

CITY OF FORT ST. JOHN

Winter City Micro-Project Strategy



FORT ST JOHN
The Energetic City

October 2017



Introduction

A key strategic initiative for the City of Fort St. John is to create vibrancy, sustainability, and resiliency in the community. A key component to achieving this initiative is being cognisant of the seasonal variation experienced in Fort St. John and planning proactively for it. Fort St. John endures a length winter that can be categorized by the following:

- Colder temperatures
- High winds and wind chill
- Regular snowfall
- Shorter daylight hours

These elements can cause discomfort for residents but also present new social, economic and recreational opportunities. The unique features of winter can be capitalized on, while those that cause discomfort can be mitigated.

The City of Fort St. John's first big step to embracing all season design and planning was in the creation of our Winter City Design Guidelines over ten years ago. The Winter City Design Guidelines have been included in the City's regulatory framework as an appendix to the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.

In 2015, Edmonton hosted an international Winter Cities Shakeup conference where those in attendance renewed their commitment to the benefits of embracing winter and Fort St. John's geographical position in the world.

The creation of this Winter City Strategy Team was a result of staff's eagerness to embrace who and where we are, reduce the barriers to the winter season, change the communities perceptions of winter, and further build on the City's annual High on Ice Winter Festival. The Strategy Team was focused on improving the four areas of winter livability:

- **Physical** – Improving the built environment of a community to respond to winter conditions.
- **Social** – Addressing social challenges that emerge or intensify during the winter.
- **Economic** – Taking advantage of economic opportunities, while addressing economic challenges associated with the winter season.
- **Policy** – Factoring winter considerations into the decision making and administration of different organizations

What is the Winter Strategy Team?

The Winter City Strategy Team was comprised of local stakeholders, City staff and Officials. The purpose was to bring together a diverse group of individuals with unique perspectives, insights and ideas to work together in identifying ways in which Fort St. John can become a model winter city. Through collaboration and dialog, a number of “easy win” micro-projects were identified. The intent of micro-projects is to provide readily implementable initiatives that require less resources but generate positive impacts on the winter living experience in Fort St. John.

The Winter Strategy Team was comprised of individuals representing the following:

- City of Fort St. John Council
- City of Fort St. John staff
- Business community
- Social services organizations
- Community arts groups
- Community recreation groups
- First Nations
- Seniors
- Planning, engineering, and landscape architecture consultants



Guiding Principles

The Winter Strategy Team was guided by the following principles:

- **Holistic** – Micro-projects must be holistic and consider and address a broad range of socio-economic factors.
- **Shared Responsibilities** – Micro-projects are a shared responsibility between the public, private and government realms. They will empower the community and build “winter citizen culture”.
- **Role of Small Interventions** – Micro-projects will not require substantial resources and provide a positive impact on the winter experience through continually implementation, shared roles and ownership.
- **Unique Solutions** – Micro-projects must recognize the unique context of Fort St. John and its winter season to develop local solutions.
- **Thinking Interdisciplinary** – Micro-projects will be developed through knowledge sharing of different professions and winter experiences.

Project Process

The Winter Strategy Team was involved in 3 collaborative meetings designed to share knowledge between the diverse backgrounds of Strategy Team participants. The meetings were held on:

- January 13, 2017
- January 27, 2017
- February 10, 2017

Each meeting dedicated a portion to educating participants on aspects involved in enhancing the winter livability of a community. These educational components were followed by guided roundtable discussions. The result was the identification of 55 micro-projects.



Micro-Project Priorities

The following micro-project priorities were identified by the Winter Strategy Team. They represent the most readily implementable micro-projects that contribute to the winter livability of Fort St. John.

