“What do we want and how do we get there” - A comparative review of First Nations Comprehensive Community Plans in British Columbia

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION in the School of Public Administration

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Abstract

First Nations are important regional development actors, and yet, their development ambitions and goals have often been ignored or poorly understood by settler governments. Since 2004, the federal government has supported First Nations band governments and Tribal Councils to develop and implement their own community plans. The Comprehensive Community Planning process has been completed by 130 communities in British Columbia (approximately 66% out of total First Nations). These plans outline a community’s strengths/assets, opportunities, goals, and ambitions for the future across eight thematic areas that are important for community development and well-being. While this exercise is meant to strengthen community governance, it is a valuable source of information to better understand First Nations’ interests and priorities. To date, there has been no comparative analysis of First Nations Comprehensive Community Plans. This study employs comparative content analysis of all publicly available CCPs in British Columbia (n=70) in order to understand communities’ development ambitions across the eight main thematic areas. In doing so, it provides a broad overview of community priorities, differentiating by community type (urban, semi-urban, rural, and remote). Understanding community development objectives is fundamental to more effective regional development and multi-level government relations.
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Acknowledgements

I must begin by thanking my supervisor Dr. Tamara Krawchenko. Without your time, support, guidance, and patience throughout the thesis process, its completion would not have been possible. Dr. Krawchenko’s insight into this field of study and her feedback regarding my own research methods has been vital to this project and my own skill development.

Thank you, Dr. Robert Lapper for your feedback and your expertise in this topic. Your advice has strengthened the analysis and approach of this research.

Thank you to Dr. Christopher Alcantara for providing some of the data which has contributed to the depth of the analysis. Furthermore, the book “A Quiet Evolution” published with Dr. Jen Nelles was a significant influence as to why I chose this research topic.

Thank you to Darcy Harrison from the University of Victoria’s geography department. The maps you created are of great value to this research.

Thank you to my friends and peers in the MPA cohort. The MPA has been a challenging and high intensity few years, but your continued support and eagerness to see each other succeed has been a highlight. Despite the pressure, we’ve always been able to stop and have a much-needed laugh.

Thank you to the people, communities, and places I have come to know along my way. My winding path has led me to this point and shaped how I view the world. Those past experiences play a big role in who I am today.

Finally, thank you to my family for your continued support. My direction hasn’t always been clear, however because of your support I can’t wait to see what is on the horizon.
1.0 Introduction

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples necessarily entails understanding Indigenous worldviews, lived realities, and ambitions, both as diverse peoples and as distinct nations and communities. This may take the form of multiple practices—from valuing and including Indigenous knowledge in decision making to decolonising public administration and supporting Indigenous governance and self determination. Intergovernmental relations in Canada today should include Indigenous governance in a wide range of forms—from Band administrations to Tribal governments and national Indigenous organisations. This is a complex landscape that is evolving as Indigenous peoples and nations assert and strengthen inherent self determination and sovereignty.

Much of the attention given to First Nations intergovernmental relationships in Canada has focussed on First Nations relations with the federal government. First Nations whose status falls under the highly paternalistic and discriminatory Indian Act have a direct relationship with the federal government unlike that of other Indigenous groups. However, there is increasing attention to understanding how municipal and regional governments are responding to the growing influence of Indigenous governments within the Canadian administrative landscape (Alcantara and Nelles, 2016, p. 10). Hundreds of communities across Canada have established intergovernmental agreements between municipalities and First Nations governments and there are growing forms of collaborative governance (Nelles & Alcantara, 2014, p. 602). Communities at the local and regional scale are inherently spatially and functionally connected. Mutual areas of cooperation can form where interest among regional development actors align. In support of this, it is important that local and regional actors articulate their development objectives.

In support of community capacity strengthening and self determination, the federal government through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) (formerly Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC), has worked in partnership with British Columbia First Nations to support Comprehensive Community Planning since 2004. Comprehensive Community Plans (CCP) are developed through collaborative processes to convene community members and articulate a community’s assets, strengths, and ambitions for future development across a variety of thematic areas. This process is important for First Nations communities due to the collective nature of land ownership and the unique vehicle of First Nations Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) to support community development. CCPs are designed to be inclusive, culture-and-community-specific, and plan over the medium to long term (25-100 years). They present high-level goals and a vision that represents the overarching aspirations for the community. As such, they present a useful way to understand community contexts and development ambitions, including from the perspective of other regional development actors (municipalities, regional districts).

Almost two decades on from the creation of the CPP programme, First Nations across British Columbia have successfully completed this strategic planning process and there is an established mentoring programme for communities to share leading practices. These documents offer a rich dataset with which to understand First Nations’ assets, priorities, and objectives, including how communities differ by geography—urban, rural, and remote. There has been no
comprehensive comparative analysis of First Nations’ Community Comprehensive Plans conducted in the literature to date. This study provides a broad overview of First Nations’ thematic development goals based on community priorities alongside an analysis of municipal-First Nations relations and partnership within 6 BC Official Community Plans (OCPs).

This research contributes to the literature on how ‘place’ (i.e. geographic endowment and proximity) together with socio economic factors are connected to development goals and ambitions of key regional development actors – First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts – in order to understand common or divergent development goals. It further contributes to the growing literature on Indigenous regional development and local/sub national government First Nations partnerships by exploring the linkages between First Nations Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs) and the local level planning context.
2.0 Purpose, scope, and research questions

The purpose of this thesis project is to gain a high-level understanding of the development goals of First Nations in British Columbia. This research has been conducted through the synthesis and analysis of available CCPs. Using the available CCPs and comparable documents, the synthesized information categorized the general development goals of First Nations communities living within the province of British Columbia. The resulting dataset and analysis highlight the broad level development priorities being pursued by First Nations communities. This is information that is useful for neighbouring municipalities and regional-development authorities when establishing local partnerships and can aid provincial and federal program design. The data gathered and illustrated can aid discussions around future planning opportunities between regional development actors and provide an accurate context for First Nations development aspirations. This will become ever more important as the dynamics of First Nation and settler relationships continue to evolve.

2.1 Problem statement

Most First Nations governments in Canada have a direct relationship with the federal government due to their administration under the Indian Act. Services and infrastructure on reserve lands are administrated by the federal government—like an island within provincial territory. This can lead to a disjointedness, with a lack of coordination of services and infrastructure across functionally connected territories. As evidence of this, a recent Canadian survey of municipal mayors and councillors found that Indigenous affairs are seen as primarily the purview of the federal and to a less extent provincial/territorial governments (Lucas & Smith, 2019). And yet, these local and regional connections matter a great deal. Conflicts between Indigenous communities and cities over land use and development are often connected to larger unresolved issues of Crown-Indigenous relations (Abele et al., 2012, p. 87). Some research suggests that collaboration between local level governments can provide benefits that overcome “challenges posed by municipal fragmentation, externalities, and common-pool resources problems” (Spicer, 2016, p. 506). Despite this, there has been a lack of academic and policy attention focused on local level approaches to co-governance between Indigenous and regional level governments. National level Indigenous issues are often reflected within the local scale of development planning and are present in both settler and First Nations communities despite their jurisdictional distinctions. Municipalities can be viewed as a microcosm of larger Indigenous issues and the response of municipal governments can be more effective if there were communication and coordination between local and Indigenous governments (Abele et al., 2012, p. 88). However, traditionally matters affecting First Nations communities have often been deferred to provincial and federal governments.

The literature on intergovernmental relations in Canada demonstrates a gap in collaborative policies between regional governments and neighbouring First Nations communities as much of the focus has been on Indigenous relationships with the federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictional levels (Alcantara and Nelles, 2016, p. 10). The research conducted as part
of this study aims to contribute to this literature by developing a dataset created from the synthesis of Comprehensive Community Plans. First Nations CCPs can form an important starting point to understand community ambitions, aggregate analysis, and can provide a rich dataset with which to understand First Nations regional development priorities and objectives, including differenced by geography. Subsequently, this information can be used by regional development actors, and government policy developers to explore how First Nations interests align with community and regional development plans. Conducting research into First Nations development planning and the current state of the municipal-First Nations relationship provides opportunity to shift academic and policy focus onto a more local level and explore avenues of collaboration between these neighbouring communities. Building a common understanding of context specific development ambitions and goals can help to strengthen First Nations-municipal-regional relations. As such, the awareness of the trends found within this dataset is valuable in developing effective intergovernmental relationships. Applying this conceptual framework to the current state of regional and First Nations collaboration can expand discussion opportunities within this niche of multi-level governance studies.

2.2 Research questions and project objectives:
The study addresses the following four research questions;

- What do First Nations’ Comprehensive Community Plans reveal about community development ambitions in the medium and longer term?
- What are First Nations’ main development priorities by thematic area and how do these differ by geography and level of socio-economic development?
- What does the current relationship between Municipalities and Indigenous governments look like and how can the inclusion of Indigenous planning be improved?
- How might CCPs be employed to support First Nations regional development and First Nations-local government relations?

Awareness of CCPs as important regional planning documents is a gateway for cooperative dialogue between neighbouring communities. By highlighting CCP development goals and strategies as stated by First Nations communities and linking them to municipal and regional planning development opportunities, the objective is to create space for policy discussion and identify strategies that can successfully address differences between local-level communities and authorities. Recognizing First Nations governments as regional policy actors and having early insight into their development goals will lay an important foundation for conversations between communities and may lead to opportunities for future collaborative relationships.
My interest in Indigenous-municipal relations stems from my experiences between 2013 and 2019 when I was pursuing a career in education in Northern Ontario. My time in the region was split between the City of Thunder Bay and the small northern municipality of Greenstone. While I was working in schools that were administered by Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, I noticed a number of differences between the jurisdictionally distinct communities. Unbeknownst to me at the time, these differences sparked my interest in this area of policy studies.

I often commuted between provincial municipalities and federal reserves which were jurisdictionally separated but shared geographic borders and were socially interconnected. Often these communities were separated by nothing more than railroad tracks, a river, or a bridge along a highway. During my time in this region several moments stand out to me. In one instance, an Indigenous community that I had regularly worked in and was located directly adjacent to a provincial municipality, separated only by a short bridge, received a boil water advisory while the neighbouring municipality was unaffected. I found myself wondering how it could be that two communities which were in such proximity could have such a significant difference in the quality of their infrastructure.

Another occasion came in the city of Thunder Bay, where again two neighbouring communities, one being Indigenous and the other a large provincial municipality, were caught in a dispute lasting several years over a shared piece of infrastructure. Several years prior, a bridge that connected the communities had caught fire. This resulted in a legal battle between the Province, the Federal Government, and a private railway company over who would pay for this vital structure. During the long and drawn-out legal process, the First Nations community (and community members of Thunder Bay) were required to commute an additional 20 kilometres. This resulted in a burden to commuters between the two communities, decreased access to businesses on either side of the river and increased response times for emergency services. Despite the bickering over legal fees and lack of progress on the necessary repairs, these neighbouring communities remained largely interconnected. Offices on both sides employed members of both communities, arenas in the city and in the reserve hosted hockey tournaments for both First Nations and non-First Nations teams, and businesses and recreational trails located on the reserve continued to be utilized by everyone in the area regardless of what side of the river they came from.

I decided to pursue a different career path and given my experiences in the region I developed an interest in Indigenous issues, intergovernmental relationships, and the role public administration can play in addressing disparities between communities. I returned to school to expand my knowledge regarding these complicated issues and received a college level graduate certificate in Indigenous governance and public administration. This led me to the University of Victoria, where I have worked towards completing my master’s in public administration. I continue to reflect on my experiences in Northern Ontario and now having left the region I can recognize that the same issues persist throughout this country.
I am not Indigenous. My insight into many of these issues is limited by my experiences as someone who is not from an Indigenous community. However, having lived, worked, studied and formed important relationships in a region of Canada that is largely interconnected between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, I have witnessed how a lack of collaboration affects all parties. From my experiences, I have come to view Indigenous-municipal collaboration as a strategy to benefit both communities and address systemic issues on a local level. I believe that many of the issues that are present today will require sustained efforts from all communities to make meaningful and lasting changes.

Finally, my perspective and values lead me to believe that collaboration in local government will provide a foundation for a stronger relationship between Indigenous and municipal governments and I acknowledge that there is a narrative around the concept of communication being a problem solver. As a result of this outlook, it is likely that my research will focus on positive examples of collaboration. Additionally, as an individual who is not Indigenous, my perspective towards research and knowing is shaped by western methodologies and concepts. Having decided to focus my research on topic that deals with Indigenous community development it is my hope that by acknowledging this western perspective, I will remain open to other concepts. During my research, I have been open to evidence and literature that challenged my initial ideas. If ever I came across such material, I made sure to include this into the research design to gain a holistic understanding of the issues.
4.0 Literature review

Interconnected literatures on multi-level governance, community economic development and self-determination, and place-based development policies usefully connect to and inform explorations of Indigenous governance, self-determination, and regional development. This literature review explores these key concepts and the evolution and potential of First Nations-municipal collaborative governance. Focusing on these three themes – multi-level governance, community economic development and self determination, and place-based development policy – the review provides a preface for the role that First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning can have in addressing the shortfalls in the governance relationships between First Nations and settler governments. Figure 1 illustrates the intersection of these literature themes.

A conceptual framework for intergovernmental collaboration already exists in the form of “multilevel governance”, a process that is characterized by deliberation and negotiation between multiple invested parties (Alcantara and Spicer, 2016, p. 185). Many municipalities in Canada are already practicing forms of multilevel governance between neighbouring local governments and used to design collaborative policies, programs, and services. (Spicer, 2016, p. 505). According to Ansell, Sørensen and Torfing (2017), this type of policy design and implementation has many benefits. As they state:
Multi-actor collaboration through joint deliberations will not only help to convey valuable knowledge about the nature and character of the problem and the kinds of solutions likely to work on the ground. It will also spur the development of innovative policy solutions that can break policy deadlocks and build joint ownership for the realisation of these solutions (p. 469).

This collaboration allows flexible adaption of policy strategies to local conditions and emerging issues by creating a process of mutual learning and practical experimentation. In their article they provide a case that suggests the strongest policies and greatest public benefits can occur by connecting multiple “actors vertically and horizontally in a process of collaboration and joint deliberation” (Ansell et al., 2017, p 475).

However, this lens has seldom been applied to the context of First Nations-municipal collaboration and could be partially explained by the confusing jurisdictional gray zone between Indigenous communities and municipalities (Graham and Peters, 2002, p. 7). This jurisdictional confusion is compounded by the fact that broader issues within the Crown and Indigenous relationship often present themselves at a scaled-down level between municipalities and local Indigenous governments (Abele et al., 2012, p. 88). Collaborative conversations between First Nations communities and cities over land use engage larger unresolved issues of Crown-Indigenous relations and the municipal-First Nations dynamic presents itself as the “front-line” of these issues (Abele et al., 2012, p. 87). However, outside of structured municipal representation in some treaty and land claims negotiations, collaborative conversations between these two communities have historically been severely limited, therefore the benefits of “joint ownership” solutions have also been severely limited.

The blind spot in regional-Indigenous collaborative governance is attributed to a long-standing approach and response that Indigenous issues are centred around provincial and federal jurisdictions. This has created a vacuum in the perceived need and capacity for policy making at a municipal level regarding neighbouring Indigenous communities (Abele et al., 2012, p. 109). As Canadian municipalities developed, federal and provincial policies impacting Indigenous communities tightened and restricted Indigenous involvement in Canadian society while simultaneously eroding Indigenous cultural identity and governance structures (Joseph, 2018, p. 19). Historically, First Nations communities and reserves were viewed as a hindrance to development and Canada’s exclusionary policies were reflected in previous amendments to the Indian Act. These policies effectively gave municipalities and companies the right to expropriate reserve lands for their own development and gave governments the authority to relocate reserves which were situated near towns of a certain population (Joseph, 2018, p. 32). These policies and others like them created an environment where the growth of Canadian cities often came at the expense of Indigenous communities, further disenfranchising those of whom who have long occupied the land (Joseph, 2018, p. 32). Long standing policies of exclusion have contributed to a lack of attention from municipal administrators towards neighbouring First Nations communities as these communities are often treated as stakeholders, rather than governments equal in status to the federal and provincial governments of Canada (Alcantara and Spicer, 2016, p. 184).
There are signs, that after decades of general exclusion and neglect, relationships between Indigenous communities and their respective municipal neighbours are beginning to shift. Research by Nelles and Alcantara documents that hundreds of communities across the country have some sort of intergovernmental agreement between municipalities and neighbouring First Nations governments (2014, p. 602). At the time of their research there were ninety-three publicly available intergovernmental agreements between local and First Nations governments within the province of British Columbia. These agreements ranged in type and focus. Some put emphasis on “jurisdictional negotiation” and established service sharing policies on fire protection, garbage collection, snow removal, and other similar services. Other agreements emphasized collaboration in order create more formalized and cooperative relationships, this included knowledge sharing and training. Whereas some other of these agreements focused their relationship on “decolonization” and sought to create more equitable relationships between local and Indigenous governments, focusing their recognition on the inherent rights and Indigenous self-government (Nelles and Alcantara, 2014 p. 202-203).

