

Regional Community to Community Forum Program

STATUS REPORT 2008 – 2018

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This Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a status update on the Regional C2C Forum program, with a particular focus on the outcomes achieved through C2C Forum events. While some general numbers are updated for the overall program, focus is primarily placed on the past ten years (2008 – 2018).

The data that informs the report was gathered using a mixed-methods approach. Research involved qualitative content analysis of 297 C2C forum final reports as well as quantitative analysis of various figures related to overall program participation and distribution amongst the categories determined through the content analysis.

While the primary focus of the qualitative component of this research has been the material outcomes reported by C2C participants—the lasting achievements or deliverables that resulted from a forum—it should be recognized that the determination of what constitutes an ‘outcome’ is essentially interpretive. It is understood that small steps such as initial discussions often lead to, and are required for, more concrete forms of actions, and that each intra-governmental relationship must move at its own pace.

Background

The idea of establishing the Regional C2C Forum program was borne out of an historic province-wide meeting between local government and First Nation leaders in January 1997. Organized by the First Nations Summit (FNS) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the meeting gave elected officials and other community leaders a much needed opportunity to exchange ideas on common goals and joint opportunities. Based on the success of the meeting, local governments and First Nations across the province saw the value of holding regional forums that would focus on local issues and opportunities specific to their communities.

The first Regional Community to Community (C2C) Forum was held in March 2000 — an economic planning session in Haida Gwaii between the Village of Masset, Old Massett Village Council, other local governments in the region and various business organizations. Eighteen years later, more than 600 C2C events have brought together over 180 First Nations and 140 local governments, with over 1,000 total participants including indigenous and non-indigenous organizations.

Now almost two decades old, the Regional C2C Forum program has been a driving force in efforts to build, mend, or transform relationships among neighbouring First Nations and local governments in British Columbia. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) releasing its Executive Summary of findings and 94 Calls to Action in 2015, and Canada's official adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2016, the program has taken on ever greater importance as local governments and First Nations use the modest grant and model it provides to focus their increased efforts for reconciliation.

While basic relationship building, methods of decolonization, and cultural respect and inclusion have been common themes in recent years, C2C forums facilitate a diverse spectrum of goals, activities, and outcomes, including everything from service provision agreements to emergency management or public health initiatives.

Program Goals

The primary intent of the Regional C2C Forum program continues to be increased understanding and improved overall relations between First Nations and local governments in BC. Forum events are intended to provide a time and place for dialogue to identify opportunities for collaboration, support reconciliation efforts, and/or resolve issues of common responsibility, interest or concern.

In order to be eligible for funding, a proposed C2C forum must involve dialogue between elected officials and/or senior staff of neighbouring local governments and First Nations, and must identify one or more of the following objectives:

- Strengthening relationships and fostering future co-operative action by building stronger links between First Nation and local government elected officials and senior staff

- Advancing First Nations and local governments to more formal relationships through protocols, MOUs, service agreements and/or collaboration on plans or projects
- Supporting local reconciliation efforts and shared capacity building
- Developing or improving coordinated approaches to emergency preparation, mitigation, response and recovery

Program Administration

The Regional C2C Forum Program is based on a simple and effective formula: a small grant covers half of the eligible forum costs. Forums are completely led and organized by the communities involved, giving participants the opportunity to get to know each other and work together in determining their specific priorities.

The program is administered by UBCM in partnership with the FNS. In most years since 1999, the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing and Indigenous Services Canada have provided funding for the C2C program.

Information on the program and the application process is available on the UBCM and FNS websites. In addition, resources such as the *Guide to Community to Community Forums in BC* have been produced to assist local governments and First Nations in preparing their applications and planning their forums.

Eligibility & Funding

Funding permitting, any First Nation (Treaty First Nation, band or Tribal Council) or local government (municipality or regional district) in BC may apply to host a forum in their community or region.

The maximum grant is \$5,000. Grants cover fifty percent of the forum's total eligible costs and the applicant is responsible for the remaining fifty percent, as either cash or in-kind contributions. After the event is complete, a final report form and financial summary are required to be submitted.

Program Highlights

Summary of the C2C Overall Program

The C2C Forum program continues to play an essential role in opening up lines of communication between First Nations and local governments and supporting the realization of diverse and beneficial projects. The program has grown in the last decade, as Table 1, below, suggests.

Table 1: Comparison of C2C Applications & Events

	1999 – 2007/08	2008/09 – 2017/18
Total Applications	217	491
Total Approved Applications	290	424
Rate of Approval	95%	89%
Number of C2C Events	253	302
Number of discrete applicants	127	195

Summary of Forums: 2008 – 2018

The past 10 years have been a period of growth for the C2C Forum program. First Nations and local governments have used the program in new and creative ways, coming together to achieve unprecedented results.

