Our Bright Future

Our Community, Our Priorities, Our Vision

A 40-year vision to guide growth and development of Fort St. John - created by the community for the community.

- Let’s provide quality housing choices for all types of families.
- Let’s protect our precious green spaces and agricultural land.
- Let’s conserve our natural resources and protect the environment.
- Let’s make sure it’s easy and convenient to get around by bus, bike, or foot.
- Let’s create a vibrant and exciting downtown core.

Created by MetroQuest in partnership with the City of Fort St. John June 2008.

MetroQuest.com
Working together to create a Bright Future

From Fall 2007 to Spring 2008 the City of Fort St. John and MetroQuest worked together with Fort St. John residents to create a community-based vision to guide growth in Fort St. John.

The process, called Bright Future, resulted in a shared vision for the community by the community. Very special thanks to the over 400 residents that contributed their hopes and dreams for the city and helped to create this vision to guide future growth in Fort St. John.

The Bright Future team conducted interviews and analyzed data to understand the challenges that will face Fort St. John over the next four decades.

- Accommodate a rapidly growing population
- Meet the needs of an aging population
- Keep up with aging infrastructure
- Control traffic congestion in a fast growing city
- Preserve the environment
- Control the rising cost of living
- Provide desirable housing options for current and future residents
- Energize a healthy and robust economy
- Protect precious natural and agricultural land
- Maintain a high quality of life, and
- Provide high quality cultural and social services.

Over the next 40 years, Fort St. John will be challenged to:

Our Community

The Bright Future team conducted interviews and analyzed data to understand the challenges that will face Fort St. John over the next four decades.

Major findings from the priorities survey include:

- Neighborhood safety is a top priority
- Environmental concerns ranked highly
- The benefits of compact development (conserving green space, energy, etc) are important to residents, and
- Alternative transportation choices are preferred above single occupant vehicle travel.

Our Priorities

At the Community Forum a survey was conducted to understand the priorities of residents. In all, 168 Fort St. John residents participated! The survey focused on housing choices, neighbourhood amenities, transportation options, environmental programs, and land use priorities.

For the detailed results, please see the Appendix.
On May 27th, 2008 two workshops featuring MetroQuest were held in hosting over 200 residents: one workshop with youth and one open to the public (attended by adults). MetroQuest is a computer scenario tool that was configured with data for Fort St. John. MetroQuest allows for future scenarios to be created and evaluated in a workshop setting. Using wireless handsets participants vote on policies and priorities and collectively create and evaluate future scenarios. The final scenarios that emerged from the two workshops were so similar that they were blended and final blended scenario is summarized here - the Bright Future Vision created by the community.

Through an integrated approach, the Bright Future Vision is able to simultaneously succeed economically, socially and environmentally. Residents have called for a blend of environmental conservation programs and integrated land use and transportation planning to address their environmental priorities. On the social front, the vision promotes a high quality of life for residents of all ages by increasing the diversity and quality of choices for housing, transportation, and social programs and preserving green space both within the city and in surrounding areas. On the financial and economic sustainability front, the vision succeeds by controlling taxes and increasing household affordability.

MetroQuest shows that the 40-year vision created by residents (shown in green) outperforms the current trend future (orange) on all ten of the priority ‘spokes’.
Both youth and adult participants agreed that new housing in Fort St. John should be more compact than the existing housing in the region with the majority of new growth occurring in and around the existing city area. Participants felt that there was a significant amount of underused land in the city which could be used to provide attractive and high quality residential space for new residents and revitalize neighborhoods and the downtown core of the city. Neighborhood design should emphasize access to quality parks, green space, and walking trails to ensure that all residents have convenient access to green areas even if their own private yard space is more limited than it was in the past. Residents were particularly interested in providing attractive housing options suitable for seniors wishing to remain in the city.

Participants identified many benefits of the vision - for example, it:

- Provides a wider variety of housing choices for residents
- Preserves green space, agricultural and natural areas
- Provides more affordable housing
- Re-vitalizes the downtown core
- Improves environmental sustainability
- Places a strong focus on attractive housing designs
- Preserves existing neighborhoods with larger yards for families needing more space.

See the Appendix for more.

The vision sees the gradual creation of more compact ‘nodes’ of development in key areas in the city leading to more vibrant and walkable downtown areas. The vision accomplishes this while protecting outlying residential and green spaces. Here we see a concept of what 2046 could look like using a more compact design (top map) compared to the current trend (bottom map).
Employment Areas
compact, centralized, and integrated
with transportation routes

Fort St. John residents strongly favor the development of more compact, efficient, and attractive employment centres in the city. The vision continues to accommodate those businesses requiring more space such as heavy industries and warehousing, but strongly encourages the development of more compact commercial and office space along key corridors and in the downtown core. Residents were particularly excited about the opportunity for mixed use areas such as buildings with commercial space on the first floor and residential units above.

Participants identified many benefits of the vision - for example, it:

- Conserves agricultural land and green space
- Reduces traffic
- Promotes walkable urban areas
- Enables a more diverse economy
- Allows for mixed use areas
- Re-vitalilizes the downtown core
- Increases tax income for city

See the Appendix for more.

Agricultural and natural Land
preserved for food security and maintaining the regional character

The preservation of agricultural and natural areas in and around Fort St. John is extremely important to city residents. While most felt that agricultural land in particular should be protected, there was a strong general sense that urban encroachment on any green space should be avoided. This sentiment is confirmed by participants’ decisions to focus on smarter and more compact growth of both housing and employment areas. Consistent with the goals of the Agricultural Land Commission, the vision preserves all of the highest quality agricultural areas. Indeed by 2046, the vision conserves about 10 square kilometers of green space compared with the current trend scenario.

