting.
- There is a strong desire to have more trades training opportunities located in Thompson.
- The majority of respondents had at least one vacancy in their workforce – some as many as 10 or more.
- Sending employees out of the region to be trained is a regular occurrence. This practice is costly and often exacerbates challenges associated with staff retention.



Students enrolled in UCN's Facilities Technician Program on the Severn Campus, in Thompson

- Most respondents strongly support the development of the ISTTC and many offered to play an active role in its governance, operations, and/or initial development (through capital investment or equipment donation).

**IMPLEMENTATION PLANS**

Immediate next steps to develop the Centre are underway. Within the existing governance structure of UCN, the institution will:

- Establish a Board of Directors for the ISTTC;
- Hire an Executive Director for the ISTTC;
- Complete a full labour market survey;
- Establish a long-term Strategic Plan for the ISTTC's Board of Directors; and
- Continue communication and partnership development with key external stakeholders whose involvement is crucial to realizing the ISTTC's vision.

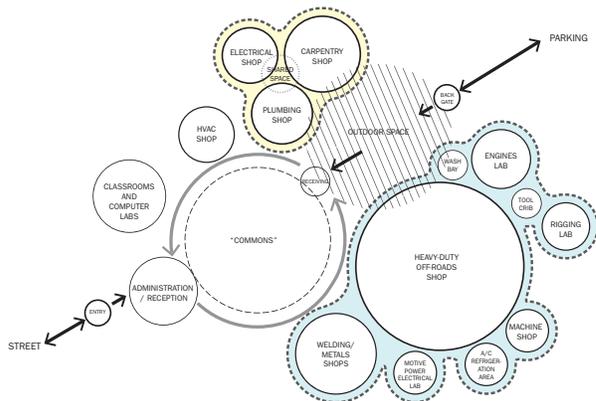
**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The ability of the ISTTC to promote economic development and diversification closely aligns with both the short- and long-term objectives of TEDWG stakeholders and has the potential to satisfy various other needs throughout the Thompson Region, including:

- Extending new, regionally-appropriate education

and training opportunities to a broader population of Northern Manitoba residents;

- Directly linking education and training to local employment opportunities; and
- Enhancing regional partnerships through the development and implementation of these and future activities.



ISTTC Functional Program

# Housing Action Plan

*The TEDWG identified Housing as a priority area for action when addressing barriers to economic development and fostering new economic sectors and activities in the Thompson Region. The TEDWG recognizes the direct link between quality of life and economic vitality in Thompson and Manitoba's North and the ability of current and prospective residents to access adequate, attainable housing options.*

## 28 | INTRODUCTION

The Thompson Region's housing market presents a number of significant challenges, including:

- Vacancy rates in the City of Thompson's rental market are notably low (0% in 2011).
- Thompson's rental market is relatively expensive compared to other Manitoba cities, including Winnipeg.
- Few subsidized, rent-geared-to-income or supportive housing options exist in Thompson despite its role as the regional center for the region.
- The majority of Thompson's housing stock was built in the 1960s and 1970s and few new builds are occurring (just 19 housing starts in 2010-2011).
- Overcrowding and inadequate housing is too common in First Nations communities.
- A young, growing, mobile regional population (median age of 24 compared with 38 provincially).

### RATIONALE

The shortfall in quality housing undercuts the ample economic opportunities and significant public and private investment made in institutions and industry in the North. When an individual turns down a job or forfeits an educational dream due to high housing costs, competitive rental markets and limited options for new, modern ownership housing, broader economic gains are inhibited.

Employers, employees and all residents, regardless of economic means, struggle. The local economy, municipal tax-base and community cohesion are all short-changed when industry turns to short-term contractors and fly-in, fly-out workers. Moreover, the impact of inadequate housing is multigenerational. Children suffer educational and emotional consequences when living in the overcrowded, run-down housing common in many Northern communities. Young families are unable to establish their own households in their home communities or take a chance on an educational or employment opportunity in the City of Thompson.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The challenges faced by TEDWG Housing Sub-Committee members – housing providers, political representatives, employers and social service providers – are significant and seemingly entrenched. The TEDWG stakeholders have chosen to act in unity with a practical plan for action in the near term and beyond, one that relies on informed planning, partnerships and innovation to break from the norm. Specifically, the Action Plan puts forward a series of implementation-ready initiatives that can benefit the Thompson Region as a whole. The identified actions are designed to stimulate new housing starts and renovations in Thompson, broaden the housing options available to residents and prospective residents of the region and enhance the capacity of local actors to foster and deliver affordable and market housing. These implementation plans include:



