

Creating a Digital Society in Northwestern Ontario

Proposal to the McConnell Foundation

November 10, 2020

The McConnell Foundation envisions a Canada in which the economy and social systems advance the well-being of all people, and in which the natural environment is stewarded for future generations. It is committed to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and seeks to unleash the resources and creativity of individuals and organizations from all sectors to solve social challenges.

A digital society in Northwestern Ontario would further all these stated objectives. This project will bring all residents of Northwestern Ontario, indigenous and non-indigenous, together to build a sustainable digital society for the region. We emphasize the word society. The relationships we are proposing to develop can be used for far more than the delivery of government services or the pursuit of economic opportunity. Critically, these tools, and their supporting infrastructure, can build relationships between people and communities that currently do not exist. Breaking down the chronic isolation of remote communities and providing an effective basis to link them to the rest of the world.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The ongoing Covid pandemic has laid bare many flaws in our national systems. Cracks in our social safety net; too little investment in long term care and early childhood education; the inherent health risks of continuing to focus our growth in ever larger urban centres; and, the inability of large portions of our population to participate effectively in the global online society. Governments are already responding. Recent announcements indicate that the pace of filling the Information and telecommunications gaps in rural and northern communities is going to accelerate. But is that enough to create sustainable communities?

This project, while supporting and monitoring the closure of the physical gaps between communities, will focus on increasing the capacity of individual northerners, northern communities, and northern businesses to fully participate in a 21st century online society. This means system changes – in education, training, health care, economic development, and governance. It means finding ways for indigenous and non-indigenous communities to collaborate. It means developing new skills and habits and greater comfort with the online world. It means addressing the issues of privacy, security and reliability in a way that brings northern and rural communities not up to the standards enjoyed in Canada's big cities but to a level where these rural communities and their residents are the bar by which others are measured.

A recent *Globe and Mail* editorial, "Thunder Bay's economic hardships are a sign of things to come for the rest of Canada," effectively summarized the challenges for Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario (see Appendix B). Over the past 40 years, the region has lost most of its resource-based jobs and the middle-class standard of living it provided them. Indigenous communities, which were largely self-sufficient, have become dependent on government programs. The future prosperity of the region depends upon the ability of its residents to create a digital society for the 21st century.

While greater connectivity is essential, maximum return from that connectivity is the goal of this project. More, and more effective, digital services in health, education, and social services. Greater, and more secure, personal digital usage across all age ranges, indigenous and non-indigenous populations, and geographic locations. Measurable growth in online economic activity from the purchase and sale of goods to the delivery of services. Improvements in physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of residents. These will be the metrics of success of this project. They will be achieved by building personal confidence, robust networks, and trustworthy systems to deliver a safe, secure, reliable digital lifestyle for Ontario's western and northern regions.

Catalytic Change

To date, all the growth in the digital economy in Canada has been in super cities (Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal). Whether or not it is possible for non-large urban centres to participate has yet to be proven, but hypothetically the information age is far less dependent on time and place. Using technology – internet access, especially mobile internet, apps (downloadable software), cloud storage and computing services, etc. – we can access information any place, any time making it possible to supply goods and services efficiently from remote regions.

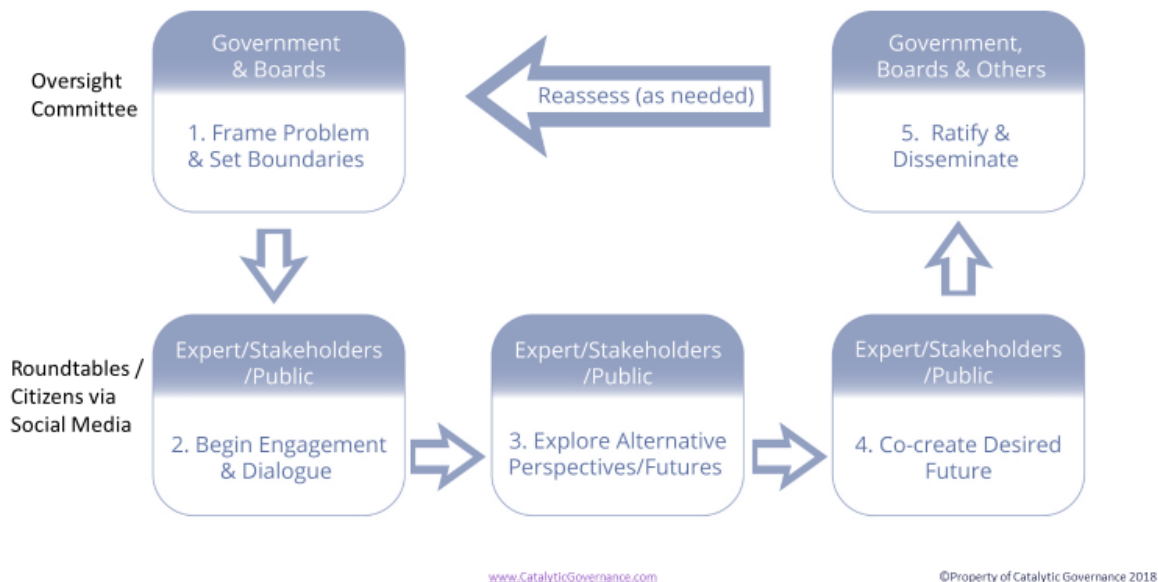
The downside of supplying goods and services electronically is isolation. To offset this, this project will focus specifically on engaging communities – remote, rural, and urban. The project is designed to give residents of Northwestern Ontario the opportunity to create the communities they want to live in, where they want to live. They can define “happiness” in terms of physical well-being, intellectual pursuits, emotional belonging, and economic independence to suit themselves. Health care (wellness), education, cultural belonging (including language) and economic development can be tailored to the community and the individuals in it. It is important that the people in the community are responsible for the development and implementation of these services in their community.