Participants identified many benefits of the vision - for example, it:

- Promotes food security for future generations
- Saves energy related to long distance food imports
- Maintains the agricultural economy and culture in the region
- Preserves natural areas for wildlife and recreation
- Provides locally-grown food options for residents

See the Appendix for more.
Transportation
focus on high-quality alternative transportation options working in harmony with land use

Given the growth of the city that is expected over the next 40 years, Fort St. John residents have called for the city to invest in infrastructure and programs to encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation like car pooling, transit, walking and biking. In a future with rising oil prices and increasing environmental concerns, residents feel that investments like more frequent transit service and attractive walking and biking paths will serve the needs of future residents of all ages. Youth participants were more supportive than adults about investing in an expanded urban transit system. Youth were also more likely to complain about the quality of roads and called for additional spending for this as well.

Both youth and adult participants stressed the importance of linking the development of new compact residential and employments areas with access to high quality alternatives to the automobile. By focusing new development in key nodes with convenient access to more frequent transit service, the vision illustrates that land use and transportation planning can work in harmony. As a result of these decisions, the vision reduces automobile use by over 130,000 kilometres per year by 2046 compared with the current trend.

Participants identified many benefits of the vision - for example, it:

- Reduces greenhouse gasses, air emissions, and energy use
- Meets the needs of all ages
- Reduces household costs for transportation
- Allows for healthier choices such as cycling and walking
- Protects against rising fuel prices

Environmental Programs
being a leader, seeking best practices

To the surprise of many participants, there was strong support for investing in improved water, waste, energy and air quality management programs. Both youth and adults feel that waste management programs including an expansion of the recycling program should be a top priority of the city. Some participants, particularly the youth who were more concerned over the rising cost of living, expressed concern over the cost of such programs. Most, however, were satisfied that savings in other areas (i.e. more efficient use of infrastructure dollars due to more compact development) could be used to offset the cost of improvements to environmental programs.

Participants identified many benefits of the vision - for example, it:

- Reduces energy use in a future with rising fuel costs
- Reduces greenhouse gasses emissions for improved climate protection
- Reduces costs for waste disposal
- Increases water conservation and protects against uncertain future for water supply
- Reduces our ecological footprint
- Demonstrates more leadership and innovation on sustainability

See the Appendix for more.
Appendix A: Topics & Issues

What challenges do we face as our region grows?

The Bright Future team interviewed residents, conducted surveys and analyzed data to understand the issues relevant to the future of our city. The MetroQuest software has also been used to evaluate the implications of growth on the region. Here is what we found.

Population Growth

According to the most recent forecast, by 2046, Fort St. John's population is expected to triple. At current house and lot sizes that could mean that the land area of the city could also triple. When interviewed about their priorities several residents mentioned their desire to protect the region's natural and agricultural lands.

Can we grow in a way that enhances the quality of life for residents? How will we provide housing and services to accommodate that growth?

Aging Population

Due to baby boomers, the number of residents over the age of 60 is expected to quintuple by 2046! Meeting the needs of seniors today and in the future will be something that the Bright Future process will be considering carefully.

What sort of transportation options will seniors require to move around the region easily? What kind of social services will be provided? What kind of housing will best meet the needs of our residents as we evolve?

Aging Infrastructure

As the city grows, more and more neighbourhoods will require upgrades to their roads, water, and waste systems. Meeting these needs may be financially and ecologically costly and requires careful planning. In addition, the increasing demand for energy from these new residents will test the limits of our existing systems.

What systems will need to be replaced or maintained, and at what cost? How will we provide services to new areas on the edge of the city? To what extent can conservation help to minimize the costs?
Density and Location of Development

In our priorities survey, residents ranked houses with large yards above all other housing types. If the city triples in population and housing density remains low, vast amounts of natural and agricultural land will be lost to development. In addition, neighbourhoods could be located close to the city or farther away in neighbouring communities like Charlie Lake and Taylor. These choices could dramatically impact land use and transportation in the region. It's clear that the vision must carefully evaluate what tradeoffs residents prefer when dealing with these choices.

What new development should we encourage, and where should new development occur?

Transportation

Today the bus system in Fort St. John is small and not well used. In general people find that traveling by truck or cars is more convenient than taking the bus. In interviews several people mentioned that one of the great things about living in Fort St. John is how easy it is to get around. As the city triples in size, traffic congestion may make travel much more difficult.

How will new housing and job growth affect traffic congestion in the future? How can we manage growth to avoid traffic congestion problems? How will people get around, and how far will they have to travel?

Environment

In the priorities survey, residents gave environmental issues a high ranking. Many commented that the quality of the natural environment is one of the best things about living in Fort St. John. With the economic and population growth that is expected, it'll be critical to ensure that the quality of the natural environment is preserved.

What policies do we need to consider to manage our resources? How will we respond to increasing concerns over greenhouse gas emissions and rising oil costs? What is the carrying capacity of our natural environment?

Cost of Living

With the increase in the size of the city housing prices and cost of living have increased significantly. It’s getting to the point that residents are concerned that their children may not be able to afford to buy a home in Fort St. John. With careful planning it may be possible to control cost of living increases but some tradeoffs may be required.

How can we ensure that existing and new residents will be able to afford to live here? What tradeoffs are we prepared to make to control the cost of living?
Appendix B: Priorities Survey Results

At the Community Forum the Bright Future team conducted a survey to get a sense of the priorities of residents. In all 168 Fort St. John residents participated!

Residents each were given a stack of ten concepts and were asked to rank them in order of priority. The concepts were randomly selected from a list of 30 concepts covering a wide range of areas that are being addressed in the Bright Future project: including preferred housing choices, neighbourhood amenities, transportation options, environmental programs, and land use priorities. The results were tabulated and some very interesting insights have emerged.

The following figure shows the 30 concepts ranked from top to bottom priority. The length of the bar shows the score for each on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being top priority. The top ranked priority was “living in a safe neighbourhood” which scored well above the second placed “energy conservation”. Others were grouped more closely together indicating smaller differences in priority ranking.

While this survey is not comprehensive enough to be conclusive, it does provide some insights into the priorities of concerned citizens. Below are some of the stories that emerge from the results. These highlights were presented and used to spark discussion at the MetroQuest workshops in May 2008.