Each micro-project priority is described below, including:

- **Title** – Name of the micro-project
- **Description** – Brief description of the micro-project
- **Winter Principles** – Which winter livability principles does the micro-project improve
- **Key Roles** – The entities that would be solely or significantly involved in the micro-project's implementation
- **Cost/Impact** – The estimated resources required versus the anticipated positive impact on winter livability in Fort St. John on a 5 point scale (5 = highest).
- **Project Lead** – The individual(s) entities within the public, private and community realms that would lead the implementation of specific micro-project.
- **Other Considerations** – Other key factors to be considered in the implementation of a micro-project.

Micro-Projects

LEAVE A LIGHT ON

<p>Description: Encourage business owners in the downtown core to leave internal and external lights on overnight and to install additional outdoor lighting on their premises to enhance the illumination during darker periods in a cost-effective manner.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 2/5 • Impact 4/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Businesses • BC Hydro 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce
<p>Other Considerations: N/A</p>	



WINTER SAND PROGRAM EXPANSION

<p>Description: Expand the City of Fort St. John's current winter sand program to two new locations at dispersed sites throughout the city. This will enhance the accessibility of sand for residents using it to cover slippery walking surfaces.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 2/5 • Impact 5/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John
<p>Other Considerations: This micro-project would need be considered within the City's existing operational plans due to delivery of sand to new locations and cleanup required to remove excess sand in the spring.</p>	



WINTER PARKS DESIGN

<p>Description: Hire a Landscape Architect consultant to develop winter themed and inspired designs for three strategically located parks (Kin Park, Matthews Park & Centre Square Park) that provide outdoor winter recreational opportunities and embody strong winter design elements.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Economic • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 4/5 • Impact 5/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Consultant(s) 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Urban Systems
<p>Other Considerations: This micro-project would require capital and operational funding to implement. The completion of this micro-project would provide the City with cost estimates for the construction, maintenance and operation of the winter parks.</p>	



Micro-Projects

POSITIVE WINTER COMMUNICATION

<p>Description: Encourage the use of positive language when providing weather updates and related weather news on different mediums including social media, radio, outdoor electronic signage and other local media. Incorporate positive winter themes and language into City communications, tourism packages and community profile packages.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 1/5 • Impact 5/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Local media • Local business 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John Communications Team • Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce
<p>Other Considerations: This micro-project could result in more resource intensive initiatives, such as developing winter themed branding for the City of Fort St. John.</p>	
	

WINTER WALKS TO SCHOOL

<p>Description: Develop a program with School District 60 to encourage students to walk to school during winter months. Identify additional "Safe Winter Routes to School" for enhanced winter maintenance that provide safe and clear passage for students.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 4/5 • Impact 5/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • School District 60 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School District 60 • City of Fort St. John
<p>Other Considerations: This micro-project would need to be planned proactively with the City's Public Works and Community Services departments due to the need to allocate additional resources towards clearing identified routes. Resources and time would also be required to consult with School 60 and schools in the City to identify the key routes.</p>	

NEW ARRIVALS WINTER PACKAGE

<p>Description: Include City of Fort St. John branded toques, mitts and other basic winter clothing in the new arrivals packages currently provided by the Visitors Information Centre. Include a 'Winter Tips' guide to help new residents from non-winter climates to adapt to winter conditions and understand resident responsibilities related to snow clearing.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 2/5 • Impact 4/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Fort St. John Visitor Information Center
<p>Other Considerations: N/A</p>	

Micro-Projects

SHOVEL YOUR STREET COMPETITION

Description:

Create a competition that evaluates how well the residents of individual streets or blocks are at performing their individual responsibilities for snow removal duties. After large snowfalls, residents would submit or tag pictures of their streets to the City's social media pages. Honorary awards would be given to streets with the best overall snow clearance after a given snowfall. Award winning streets would be entered into a final draw for an all-expense paid winter block party, including food and non-alcoholic beverages

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social

Cost/Impact

- Resources 2/5
- Impact 5/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Community

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Volunteer Community member(s)

Other Considerations:

N/A



WINTER BLOCK CAPTAIN PROGRAM

Description:

Encourage local residents to become "Winter Block Captains". They would be provided with winter clothing and a shovel with City of Fort St. John branding and be responsible for shovelling snow from certain areas within close proximity to their home, such as stretch of sidewalk or bus stop. They would also be provided with signage that designates them as a Winter Block Captain to display on their property. All Block Captains would receive recognition for their efforts at the annual Community Awards event.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social

Cost/Impact

- Resources 1/5
- Impact 5/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Community

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Volunteer Community member(s)

Other Considerations:

Additional resources may be required to provide greater incentives to generate interest among the community in becoming a Winter Block Captain.



