

**CITY OF QUESNEL
PRIORITIES & PLANNING WORKSHOP**

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

This report is prepared for the sole use of the City of Quesnel. No representations of any kind are made by Neilson-Welch Consulting Inc. (NWCi) to any party with whom NWCi does not have a contract.

Neilson-Welch Consulting Inc.
406-1708 Dolphin Avenue
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 9S4
t 250.868.2118 f 250.862.9101
nwc@silkenet

2003-APR-22



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. DAY ONE	2
Workshop Introduction	2
Key Issues	2
Council Meetings	3
Staff Reports to Council.....	4
2. DAY TWO	5
Introductory Comments	5
Vision, Mission, Principles & Values	5
Vision.....	5
Mission	5
Principles.....	6
Values	6
Further Review	6
Deliverables	6
Long-term Infrastructure Planning	6
Long-term Financial Sustainability	7
West Quesnel Land Stability	7
Core Services Review.....	7
Economic Development	8
Community Leadership	8
Relationship with CRD	8
Summary Table	8
3. NEXT STEPS	10

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – *City of Quesnel Workshop 2003: Workbook*

I

INTRODUCTION

In early April, 2003, the members of the City of Quesnel Municipal Council participated, along with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, in a *Priorities & Planning Workshop* over two consecutive evenings. The primary purpose of the *Workshop* was to establish a set of priorities and accompanying deliverables for Council to pursue over the next six months.

This report, titled *Workshop Proceedings*, provides a written account of the decisions that were made during the two-day event. The report is divided into three chapters:

- Chapter 1 summarizes the discussions held and conclusions reached during day one of the *Workshop*. The set of priorities determined by Council is presented in this chapter.
- Chapter 2 focuses on the events of day two. The deliverables outlined by the group are outlined in this chapter.
- Chapter 3 provides four suggested next steps for Council to consider.

Attached to the report as *Appendix 1* is a copy of the *Workbook* prepared by the City Manager to help guide Council in its *Workshop* deliberations. Included in the *Workbook* is a copy of the *Workshop* agenda.

The *Priorities & Planning Workshop* was facilitated by local government policy consultant Allan Neilson-Welch. Allan is the head of Neilson-Welch Consulting Inc., a BC-based consultancy that works with municipalities in a range of topic areas, including priority-setting. Allan served as the Director of Corporate Services at the City of Quesnel from 1997-1999.

1

DAY ONE

This chapter summarizes the discussions that occurred on day one of the *Workshop*. A summary of the *Workshop's* welcoming comments is provided first, followed by reviews of:

- the priorities for the organization, as identified by the *Workshop* participants
- the participants' assessment of the Council meeting structure
- the group's assessment of staff reports

Workshop Introduction:

Day one of the *Workshop* started at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 2. The facilitator began the session by asking each participant to identify his or her expectations of the *Workshop*. The predominant expectation voiced related to the need for Council, as a collective, to identify a set of priorities to pursue. The need to abide by whatever plan was created by the group was also emphasized. The total list of expectations put forward by participants is featured in Figure 1.1.

After discussing expectations, the facilitator outlined

Figure 1.1
Expectations of the Workshop

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| - process to be driven by Council | - better understand each other |
| - give administration understanding of Council (collective) | - learn from each other |
| - understand what each member thinking | - develop mutual respect |
| - get feedback from mayor | - breakdown barriers to communication |
| - identify priorities | - enjoy ourselves |
| - set plans; follow them | - identify where we're going |
| - achieve consensus on vision | - develop team chemistry |
| | - identify issues to address |

the *Workshop's* purposes. The primary purpose, it was explained, was to develop a set of priorities and accompanying deliverables to guide the organization for the next six months. In addition to this main purpose, the *Workshop* was intended to provide Council with opportunities to:

- examine and, if necessary, improve the Council meeting system
- assess and suggest changes to the way in which staff reports to Council
- update the City of Quesnel vision, mission, principles and values

The facilitator ended the introduction by reviewing the workshop agenda, a copy of which is included in *Appendix 1*.

Key Issues:

As noted, the primary purpose of the *Workshop* was to help Council identify a set of priorities and accompanying deliverables. To assist Council with this task, the *Workbook* provided a list of 19 important issues that had emerged over the previous four months during various interactions among Council and staff, and with the public. Figure 1.2 on the following page presents the list from the *Workbook*.

Two hours were spent on day one reviewing and adding to the list. After these discussions, the facilitator asked each participant to identify the two or three issues that he or she, personally, believes to be the most important for Quesnel. The list that emerged from this exercise is presented in figure 1.3.