A project as complex as this needs an inclusive process that engages a wide range of participants in constructive dialogue, creates shared mental maps of the future digital ecosystem and most importantly, drives communities of practice to action. Catalytic Governance is such a process. It empowers community leaders, indigenous and non-indigenous to engage in a dialogue about shared issues, find common ground and build the trust required to take on wicked challenges, such as building a truly digital society in Northwestern Ontario.

Leadership in the information age is about making meaning – the process of making sense of what people are doing together so that people feel committed to the project. Catalytic Governance is a leadership process that encourages and enables people from diverse backgrounds and interests to work through issues; find common ground; construct shared mental maps, norms and expectations; and begin to act or experiment on that basis.

This project, at its heart, is the application of the principles of Catalytic Governance to assist the people of Northwestern Ontario, indigenous and non-indigenous, to create a new society. A digital society, that meets their needs, as defined by them, and builds the societal frameworks and decision-making infrastructure necessary to sustain that society long into the future.

Catalytic Governance is a collaborative change process



The power of Catalytic Governance lies in the combination of dialogue, scenarios, and action (steps 2, 3 and 4). Dialogue is important, scenarios are important; but traction comes when people roll up their sleeves and do the work – that is what makes it happen.

A roundtable composed of 20 to 25 community leaders with a significant stake in the outcome will govern the process. These individuals will be drawn from three communities – First Nations, municipalities and towns, and the City of Thunder Bay – and from service providers, including education, healthcare, economic development, infrastructure, and social services, and from government agencies. Approximately one-third of the participants (proportionate to their population) will be indigenous leaders.

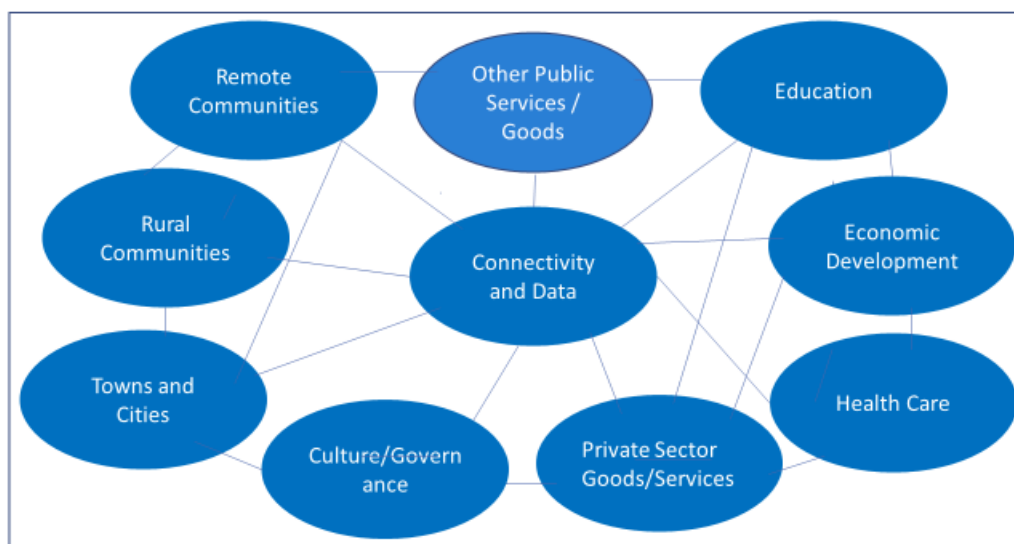
The core roles of government agencies, societal leaders, and volunteer oversight committees remain as important as ever. What changes is how they can accomplish these responsibilities effectively in the information age, particularly when transformative change is required.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF: BUILDING A DIGITAL SOCIETY

Over the past three years, three organizations, Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Corporation, Northern Policy Institute and Catalytic Governance have worked together with key stakeholders in the region (Appendix C) to develop and promote a project to create a Digital Ecosystem for Northwestern Ontario (NWO). This ecosystem would deliver public and private sector services and goods to communities in the region, including the City of Thunder Bay, 34 towns and municipalities and 81 First Nations. It would also connect NWO to the rest of Canada and the world, making it possible for the region to market its products and services globally.