Collaborative approaches to governance and policy development, while perhaps not ground-breaking, have been under-explored in terms of the municipal-Indigenous relationships. Apart from the studies conducted by Alcantara and Nelles, extensive research focusing on this topic has been limited. Those who do research this topic suggest that strong municipal-Indigenous relations can assist in meeting a range of objectives, including identifying areas of mutual interest and developing joint initiatives, meeting regulatory requirements for community development, partnering on service delivery and resource management, establishing joint economic development opportunities, and more liveable communities overall (Alcantara and Nelles, 2016, p. 10). Of interest to note is that intergovernmental agreements are not new ideas in governance. In an article, Spicer, (2016) explores similar benefits to cooperative administration while focusing on the more informal side of collaboration. As Spicer notes, one of the main reasons for a collaborative approach to local governments is because “municipal officials largely look to service sharing as a means of reducing the cost-of-service provision by realizing significant scale economies, while also overcoming challenges posed by municipal fragmentation, externalities, and common-pool resources problems” (2016, p. 506). According to the author, low stakes forms of collaboration such as information sharing, to more complex contractual agreements such as service agreements, mutual aid, joint planning, and memoranda of understanding are often strategies used to achieve local intermunicipal cooperation (Spicer, 2016, p. 506). At the same time, these same strategies have been relatively underutilized when applied to the context of municipal-First Nations collaboration. However, as First Nations communities increase their land base through land purchases and self-government and land claims agreements, these forms of inter-governmental partnerships will become increasingly important for the development for all communities (Alcantara and Nelles, 2016, p. 10).

Indigenous communities have already asserted their importance as regional policy actors prior to the rise of more established forms of self government. Indigenous Economic Development Corporations (IEDCs), which often operate under the economic and business development branch
of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit governments, play a major role in driving Indigenous economic advancement through business development, employment, and community-based projects (CCAB - Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations, n.d.). IEDCs have been developed by First Nations communities as a pathway to establish both economic and political capacity, while simultaneously representing their home communities within the local region. These economic development corporations have often been created ahead of more comprehensive and formal forms of self-government, and serve similar functions regarding community socio-economic development (Wilson & Alcantara, 2012, p. 782). IEDCs establish First Nations as regional policy actors by often recovering, managing, and governing lands and resources. Often these Indigenous owned economic development corporations engage in business opportunities to support the long-term development visions of their communities. Using the profitability and growth of these businesses, IEDCs help fund community programs such as education, health and wellness, housing, as well as other social programs and services (Anderson et al., 2006, p. 46). Through these efforts, these Indigenous owned development groups define and contribute towards their community’s sustainable economic and social development while simultaneously promoting business and entrepreneurial activities (Weir, 2007, p. 5). In this light, it is important to note that a communities’ economic development is also a powerful catalyst for self-sufficiency and self-determination.

Often Indigenous economic development seeks to maintain traditional values and ideologies while engaging in economic activities (Nelson, 2019, p. 4). Indigenous economic development regularly focuses on principles such as responsibility, reciprocity, and stewardship of the land to ensure access to a healthy environment and economic opportunities for future generations. These principles are captured in the “seven generations” philosophy of Indigenous development, which stresses that the decisions made today must result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future (Hilton, 2021, p. 4). As such, economic strategies pursued by Indigenous communities offer an opportunity for region-wide sustainable economic growth. Given the emphasis on a “seven generations” model of development, Indigenous economic development can contribute towards remedying the boom-and-bust cycles of development that have long been associated with rural and remote communities.

First Nations governance and nationhood is in the midst of rescaling and there is a growing regional framing to many initiatives. This rescaling reconstitutes Indigenous governance which, especially for First Nations, was undermined and divided by the Indian Act which imposed band governance and disrupted traditional structures including matriarchal governance. Academics like Taiaiake Alfred (2009, p. 44) question the extent to which First Nations Band Governance can ever be the vehicle for self-determination given their origins as a form of settler state colonial control. Others question the extent to which settler regional governance can ever meaningfully connect with Indigenous governance and self determination, seeing its very constructs as antithetic of Indigenous worldviews and interests (tebrakunna country et al., 2019, p. 1515). Thus, it is important to recognise that regional governance is a contested landscape and that it is being
rescaled and reshaped from the perspective of Indigenous governments in many cases alongside a growing focus on Indigenous-local-regional government relations.

Indigenous economic development is reshaping the economic landscape of rural communities in British Columbia. For example, The Ts‘ouke Nation on Vancouver Island is one instance of a community engaging in the seven generations form of planning. The Ts‘ouke Nation pursues a diverse range of sustainable economic developments such as clean energy, wasabi production, and oyster farming (Hilton, 2021, p. 147). As Indigenous economic development grows, opportunities extend to the wider region and can create mutually beneficial prospects between neighbouring communities (Boyd & Lorefice, 2018, p. 582). This model of growth is already taking place in British Columbia. For instance, after the decline of the forestry and fisheries industry in the municipality of Bamfield, the Huu ay aht nation established a successful Christmas tree farm and invested in several commercial lots within the neighbouring community (Hilton, 2021, 147). In another part of the province, the Ossoyoos Indian Band has established itself as an important regional economic driver for not only its community but for the whole region. The community is credited to have “virtually no unemployment” amongst its membership and acts a significant employer for people living in the nearby municipality (Hilton, 2021, p. 148).

It is important not to underestimate the positive impact that strong Indigenous economies can have on overall economic development. In a 2011 report, TD Bank estimated that First Nations would have a market potential of over $32 billion by 2016 (Hilton, 2021, p. 163). This is despite a long-standing history of economic exclusion of Indigenous peoples. In order to completely unlock the potential of the emerging Indigenous economy, Hilton argues that this will require “careful attention, design, and a strategic national growth framework to meet the challenge of economic reconciliation in an age of continued assertion of Indigenous rights” (Hilton, 2021, p. 163). By making these important policy changes, the current value of $32 billion can be increased to a potential of $100 billion in the years to come (Hilton, 2021, p. 163). Currently, Canada’s economy is missing out on estimated $27.7 billion dollars by an “under-utilized” Indigenous workforce. This number was calculated by highlighting the differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Canada. The report reads that:

If all Indigenous people had employment, income, education, and poverty rates comparable to that of all Canadians, Canada’s GDP would grow by 1.5% or $27.7 billion. For this report to be actualized is bigger than any other economic growth plan in Canada today. And realistically, this target is attainable within existing means and systems. (Hilton, 2021, p. 163)

Creating the conditions needed for Indigenous communities to thrive is also in Canada’s best interest. Currently, First Nations communities are the fastest growing demographic in Canada (OECD, 2019, p. 31). However, First Nations are also often faced with several systemic issues that impede community development. Overall Indigenous communities fare worse in a number of key indicators such as health, education, employment, and access to quality housing (OECD, 2020, p.
Creating the change needed to have this level of impact is not simply a matter of investment in Indigenous businesses. To create sustained change of this magnitude, systemic transformation is needed, and Indigenous development priorities need to be accurately reflected. Canada and its regional development planners have a history of creating policies without representing the interests of Indigenous communities. Policies developed within Canadian society need not always be created specifically for Indigenous communities, but all communities would be better served if policies were created with Indigenous communities.

Settler Governments have an overwhelming impact in setting the framework conditions for Indigenous economic development through their strategy setting, policy design and implementation and brokering between stakeholders (OECD, 2020, p. 292). As a result, these governance arrangements can either serve to build local capacity promoting economic development or act to inhibit it and promote dependancy (OECD, 2020, p. 292). Those who study Indigenous economic development emphasize the importance of a “place-based” approach to policy design where governments work collaboratively, and local communities identify regional priorities and development strategies. In a 2020 report by the OECD, the authors argue that a place-based approach to First Nations community development and self-governance is an effective and logical method of development. Under this model of development, it is necessary to understand how ‘place’ impacts policy design. In the OECD report, the document states that:

Place is fundamental to Indigenous identity and shapes economic and well being outcomes for Indigenous communities. Different territories and communities have different endowments, histories, and accessibility to markets and opportunities. Developing these places requires addressing multiple factors (human capital, infrastructure, innovative capacity) in an integrated way that aligns with local circumstances. Local communities have the knowledge about these circumstances and should lead decision-making about development. Therefore, policy and governance arrangements are needed to mobilise this potential in a way that is driven by local communities. (OECD, 2020, p. 292).

This is made even more important given the diversity of urban, rural, and remote First Nations across the geography of Canada. If this type of strategy is well-conceived and gains Indigenous support it could be an effective way to galvanise action and monitor progress across the whole of government on this issue and would provide an important focus on economic reconciliation (OECD, 2020, p. 301). Using a ‘place-based’ approach to policy design can lead to more effective development program strategies and better allocate resources to such programs.

Creating a successful place-based approach to Indigenous economic development relies on the strong visions for community growth provided directly by communities. To aid these community visions governments can assist with mechanisms prioritising and sequencing investment based on overall community needs. These needs range from infrastructure and services to skills development, mentorship and access to finance (OECD, 2020, p. 290) Effective multi-level governance and coordination between federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations
governments is crucial for First Nations community development to take root. Where multi-level collaboration has occurred there have also been examples of successful outcomes addressing development across multiple dimensions such as infrastructure, investments, housing, leadership, mentorship, and skills training (OECD, 2020, p. 291, 295). In these occasions, Indigenous communities have been effectively engaged on the issues that impact them and there is a stable recognition of land rights (OECD, 2020, p. 291). In short, the OECD report argues that a holistic vision to community economic development centred around Indigenous nations’ regionality is needed, and horizontal collaboration across all levels of government is essential.

One issue facing place-based policy design is a lack of a universal method where information regarding First Nation community development is gathered, shared, and discussed. Federal departments dealing with Indigenous affairs coordinate their work often through informal meetings and working groups, as well as more formalised initiatives like the Strategic Partnership Initiative; a program which seeks to increase Indigenous participation in complex economic development opportunities, and often related to natural resource sectors. (OECD, 2020, p. 240, 302). Most Canadian Provinces have policy frameworks and consultation guidelines to manage their relations with Indigenous peoples, however these methods also differ from province to province. Finally, although the relationship is beginning to shift, municipalities have historically engaged in a very limited manner with neighbouring First Nations (OECD, 2020, p. 302, 303). Every level of government determines their own strategy for engaging with Indigenous organisations and the resulting policies irregularly reflect regional issues. Therefore, to bolster effectiveness, there is a need for a longer term and unified strategic approach where engagement between levels of government and Indigenous communities is centred on place-based policy solutions (OECD, 2020, p. 303).

Regional development authorities and municipalities are the front line of this type of administrative transformation. Local level planners can change a long running culture of Indigenous exclusion and work to establish mutually advantageous partnerships between communities. Canadian municipalities should begin to explore partnerships with neighbouring Indigenous communities, not solely because of shifting jurisdictional dynamics, but because establishing partnerships between communities can create a better quality of life for every party involved. To add to this discourse and expand the breadth of topics within the study of regional development and Indigenous forms of multi-level governance, a synthesis and dataset of available CCP documents has been created. By exploring and aggregating data from Comprehensive Community Plans released by First Nations communities in the province of B.C., a resource has been created that accurately reflects First Nations development goals, and can aid policy development at the federal, provincial, and municipal level by providing greater context for policy makers. This has been done to help bridge the gaps between communities which have been separated jurisdictionally but are often geographically and socially are interconnected.
5.0 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative content analysis of publicly available First Nations Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs) and comparable documents, focusing on similar key development themes. CCPs are developed by communities to document both their assets and opportunities. They outline a community’s medium- and long-term development priorities. As such they are a valuable document to understand community development goals and how they do, or do not align with that of other regional development actors (e.g. municipalities and regional districts).

5.0.1 Description of CCPs

Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) is an ongoing process that enables a community to plan its development in a way that meets its needs and aspirations in all aspects of community life. The Federal Government through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), now Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has been working in partnership with B.C. First Nations to support CCPs since 2004 (Comprehensive Community Planning — CITIES andamp; ENVIRONMENT UNIT, 2020). Some of the thematic areas of focus that often appear in CCPs are:

- Governance
- Land and Resources
- Health
- Infrastructure Development
- Culture
- Social
- Education
- Economy

CCPs are collaboratively created by community members, designed to be inclusive, culture-and-community-specific, and long term (What Is CCP?, 2020). As such, they represent a bottom-up vision of development. These documents range from medium to long term (25-100) year plans that focus on high-level goals and a vision that represents the overarching aspirations for the community. These documents are designed to encourage involvement from their communities as much as possible through staff meetings, Chief and Council meetings, and community meetings. However outside consultants may occasionally be hired for the process. CCPs are often used by researchers to understand development priorities in specific communities. Nonetheless, there has been no comprehensive comparative analysis of their contents conducted in the literature to date. As such, this study provides researchers with a broad overview of First Nations’ thematic development goals based on community priorities. It will also contribute to the literature on how ‘place’ (i.e. geographic endowment and proximity) together with socio economic factors are connected to development goals and ambitions of three core regional development actors – First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts – in order to understand common or divergent development goals. This work will contribute to the nascent literature on Indigenous regional development and local/sub national government First Nations partnerships.
5.0.2 Analysis of community attributes—Community well-being

The “Community Well-Being Index (CWBI)”, available through the department of Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, provides a snapshot of a community’s current socio-economic well being (Community Well-Being Index - Open Government Portal, n.d.). The CWBI uses various indicators such as education levels, labour force activity, and income and housing, which are obtained through Statistics Canada’s Census of Population and combined to give each community a well-being “score” (Community Well-Being Index - Open Government Portal, n.d.). These data are by no means perfect as a national level statistics system for First Nations communities in Canada is not streamlined. Often multiple federal departments record, and track data based on different metrics resulting in a wide range of data available. Statistics Canada relies on self-reporting regarding Indigenous identity and allows for numerous possible responses, thereby making the statistics gathered difficult to express accurately (OECD, 2019, p. 70). Furthermore the CWBI scores do not incorporate Indigenous values and perspectives into the well-being framework (OECD, 2019, p. 68). Nevertheless, these scores remain useful for a broad overview of general trends within these communities.

The CWBI scores are used in this study as a proxy to understand levels of community development and wellbeing. The scores are assessed against key thematic areas (see next section) in order to identify any patterns related to wellbeing and community strategic interests. This score may then be used as a key indicator to gauge and explain the direction of a community’s future and provide analysis beyond the scope of geographic factors.

5.1 Methods

This project focusses on quantitative content analysis of CCPs. While compiling the information, data (CCP text) was coded and recorded through a thematic analysis. The following sections of the CCP analysis tracker include:

- **Vision/value Statements** – These statements identify high-level and long-term goals for community development. They project general development paths for communities and may be useful for BC regions and municipalities to understand when designing complementary policies that can align with FN visions and values.

- **Economic development** – areas of interest for community economic development. This may refer to developing eco-tourism within an area, natural resource harvesting (i.e. forestry or mining), business development on reserve lands, and other similar developments.

- **Lands and resources - environmental development** – This section can refer to areas that are identified by communities and/or scheduled to fall under land transfer agreements. These sections may include areas of land that are for FN Band exclusive use, or conservation and revitalization efforts. This section may include some overlap with Economic Development.

- **Infrastructure development** – Refers to basic infrastructure development within a community such as the quality or availability of roads, access to potable water, sewage, housing, etc.
• **Social development** – This section can refer to employment/education targets for communities. Health and wellness initiatives, community safety, culture and language policies, and other community focused policy interventions also feature in this development theme. It can also occasionally include community infrastructure development such as rec centres, rehabilitation or healing centres, or training and capacity building initiatives.

• **Governance development** – The focus of this theme is to examine the development goals relating to a community’s internal administrative structure as well as the policy’s that guide the overall governance of a community. By examining topics that fall within this theme the goal is to understand where the communities emphasize their attention in the core governance of a community.

• **Level of community consultation and engagement** – This section reflects the overall impression of the level of community consultation and engagement mentioned during the scans of each CCP document.

• **Existing FN-municipal-regional agreement (Y/N)** – List provided by Dr. Christopher Alcantara. Simply records whether a First Nation’s community has an existing agreement with a neighbouring Municipality/Regional Development Authority.

• **Additional notes and impressions** – A section that provides opportunity for overall comments and thoughts on individual CCPs.

• **Socio-economic data** – These data include census information found using Federal Government websites. This included the registered populations of each community, the reported unemployment figures, median household incomes, and the Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) scores.

Five main themes are the primary focus, as they represent the bulk of the data extracted from the CCP Documents. These development themes are: Economic Development, Lands and Resources - Environmental Development, Infrastructure Development, Social Development, and Governance Development. Reviewing the data revealed individual policy interventions which are distinct but thematically related development initiatives. These thematic policy interventions are defined as ‘subcategories’. Each of the 5 main development themes includes several development subcategories which represent policy intervention strategies targeting specific areas of development foci. The CCP data collected is organized using the following categories and subcategories; for a full description of each subcategory refer to Appendix 1:

• **Economic Development:**
  - Tourism and Arts-Culture
  - Resource Extraction Based
  - Land Based
  - Energy Development
  - Service Delivery
  - Business and Commercial Development
  - Membership Focused Initiatives and Approaches
- Benefit Funding Agreements and Partnership Agreements
- General Policies

- Lands and Resources (Environmental) Development:
  - Marine and Fisheries
  - Agriculture
  - Forestry
  - Mining - Oil and Gas
  - Other Resources
  - Renewables
  - Land Use and Management
  - Conservation and Cultural

- Infrastructure Development:
  - Water
  - Transportation and Roads
  - Energy and Energy Generation
  - Housing
  - Community Facilities
  - Waste
  - Emergency Planning and Preparedness
  - General Policies

- Social Development:
  - Culture and Language
  - Education and Training
  - Health and Wellness
  - Individual and Family Development
  - Community Elders and Youth
  - Community Development and Engagement
  - Community Safety

- Governance:
  - Communications
  - Administrative Staff and Structure
  - Governance and Self-Governance
  - Land Claims and Treaty
  - Policy and Laws
  - Regional Partnership Strategies

- Existing FN-Municipal and Regional Agreements
- Level of Community Consultation and Engagement

During the synthesis of the CCPs, data was initially compiled into a single spreadsheet. The data was then reorganized with each unique datum being slotted into the subcategory that was most
appropriate for that datum. Each community was then categorized into one of four geographic regions using the available census data reflecting a community’s urbanity. These geographic regions are: urban, semi-urban, rural and remote. To codify the data (discussed below), a binary based coding system was created that records whether an individual community includes policy interventions (defined as any course of action, programme or activity mentioned in the First Nations’ development planning documents) within a given development subcategory. This binary coding system assigned each subcategory either a 1 or a 0, 1 = yes and 0 = no, and based on whether a community’s CCP includes a related policy intervention within that given development subcategory. For example, if “community a” includes three unique interventions under the development subcategory of “transportation and roads”, that subcategory is recorded with a “1” for “yes – interventions mentioned”. If “community b” has no policies under “transportation and roads”, that subcategory is recorded with a 0 for “no interventions mentioned”. Appendix 2 provides an example of the binary coding system using the infrastructure development theme, focusing on urban communities.