Thompson Housing Stock

1. **City of Thompson housing incentive program:** An incentive package that leverages the City's role in land supply, zoning, development control, taxation and financing and links these mechanisms to explicit housing policy goals.
2. **City of Thompson regulatory changes:** As part of the 2012 update of the Thompson and Planning District Development Plan and Zoning By-law, policy changes that stimulate new housing starts and enable the development of affordable ownership options, seniors-oriented housing, new purpose-built rental starts, student housing and a broader mix of uses and greater activity in the downtown.
3. **Project Northern Doorway (supportive housing for individuals at risk of homelessness):** A project, led by the Thompson Homeless Shelter, affordable housing, mental health, health, social service and emergency service providers, that combines the provision of supervised, affordable housing with individualized and coordinated health, counseling and employment services for the vulnerable, high-needs homeless population in Thompson.
4. **Affordable family rental housing:** New or renovated affordable family rental to broaden cost, tenure and unit type options for families, including those pursuing education and employment opportunities in Thompson, and relieve pressure on the rental market.
5. **Housing marketing plan:** A campaign jointly publicized by regional stakeholders communicating the opportunities present in the region for both investors and homebuyers, including key market and demographic indicators as well as the City's incentive programs.
6. **Thompson Housing Agency and continued collaborative planning:** An expanding role for the THA and its regional partners in housing research, planning and advocacy as well as housing development and management.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic diversification in the Thompson Region requires a solid base of modern, diverse and affordable housing. With little recent investment in housing, the housing presently on offer, both in Thompson and across the region, does not meet the needs of the contemporary Northern population and the desired workforce. The Housing Action Plan, in conjunction with the other initiatives launched by the TEDWG, seeks to foster new and broader housing options for the Thompson Region's residents and prospective residents. In all cases, the priority action items identified in the Action Plan endeavour to build on the efforts of local service providers and enhance their capacity to control their own housing destiny.

# Local and Regional Identity Action Plan / City of Thompson Place Branding Strategy

*Recognizing the importance of the image of the City of Thompson and its surrounding region to both internal and external audiences in the attraction and retention of skilled labour in Thompson, the TEDWG identified Local and Regional Identity as a priority area. In response, TEDWG stakeholders developed a Place Branding Strategy for the City of Thompson to more accurately reflect the evolving character and values of the community.*

## 30 | INTRODUCTION

An extensive community engagement program, including an online Place Branding Survey and targeted Focus Group sessions, provided valuable input into the development of the Strategy. A majority of those who engaged in the process identified the city's role as a regional service center. For most, the vitality of the city's economy is closely related to the health, education, employment, earning power and sense of belonging and pride of its people. Importantly, many of the systemic challenges and issues identified through the Place Branding Survey and Focus Group sessions have been considered and are being addressed through other TEDWG Action Plans in areas such as restorative justice; education and training; housing; and economic development.

The Place Branding Strategy balances the challenges and benefits of life in Thompson today (current assets) with what the city wants to become (future ambitions). In order to do this, the Strategy will focus primarily on promoting positive aspects of life in contemporary Thompson: a diverse and evolving Northern city.

### RATIONALE

Like many communities, Thompson's brand management is primarily reactive in nature. The side effect of a reactive approach is an assortment of materials and messages

that are not unified under a centralized strategy. Further, the city's current marketing material does not reflect work that has been done by the TEDWG since 2010. The Place Branding Strategy must ensure foundational branding elements are in place that are consistent in look and feel, and reflective of where Thompson is today. Thompson is in a period of growth and change. From a place branding standpoint, it is an excellent time to launch a new branding program. The brand, and associated visual identity, serve as a symbol of change and, importantly, that the change is being managed.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The Place Branding Strategy will ultimately be approved by City Council and will provide a framework for the City of Thompson to follow in communicating and promoting the benefits of the city to both internal and external audiences.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

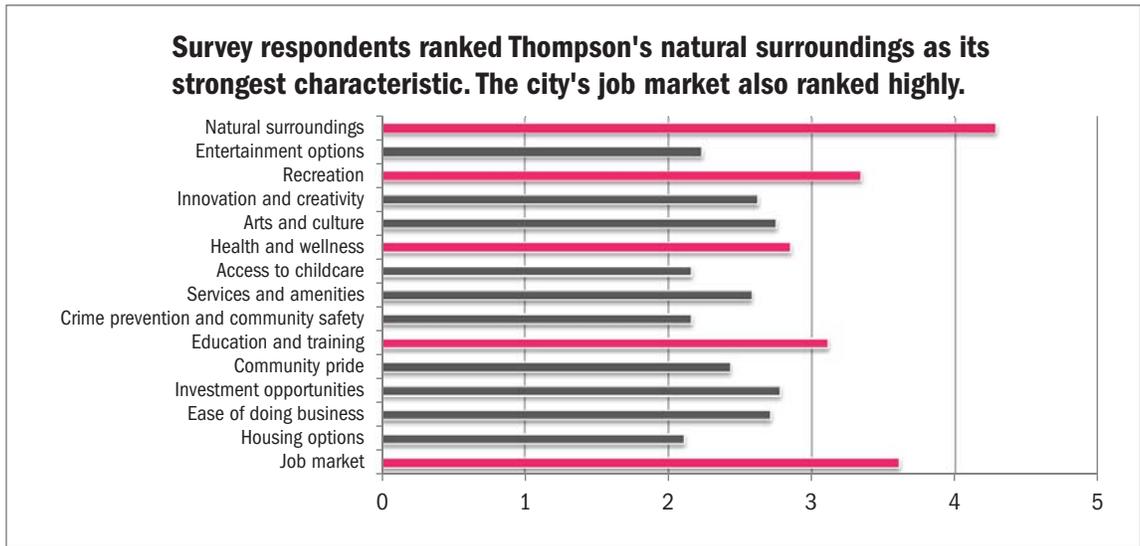
The Place Branding Strategy will aid TEDWG partners in communicating to an audience both within and outside of the Region their progress in addressing systemic issues such as lack of housing options, public safety, and low levels of educational attainment. The Place Branding Strategy will also be a critical tool for the City of Thompson, Thompson Unlimited and other stakeholders as they prioritize messages with clear links to economic diversification and development goals.