The ecosystem includes the physical capacity to interconnect communities, systems, and services, much of which is being funded by the federal and provincial governments. But, more importantly, it involves maximizing our capacity and our collective desire to use those connections to their full potential. Retraining, of both service providers and consumers, will be central to the success of this project. A digital ecosystem involves changing the way we make decisions about funding or prioritizing services. It also involves fundamentally rethinking how we go about creating and designing systems to deliver and identify services desired by our communities. It is an overlapping, interdependent, and ever-changing set of flexible relationships.

What is the NWO Digital Ecosystem?



We have identified five objectives of this project:

1. The digital ecosystem would support economic growth in NWO, an important component of well-being for the communities in this region. Economic growth in the past has been largely dependent on natural resources, such as forestry, mining and wilderness tourism. While these are still very important to the economy, they alone cannot provide the opportunities necessary for economic growth and to attract and retain the skills required of people in the region.
2. The digital ecosystem would support significant improvements in health care and the social determinants of health. Over the past two decades, the well-being of citizens in NWO has been declining. The population is aging rapidly, by 2025 one-quarter of the citizens in the region will be over 65 compared with 17% in the rests of Ontario. In addition, those under 65 are more likely to be unemployed, overweight, or have substance abuse issues. This puts a tremendous strain on the health care system, which can only be relieved through automation of administration and routine treatments. Already, the region with less than 2% of the population of Ontario consumes more than 5% of the provincial health care budget.

3. Education is also a challenge, especially for students in remote communities (First Nations and non-Indigenous) to acquire the skills they need to contribute to the economy. To get the education necessary to fully participate in the information economy, they are forced to leave their communities to go to school. Leaving home at a young age, without family and community support should not be acceptable. Given the progress in online learning, virtual reality and gaming, much of the required education could be effectively delivered over the internet and augmented by local resources. Furthermore, life-long learning will be essential for all citizens to help them keep their skills current and relevant. Many of these programs could be delivered through a combination of online and in-person learning.

4. The digital ecosystem would also support self-determination. Communities must play an important role in deciding how to roll out online delivery of education, health care and economic opportunities. For these services to be accepted and used, the community must embrace them and assist people to use them. Each community will have its own history, culture, customs, norms and often language and it will want to ensure that these are taken into consideration in creating the community that they want to live in. As importantly, healthy communities also require opportunities to engage socially and intellectually, which may be well furthered using the internet.

5. Although this project is very important to the future of NWO, it would also be important to the province and the country as a model for use elsewhere. Before going digital, Canada must experiment to find the most effective ways to operate in a digital world. The social implications of online delivery of education, health care and work have not been sufficiently explored; more research and development are required to determine how to build healthy communities that are connected to the rest of the province, the country and the world. By testing and learning in NWO, the province and Canada can better understand how to transition from the industrial age to the information age. We can learn how to build digital communities; communities that are desirable places to live, work and play. This learning may be exportable to other regions of Canada, and the world.

We expect that the biggest challenges with this project will not be technological, but social. Change is difficult, especially transformational change. For this change to be effective it must be embraced by the community. To this end, we are proposing a dialogue-based process to build communities of interest to envision and enact a digital future, community by community. The process we are recommending, Catalytic Governance, has been used effectively to modernize the Canadian Payments System starting in 2011 and to “Reimagine the Accounting Profession” starting in 2018. (<http://www.catalyticgovernance.com/>) Given the size of this project it is our intention to begin with a pilot project including nine first nations, one municipality encompassing eight towns, and the regional supply hub, the City of Thunder Bay.

