

# Transportation and Youth Unemployment in Williams Lake

Sample Grant Application for Job Shuttle

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The Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area  
Dave Preeper: The Child Development Centre  
Matt Neufeld: The Boys and Girls Club  
Horton Ventures  
Pioneer Log Homes  
The Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Centre  
Lake City High School  
Graduation Routes Other Ways (G.R.O.W.)  
Chris Hutton: City Planner of Williams Lake  
Barking Spider Mountain Bike  
Williams Lake Indian Band  
Better at Home

## Structure of this Report

This sample grant application has been assembled by a group of students from the University of British Columbia who took part in a community-based research course. This document can be used as a basis for future grant applications by organizations and/or individuals who decide to pursue the proposed bus shuttle or other form of alternative transportation. The Potential Program Structures and Budget and Logistics are only suggestions and any portion of the document may be modified to satisfy future funding application requirements.

## Summary of Project

In collaboration with the Williams Lake Social Planning Council and the Cariboo-Chilcotin Child Development Centre, this project aims to address current barriers to employment faced by youth (ages 16-29) in the City of Williams Lake. Currently, various economic, social and political barriers have undermined transportation options within the city, impeding young people's ability to find and access employment opportunities. The effects of youth unemployment in Williams Lake are widespread. With 34.33% of youth in the community facing unemployment<sup>1</sup>, this poses a significant challenge to the community.

Based on a needs assessment in Williams Lake, our proposal presents a youth-oriented job shuttle as one way to address youth unemployment. The needs assessment is based on four focus groups with youth aged 17-31 (total of 18 participants) and seven interviews with professionals conducted over the course of 4 months. The research presents the social, cultural and economic context for the job shuttle's framework implementation. It is clear that transportation is not the only barrier to employment for youth; many other social issues act as barriers to employment, including education, socioeconomic status and mental health. For this reason, improving employment rates among youth will require a wholesome approach, and the proposed job shuttle in this document would primarily address the barrier of transportation. Further discussion is needed to determine the exact logistics and cost of the implementation of a shuttle, however an estimated 40-80\$ would be needed per run, depending on route length, driver pay, vehicle type etc. in order to conduct a pilot project. This 40-80 is based off of the 'Barking Spider Mountain Bikes' retired shuttle system, which required 100CAD per 50km route in order to turn a profit. Our shuttle system would not be for profit, and the potential routes range from 11-50 km round trip.

## Context of Williams Lake

### *Geographic Context*

The unique context in which Williams Lake is situated is important to note before moving forward. Williams Lake is a rural city located within the Central Interior of British Columbia in the Cariboo Chilcotin region and is approximately six hours north of Vancouver situated along the Cariboo Highway. There are many geographic challenges that make transportation in Williams Lake difficult, as the downtown area is fairly concentrated and the residential areas beyond are widely dispersed. A large portion of the city is also quite industrial and in close proximity to the highway

### *Social Context*

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey (NHS). Last Updated October 23, 2015.  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=950>

The population of Williams Lake was approximately 11,000 residents in 2011<sup>2</sup>. 20% of the population in Williams Lake is aged 15-29 (7% are 15-19, 7% are 20-24 and 6% are 25-29)<sup>3</sup>. Indigenous people account for a large portion of the Williams Lake area population. 17% of the urban population of Williams Lake self-identifies as Aboriginal, including First Nation, Inuit or Métis<sup>4</sup>. Indigenous youth face barriers to employment that result from generations of systematic oppression. There is a long history of exploitation that underlies the current rates of poverty among Aboriginal people<sup>5</sup>. Many people find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty, poor health, low education and family violence which continue to reinforce each other. This, combined with systematic disadvantages and discrimination, creates numerous barriers to successful employment<sup>6</sup>. Young Aboriginal people in Northern Canada are more likely to be unemployed than other Canadians<sup>7</sup>. In 2006, for example, the unemployment rate for all Aboriginal youth in Canada was 22%, compared to a national average for youth of 13% while in 2009, the employment rate for Aboriginal youth was 45.1%, while non Aboriginal youth was 55.6%<sup>8</sup>. These rates can be attributed to a number of reasons, some of which include lower education attainment for Aboriginal youth, early parenting, and unwillingness to relocate<sup>9</sup>. Lacking work opportunities in small communities and reserves not only causes unemployment but also lowers the wage for working youth due to high labour supply<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. 2012. Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released June 27 2012. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey (NHS). Released June 26 2013. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