Thompson's Natural Surroundings

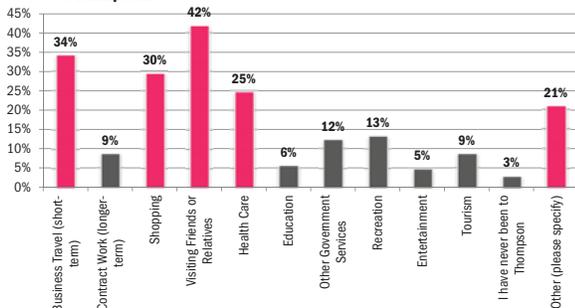
**Survey respondents ranked Thompson's natural surroundings as its strongest characteristic. The city's job market also ranked highly.**

| 31



**Many respondents come to Thompson to visit friends or relatives. Business travel and shopping are other common reasons to come to Thompson.**

Key findings of the Thompson Place Branding Survey



# Economic Development Action Plan / Thompson Unlimited Five-Year Strategic Plan

*The TEDWG worked closely with the Board of Directors and staff of Thompson Unlimited (TU) to align Thompson Unlimited's mandate with the outcomes of the broader TEDWG process in order to empower TU to support or actively implement TEDWG recommendations. The Economic Development Action Plan includes an updated Mandate Letter for the organization and a Five-Year Strategic Plan that identifies the organization's broad service areas and general functions. The 2013 Annual Work Plan is also included and details the specific tasks of the organization in achieving its mandate.*

## 32 | INTRODUCTION

Thompson Unlimited is a board-governed economic development agency that was formed in 2003. The organization carries out the City of Thompson's economic development function within the following parameters:

- TU works within the context of the Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan that defines economic development in terms of job creation; investment attraction and retention; the availability of land; and education and training opportunities within the City.
- TU is an economic development organization. Its mandate is job creation and investment attraction and retention.
- TU is not a land use planning or an education and training agency. It will cooperate with the City and education institutions to support them in their mandate and seek their support for its job creation and investment attraction and retention work.
- The Sustainable Community Plan places economic development in the context of Thompson's position as the "Hub of the North." The geographic focus of TU's activities is Thompson, not as a stand-alone community, but as the hub of its Region.

## RATIONALE

The TEDWG process highlighted opportunities in all sectors of the economy in addition to sectors that support economic growth, such as education and training and housing. A hierarchy of economic development opportunities serves to guide TU's allocation of resources:

- Priority attention is given to what is needed in Thompson and Region in terms of goods and services. Local and regional demand for Thompson-based businesses is a direct and relevant driver for economic development and TU activity.
- Investment retention and preserving and expanding the range of goods and services already in place in Thompson takes precedence over prospecting for investment in new industries from outside the Region.
- Investment attraction and retention that strengthen the linkages between Thompson and its Region are a priority.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

TU's Five-Year Strategic Plan focuses on the organization's three core Service Areas, including:

**Regional Service Center:** TU's Mandate gives priority attention to growing Thompson as a regional service center by addressing local and regional demand for



developable land, infrastructure, housing, education, and goods and services. The City of Thompson, through a series of documents and agreements, has made significant changes to its land use and infrastructure planning practices in order to better support economic development.

**Winter Weather Testing:** Over a ten-year period, Thompson Unlimited has developed and promoted Thompson internationally as a center for winter weather testing. On an annual basis, the winter weather testing sector is estimated to inject \$1 million into the local economy, resulting in positive economic impacts for local and regional businesses. TU is currently pursuing a plan to develop the physical infrastructure required to support a winter weather testing Centre of Excellence in Thompson.

**Tourism:** As a regional service center, Thompson attracts travelers and regional stakeholders traveling for leisure, business, goods and services, medical, and other personal reasons. Thompson's ability to attract regional and other visitors will be strengthened by a key outcome of the TEDWG – a Place Branding Strategy for the City. The strategy outlines the strengths of the community to promote those messages to residents of Thompson, the region and further afield. The strategy includes an updated visual identity and recommendations for future marketing campaigns that will require TU's support for implementation.