Some of the statistical highlights over the past 10 years include:

- The program has had 195 different applicants. 85 of those were First Nations and 110 were local governments. Of those 110, 25 were regional districts.
- 302 applicants completed their proposed activities, which in many cases included multiple C2C events.
- Roughly 40% of completed events involved more than the two required participants (the applicant First Nation or local government and their neighbouring counterpart).
- The most recent year looked at for this study, 2017/18, had 66 applications—the highest in the program’s history.

A year-by-year breakdown of these figures, as well as the percentages of applicants that were First Nations and local governments, are found in Table 2, below:

Table 2: Application, Applicants, Forums, and Participants 2008 – 2018

Year	Total App's	First Nation Applicants	Local Government Applicants	Total Completed Forums	Participant FNs & LGs
08/09	55	35%	65%	42	170
09/10	35	40%	60%	23	96
10/11	49	24%	76%	31	113
11/12	43	33%	67%	28	103
12/13	38	32%	68%	25	100
13/14	46	39%	61%	26	86
14/15	61	30%	70%	37	143
15/16	48	29%	71%	31	98
16/17	50	30%	70%	27	97
17/18	66	30%	70%	32	138
Total	491	32%	68%	302	1,144

Withdrawn Applications

It is important to provide context for the occurrence of withdrawn applications. These are applications that are reviewed and approved by UBCM and FNS but which do not result in completed forums. Between 2008 and 2018, approximately ¼ of the approved applications did not result in a completed forum.

Over the history of the program, applications have been withdrawn for many different reasons, including:

- Local emergencies, such as flooding, wildfires and weather events
- Changes in elected officials in both local governments and First Nation communities
- Acute community issues, including job losses and youth issues
- Losses in the community, such as the death of an elder or community member

Most commonly, however, staff turnover and a lack of time, capacity or the resources required to adequately organize an event are the cause of withdrawn applications.

Quite often in fact, events are not held simply because a date cannot be found within the fiscal year when all parties are available to meet.

In an effort to address this, numerous steps have been taken by UBCM to help applicants succeed with their events:

- UBCM provides a dedicated staff person who can help answer questions and provide advice to communities that are trying to organize an event.
- The *Guide to Regional Community to Community Forums in BC* was published in 2008 to help new and repeat applicants plan for and host C2C forums.
- For the 2018/19 program the requirement that elected officials participate in C2C events was loosened to include senior staff.

Forum Outcomes

Forum outcomes are the tangible results that come out of C2C events. These outcomes can take many different forms, impact diverse aspects of the communities involved, and create change to varying degrees. Some generate long-lasting benefits while others are aimed at short-term relief of a particular issue, or as relationship building events.

The outcomes observed and described below are grouped into three outcomes themes, based on the area or aspect of the communities that they relate to, or to the type of interests they serve. Within each theme, a number of outcome categories emerged, each corresponding to a set of activities and results that share certain characteristics. These categories are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive (one reported action can be recorded as multiple outcomes).

The outcome themes and categories are:

1. Leadership Relations
 - Relationship Building
 - Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, and Accords
 - Information Sharing on Government Process
2. Community Wellbeing
 - Health, Safety, and Services
 - Economic Initiatives
 - Community Engagement
3. Environmental Stewardship
 - Land/Water Use
 - Emergency Preparedness

The following sections provide a brief description of each outcome theme and related categories, as well as some relevant findings, metrics, and examples from the past 10 years.

Leadership Relations

With one of the few requirements of the C2C Forum program being the involvement of elected officials and/or senior staff from at least one First Nation and one local government, relationships and communication between community leaders will always feature prominently in C2C events.

However, some forum outcomes place emphasis directly on the development and nurturing of relationships between governing bodies, while others do this as secondary to other benefits, or simply rely on existing leadership relations as a means to other ends. The types of outcomes that fall into the former group are generally geared

towards improving governance practices and processes through increased communication and coordination, and are outlined below.

An emphasis on leadership relations was observed almost ubiquitously across the scope of this study, with only 29 of 297 final report forms lacking at least one of the following three leadership-related outcomes.

Relationship Building

Many final reports submitted for Regional C2C Forums highlight the significance of finding time for First Nations and local governments to come together to share a meal and engage in dialogue. The outcomes of this dialogue may be understood in many different ways, from building trust and rapport or establishing mutual respect to simply ‘putting faces to names’.

This type of outcome can be particularly meaningful when communities have newly elected officials who may not be familiar with their neighbouring local governments or First Nations, and are therefore starting new personal relationships. Some of the more distinctive activities aimed at relationship building are the purposive sharing of culture and history, the celebration of past cooperation and achievement, and engagement in team-building or other social activities that lead to comfortable and productive working relationships.