Contents:

2: Ranking of all 30 concepts

3: Highlight – Environmental concerns ranked highly

4: Highlight – Housing choices less important than neighbourhood amenities

5: Highlight - Desire to have large yards may conflict with neighbourhood priorities

6: Highlight - Strong support for locally-owned businesses

7: Highlight - Green transportation choices a priority
A Snapshot of Community Profiles

How would you rank these 30 concepts?
Here are the combined ranking from our participants.
The following pages highlight some key findings.

Living in a safe neighborhood
Energy conservation
Living close to a park or green space
Reducing air pollution
A vibrant downtown area
Supporting locally-owned stores
Being able to walk or cycle to school / work / shopping...
Locally-grown food
Low cost of living
Living close to community centres / recreation
Protecting wilderness areas
Preserving agricultural areas
Living close to work / school
Reducing greenhouse gases
Living in a house with a large private yard
Lower housing prices
Living in a low maintenance home
Having a variety of higher paying jobs close to my home
Living close to schools / child care / youth facilities
Direct, speedy transit routes
Living close to shopping
A bus stop nearby
Shopping areas with plenty of parking
Living in the same neighbourhood throughout my life
The freedom and privacy that driving gives me
Living in a spacious house
Living in a townhouse or duplex with a small yard
Access to large chain stores
Living in a 3 or 4 storey condo building
Living in a 5 to 10 storey condo building

Ranking on a scale of 1 (low priority) to 10 (high priority)
Environmental concerns ranked highly

Each of the concepts dealing with environmental issues (GREEN) were ranked in the top half of the concepts with “Energy Conservation” and “Reducing Air Pollution” ranked 2nd and 4th respectively.
Survey results indicated that residents of Fort St. John place a higher value on key neighbourhood amenities (GREEN) such as living close to parks, green spaces, and recreation centres than they do the type of house that they live in (ORANGE).
Large yards may conflict with neighbourhood priorities

Among the concepts related to housing choices (ORANGE), “living in a house with a large private yard” was the only concept to make it into the top half. In contrast, the concepts that relate to the benefits of a more compact style of housing (GREEN) were ranked highly. Given the growth in population that is anticipated it is difficult to imagine a future in which the majority of residents will be able to have large yards and live close to amenities at the same time.

Ranking on a scale of 1 (low priority) to 10 (high priority)
Residents clearly indicated their preference to support locally-owned stores (GREEN) and locally-grown food (BLUE) over larger chain stores (ORANGE).
Green transportation choices a priority

The “green” transportation concepts ranked highly including walking and cycling, energy conservation and reducing air pollution (GREEN). Concepts related to motorized travel (ORANGE) all ranked in the bottom half with transit-related concepts ranking only slightly higher than car travel. These results are interesting given the dominance of automobile travel today in Fort St. John.
Appendix C: Vision Details with Detailed Participant Feedback

On May 27th, 2008 two workshops were held in Fort St. John hosting over 200 residents: one workshop in the morning with youth and one in the evening open to the public (attended by adults). These workshops featured MetroQuest, a computer scenario tool that was configured with data for Fort St. John. MetroQuest allows for future scenarios to be created and evaluated in a workshop setting. Each participant was provided with a wireless handset and a worksheet where they could record their comments. This appendix presents the decisions that both the youth and adults made at their respective workshops as well as the information recorded on the participant comment forms.

How this Appendix is organized

For each MetroQuest choice presented, a graph showing the results of the keypad voting is presented with the results of the youth voting shown in yellow and the adults shown in blue. When applicable, a screen shot from MetroQuest is provided to show the details of the preferred choice.

In each section, participant comments relevant to that topic area are recorded as well. These comments are grouped into common themes to allow the reader to see the range of support for each topic. Youth comments are shown in *italics* and adult comments are in normal text.

Housing: well-designed, more compact and green

![MetroQuest screenshot](image)

Benefit of the vision: provides a wider variety of housing choices for residents

Participant comments from feedback forms:

- I’m excited that the city will provide a variety of housing styles from families to seniors
- I’m excited about smaller homes that are young family / senior friendly
- Compact development would encourage younger families and retired people to stay in the community
- Housing needs to have a variety of low to high density
- Based on the projected demographics emphasis on smaller houses makes sense
- I’m excited about the variety of choices
- I’m excited about that we will still have some houses with a yard
- A mixture adds originality to the overall community
• I’m excited about more variety of housing
• I’m excited about the variety of available property to satisfy peoples tastes and incomes
• I could live in a little townhouse or an apartment or a mansion. I love choices!
• I’m excited about the better variety of housing

Participants also felt that it was important to maintain attractive options families who wish to enjoy houses with large lots. Despite the shift towards more compact growth, by 2046 over 40 percent of the housing in Fort St. John will be single family houses on large lots.

• I still want the single family large lot but I’d develop with new technologies to make it sustainable
• I’d never live somewhere with no yard
• I like being able to pick my nose without my neighbor watching me
• It sucks a bit because without having a house there isn’t a yard to play on

Benefit of the vision: preserves green space, agricultural and natural areas

• Rural recreational is a waste of land
• Preserves agricultural land and allows for green space
• Must preserve adequate farmland as food & ability to produce it locally is soon to become a necessity
• I’m excited about changing the trend of wasted space
• I’m excited about saving lots of natural land and wilderness and compacting the people like co-operative sardines
• Don’t build residential areas that take up acres or huge yards that serve no special purpose
• Need more apartments – I don’t want housing everywhere

Benefit of the vision: provides more affordable housing

• I’m excited about affordable and sustainable housing
• I’m excited about infrastructure costs being kept down
• I’m excited about bringing prices down
• I’m excited about housing will be more affordable and easily reached
• I’m excited about making more apartments because housing is too expensive so more apartments are needed
• I’m excited about more compact will make housing costs cheaper

Benefit of the vision: re-vitalizes downtown core

• Some good quality condo’s downtown would be very interesting
• I’m excited about re-establishing the city core
• I’m excited about potential for higher density housing in city core
• 5-15 storey apartments can be valuable and can improve density in the downtown core

Benefit of the vision: improved environmental sustainability

• Benefits of compact housing: reduced greenhouse gas impact
• Compact housing is consistent with my priorities: energy conservation, green spaces, etc.
• We need to preserve energy and have higher density developments
• Will the city required geothermal considerations in the building code?
• All buildings must be energy efficient.