LIGHTED METAL TREES

Description:

Engage the local arts and trades communities to develop metal illuminated tree sculptures to be placed along trails and in key public areas. Continue this competition on an annual basis to continually place new trees on an annual basis.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 3/5
- Impact 4/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Community
- Local business

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Fort St. John Arts Council

Other Considerations:

This micro-project would need to be coordinated with the City of Fort St. John's Integrated Services department for installation and possible maintenance. The trees could be either seasonal or permanent installations.



Micro-Projects

WINTER THEMED BANNERS

Description:

Develop a number of Winter themed banners to be installed in the downtown area during the winter season. The banners could be partially or fully created by the local arts community and display positive imagery and language associated with the winter season but not specifically related to any winter holiday.

Winter Principles

- Physical

Cost/Impact

- Resources 2/5
- Impact 3/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local arts community

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Fort St. John Arts Council

Other Considerations:

City infrastructure, such as street lights, may need to be retrofitted with supports to hold the banners in place. Opportunities to hang banners on buildings in the downtown and required supports should be explored. This will require discussion with building owners in the downtown and local business.



WINTER FASHION SHOW

Description:

Hold annual winter fashion shows at the beginning of the winter season to spread awareness of proper winter clothing habits, build excitement for the winter season and promote local businesses. Encourage outdoor locations for the show, such as closed off downtown streets or centrally located public spaces. The Fashion Show would also be used as an opportunity to collect donations of winter clothing from residents to be distributed to individuals in need of proper winter clothing.

Winter Principles

- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 3/5
- Impact 3/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business community
- Local community organizations

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business partner(s)
- Community Bridge
- Salvation Army
- Women's Resource Center

Other Considerations:

The resources required to implement this micro-project could be reduced through corporate sponsorships, volunteering and admission fees. Emphasis should be placed on establishing partnership and sponsorships with local businesses and retailers that sell winter clothing. This event may also include a segment related to winter clothing for pets

INDIGENOUS WINTER VILLAGE

Description:

Develop partnerships with local indigenous communities in the Treaty 8 area to establish an indigenous themed village area at the High on Ice Festival. The village would showcase local indigenous culture through displays, storytelling and activities located in a village type atmosphere.

Winter Principles

- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 2/5
- Impact 4/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local indigenous communities

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Treaty 8 Tribal Association
- Fort St. John Metis Society

Other Considerations:

The resources required to implement this micro-project could vary depending on if the City of Fort St. John would need to provide some of the infrastructure necessary for the Village. This could include items such as teepees and fire pits .



Micro-Projects

COMMUNITY TRAIL LIGHTING

<p>Description: Construct pedestrian scaled lighting displays along key community pedestrian corridors, such as the Community Trail, and future trail extensions. This is intended to serve as annual exhibit or pilot project in trail lighting that could lead to future investments in permanent trail lighting infrastructure. Partnerships with the local arts community are suggested.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 3/5 • Impact 5/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Local arts community 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John Integrated Services • Fort St. John Arts Council
<p>Other Considerations: The costs associated with the installation of pedestrian lighting can vary significantly depending on the type of lighting installed.</p> <p>The implementation of this micro-project would be through temporary trail lighting displays that would not include permanent infrastructure. It would serve as a pilot project to a larger investment in trail lighting.</p> <p>Non-traditional lighting displays are encouraged, for example light reflective or illuminated bird houses.</p>	