While relationship-based outcomes may appear less tangible than some of those that follow, the importance of strong individual relationships to efforts of inter-governmental cooperation cannot be understated. As made even more apparent in the Spotlight Relationships section that follows, personal relationships often serve as the foundation for all further achievements.

Findings:

- By far the most prevalent outcome of the C2C Forum program, roughly 85% of final report forms explicitly name relationship building as a primary and desirable achievement of the events they discuss.
- Forums that emphasize relationship building often achieve additional types of outcomes through the same events. Although, it should be kept in mind that more diverse outcomes do not necessarily indicate more fruitful forums, as those that pursue outcomes in a single area may achieve results that are more deeply felt by their communities.
- Relationship building has been an emphasis of the program since its inception, and this continuity is clear in the consistently high rate of relationship building outcomes observable across the scope of this study. During each of the 10 years analysed, the percentage of forums that emphasized relationship building outcomes explicitly has never dropped below 70%.

Examples:

A good way to illustrate relationship building outcomes is through comments provided by forum participants:

- “Overwhelmingly, consensus was reached in many areas - the importance of communication, the desire for greater awareness and understanding, a hope for increased cooperation and collaboration and a need for closer community ties and relations. These impressions informed the need to build a set of strategies for creating and maintaining closer working partnerships.” – 2008/09 District of North Saanich Final Report: Meeting with Pauquachin First Nation
- “The highlight of the forum without question was the opportunity for the participants to sit in a traditional circle ... The theme of the forum was ‘lets'emot ye yoyes makw tete'otel stelomet’ - all of us working together with one mind - working towards a common understanding” – 2010/11 Fraser Valley Regional District Final Report: Meeting with Chawathil First Nation
- “Throughout the session, participants interacted, learned from each other, and found common ground to build a greater understanding of each other and to recognize similarities instead of differences. The positive effect of these sessions is cumulative - with each opportunity to interact, to socialize and to work together, both communities recognize a growing understanding and friendship and a greater desire to work together on common initiatives.” – 2013/14 Town of Ladysmith Final Report: *Paddling Together* with Stz'uminus First Nation
- “The experience was extremely valuable as the two Councils met to introduce themselves to describe their histories and challenges en route toward reconciliation of past misunderstandings as all strive for a successful, viable North Island future for all residents. At times tears were shed illustrating the level of empathy and trust that transpired between these strong leaders during the day-long forum.” – 2014/15 Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation Final Report: Meeting with Port Hardy and Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre

Protocol Agreements, MOUs & Accords

Another well-established outcome of the C2C Forum program is the development or signing of protocol agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOUs), or accords between neighbouring First Nations and local governments.

The establishment of formal documents that dictate procedures between governing bodies is generally not possible without initially nurturing personal relationships, and once in place, these agreements often serve to cement the particular forms of interaction that have been tested and agreed upon through instances of informal relationship building. In this way, formal agreements can be viewed as both an extension of, and commitment to, principles arrived at through personal relationship building, and can set the stage for successful future cooperation in many forms.

Findings:

- Roughly 45% of final report forms indicated that some degree of progress was made towards formalizing relationships between First Nations and local governments through protocol agreements, MOUs, or accords. This makes it the second most common type of outcome of the past 10 years after relationship building.
- 37% of those forums that worked towards establishing an agreement, MOU, or accord resulted in either the drafting or signing of the document.
- Formalizing relationships through agreements, MOUs, and accords has been a consistent outcome over the past 10 years, with at least 10 different forums working towards or fully realizing this goal each year.

Examples:

- In 2008/09, Splatstin First Nation hosted a C2C Forum that resulted in separate draft protocol agreements with seven different local governments: the City of Enderby, City of Armstrong, North Okanagan Regional District, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, District of Sicamous, Township of Spallumcheen and District of Lake Country.
- As part of the 2009/10 program, The Mayor and Council of Ucluelet met with the Chief Councillor and Councillors of the Yu?lu?it?ath First Nation to discuss issues of mutual concern and brainstorm a strategic plan. Through this process, a protocol agreement was developed and later signed.
- Malahat Nation and the Cowichan Valley Regional District developed the TransCanada Trail MOU in 2012/13, which outlines the mutual responsibilities and benefits associated with a trail built through traditional Malahat territory. Additionally, the two communities signed a tripartite agreement with the Mill Bay Marina group for the construction of a new community boat launch, and explored servicing options related to water provision and sewage processing facilities on Malahat Nation lands.