Across all of the Service Areas described above, Thompson Unlimited provides three Key Functions: information gathering and dissemination; facilitation and fostering partnerships; and marketing and promotion. While the Service Areas describe what the organization does, the Key Functions speak to the organization's approach to job creation and investment attraction and retention and its role in marketing and building upon Thompson's existing economic core.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Thompson Unlimited's Mandate Letter is now closely aligned with the outcomes of the broader TEDWG process, empowering TU to support or actively implement TEDWG recommendations. The organization's renewed focus on specific Service Areas is supported by a Five-Year Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan. TU's critical role as a facilitator of and partner in economic development will also promote local and regional investment in Thompson.

# Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan

*The Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan (TRIP) identifies potential population growth and economic development opportunities in the Thompson Region and determines what infrastructure will be needed in the future to support growth. The TRIP also assists in defining Thompson's role as a regional service center. The TRIP assesses a wide range of both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure and focuses on the development of transportation, housing and education and training infrastructure over the next 30 years, within a long-term concept for regional infrastructure development.*

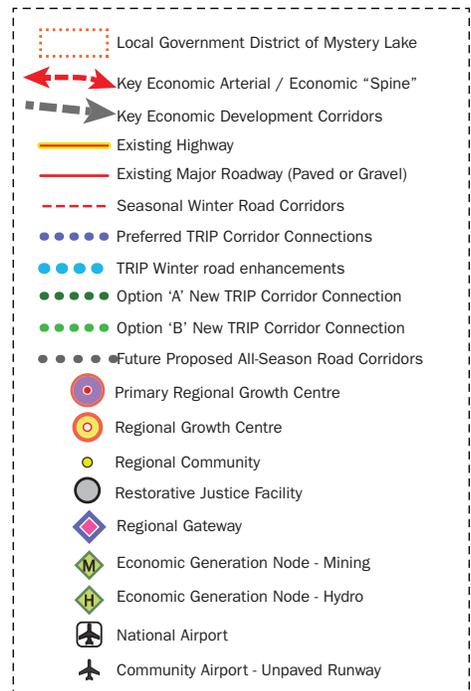
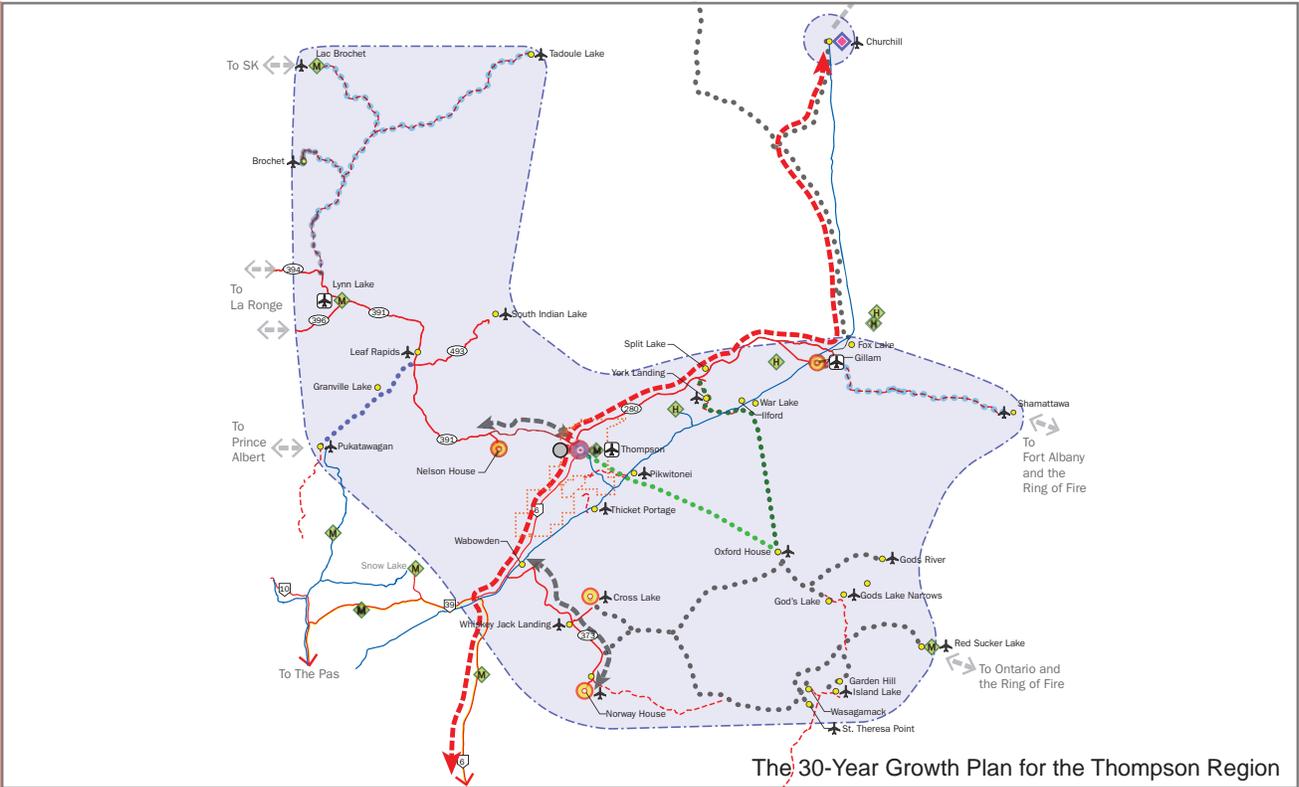
- 34 | Similar to other regional planning processes undertaken across Canada, the TRIP was developed in order to:
- Define the roles and responsibilities of urban centers and communities surrounding the center;
  - Help communities and organizations work together to create efficiencies for funding and other resources;
  - Ensure that the growth and development occurring throughout the region is benefiting all communities;
  - Determine how smaller communities can support development through untapped workforces, the provision of services, and providing options for where people can live; and
  - Determine how large centers, such as Thompson, can grow in a sustainable manner and provide more and better services to regional communities.

