



Tłıchq Economic Development Strategy Review & Update ‘What We Heard’ Summary

This document provides an overview of the engagement for the Tłıchq Economic Development Strategy review and update. Engagements activities have included an interview, survey, and a series of public engagement workshops.

Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted earlier in 2021. These stakeholder interviews included meetings about economic development and training for the Tłıchq region with:

- Tłıchq Government staff, including Economic development officers,
- Business owners, GNWT officials, and other partners.

Survey

The virtual survey launched on September 30th and was advertised over the Tłıchq Government Website and their social media channels. Hard copies of the survey were mailed and distributed to citizens at public spaces (Offices and Community Stores) within each community. These surveys are in the process of being mailed back or scanned to the Project Team for analysis. At the time of writing this, 15 responses to the online survey and hard copy surveys have been received and reviewed by the Project Team.

Workshops

There were 5 virtual workshops were held over October 2021 to engage with citizens in each Tłıchq community. There was an engagement session tailored for each community and one session was intended to have a regional focus.

Fast Facts:



Engaged with 45 participants through the workshops & survey



80% of participants introduced to the Strategy



4 Key Themes identified (Barriers, Strengths, Opportunities and Training)

WHAT WE HEARD





What We Heard

Barriers



HOUSING

- ▶ There is inadequate housing for employees, instructors, and citizens.
- ▶ Communities need certified local tradesmen to perform house maintenance or repairs.
- ▶ There is a lack of equipment available for house construction and repairs.



COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Difficult to advertise training and employment information effectively to citizens. For instance, employment opportunities posted on Facebook, the Tłıchǫ website and in-store is not reaching citizens.
- ▶ Citizens are unaware of what services and programs are available in each community.
- ▶ Access to reliable affordable internet is a key issue. A lack of devices (cell phones, laptops) and poor connectivity has restricted adults and students from engaging in educational training programs.
- ▶ There is difficulty understanding how citizens learn. Gathering meaningful feedback is a challenge.



EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ A significant gap exists with how training leads to employment in the community. Skilled workers either find employment outside the community or require additional training.
- ▶ There is a lack of reliable and age diverse childcare services across the Tłıchǫ region. This makes it hard to attend trainings or commit to certain types of employment.
- ▶ More partnerships between entrepreneurs and business owners is required to help individuals mitigate barriers towards starting their own business. Barriers such as overwhelming paperwork, costly licenses and insurance have discouraged people from expanding their business.
- ▶ Challenging to find applicants for part time job postings.
- ▶ Rent increases for employed citizens discourages many from finding work.
- ▶ Individuals are relying on the COVID-19 Recovery Benefit or other supports for income.



OTHER

- ▶ Lack of transportation from Edzo to Rae is a challenge. There are no bus routes or transportation services to connect those areas.
- ▶ Longer hours should be encouraged for essential services (gas stations, restaurants etc.) to cater to citizens and tourists needs.
- ▶ Trades related to mining can be viewed as a 'double edged sword'. It instigates social issues even though it brings in revenue for communities.



Current strengths



SKILLS

- ▶ Learning by doing is a strength of the Tłıchǫ citizens (eg. mining, trades, hunting, harvesting, and arts and crafts).
- ▶ Citizens have a wealth of knowledge about their land, traditions and language.
- ▶ Tlıcho citizens are passionate and proud of their traditional art pieces.
- ▶ Drivers training and heavy equipment training has led to employment opportunities with the Tłıchǫ All Season Road.



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- ▶ Online Tłıchǫ store/sales have exceeded expectations.
- ▶ The Tlıcho artwork competition has been successful in collecting ideas of artwork to be printed.
- ▶ Infrastructure investments has led to the development of the Culture Camp and Sleeping Cabins. There also has been improvements to landscaping, upgrades to the kitchen, construction of new cabins, new gazebo and washrooms.
- ▶ An adult education center In Behchokǫ has been created to support adult learning.



DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ A new subdivision is being developed in Edzo. Younger citizens are interested in the new development.
- ▶ Tłıchǫ all season road will allow for new businesses (Mechanics, gas stations, etc.).




ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Wilderness and Industrial safety training programs have been successful in getting participants certified and employed (during the winter and summer).
- ▶ The lakes and fishing provide tourists an opportunity to disconnect from the technology and interact with nature.