Additional thoughts: design of compact housing

• I’m excited about lots of green and walking space. Neighborhood parks
- I’m excited about walking trails and green space
- Encourage more high density housing if green space available for family use to compensate for lack of private yards
- I’m excited about more nice parks and nature!!
- Make lots of parks to compensate for lack of yards
- We need good condo developments – I recommend 2&3 bedroom condos in more “tower” format i.e. 3 storey’s + single floor layout

Where will people be encouraged to live?

1. City-focused development
   - 81%
   - 45%

2. Multi-nodal development
   - 19%
   - 55%

Other thoughts: pattern of development

- More focused development within city limits
- I’m excited about keeping the tax base in the city
- Compact housing/city focused
- More compact, centralized growth
- If satellite communities develop but jobs in outlying areas are scarce develop commuter transport to city centre jobs
- I’m excited about increased density, use of residential and commercial mixed developments, reduction in large inefficient housing
- I’m excited about housing spread out in multi nodal dev to give choices for people to live
- Multinodal is a good choice to create a neighborhood feeling for communities
- I’m excited about planning mixed housing within each neighborhood, improving quality of neighbourhood planning
- I’m excited about preserving rural villages and communities
- We should make and area for apartments and townhouses and areas for houses with big and small yards
Relevant MetroQuest results of the “Our Vision” scenario (green) compared with the “Current Trend” scenario (orange). This shows population density with the darker colors indicating areas of higher population density.
Employment areas: compact, centralized, and integrated with transportation routes

How compact will new business development be?

1. Favour business parks
   - 16%

2. Maintain current mix
   - 28%
   - 29%

3. Mostly compact growth
   - 56%
   - 69%

Benefit of the vision: conserving land and protecting the environment

- We must reduce our land footprint
- Compact growth!!
- Encourage infilling
- Let’s use the space we have before moving out
- All new building should be energy efficient. Can we go as far to say self-sufficient?
- I’m excited about that we won’t be using valuable space for jobs
- We need to conserve space
- This allows for more care for the environment

Benefit of the vision: less traffic

- Less commuting if jobs are near housing
- Promotes better integration with surrounding community and less dependence on vehicles (i.e. can walk to do errands at lunch, get a bite to eat etc.)
- I’m excited about spreading jobs across the region as it would cut down on commutes to work, also promotes diversity
- There will be new ways of working electronically
- I’m excited about keeping the location tight to create that critical mass for great public transportation
- If you want a realistic bus system or car pooling, jobs need to be in town.
- Jobs closer to town
- Keep jobs in town where homes are

Benefit of the vision: provides for a more diverse economy

- Must have alternate sources of jobs
- I’m excited about as the city and area grows, so will the diversity of new jobs and occupations
- Good jobs!
- I’m excited about more variety of where you can work. Not everyone wants to work in town
- I’m excited about jobs should be more diversified
- Bring in better businesses so teens don’t have to work at grocery stores!
- I’m excited about there may be a larger variety of jobs
- I’m excited about more job availability and more comfortable and exciting places to work

Benefit of the vision: providing mixed use areas

- I’m excited about attractive and dynamic areas where residential and workplace can co-exist
• Stores should have people living above them
• If done correctly, we could have residential living above our businesses

**Benefit of the vision: re-vitalization of downtown core**
• Encourage more development of business in core area
• *Fun centres like malls and clubs*

**Benefit of the vision: increased tax income for city**
• I’m excited about maintaining and developing city income
• A *higher rate of spending for the economy*

**Additional thoughts: design**
• Density but not ugly

![Chart showing job location preferences]

**Additional thoughts: location**
• Many companies bring in workers. I would like to see workers live in the city and work in the surrounding areas eg. Fort Nelson, Fort McMurray
• I’m excited about encouraging offices to be built in FSJ not in region (i.e. Westcoast/Spectra Building and other offices outside city)
• *Businesses out of town will not receive the support needed to thrive*
• *Keep jobs in FSJ*
• *Jobs all belong in the city*
• *Some homes and jobs should be separate*
• I want more jobs in the region so there is equal development and less congestion in the city

**Additional thoughts: what type of jobs will we have?**
• Where will job growth come from? Oil/gas is a non-renewable resource. What will the impact of a depleted resource be on population growth?
• I’m excited about high paying jobs in manufacturing > sustainable jobs too

**Naysayers**
• I’m excited about dense development but we need to consider that some businesses need large areas
Agricultural and natural Land: preserved for food security and maintaining the regional character

How much will agricultural land be developed?

1. Protect agricultural land
   - 78%

2. Develop agricultural land
   - 22%

Benefit of the vision: protecting agricultural land in general
- Protect agricultural land at all costs
- I’m excited about making it positive that we protect our agriculture land
- I’m excited about this is needed (protection and usage for agricultural purposes) and that participants supported
- I’m excited about that we won’t be losing our agricultural land
- I’m excited about agricultural land will be maintained and will not be taken over by urbanization or industrialization
- If is gets destroyed we’ll never get it back
- I’m excited about that although FSJ will expand, some of the land will remain undeveloped
- I’m excited about land still available for farming even though the city is developing

Benefit of the vision: food security
- Locally grown food will become more important with rising fuel prices.
- Protect agricultural land – we’re going to need it
- Minimal use of existing agricultural land for development. We will need this for food production in the future.
- Regionally there is a huge amount of prime agricultural land which could be used to feed the population
- I’m excited about that we view agricultural land as important for our future. We will need this land to produce food in the future
- As the city grows more land will be needed to grow the food
- We will be the bread basket of BC if climate change predictions actually come true
- I’m excited about saving it! We need to be able to grow foods! Let’s not starve for lawns.
- If there is going to be a global food shortage, why take agricultural land? In doing so, in the end, we will defeat the entire purpose of this workshop – as we will ignore the future global crisis just for the selfish desired of FSJ
- I like to have food! Don’t take my food away!
- Keep land for the growth of food and farming.
- If the population triples we should also triple the harvest from our agricultural land

Benefit of the vision: locally grown food/100 mile diet
- 100 mile diet is a must
- Locally grown food is a very high priority for me
- I’m excited about if we do protect agricultural land we could do the 100 mile diet
• Let’s not ship our water to California to grow veggies/fruit to then be shipped back to us!! (Seems a bit crazy)

**Benefit of the vision: maintaining the Economy and Culture of Agriculture in Region**
• *Ag land is a major part of FSJ culture*
• *Availability of land for country living*

**Benefit of the vision: providing more green spaces in city**
• Incorporate some of the green spaces into the city
• What about opportunities for community gardens!