OUTDOOR WINTER PATIO(S)

<p>Description: Partner with a local business in the downtown core to construct a seasonal outdoor patio that utilizes winter design principles. The City would provide the materials and capital costs associated with the patio, while the partnering business would be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the patio.</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Social • Economic 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 2/5 • Impact 3/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John • Local business community 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John Integrated Services • Local business partner(s)
<p>Other Considerations: The resources required to implement this micro-project could be reduced through corporate sponsorships, volunteering and admission fees. Emphasis should be placed on establishing partnership and sponsorships with local businesses and retailers that sell winter clothing. This event may also include a segment related to winter clothing for pets</p>	

COMMUNITY FIRE PIT(S)

<p>Description: Provide a fire pit and seating area in a centrally located public space or park that operates on a temporary basis (weekends or special events).</p>	
<p>Winter Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Social 	<p>Cost/Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 2/5 • Impact 3/5
<p>Key Roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John 	<p>Project Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Fort St. John
<p>Other Considerations: Opportunities exist to engage the local arts community of developing unique designs for new fire pits.</p>	
	

Micro-Projects

WINTERIZE YOUR SPACE PROGRAM

Description:

Encourage local businesses and community organizations, especially those located in the downtown, to improve their building facades and walkways in front of their buildings that incorporates winter friendly design. The City would develop a brochure that identifies easy and cost-effective winter friendly improvements and distribute the brochure to participants. Participants would be given signage that indicates their participation in the program.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 2/5
- Impact 5/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business
- Community organizations
- Consultant(s)

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business partners
- Community organization partners
- Urban Systems

Other Considerations:

Improvements made to walkways adjacent to the buildings of program participants may require approval from the City's Integrated Services department to ensure they do not inhibit pedestrian movements and municipal services, such as snow clearance.

WINTER MOVIE IN THE PARK

Description:

Continue the City's current summer program of providing outdoor movie nights at Centennial Park. This includes providing some site upgrades for comfort, including a perimeter of coniferous trees to act as a wind shield for the viewing area.

Winter Principles

- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 3/5
- Impact 3/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John

Other Considerations:

N/A



SNOW ANGELS PROGRAM

Description:

Relaunch the Snow Angels program to identify volunteers to provide snow clearing services for elderly and mobility challenged individuals who are physical unable to shovel their own driveways and walkways. This could include a partnership with North Peace Secondary School to provide a community volunteering option for students. Volunteers would be provided with City of Fort St. John branded winter clothing and a shovel.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social

Cost/Impact

- Resources 1/5
- Impact 4/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local community organizations
- School District 60

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Community Bridge
- North Peace Secondary School

Other Considerations:

N/A .



Micro-Projects

WARMING HUTS

Description:

Construct a number of warming huts to be placed near outdoor winter recreational areas, such as outdoor hockey rinks, the Matthews Park skating ribbon and Centennial Park. Utilize local materials, craftsmen, artists and designers to design and construct the huts. The City of Fort St. John would cover the material and construction costs of the huts.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 4/5
- Impact 4/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local arts community
- Local business community

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Urban Systems
- Fort St. John Arts Council

Other Considerations:

The resources required to implement this project vary on the number of warming hut installations funded, warming hut designs and type of materials required for construction.



CITY CENTRE SQUARE SKATING RINK

Description:

Construct and maintain a skating rink and skating ribbon at City Centre Square Park. Include a skate rental booth and other amenities, such as seating and warming huts, to create a centrally located winter destination in the downtown.

Winter Principles

- Physical
- Social
- Economic

Cost/Impact

- Resources 5/5
- Impact 5/5

Key Roles

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business community

Project Lead

- City of Fort St. John
- Local business partners

Other Considerations:

The resources required to construct and maintain the City Centre Square Skating Rink would likely be significant and varied depending on the size of the ice surfaces and additional infrastructure provided. The City should engage with the downtown and city wide business communities for potential sponsorship opportunities.