Opportunities for the Communities


INDUSTRIES

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- ▶ Green tourism and employment around environment preservation and restoration can be explored. (Ex. Tours to view endangered species)
 - ▶ Nature guides that promote the community's natural environment is another avenue for citizens to gain employment.
 - ▶ Providing transportation services for tourists from the airport would increase travel within communities.
 - ▶ Local grocery stores such as a Co-Op would entice citizens to shop within the community. Offering incentives such as discounts on grocery items to reduce travel to Yellowknife to complete shopping. The grocery stores should be operated and managed by citizens.
 - ▶ The expansion of agricultural businesses can be explored including development of greenhouses and cannabis. Agriculture developments would allow citizens to grow their own food and tackle food insecurity. This in turn leads to reduced food costs.
 - ▶ The Tłıchǫ region would benefit from outside the box thinking with regards to economic development. For Example, a brewer and distillery development.
 - ▶ Developing banking institutions that are located in the communities will encourage citizens to apply for financial accounts.

INITIATIVES

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- ▶ Consider repurposing existing infrastructure (abandoned buildings) into training or education facilities. For instance, once the new super school is built in Behchokǫ, the older high school (Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School) can be used to deliver trainings.
 - ▶ Beautify the communities (ex. Demolish old buildings, construct outdoor theatres, marketplace for vendors etc.).
 - ▶ Sidewalks need to be created for pedestrians, tourists, and citizens to walk around.
 - ▶ The creation of walking trails and storyboards along significant landmarks will help promote Tłıchǫ culture. Similarly, graveyards can be used as sites/landmarks to be shared with tourists. Stories could be shared at these gravesites as well.
 - ▶ Ensure that trainings and education opportunities are offered within the communities rather than requiring travel.
 - ▶ Seek community champions who can spearhead smaller projects with funding.

SCHOOL AND YOUTH

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- ▶ It is crucial to focus on what can be offered to the next generation. Skills and knowledge sharing is a significant step for younger people to gain access to employment opportunities.
 - ▶ School staff members can contribute time to run an afterschool program that connects Tłıchǫ youth with career pathways.
 - ▶ Create more opportunities for youth and the Tłıchǫ Government to discuss what careers they are interested in.
 - ▶ A Super School/ Campus is being developed in Behchokǫ. The new school provides a library with quiet spaces for citizens who desire to attend online learning sessions.
 - ▶ Mature students can struggle attending school and trainings due to family and financial obligations. Assisting with this will support attendance and completion.



EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ More targeted training programs will address employment gaps within each community.
- ▶ Pathways for citizens to advance in their career from entry level positions to managerial should be created. Resources and additional training must be offered for people to enter higher employment positions.
- ▶ Additional positions such as computer technicians/ hospitality (ex. chefs) should be created to cater towards citizen interests.

Training



SUCCESSFUL TRAININGS

- ▶ Interactive in-person training has better engagement compared to other types of training (eg. Online).
- ▶ On-the job trainings are preferred as citizens gain experience while in the field. For instance, water plant operators have on-the-job training.
- ▶ Trainings that are paid have a higher participation rate. People are compensated for attending rather than having to risk losing pay from current employment.
- ▶ Shorter training programs have more participants as it integrates well with people's schedules.
- ▶ Training programs must align with people's work schedules.
- ▶ The training type is a factor that contributes to participation rate. Trades or traditional training programs are more likely to have a higher turnout.
- ▶ Trainings on promoting traditional businesses are essential to preserve Tłıchǫ culture. For instance, caribou hide making and subsequent businesses using the hides.
- ▶ Trainings or bridging programs should connect with post-secondary, apprenticeships or employment.
- ▶ Journeymen and apprenticeships in the communities creates more opportunities for citizens to be certified.