Information Sharing on Government Process

A popular method of improving leadership relations and practices employed at C2C Forums in recent years is the sharing of information on governing processes between First Nations and local governments. While First Nations often have models, methods, and principles of governance that differ from local governments, as well as other First Nations, this diversity can be seen as a strength in BC. Through guided tours of respective facilities, presentations on the roles and responsibilities of hereditary chiefs and other distinctive officials, and the sharing of resources such as official community plans or other documents, First Nation and local government leaders work together to find new ways to best serve their communities.

Findings:

- Due to its lack of representation in past reports, this outcome is believed to have increased in popularity in the past 10 years. This could be due to growing comfort among neighbouring organizations that have been active in the C2C Forum program since the early 2000s, a societal broadening of what is considered to constitute ‘good governance’, or an increased emphasis on regional collaboration and innovation in BC’s local government and First Nation communities.
- During the 2017/2018 funding cycle, ¼ of final reports contained an outcome related to information sharing on government process.

Examples:

- In 2014/15, the Soowahlie First Nation hosted a C2C Forum with the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) meant to establish a positive foundation for a future MOU and Intergovernmental Relations Protocol. The event provided an opportunity for new FVRD board and committee members to learn about the Soowahlie’s governance structure, as well as salient issues and goals particular to that Nation.
- As part of a 2015/16 C2C Forum, the Lillooet Tribal Council and six northern Sta’a’timc communities provided the District of Lillooet Council with a “Sta’a’timc 101” presentation. The Sta’a’timc have a complex structure that includes 11 communities, two tribal councils, a chief’s council, and numerous service providers, thereby necessitating a fulsome overview.
- The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and SXTA First Nations held a C2C Forum in 2017/18 that included a cultural bus tour highlighting Stó:lō Place Names in the Fraser Valley and a facilitated relationship building workshop. The event included presentations by FVRD and SXTA leaders on the particular history, purpose, and function of each organization.

Community Wellbeing

While improving leadership relations among partnering First Nations and local governments is an important aspect of the C2C Forum program, many applicants choose to focus their efforts on improving the wellbeing of their communities more directly. The outcome categories gathered below locate the interests of local community members, groups, and businesses as the central motivators for activities planned for or undertaken through C2C forums, often involving these individuals and organizations in priority setting and implementation processes themselves.

While not quite as prevalent as outcomes that fall under the leadership relations outcome theme, a significant 63% of final report forms over the last 10 years mentioned at least one of the community-based outcome types described below.

Health, Safety and Services

Solutions to the issues that often matter most to local community members—those related to safety, health, and services provision in their community—are often discussed and worked towards at C2C Forums.

The wide-ranging list of outcomes that fall under this robust category has included negotiating service provision agreements (for water, electricity, communications, waste management, and so on), tackling health issues related to hospitals, food security, and drug and alcohol abuse, pursuing safety measures such as effective policing and animal control, developing transportation infrastructure, housing initiatives, educational programs, and many more. These outcomes contribute to the liveability of communities by improving existing supports for community members and their families.

Findings:

- 42% of final reports over the past 10 years indicated making some degree of progress towards addressing an issue related to health, safety or services.
- Of those reports, 35% reached the implementation stage through the formation of working groups, drafting work plans, identifying project leads, or otherwise moving an initiative forward ‘on the ground’.
- Representation of this outcome category is consistent over the past 10 years, with an average of 12 forums per year reporting the achievement of a health, safety or services outcome.

Examples:

- In 2008/09, the Stó:lō Tribal Council hosted the Drugs, Gangs and Organized Crime Forum in First Nation Communities—a two day event that brought together local governments and First Nations from the Fraser Valley, provincial and federal representatives, and experts in policing, drug trafficking, border integrity, and organized crime. The forum resulted in a set of community response strategies for dealing with these serious local issues.
- A 2009/10 C2C Forum was the site of a meeting between the District of Port Edward, their neighbouring First Nations—the Lax Kw'alaams, Kitkatla, Metlakatla and Hartley Bay bands—, and the Northern Health Authority regarding the communities’ interest in the development of a drug and alcohol treatment centre in their region. The event initiated a productive dialogue that led to follow-up meetings and alternative solutions.
- As part of a 2015/16 joint-Council meeting between the Thompson-Nicola Regional District, Simpcw First Nation, Resort Municipality of Sun Peaks, and Districts of Clearwater and Barriere, local leaders participated in an interactive session on the role of governance in food security. This included a presentation from the District of Barriere on their Aquatics Greenhouse, and

resulted in the District of Clearwater submitting a resolution to UBCM aimed at reducing roadblocks and red tape associated with getting “meat to the table” in their region.

Economic Initiatives

Contrasting the outcomes above, which address diverse aspects of community members’ experiences, those that fall into this outcome category have a more focused direction—namely, the exploration and pursuit of opportunities for joint-business ventures. Through tourism, resource development, strategic skill training, and other economically oriented projects, partnering First Nations and local governments attempt to boost their local economies as a route to enriching their communities.