Through further group discussion, the group succeeded in reaching consensus on the seven most critical issues:

- long-term infrastructure planning

Figure 1.2
Workbook's List of Issues

- | | |
|---|--|
| - budgetary challenges | - core services review |
| - new City Hall | - economic development & diversification |
| - industrial tax policy | - business retention & downtown revite |
| - staff resources & workload mgmt | - city beautification |
| - restructure & boundary expansion | - employee productivity |
| - commercial development in South Quesnel | - social & community development |
| - West Quesnel land stability | - grants-in-aid |
| - long-term land use planning | - provincial downloading |
| - relationship with CRD | - <i>Community Charter</i> public-private partnerships |

Figure 1.3
Participants' List of Key Issues

- | | |
|--|--|
| - financial responsibility | - West Quesnel land stability |
| - long-term infrastructure planning | - core services review |
| - community support | - alternate truck route |
| - beetle kill | - air quality |
| - investment in business | - support for business & industry |
| - local demographics | - retention of professionals |
| - downtown vs. strip | - school closures |
| - relationship with CRD | - City Hall viability |
| - budget challenges (revenues) | - employee productivity |
| - protective services (lack of volunteers) | - logging truck usage of roads |
| - community well-being | - recognition day for citizens |
| - transit | - restructuring & service expectations |

Figure 1.4
Council's List of Priorities

- long-term infrastructure planning
- long-term financial sustainability of the municipal corporation
- West Quesnel land stability
- the need for a core services review
- economic development
- community support
- the City's relationship with the Cariboo Regional District

- long-term financial sustainability of the municipal corporation
- land stability in West Quesnel
- the need for a core services review
- economic development
- community support
- the City's relationship with the CRD

These seven issues, which are profiled in Figure 1.4, constitute Council's set of priorities to pursue over the next six months.

Council Meetings:

The primary purpose of the *Workshop*, as noted earlier, was to develop a set of Council priorities and accompanying deliverables for the next six months. In addition to this focus, however, the *Workshop* was structured to provide opportunities to tackle other important items. One of these items was the Council meeting system.

The *Workbook* identified the various meeting venues that Council uses to conduct City business. The complete list of venues includes:

- delegations to Council, which are received once per month
- regular Council meetings, which occur every second week
- committee of the whole meetings, which accompany Council meetings as required
- *in camera* meetings
- sub-regional caucuses, from which Council is often excluded
- joint municipal/sub-regional meetings, such as the Joint Planning Committee
- retreats and workshops

Participants were asked to comment on the pros and cons of the meeting system and its individual components. Overall, participants agreed that the current system is working well – that is, allowing Council to attend to its business in a thorough yet time-effective fashion. Several points for improvement, however, were recorded:

- at times there are too many special meetings of Council (this point was attributed to the relative newness of Council)
- delegations should be managed better (clear guidelines outlining the rules should be provided to delegations; staff may be able to vet delegations better, without denying people the right to appear before Council)

- would be advantageous to allow certain delegations to appear at a televised regular Council meeting
- all meetings should be scheduled to begin after 4:00 pm to better suit Council members' schedules
- all members of Council need to be well prepared for meetings (at a minimum, each member is expected read his or her agenda)
- members need to be succinct in presenting views
- members need to speak to each other, not the camera
- the Joint Planning Committee is not working
- City Council should be represented at all CRD Northern Caucus meetings

City

- update resolution pages three times per year to identify status of actions being taken pursuant to Council resolutions
- use email wherever possible (no hard copies)

Staff Reports to Council:

The way in which staff communicates to Council was another item addressed in the *Workshop*. As noted in the *Workbook*:

"Administrative Reports written by staff members and presented to Council are very important documents. Reports to Council serve as the prime communication and decision making tools used by Council. They provide Council with information on key issues, and/or provide technical recommendations on a variety of administrative and policy matters."

Council members were asked to comment on the pros and cons of the ways in which staff communicates to Council. As with the Council meeting structure, the overall view of the staff reporting system was positive. The visual format and the order of the administrative reports are appreciated by Council, as is the background information contained in each document. The Council minutes are viewed as particularly good.