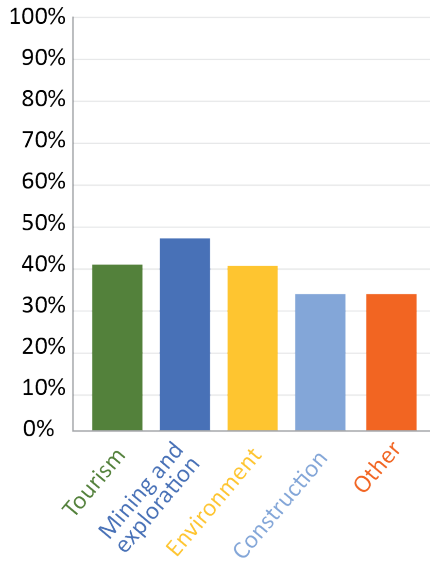
TRAINING NEEDS

- ▶ There is a need for a dedicated training facility. The learning center owned by Aurora College is costly to rent.
- ▶ There is a lengthy approval process for adult educators to deliver trainings in the communities which has created another barrier.
- ▶ Academic upgrading is often required: literacy level, numeracy, and other essential skills.
- ▶ Some training and upgrading has a focus on youth making it difficult for adults to participate.
- ▶ There is a lack of equipment available for trainings. The equipment cannot be purchased locally.
- ▶ A training plan and project plan needs to be created as it is beneficial for tracking which programs are to be delivered.
- ▶ More training around office and business skills is needed.
- ▶ Men within the communities are reluctant on traveling to Yellowknife to participate in trainings. They would prefer to participate in trainings in their communities.

Selection of Survey Responses

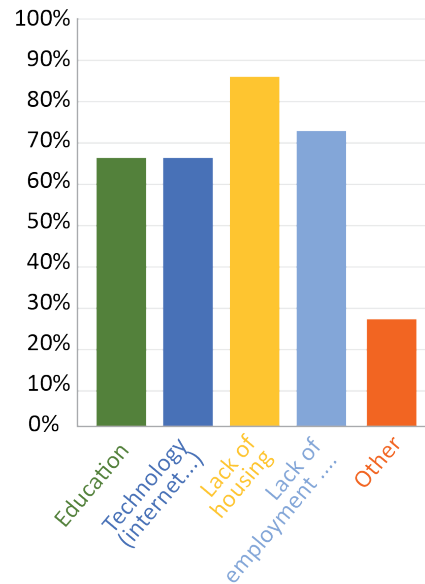


What are the economic development strengths in your community?



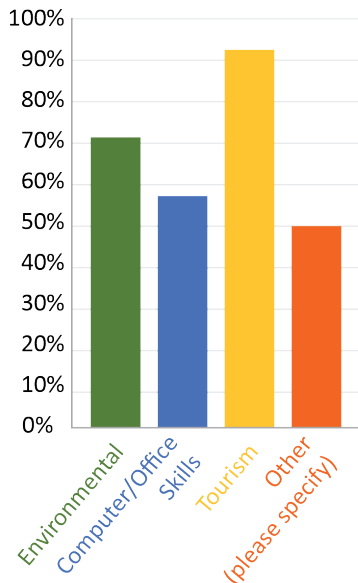
Other: traditional crafts, mining trades. Mines help the community economy to grow, this leads to: roads, health-care, housing, and better understanding about the environment after the mine life and putting back the environment the way it was, for future generations.

What challenges or barriers for economic development do you see in your community?



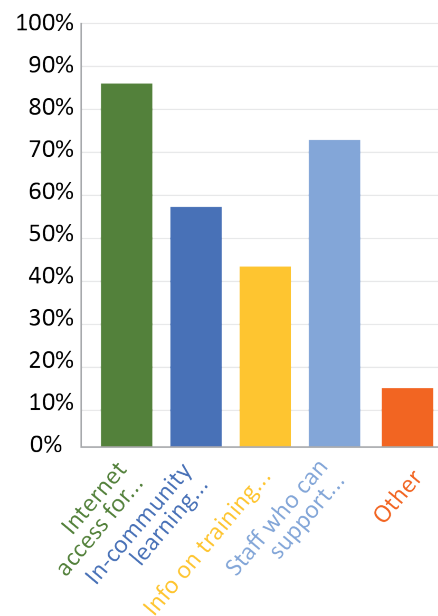
Other: Lack of tourism services such as restaurant and gas station and store with late hours, people need help with applications for business or tourism and not enough jobs for older adults and young adults.

What skills are lacking in your community? What training should be available?



Other: Early childhood education, Driver's license. Taxi license and business. Tour guide license and business. Customer service, learn more about the education environment, how to sign up for college. Internet and Supervisor Training

What are the challenges for delivering training in your community?



Other: Motivation, Depending on the Time of Day Internet is so slow it's unusable