

## **C3 - Planning For Transition In BC's Northwest Region: Shared Experiences From Kitimat, Gitwinksihlkw And Terrace**

**Presentation title:** Planning for Transition in BC's Northwest Region: Shared Experiences from Kitimat, Gitwinksihlkw and Terrace

**Presenters:**

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Gwendolyn Sewell - District of Kitimat  
Harry Nyce, Jr. - Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw  
David Block - City of Terrace

**Abstract**

The Northwest Region of BC is undergoing significant transitions. While there are commonalities in the challenges faced, there are also differences (e.g. impacts of globalization, cultural context) and in turn, varied opportunities for responding to challenges, planning for growth through adaptation and encouraging vibrant communities. Kitimat Industrial globalization, technological change and the continuing drive for local industry to stay competitive have combined to reduce the number of local industrial jobs and population. Kitimat's Economic Development Department forecasts up to \$11 Billion of looming investment. While construction may make the economy boom, the downside is industrial job loss. Clarence Stein designed Kitimat to be a compact community: a transit- and pedestrian-friendly pattern of development which was very efficient to service and maintain. This 'sustainable' layout, plus a significant industrial tax base, allowed a high level of municipal services and low residential and commercial property taxes. The new environment is rural-size lots and the prospect of provincial limits on industrial taxation. This combination may require a paradigm shift for the current local government. This presentation will explore how you address this situation in the context of an Official Community Plan. Key topics will include: how the plan integrated the possibility of population decline with growth potential, explored the prospect of significant economic change and the emerging reality of a new community character, and promoted economic and environmental sustainability. Gitwinksihlkw The Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw is one of four Nisga'a Villages in BC's remote Nass Valley. Gitwinksihlkw is in the midst of transition under the terms of the landmark Nisga'a Treaty. Gitwinksihlkw has faced many challenges including population decline, housing, services and employment. Positive change is on the horizon. Moving forward, the Village is seeking to establish municipal-style structures to guide the natural growth of Gitwinksihlkw in a systematic and orderly way for the ultimate benefit of the community as a whole. The process of change moving forward is the development of the Official Community Plan and the Economic Development Strategic Plan. These plans are accompanied by a suite of Village legislation that supports community development and planning. This presentation will review the current work of the Village and the new context of operations as part of the Nisga'a Treaty. Terrace The City of Terrace and local First Nations are moving forward following a recent down-turn in the local resource based economy. Riding a wave of proposed regional industrial projects, such as the Rio-Tinto Alcan smelter modernization, Prince Rupert CN Container Port and mining developments among others, the City is looking to a wide spectrum of initiatives to prepare for growth and change. The Official Community Plan review, Downtown Planning, Integrated Community Sustainability Planning and Airport Lands Economic Development opportunities position the City to take advantage of the changing economy of Northwestern BC. This presentation will highlight long range planning initiatives, including the initial stages of developing a sustainable OCP and the award-winning Airport Lands Area Concept Plan. Community engagement in the development of a vision for 'Terrace 2050' will be the key initiative in drafting the Official Community Plan in 2009. The presentation will focus on positive partnerships that are being developed with the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations for economic and tourism development that will benefit and strengthen the local community.

### **Speaker Biography**

Gwendolyn Sewell, MCIP, Director of Community Planning & Development, District of Kitimat, Kitimat, BC  
Gwendolyn earned a BA in Geography at UVIC and completed MA coursework at UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning. She became a local government planning professional in 1986, following a short stint in the private sector. A resident of Northwestern BC since 1985, Gwendolyn is passionate about the joy of living in one of BC's wilder—non-metropolitan—places.

Harry Nyce, Jr., BSc, MBA, Chief Executive Officer, Village of Gitwinksihlkw, Gitwinksihlkw, BC  
Harry received a Master's in Business Administration in 2007 from the University of Northern British Columbia; and a BSc from the University of Victoria in 1994. He has worked in all aspects of Village Administration including the varied and numerous programs and services; and has served as the Chief Executive Officer since 1994. Harry is determined to establish sustainable growth for the Village. Harry also serves as an instructor to the Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute (Nisga'a University-College), the University of Northern British Columbia and the BC Justice Institute. Harry holds a chieftainship title for his family in the Killerwhale clan; and he is a member of the Tsimshian and Nisga'a First Nations.

David Block, M.E.Des., MCIP, City Planner, City of Terrace, Terrace, BC  
David is a member of the Planning Institute of BC and has a Master's in Environmental Design (Planning) from the University of Calgary and a BA in Geography/Sociology (SFU). David's work experience includes both the public and private sectors. As a generalist planner, David enjoys the opportunities a smaller city environment provides to be a leader in a wide variety of planning roles.

Karen A. Gregory, MScPI, MCIP, Managing Associate, Stantec Consulting, Vancouver BC  
Karen holds a Master's of Science in Planning from UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning and a Bachelor's of Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo. She leads Stantec's Planning & Landscape Architecture team. Karen is an elected member of PIBC Council. She has provided consulting services to the District of Kitimat and the Village of Gitwinksihlkw.