Ideas to improve staff reports and other forms of communication were identified as follows:

- important to stick to the format in all cases (fire department reports often deviate, which can result in confusion)
- would be useful to develop a gazette (copies to each member of Council) for City maps that may be referenced in reports
- use layperson terms whenever possible
- be succinct
- some members of Council wish to see more detailed cheque listings (e.g., add descriptions), including for electronic cheques issued by the

2

DAY TWO

This chapter summarizes the proceedings from day two of the *Workshop*. As with Chapter 1, the text here follows closely the agenda for the day. The text begins by relating the facilitator's introductory comments. A summary of the discussions around the City's vision, mission, principles and set of corporate values is then provided. An outline of the deliverables established by the participants to accompany Council's key priorities ends the chapter.

Introductory Comments:

The facilitator opened day two of the *Workshop* by reviewing the discussions from day one. Participants were reminded, first, of the individuals' expectations of the *Workshop*. The participants' list of issues (see Figure 1.3) was then outlined, followed by the shorter list of Council priorities that was developed through consensus (see Figure 1.4). The day one reviews of the Council meeting system and staff reporting system were also summarized for the participants.

Following the review of day one, the facilitator outlined the day two agenda:

- a review of City's vision, mission, principles and corporate values
- the development of deliverables to accompany Council's list of priorities
- time permitting, a discussion on how to better engage the community in decision-making

Vision, Mission, Principles & Values:

At an earlier retreat, the previous City Council developed a vision, mission, set of principles and set of corporate values to guide the organization. The purpose of this part of the *Workshop* was for the present Council to review and, if necessary, amend these important documents.

The facilitator began the discussion by reminding participants of what is meant by certain key terms:

- *Vision* ? a vision statement identifies the kind of organization Council wishes the City of Quesnel to be; the statement is usually written in the present tense
- *Mission* ? a mission statement identifies the broad objectives that Council wishes the organization to achieve; what the organization will do to realize the vision
- *Principles* ? guiding principles are qualities and attributes that members of the organization view as important
- *Values* ? the organization's corporate values are the "signposts" that govern how the organization and the people within it conduct business

? Vision

Participants were reminded of the City's existing vision statement:

"The City of Quesnel will enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Quesnel by providing equitable, sustainable, fiscally responsible and social infrastructure; and opportunities for diversified economic growth in a socially and environmentally responsible manner."

Participants were asked to comment on the validity of this vision statement for the organization today. The group appeared to agree that while the vision is valid, it is not clear whether Council and the organization have been successful in living up to the statement.

? Mission

The group reviewed the City's mission statement:

"The City of Quesnel will provide its residents with outstanding quality of life in a vibrant, prosperous, diversified community, achieved

through a process of public consultation and trust."

Several participants noted that the mission should be more distinct from the vision statement. The need for more tangible wording was noted, as was the concern over the omission of environmental goals.

? Principles

The City's list of guiding principles includes the following entries:

- quality municipal services
- responsible government
- cultural diversity and heritage
- economic vitality
- active and liveable neighbourhoods
- environmental protection
- community-based solutions

Some members of Council suggested that this list be expanded to include the promotion of community spirit (support of volunteers), the recognition of individuals' contributions and economic innovativeness. The consensus favoured the smaller existing list.

? Values

The corporate values, which were originally defined by the City's management team, includes the following entries:

- open communication
- responsiveness
- empowerment
- teamwork
- integrity
- fairness
- approachability
- accountability
- mutual trust and respect
- professionalism
- creativity
- honesty
- consistency
- compassion

Forgiveness and environmental protection were suggested additions; group consensus, however, favoured the existing list. The point was made by a number of participants that "the proof is in the pudding" – i.e., the values are meaningless if Council

and staff do not practise them.

? Further Review

The *Workshop* provided Council the opportunity to review and affirm the validity of the organization's existing vision and mission statements, and existing sets of principles and values. It was agreed by participants that there would be value, in a future workshop, in allowing Council to create "from scratch" a completely new vision, mission, set of principles and set of values for the organization. The new statements may, to be sure, resemble closely the existing statements. The key difference, however, would be that the new statements would be created by and owned by the new Council. It is difficult for the new Council to take ownership over the existing statements, which were created by the previous Council. Ownership is important.

Deliverables:

The purpose of this section of the *Workshop* was to have Council identify specific deliverables to accompany Council's priorities, and to achieve over the next six months. Figure 1.4 outlined the list of priorities reached by consensus; this list is reproduced in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1
Council's List of Priorities

- long-term infrastructure planning
- long-term financial sustainability of the municipal corporation
- West Quesnel land stability
- the need for a core services review
- economic development
- community support
- the City's relationship with the Cariboo Regional District

The text below presents the deliverables that were identified for each issue. Figure 2.2 at the end of the text summarizes the deliverables.