Micro-Project Implementation Plan



To facilitate the implementation of the identified micro-project priorities, a number of recommendations have been provided.

Designate a Winter Micro-Project Coordinator

The City of Fort St. John should identify an existing staff member or hire a temporary position to oversee the implementation of the micro-projects. The duties would include consulting with the relevant stakeholders related to specific micro-projects, identifying necessary partnerships in the community and working with individuals keen to lead specific micro-projects. They would also be responsible communications related to micro-projects and the monitoring and review of the program. This position would be within or report to the City of Fort St. John Community Services department.

Allocate \$50,000 for Micro-Project Implementation

It is highly recommended that the City allocate a minimum of \$50,000 into a dedicated fund for micro-project implementation capital and operational costs. This would be an annual fund that would not include any compensation costs related to the winter micro-project coordinator.

Winter Kickoff Campaign

To build excitement for the micro-project program and winter season, the City may consider hosting a winter kickoff campaign. This could consist of a number of city communications on social media relating to upcoming micro-projects to be implemented.

The City may also wish to consider hosting an event in late fall focused on building excitement for the upcoming winter season. This event could include information on City snow clearing plans, updates on the micro-projects planned for the upcoming winter, and other information on winter events and activities.

Community Participatory Budgeting

Community participatory budgeting is the allocation of a set amount of money into a fund that is managed through community engagement processes in which community members decide directly how the funds are spent. In the context of micro-projects, the City should consider hosting an event(s) where the community directly votes on which micro-projects to fund and implement for the upcoming winter. This exercise would contribute to a sense of community ownership over the projects and help build excitement for the upcoming winter season.

Monitoring and Review

Continual monitoring and review of micro-project implementation will prevent potential issues resulting from implementation, recognize micro-project successes to carry forward in future winter seasons and provide insight to be used in future Winter Strategy Team initiatives. Monitoring and review would be a responsibility of the recommended winter city coordinator.



Winter Macro-Projects

The Winter Strategy Team identified a number of winter macro-projects that did not meet the criteria and spirit of the envisioned micro-projects due to their size, scope and resources required to implement. Although they do not fit within the confines of a micro-project, the macro-projects would contribute to the winter quality of life in Fort St. John if implemented. They would require a more intensive planning process with greater allocations of funding if pursued. The following macro-projects were identified:

School District Playground Design

The City of Fort St. John would partner with School District 60 to develop a set of playground and playfield design guidelines that focus on creating winter friendly play spaces. Both parties may engage a consulting firm to draft the guidelines which would then be used to evaluate new investments in outdoor play infrastructure and landscaping at School District 60 schools.

The intent is to move towards developing outdoor play areas that mitigate harsher winter elements while providing school aged children with fun outdoor activities that capture the winter season spirit.

Winter Safe Homeless Spaces

It was recognized that there is a shortage of safe warm spaces for the City's homeless and disenfranchised populations during the winter months. The cold temperatures experienced during Fort St. John's winter could lead to injury and death without proper winter clothing or warm spaces to inhabit.

The homeless spaces program would see the City of Fort St. John work alongside with local community organizations, such as the Salvation Army, to identify opportunities for developing safe heated spaces for the City's homeless and disenfranchised populations for short term durations.

Bus Shelter Upgrades

The City's existing bus shelter would be upgraded, including heat systems at high passenger frequency stops, additional seating and improved lighting. Additional shelters, windblocks and seating could be added at existing stops that have no additional infrastructure.

Snow Maze

Construction and operation of a snow maze was identified as a large scale initiative that could be included as part of the High on Ice festival or become a permanent installation. This would create new recreational activities and economic opportunities for the City.

Comprehensive Winter Planning

The intent of the Winter Strategy Team was to identify readily implementable and smaller scale projects that would contribute positively to the winter livability of Fort St. John. It was recognized that a larger scale planning exercise with a more comprehensive community engagement component could provide the City with an all-encompassing framework for improving winter livability.



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FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City

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