
CITY OF THOMPSON FORMALLY LAUNCHES THOMPSON 2020**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

THOMPSON, June 19, 2017 – After much preparation and anticipation, City Council has approved Thompson 2020 Master Charter following a presentation by the Thompson 2020 project management team. Newly named Thompson 2020 Project Manager Tim Gibson and Assistant Project Manager Harold Smith presented their vision for the development of Thompson 2020 over the next 24 months, as well as the lasting impact the project aims to achieve.

As Vale places the Birchtree Mine on care and maintenance and prepares to close the doors of its long-standing smelter and refinery, the primary focus of Thompson 2020 is to work with community members, regional stakeholders and rights holders, and organizations at all levels of government to mitigate the effects of downsizing in Thompson’s mining sector. Equally important, however, are the seeds that Thompson 2020 will plant for the future: an expanded network of employers, stakeholders and rights holders, and supporting infrastructure that will form the foundation for a diversified and sustainable northern economy.

Thompson 2020 will identify priority components to be executed prior to Vale’s target for workforce reductions in 2018. These priority tasks will be executed based on a concrete project structure based on clearly defined milestones, developed with input from partners, stakeholders and rights holders, and reported publicly on a regular basis.

The scope of Thompson 2020 is limited, however no idea will be rejected outright. Components beyond the project’s 24-month scope will be carried on by partners, stakeholders and rights holders, including the City of Thompson’s Economic Development Officer (EDO). The EDO will form an integral part of the Thompson 2020 process.

“As the new decade approaches, the community of Thompson is faced with its greatest challenge yet,” said City of Thompson Mayor Dennis Fenske. “Prompt and deliberate action is needed to ensure that we mitigate the impact on our workforce and our residents and neighbors. As we stand resolute and united, we will forge a new path towards a bright and promising future. Thompson 2020 will be our compass.”

Scope of Work

Thompson 2020 has identified four key areas of work that are critical to the development and sustainability of the northern economy:

Workforce Retention

Working closely with Vale, Thompson 2020 will work with local and regional stakeholders and rights holders to create meaningful opportunities for people affected by the smelter and refinery closures, as well as the shifting of Birchtree Mine to care and maintenance status. Our aim is to help them stay in the region by identifying and encouraging new opportunities for employment, training, and entrepreneurship in the north.

Retention

Thompson 2020 will seek new opportunities for residents of all ages to realize their dreams in the north, from young millennials starting careers and families to retirees planning for their golden years. Information sessions have already identified several areas of interest, including healthcare and affordable housing, as well as cottage and acreage lots within and around Thompson.

Economic (Re)Development

While mining has brought considerable wealth to Thompson and region over the last five decades, the remainder of Thompson's assets have largely been underutilized, including people, recreation and tourism opportunities, and the provision of regional services as the Hub of the North. Thompson 2020 will provide the tools and environment for new and existing businesses to thrive in Thompson and the north, and encourage new avenues for development.

Infrastructure (All-Weather Roads)

Thompson is located on the Treaty 5 Traditional Lands of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and the lands of the Métis People. Connecting roadways have been neglected as a fundamental part of bringing northern Manitoba together, despite being a fundamental element of integrated economies the world over. Thompson 2020 will push to initiate the construction of all-weather roads in place of the seasonal roads that currently connect our outlying communities, reducing the costs of goods and further solidifying Thompson as a regional hub.

Partners, Stakeholders, and Rights Holders

Along with the community at large, Thompson 2020 will draw from continuously from the partners, stakeholders and rights holders, including:

- City of Thompson

- Province of Manitoba
- Vale Canada Ltd.
- Service Canada
- Community Futures North Central Development
- Community Economic Development Fund
- Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
- Thompson Chamber of Commerce
- Churchill Regional Economic Development

About the Team

Tim Gibson is an industrial engineer by trade, and holds an MBA in natural resources, energy and economics, a master's certificate in project management, and a Six Sigma green belt. Gibson has lived in northern communities for 15 years, and brings over 25 years of project management and implementing organizational change. He also sits on the board of directors for the Thompson Recycling Center, and coaches local ringette.

Harold Smith is a former city councillor and a long-time resident of Thompson. He holds a Bachelor's of Commerce from the University of Manitoba, with extensive experience in public housing, project management, and land claims implementation and negotiation.

Media Contact:

Kacper R. Antoszewski
Communications Officer
City of Thompson
204-677-7929

communications@thompson.ca