PROJECT PLAN: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

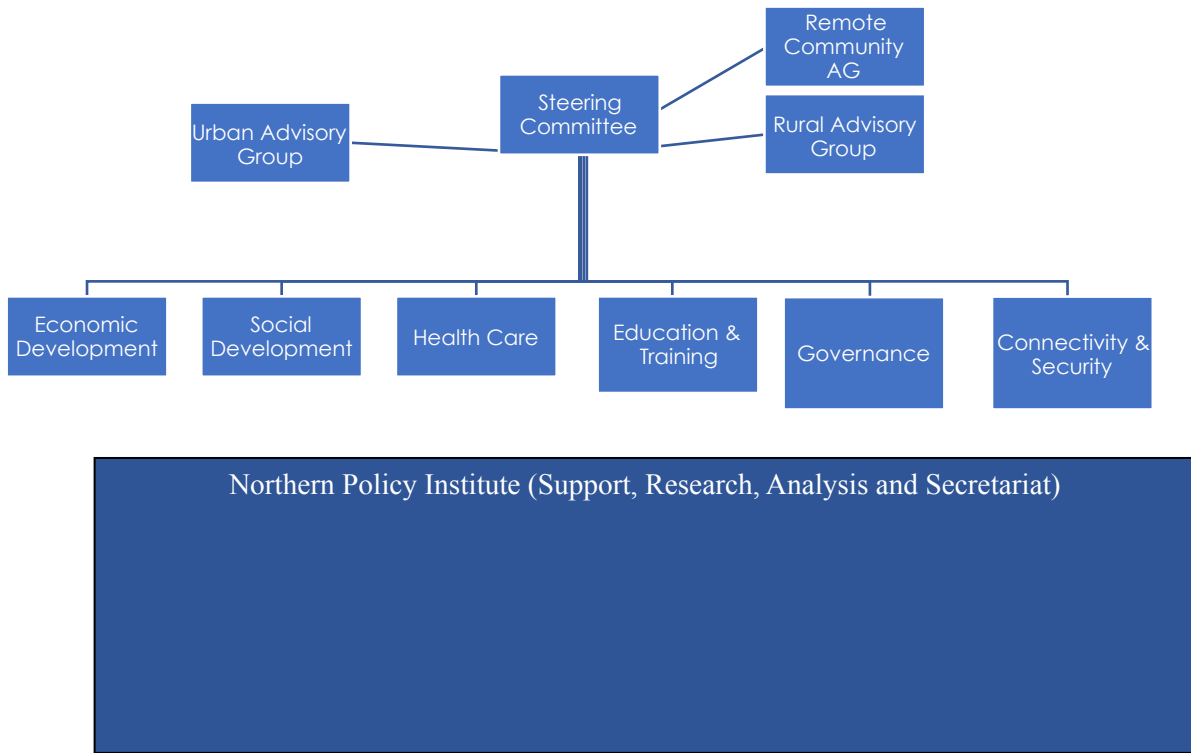
Building the digital ecosystem will be a multi-year collaborative initiative between indigenous and non-indigenous residents of NWO. Given the transformational nature of this project we are planning to pilot it in 2021-2022 with Matawa First Nations (5 remote and 4 road-access first nations), Greenstone municipality (a town created by the amalgamation of 8 communities along a 100 km stretch of highway 11) and the City of Thunder Bay (supplier of many of the services to this area). We are proposing a preliminary workshop in early 2021 to kick-off the project and ensure that there is a strong enough commitment from leaders in the region and an effective oversight mechanism to move forward.

If the pilot project is successful, we will begin the process to make this vision for Northwestern Ontario a reality in 2022-3, using a catalytic change process over the course of the next three years.

This funding request is for the pilot project.

Organizational Approach

Northern Policy Institute will provide the core secretariat and research support for the project. External experts will be contracted to provide key knowledge and skills, particularly around the use of Catalytic Governance to drive sustainable change. Six volunteer working groups will be struck to guide and sustain project priorities in each of six key areas: economic development, social development, health care, education and training, governance, and connectivity. The chairs of each of these groups will be provided a stipend to compensate them in part for their central contribution. Finally, advisory groups will be formed from the three community types present in the region affected: urban, rural, and remote. These advisory groups will provide critical feedback and direction to the six working groups to ensure activities and findings are adapted to and reflective of the three distinct community realities.



1. Kick-off

Workshop

Once the project has been approved in early 2021, we intend to bring together (via video conference) approximately 20 to 25 community leaders, including regional public, private and first nation leaders, to launch the project. Over the past year we have met individually with most of these leaders and gained their support for this project (see Appendix C).

The purpose of the preliminary workshop is to better understand the meaning and implications of creating a digital ecosystem. To support this learning agenda, we will invite experts from each of the service areas – economic development, social development, health care, education, and infrastructure -- to demonstrate advances in providing remote services. Lakehead University, Confederation College, Contact North, and the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre are already leaders in these fields. National and international experts will also be tapped to broaden the discussion and ensure the goals set are transformational as opposed to incremental.

In addition, given that NWO is a region (not a province, a municipality, or a First Nation, but a collaboration between them all) we need to think about a governance structure for the project. Self-governance with Federal / Provincial oversight is one possibility. We will bring in governance experts to help the participants define the mandate for the project and develop an effective governance model. Developments in regional governance in the James Bay region of Quebec is one such model to be tapped. Contacts in Finland and New Zealand are also interested in sharing their experiences in regional control that blends indigenous and non-indigenous governance styles and knowledge.

Finally, addressing the issues of existing connectivity, data security, and privacy will be central to the success of creating a digital economy in NWO. This additional working group will be tasked to explore these areas as well setting at least a basic direction for future progress in relation to safe, reliable, confident use of internet-based tools and platforms.