The C2C Forum program has been a productive venue for economic collaboration since its beginnings, as it provides First Nation and local government leaders with a neutral space in which to brainstorm and develop mutually beneficial economic strategies.

Findings:

- 37% of final reports over the past 10 years indicated making some degree of progress on economic initiatives.
- Of those reports, 34% demonstrated project implementation, by forming working groups, drafting work plans, identifying project leads, or otherwise moving initiatives forward ‘on the ground’.
- While economic initiatives remain a prominent part of the C2C Forum program, less of these outcomes were reported over the past two years. This could be due to a national shift towards reconciliation-based priorities in recent years.

Examples:

- A 2009/10 C2C forum provided the setting for the final review and ratification of the articles of incorporation for the Vermillion Forks Community Forest—a highly successful shared economic initiative between the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, Town of Princeton, and Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. The project rests on three pillars of sustainable development—ecological, social, and economic—and was initiated through discussions that took place at previous C2C forums.
- As part of the 2014/15 program, the Yuułuʔiłʔatʔ government, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, and Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino held a series of seven workshops for the development of a regional education tourism (“knowledge and innovation”) initiative. Over the course of these meetings a project plan was developed that included a Terms of Reference and Communication Protocol, a Regional Asset Inventory, a Capacity Building, Training and Business Incubation Strategy, and a Market Research and Strategy

Development Report. One participant commented, “This project showed us the value of working together, and confirmed that we can in fact pursue economic development that is mutually beneficial.”

- The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, District of Lillooet, Lillooet Tribal Council, and the six northern St’at’imc communities that the LTC represents came together in 2016 to strengthen their relationships and discuss potential economic collaboration. Structured using a template called the Stronger Together Toolkit for First Nations—Municipal Community Economic Development Partnerships, the Forum provided an opportunity to learn “how to do business with St’at’imc”, as well as an overview of various business and community development initiatives already taking place in the region.

Community Engagement

One method of increasing community wellbeing practiced by partnering First Nations and local governments is the direct involvement of community members in the Forum itself.

While elected officials or senior staff of at least one local government and one First Nation must be in attendance, by engaging the public in decision-making and project implementation processes, or orienting C2C Forums to be aimed specifically towards public participation, community leaders empower those that they represent and benefit from their local knowledge and experience. This practice can include outreach and public education programs, trade shows, community celebrations, and media participation that keeps the public informed and engaged in relationship building between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Findings:

- Roughly 20% of final report forms over the past 10 years indicated achieving an outcome related to community engagement.
- Over half of those reports contained a community engagement outcome that was advanced to the point of implementation. This significant portion is likely due to the substantial planning efforts that often go into initiatives aimed at public participation prior to the forum taking place.
- The past 10 years has seen an even distribution of community engagement outcomes, with an average of six forums per year reporting this type of achievement.

Examples:

- Community engagement was an important feature of a 2010/11 C2C Forum between Komoks First Nation and the Comox Valley Regional District, which involved the signing of a protocol agreement between the two organizations. Local media were in attendance, as it was important to both sides that community members be made aware of, and involved in, an achievement that

they viewed as a new “foundation for ongoing and positive relations between all parties to benefit the residents of Comox Valley.”

- On Family Day in 2015, the Lower Kootenay Band and Town of Creston teamed up to host a C2C forum that doubled as a Children’s Festival meant to nurture relationships between young people with different cultural backgrounds. The event was a success, combining speeches and dialogue between the Mayor and Chief of the respective communities with cultural presentations, dancing, and other social activities that served to build bridges and foster new friendships.
- As part of a 2017/18 C2C forum, the District of Port Hardy, Kwakiutl First Nation, Quatsino First Nation, and Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Nations came together for two events: a dinner meeting for leadership that focused on opening lines of communication, and a public mural unveiling ceremony that coincided with National Aboriginal Day. The mural, Galagpola—meaning Holding Each Other Up And Coming Together—was meant to signify collective strength and community spirit.

Environmental Stewardship

A third focal point for forum outcomes is the land base for which First Nations and local governments are responsible. Instead of attempting to affect change on the socio-cultural level of their communities or the political level of leadership relations, some partnering First Nations and local governments take an environmental perspective, viewing these other levels in the context of their relationship with the broader natural world.

As implied in this statement and demonstrated further below, the boundaries between these spheres are extremely fluid. Achieving outcomes in the theme of Environmental Stewardship can mean anything from strategizing for selective resource extraction and other forms of economically motivated environmental management, increasing awareness of the inherent value of water, soil, plants, and animals, tackling land-use issues and altering official boundaries between communities, or negotiating local human/nature relationships through initiatives around emergency preparedness and response.