Using the binary coding system, the relative distribution of communities including related policy interventions can be calculated and represented as a percentage out of total communities. This method was extended to include the specific totals for communities within each geographic classification. These percentages demonstrate how prevalent each policy development subcategory is amongst each geographic region. For example, the “tourism and arts – culture” subcategory recorded that six out of ten urban communities had related policy interventions. It therefore receives a percentage total of 60%; representing that 60% of urban communities included tourism related policy interventions.

Table 1 illustrates the calculated percentage totals (prevalence) for the economic development category and subcategories amongst all geographic classifications. This process is repeated for each main development category within the CCP documents, ie infrastructure development, social development, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Classification</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism &amp; Arts-Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Urban</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration
Note: This table shows the total percentage of communities that include related policies within their planning documents, per development area.
The complete process has been compiled into five phases to best describe the methods used to quantify and analyse the data.

**Phase 1: Data collection**

The data was collected and synthesized in several phases throughout the research process. During the initial data collection phase, a list was provided by a contact at Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). This list included one-hundred-and-thirty First Nations communities in British Columbia that have completed the CCP process (refer to Appendix 3). Once the list was acquired the next step was to locate all available CCPs. ISC was unable to provide the documents without the explicit permission by the First Nation community that owned the CCP. Using the list as a guide, the CCP documents were then compiled and recorded into four categories. These categories being:

- Found CCPs; available copies of comprehensive community plans.
- Alternate Documents; comparable documents that contain similar themes related to Indigenous community planning. Documents such as land use plans, community strategic plans, and other similar types of documents were used.
- Documents that were not found were labeled as unavailable.
- Broken links; If a broken link was found that information was recorded. The community would be contacted and a request for their CCP was made.

In the case of a broken link, the community was contacted directly via e-mail or telephone. This was the situation with six communities. Of these six communities, two responded stating that their community plans were being updated and were not ready to be released publicly. One community provided their previous plan.

The dataset was compiled by searching through all the First Nations’ community websites and publicly available databases such as the First Nations Knowledge Network. In the end, fifty-seven CCP documents and thirteen comparable documents were compiled. The final sample size consisted of seventy Indigenous community planning documents (53% of all known CCPs). sixty of the known one-hundred-and-thirty completed CCPs were unable to be sourced. Once this process was completed, a map was created revealing where these communities are located. Figure 2 highlights the geographic diversity of the communities reviewed for this research.
Phase 2: Thematic coding

The next phase in the data compilation was to scan each document and record individual policy interventions from all CCP documents. During this scan, policy interventions were recorded into their respective themes using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to create synthesized versions of each community’s CCP. This initial spreadsheet (spreadsheet 1) was divided into the following categories:

- Vision/Values Statements
- Economic Development
- Lands and Resources (Environment) Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Social Development
- Governance and Policy Development
- Level of Community Consultation/Engagement
- Additional Notes
- Socio-Economic Data/CWBI Score
Phase 3: Geographic features

Once this section had all seventy documents synthesized into their respective categories this process was repeated. A second “master” spreadsheet (spreadsheet 2) was created. This spreadsheet contained all development subcategories under each respective theme. These subcategories were informed by the initial scanning process. Using the information compiled from spreadsheet 1, the following step in the process consisted of scanning each main development theme and reorganizing the data into these new subcategories. The resulting document was then used to organize all policy interventions referenced by First Nations communities. Each communities’ band number was used to reorganize the spreadsheets into their respective geographic classification using the available census data. Each community was codified based on the following criteria:

1. Census subdivision within census metropolitan area.
2. Census subdivision within census agglomeration with at least one census tract.
3. Census subdivision within census agglomeration having no census tracts.
4. Census subdivision outside of census metropolitan area and census agglomeration area having strong metropolitan influence.
5. Census subdivision outside of census metropolitan area and census agglomeration area having moderate metropolitan influence.
6. Census subdivision outside of census metropolitan area and census agglomeration area having weak metropolitan influence.
7. Census subdivision outside of census metropolitan area and census agglomeration area having no metropolitan influence. (*Statistics Canada, 2015*)

Using the above information and the community’s “band registration number” four separate categories have been created to reflect four geographic locations based on their proximity to metropolitan areas. The classifications are recorded in the following way:

- Bands with the numbers 1 and 4 had “strong” influence from metropolitan centres.
- Bands with the numbers 2 and 5 had “moderate” influence from metropolitan centres.
- Bands with the numbers 3 and 6 had “weak” influence from metropolitan centres.
- Bands with the number 7 had “no influence” from metropolitan centres.

Once the communities were reorganized into their respective categories, these categories were then relabeled the following way:

- “strong” became “urban”,
- “moderate” became “semi-urban”,
- “weak” became “rural”, and
- “no influence” became “remote”

The seventy total communities were reorganized in the following manner:

- 10 communities were classified as “urban”
• 15 communities were classified as “semi-urban”
• 17 communities were classified as “rural”
• 28 communities were classified as “remote”

**Phase 4: Data analysis**

Once these communities were re-organized into their geographic classifications, it was then possible to begin analysing the data found within each thematic development category. First each subcategory had its unique inputs totaled to gain numeric values that reflected the number of goals and strategies found within that respective subcategory. This process was repeated for each category and subcategory. This ultimately resulted in numeric values that ranged dramatically from community to community. Some communities referenced only one or two policy interventions within any given subcategory, while others listed hundreds of unique policy interventions. The dramatic difference between values likely resulted from the range of quality amongst the CCP documents. Due to the significant differences in the CCPs collected, it was determined that this method was an unreliable format to highlight trends and patterns found within the data.

Following this, the data was then codified using a simple binary system. Numeric values were assigned to the subcategories to reflect whether data was present. If data was present in a column, that column then received a “1”, if no data was present in a column, then that column received a “0”. Once this step was completed, percentages representing the prevalence of communities that included related policy interventions across each subcategory were calculated. This was repeated for each geographic region. For instance, using the category of “lands and resources - environmental development” as each community’s various subcategories were given a binary code, those binary codes within the respective sub-category’s column were averaged based on the total number of communities present within each geographic classification. An example of this would be if hypothetically five out the ten urban communities recorded policy interventions related to the subcategory of “marine and fisheries”, that sub-category was then recorded as having 50% of communities pursuing policy interventions related to “marine and fisheries”, refer to Appendix 2. This information is used to illustrate and highlight the differences and similarities of development foci amongst the geographic regions.

Finally, a data file was provided by Dr. Christopher Alcantara reflecting the number of First Nations communities that have existing inter-governmental agreements with neighbouring municipal governments. This dataset removed specific identifiers to preserve the confidentiality of these agreements. Only the name of the First Nation, name of the municipality, and type of agreement (ie, relationship building, service agreement, land transfer, joint management, or decolonization) was disclosed. Using this dataset and the data gained from the CCP analysis the total amount of communities who have existing agreements versus total amount of First Nations expressing interest in these types of agreements was able to be conveyed. This information is presented in Figure 17, under the findings and analysis chapter.
Phase 5: Municipal plan review and CCP comparison

Upon completing the CCP data analysis, several municipal level “Official Community Plans” (OCPs) were collected in order to gain insight into the current state of the municipal-First Nations planning relationship. A brief comparison of similar policy interventions between OCP and CCP was also conducted to draw attention to collaborative opportunities. The OCPs reviewed belonged to the following cities:

- Nanaimo,
- Chilliwack,
- Kamloops,
- Williams Lake,
- Prince George, and
- Terrace

These six cities were chosen based on the following criteria:

1) The majority First Nations CCPs collected are clustered around similar small and medium sized cities.
2) These cities have been chosen to reflect the different geographic realities of the province which include coastal and interior communities, as well as northern and southern municipalities.
3) These cities have several First Nations communities located either directly adjacent to the municipality or serve as a hub city for multiple First Nations communities.
4) Finally, the cities of Victoria and Vancouver have been omitted due to their large metropolitan size and because these two cities are not best suited to reflect the current realities of most municipalities found within this province.

The comparative analysis of the OCPs and the CCPs was combined with a literature review that discusses the current state of municipal-Indigenous relationships in Canada and elsewhere. Using these methods, the current state of these types of administrative relationships within British Columbia can be inferred.

5.2 Strengths and limitations

Throughout the research process several limitations presented themselves. Steps were taken to minimize the impact of these limitations however they are important to mention to preserve the integrity of the research project. Despite these limitations, these data also provide several strengths and opportunities for further research.

5.2.1 Limitations of the analysis

*Comprehensiveness of source material*

This project initially sought to be comprehensive and capture the data available within all the CCP documents that have been produced in the province of British Columbia. To date, there
are one-hundred-and-thirty completed CCPs that Indigenous Services Canada has within their records. Due to privacy concerns these documents are not publicly available and cannot be accessed without the permission of the First Nation responsible for creating these documents. As result this dataset is not comprehensive as was the initial intention. Of the one-hundred-and-thirty known CCP documents fifty-seven CCP documents have been retrieved and thirteen are comparable documents such as land-use plans, strategic community plans, or similar documents. These comparable documents are used as substitute documents when the CCP is unavailable. Sixty of these documents are unable to be sourced. Therefore, while a slim majority of the available CCPs were retrieved (53% of total known documents), this dataset is not a truly accurate representation of the existing planning potential that CCPs provide.

**Access to most current CCP documents**

Through limiting the scope of the research to documents that were only available in the public domain, the most current versions of the CCP documents were not always available. On two occasions, communities communicated that their CCP was currently unavailable as they were being updated. Therefore, the data used to complete this research may not be the timeliest as priorities amongst various communities may have shifted over time. To compensate for this, the approach towards this research project has been as a theoretical “proof of concept” exercise. It is important to acknowledge that this dataset does exist and replicating this research project is extremely feasible given access to current material and all existing CCPs.

**Accuracy of the CCPs**

Relating to the previous limitation, access to the most current versions of the CCP documents was restricted, this dataset was created using what was available in the public domain. As a result, some of the CCPs and other comparable documents were either reports created to communicate with community membership and interested parties, or these documents are working drafts intended to be revisited and edited before completion. These documents are still used towards the final count of seventy CCP documents. This has been justified as it contributes to the “proof of concept” approach to the research project.

**Quality of CCPs**

The overall quality of the CCP documents varied dramatically from community to community. Some of these documents range from several hundred pages and the information these documents contained was thoroughly detailed and well organized. Other documents were much shorter and may have comprised of only a few dozen pages. Some documents lacked detailed policy interventions and seemed under-explored or largely aspirational. Due to the varying levels of quality found within these CCP documents, keeping the findings intentionally focused on broad and high-level development themes was a strategy to ensure a more truthful reflection of First Nations’ development goals. Despite the varying degrees of quality in these planning documents it is still important to understand what development areas First Nations choose to pursue.
5.2.2 Strengths of the analysis

Added value to the CCP process

CCPs have been designed to reflect the development goals of singular First Nations communities. A comprehensive review of these documents expands the scope of these singular documents and create a new broader level of awareness. This high-level awareness of First Nations development priorities is made even more valuable in that it is informed directly by the development ambitions expressed by these communities. Furthermore, the data collection techniques used can be adjusted to specific regional levels, and geographic categorization can be adjusted based on other desired metrics. CCPs are not just important planning documents for individual communities, but they provide a pathway for other regional policy actors to accurately reflect First Nations development priorities within the local context. The research process can be replicated outside of British Columbia since First Nations in other provinces are conducting their own CCPs. The synthesized CCP spreadsheets and accompanying graphs provide the reader an easy to access resource where one can explore and compare the data collected from all documents.

Further opportunity for data manipulation and scalability

This is an extensive dataset that covers a number different development categories. The data analysis is only the initial study of the information collected and for that reason it has been kept intentionally broad. More in-depth possibilities of quantifying these data are possible as each subcategory created can be further re-structured. For example, in the popular infrastructure subcategory of housing there are many ways to further organize this section. Housing can be further divided into categories such as “construction”, “repairs and renovations”, types of housing such as “elder care homes” or “high density” and “low density”, “multi-family”, etc. Furthermore, these methods are easily scaled to encompass more specific regions within British Columbia and can be employed by individual municipalities to review policy trends amongst neighbouring Indigenous communities. For example, a city such as Kamloops has numerous First Nations communities within its surrounding area. Understanding the trends amongst the development foci for neighbouring First Nations communities can assist with strategic development planning for all regional actors.

Opportunities to expand the scope of research

Further opportunities for research are possible. Having collected development plans from Indigenous communities this information can be overlapped with municipal level Official Community Plans (OCPs). A short comparative analysis between OCPs and CCPs was conducted as part of this research however a more exhaustive study can be carried out. This would increase opportunities for discussion around collaborative approaches to development. Additionally, an opportunity for additional studies can include a survey of municipal planners regarding the level of awareness of the CCP documents, and their influence on the municipal planning process. This would further explore what barriers to collaborative relationships currently exist between municipal and Indigenous communities.
Application across administrative levels

The context of the research does not solely apply to municipal level governments. Understanding the trends in Indigenous planning can be useful for provincial and federal levels of government. Having high-level understanding of the differences and similarities of Indigenous planning across the various geographic contexts can inform policy makers in all levels of government. This information is a significant source of insight for social, economic, infrastructure, and lands related policy makers and its uses are plentiful. The data collected is informed by various development foci expressed in the CCP documents. As such, it creates an accurate high-level representation of Indigenous development goals in the province of British Columbia.
6.0 Findings and analysis

This chapter provides an overview of First Nations community planning in British Columbia as expressed in comprehensive community planning documents. It reveals the complexity of issues, goals, and priorities of First Nations communities across the province of British Columbia. Each CCP reflects unique local and regional circumstances; while this research examines overarching trends, this does not negate the relevance of individual CCPs and their meaning to the communities that have created these documents. In many cases, these are evolving and living documents. The articulation of community planning objectives in these documents should not supplant meaningful engagement with First Nations by other orders of government. In order to create effective and equitable policies, municipal levels of governments are urged to consider the specific situation of their Indigenous neighbours.

CCPs do not have a common structure; this limits the comparability of the documents. Communities may, for instance, place certain items such as membership employment or the construction of community facilities into differing development themes. These items were often placed into categories such as economic development, infrastructure, or social development. While a decision could be made to re-organize and re-interpret that data, in these occasions the data was recorded under the category where it was originally placed. This has been done in order to maintain the integrity of the communities’ visions. The remaining of this chapter shares the findings from the content analysis by thematic area, drawing out key themes.

6.1 Overview of findings

Social development and Infrastructure development are the most frequently discussed initiatives across all communities

General findings have been calculated using the binary coding system to calculate the prevalence of development subcategories across all geographic classifications. This binary coding system recorded whether a community included any policy interventions related to specific development themes, 1 = Yes, 0 = No, see attached Appendix 2 for example. Each development category had its subcategory binaries totaled to determine what the average rate of intervention inclusion was amongst all development themes discussed by all communities reviewed, n=70. This was accomplished by calculating the sum of communities with related policy interventions under each development theme. Then the sum of each category was totaled. From there, the average levels of policy representation across all development themes were able to be calculated. Figure 3 illustrates these findings.
Note: Each section represents the total percentage of each development theme out of all initiatives reviewed.

Social development and infrastructure development are the most prominent areas and had the highest prevalence across community CCPs. Collectively these two categories represent nearly half (47%) of the total policy intervention foci of the documents reviewed. The third most prevalent area discussed is economic development, where 21% of unique policy interventions are included under this development category. Finally, lands and resources – environmental development and governance development policies are the least prevalent within these planning documents. Both development categories represent only 16% each of the total policy interventions discussed amongst the communities reviewed. These findings demonstrate where broad level community priorities lay. Reviewing the data suggests that most First Nations communities’ have policy development interests in the areas of social and infrastructure development. Exploring opportunities in these areas is where the collaborative initiatives are the most likely to occur across the province’s communities.

Each main development theme has been further studied to determine the propensity of the subcategories within their overall development areas. The subcategories are calculated using the binary coding system’s totals and illustrate how prevalent each subcategory is within each development theme. Figure 4 illustrates these data. Understanding where community development priorities lay can assist policy makers of all levels in designing more fitting programs and services that better align with Indigenous development goals.
Within the main theme of economic development, business and commercial development, membership-focused initiatives and approaches, and tourism and arts-culture policy interventions are the most common strategies for encouraging economic development within the communities reviewed. Business and commercial development strategies often focus on creating commercial businesses such as retail stores, markets, restaurants, and other market-focused opportunities. Often communities include references to operating and managing business development corporations that oversee band owned operations as part of their business development strategies. For example, the Bridge River Indian Band Development Corp. has a range of businesses focussed on guided tours, equipment rentals, septic rental and services, contracted logging services, and space rentals (*Xwisten Businesses*, n.d.). As another example, the St’át’imc Government Services/St’át’imc Chiefs Council, which is made up of 11 communities spread out between Whistler and Kamloops also offers business development opportunities for member communities (*Communities – St’át’imc Government Services*, 2021). This tribal council operates several businesses that are variously specialised in engineering; management consulting; piping and piling; welding, fabrication and engineering, eco-resources, archaeology and heritage, and safety services (*Xwísten (Bridge River)*, 2013, p. 31). This demonstrates that a wide range of enterprises are being pursued by First Nations bands and economic development corporations.

