

2001  
COMMUNITY to COMMUNITY  
Joint Forum

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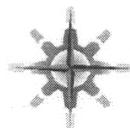
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Final Report

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Organized By:



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



## THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION CONTINUES

**“First Nations peoples desire to have control over their own lives.” Like everyone else in British Columbia, First Nations also want an adequate standard of living, decent healthcare, culturally appropriate education for our children, a vibrant and diversified local economy, a healthy and sustainable environment, and reduced unemployment. The general goals we hope to achieve through political negotiations match the goals of most other British Columbians and local governments also. In order to meet our goals, we will need to include our neighbours.”**

*Kathryn Teneese, First Nations Summit*

**“This is a significant event because it sends a strong message that we in this room and those we represent, are committed to building relationships between our communities and our governments. We recognize that cooperative government to government relationships at the local level bring direct economic, social and environmental benefits for all of us.”**

*Jim Abram, UBCM President*

**“In many ways, I think we can all learn a great deal from the approaches you are developing here in B.C. You have clearly recognized that far more can be achieved by working together than apart; that there are many more things which unite us than divide us; and that at the end of the day, it’s really all about building opportunity.”**

*Hon. Robert Nault, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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On March 6, 2001, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the First Nations Summit (FNS) hosted the second province-wide Community to Community Joint Forum in Vancouver. The objective of this Community to Community Forum was to create an opportunity for dialogue on issues of common concern between local government and First Nations leaders from across British Columbia. Over 150 delegates attended the meeting, including those involved in treaty negotiations and those that are not. Representatives from the federal and provincial governments also attended as well as a number of other interested organizations all of whom contributed to building understanding on the issues addressed.

This final report on the March 6, 2001 Community to Community Joint Forum has two main purposes:

1. To provide participants with a **summary of the event**, including the input received from the small groups discussions, the case study presentations and results of plenary discussions; and
2. To provide local governments and First Nations elected leaders and staff with a **toolkit** of ideas and opportunities for working together, based on the results of the conference.

The report introduction describes the origins and growth of the Community to Community Forum initiative and how the work done at the conference is a continuation of an on-going effort by BC First Nations and local governments to work cooperatively for the mutual benefit of their communities.

The toolkit is organized into the four topic areas that guided discussions at the conference:

- Economic Development
- Natural Resource Management
- Service Delivery and Land Use Coordination
- Government to Government Linkages

In relation to these four areas, speakers and participants throughout the day focused on identifying common “visions” or objectives, benefits and barriers to achieving those objectives and finally, short- and long-term actions needed to achieve them. Analysis of the case study and participant input in these four areas has revealed some common themes which are highlighted in the toolkit blue pages.

The record of small group discussions clearly shows that First Nations and local government leaders believe they have many more similarities than differences, and that there are things they can be doing together today, to accomplish their common objectives. Given that participants were given the difficult task of identifying specific actions to achieve their objectives, the range and volume of ideas generated is impressive.

Economic development was the topic area that received the most attention from participants and generated the most ideas. This attention to economic development underscores the many common

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interests neighbouring communities have, in this case an interest in increasing employment and opportunities for investment in their region. This topic area was closely linked to discussions on natural resource management.

Within the four topic areas (economic development, natural resource management, land use and servicing, and government linkages) improving communication and the importance of education were also dominant themes.

The vast majority of short- and long-term actions generated by participants were joint ones and the benefits of undertaking joint actions were clearly articulated by participants. Community leaders were able to see beyond any current conflicts that may occur to a period when, as a result of building strong working relationships through processes like the Community to Community Forum, resolution to issues will be found.

The following are key recommendations for local government-First Nation relationship building generated at the conference:

- Create as many opportunities as possible to meet face to face to allow identification of issues of common concern and community driven solutions
- Actively pursue education and training activities between governments
- Consider differing perspectives, e.g. in resource use, governance structures
- Work to change legislation impacting local governments and Indian Bands where it creates barriers to effective working relationships
- Jointly pursue public-private partnerships as cost-effective ways of developing infrastructure and services
- Participate in joint planning processes
- “One size does not fit all” – there is no one way to build relationships because the history and local context in each case will be different
- Continue to explore ways of linking decision-making bodies
- Hold regional forums including through the UBCM/FNS Community to Community Forum program
- Pursue local control of resources, e.g. forest resources
- Look to joint tourism as a key focus for joint projects
- Begin planning within a framework of community sustainability
- Actively oppose racism – undertake education programs
- Be preventative where disputes are concerned and develop dispute resolution mechanisms

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- Case Study Summary
- Blue “Ideas and Opportunities” pages
- Results from Small Group Discussions
  - ⇒ Vision Objectives – Benefits and Barriers
  - ⇒ Vision Objectives – Short-Term and Long-Term Actions

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