**Additional thoughts: challenges of protecting agriculture**
• What about making farming economically viable?
• What do the ranchers and farmers see for the future – Seems as though many children want to leave the family farm.

**Additional thoughts: allowing development of some agricultural land**
• It could make some sense for reducing impacts on the environment to take some land out of the ALR
• Would like to see agricultural land preserved but not at the expense of long term planning
• Land around the city not being farmed anyway

**Additional thoughts: protecting natural areas**
• *That land is where we go for fun, camping, fishing etc.*
• *I’m excited about our vision keeps wildlife habitat instead of destroying it*
• *Keep the crown land for hunting, hiking, fishing, and camping because we cannot do these activities on someone’s property*
• *We live in Canada – we are known for our space & we appreciate our ability to be in nature not just small bits*
• *I’m excited about so wildlife won’t have to come to town they’ll have space to roam*

**Additional thoughts: need to protect both through smarter growth**
• Need to protect green areas and agricultural land – need smarter development - no expansion of boundaries unless extremely necessary!
• City must enforce clean-up of all contaminated lots. Too much wasted space.
• I’m excited about using brown spaces to develop inside city
• *We need less space between houses*
Relevant MetroQuest results of the “Our Vision” scenario (green) compared with the “Current Trend” scenario (orange). This shows a concept of land use for 2046 with agriculture in light green, natural in dark green, job areas in blue, housing areas in yellow and mixed use in purple.
Newly Developed Land
By Type (Cumulative)

- 2006
- 2046

Agricultural
Natural
Transportation: focus on high-quality alternative transportation options working in harmony with land use

How will the region focus investment in new transportation infrastructure?

1. Regional road network 15% 17%
2. Split investment evenly 14% 46%
3. City transit network 6% 24%
4. Regional transit network 15% 63%

How much will alternative transportation be encouraged?

1. Favour drivers 8% 12%
2. Maintain current mix 15% 10%
3. Support alternatives 48% 67%
4. Strongly favour alternatives 11% 30%

General support for transportation alternatives

- I’m excited about the opportunity to encourage alternative transportation choices
- I’m excited about the opportunities that the city has to get people out of cars! So much that can be done thru policy & city support that could make FSJ less vehicle reliant even in the winter
- We need to develop a great bus system

Benefit of the vision: better for the environment

- Less vehicles! Environmentally-friendly city
- A more extensive transit plan supports the idea of treating our planet better
- I’m excited about more bus routes, nicer sidewalks, bike lanes between sidewalk and road so people don’t have to share with bikes
- Busses etc. must use power that is green

Benefit of the vision: meets the needs of young and old

- Public transit needed for students and people who don’t drive. Don’t see a lot of other people using the bus.
- More transit options – help for seniors

Benefit of the vision: promoting walking and cycling

- Walking/cycling paths – do maintain them in the winter
- It is so small we should walk more
• I’m excited about encouraging alternate use – more walking and bike trails

**Benefit of the vision: protects against high gas prices**
• gas is WAY TOO expensive
• Gas prices are ridiculous

**Additional thoughts: it won’t be easy shifting attitudes**
• Car will be the favoured form of transit for at least 20 more years in FSJ whether we like it or not
• We should use more transit however this will require a substantial change in attitude
• No big time companies employees will take a bus. They are given a company vehicle and a gas card!

**Additional thoughts: ideas about the solution**
• Need to fix transit system so it is usable
• If bus service was more convenient
• Must be functional
• Currently transit system is no use to me. Infrequent. Takes too long.
• Give tax breaks to people who use public transit
• We need better bus stop shelters! It get’s -40C in winter!
• I’m excited about having a regional transit system that works and is regular
• Make busses quicker & ride between towns
• Smelly public busses...yee-haw!
• I’m excited about more frequent bus service
• I’m excited about smooth, faster easier transit

**Additional thoughts: questions about who pays**
• Who pays for alternative transportation?
• Who would pay for alternative? People are already upset with taxes.

**Additional thoughts: support city-based transit**
• I’m excited about acknowledging that the transit system must be a part of the whole travel grid in the city
• Invest in city bus transportation
• Keep busses out of Charlie Lake and surrounding areas

**Additional thoughts: support both road and alternatives**
• We have an opportunity to create a balance of choices
• Prefer a 5th option – regional transit plus new roads
• I’m split on this. People want good new roads but transit is good for environment

**Additional thoughts: sore support for roads**
• We are not using public transportation and I feel that we must emphasize our resources on road infrastructure.
• Many people work outside the city and need to get to work too.
• Need to fix roads before development. Wider roads
• Need wider roads to drive safer. Less potholes
• A regional transit network?? Wasted money - Town is not big enough. Spend the money on environment/ parks/roads. FSJ is an oil town.
• Potholes have cost me $600 in repairs to my car
• Need to fix potholes
• Maintenance of roads need to be a priority. The potholes are outrageous
Relevant MetroQuest results of the “Our Vision” scenario (green) compared with the “Current Trend” scenario (orange)

**Proximity to Transit**
Population Within Walking Distance

- **2006**
  - Homes Near Transit: [Bar Graph]
  - Jobs Near Transit: [Bar Graph]

- **2046**
  - Homes Near Transit: [Bar Graph]
  - Jobs Near Transit: [Bar Graph]
Person Distance Traveled
Total Daily Commute, By Mode

2006
- Single Occupant Vehicle
- High Occupant Vehicle
- Buses

2046
- Single Occupant Vehicle
- High Occupant Vehicle
- Buses

Cycling & Walking

Millions of km

Our Vision
Current Trend
Environmental programs: being a leader, seeking best practices