Membership-focused initiatives and approaches are a community’s strategies designed to target membership employment. This category often features policy interventions such as membership job training initiatives. For example the community of Skidegate aims to “create job training program for trades” (*Skidegate Comprehensive Community Plan 2012-2017*, 2017, p. 21). This economic development subcategory also references creating membership skills inventories to maximize employment opportunities for individual members within their community. Tourism
and arts-culture developments often feature tourism operations and opportunities such as, guided excursions or resort and camping operations. This subcategory also utilizes a community’s unique cultural output marketing cultural goods crafted by local artisans or utilizing cultural centres marketed towards non-community members. The three least prevalent areas of economic development are resource extraction (9%), service delivery (7%), and energy development operations (5%), collectively representing only 21% of the total policies discussed under economic development.

The lands and resources – environmental development category is the least prevalent development categories amongst the documents reviewed. Despite this, there is a clear focus amongst the CCPs reviewed. The policy interventions connected to land use and management and conservation and cultural use development themes are the most prevalent and common development initiatives within the lands development category. These policy interventions represent nearly half of the total policy development focus of all communities (47%) (see Figure 5). Furthermore, these two categories are often interconnected.

*Figure 5 Type of intervention, by Lands & Resources - Environmental development theme, percentage out of total, n=70*
For example, Tsawout First Nation aims to:

Protect environmentally and culturally sensitive areas including Tixen Spit, Tetayut Creek, Brackish Meadow/Salt area, and shoreline. This will include providing for more green space through a network of trails and open spaces throughout the plan area. *(Tsawout First Nation, 2011, p. 17)*.

These strategies reflect that amongst many First Nations communities, the cultural use of the land is interwoven into sustainable land management and conservation. Alternatively, resource-based industries are also represented in this development category to a much lesser degree. Of the six various resource categories the most common policy interventions are related to the development themes of marine and fisheries (15%), agriculture (11%), and forestry initiatives (11%). The least common categories are renewables (4%), mining and oil – gas (4%), and other resources (7%). These categories are often not reflected in most of the documents reviewed suggesting that communities in general do not have interest in pursuing development in these areas. This is reaffirmed by the economic development section that demonstrated resource extraction and energy-based policies are seldom pursued as a form of economic development.

The infrastructure development category is quite prevalent across the documents reviewed. Often this category is one of the most thorough sections within the CCPs reviewed. These forms of policy intervention are regularly discussed across the nine related subcategories. All categories are somewhat evenly represented amongst the CCP documents, and most of policy interests range between 11% - 16% prevalence of related intervention. Figure 6 illustrates these data.

*Figure 6 Type of intervention, by Infrastructure Development Theme, percentage of total by theme, n=70*
Infrastructure development provides a wide range of development opportunities as this is a common and thoroughly crafted development category for First Nations. However, the most prevalent policy interventions are related to the development of community facilities and housing, both being 16% of the total interventions discussed. The types of policy interventions that are included under the community facility subcategory are numerous however facilities for mixed community programing are often desired. For example:

Build a community centre, with space for the Elders and youth groups, language and culture programs, activities hosted in the current learning centre and possibly the treaty research centre as well. The desire for dedicated space for these types of activities was voiced repeatedly throughout the CCP engagement process and has been for years (Wei Wai Kum First Nation, 2019, p. 47).

These types of facilities are often featured in this subcategory, still other facilities such as playgrounds, community ‘beautification’ initiatives, band offices, and gathering spaces are also often mentioned. Housing policy interventions often focused on the availability and style of on reserve housing. For example one community mentions, “housing for our citizens is a critical goal - improving the number of houses available, the quality of housing, and the accessibility of housing for all our citizens is important” (Toquaht Nation Government, 2016, p. 24). The housing category also includes interventions related to repairs and renovations. The slight outlier in the infrastructure development category is the subcategory of energy and energy development where this development theme represented only 9% of the total policy interventions mentioned. The few interventions that are discussed often focus on increasing energy efficiency, investing in sustainable power generation, or eliminating dependence on diesel generators (Skidegate Comprehensive Community Plan 2012-2017, 2017, p. 24).

Social development is also a commonly featured development category amongst the First Nations communities reviewed. This theme is the most frequently discussed development area amongst communities and regularly includes policy interventions across several development subcategories. As a result, policy interventions are quite evenly distributed amongst all development subcategories. Figure 7 illustrates these data. culture and language and health and Wellness are the most prevalent subcategories, representing 16% each of the policy interventions being discussed within social development. Often culture and language policies focus on members learning and being involved in their nation’s cultural practices, One such example comes from the Skeetchestn Indian Band whose strategy to “host language immersion camps” includes goals such as, “connection to our land (Secwépemculécw)”, “language (Secwépemcstín) and cultural and spiritual customs and practice define the Skeetchestn community”, “fishing, hunting and plant
gathering for food and medicines has long sustained the community.” (Skeetchestn Indian Band, 2015, p 35).

Health and wellness policy interventions have a range of goals and strategies relating to topics such as, nutrition, access to physical and mental healthcare services, and increasing community participation in healthy forms of recreation are often featured in this development subcategory. Overall, each development subcategory features between 12% and 16% of the total focus of the social development category. In this development category, there is no particular area of focus amongst the First Nations reviewed. Instead, each policy subcategory is quite evenly represented throughout the CCP documents.

Finally, governance development policies are also often featured in the CCP documents reviewed. This section focuses on policies relating to administrative staff, membership communication strategies, general governance procedures and protocols, as well as more specific interventions on governance related policies and law initiatives. This section also includes references to strategies seeking to establish further regional authority or create collaborative relationships with regional actors. Occasionally governance development referenced land claims in a community’s traditional territory. Overall, the share of governance related policies ranges between 17-20% across most themes. The exception is “land claims” which comprises 8% of all governance related policies out of total CCPs (N=70). Figure 8 illustrates these data. The awareness of a community’s governance priorities can lead towards more effective governance of a region as local policy actors can explore collaborative and complimentary policies.
Governance priorities and policies are important for regional actors to understand as they provide opportunities for administrative support between communities and can establish positive relational processes between governing bodies through training opportunities and technical support. Often First Nations governments express a desire to address specific administrative issues. One such example mentioned by the Okanagan Indian Band states the community administration is experiencing, “a lack of integration – working in silos” (Okanagan Indian Band, 2020, p. 11). Awareness of these common challenges faced by governments can aid regional authorities in creating knowledge sharing opportunities between administrations, thereby creating the conditions needed to aid the relationship building process. This section can also provide useful context for a community’s position towards collaboration as it is often stated under governance development. One example states, “objective 4: build meaningful long term and functional relationships with our neighbouring communities, organizations and corporations” (?Aqam First Nation, 2017, p 28).

It is important to understand the high-level context in which First Nations develop their community policy priorities. They should be seen as the first step in creating awareness amongst local policy actors to explore mutually beneficial policy avenues. To create more effective and comprehensive local governing regimes, communities need to be aware of each others’ priorities and then mutual opportunities can be explored. Additional context can be created by using geography as a metric to analyse trends found within the data. The geographic context can be utilized to better understand what differences and similarities exist amongst these community planning documents.
Overall, there is no strong variation by geography—urban, rural, remote.

CCPs have been analysed by geography to understand if degree of remoteness or urbanity impacts the types of development interventions undertaken by a community. Each community is categorised according to urban, semi-urban, rural, and remote based on their ranking found in available census data. This analysis of CPPs reveals more similarities between the various communities than differences. Across the available sample size, each type of region pays a similar amount of attention to any given sub-category. Geography does not frequently appear to be a strong explanatory factor for most development foci. Overall, communities regardless of their geographic classification are heavily focused on themes within the social and infrastructure development of their communities. The percentages, which represent the level of policy prevalence and frequency across the communities reviewed, largely seem to be quite similar between the regions. However, amongst specific subcategories there are notable trends that emerge when geography is used to distinguish between communities. The following sections share an analysis of the main thematic trends observed.

6.2 Economic development

Economic development initiatives are focussed on Business and Commercial developments, Membership focused initiatives and approaches, and Tourism and Arts – Cultural development.

Economic development encompasses “programs, policies, or activities that seek to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life for a community” (What Is Economic Development? - Province of British Columbia, n.d.). Economic development is fundamental to a Nation’s sovereignty as it is a catalyst for independence and self-reliance and is an important foundation for personal and community health and stability. Therefore, understanding what economic development foci exist amongst First Nations is important for all policy makers to consider. The prevalence of Economic development policies is similar across most policy subcategories regardless of geographic category. Most geographic regions reflect similar figures to the general average prevalence levels across policy categories. Figure 9 illustrates these data.
However, several distinct trends do appear where geography may be a factor. The tourism and arts-culture subcategory is a prevalent strategy amongst all communities. This subcategory features noticeably more often amongst communities classified as rural and remote at 88% and 86% respectively. Whereas amongst the urban, and semi-urban communities the rates were 60%, 67% respectively. Figure 10 illustrates these selected policy subcategories.
The difference between the geographic regions may be due to several factors. Remote communities may have less access to large markets and may decrease the effectiveness of traditional business opportunities. Communities may face issues with the delivery of resource-based products to these markets given that remote communities are more likely to face transportation/access related issues. Tourism and culturally based products may be a more viable option for these communities as opportunities for guided tours through remote back-country locations remain popular in British Columbia and these communities poses a strong sense of cultural identity.

Second, urban communities have a slightly larger focus on membership-based initiatives as a strategy of economic development. This sub-category has an emphasis on job-training and skills inventories of community members and might be attributed to the diversity of employment opportunities in urban areas. Urban based First Nations communities may be seeking to tap into this diversity by developing strategies that focus on their individual members accessing the wide range of employment opportunities found beyond their own community’s borders. The third emerging trend found within these dataset is that on average only 50% of communities include resource extraction based economic strategies amongst their economic development goals, giving this subcategory the third lowest prevalence rate on average. There is a greater tendency amongst semi-urban (60%) and rural (76%) communities to include resource extraction based economic strategies as part of their development focus. Whereas only 20% of urban and 43% of remote communities mention policies related to resource extraction. This may be attributed to the access to these resources, or perhaps this relates to communities’ cultural values regarding sustainability and resource development. This explanation may also extend to the energy development subcategory. This subcategory is the least frequently discussed and has only a 27% prevalence amongst the communities reviewed. Furthermore, the energy related policy interventions often discuss pursuing sustainable forms of energy generation such as solar, or wind.

Finally, rural communities have the highest level of perceived interest in benefit-funding and partnership agreement-based policies. This is noteworthy as often resource extraction and benefit funding agreements between First Nations and resource-based companies coincide. Yet it appears that rural communities tend to include these types of partnership strategies at a higher rate than compared to their semi-urban counterparts. In fact, the prevalence amongst semi-urban and rural communities to include economic development interventions across all subcategories is in favour of rural communities. This may explain the difference in socio-economic data gathered between these two community types and is discussed in section 6.9 Socio-economic trends.
6.3 Lands and resources - environmental development

Lands and resources – environmental development policy interventions are focussed on creating land use and management regimes for traditional territories and are strongly related to conservation and cultural land policies.

As was noted in the economic development section, the lands and resources - environmental section similarly does not have any significant differences between the geographic classifications. Figure 11 illustrates the data that has been collected regarding the prevalence of policy interventions related to each of the lands and resources – environmental subcategories.

![Figure 11 Land & resources - environmental development initiatives by theme, share out of total by geographical classification, n = 70](image)

Land use and management, and conservation and cultural development are the dominant type of policy intervention regardless of geographic region. Across each region these policy interests feature prominently in the vast majority of the CCPs reviewed. This suggests that of the CCPs collected, most First Nations in British Columbia are seeking to develop land management policies that feature environmentally sustainable practices. The cultural component to land is also highly important for these communities as traditional practices and environmental stewardship are interwoven throughout the policy goals and strategies discussed in these community planning documents. The Lake Babine Nation provides an example of such interwoven goals within the land and resources section of their CCP. The policy intervention seeks to, “continue to identify, protect and preserve culturally significant areas, wildlife, watersheds, resources, in a responsible and communal way that sees a role of stewardship for all LBN citizens” (Lake Babine Nation, 2017, p 24). Interestingly, remote communities tend to have a noticeably lower than average tendency to include policies related to the conservation and cultural aspects of lands-based
development (see Figure 12). This could be due to the relative abundance of land in remote locations, thereby making this category less pertinent. Besides land management and conservation focused policies, policies relating to the industries of marine/fisheries, agriculture, and forestry, had the second highest tendency to appear as policy interventions across all communities. This demonstrates that while management and conservation seem to be the most common amongst these communities, renewable land-based industries are still somewhat significant.

*Figure 12 Selected lands & resources – environmental development initiatives by theme, share out of total by geographical classification, n=70*

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Given the importance of the fisheries for coastal communities in British Columbia, and the economic and cultural significance of salmon to much of the province, it is perhaps not surprising that marine and fisheries policies have a higher tendency to be included by communities when compared to the other resource-based industries. Forestry policies appear to be the second most common interventions for these communities apart from urban communities. Only 10% of the total of urban communities mention any policies related to the forestry sector. This may relate to a lack of access to timber supplies for these communities. Finally, mining - oil, and gas policy interventions were uncommon amongst all CCPs reviewed. Most communities chose not to address these industries within their CCP policies. Urban, semi-urban, and rural communities all seldom include policy interventions in this area. The percentage of communities discussing this industry is 10% (urban), 0% (semi-urban), and 7% (rural). However, amongst remote communities this policy subcategory appears to be marginally more common (29% prevalence). This may possibly be attributed to the lucrative nature of this high-intensity industry which is only 7% less prevalent than the total of remote communities discussing forestry policies (36% prevalence). It is necessary to note that often the mining – oil and gas policies discussed seek to ensure certain
conditions are met before they are approved by the community. For example, the community of ?Esdilagh mentions, “We are currently working with Gibraltar on ensuring that the mine is not contributing to contamination of food in the area... The objective of this planning is to identify community values as it relates to activities on the traditional lands and ensure that all industry and government respect these values on the land” (?Esdilagh First Nation, 2010, p 6). The community goes on to mention:

Conventional oil and gas development is not an allowable activity in plan units in the northern portion of the plan area. Unconventional gas development is not supported due to community concerns on the environmental uncertainties with the development. Additional information on oil and gas development including water management is required by the community prior to any development in the Kwadacha Nation plan area.” (Community of Kwadacha, 2017, p 24).

This demonstrates that even amongst the communities who have made space for such industries to operate within their traditional territory, conditions must first be met for these operations to take place. Finally, on average rural communities had the highest tendency to include policy interventions relating to resource-based industries, apart from the “mining - oil and gas” subcategory. This could be due to their access to these types of resources and their proximity to available markets for these goods. However, amongst all other geographic regions resource-based lands policies remain relatively unpopular. Figure 13 reflects the tendency of each geographic region to include resource-based policy interventions in their CCPs.

*Figure 13 Selected resource development initiatives by theme, share out of total by geographical classification, n =70*
6.4 Infrastructure development

Infrastructure development is mostly focussed on housing and community facilities related development.

Infrastructure development has a high prevalence of policy interventions across the various the related subcategories and amongst most communities reviewed. It is in this area where significant attention on goals and strategies is demonstrated by the majority of the reviewed CCPs. Referring to Figure 14, this graph shows the prevalence of all sub-categories collected for all geographic regions. In particular, the policy interventions related to housing, and community facilities are prevalent across all four of the geographic classifications. In both cases urban communities have the highest tendency to include these policy interventions. 100% of urban communities include some type of intervention relating to these categories. However, the other three geographic categories also have high rates of policy prevalence, ranging between 80 – 84% of communities including interventions related to housing and community facility development.

![Figure 14 Infrastructure development initiatives by theme, share out of total by geographical classification, n = 70](image)

This signals that these goals and strategies are important areas of development for First Nations communities across the province of British Columbia and geography is not a significant factor. Transportation and roads related interventions have the third highest prevalence amongst the communities reviewed. On average 78% of communities include some sort of in policy intervention that relates to this sub-category. However, all (100%) of urban communities include some form of policy intervention related to transportation and roads and often this development subcategory focuses on the transportation needs of its membership. For example the Musqueam First Nation intends to “explore providing transportation for community health and recreation activities, medical needs, and events” (Musqueam First Nation, 2018, p 51). The prevalence of these types of policy intervention suggests that transportation and interconnectedness between regional communities poses some form of barrier for Indigenous communities. Transportation is a
particularly important policy area as issues related to inter-community connectivity can have knock-on effects which impact other socio-economic forms of community development. This is identified in the Pauquachin Nation’s CCP:

Community members face different barriers when trying to gain employment. One of the major barriers is transportation, as the Coles Bay reserve is not frequently served by public transportation and many residents do not own a private vehicle. Young parents face the difficulty of finding work that fits into their children’s schedule, as many employers require work during the evenings and weekends.” (The Pauquachin Nation, 2015, p 29).

The higher-than-average prevalence of transportation and roads related policy interventions amongst urban communities may be due to jurisdictional “blind-spots”.

Urban and remote communities tend to have lower levels of policy prevalence regarding waste removal and processing (60% and 50% respectively). This possibly stems from the interconnectivity of urban communities and the abundance of land that remote communities have access to. Conversely, that data demonstrates that semi-urban and rural communities have higher tendencies to include policies relating to these forms of infrastructure development, (80% and 71% respectively). This could be due to the greater distances between communities thereby creating less access to waste removal and processing services. Finally, a pattern emerges demonstrating semi-urban communities as outliers in several categories. In three of seven policy intervention areas, semi-urban communities have noticeably lower prevalence rates of policies regarding transportation and roads, energy and energy generation, and emergency planning and preparedness. Furthermore, semi-urban communities have the highest tendency to include policies regarding water related infrastructure and appear to be an outlier in this category. These communities often have a noticeably higher or lower tendency to include policy interventions in several subcategories across each of the five major development themes. This trend often presents information that may not be intuitive, and further investigation into what conditions are present amongst semi-urban areas may be considered.