2. Pilot Project – Matawa First Nations, Greenstone and Thunder Bay

The City of Thunder Bay, the Matawa Tribal Council (Matawa First Nations Management) and the Municipality of Greenstone have confirmed their interest in working with us to pilot the development of the NWO digital ecosystem. This pilot has all the elements necessary to prove the concept – remote communities, rural communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, as well as the City of Thunder Bay which supplies most of the health care, education and economic resources to support these communities. As of the 2016 census Matawa First Nations had a population of 5,094, Greenstone of 4,636 and the City of Thunder Bay of 93,952. In 2018, Matawa First Nations secured funding from the federal government to provide internet services to its nine communities. Greenstone will have high speed internet access in all eight communities by 2021. Thunder Bay's municipally owned utility is expanding fiber optic services across the city and region.

Key Deliverables

In addition to three advisory groups made up of community representatives, we would establish working groups of ten to twenty participants for each of the major areas – economic development, social development, health care and, education and training. These working groups would research and develop the services and supports necessary to provide reliable, secure, and accessible online access and services to the communities.

Two additional working groups will be created. One will focus on the challenges related to community development, including technology readiness, culture and language integration and self-governance. The other will tackle the development and integration of technological infrastructure, including internet and data access, cloud storage, security, privacy etc. The chairs of the three community advisory groups, the six working group champions, an overall champion for the project and representatives of the project partners will form the steering committee for this pilot project. Resources and support for the project will be provided by Northern Policy Institute.

Once formed the six working groups will be tasked with setting a mandate for their committees that will facilitate the actions and investments required to develop a 21st century digital society in Northwestern Ontario within the next 2-5 years. Each will have both centralized staff support and an annual budget of \$15,000 to “seed” projects and experiments in their area of responsibility. While much of their work will occur outside committee meetings and be tracked/coordinated via email, it is expected that the three Community Advisory Groups and the six Subject Area Working Groups will meet at least once per quarter. The Steering Committee will meet once a month to monitor overall progress and project priorities.

The project coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Overall management of the project, including coordinating the work of the service area champions and analysts / consultants
- Management of the catalytic governance process, including workshop design, delivery, speakers, recording and reporting
- Development of an approach for community engagement and recruiting, training and supporting community developers
- Co-ordinating the activities of the users and suppliers of online services
- Providing support for the governance apparatus chosen by the community
- Fund raising for the pilot project and for the second phase rollout

As noted, we intend to approach the service delivery areas using working groups. A dedicated volunteer will be recruited to champion each area – economic development, social development, health care, education and training, culture/governance and, connectivity and security. While each champion will be a volunteer provision has been made in the project budget for an honorarium for each Working Group Chair in recognition of the time and commitment they will be asked to dedicate to this project. The champions will be supported by a staff analyst who will be responsible for research and analysis. A Project Officer will also be assigned to arrange and record working group sessions and source, analyze and arrange meetings with potential suppliers. The Champions will also be in regular contact with, and receive guidance and advice from, the overall Project Coordinator.

Service Area Champions will be responsible for:

- Recruiting members of the working group
- Chairing and setting the agenda for working group meetings
- Developing a strategy for delivery of services in their area

- Guiding (jointly with the Project Coordinator) the work of the Analyst and the Project Officer
- Researching and meeting potential suppliers
- Recommending suppliers/approaches to the NWO ecosystem governing body

As with all NPI projects, the research generated by this project (including formative and summative assessments of the project itself) will be distributed publicly. Lessons learned and best practices developed will be shared widely both inside and outside of Ontario. A particular focus will be placed on federal policy makers, indigenous leaders, researchers specializing in rural and remote community development, and provincial ministries responsible for social and economic development and the delivery of services in rural and remote areas. Opportunities to present project results and the project concept itself, once funded and underway, will be sought at appropriate conferences and other gatherings of thought leaders in this area.

Community Engagement

As noted above, the complexity with this project is not the technology but the social change involved. Cross-cultural understanding, flexibility, adaptability, and constant two-way communication will be key. Considerable resources have been set aside to support project presence in the community. Either through the recruitment of community members as project champions or through regular visits to the community by key volunteers and staff to develop the rapport necessary to build momentum and to facilitate and support community driven change.

Even in the age of COVID social change will require personal interaction. In many communities this requires direct face to face engagement, which is generally facilitated by the sharing of a meal. Allocations have been made for hosting breakfast and lunch events in the rural and urban communities and for multiple trips to the remote communities via fly-in connections. Once visits are allowed again, of course (any First Nations have wisely closed their communities to non-residents for the duration of the COVID crisis). In that environment, recruiting and supporting community-based champions will become even more important to progress on this transformation change.

Even with regular visits and events, connecting with all community members is difficult. The direct outreach activity will be supplemented by both traditional and online outreach and engagement. To ensure that avenue is as effective and responsive as possible, provision has been made in the project budget for a dedicated communications resource to promote and respond to engagement and feedback from all participating and affected communities.