The relationship between centers and their surrounding regions can be described using the 'hub and wheel' model.

The TRIP serves as a roadmap for infrastructure development in the Thompson Region over the long-term, focused on Thompson as the 'hub.' It addresses equally what needs to be done, such as the development of all-weather roads in the North, and how this work may be carried out (e.g. through a community development model). The TRIP represents the united interests of Aboriginal stakeholders, the City of Thompson, industry and local business in developing a sustainable and

productive Thompson Region through the provision of high quality infrastructure.

The TRIP represents each phase in the planning process, beginning with education and capacity building around the purpose and importance of long-term infrastructure planning at a regional scale and concluding with a series of fully elaborated options for infrastructure development in the Thompson Region. At the core of the plan was a comprehensive Level of Service analysis that provided a ranking of infrastructure across each of the communities in the Thompson Region. The TRIP's main purpose is to provide a strong framework for stakeholders in the Thompson Region as they engage the Province of Manitoba, the Government of Canada and private sector stakeholders in the areas of regional planning, infrastructure development, capital funding, and economic development.



# Thompson and Planning District Development Plan

*The Thompson and Planning District Development Plan (DP) is a by-law approved under the Manitoba Planning Act. A Development Plan directs land and resource use within a specified planning area to achieve the area's stated goals. The Thompson planning area includes the City of Thompson (City) and the neighbouring Local Government District of Mystery Lake (LGD). The DP sets the long-term vision and objectives for growth and investment within the District.*

36 | The updated Development Plan establishes a clear framework for land use decision-making within the Planning District. In recent years, increased pressure on existing residential, commercial, industrial and recreational inventories has limited the City's ability to attract investors. With an updated Development Plan in place, day-to-day decisions will be based on the goals and objectives identified in the document. This will reduce uncertainty among both public and private investors with respect to the future development of land and will ensure that the timing of such development coincides with the progressive provision of public services.

The DP was revised to bring it into alignment with the Thompson and Planning District Sustainable Community Plan (SCP) and Master Parks Plan (MPP), both adopted by City of Thompson Council in April 2010. These documents provide significant direction to the City across all areas of planning including economic, social, cultural, built and natural environment, and governance. The updated DP better captures the existing character of different areas in the City and provides direction for improvement.

