



Smart Growth on the Ground

**For Immediate Release**

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## **SMART GROWTH ON THE GROUND PROJECT RELEASES AMBITIOUS PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRINCE GEORGE - A downtown that is the focal point for energy efficiency, housing options that address various demographics, and projects that range from an enhanced year-round public market to a people friendly transportation system. These are all aspects of the Concept Plan developed for downtown Prince George as part of the Smart Growth on the Ground project. The design charrette wrapped up Friday May 15 with the release of a concept plan. The concept plan was the result of an intensive four-day exercise that involved professional planners and designers who worked closely with community representatives in developing plans and policies to address issues such as housing, livability, sustainability and economic development all centered on the downtown.

"This was an amazing process and I am honoured to have been a part of it," says Manpreet Sidhu who was the youth representative on the design charrette. She added, "It was an inclusive process and I'm thrilled with the outcome."

The concept plan attempts to capture what the downtown could look like by 2035 and one of the more impressive aspects of the plan is a revamped civic green space and plaza area that would extend from near the Civic Centre, past City Hall and beyond Queensway towards the river. This green space would also integrate a significant water feature.

During the final presentation, Prince George Mayor Dan Rogers reflected "We have not poured concrete this week, we have molded clay and that means the specific details may change over time but the central vision will remain in tact."

"It is important to remember that this is a high level concept plan" says Shana Johnstone, Manager of Smart Growth on the Ground. "This concept suggests what could be, and provides a framework and source of inspiration for the community as they move forward. This future vision can be used to direct positive change and investment in the downtown starting today."

The plan will not only have diagrams and plans that address the form and character of buildings and streets but it will also contain recommendations around policies that would help address some of the issues in the city centre such as safety and homelessness. There will also be more detail as to the best strategies to ensure implementation of the plan.

"All those participating in the process should be extremely proud of their contributions," says Rogers, who participated in the design charrette along with Councillors Shari Green, Murry Krause and Cameron Stoltz. Rogers added, "We have an exciting concept plan but of course the key will be ensuring it is implemented, something we are already working on."

During the final presentation Friday night, charrette team members identified several quick wins that can be initiated in the coming months – including a temporary community garden. These actions will ensure that this long term vision will not languish on the shelf, but will be implemented.

In his closing remarks, Mayor Dan Rogers emphasized that what was apparent during these presentations was the use of the pronoun “we” and how this process resulted in a sense of ownership over the plan. “We have developed a concept plan together. We have developed a shared vision.”

The Smart Growth on the Ground project was initiated in 2007 and is the most extensive and participatory planning exercise the community has undertaken. The published report is expected to be tabled in September but information on the concept thus far will be available on the SGOG website ([www.sgog.bc.ca](http://www.sgog.bc.ca)).

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The charrette final presentation (from May 15), images and photos can be found on the SGOG website for download: <http://www.sgog.bc.ca/content.asp?contentID=144>

For more information:

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