6.5 Social development

Social development initiatives focus predominantly on culture and language, health and wellness, and education and training related interventions. Most subcategories are well represented amongst the CCPs reviewed.

The most prevalent policy subcategories are found within the social development category. Referring to Figure 15, all urban communities reviewed have a high tendency to pursue policy development in culture and language, health and wellness, individual and family development, and community development and engagement policies.
Rural communities have the highest tendency to include education and training related policy interventions at a prevalence rate of 94%. Often education and training related policies look towards encouraging better outcomes for students within the K-12 school system by supporting and celebrating academic achievement. Occasionally, these initiatives also seek to increase a nation’s cultural presence within the broader school system. An example comes from the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw nations who seek to design a schools based project delivering cultural sensitivity training for school district staff. The community intends to, “develop a workshop to teach others about the GN community, history and culture, including activities designed to promote understanding and cultural sensitivity” (Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw, 2016, p 29). This policy area also frequently includes strategies to support membership employment training. Other policy interventions seek to extend education and training opportunities to their adult membership. For example, the Halalt First Nation uses this section to express their desire for more “Training Opportunities (Career workshops, job shadowing and work experience, mentoring, small business management, etc.)” in order to assist their membership (Halalt First Nation, 2018, p 23).

Remote communities have high tendencies to include social development policy interventions across most subcategories. However, remote communities are never the highest nor lowest amongst the development themes observed, with the exception of the policy category of community development and engagement. Here only 75% of remote communities include some form of policy intervention relating to community development and engagement. This makes remote communities the least likely to pursue these types of policy interventions across all geographic categories.

Semi-urban communities have comparable levels of policy prevalence across all subcategories of development. This has not generally been the trend as semi-urban communities have been the outliers in several categories. However, in the subcategory of community safety,
semi-urban communities are a low-end outlier with 53% of communities pursuing some sort of community safety related policy intervention. In this policy area, semi-urban communities have a significantly lower tendency to include community safety related policy interventions when compared to the next lowest prevalence rates, found amongst remote communities (68%). Yet, the community safety subcategory captures a variety of policy interventions related to the theme. Often communities seek to establish positive relationships with local law enforcement or ensure that members “are aware of human/wild animal interface issues” and occasionally related policy interventions focus on promoting workplace safety initiatives (Ditidaht First Nation, 2017, p 32). Other times community safety related initiatives include ensuring that vulnerable community members have access to safe shelters within the community. Despite the range of possible policies semi-urban communities tend to less frequently mention these forms of intervention. Conversely, rural communities have the highest tendency to include policies relating to community safety at a prevalence rate of 76%.

Despite the range of prevalence across the various policy interventions, social development is often the most prevalent category amongst the CCPs reviewed. This suggests that when local policy actors seek to develop relational planning processes with neighbouring First Nations, consideration on how a plan will impact the social sphere of these communities will be important to the success of the policy development.

6.6 Governance

_Governance-related development initiatives are focused on policies related to governance and self-governance, communications policies, and enhancing the capacity of a community’s administrative staff and structure._

Of the total communities reviewed (n=70) the most frequent policy interventions relate to establishing systems of governance and pursuing forms of self-governance (79%), followed by establishing stronger policies around communications (77%), then providing support for administrative staff (75%), next is establishing regional partnerships or regional authority (71%), followed by policy and laws (68%), and finally least mentioned amongst the CCPs is land claims and treaties (34%), refer to Figure 16.
In the land claims and treaties subcategory, communities on occasion mention specific land claim issues such as, “Reclaim unseeded [sic] territory (golf course, Chehalis River Hatchery, Weaver Creek, Campsites)” (Sts’ailes, n.d., p 71). However, more often this policy category is used to reaffirm aboriginal-rights and title within traditional territories or reference pursued areas of interest relating to self-governance agreements and treaty. One such example is from the Splatsin First Nation, where the community mentions within their planning document that they aim to “assert jurisdiction and traditional practices of Title and Rights over land and water resources within the Splatsin territory, using suitable financial and physical resources and community engagement” (Splatsin, 2013, p 21). Generally, the prevalence of policy interventions relating to land claims and treaties are similar across most geographic categories. However, urban communities had a noticeably higher rate of related policy interventions mentioned in their CCPs. This could be due to the restricted access to land in urban areas and the increased economic potential that these lands hold. Additionally, the need for First Nations to assert their authority in these areas may take on greater importance as municipalities tend to have much larger populations and access to resources compared to their Indigenous neighbours.

Rural communities have a slightly higher tendency to include governance related policy interventions in four of the six development subcategories. These communities have the highest tendencies to include policy interventions regarding communications, administrative staff and structure, governance and self governance, and policy and laws. This suggests that rural communities have the most interest in governance reform. Conversely, remote communities have the lowest tendency to include governance related policy interventions in four of the six
development areas. These areas being, administrative staff and structure, governance and self-governance, policy and laws, and regional authority and partnership strategies.

The prevalence of policy interventions related to regional authority and partnership strategies somewhat echo the data provided by Dr. Alcantara (see Phase 4: Data analysis - page 33, above). However, 100% of the urban communities reviewed included policy interventions that pursue regional authority or partnership strategies. Comparing this to the data provided by Dr. Alcantara and referring to Figure 17, only 30% of the urban First Nations reviewed had some sort of existing municipal – First Nations agreement. These data implies that while these communities might not have agreements in place, the desire to have a relationship-based agreement is present. The Leq’á:mel First Nation is an example of this. Leq’á:mel’s planning document features a policy goal related to shared servicing that reads, “Leq’á:mel First Nation will work with the District of Mission, the City of Chilliwack, City of Abbotsford, and the Fraser Valley Regional District, and other land developers to look at mutually beneficial servicing agreements and other infrastructure upgrades.” (Leq’á:mel First Nation, 2015, p 10). According to the data collected by Dr. Alcantara, The Leq’á:mel community did not have an existing municipal agreement of any kind during the time of data collection (2014).

Of the total communities whose CCPs have been reviewed, only 41% have existing municipal-First Nations type agreements. The highest proportion of the communities that have an existing agreement are in the Semi-Urban category (60%). Less than 50% of the communities in the other three geographic groupings have some sort of existing agreement in place. Comparing these data to the prevalence of communities discussing these types of policy interventions, demonstrates that there is a gap between what is happening ‘on-the-ground’ and the desire amongst communities to

Figure 17 Existing FN-municipal agreements vs expressed desire for similar types of policy in community planning documents, n = 70
pursue such agreements. These data suggest that the current state of this type of multi-level cooperation is not meeting the desire amongst First Nations communities for these types of inter-governmental relationships, and there is room for these partnerships to grow.

6.7 Community engagement

*Most communities are perceived to have either medium or high levels of community engagement when designing their community plans. The policy interventions discussed represent community values.*

When creating the overall research design, a category was created that tracks general impressions regarding the level of involvement of community members when the design of a community’s CCP was taking place, see Figure 18. Band membership insights reflect what areas of development are the most essential resulting from the lived experiences and perspectives of community members. As such this represents a truthful representation of community values and policy priorities. Decisions on whether a CCP had low, medium, or high levels of involvement are influenced by how many forms of engagement are used when communities design their CCP.

*Figure 18 Perceived levels of community engagements amongst communities reviewed n=70*

Examples of community engagement include references to strategies such as: newsletters, community information sessions, youth and Elder visioning sessions, community surveys and questionnaires, and the frequency of community member design gatherings. This category is also influenced by how often community engagement is reflected in the planning areas. This is expressed when policy strategies are connected to survey results, questionnaire responses, or references to organic moments which occurred during community gatherings. Most of the CCPs reviewed demonstrate effective engagement strategies between CCP planning and their membership. Many of these communities are represented in the medium and high categories of perceived community engagement, particularly the urban, semi-urban, and rural communities. These two categories represent 64% of the communities reviewed, while the “none mentioned”
and low categories represent only 37% of communities reviewed. However, in these two categories remote communities feature more often than do the other geographic groups of communities. Finally, it should be noted that these data may not be the most accurate in this category since often the final versions of the CCPs were unavailable and several working drafts were used in these data set. Furthermore, the none-mentioned category does not comment on the level of community engagement conducted and simply reflects that a CCP chose not to include references to community engagement. This does not intend to suggest that no engagement was conducted.

6.8 Overall development trends

*Regardless of geographic classification, communities tended to follow a similar trend.*

Geography plays a role in several specific areas of community development but does not have a significant influence on the overall patterns of development foci. When these data are viewed despite the geographies, focusing on the average cumulative levels of policy intervention prevalence across all development themes, one can gain a clearer understanding of where the main planning focus of BC First Nations communities lay. This is demonstrated in Table 2, comparing the average policy prevalence rates of each development theme amongst all communities regardless of geographic regions.

*Table 2 Average policy prevalence rates of each development theme regardless of geography, n=70*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Development Focus</th>
<th>Total Averages of all Geographic Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lands &amp; Resources (Environment) Development</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Development</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lands and resources - environmental development is consistently the development category that had the lowest tendency to include policy interventions amongst the CCPs reviewed. Whereas social development is the category that has the highest tendency to include a range of policy interventions amongst all communities. Referring to Figure 19, there is a clear trend that demonstrates the prevalence of development policies increasing amongst communities regardless of geography. In every development category each geographic region seems to have a higher tendency to include relative development policy interventions.
The minor exception is amongst remote communities, where economic development policies feature slightly more often than governance policies (57% and 54% respectively). Rural communities have a higher tendency to include economic development, as well as the lands and resources – environmental development strategies within their CCPs. Whereas urban communities feature more prominently when discussing policies relating to infrastructure, social, and governance types of development. However, another point of note is that throughout these development categories, semi-urban communities regularly have a lower tendency to include policy interventions in several categories. This is often represented as outlying cases of what might be expected. In this instance, semi-urban communities feature less often in infrastructure development and social development when compared to any of the other three geographic categories. Therefore, for policy makers to make the most meaningful relational impacts between local level actors, collaborating on development topics that hold significance to Indigenous communities is likely the most effective strategy.

6.9 Socio-economic trends

*Urban communities on average ranked the highest. Semi-urban communities on average rank lower than rural communities in all socio-economic indicators.*

It should be noted that this dataset is imperfect as the census data used relies on self-reporting. Therefore, the complete dataset is unavailable. Still, this information illustrates an important picture and one that provides insights into how geography impacts the development of these communities.
Semi-urban communities tend not to fare as well as rural communities in all categories reviewed. This seems counter intuitive given the general downward sloping trend from urban to remote communities. Figure 20 highlights this pattern and illustrates the median household incomes and averages for each geographic category.

Figure 20 Median household incomes by geographic classification, n = 36

Urban communities tend to have a higher level of income when compared to all other geographies. However, semi-urban communities tend to have on average a lower-level income when compared to rural communities. Remote communities have on average the lowest level of income out of the four geographic regions. A parallel pattern emerges when viewing reported unemployment rates for each geographic location, refer to Figure 21.
In this metric, urban communities have on average the lowest unemployment rates when compared to the other geographic groupings. Semi-urban communities have slightly higher rates of unemployment when compared to rural communities, and remote communities have the highest rates overall. This pattern is once again present when examining the Community Well Being Index Scores. Urban communities rate the highest, while semi-urban communities rank slightly below their rural neighbours, and remote communities are at the tail. This is illustrated in Figure 22 below.

**Figure 21 Unemployment rates by geographic classification, n = 52**

![Unemployment rates by geographic classification](image)

**Figure 22 Community Wellbeing Index Scores by geographic classification, n=53**

![Community Wellbeing Index Scores by geographic classification](image)
One potential reason for the socio-economic differences between semi-urban and rural communities may be connected to the difference in the prevalence of economic development policies. Rural communities have higher rates of prevalence in all economic development subcategories versus their semi-urban counterparts. Using the average for policy prevalence amongst all interventions in economic development, and median household income a slight correlation does seem to appear, refer to Figure 23 and Figure 24.

On average, more rural communities have a higher policy prevalence rate in every economic subcategory compared to their semi-urban counterparts. While economic development does not paint a complete picture in terms of community wellbeing, in this example it may contribute to the socio-economic differences found between semi-urban and rural communities. Figure 25 illustrates the differences in prevalence of semi-urban and rural communities exploring rates of policy interventions across all economic subcategories.
6.10 Community level analysis

Economic and social developments have more diversified policy interventions. Infrastructure development is predominantly focused on policies related to housing and community facilities.

During the data collection and analysis phase, individual policy interventions per development sub-category were recorded for each community. These numbers represent how many unique interventions a community considered when creating their community’s development plan. Due the differences in the overall quality of these documents the numbers of the individual policy interventions vary dramatically across development themes. Some communities explore fewer and more thoroughly considered policy interventions, while other communities seemingly approached these planning documents with more ambitious and exploratory ideas for possible policy interventions. Others include many hyper-specific policies. As a result, there are numerous outliers in the data that are on the high and low end of the spectrum. Furthermore, within the subcategories reviewed there is range in the level of detail amongst the individual policy interventions. For example, within the popular Economic development strategy involving tourism, some interventions are quite broad. For example, Adams Lake Indian Band states, “Review of tourism development opportunities” (Adams Lake Indian Band, 2015, p 51). While others are more specific and detailed such as the interventions listed by Boston Bar First Nation: “Start guided tours, e.g., gold panning, arrowheads, etc” and “Develop destination hotel or cabins (rustic) – tepees, yurts” (Boston Bar DRAFT CCP, n.d. p 7). This pattern is present across every development theme and subcategory reviewed. Having the awareness of where communities’ interests lie on a high-level can provide guidance for policy makers and creates space for conversations. Whereas, exploring specific development opportunities on a regional level will need to be done on an individual basis.

Graphs have been created illustrating these numbers across the development categories studied. These graphs provide insights into the variety of ways First Nations communities are
pursuing planning and development policies. Figure 26, below illustrates the average numbers of unique economic development interventions being considered by First Nations communities. Business and commercial development on average appears to have the highest number of interventions considered out of all the economic development policies represented. Membership focused initiatives and approaches and tourism and arts-culture economic pursuits also featured more often amongst the communities reviewed, however, the category focused on membership initiatives has a slightly higher median than the tourism focused category. As previously mentioned, this development theme has only 63% of communities choosing to address economic development policies in their CCPs, thereby making it the second least frequent development category amongst the communities reviewed. However, the notable range of economic policy interventions suggests that when communities do include economic development policies, there is a significant amount of diversity in the economic policies they choose to pursue.

*Figure 26 Amount and range of individual economic development interventions by theme*
There are several outliers for most of the policy categories and in general there is a wide range of interventions considered amongst the communities that chose to include economic development interventions. One extreme outlier is not included to preserve readability. The community of Stswecem’c Xgat’tem First Nation (SXFN) includes 99 unique intervention strategies amongst the Tourism and Arts-Culture policy category. Examples of this include reference to numerous specific culture based attractions and venues, such as, “Fasting Sites”, “Gathering Sites”, “Culturally Modified Trees”, “Pit Cooking”, and multiple variations of possible tourism operations (Stswecem’c Xgat’tem First Nation, 2018, p 28). Whereas it is more common that communities include similar policy interventions under one heading. However, the large amount of individual policy interventions does suggest that there is indeed a keen interest within this community to pursue tourism focused economic development.

Lands and resources – environmental development is a theme where communities tend to focus on pursuing policy interventions related to two main priorities. Referring to Figure 27, land use and management, and conservation and cultural policy interventions featured regularly amongst the communities studied.

Figure 27 Amount and range of individual lands & resources - environmental development initiatives by theme

Most communities reviewed tend to include policy interventions related to land use and management, and conservation and cultural policies. These two development subcategories are often the largest focus within lands related development, and they also include the highest average range of unique policy interventions. Of the other development interventions featured, resource-
based operations were significantly less of a focus for communities and often featured far fewer unique policy interventions per category. These data provides insight that for many First Nations their land managements regimes and conservation policies are the main priority, and extraction-based industries take on a less significant role.

In Figure 28 that focuses on infrastructure development a higher range of policy interventions across development subcategories is seen. Several unique policy interventions across the infrastructure subcategories are discussed amongst many of the communities reviewed.

*Figure 28 Amount and range of individual infrastructure development interventions by theme*

This suggests that infrastructure development is a key priority for many of these communities. One extreme outlier has been removed to preserve the readability of the graph. The community of Tla-amin First Nation includes ~65 unique policy interventions in the water subcategory. In this subcategory, The Tla-amin community includes common policy interventions, such as “Sub Goal 3f) - Upgrade water treatment plant (buildings and equipment)” (Tla-amin Planning Team, 2007, p. 97). However, due to the hyper specificity of their related policy interventions they are an outlier in this category. For example this community includes individual policy strategies such as...
“Develop handout on what water plant is, works there and why it is important to SFN”, “Install gate valves in certain places for fire protection” (Tla-amin Planning Team, 2007, p. 105), and “Develop shift schedule – rotate weekends” within this development section of their CCP (Tla-amin Planning Team, 2007, p. 104).

Most communities include interventions tied to community facilities and housing. These policy areas also include the highest amount of individual policy interventions. Here, communities have on average between two and fifteen unique policy interventions connected to these infrastructure development areas. However, unlike other overall development themes previously discussed, most communities include several development policy interventions across the range of development subcategories. Examples of the variety of policy interventions related to infrastructure development include:

- Expanding or repairing water treatment facilities,
- Road maintenance and expanding transportation options for community members,
- Installing solar panels on existing buildings,
- Housing construction and repair,
- Constructing community facilities such as green houses, parks and recreation spaces and other community use spaces,
- Creating recycling and compost programs as well as general waste services,
- Creating community emergency plans for specific emergencies such as fires and earthquakes, and
- General infrastructure maintenance programs.