? Long-term Infrastructure Planning

Council is concerned that there is a growing infrastructure deficit in Quesnel. No plan presently exists to systematically replace deteriorating infrastructure or to systematically deal with the

maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Council wishes to develop an infrastructure plan to ensure that, over the long-term, sufficient funding is earmarked to regularly replace and maintain aging works and services.

The City Manager has been asked to bring to Council some terms of reference for developing a long-term infrastructure plan. It is expected that, among other items, the terms will address:

- the scope of the plan (e.g., what exactly is included in the definition of infrastructure?)
- the need for a detailed inventory of existing infrastructure
- some of the key variables that determine the life spans of different type of infrastructure
- the need for estimates of annual costs associated with the plan
- the issue of a dedicated infrastructure tax to provide stable long-term funding
- the cost of preparing and updating the plan

After reviewing the terms of reference and staff's recommendations, Council will need to decide on how to proceed in developing the plan.

? **Long-term Financial Sustainability**

This priority is broad in scope and includes a number of sub-issues, including:

- economic development
- contingency planning to address major economic jolts (e.g., closure of a mill)
- a financial plan for the new City Hall
- the need to consider industrial tax rates vis-à-vis those of other classes
- user fees charged for City services
- the future of the airport in light of current airline industry problems
- the cost of providing services

Staff noted that many initiatives are presently underway (or planned) to address several of these sub-issues. For example, the financial plan for the new City Hall is close to completion. The Quesnel and Community Economic Development Corporation is involved in a capital visioning exercise with the community to identify future facility needs. The planned core services review (see later) and industrial taxation policy will also help to address concerns related to the City's long-term financial sustainability.

? **West Quesnel Land Stability**

Concerns over land stability affect hundreds of residents and homeowners in West Quesnel. A de-watering pilot project, recommended by AMEC, is presently underway. Until the project has been completed, all infrastructure projects in the affected areas of West Quesnel need to remain on hold.

The pilot project is the key deliverable for Council under the West Quesnel land stability priority. A second deliverable is to begin work on a lobbying campaign targeted at the provincial government. Such a campaign cannot be completed until the results of the de-watering project are known; however, work on the campaign could begin. The Attorney General, who is responsible the province's Emergency Preparedness Program, could be made aware of the situation and the community's ultimate expectations concerning financial assistance from the province.

? **Core Services Review**

Council wishes to undertake a wholesale review of the City's services. For each individual service, Council would like to examine fundamental questions such as:

- Is the service considered a core service in which the municipality should be involved?
- Should the provision of the service be the responsibility of another level of government or another sector (e.g., private sector)?
- If the service is a core service, is the City's current approach to delivering the service the most cost-effective and appropriate in terms of meeting the City's goals? What options exist?

Council has asked the City Manager to prepare, for Council's review, some terms of reference for a comprehensive study. Among other items, the terms of reference should address the:

- purpose of the review
- scope of the review
- need for a detailed inventory of City services and activities, including their methods of delivery
- criteria for determining which services are considered to be "core" to the City's purpose
- methodology
- timeline

The terms should also state clearly that no element of the *status quo* is sacrosanct. Put differently, every service and method of service delivery in place at the City today is subject to review. In developing the terms and in carrying-out the review, the City Manager is expected to involve staff from all departments and levels of the organization.

? Economic Development

The need to promote the economic development of the community is an ongoing priority for Council. Economic development is a broad priority that encompasses many areas of activity, including some (or all) of the other specific priorities identified in figure 2.1. The successful pursuit of these other priorities will help to promote the City's economic development.

In addition to these other pursuits, the need to monitor customer service in City Hall was identified for the City Manager. The need for improved communications between Council and the Economic Development Corporation, specifically with respect to investment inquiries, was also identified. A specific deliverable for Council to achieve in the next six months is to review the City's economic development function as delivered through the Economic Development Corporation. Council will be working with the City Manager to develop the appropriate terms of reference for the review, and to conduct the review.

? Community Support

A considerable amount of time at the *Workshop* was spent discussing and defining the topic of community support. Clearly, a key aspect of community support is Council's grants-in-aid program. The point was made by several participants, however, that grants-in-aid is but one of the ways in which the City provides support to community groups and the community as a whole. Permissive tax exemptions are another aspect, as are the City's investments in recreation, cultural services and even infrastructure.