To what extent will energy conservation & air quality programs be implemented?
1. Spend less on programs 0% 14%
2. Maintain programs 12% 16%
3. Spend more on programs 32% 51%
4. Achieve best practices 19% 56%

To what extent will water conservation and waste management programs be implemented?
1. Spend less on programs 0% 7%
2. Maintain programs 7% 17%
3. Spend more on programs 17% 67%
4. Achieve best practices 9% 76%

General support for the vision
- I’m excited about we are thinking in the right direction, Now the action!!
- What goes around, comes around
- I’m excited about the possibility of doing or coming close to best practices!
- City should be more proactive in regards to environmental costs and conservation. Be more innovative
- I’m excited about waste will be managed properly and natural resources will not be rapidly depleted
- I’m excited about not much increase in GHG even though pop is tripling

Benefit of the vision: waste management and recycling a top priority
- I’m excited about recycling pickup
- Garbage pickup has to include recycling. This will aid in saving the environment. The OSB plant emits more toxins on a daily basis than vehicles.
- We should conserve water, have ton of recycling areas and only one landfill for garbage.
- Way more waste management programs would be a good idea
- I’m excited about better waste management
- More money should be invested in recycling & compost disposal

Benefit of the vision: showing leadership among municipalities
- I’m excited about we can be a leader
- We need to lead in this area!

Additional thoughts: residents surprised by level of support
- Surprised by the high percentage of those concerned about the env
- I’m excited about it seems FSJ wants to conserve
- I’m excited about that this was ranked so high. There really should be no other choice but to work hard to strive for best practices
- I’m excited about willingness to reduce waste and conserve water and energy
- I’m excited about the commitment to increased conservation
- I’m excited about the majority of the students want to better the community

Additional thoughts: don’t want to spend more
- Energy and Air is important but not on taxpayers backs. Need to get grants from gov’t or redistribute how taxes are spent.
• Better recycling should be able to be achieved with current budgets
• Why do citizens have to pay for the bad choices of governments.
• I don’t want raised taxes

Additional thoughts: willingness to spend more for conservation
• I’m excited about that people intent to do the best for the environment etc even if in reality it will cost them higher taxes
• Gotta do better in the future. We’ve all got to bite the bullet.

Additional thoughts: ideas about protecting environment
• The city needs far-thinking by-laws. For example: ban all outside xmas lights except LED (or maybe ban them all). This would save lots of energy at peak season.
• Ban plastic bags like other cities have done.
• Developments like our hospital where waste water etc are recycled will help.
• No idling during hockey practices
• Give tax breaks to people who use best practices
• Cut down on plastic bags that almost everyone uses
• Plant more trees to naturally filter the air. It also makes the city look more environmentally friendly.

Naysayers
• No one really cares about the air or we wouldn’t all drive vehicles like we do.

Relevant MetroQuest results of the “Our Vision” scenario (green) compared with the “Current Trend” scenario (orange)
Summary Results

Scenario Summary
By Key Indicator

Our Vision
Current Trend

- Household Affordability
- Urban Containment
- Fiscal Health
- Alternative Transport
- EcoFtprint Reduction
- Commute Time
- Waste Management
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction
- Water Conservation
Economic Results

Household Cost of Living
By Expense (Annual)

- 2006
- 2046

- Housing
- Transportation
- Food
- Utilities
- Taxes
- Other

Thousands of Dollars
0 10 20 30 40 50
Appendix D: Additional Comments from Participants

General comments

Compliments and thanks
- Very interesting, good discussions
- I think the process is very positive
- Thanks for the opportunity to participate
- Good exercise & great planning tool
- This was well worth the time – an eye opener!
- Dave – your presentation was excellent
- Thank you David.
- Thanks for the effort!
- It was a fun process – I wished I could have stayed for the entire evening

Encouragement to the City
- Be creative.
- We need more people to attend to make an exercise like this worthwhile. We also need an open-minded city to recognize the change that people want and need
- We should not be afraid of change. This vision is all good but now the city needs to follow through and implement policies, create incentives and lead by example.
- FSJ and surrounding area have the potential to be beautiful – let’s work together towards that beauty

My favorite part of the workshop...

Learning about the future possibilities
- Seeing how you can change the future
- Seeing the affect of different scenarios
- The ability of the program to show future changes
- The excellence of the area overviews
- Seeing the results of the vision process
- The results
- Graphical representation of the effects of choices
- Comparison of the youth to adult choices
- Seeing how our choices blended together in a fiscally responsible way
- Seeing the overall results
- Seeing how FSJ is going to develop in the future
- Seeing how much our choices change things and can improve or worsen it
- That we can still have a big city with better homes for families and still have more conservation
• Seeing how FSJ will be in the years to come
• Learning about what our city might look like in the future
• The graphs and explanations about what they mean today and tomorrow

Voting/having my say in our future
• Instant results on polls
• Interactive voting,
• Instant results!
• The voting
• Voting
• The voting
• The voting
• The voting. It was fun. I know it’s silly, but true.
• The fact that we had the opportunity to vote
• Having a say
• Learning that it is possible to make a difference
• That I got to take part in my future

Open discussion & sharing ideas
• The opportunity for discussion
• Collaborative discussions
• The networking
• Open discussions and sharing of ideas/opinions
• Getting the global vision of all present
• To hear what others thought – the opportunity to hear comments was interesting
• Realizing how unrealistic the students of the future truly are. They have absolutely no idea about their impact. I honestly hope that FSJ council is not this closed minded and ignorant.

Playing with innovative technology
• Interesting software!
• The remote voting thing
• The controllers
• Using the button thing
• Pressing buttons and interacting! Plus all the catchy tunes!
• The remotes
• Using the universal remote
• Playing with the doohickies

Instant visual results of choices
• Visual instant view of effects of choices!
• Voting and seeing the results right away
• The quick results
• The immediate print out of results
I learned about...