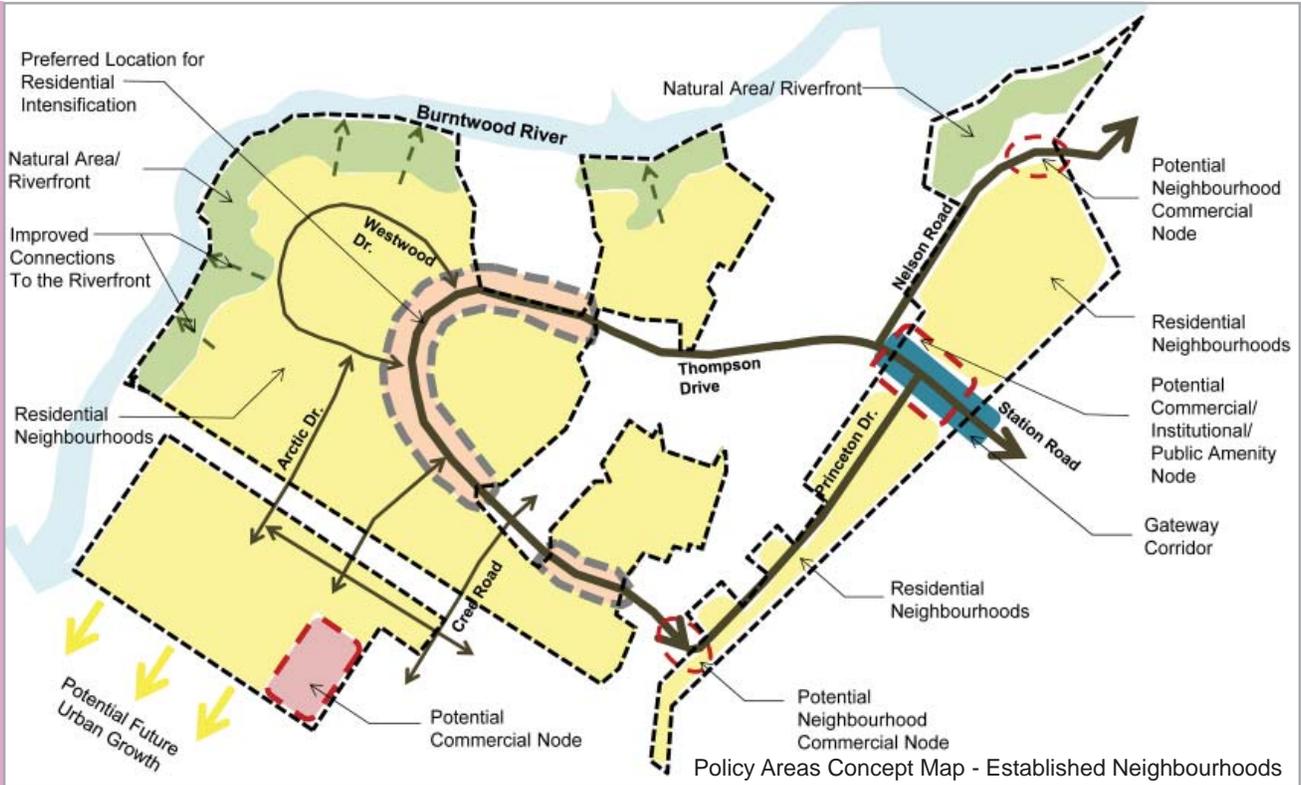
The DP comprises three major policy sections. The first section establishes general policies that address the District as a whole (both the City and LGD). The second section provides policies specific to the LGD. While the LGD has limited development potential, the DP sets out specific policies to ensure any potential development is

in line with the District's broader vision. The third section provides policies that apply within the City's municipal boundary. Over time, the City has become more complex and now accommodates a variety of land uses in distinct character areas. Neighbourhood-level demographic analysis revealed how different areas within the City have evolved and suggested how the City could be better arranged into Policy Areas. The Policy Area approach provides an alternative to the typical land use approach by defining a vision and applying a customized set of policies to a particular area. This approach ensures that the character of each area is both protected and enhanced through development.

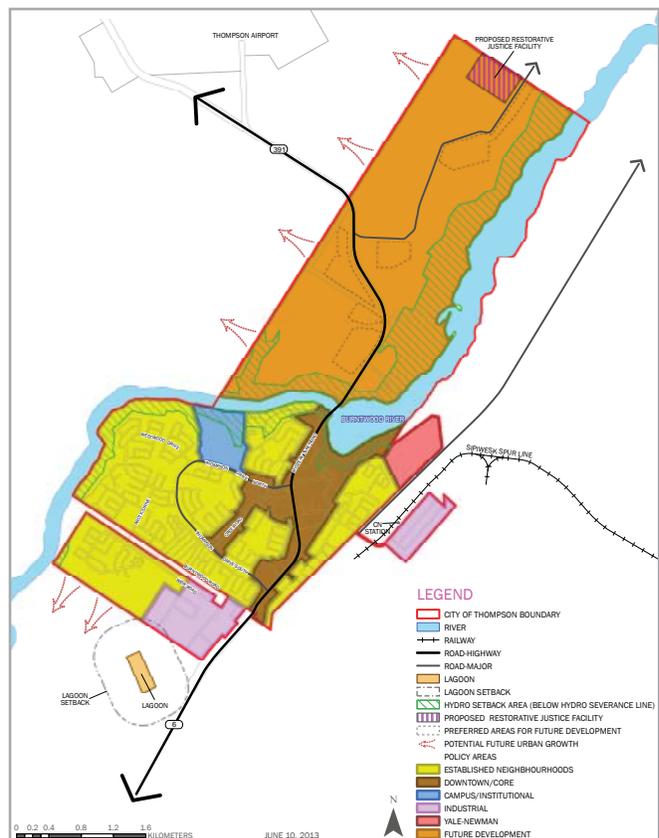
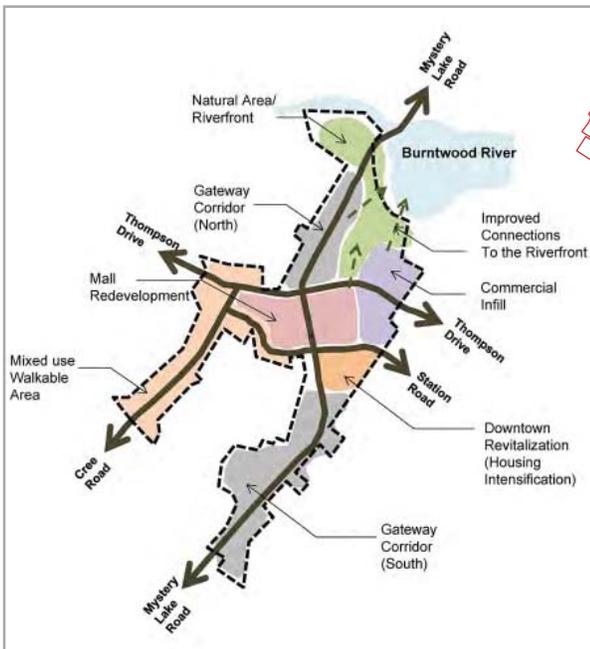
The DP includes six Policy Areas including Downtown/Core, Established Neighbourhoods, Campus/Institutional, Industrial, Yale-Newman, and Future Development. In Policy Areas that include multiple land uses, additional conceptual maps provide direction as to what type of development is anticipated.