Notwithstanding these other aspects, *Workshop* participants agreed that the grants-in-aid program is important. Participants also acknowledged that discussions around grants-in-aid are inherently controversial and divisive. New grants-in-aid guidelines and procedures would, it is believed, decrease the potential for disharmony and improve everyone's understanding of the program.

The City Manager has been asked to provide options to Council for improving the existing grants-in-aid program. Once received, Council will review the options and make the necessary policy decisions.

At the *Workshop* the facilitator cautioned Council to not expect the City Manager to present "the solution" to the grants-in-aid issue. Ultimately, the decision as to which option(s) to endorse will be a political one for Council.

? Relationship with the CRD

The City's current relationship with the CRD is a concern to Council. As suggested earlier in Chapter 1, Council feels that the Joint Planning Committee is no longer an effective vehicle for promoting the City's interests within the broader community of Greater Quesnel. Specific concerns related to key regional services – namely recreation and library – were also raised at the *Workshop*.

The final 30 minutes of the *Workshop* were devoted to a discussion of the relationship with the CRD. During the discussion, the City Manager reviewed with Council a pending staff recommendation for the City to initiate formal statutory reviews of its participation in the CRD's recreation and library functions. This recommendation was subsequently adopted by Council and made public. The statutory reviews that have since been initiated by Council constitute Council's deliverables under this priority.

Summary Table:

Figure 2.2 on the following page summarizes the deliverables that accompany Council's set of priorities. These deliverables are to be pursued over the next six months.

**Figure 2.2
Summary of Deliverables**

Council Priority	Deliverables
Long-term Infrastructure Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City Manager to prepare, for Council's review, terms of reference for a long-term infrastructure plan – Council to determine how to proceed with plan
Long-term Financial Sustainability of Municipal Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City Manager to present, for Council's review, financial plan for the new City Hall – Council to review capital visioning exercise being undertaken by Economic Development Corporation – Council to proceed with development of industrial taxation policy
West Quesnel Land Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Council proceeding with de-watering pilot project (underway) – Council to begin work on lobbying campaign
Core Services Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City Manager to prepare, for Council's review, terms of reference for wholesale core services review – Council to proceed with review
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City Manager to prepare, for Council's consideration, terms of reference to undertake review of economic development function, as delivered through the Economic Development Corporation – Council to proceed with review
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – City Manager to prepare, for Council's consideration, options for new grants-in-aid program – Council to decide on preferred option(s)
Relationship with Cariboo Regional District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Council to initiate statutory reviews of CRD recreation and library functions (underway) – Council to participate in review

3

NEXT STEPS

During the two-day *Workshop*, City Council was successful in establishing a manageable set of priorities and accompanying deliverables to be pursued over the next six months. Council's chief task now is to proceed with implementation. Four suggested "next steps" designed to assist Council in its chief task are set out in this chapter.

Formal Adoption:

The first step for Council is to formally adopt, by resolution and at a public Council meeting, its set of priorities and accompanying deliverables. The mayor should introduce the topic and outline the key information. A brief review of the *Workshop* in which the priorities and deliverables were established would also be useful.

As a courtesy, the mayor should consider sharing a draft of his comments with other members of Council prior to the public meeting.

Communication:

Following its formal adoption of the priorities and deliverables, Council should develop a modest public information exercise aimed at communicating Council's program to the citizens of Quesnel. A news release could be issued to outline the key points. Further information could be provided in a newsletter-type document available on the City's website (referred to in the news release).

Immediately prior to the publication of the news release, the City Manager should provide a memorandum to City staff to outline Council's priorities and deliverables. Special attention will need to be given to the explaining the core services review.

Monitoring:

It is important for Council to monitor the City's progress over the next six months in pursuing and achieving the key deliverables. Council should consider asking the City Manager to provide Council, every two months, with an update on progress made.

Review:

It is recommended that Council meet again, in a workshop setting, at the end of the six month period in early November, 2003. At the workshop, Council could review in detail the progress made on the deliverables, and provide further direction to staff. The workshop could also be used to create new vision and mission statements, and new sets of principles and values. As noted in Chapter 2, the current Council may benefit from the opportunity to create, from "scratch", its own vision, mission, principles and values for the organization. The vision, mission, principles and values in place today, while valid, are not owned by the present Council. Ownership over such important guiding documents is important.

Finally, the November 2003 workshop could be used by Council to set new priorities and deliverables for 2004 (some of which may resemble extensions to the priorities and deliverables just established).

APPENDIX 1

CITY OF QUESNEL WORKSHOP 2003 WORKBOOK