This suggests that there is a wide range of meaningful opportunities for infrastructure development projects as this area appears to have numerous varied policy priorities amongst the communities reviewed.

Social development is another category where communities often record several unique policy interventions across multiple policy areas, see Figure . Often this section is the most thoroughly developed policy area amongst the communities reviewed. In this category there is a higher tendency to include multiple policy interventions across development subcategories. Social development is not only the most prevalent development theme discussed amongst the CCPs reviewed but, this area also includes a wide range of individual policy interventions across all development subcategories. Not one single area was targeted for social development. Instead, communities often have a diverse range of policies targeting the central goal of advancing community social development. Therefore, this category should be considered the main priority for communities, as often the most well developed and varied planning initiatives are created for this section of a community’s CCP.
On average, every development category includes several interventions. The areas targeting health and wellness, education and training, and community development and engagement are the three categories with on average the most individual interventions and highest average ranges of individual policy interventions. Particularly amongst the community development and engagement subcategory, this subcategory’s primary goal focuses on creating community cohesion. K’omoks provides an example of the diversity of policy options available within community development by including stating their goal is to, “encourage community-supported events that appeal to all generations, such as sports days, canoe trips, traveling to KFN lands, visits to other Nations, camping, picnics, and game days.” (K’omoks First Nation, 2014, p 57). Municipalities could support such initiatives by offering venues to hold community events. Local venues such as recreation centres can also serve First Nations communities by creating spaces to hold language classes, health and wellness programs, and other forms of desired education and training strategies. Municipalities may not have a direct role in the social development strategies of First Nations, however opportunities to assist First Nations neighbours do exist if desired.

The governance section also featured well developed and diversified policy areas, however overall fewer communities gave this section a high degree of attention as compared to Infrastructure development and Social Development. Figure illustrates the data below. To preserve readability two extreme outliers have been removed from this chart. These outliers came
from the Tla-amin community and includes over eighty individual policy interventions related to the categories of administrative staff and structure, and governance and self-governance.

Figure 30 Amount and range of individual Governance development interventions by theme

There is opportunity for collaboration in this policy area, as communities in British Columbia are making efforts to work together by establishing positive working relationships between governments (Alcantara and Nelles, 2014, p. 602). Many First Nations communities are seeking to increase their staff’s administrative capacity and explore strategies related to communications with their broader communities. These categories often have relatable goals to similar issues faced by municipal governments. For example, the community of ?Aqam has an administrative goal that seeks to develop and manage their “human resources to maximize… effectiveness, efficiency and accountability as individuals and as a community administration” (?Aqam First Nation, 2017, p. 28). All organizations share challenges related to human resources and this is an opportunity for knowledge sharing between administrations. In general, this area could provide potential opportunities for regional authorities to provide partnership and training assistance between communities as expressed by the related policy goals within communities’ CCPs.
6.11 Collaborative development planning amongst Municipal and First Nations governments in British Columbia

Municipalities in British Columbia are currently practicing limited forms of collaborative relationships with First Nations communities. However, examples of more meaningful forms of collaboration do exist.

The current state of development planning relationships between Municipal and Indigenous communities is varied. A review of several Official Community Plans (OCPs) released by municipalities in British Columbia reveals that there is a significant range in the level of involvement that Indigenous communities have when regional planning initiatives are undertaken. After reviewing six official community plans released by small and medium sized municipalities, it does seem that there are some examples of effective relationship-based approaches to municipal planning. However, there is also room for improvement amongst other communities as there is no provincial standard for municipal-Indigenous engagement strategies. The OCPs reviewed belonged to the municipalities of:

- Nanaimo,
- Chilliwack,
- Kamloops,
- Williams Lake,
- Prince George, and
- Terrace

Upon reviewing these OCPs, each document recognises that their municipalities now occupy the traditional lands of First Nations communities. This recognition is usually given in the preamble sections of the OCP, not unlike a “land acknowledgement”, and found within sections that discuss the history of the city and the surrounding area. Additionally, each document did reference performing consultations and mentions establishing partnerships with Indigenous communities. This suggests that some level of Indigenous involvement in the administrative and decision-making process is considered. However, even amongst these six OCPs the evidence of meaningful and effective collaborative processes varies to a significant degree. It should be noted that the plans which seemingly lacked in effective collaborative processes often use vague references such as “consultation” or “engagement” when referring to “First Nations partners”. Often these references are made in the context of engaging other stakeholders within the community. For example, the city of Kamloops’s official community plan often referred to partnerships with First Nations in the following manner. The Kamloops Official Community Plan the document states that, “available data on community demographics, projected growth patterns, and historical development trends were integrated with public, stakeholder, and First Nations input to develop land use policies that are both evidence-based and responsive to community needs.” (City of Kamloops, 2017, p. A-7). Additionally, in the “Social Planning” section of the Kamloops Official Community Plan this goal and explanation occurs:
**GOAL:** Support the development of partnerships, policies, and programs that strengthen and enhance the well-being of local residents -
Encourage and pursue multi-sector partnerships with the regional health authority, the local school district, Aboriginal peoples, social service agencies, and community associations to support community well-being by addressing the social determinants of health. (City of Kamloops, 2017, p. D-37)

The city of Kamloops is not alone in this regard. The northern British Columbian city of Prince George also lacks detailed policies when referring to cooperation with the Indigenous community. Like Kamloops, Prince George sparsely mentions Indigenous communities in the city’s OCP and when it does, the documents often associate First Nations with other ‘stakeholder’ groups. In one section the OCP mentions, “Opportunities exist to integrate underutilized segments of the population into the local work force, including women, First Nations, mature workers, students, immigrants, and people with disabilities” (City of Prince George, 2011, p. 27).

Vague language and policy procedures are present throughout the Kamloops and Prince George OCPs whenever a collaborative process is alluded to. The reference to Indigenous communities as stakeholders or the simple mention of Indigenous ‘consultation’ is not solely indicative of an underwhelming municipal-First Nations collaborative governance process. However, this vague language in addition to an absence of explicit examples of programs or policies does indeed suggest that effective relational planning protocols between the municipality and First Nations communities may be lacking.

The literature has suggested that within Canada, and elsewhere, cooperative based planning processes between municipalities and Indigenous governments still seems to largely be an after-thought in the planning process. Often Indigenous planning and engagement is sought in the form of “consultation” which often translates to input once plans have largely already been created. Furthermore, these communities are viewed as “stakeholders” whose views may be considered important but do not actually have any jurisdictional weight behind them. This can result in an underwhelming final plan for those Indigenous “stakeholder” communities. More effective collaborative planning practices can be achieved if all governments “develop relational approaches to planning and governance with Indigenous communities based on values of mutualism, reciprocity, and sovereignty” (Bouvier and Walker, 2018, p. 133). Of the OCPs reviewed, only two of these documents demonstrate such an effective relational based planning process. The cities of Chilliwack and Williams Lake demonstrate policies and strategies that emphasize effective municipal-First Nations coexistence and coproduction. Common amongst these OCPs is that planners recognize First Nations inherent rights to self government, and thereby acknowledge their role as independent policy actors within the region.

The City of Chilliwack’s OCP begins in a similar manner as the other OCPs and references the Indigenous populations’ long-standing history within the area. However, even at this stage the Chilliwack OCP begins to separate itself by paying credit to the Sto:lo Nation’s role in contributing to the current landscape of community development within the shared geographic area. Here, the
document cites the Sto:lo’s contribution towards natural resource development, cultural tourism, education and economic development partnerships, sustainable resource management, and the overall employment within the upper Fraser Valley (City of Chilliwack, 2015, p. 10). The City of Chilliwack goes on to demonstrate an understanding and willingness to consider the role that First Nations jurisdiction can have when creating policies and setting development goals. This is presented when discussing the city’s growth policy, in this section the city planners include the following policy consideration:

**POLICIES: Goal 1 Manage Growth Responsibly – 6. Co-ordinate with First Nations**

Work with First Nations to co-ordinate future developments in the City and on First Nation Reserves that share common boundaries, or otherwise affect each other in terms of traffic management, servicing, utility system capacity planning, environmental design, recreational facility planning, or social/ economic/cultural activities. (City of Chilliwack, 2015, p. 26).

The Chilliwack community plan has multiple examples that involve setting out clear and detailed measures of involvement and references specific development areas. This was not present in other OCPs which communicated vague relational planning process.

Additional collaborative approaches to municipal planning are discussed and concern a proposed transportation network development. In this proposed development, the plan discusses the creation transportation corridors between two neighbourhoods (Sardis and Vedder), and the need to involve the First Nations government in the planning process. Here the plan clearly accounts for First Nations reserves in the development of these corridors and mentions that its goal is to create an integrated transportation network. Chilliwack’s plan states:

To supplement the three main corridors, secondary north-south routes are needed. Between Sardis and Vedder these north south routes are basically non-existing due to the presence of the ALR (Agricultural Land Reserve) and First Nation reserves” … “In addition, consultation with the First Nations is essential to the development of an integrated road network between the reserves and City neighbourhoods. (City of Chilliwack, 2015, p. 48).

The Chilliwack OCP expresses a similar approach to planning when discussing the development of a sanitary sewerage system. Stating that, “First Nations reserves are an integral part of the utility system, early consultation with First Nations is crucial” (City of Chilliwack, 2015, p. 52). The Chilliwack OCP demonstrates that the Indigenous communities and governments sharing the region are much more than an afterthought in the planning process. They are not simply another stakeholder group that are meant to be consulted for their input, instead Indigenous governments are treated as important planning partners that are to be engaged early and on a regular basis in order to create meaningful collaborative development plans that serve both communities.

Effective OCPs reflect that First Nations governments are policy actors by acknowledging their role in delivering programs, providing services, and their inherent rights to the land.
Furthermore, these planning documents create space by including input from First Nations governments earlier in the policy development phases and are considerate of the distinctive rights and title held by Indigenous communities. For instance, the small central British Columbian city of Williams Lake created a municipal planning document that best exemplifies a collaborative regional planning process. Every OCP reviewed acknowledged the Indigenous presence in the area, often through a historical reference to a First Nations’ traditional territory, however the Williams Lake community plan goes a step further. The Williams Lake OCP goes to considerable effort throughout its various policies to ensure Indigenous planning and participation is reflected. There is clear evidence that the planning team considered and acknowledged the role that Indigenous sovereignty has within the regional planning context. The Williams Lake OCP includes a direct statement regarding the sovereignty of Indigenous governments and their role in the region. In the document the following statement establishes the collaborative tone for the overall implementation of the OCP:

The City of Williams Lake recognizes that our First Nations Bands are a recognized form of government and in addition to historical significant (sic) is why partnering with First Nations has been singled out as a community priority [emphasis added] (City of Williams Lake, 2011, p. 72).

Here the City of Williams Lake provides the acknowledgment of jurisdiction and sets the stage for collaboration that is based on the principle that First Nations governments are much more than another stakeholder group to be consulted. It is significant to note that the Williams Lake OCP recognizes the mutually beneficial opportunities that collaboration between government administrations can provide. The document includes the following statement:

Coordinating the delivery of services ensures that gaps in services are identified and duplication of programs is eliminated. Strengthening organizations governance so that they can deliver quality services and explore new and innovative programs is important to a small community like Williams Lake where social service organizations serve a wide region. (City of Williams Lake, 2011, p. 28).

The Williams Lake plan includes numerous references to collaboration throughout the plan in nearly every policy area. However, the OCP further separates itself from the other documents reviewed by including a substantial section titled “Partnering with First Nations”. This section provides multiple examples of more specific policy points, some of which are:

**Facilitation and Coordination**

The following policies can assist in the establishment of mechanisms that ensure an open and comprehensive exchange of ideas and information to promote a common understanding of issues.
PFN.1 Recognize and address local First Nation government interests in the municipal decision-making processes.
PFN.2 Revisit existing policies, programs, and strategies to ensure that First Nations needs, ideas, and opportunities are identified.
PFN.3 Collaborate with the T’xelcencm and Xat-șüll bands, and other governmental and community partners, to support the social and economic well-being of First Nations living in Williams Lake.
PFN.4 Continue and enhance information sharing with First Nation communities.” (City of Williams Lake, 2011, p. 75).

The examples of effective partnership strategies in the Williams Lake are numerous. However most importantly the municipality recognizes that Indigenous governments have distinct rights and title and are important policy actors within the region. Taking active steps towards creating positive working relationships through planning partnerships is a key strategy employed by the city. Often municipal planners seem to consider and even encourage mutual opportunities for collaboration and recognizing that collaboration benefits both communities. This differs from weaker OCPs’ approach where First Nations consultation seems to be a much more tokenistic exercise and often these relationships are deferred to provincial and federal governments. Through the direct municipal-First Nations relationship, Williams Lake and neighbouring Indigenous communities can explore development opportunities that ensure “that gaps in services are identified and duplication of programs is eliminated” (City of Williams Lake, 2011, p. 28). Williams Lake takes on this relationship directly and its method to municipal planning reflects the values of mutualism, reciprocity, and sovereignty as identified by Bouvier and Walker (2018, p. 133), and as a result the city can better explore mutually beneficial development opportunities.

6.12 Conclusion

CCPs are an emerging form of regional planning documents and there is great potential for use beyond their immediate communities.

Indigenous communities are important regional policy actors who are undergoing their own planning processes. Having a broad understanding of the trends in First Nations planning sheds light on regional issues which are not currently being addressed by the municipal planning processes. The insight provided by the policy interventions and foci of First Nations communities create avenues to pursue more holistic regional planning initiatives. Creating collaborative planning processes provides opportunities to improve upon the wider context of regional development. Therefore, municipal planning should account for the policy directions that Indigenous planners are focusing on, instead of carrying on with planning practices that reinforce disenfranchisement and segregation on a local level. Collaborative planning is essential to create stronger and more comprehensive community plans for everyone living in these territories. The high-level data gathered and illustrated provides a gateway of understanding, and creates the opportunities needed to discuss and establish future planning initiatives between communities.
CCPs are relatively new planning documents, and their potential is still being explored. These findings provide the opportunity to view CCPs as important planning resources that extend beyond the context of local First Nations communities and can be used to inform policy makers. The data gathered highlights that generally these communities seem to share more in common than they have as differences. However, in several specific areas there are key differences in development focus amongst specific policy intervention subcategories. Understanding the similarities and differences amongst First Nations communities can be an important source of knowledge for policy makers who intend on creating more effective regional policies and create stronger working relationships with Indigenous governments. Furthermore, accounting for the various policy directions discussed in this dataset can lead to a more effective roll out of services and programs and creating space for Indigenous planning priorities at the local level can create policies that extend beyond the narrow confines of regional jurisdiction. The trends discussed assist in generating additional discussion opportunities between communities based on high-level development priorities. Furthermore, these data highlight broad trends across the province, yet it can be applied across all levels of policy as the information accurately expresses development goals which have been directly communicated by First Nations communities.

Chapter summary

The key findings from the analysis are:

- Infrastructure Development and Social Development made up 23% and 24% respectively of the total policy interventions mentioned by all communities, n=70. The fewest policy interventions discussed amongst total communities related to Lands & Resources – Environmental Development and Governance Development. Both representing 16% of all policy interventions foci (see Figure 3).

- There are similar rates of policy prevalence amongst all geographic classifications in all the main development themes. Each region has comparable average prevalence rates in all main development themes – lands and resources – environmental development (49%), economic development (63%), governance development (67%), infrastructure development (71%), social development (82%) (see Figure 19).

- Amongst urban, rural, and remote communities there are similar rates of prevalence of policy interventions across most development subcategories. However, semi-urban communities are an outlier in several development areas (see sections 6.2 Economic development and 6.4 Infrastructure development).
Key findings continued:

- Semi-urban communities are outliers in several key categories particularly when compared to their rural neighbours. Semi-urban communities tend to fair worse in every socio-economic category reviewed when compared to their rural neighbours (see section 6.9 Socio-economic development).

- The communities reviewed tend to focus their policy interventions on a few specific subcategories such as the housing and community facilities focus found in infrastructure development. However, economic development and social development have a wider range of average number of individual policy interventions across several related development subcategories. This suggests that there is diversity amongst the policies pursued by communities in these specific categories. Whereas other development categories tend to focus their policy interventions in more specific approaches.

- Understanding where First Nations communities place their development priorities sheds lights on meaningful opportunities for policy development and cooperation between local and First Nations governments. The data demonstrates that First Nations communities clearly favour infrastructure and social development initiatives. Often communities tend to include fewer policy interventions related to economic and lands related development, specifically in subcategories relating to resource and energy industries. Therefore, the most effective development policies and opportunities will likely need to account for impacts on First Nations’ social and infrastructure development goals and avoid an emphasis on resource extraction type industries.

- In British Columbia examples exist of municipalities developing effective collaborative planning relationships with their First Nations neighbours. However, despite often occupying the same physical space, these regional level policy actors have no legal obligation to engage in relational planning. Currently municipal governments are taking on this responsibility on a case-by-case basis and to varying degrees of effectiveness. Without a universal standard for local-level collaborative planning, there is much room for improvement across the province.
7.0 Discussion and analysis

First Nations in British Columbia have been expanding their rights to self-governance and through this process they have been advancing their roles as regional development actors. However, their ambitions have not always been understood by traditional development actors and have often simply been ignored by local governments. This has led to poor infrastructure planning, disconnected economies, and an overall lack of functional integration between communities. Often municipal-Indigenous relationships have been based on tokenistic relational practices and real planning responsibility has been deferred to provincial or federal governments. The lack of Indigenous policy awareness has resulted in missed opportunities between regional planning authorities and First Nations planners. Changing the old form of the municipal-First Nations relationship and applying the principles of multi-level planning to the local level, regional development actors have the chance to create more holistic and less contentious local development policies that not only create mutual resource efficiencies, but better serve all regional communities.

7.1 A case for a universal approach to collaborative regional development planning between local-level authorities and First Nations’ governments – how studying CCPs can help.