We have important choices to make
- The multiple effects of centralizing
- Cross effect of decision making – requires balance
- Need to take part in the building of the city
- Decisions we make today last forever
- Our opinions count and the time to mould tomorrow is today
- Compact housing is crucial to the development of FSJ
- That cities double and if good decisions aren’t implemented, then we are doomed!!
- There is a lot of room for improvement
- That the growth of the city is heading in a bad direction
- Personal comfort does not always help the environment e.g. idling cars to keep warm
- We need to conserve on items that are being diminished
- That we are going to run our of water unless we do something
- That we can run out of natural resources i.e. water

People are more environmentally conscious than I thought
- We recycle more than I believed. It encourages me to continue.
- The people polled favored best practices
- FSJ is not just a red neck town – and the future looks good. Although at this point I’m glad I’m not a senior.
- There is more concern about food provision than I expected
- Youth appear more hopeful of the future of our community than I thought
- Our citizens are very conscious of their environment, sustainability and green technology
- We care a lot about our future
- People like stinky busses! Yick!

We can make a difference in our future
- How what one person does or eats has an enormous effect on others
- We can plan our future
- We can reduce energy and costs by compact development
- We can make a difference
- A reminder that one person – one at a time – can make a difference
- There are lots of choices out there and tough decisions need to be made
- I can make a difference
- I can help make a difference

Others think the way I do
- Other people are environmentally conscious
- Common thought
• It was interesting to note that so many people here tonight felt the same way I did.
• Strong unity on the vision
• Students and adults voted very similarly – it is great to know teens are thinking and learning about their environment and are concerned about the future.

FSJ is growing quickly
• That they think FSJ is going to get bigger
• City will be huge by the time I come back

Other comments
• That very few people are interested in being part of the process – more interested in complaining about the process
• I am 65 – I don’t think I can afford to stay here. After 40 years, I’ve learned that I may have to leave.
• That a lot of people think they can have their cake and eat it too!
• That the government is trying to sway our minds
• That I might have a future in urban planning
• About ecological footprint

Things I’m willing to do to help

Stay involved
• Be a part of the community. This can be increased with programs like this – the city needs to continue to consult with the people and follow through
• Give input into plans
• Push for local self-sufficiency & preservation of farm land, conservation
• Stay involved – keep providing feedback
• Continue to give my input and find out from others about new ideas and best practices
• Be involved
• Become and stay involved in decisions
• Keep the ideas flowing to city hall
• Give my opinions at certain events
• Keep being vocal and vote in accordance with my beliefs
• Supporting realistic ideas and programs. Being part of community involvement.
• Get involved in the community and get my ideas out there

Do my part for the environment
• Conserve as much as I can and try to do more as I learn more.
• Reduce energy use
• Will focus more on waste and water conservation
• Be much more aware of my impact on our greening area!
• Recycle more
• To help clean up after people and to only use what I need and not waste
• Recycle more.
• Recycling
• Do my part for the environment
• Doing community services like recycling
• Continue my recycling and composting.
• Help keep the city clean
• Have a much smaller ecological footprint

Work and Pay taxes
• Pay taxes
• Help by paying taxes
• Work
• Work

Drive less and use alternative transportation
• Drive less
• Drive less (now that I’m retired)
• Ride my bike and encourage my kids to ride to school whenever weather permits
• Own less cars
• Spend more time walking and less driving
• Buy a bike and use more alternative transport

Nothing
• As an individual nothing, but as a whole...
• I don’t think there is anything I can do to help

Other comments
• Move to a smaller house
• Hang on through the turmoil with the NIMBY’s
• Be open to changes in the future
If I had one minute with the Mayor...

Thanks, compliments, and encouragement

- Stay on your path. It takes a strong leader to manage a community as large as a company.
- It is achievable.
- Jim, this is going to be important to our children. We need to establish development standards that are focused on a great community for years to come. Thanks for the good work & the leadership!!
- Mr. Mayor, keep up the good work – it has been a privilege to be involved in this process. You have drawn out many people with good thoughts/ideas who care about the future of the city/province/country/world and what we will leave for our children.
- Let’s make sure that in 5 years we’ve acted on what we’ve identified or at least implemented policies/incentives that encourage easier movement to the proposed vision.
- Good job – you are moving in the right direction and are aware of the tradeoffs required by environmental choices
- Keep up the good work Jim!!
- Show leadership with this vision developed by those present. Thanks!
- If you need more input perhaps put some of these scenarios into the newspaper where people can learn about them and provide feedback.
- It was a nice idea to ask the future leaders!
- Plan the future for your grandchildren. Not for me, but them.
- It’s a good vision but the changes need to happen faster than 2046
- Be realistic and sensitive to the citizens needs

More green spaces and walking paths

- Encourage park and green space
- Make this a community that puts a strong emphasis on quality of life (i.e. green spaces, walking trails, recreation facilities, art and culture)
- Make sure that green areas & walking pathways are included in all neighborhood developments.
- More walking paths throughout the city
- Green space & walking/biking/parks/play areas and trails are really important in compact development
- Quality planning – green spaces, housing build around squares.
- How can we save the green & fields. We need more parks & wildlife reserves. We can grow & save our country’s nature, we just have to be smart.
- Keep agriculture.
- Keep the city sort of the same. Keep farm land.

Housing and development suggestions

- Encourage smallish rancher style housing for seniors
• Quality housing of all sizes, better human occupancy of neighborhoods please
• Increase density in the downtown core.
• Mix residential and commercial in the core area
• Those brown lots…legislate mediation!!!
• Start taking a stronger stance on development – less helter/shelter development. Make choices based on principles versus knee jerk reactions of neighborhood communities. Current/past focus has been on development vs. smart development.
• Resist growth outward
• Build more high schools
• More malls to keep people buying in FSJ off to GP or Edmonton. More varieties of designer clothes, shoes and so on.

Transportation suggestions
• I would talk about the road conditions of FSJ.
• Repair the roads
• Please put some funds towards road maintenance
• More bus routes need to be developed
• Make the bus faster
• I would talk to the mayor about the taxi service and their inefficiency
• Add a few buses but not a lot. Like GP without traffic jams.
• The bus schedules are confusing and need more signs about where they go and what time
• The north-south traffic pattern of 94, 96, 98 etc is creating problems. We need some regional shopping in the north to limit the N-S racetrack.