Workplan

2021

January

- Meet with potential funding organizations
- Recruit champions for the six working groups (four service areas plus governance and security/connectivity)
- Recruit conveners for the three community advisory groups

- Hold the first meeting of the organizing committee (made up of these nine individuals plus the Project Coordinator and project partner representatives)
- Develop an agenda and identify potential speakers for the workshop

February

- Recruit potential members of the working groups and community advisory groups to attend the workshop in early 2021
- Prepare for the two-day kick-off workshop including identification of roundtable participants, invitation of speakers, travel / accommodations, communications, etc.
- Prepare the six working group champions to present their initial thinking to the workshop participants

March

- Bring about 20 to 25 people together for two days to launch the NWO Digital Ecosystem pilot project and begin the engagement (step2) of catalytic governance process
- Establish the governance structure recommended by the workshop participants

January to March

- Working Group Meetings –
 - Define mandate and terms of reference
 - Identify short, medium, and long-term tasks
 - Assign tasks and agree on target dates for reporting or completion
- Community Advisory Meetings –
 - Receive an outline of the project structure, objectives, and timelines
 - Provide guidance on community goals for project
 - Identify desired governance and feedback methods
 - Agree on timeline and manner of future updates and reports
 - Invite ongoing communication and comment
- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Review and approve working group mandates, targets, and timelines
 - Review community feedback and adjust working group plans if needed
- Research & Analysis –
 - Literature review on appropriate success measures
 - Preliminary scoping of existing capacity and current innovations/projects present in the region
- Communications & Outreach –
 - Preliminary project information and marketing
 - Preliminary community invitations and engagement
 - Begin to build community contact list and encourage two-way discussion

April to June

- Working Group Meetings –
 - Report on assigned tasks – progress, problems, solutions, next steps
 - Discuss and assign new tasks as needed

- Review and recommend success measures for project in assigned area of expertise
- Community Advisory Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Raise questions or address other desired feedback or governance needs
 - Review and recommend success measures for project from the community perspective
- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Receive input from community advisory meetings
 - Review and decide on success measures for project
- Research & Analysis
 - Research as assigned by working groups or as requested by community advisory groups
 - Begin to compile baseline of measures chosen by steering committee to assess project impact
- Communications & Outreach –
 - Prepare and distribute updates on progress, current and future tasks, impact measurement discussions, and community feedback
 - Ongoing outreach to community member and affected individuals/organizations

July to September

- Working Group Meetings –
 - Report on assigned tasks – progress, problems, solutions, next steps
 - Discuss and assign new tasks as needed
 - Review baseline measures and recommend revisions to success metrics as needed in assigned area of expertise
- Community Advisory Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Raise questions or address other desired feedback or governance needs
 - Review baseline measures and recommend revisions to success metrics as needed from the community perspective
- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Receive input from community advisory meetings
 - Review baseline measures and approve any revisions to success metrics as needed
- Research & Analysis
 - Research as assigned by working groups or as requested by community advisory groups
 - Revise baseline success metrics as directed by steering committee to assess project impact going forward
- Communications & Outreach –

- Prepare and distribute updates on progress, current and future tasks, impact measurement discussions, and community feedback
- Ongoing outreach to community member and affected individuals/organizations

2021-2022

October 2021 to June 2022

- Work will continue as outlined above for all groups with the addition of a quarterly compilation of and reporting on agreed success measures wherever possible

2022

July to August

- Working Group Meetings –
 - Begin to wrap up assigned tasks
 - Develop preliminary report on impacts
 - Recommend future work needed, who should pursue that work and on what proposed timeline
- Community Advisory Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Raise questions or address other desired feedback on identified impacts and needed future work
- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Receive update from each working group
 - Receive input from community advisory meetings
 - Raise questions or address other desired feedback on identified impacts and needed future work
- Research & Analysis-
 - With direction from the steering committee, compile material from working groups and community advisory groups into a draft project summary report
- Communications & Outreach -
 - Prepare and distribute updates on progress, current and future tasks, impact measurement discussions, and community feedback
 - Ongoing outreach to community member and affected individuals/organizations

September to December

- Working Group Meetings -
 - Wrap up assigned tasks
 - Review and provide comment on draft project summary report
 - Review and comment on identified trends in agreed project metrics since the beginning of the project
- Community Advisory Meetings –
 - Receive final updates form working groups
 - Review and provide comment on draft project summary report

- Review and comment on identified trends in agreed project metrics since the beginning of the project
- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Receive final updates form working groups
 - Receive final input and comments from community advisory groups
 - Review and comment on identified trends in agreed project metrics since the beginning of the project
- Research & Analysis –
 - Revise project summary report as directed by steering group
- Communications & Outreach -
 - Prepare and distribute for public consumption the summary project report and any final updates on project work

2023

September to December

- Steering Committee Meetings –
 - Gather to review 12-month update on project performance measures
- Research & Analysis –
 - Prepare final update of project performance metrics to assess ongoing impacts of project 12 months after project work is completed
- Communications & Outreach -
 - Prepare and distribute for public consumption the final update of project performance metrics 12 months after project work is completed

Pilot Project Budget

The following budget is proposed for a two-year pilot project with Matawa First Nations, Greenstone and the City of Thunder Bay.