The literature supports early and regular engagement with Indigenous communities as a method of creating more effective regional development plans. Yet there is a noticeable absence of Canadian local-level governments participating in such collaborative approaches to planning.

In an article by Bjärstig et al, the authors discuss the consultation process between two different municipalities located in Norway and Sweden. This article focuses on the planning relationship between municipal governments and the northern Indigenous Sami population. Here the authors identify that early engagement is the key difference concerning effective planning processes between Norway and Sweden. In Sweden, when a municipal government is undergoing the municipal comprehensive planning process the government must include some form of Sami consultation, however this is only mandatory in the later steps of the planning process and not when the plan is being conceptualised (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 6-7). On the other hand, in Norway the municipal government is required within the first year following its election to agree on a planning strategy and then immediately consult the Sami Community. This strategy is meant to be carried out regularly and is intended to clarify the governments’ plans while promoting both predictability and involvement between communities (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 6). By including local Indigenous governments in the early phases of the planning cycle this creates a strong opportunity to incorporate Indigenous interests into the project design and allows these interests to be appropriately integrated into the overall development planning process (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 6). With these practices, municipal awareness and inclusion of Indigenous rights could be strengthened and allow for more advanced inter-municipal and regional planning processes to be
developed (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 16). Similar collaborative planning approaches are being implemented as evidenced by the Chilliwack OCP.

One major difference between the Scandinavian and Canadian contexts is that in Canada municipalities have no obligation to consult and collaborate with regional Indigenous governments and the jurisdictional responsibility for Indigenous consultation rests with the Provincial and Federal governments. However, despite Scandinavian municipalities having legal obligation to engage the Indigenous population in planning development, there remains a reluctance by local politicians to recognize the formal rights of the Sami (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 16). Due to the widespread reluctance to recognize the Sami’s rights by municipal leadership, many of these communities are dependent on politicians’ willingness to take their needs into consideration (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 16).

Despite Bjärstig et al researching municipal-Indigenous planning processes within the context of Scandinavia, the municipal hesitation to conduct relational planning with neighbouring Indigenous communities echoes the Canadian planning environment. In Canada, municipal leadership also operates under the perception that there is no obligation for Indigenous consultation regarding local-level planning. This is supported by research conducted in 2019 where a Canadian national level survey of more than one-thousand municipal mayors and councillors was conducted. This study investigated municipal leaderships’ views on multilevel policy involvement and their perceptions of which policy domains are most influenced by the various policy actors. The findings of this research raised two points of interest. The first being that of eighteen different policy domains involving development planning, the respondents identified that local governments are the most important policy actors in the following areas:

- Arts and Culture,
- Economic Development,
- Emergency Planning,
- Parks and Recreation,
- Policing,
- Public Transit,
- Roads,
- Bridges and Highways,
- Solid Waste, and
- Water Supply (Lucas and Smith, 2019, p. 284).

The second point of interest is the areas where municipal leadership identified they are not the most important policy actor. These areas are electricity and natural gas supply, housing, and public health, which have all been identified as being a majority Provincial responsibility (Lucas and Smith, 2019, p. 284). The remaining three domains are climate change policy, immigrant settlement policy, and Indigenous relations/Indigenous affairs [emphasis added]. These three policy domains are seen to be predominantly within the realm of the federal government (Lucas and Smith, 2019, p. 284). Lucas and Smith’s research suggests that municipalities across Canada
see the policy domain of Indigenous relations to be firmly in the hands of the Federal government. These survey results are quite revealing in how the contemporary landscape of municipal-Indigenous collaboration largely operates in Canada. Unlike in Scandinavia, despite the reluctance on the local level, relational processes are mandatory between the local and Indigenous governments, whereas municipalities in Canada see this relationship to be the responsibility and within the jurisdiction of the federal government. Despite the numerous amounts of potential overlap in policy interests between municipalities and Indigenous governments, municipalities still feel that creating policy solutions affecting Indigenous communities is better left to the federal government. This becomes increasingly problematic as it perpetuates the notion that Indigenous communities are wards of the federal state instead of recognizing their local agency and the rights to self-determination of Indigenous governments. Evidence of a lack of meaningful involvement by First Nations in local level planning is further supported by other authors who have studied Indigenous-municipal relationships. It is noted by Canadian authors Bouvier and Walker that:

there is a noticeable comfort emerging within planning and municipal governance when it comes to acknowledging that our cities are on Indigenous lands, often referred to as Indigenous traditional territories or homelands. But beyond that basic recognition, municipalities still do a poor job overall of making space for Indigenous sovereignty, worldviews, processes, and protocols in the shared space of the city (2018, p. 130).

These authors go on to suggest that the unbalanced approach to planning between cities and Indigenous communities has contributed to the disenfranchisement of Indigenous people within urban spaces (Bouvier and Walker, 2018, p. 130). One proposed solution to creating relational change between municipal leadership and Indigenous governments is for municipal planners to shift the mentality of “Indigenous relations” as being an area of jurisdiction held by the federal government. Instead, municipal leadership need to view Indigenous communities as having distinctive rights and title beyond those of typical urban stakeholders (Bouvier and Walker, 2018, p. 131). In order to step towards more effective planning practices theorists and practitioners “need to develop relational approaches to planning and governance with Indigenous communities based on values of mutualism, reciprocity, and sovereignty” (Bouvier and Walker, 2018, p. 133). The municipal-Indigenous relationship should be founded on coexistence and coproduction. However, to create this type of relationship local level leadership must first recognize the right of Indigenous self-determination, and First Nations’ ability to exercise their sovereignty in urbanized traditional territory (Bouvier and Walker, 2018, p. 131). These values have remained largely absent amongst most municipalities.

The current paradigm regarding municipal-First Nations planning collaboration has often been one of rudimentary consultation practices, if any. Currently a significant barrier to establishing more effective municipal-Indigenous relational planning processes seems to be that municipalities do not have any legal duty to consult with neighbouring Indigenous communities. The duty to consult is held by the federal government and provincial governments, and
municipalities are omitted from this duty (Dougherty, 2020). In this respect, a comparison can be made between municipalities and resource-based industries in the manner that Indigenous consultation is implemented. Like municipalities, industries also do not have a legal duty to consult, however resource-based operators often employ consultation and engagement practices early in development planning to avoid or minimize impacts on key Indigenous interests before any significant planning investments are made and project adjustments become more difficult (Gray, 2016, p. 2). Proponents in these industries view consultation and accommodation as way of developing cost-effective planning adjustments while keeping the integrity of the project (Driedzic, 2010). Furthermore, accounting for the development goals and strategies of neighbouring communities early in the design of development policies and finding opportunities for collaboration, can yield more comprehensive and adaptive community services and programs. In turn these policies are better suited to local conditions (Ansell et al., 2017, p 475; Spicer, 2016, p. 505). The study of CCP data is a method of understanding which is akin to early engagement. As early engagement creates an opportunity to incorporate First Nations development priorities within the fold of regional development planning, so too does the comprehensive study of CCPs. It has been regularly identified that early engagement is crucial to effective policy development, particularly when working with Indigenous communities (Boyd & Lorence, 2018, p. 584). Similar principles behind the industry-Indigenous manner of consultation are reflected by British Columbian municipalities. However, until municipal-First Nations collaboration becomes accepted as a normative process there will continue to be inefficient regional forms of governance.

Based on the OCPs reviewed, and supported by the literature review, it appears that within the province of British Columbia, municipalities are aware of their First Nations neighbours. However due to a lack of a formalized municipal-Indigenous planning process, the level of First Nations involvement in regional planning initiatives seems largely to be based on the “good-will” of the municipality. The need for earlier involvement in the municipal planning process is called for by Bjärstig et al (2020, p. 14), however, as mentioned by the authors Lucas and Smith, most municipalities in Canada still feel that the policy realm of Indigenous relations is the responsibility of more senior levels of government despite the fact there are many overlapping areas of interest between the two jurisdictions (2019, p. 284). Currently there is evidence that within British Columbia there are effective collaborative planning processes beginning to take hold. However, unless more municipalities begin to recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and take steps towards creating stronger relational based planning processes, municipal planning will likely continue to inadequately incorporate First Nations development priorities and regional development planners will miss opportunities to provide more effective programs and services. To increase the effectiveness of municipal and Indigenous local planning processes more will need to be done in to standardize meaningful collaboration across the regional development landscape.
7.2 The role of CCPs in regional planning development and municipal-First Nations relationships – insight and early opportunities.

**CCPs communicate First Nations development goals as shared by First Nations communities, as such these documents express the truest form of First Nations development priorities.**

Historically, Indigenous communities have had a complicated relationship with the term “development”. Amongst First Nations, the term evokes mixed feelings, expectations, and mistrust as development has often come at the expense of Indigenous cultures and values. However, simultaneously, most First Nations community leaders pursue economic development opportunities that create local employment, wealth creation, self-sufficiency, and an improved quality of life (Nelson, 2019, p. 2). Yet, structural, and historic barriers constrain Indigenous business development and employment. This is partly due to systemic challenges such as the inability of communities to place reserve property as collateral in order to access financing, as well as a general lack credit history (Small Business Task Force, 2018, p. 40). Partly for these reasons, the provincial and federal governments have several development programs targeting the growth of Indigenous economic projects. Often the response of these governments encourages First Nations to pursue development and participation in resource extraction-based industries. In a report titled “Small Business Speaks: Hearing from B.C. Small Businesses about How to Help Make Their Future Bright”, one of the recommendations cites increasing First Nations’ participation in major resource development projects:

> It was also noted that the government should adopt Indigenous-specific procurement policies and tax credits for large projects (e.g., LNG) to procure from local Indigenous businesses (Small Business Task Force, 2018, p. 41).

Increasing Indigenous involvement in resource and energy projects is also a strategy adopted by the federal government. Indigenous Services Canada operates the “Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program” (AEP) which is part of the wider “Land Management and Economic Development Services Program” (LEDSP). The AEP seeks to increase the number of viable businesses in Canada controlled by Indigenous people and provides funding incentives for multiple possible initiatives. However often these monetary incentives encourage Indigenous communities to participate in natural resource and energy-based development projects. (Government of Canada, 2017). In the AEP program alone, 100% of eligible costs of up to $75 M can be funded for projects that “establish or expand private equity instruments that foster the early and late stages of project development and help facilitate increased Aboriginal participation in major resource projects” (Government of Canada, 2017). Whereas alternatively, the broader LEDSP only offers funding that covers 100% of $10 M for such “initiatives that support Aboriginal environmental pollution prevention and improve environmental awareness and compliance” (Government of Canada, 2017). This implies that the federal government is strongly encouraging Indigenous communities to pursue resource and energy development projects over more conservation focused programs.
In contrast to resource focused provincial and federal development programs, the data collected from the comprehensive scan of CCPs highlights that these forms of economic and land-based developments are infrequently pursued by most of the communities reviewed. Referring to Figure 10, in total only 50% of CCPs reviewed included resource extraction-based policy interventions as a form of economic development. 76% of rural communities included resource development as an economic development strategy, however only 20% of urban and 43% of remote communities pursued any resource extraction-based policy interventions. Furthermore, the percentage of communities pursuing “Mining - Oil and Gas” related policies drop to an average of 12% of communities, with only 29% of remote communities mentioning this type of policy intervention, refer to Figure 13. These low rates of policy prevalence within the reviewed CCPs illustrate that resource extraction and energy-based projects are often not desired by most communities within British Columbia despite provincial and federal incentives for First Nations to pursue these forms of economic development. As development programs continue to be designed that do not fully account for Indigenous community values, community participation in these programs is likely to remain low and socio-economic conditions are doubtful to improve. However, using CCPs to inform the design of government programing can lead to more effective policies as the success of a community’s socio-economic development is more probable if the band has control over their development in a culturally appropriate way (Nelson, 2019, p. 3). The federal response to existing and emerging Indigenous economic development opportunities has often been tied to the natural resource sector. For instance, the Strategic Partnership Initiative, beginning in 2010, has an annual budget of $14.45 million to support economic projects connected to mining, fisheries, forestry, agriculture, and energy (OECD, 2020, p. 297). The methods used to analyse CCPs can give policy makers a more accurate understanding of where and how best to allocate funds. As the data suggests, incentivizing resource-based industries may not be universally the best approach as these types of industries are less often pursued by communities and there is a range of industry interest depending on community regionality.

The notion of “place-based” policy design is quite fitting and such a strategy is already employed in other colonial commonwealth nations. For example, the nation of New Zealand employs place-based policy design to incentivise policies which adjust to local needs, characteristics, and aspirations. Here, strategies can address place-based dynamics and identify how policies and services can be adapted to these conditions – setting up separate frameworks to address them (e.g., urban, rural, remote) (OECD, 2020, p. 301). As for policy makers and administrations that are pursuing reconciliation, these methods of data collection can provide an opportunity to revaluate existing development programs and create better suited policies that meet the needs and wants voiced by Indigenous community planning. Other studies exploring the issue suggest that if these conditions are met, communities can increase their access to wealth and community infrastructure developments, while most importantly maintaining Indigenous culture and values. (Nelson, 2019, p. 3). Therefore, the comprehensive study of CCPs offers an opportunity to accurately understand Indigenous development priorities as they are expressed by Indigenous communities.
Governments are using provincial and federal level strategies to address local level First Nations’ development priorities. Often the development goals pursued by provincial and federal governments are at odds with Indigenous long-term community planning. Alternatively, mutual policy avenues between First Nations and local level governments do exist. The study by Lucas and Smith focusing on municipal leaderships’ perceived roles in regional policy domains, highlights numerous policy areas that coincidently overlap with Indigenous development interests expressed in the reviewed CCPs. The survey demonstrate that municipal leaders feel their greatest contributions relate to the following policy areas:

- Arts and Culture,
- Economic Development,
- Emergency Planning,
- Parks and Recreation,
- Policing,
- Public Transit,
- Roads,
- Bridges and Highways,
- Solid Waste, and
- Water supply (Lucas and Smith, 2019, p. 284).

When contrasted with the policy intervention subcategories informed by the synthesis of the CCP documents, multiple subcategories share common themes with the policy areas identified by the municipal leadership survey. These areas are:

- Language and Culture – Arts and Culture: Social Development,
- Economic Development,
- Transportation and Roads – Public Transit/Bridges and Highways: Infrastructure,
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness – Emergency Planning: Infrastructure Development
- Waste – Solid Waste: Infrastructure Development,
- Water – Water supply: Infrastructure Development,
- Conservation and Cultural Land Use – Parks and Recreation: Lands and Resources/Environmental development, and
- Community Safety – Policing: Social Development.

Therefore, opportunities to create more effective relational processes between these jurisdictions and across a variety of regional development initiatives seem plausible. Yet, the academic and gray literature suggests that municipal-Indigenous planning relationships are generally underdeveloped. This suggests that unless the duty to consult is extended to municipal levels of government there will need to be a paradigm shift amongst municipal leadership to effectively explore relational planning opportunities. Given the level of policy interest and overlap between municipal and First
Nations planning foci it is likely that there are several common interests to be explored that would benefit both communities. For common interests to be effectively discussed between communities, municipalities need to shift their relationship away from tokenism and towards a more collaborative partnership recognizing Indigenous governments as regional policy actors. Through the study and synthesis of the CCP documents, municipal planners can better account for development goals that are prioritized by neighbouring First Nations governments. For example, Table 3 highlights and compares several policy interventions taken from the reviewed OCPs with similar interventions mentioned by neighbouring First Nations’ CCPs. Table 3 is not exhaustive and a more systematic analysis is necessary, however it demonstrates possible opportunities where regional collaboration might exist.

Table 3 Examples of comparative policy interventions between municipal OCPs and neighbouring First Nations’ CCPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal OCP</th>
<th>First Nations CCP</th>
<th>Common Development Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops OCP:</td>
<td>Skeetchestn Indian Band:</td>
<td>Social Development (emphasis on health and well being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The City has been able to encourage multi-sector partnerships to address issues related to… food security, and mental health and addictions, with a focus on specific demographic groups including children and youth, seniors, off- and on-reserve Aboriginal communities, and persons with disabilities.”</td>
<td>• “Health Goal 2: Skeetchestn residents have timely access to appropriate medical services.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Strategy: Develop a program including materials and support to ensure Skeetchestn is a community free of drug (including prescription drugs) and alcohol abuse.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Strategy: Review current transportation programs and service levels and investigate options for enhancing access to off-reserve medical services.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(City of Kamloops, 2017, p. D-36, D-37)</td>
<td>(Skeetchestn &amp; Skeetchestn, 2015, p. 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Terrace OCP:</td>
<td>Kitsumkalum:</td>
<td>Infrastructure Development (emphasis on transportation and water)</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Support the enhancement of the cycling network and the pedestrian network including sidewalks, pathways and trails.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Design roads, and develop and redevelop related infrastructure, to meet our current needs while considering future growth.”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Provide safe and cost-effective treated water.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Bike to work/ walk to work weeks”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Our community will have safe, beautiful transportation corridors”</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Plan/ increased water for growing community”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Kitsumkalum First Nation, 2016, p. 20, p. 23)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Nanaimo</td>
<td>Halalt First Nation</td>
<td>Economic and Social Development (emphasis on tourism and cultural development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “To achieve a mix of land uses on harbour front lands without compromising marine activity.”</td>
<td>• Outdoor adventure tourism, particularly relating to marine activities such as kayaking, and scuba diving are experiencing significant growth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a vibrant waterfront through a balance of marine related enterprises, mixed residential development and other uses that invite public use and enjoyment without compromising marine employment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To make arts and culture visible and accessible. Nanaimo is a place where residents and visitors will encounter various forms of visual art as part of their daily experience. Ensure that exceptional facilities are available for the creation, preservation and presentation of arts and culture within the city.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teach Traditional Practices, Train youth in Traditional Arts, and Cultural Activities and Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Halalt First Nation, 2018, p. 21. p. 24)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
City of Chilliwack

- Assist ongoing discussions with the Agricultural Land Commission regarding opportunities for responding to public needs and/or strengthening agriculture.