Due to its flexible structure, the C2C Forum program has proven to be not only capable of accommodating outcomes across the socio-cultural, political, and environmental spectrums, but also adept at bringing these elements into fruitful dialogue with one another.

The theme of environmental stewardship was represented in 31% of final report forms analysed.

Land/Water Use

As co-inhabitants of territories long occupied by indigenous peoples, much of First Nation and local government interaction in BC has historically revolved around issues of land use. While land disputes continue today, they are only one component of a host of nuanced land and water-based issues and priorities that First Nations and local governments navigate.

The C2C Forum program provides common space for these parties to hold discussions and achieve outcomes related to resource management and environmental protection, archaeological programs and processes, and marine use and bylaws, in addition to those related to land tenure and reform.

Findings:

- One-third of final report forms over the past 10 years indicated making some degree of progress towards an outcome related to land/water use.
- Just under half of the above reports demonstrated land/water use outcome implementation through the formation of working groups, drafting of work plans, identification of project leads, or otherwise moving an initiative forward 'on the ground'.
- The past 10 years has seen an even distribution of land/water use outcomes, with an average of 10 forums per year reporting this type of achievement.

Examples:

- A C2C Forum between the Skeetchestn Indian Band and District of Logan Lake in 2015/16 yielded several land-use outcomes, the foremost of which was an agreement to co-manage a woodlot and adjacent Community Forest belonging to the respective parties for wildlife continuity and other ecological purposes. The meeting also served to clarify several boundary issues, allowing the communities to navigate these as they moved forward with planned development partnerships.
- Also taking place as part of the 2015/16 program was a Forum hosted by the Katzie Eco-cultural Restoration Project, which brought together representatives from Katzie and neighbouring First Nations, Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, and Metro Vancouver, as well as environmental and academic researchers. The Forum was geared towards information sharing, with project leaders presenting their plans for site restoration and the experimental cultivation of wapato and other culturally significant plants, while also gathering feedback on local community values and priorities that would then be incorporated back into the project.
- In 2016/17, Westbank First Nation and the Regional District of Central Okanagan held a C2C Forum that combined a land-use tour and workshops to bring awareness to traditional indigenous land-use and the need for

archaeological site protection. Through a specific focus on the importance of First Nation culture to Regional Parks, the ultimate goal of the Forum was the endorsement of an MOU for Cultural Site Protection within regional park boundaries by both organizations. This was expected to be achieved by late 2016 or early 2017.

Emergency Preparedness

A second type of environmentally oriented outcome is that of emergency preparedness. Outcomes in this category lead to the increased resiliency of neighbouring communities to harmful natural forces such as flooding, earthquakes and wildfires. The activities that lead to emergency preparedness outcomes can include, but are not limited to, joint-training opportunities, regional strategizing sessions, and protective service provision.

Findings:

- 18% of final report forms analysed indicated making some degree of progress towards achieving an outcome related to emergency preparedness.
- One-third of the above reports demonstrated that their outcome reached the stage of implementation through the formation of working groups, drafting of work plans, identification of project leads, or by otherwise moving an initiative forward 'on the ground'.
- While these outcomes were fairly evenly distributed between 2008 and 2018, almost half of the 32 applications submitted for the 2018/19 program indicated an emphasis on emergency preparedness. This increase is likely due to the back to back devastating fire and flood seasons experienced in BC in 2017 and 2018, and with the current trend of extreme weather conditions expected to persist due to climate change, C2C Forums will likely continue to serve as a popular venue for strategizing collective responses to these issues.

Examples:

- The Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot hosted a C2C Forum on Emergency Planning in 2011/12. The facilitated event included numerous First Nations and local governments, including the Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, and Uchucklesaht First Nations, the City of Port Alberni, and the Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino. After sharing resources and summarizing their existing plans and concerns, the group developed an action plan for coordinating and formalizing emergency procedures.
- In 2015/16, ?Aq'am (St. Mary's Indian Band) held a C2C Forum that involved meetings with each of the Cities of Cranbrook and Kimberley. The events resulted in agreements with both communities for shared emergency wildfire protection services, as well as training opportunities for members of the

?Aq'am volunteer fire department. Both agreements were formalized through the signing of MOUs.

- From 2014 to 2018, the District of Kent, Village of Harrison Hot Springs, Sq'ewlets, Sts'ailes, and Cheam First Nations, Seabird Island Band, Sto:lo Tribal Council, and other regional communities participated in at least seven C2C Forums related to the Fraser River and flood management in the Lower Mainland. Following collectively penned letters to other organizations and levels of government, the group was able to bring the Fraser Basin Council to the table and also sent a delegation to meet with the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to discuss their concerns. The C2C Forum program provided a crucial collaborative space for strategic planning throughout this process.