Revenue		Year 1	Year 2	Total
McConnell Foundation	Proposed	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
Anonymous Foundation	Proposed	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$250,000
NOHFC	Proposed	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
Event Sponsors	Proposed	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
Total Revenue		\$750,000	\$750,000	\$1,500,000

Expenses				
External Researchers, Authors & Advisors		\$250,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
Human Resources		\$125,000	\$125,000	\$250,000
Working Group Project Budgets		\$90,000	\$90,000	\$180,000
Interns & Project staff		\$80,000	\$80,000	\$160,000
Reports & Publications		\$45,000	\$45,000	\$90,000
Travel & Accommodations		\$40,000	\$40,000	\$80,000
Translation		\$35,000	\$35,000	\$70,000
Events		\$35,000	\$35,000	\$70,000
Marketing & Public Relations		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
General Office		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
		\$750,000	\$750,000	\$1,500,000

Scaling to the Entire Northwest (and beyond)

Assuming the workshop and pilot are successful, the project would propose to move forward with the full Catalytic Governance process for all of Northwestern Ontario. This third phase – full implementation of the digital ecosystem to all communities in NWO – would likely take a further 3 to 5 years. However, at the end of the pilot project we would have learned enough to begin implementation in other parts of the region / province / country far more swiftly than will be the case in the pilot communities.

APPENDIX A

Project Partners

About Northern Policy Institute (NPI)

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern Ontario communities.

As a federally registered charity for educational purposes, we operate throughout Ontario's northern regions to enhance North Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario and Canada as a whole.

Our Vision:

A growing, sustainable, and self-sufficient Northern Ontario. One with the ability to not only identify opportunities but to pursue them, either on its own or through intelligent partnerships. A Northern Ontario that contributes both to its own success and to the success of others.

Our Mission:

Northern Policy Institute is an independent policy institute. The object for which the corporation is incorporated are:

- To advance education on the topic of sustainable growth in Northern Ontario, including sustainable growth for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people and communities in Northern Ontario, by conducting research and analysis in the fields of economic, technological and social trends and then making the results publicly accessible;
- To advance education by providing internship positions to youths within Northern Ontario and by holding meetings and conferences for the general public, media and government officials; and
- To do all such things as are incidental or ancillary to the attainment of the above objectives.

Our Values:

Objectivity – NPI is a non-partisan, federally registered charity for educational purposes providing fair, balanced and objective assessments of policy issues affecting all of Ontario's northern regions.

Relevance – NPI will support practical and applied research on current or emerging issues and implications relevant to Northern Ontario now and in the future.

Collaboration – NPI recognizes the value of multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary and multicultural contributions to the collective advancement of Northern Ontario and works in a collaborative and inclusive approach to provide a full range of policy options for decision-makers.

Coordination – NPI will complement the existing research efforts of Northern Ontario's postsecondary institutions and non-government organizations and explore opportunities for coordinated efforts that contribute to the mandate of NPI.

Accessibility – The work of NPI will be publicly assessible to stimulate public engagement and dialogue, promoting viewpoints on the interests of Northern Ontario and its people.

About the Thunder Bay CEDC

Incorporated in December 2006, CEDC is an arms-length Community Development Corporation, led by an independent board with core funding from the City of Thunder Bay.

CEDC receives formal proposals on projects that will contribute to economic development. It responds quickly to new opportunities and initiatives to attract direct financial involvement from government and private sectors. CEDC's staff will assist your business with attaining essential information for decision making.

Located within CEDC's administrative office, the Thunder Bay and District Entrepreneur Centre provides seminars, workshops and free and confidential business counselling services to new and existing small businesses.

The mandate of the CEDC is to operate in a way that is:

- Project based
- Business led
- Partner driven
- Community supported

We can help with:

- Community information and statistics
- Networking and referrals
- Assistance in site selection
- Labour market data

We are responsible for:

- Business development
- Business retention and expansion
- Entrepreneurial support
- Opportunity promotion, and
- Collection and assessment of key business data

About Catalytic Governance

We have each worked for years to encourage and lead transformative change in rapidly changing, multi-stakeholder environments in both the public and private sectors. Some five years ago we came together to work on a major effort to transform the Canadian Payments System, combining our

different approaches. The results surprised us. The energy for change that was released, the extent to which the mental maps of very different stakeholders shifted and converged, and the sense of community and shared ownership that resulted, far exceeded our expectations. We wanted to share this experience and to compare notes with other practitioners who are also looking for better ways to govern and create transformative change in the information age, and to tackle wicked problems which range from climate change to health care, terrorism, inequality and many business strategy issues.

APPENDIX B

Thunder Bay's economic hardships are a sign of things to come for the rest of Canada
The Globe and Mail, December 22, 2019

There is a good argument to be made that Canada would not exist as we understand it today without Thunder Bay.