(Chilliwack, 2015, p. 24)

Soowahlie First Nation

- Agriculture in particular was mentioned repeatedly throughout the planning process. Agriculture options should be explored in some detail in the larger Strategic Land Use Plan. Options should include both intense uses such as greenhouses and more passive uses such as wild berry picking. There are also opportunities for members with CP land and partnerships with Soowahlie First Nation.

(Focus Corporation and Soowahlie First Nation, 2010, p. 21)

Lands and Resources Development (emphasis on agriculture)

- Having access to this knowledge would be a significant advantage in developing holistic policies and a substantive shift towards creating a positive working relationship between these regional policy actors. The comprehensive study of CCPs is a method to aid communities and other levels of government who are engaging in collaborative planning processes. Having accurate insight into the realm of First Nations planning is important for municipalities that intend to create stronger relationships with neighbouring First Nations communities. Documents produced by Indigenous groups suggest that early engagement is about fostering direct involvement in crucial decisions and not just signing off on a project at an earlier date (Boyd and Lorence, 2018, p. 572). These ideas are regularly brought up by numerous Indigenous groups who advocate that early engagement is not just about timing, it is about being part of major decisions (Boyd and Lorence, 2018, p. 572). Early engagement and policy understanding between regional actors can create the positive relational conditions required to design more effective local-level plans, including much needed programs and services meant for local communities. These methods can be used as a tool which offers planners awareness of First Nations’ development priorities on a broad-level and in several key development areas. Furthermore, the contextual knowledge and insight regarding Indigenous development goals provided by studying CCP documents offers planners foresight when consultations between communities are carried out. The insight gained by the analysis of regional CCP documents provides municipal governments a chance to explore beneficial policy initiatives guided by the interests expressed by their jurisdictional neighbours. Collaboration between municipal governments and Indigenous governments can address gaps in the local policy development process that might otherwise go unnoticed. Including First Nations’ governance perspectives into local level policy design can address more pervasive planning and development concerns which are otherwise likely to be missed in the jurisdictional quagmire that is the First Nations-Municipal-Provincial-Federal policy landscape. Furthermore, collaboration can reduce
costs to funds and resources as contentious issues can be identified earlier, and program and service redundancies can be eliminated (Driedzic, 2010).

The jurisdictional landscape in Canada is shifting in significant ways. In 2019 the British Columbia Government voted to adopt all articles within United Nations Declaration on the Rights Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and passed Bill 41 – 2019: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act into provincial law (Bill 41 – 2019: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2019). The federal government has recently passed bill C-15, which follows similar legislative action (Brinker, Duncanson, O'neill Sanger, and Twa, 2021). Indigenous people have the right to develop priorities and strategies for their own territories, and projects that may adversely affect their environment, economy, culture, or religion should be avoided (Thornberry, 2012, p. 20). Having the insight afforded by studying CCPs may become ever-more advantageous for regional development planners as articles within the Declaration require that governments intending to conduct any projects affecting Indigenous territory or resources must be first be approved by the Indigenous people’s representative institutions through open dialogue and in good faith. As there will likely be increasing amounts of pressure from Indigenous communities seeking more meaningful forms of consultation and input within their traditional territories it will be increasingly important for regional development authorities to create more effective planning relationships with neighbouring First Nations governments. Accounting for CCPs in local level planning will become less an exercise of “good-will” but become an important strategy for collaboration as British Columbia and Canada roll-out UNDRIP legislation.

British Columbia’s legislated bill on UNDRIP calls for the government to prepare a comprehensive action plan that will be implemented in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in the province (Bill 41 – 2019: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2019). The federal bill calls for similar approach to achieve the objectives of the Declaration through consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples and with other federal ministers. Furthermore, Bill C-15 seeks to incorporate measures that address injustices and all forms of discrimination, and “promote mutual respect and understanding as well as good relations” (Government Bill C-15 (43-2), Parliament of Canada, 2021). CCPs already contain a wealth of knowledge focused on First Nations’ visions for future development projects and directions. Seeing as both the provincial and federal bills on UNDRIP call for collaborative action plans, the careful consideration of First Nations’ CCPs could be highly relevant and useful when developing the necessary actions to implement these bills.
Discussion and analysis summary:

- There is reluctance across Canadian local-level governments to implement meaningful collaborative policy development with First Nations, who have often been deferred to the responsibility of provincial and federal governments. This contributes to a lack of cohesive policies between municipalities and First Nations communities and extends to ineffective local level policy design.

- Municipalities in British Columbia are beginning to explore collaborative relational development processes with their Indigenous neighbours. However, some of these relationships fail to provide meaningful development opportunities. Recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and role as policy actors is an important step for municipalities to begin effective planning relationships.

- Provincial and federal development programs incentivize resource and energy projects however the review of CCPs demonstrates that most communities do not pursue related policy interventions.

- Municipalities often have an overlap in policy interest with First Nations communities. Early engagement with Indigenous communities can give municipalities a planning advantage as contentious issues may be flagged early on and solutions can be better incorporated.

- A brief review and comparison of several municipal OCPs and First Nations CCPs highlights opportunity for collaboration in development themes related to social, infrastructure, economic, and lands and resources related policies does exist. This review is not exhaustive but demonstrates the potential planning power of these documents.

- CCPs are an important source of information. They reflect the expressed development goals of important regional policy actors. Incorporating these goals into policy development can aid planners in creating better serving programs and services in their shared regions. As both provincial and federal legislation calls for cooperative approaches towards implementing UNDRIP, careful consideration of First Nations’ CCPs can be useful in laying out a vision for this form of collaborative development.
8.0 Conclusion

As Canada and British Columbia undergo a process of reconciliation between settler communities and the Indigenous population, evolving forms of administrative jurisdiction will emphasize the role that Indigenous consultation has in the municipal planning process. In the coming years these local level relationships will become increasingly important as the landscape of regional authority shifts. Relational dynamics between neighbouring Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities will need to innovate to effectively plan for the future of both communities. Municipalities and regional development authorities will need to explore opportunities in creating multi-level forms of governance with their Indigenous neighbours and incorporate these governing bodies earlier into the local planning processes. It has been noted by others who study multi-level and Indigenous governance that inclusive forms of governance which incorporate Indigenous interests in final decisions, can yield more holistic and sustainable and local level development plans (Bjärstig et al., 2020, p. 14). This in turn creates more comprehensive social programs, infrastructure projects, land-management regimes, and economic development prospects that can better serve both communities. Municipalities currently demonstrate varying degrees of openness to cooperative planning and policy development. However, awareness of First Nations’ development trends can aid regional planners when exploring new relational planning processes with their First Nations neighbours by accounting early on for their policy goals and strategies. Insight into First Nations community development, as expressed by these communities, can provide opportunities to expand the regional planning landscape and create new relational practices between First Nations and local level planning authorities. Using the available Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs) released by First Nations governments and examining the current state of municipal-First Nations collaborative planning highlights what barriers and opportunities for cooperation currently exist. Understanding this planning environment gives planners the awareness needed to effectively account for the development goals of regional Indigenous policy actors.

As prefaced in the literature, this dataset and the trends within found within it, are important for regional development planners to understand. First Nations development foci often reflect unresolved issues that other forms of policy development and governmental programming are not accurately addressing. However, the current environment of municipal-First Nations collaborative planning demonstrates that there is an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of this relationship across the province of British Columbia. There are positive examples of municipal-First Nations relational planning, however, it is not universal and leaves much room for improvement. CCPs represent the development aspirations of First Nations communities as expressed by these communities. Their study provides policy makers the opportunity to create more informed policies that account for Indigenous cultural values and development priorities. It is recommended that local planners expand their policy design practices and begin incorporating the planning potential of CCPs into the broader fold of regional planning. This is not only an opportunity for First Nations communities to better realize their socio-economic goals but also for local level planners to create a mutually beneficial and reciprocal planning-based relationship to the benefit of all communities.
By revisiting the research questions guiding this study several conclusions can be drawn. The study of CCPs in British Columbia reveals that often the main priority for First Nations tends to focus on the development of the social and infrastructure needs of these communities. These documents show that often the most thoroughly discussed development categories tend to focus on these two areas. However, for this occur, policies promoting First Nations economic development and independence should be developed and guided by the values and strategies expressed by these communities. While commonalities do exist, there are differences in the policy interventions discussed by First Nations communities, and regionality can be a factor in how a First Nation chooses to pursue community planning. The methods used to conduct this can be further refined to highlight specific regions across the geographic and socio-economic diversity of British Columbia. Understanding these contexts can help align policies between regional actors as jurisdictional dynamics shift within the province.

A brief scan of planning documents belonging to Municipalities demonstrates that communities in the province are aware of their First Nations neighbours, however the approach to a collaborative relationship is not universal. Supported by the literature, it seems that despite apparent mutual policy avenues between these communities the relationship seems to be underdeveloped. The knowledge gained by the regional study of CCPs can highlight opportunities for collaboration and re-focus multilevel discussions towards resource efficiencies between these two communities. A more comprehensive and thorough study of OCPs and CCPs across British Columbia can explore the true potential of this type of study. Through the comprehensive study of CCPs evidence can be quantified that highlights the likelihood of provincial and federal development policies having uptake with First Nations. Using the information to illustrate community designed development strategies should be an important method to influence the design of development policies. These methods are an effective way of underlining that a “one size fits all” funding focus is likely to have gaps across the various geographies in British Columbia, and Canada. While this research is not without its gap it demonstrates the potential that CCPs can have in multilevel development planning.
References


Xwisten Bridge River First Nation. (2013). *Xwisten Community Profile*. 
Appendices

Appendix 1

Development Theme Subcategory Descriptions

Economic Development:

Tourism and Arts-Culture – This sub-category included items that focused on developing a community’s capacity for tourism related initiatives by focusing on development goals and strategies that cater such activities. Popular strategies included things such as recreational resorts, and campgrounds, as well as providing tourism attractions by way of a community’s unique cultural identity. Developing opportunities for and through local artisans and crafters was also a popular strategy that was captured in this sub-category.

Resource Extraction Based – This sub-category focused on traditional resource extraction types of economic development. Popular items in this sub-category included things such as forestry operations, harvesting through fishing operations, and gravel pit operations.

Land Based – Within this sub-category the focus was on the use of land, primarily through zoning such as the development of real-estate opportunities, or the creation of an industrial zone. Additionally, the use of the land for cultivation either through agriculture/aquaculture operations or for livestock was also considered within this economic sub-category.

Energy Development – This category looked at energy development as a means of economic development. The most popular item in this category seemed to be “run-of-river” hydro-electric facilities, however other items such as solar power/wind power were also considered for energy development projects.

Service Delivery – For the sub-category of “service-delivery” this section focused on community services offered and included as part of a community’s overall economic development strategy. When mentioned in a community’s plan popular services included child and elder care, as well as other healthcare type initiatives. Occasionally waste services were mentioned as being an part of the “service delivery” strategy.

Business and Commercial Development – This economic development strategy focused on traditional business development opportunities or community entrepreneurial development strategies. Often roadside service stations were mentioned as business strategies as well as providing development opportunities for traditional store front development within the communities were given as examples. This sub-category also included more complex business structures such as creating business development corporations.

Membership Focused Initiatives and Approaches – In this sub-category, “membership focused initiatives/approaches” largely focuses on strategies for increasing membership employment and employability. Items within this sub-category regularly mention skills training or increasing employment opportunities for members within the community.

Benefit Funding Agreements and Partnership Agreements – This category includes items where a community references a “benefit funding agreement”, these agreements are economic strategies for a community to collect revenue whenever development occurs within their territory. In this sub-category operations in forestry or mining regularly appear to provide benefit funding
agreements. Partnership agreements reference whenever a community seeks to enter or has entered as a development partner with an outside organization such another business operator or even another First Nations organization that is not exclusively part of the original community of focus.

**General Policies** – This sub-category simply captures items that are broad in nature or are sweeping policy strategies. Items such as developing a multi-year economic development plan or any reference to economic growth without specific strategies appear within this sub-category.

**Lands and Resources (Environmental) Development:**
When scanning through this category it seemed that communities either focused on this section as an extension of their economic development strategies or it was geared towards conservation initiatives and broader land-use planning style strategies. Often Land Use and Conservation Initiatives connected to core cultural aspects of a community. A community’s cultural connection to the land is often reflected throughout this category. This category was broken down in the following way:

**Marine and Fisheries** – This sub-category includes items referencing community participation in the fishing industry, using area for aquaculture, fish hatcheries, inter-marine areas (ie tidal zones), and anything related marine areas.

**Agriculture** – Items in this sub-category focus on food security and using the land for growing crops or raising livestock.

**Forestry** - Items include silviculture, non-timber forest products, traditional forestry practices, and other related items.

**Mining - Oil and Gas** – Focuses on any reference to any development strategies related to the mining sector or the oil and gas sector.

**Other Resources** – This captures any other resources that may not be reflected in the previous categories. Some examples of this include “gravel resources” “cultural resources” or general reference to “resources”.

**Renewables** – This sub-category reflects any reference to renewable resources that were not mentioned in the previous categories. Some examples mentioned are “fish and wildlife” management, solar energy development, and wind.

**Land Use and Management** – This sub-category records whenever a community references the use of land for recreational or educational purposes, or references service delivery for a parcel of land. This section also includes land management strategies such as zoning initiatives such as housing or other future development opportunities.

**Conservation and Cultural** – This section records wherever a community references conservation initiatives on their land or explicitly mentions the use of land for cultural/traditional purposes such as berry picking, ceremonial practices, or archaeology.

**Infrastructure Development:**
**Water** – This sub-category recorded any item that related to expanding the infrastructure relating to water. Examples include water treatment, plumbing, or reservoir development.
Transportation and Roads – This section focused on capturing items that related to transportation or road networks within the community and surrounding network. Popular examples included road maintenance initiatives or transportation services to other communities in the surrounding areas.

Energy and Energy Generation – Often this category included strategies to create more energy efficient buildings or provide more sustainable forms of energy generation for the community.

Housing – Often focused on expanding access to housing options and varieties for community members however this sub-category also included items such as home renovations, maintenance, and inspection policies.

Community Facilities – This section focused on buildings and facilities that were designed for community use. Some examples of this include gymnasiums, long houses, community gathering facilities, playgrounds, sports fields and other similar type facilities.

Waste – This sub-category focused on capturing development strategies related to community waste. This being either developing things such as trash removal, recycling programs or facilities, and sewage treatment.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness – This sub-category recorded community goals and strategies that captured items relating to Emergency Planning/Preparedness such as establishing community-based firefighting services, or emergency plans related to natural disasters that may affect the area.

General Policies – This sub-category was for ambiguous and broad strategies relating to community infrastructure development. Some examples of this include “Infrastructure Upgrades”, “Ensure community wellbeing through infrastructure”, and “effective management”.

Social Development:

Culture and Language – The focus for this category was to record any policies or initiatives that reflected a community’s desire to expand culture or language programing. Some examples of this included traditional culture programing such as hunting or fishing camps as well as a variety of language programs such as camps, “language nests”, and school programming.

Education and Training – This section recorded any community goals or strategies that focused on the role of school based education and other community training initiatives. Often focused on encouraging participation and achievement in the K-12 school systems but also regularly cites adult education programing as important strategies for communities.

Health and Wellness – This sub-category focused on providing health and wellness programming for community development. Some examples from this section include community nutritional programming such as cooking classes, community care and nursing accessibility, mental health counselling, as well as addictions counselling.

Individual and Family Development – This section recorded programs focused on individual and family support programs. Some examples include parenting support programs, family centres, and social assistance support and programing.

Community Elders and Youth – This section focused on recording community goals and strategies which focused on developing programs that targeted the community’s Elders and
youth. Examples from this sub-category included creating Elder knowledge sharing programs, providing in-home care for elders, after-school programming for youth, and creating more youth focused recreational activities.

**Community Development and Engagement** – The Community Development and Engagement sub-category recorded goals and strategies that focused on community cohesion. Examples from this section include various types of social events relating to holidays and traditional cultural events, as well as community based recreational activities. Often communication regarding these events was a key strategy.

**Community Safety** – This sub-category recorded goals and strategies that focused on overall community safety. Some examples found in this section include various types of community policing and security initiatives, as well as creating safe spaces for at-risk community members to find shelter.

**Governance:**

**Communications** – This sub-category recorded on initiatives designed to increase communications between community administration and the it’s members.

**Administrative Staff and Structure** – This section focused on any items that relate to the internal staff and structure of the community’s administration. Often focused on increasing staff capacity through training programs or hiring initiatives.

**Governance and Self-Governance** – Governance/Self Governance records items that relate to the act of governing a community. It recorded any programs or initiatives that are goals or strategies to support the process of governance. However, this section does not include any specific reference to policies or laws that a community may want to pursue. Examples in this sub-category include the creation of a “water system management committee”, developing a model of self governance, and the pursuit of self-government.

**Land Claims and Treaty** – this section recorded any reference to outstanding land claims or treaties and self government discussions that may have been mentioned in a community’s CCP.

**Policy and Laws** – Policy and Laws section recorded any item that referenced implementing formal policies or laws within the community or its governance. Some examples of this include creating formal dispute resolution processes, creating an election code, creating land codes, and others.

**Regional Partnership Strategies** – This section recorded whenever a CCP mentioned having any kind of regional partnership strategy. This may include other governments including municipal or provincial, other First Nations governments, or business/industry partners. Some examples from this sub-category include recreational facilities partnerships, regional lands and resource industries, and communities sharing waste facilities.
Appendix 2

Sample of Binary Tracking Sheet, Infrastructure Development Theme, Urban Communities, n=10

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## List of First Nations communities who have completed CCPs (Provided by ISC)

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