Spotlight Relationships

Winds of Change: Lil'wat Nation, N'Quatqua, Pemberton & Squamish-Lillooet RD

First launched in 2004, the Winds of Change Initiative is a collaborative public policy initiative to reduce the harm associated with local drug and alcohol misuse. Over the course of nine C2C Forums from 2008 to 2018, the Initiative was re-engaged and became a positive influence in the communities for many years. The Initiative continues today in the form of The Wellness Almanac, which is driven by the Winds of Change Steering Committee and is described as a grassroots tool for promoting wellness in the communities of Pemberton, the Lil'wat Nation, Area C of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and N'quatqua.

Four iterations of the annual Winds of Change Wellness Gathering took place from 2011 to 2014 with support from the C2C Forum program. The following quotes capture the impressive scope and influence of these Gatherings:

- “The Second Annual Winds of Change Wellness Gathering was a huge success with approximately 500 people in attendance throughout the day. The vision for the event included bringing communities together, community engagement, increased knowledge of the benefits of active, healthy lifestyles, greater awareness of wellness providers, and an increased awareness of the Winds of Change initiatives. The outcome of the event demonstrated that by working together, neighbouring communities can move towards a common vision of healthier communities.” – 2011/12 Village of Pemberton Final Report
- The Third Annual Winds of Change Wellness Gathering focused on "Inclusive Engagement of Communities". The event involved a Wellness Trade Show, joint council meeting, and Recognition Awards that "acknowledged past cooperation, celebrated relationships built between community leaders, and the building of community development through dialogue with organizations, programs and individuals who have made a commitment to enhancing the community fabric, as identified through Winds of Change initiatives." – 2012/13 Village of Pemberton Final Report
- The Health and Well-Being of Neighbours Wellness Gathering “included bringing together students from Xit’olacw Community School (Mount Currie) and Pemberton Secondary School to participate in an all day workshop, November 21st, facilitated by Theatreworks. The day focused on utilizing the games and exercises of Theatre for Living (improv theatre) to explore reconciliation in terms of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the impact of residential schools. The groups talked about reconciliation in terms of relationships with others— friends, family, teachers— about moments when something goes wrong, and how we might restore friendly relations. The participants were thoughtful, creative and courageous – they took a lot of risks in the exploration with many learning outcomes.” – 2014/15 Village of Pemberton Final Report

Born in 2012, The Wellness Almanac aims to “amplify the positive work that is taking place here, celebrate the talent, expertise and passion among us, build a stronger sense of community, and encourage individuals on their healing journeys.” They report being built “on the work and vision of many, including work undertaken by the Winds of Change Steering Committee which guided our communities together 15 years ago (in 2004)” (thewellnessalmanac.com).

Waterfront Area Plan: Stz’uminus First Nation & Ladysmith

Through 10 C2C Forums between 2008 and 2018, in addition to many engagements outside of the program, Stz’uminus First Nation and the Town of Ladysmith have built an exemplary relationship that has resulted in many beneficial outcomes for members of both communities. One of the most prominent of these is the Waterfront Area Project, which is credited with bringing together and strengthening the bond between the Town and Nation by focusing their energies on an area that holds cultural, spiritual, and economic significance for both parties ([Itst uw'hw-nuts' ul-wum - we are working as one](#)). The Waterfront Area Plan was completed in 2018 and can be traced back as far as the 2007 signing of the Naut’sa Mawt Community Accord between the two communities, and the steering committee born from it. Implementation of objectives laid out in the plan is expected to continue past the year 2023.

While the Waterfront Area Plan represents a landmark achievement that took shape in part through multiple C2C Forums, the program facilitated many other outcomes that make up the fabric of this important relationship. The following quotes provide a snapshot of a few of these encounters:

- *Leadership BC-Ladysmith Program* - “The key benefit of this event is that it provided an opportunity for Town of Ladysmith Mayor and Council, and Stz'uminus FN Chief and Council, and citizens of both communities, to get to know each other outside of the formal work and meeting environment. The opportunity to have fun together, to share a meal and a celebration, has already proven its worth in a new spirit of friendship and sense of shared purpose between the two Councils” – 2009 Town of Ladysmith Final Report
- *Paddling Together* - “The main objective of the forum was to continue to build mutual understanding and acceptance as the basis for strong and trusting relationships between members of the Stz'uminus and Ladysmith Councils and broader communities, and to support the successful implementation of the joint initiatives identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two communities” – 2013/14 Town of Ladysmith Final Report
- *Imagining our Future Together* - “Prior to the event, all participants received the ‘hot-off-the-press’ Joint Community Report, detailing progress made on joint commitments over the past year. This report formed the basis of both the celebration of achievements, and the next round of planning and setting new priorities” – 2015/16 Town of Ladysmith Final Report

The ripple effects of these exchanges have been, and will continue to be felt across the two communities, and even beyond. In 2013/14 Ladysmith Mayor Rob Hutchins gave a guest presentation at a 2013/14 C2C Forum between Esquimalt First Nation and the Town of View Royal, in which he discussed the major progress that his, and the Stz'uminus First Nation Councils had been able to achieve over the previous eight years. The spirit of generosity and respect that underwrites this relationship can serve as a powerful example for other local governments and First Nations as they work towards goals of reconciliation and the mutual flourishing of their communities.