The DP also includes an implementation strategy. This strategy identifies areas in which the District, City and LGD can work together and with other stakeholder groups toward the betterment of the District. The DP also provides clear direction to and is in alignment with the controls included in the City of Thompson Zoning By-law (ZBL).

As a foundational document, the DP provides the City of Thompson and the surrounding region with a clear guide



for future land use, investment, development and growth. As part of an updated suite of regulatory documents, the DP aligns land use decision-making in the District with the objectives expressed in TEDWG Action Plans to provide a strong foundation for future economic diversification and development.



# City of Thompson Zoning By-law

*The City of Thompson Zoning By-law (ZBL) is a tool used to implement the Thompson and Planning District Development Plan (DP). It typically represents what is ‘on the ground’. The ZBL regulates the land use and the location and use of buildings and structures within Thompson’s municipal boundary. It includes text regulations, tables, graphics and maps that together provide precise controls and standards used in evaluating planning and development applications.*

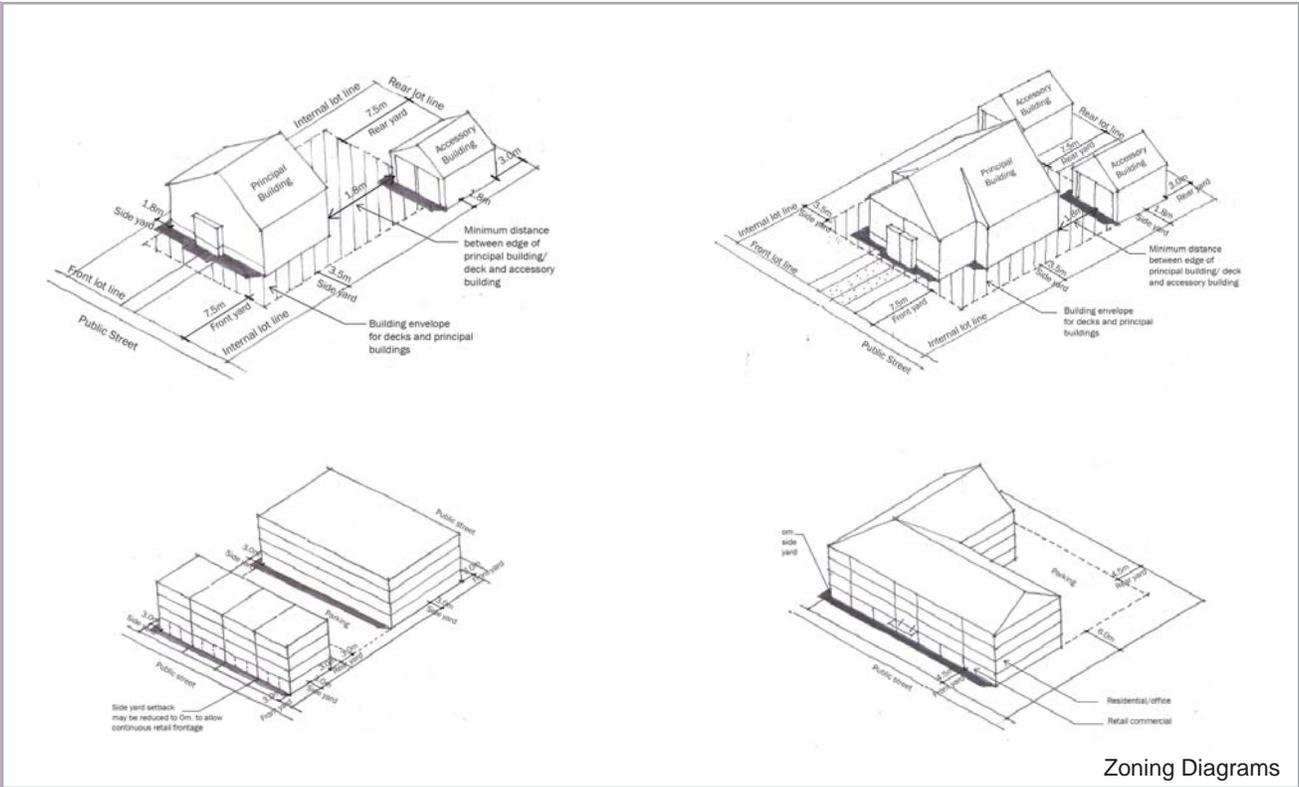
38 | The Zoning By-law is a companion document to the Development Plan. Both documents are critical to guiding the future growth and development of the City. The ZBL ensures decisions made by City administration, Council and the public reflect and are in compliance with the objectives and overall vision of the Development Plan. The ZBL’s enforceable regulations provide predictability and support to both public and private sector investors.