The 19th-century federal policies around building the Canadian Pacific Railway made it necessary to build cities on Northern Ontario's lakehead. Port Arthur and Fort William, the cities that would amalgamate into Thunder Bay in 1970, became grain shipment points for the prairie frontier, bringing the area prosperity. That was only amplified by the provincial government policies supporting the myriad industries that followed suit: forestry, mining, shipbuilding, rail-car manufacturing, pulp and paper. And the economic infrastructure that was laid in the first third of the 20th century provided opportunities in the area's sawmills, pulp mills, grain elevators and manufacturing plants.

This was the golden age of Thunder Bay's economic development. By the 1970's, the city offered numerous well-paid industrial and transportation jobs for unskilled labour, spawning a large and prosperous middle class that required little investment in education. Moreover, the relative isolation of the local economy created a captive market for retail goods and services, as well as a cozy business environment dependent on a few key industries in a company town.

But then the veneer of that golden age began to chip off. Thunder Bay was forced to adjust to labour-saving technological change, greater global competition in resource industries, shifting grain markets and the decline of the grain trade. The forest-sector crisis ultimately saw three out of four pulp mills and a major sawmill close. Deep cuts to the work force this summer at Bombardier – whose manufacturing plant has become a crucial part of the city's landscape – are a continuing saga.

As its traditional resource and transportation sectors shed employment, Thunder Bay diversified into health care, postsecondary education and government services, with the broader public sector accounting for 30 percent of employment. So now the city remains a company town – but the public sector is the company, making the city extremely sensitive to the whims of politicians in Ottawa and Toronto.

Despite that, Thunder Bay's economic growth remains arrested; it has not been able to generate enough opportunities beyond the activities that powered its initial growth. As a result, the city's population has not grown since the 1970s. The economy has evolved into an enclave of high-paying and more secure knowledge-economy jobs, broader public-sector jobs and a swath of minimum wage service jobs. The municipal tax base is stretched thin, providing spending and service levels that evolved when there was a lucrative industrial tax base; property taxes have been rising for years. After decades of youth out-migration, the population is aging faster than the Canadian average, even with the influx of a young and rapidly growing Indigenous population.

Its dual role as a city and a region makes economic transition even more difficult. Federal and provincial resources for health, transportation, education and social services are geared to its municipal role, but Thunder Bay is also expected to function as a regional health and social centre for the entire northwestern region of Ontario – an area the size of France.

This has increasingly made economic polarization, mental-health and addition problems and a decaying social fabric marked by crime, drugs and an increased use of shelters and food banks a fact of life in Thunder Bay. In many respects, what has happened here mirrors the state of affairs in the U.S. rust belt, where economic trauma has fuelled populism and negative attitudes. Here, increased friction with a young, growing and more assertive Indigenous population with legitimate needs and aspirations can spill over into racism.

How Thunder Bay deals with its economic and social challenges should not be viewed as a spectator sport by smug urban elites in central Canada. What is happening here is not comeuppance for bad behaviour. Thunder Bay is the canary in the coal mine for the rest of Canada – a country so vast and sparsely populated that other cities, forced also to function as centralized regional hubs with the conspicuous absence of the provincial and federal governments will surely soon experience similar struggles.

This is what can happen when you are a small economy in a changing world, dependent on a few key export industries that tank. Those who cannot see that need to look in the mirror and open their eyes.

Livio Di Matteo, Professor of Economics, Lakehead University

APPENDIX C

Stakeholder Engagement

We met with the following individuals / organizations and everyone expressed interest in the project and indicated they would be interested in participating:

- The Honourable Patricia A. Hajdu, MP
- Don Rusnak, MP (former), Thunder Bay-Rainy River
- Brian Ktytor, Vice President Corporate Services, Northwest LHIN
- Jonathan Mitchell, Vice President, Research and Policy, HealthCare Canada
- Jean Bartkowiak, President & CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute
- J.P. Gladu, CEO, Canadian Council of Aboriginal Affairs
- Mike Beliveau, FedNor
- Hilary Hartley, Chief Digital Officer and Deputy Minister for Digital Government, Ontario
- Melanie Fraser, Acting CIO, Province of Ontario
- Matthew Grey, Senior Policy Advisor, Digital Government, Province of Ontario
- Jamie Taylor, Regional Director, MNDM Thunder Bay
- Jason Paul Rasevych, Manager of Economic Development, Matawa First Nations
- Ila Beaver, Mental Wellness Coordinator, Matawa First Nations
- David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO, Matawa First Nations
- Jim Madder, President, Confederation College
- Dr. Moira McPherson, President, Lakehead University
- Audrey Gilbeau, Director, Nokiiwin Economic Development
- Michael Nitz, BDC Business Manager for Ontario North
- Dan Topatigh, President, Tbaytel
- Stefan Fournier, Associate Director, Northern and Aboriginal Policy, Conference Board of Canada
- Christopher Cornish, Executive Coordinator, Ring of Fire Secretariat, Indigenous Services Canada
- Michael Pelletier, Director of Economic Development, Fort William First Nation
- Kristen Oliver, Executive Director, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association