Great vision, but limit tax increases
• Because person’s attending the meeting and filling out questionnaires, want to have the best city, that doesn’t mean they are all taxpayers and it doesn’t give the city open season to raise taxes to meet everyone’s wish list or idealistic thoughts. A long term plan is needed that is cost effective and realistic.
• The visioning is a great game to play but at what cost has this come to taxpayers and how much of what has been shared can be used to actually make actual decisions for the city.
• We need to keep an eye on taxes in achieving this vision. Lots of good ideas were presented – but we will likely only afford specific choices. Focus on higher density housing now – but please make it affordable.
• More government support, politically and federally, for moral support & financial incentives.
• Multi-nodal development would be preferred as long as the elected officials in the city and all the outlying areas get together and agree to share both the services and amenities along with the tax burden.

Cleaning up the city
• Lack of sidewalk and proper city cleaning program – the cleanliness of public property e.g. the skating rink.
• There should be a group of people to clean up the trailer park by ecole elementary. Everywhere in FSJ should look it’s best and clean so please do something to clean it up. Thank you.
• We need to clean FSJ up!
• I would like to see our city centre trailer park and that side of town cleaned up because it is making our town look horrible and that end is turning into a version of East Hastings.
• You need to stop trying to fix our highways for the 2010 Olympics and spend some time on things like city centre trailer park.

More youth facilities
• Teens could stay more out of trouble if we had things to do. If you’re under 19 you can’t get into a bar to dance or hangout so I think a youth dance club for 15 to 20 can get in, with no alcohol but just to dance, have fun.
• Need more place for kids to go. i.e. night clubs
• I would like to talk to the mayor about a night club for teenagers with no alcohol or drugs. We need a place to go and stay out of trouble. We need a place to hang out. I will be writing a letter.
• More recreational centers and programs

Say no to Site C
• Come out strongly against Site C. Two dams is enough for us to sacrifice. Let’s protect the river that gave us life.
• With all the concerns tonight about the 100 mile diet, protect agricultural land, how can the city council allow the government/BC Hydro to ruin our Peace River Valley by going ahead with Site C. Why would we sacrifice our valley to Southern Province?
• Please don’t sacrifice the Peace Valley for a mega project (Site C dam) that in the final analysis, isn’t as green as it first appears (or as BCH wants us to think it is) and has a limited lifespan for what will be only a very few permanent jobs.
• Please don’t sacrifice the beautiful Peace River region for industry. The money is not worth the environmental loss.

More environment and conservation programs
• I would like to see environmental change such as bigger and better recycling programs & conservation of crown land.
• Change bylaws to require green/conservation development i.e. density housing, water conservation plumbing fixtures etc.
• I want to see the city pursue 21st century solutions to energy requirements and industry.

More support for culture, art and recreation
• Leisure activities, meeting centers, cultural, literacy, arts, recreation – all play activities and their development is importation also.
• I would tell him that Fort St. John needs more tourist attractions.
Other suggestions

- Keep the pace of growth under control (not too fast)
- I would be surprise if you actually get the number of people retiring in FSJ – as I would think that many people would move to more southern/warmer locations.
- We need to attract a mix of professionals and low impact industries

Words I’d use to describe my vision

Green

- Sustainable
- Sustainable
- Green
- Green – buildings, spaces, philosophy
- Preservation of green spaces and recreational opportunities where possible
- Green spaces
- Nature lovers!!
- Recycling
- Environmentally conscious
- Environmentally responsible
- Environmentally friendly
- Eco-friendly
- Efficient
- Extensive trail systems
- Lots of parks and trails

People-oriented

- People-oriented
- Community with a heart
- Family-friendly
- Work and play for all age groups, economic status, educational levels
- Friendly
- Catering to needs of all ages and incomes
- To have long term residents – look at FSJ as a place to retire
- Open/accepting
- Open
- Accessible,
- Livable
- Livable
- Health care facilities
- A sense of community
- Less homeless people
Prosperous & Affordable
- Affordable.
- Affordable housing
- Fiscally responsible
- Financially sustainable
- Financially stable
- Economically viable
- Economically diverse
- Economic diversity
- More diverse (less oil and gas)
- Good economic climate
- Good economy

Exciting and vibrant
- Vibrant
- Vibrant/energetic
- Dynamic
- Colorful
- Busy
- Flourishing
- Exciting, fun
- Cool and fun

Well-designed/planned
- Well designed buildings/high standards/well maintained older houses
- Evidence of pride – well maintained infrastructure/public spaces
- Well-planned
- Living in a safe neighborhood with green spaces nearby and being able to walk to work. Balance of attractive living with amenities close by.
- A visually appealing community
- Pretty
- Nice buildings
- Beautiful place to live

Safe
- Safe neighborhoods for children
- Safe
- Safe
- Safe
- Safe
- Safe
- No drunk/homeless people walking on the street (scare people)
Easy to get around
- Pedestrian/cycling/public transit friendly
- Way more pedestrian friendly (strollers, bikes, rollerblades, anything but SOV)
- Good public transit
- No vehicle commercial zones
- Better air service – more affordable
- Connected

Great recreational opportunities
- Many year-round recreational opportunities
- More recreational areas
- Better hockey program
- A sandy beach
- Bigger mall
- More things for teens to do

Compact
- Development in all the brown lots around the city
- Compact green city
- Dense commercial areas
- Compact living

Clean
- Clean
- Clean
- Clean
- Clean

Healthy
- Encourages healthy lifestyle
- Active town that promotes healthy living
- Healthy
- Medical centre of the north

Multicultural
- Cultural diversity
- Multicultural
- Multicultural

Creative
- Opportunities to create
- Creative
- Known for problem solving
Sufficient infrastructure

- Sufficient infrastructure
- Infrastructure to keep up with expansion

Other comments

- A combined city encompassing all the local nodes
- One with the Peace Valley intact and being used for growing food (market gardens), recreation, and tourism.