The City’s previous Zoning By-law was created more than 20 years ago. Its text-based format made the document difficult to interpret and apply in a consistent manner, oftentimes limiting the City’s ability to attract investment or manage growth in a sustainable manner. In addition to its age and appearance, the ZBL required several updates to address issues such as an overabundance of complicated use classes, no discussion of mixed use zones, out-of-date regulations, high parking requirements, fencing issues and hindrances to redevelopment and revitalization in the City’s downtown.

The new ZBL is a leading-edge document in terms of both policy content and layout. The ZBL’s design and graphics make it user-friendly for both the public and City staff. The ZBL now features concise tables for each zone that outline the type and location of development that can be considered. The document also features sketches that show what type of development the regulations will yield when applied.

Other improvements include a consolidated list of defined use classes. The updated ZBL takes a flexible approach, reducing the previous 250 use classes to approximately 100. The ZBL also increases flexibility in the zones applied in the City’s downtown, increasing opportunities for a broader range of more pedestrian-oriented development. Parking requirements have also been reduced in several areas to reduce the prevalence of single-use surface parking in the City. Finally, a new, user-friendly zoning map shows where the new zones will be applied across the City.

The ZBL applies the direction and guidance provided in the DP to new development and regulates existing development in a manner consistent with higher order plans. The Zoning By-law’s new easy-to-understand format, along with its alignment with the updated DP, ensures a more open, accessible and efficient development approval process for prospective investors, developers, business owners and residents alike. Economic diversification and development in the City of Thompson depend on the City’s ability to attain the highest and best uses of land within its municipal boundary. The updated ZBL incorporates the objectives of the TEDWG Action Plans to ensure existing and future uses are compatible with the City’s long-term development strategy.



# City of Thompson Sustainable Asset Management Plan

*The Sustainable Asset Management Framework (SAM) is closely linked to the City's other regulatory documents. Implementation of the Thompson and Planning District Development Plan (DP) and City of Thompson Zoning By-law (ZBL) depends on the City's ability to construct and operate necessary municipal assets, including water, wastewater, sanitary, roads, sidewalks, buildings, vehicles and other infrastructure.*

40 | The Sustainable Asset Management Framework is intended to be a guiding document and to provide Council with the tools to set a long-term mandate for the City's Department of Assets and Infrastructure. The SAM outlines components of the asset management planning process and recommends next steps for the development of an Asset Management Plan for all types of municipal infrastructure. Components of the asset management planning process include:

**Asset Knowledge:** Asset knowledge refers to the compilation of asset information within an asset inventory or register with detailed attributes for existing assets. This inventory or register is typically a database that has geo-spatial reference capability (e.g. a Geographic Information System (GIS) database).

**Asset Cycle:** An asset lifecycle describes the performance of an asset over time. The analysis of asset lifecycles enables a detailed understanding of how to maintain or improve an asset's performance.

**Financial Situation:** There are several financial considerations that are important in developing an asset management framework. Two critical considerations are the current replacement value of the asset and the asset's depreciated value.

**Decision Making:** The City will need to periodically evaluate their decision-making processes for assets and

the level of service those assets provide. This includes identifying who is responsible for making decisions about level of service, what information is being used to make the decision, and whether or not there is any documented evidence to make the decision.

**Governance:** Asset Management plans need to integrate the goals and objectives of citizens, City Council, and City employees as well as satisfy the legislative regulations of operating an asset.

**Sustainability Monitoring:** Monitoring needs to be conducted at several levels. It starts with the asset itself by tracking all activities and associated costs that are performed on the asset.

The SAM identifies the critical relationship between infrastructure spending, land development and economic development. It is intended to aid the City of Thompson in managing both economic and population growth through targeted infrastructure development that is linked, via the Development Plan and Zoning By-law, to sustainable land use planning. It will be partially implemented through a new dedicated infrastructure funding arrangement between the City of Thompson and Vale.