Shared Histories: Office of the Wet'suwet'en & Smithers

Illustrating the diversity of C2C Forum outcomes that this report has attempted to document are the Office of the Wet'suwet'en and Town of Smithers, who published a book titled *Shared Histories: Witsuwit'en – Settler Relationships in Smithers, British Columbia, 1913-1973*.

Over the course of nine Forums from 2008-2018, the two communities hosted a series of “Cross Cultural Workshops”, developed and signed a new protocol agreement in the spirit of “Creating a New Memory Together” (a quote from the late chief Pat Namox regarding his belief that it was time to ‘create a new memory in the minds of the children’), and held multiple Reconciliation Dialogue Workshops with various target audiences and topics.

As demonstrated by the quotes below, the book project between Smithers and the Wet'suwet'en was deeply tied to efforts for reconciliation and healing between the two communities:

- “The C2C forum became a safe space to explore whether the Town of Smithers and the Office of Wet'suwet'en were ready and willing to co-design such a research project. It allowed time to reflect on the project, and to talk about how this idea project might move forward, to name tensions and opportunity in engaging in such a project and begin brainstorming around to being able to imagine engagement tools to draw in a larger community audience. The forum clarified boundaries, terms of engagement, outcomes to move forward and guiding statements to provide a foundation on which to build a Terms of Reference” – 2014/15 Town of Smithers Final Report
- “There was an opening prayer and a welcome to the territory before opening statements from the Town of Smithers and the Office of Wet'suwet'en. Both communities acknowledged that they have been working very well together and cited the Shared Histories Project as a major accomplishment to be proud of. Further work on Shared Histories includes seeking funds to print the Shared Histories book with the wider community. A facilitator assisted in a dialogue on reconciliation. The Facilitator reviewed Call to Action items with specific focus on a. 57, professional development and training for public servants, b. 77. National Centre For Truth And Reconciliation and c. 92 business and reconciliation” – 2016/17 Town of Smithers Final Report

- “This C2C was in the form of an all day Reconciliation Dialogue Workshop in Smithers led by Reconciliation Canada and hosted by the Town of Smithers. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to learn about our shared history, to explore our own personal journey in reconciliation, and to gain access to tools and strategies to take reconciliation action. The workshops are modeled on an Indigenous circle process that creates a supportive and safe environment for meaningful dialogue and relationship building. Together participants explored pathways to reconciliation and developed individualized and community-based and community-driven reconciliation action plans” – 2017/18 Town of Smithers Final Report

Shared Histories was published in 2018, garnering widespread media attention and accolades. The book describes itself as “a collection of hidden histories [that] reveals how generations of Wit’suwit’en made a place for themselves despite local, provincial, and national efforts to push them, and indeed all Indigenous peoples, to the fringes.”

Moving Forward

The C2C Forum program has served an integral role over the past 10 years in facilitating the development of positive working relationships and other tangible outcomes for neighbouring First Nations and local governments across BC.

From the near-half of forums that result in progress being made towards formal agreements, to the emergence of information sharing and emergency preparedness as Forum topics, and the consistent representation of economic initiatives, land/water use, health, safety, and services, and community engagement-based achievements, the findings collected here indicate a diverse and dynamic program that will only continue to grow along with the inter-governmental relationships that it nurtures.

While the future of the program is dependent on continued Provincial and Federal funding and is therefore not guaranteed, with the significant results that it produces and modest investment that it commands, it is our sincere belief that the C2C program should continue to be a foundation for First Nation/local government relations in BC.

Future iterations of the program, while difficult to predict, have been shown likely to include increased emphasis on regional emergency management, with focus on prevention, response, and recovery. It is also likely that C2C Forums will continue to be used as a funding source for reconciliation efforts between local governments and First Nations, especially in light of the release of the 94 TRC Calls to Action and Canada's adoption of UNDRIP in recent years.

This report has attempted to communicate the spirit of the C2C Forum program over the most recent ten year period through figures, examples, and thematic analysis. It is our hope that this has been accomplished, and that readers are left with an appreciation for this unique funding program.