<sup>5</sup> "Aboriginal Issues." Centre for Social Justice. Accessed March 10, 2016. <http://www.socialjustice.org/index.php?page=aboriginal-issues>.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Abele, Frances, and Senada Delic. *Aboriginal Youth Employment In Northern Canada*. Report no. 14-01. Carleton Centre for Community Innovation, 2014. <http://carleton.ca/3ci/wp-content/uploads/Aboriginal-Youth-Employment-Report-March-20-2014.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> CMEC. (2012). Literature Review on Factors Affecting the Transition of Aboriginal Youth from School to Work (pp. 1-102, Rep.).

## WILLIAMS LAKE POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2011

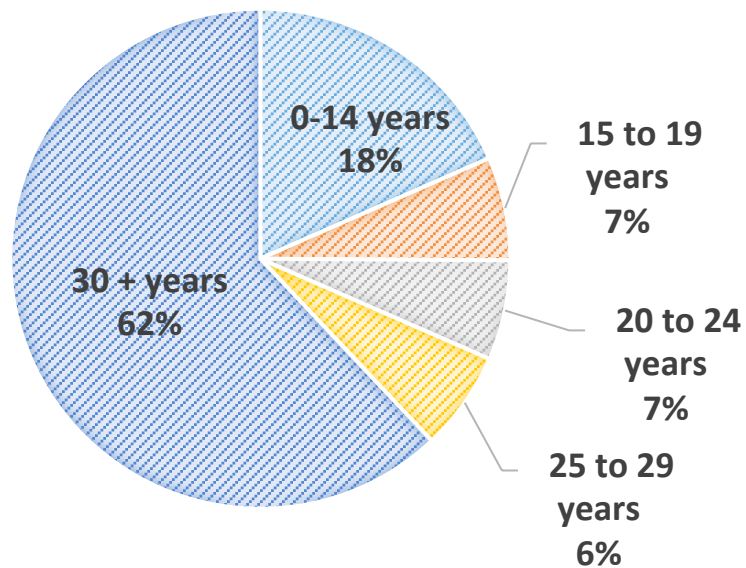


Figure 1: Population by Age Group, Statistics Canada 2011 Census Profile

## POPULATION OF WILLIAMS LAKE BY ETHNICITY, 2011

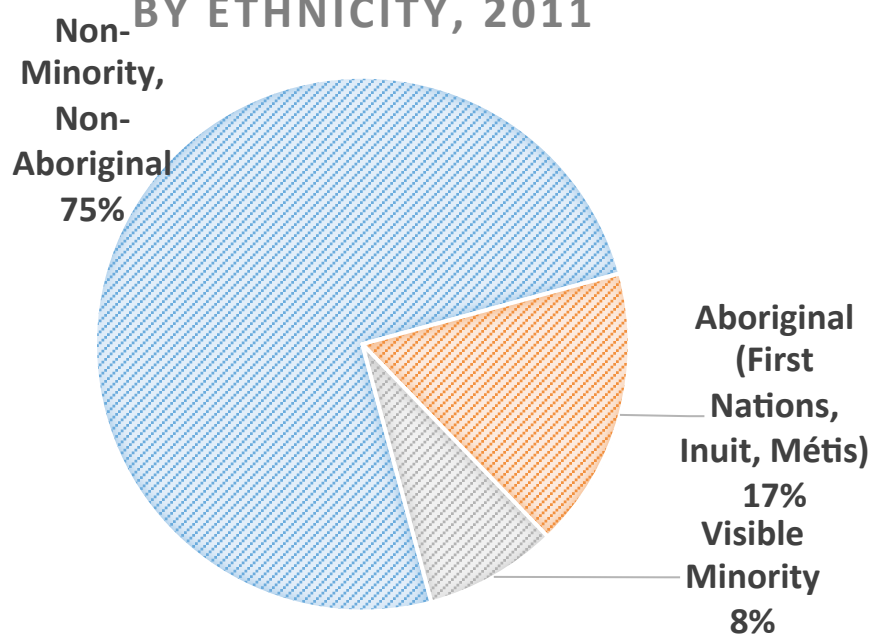


Figure 2: Population by Ethnicity, Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey

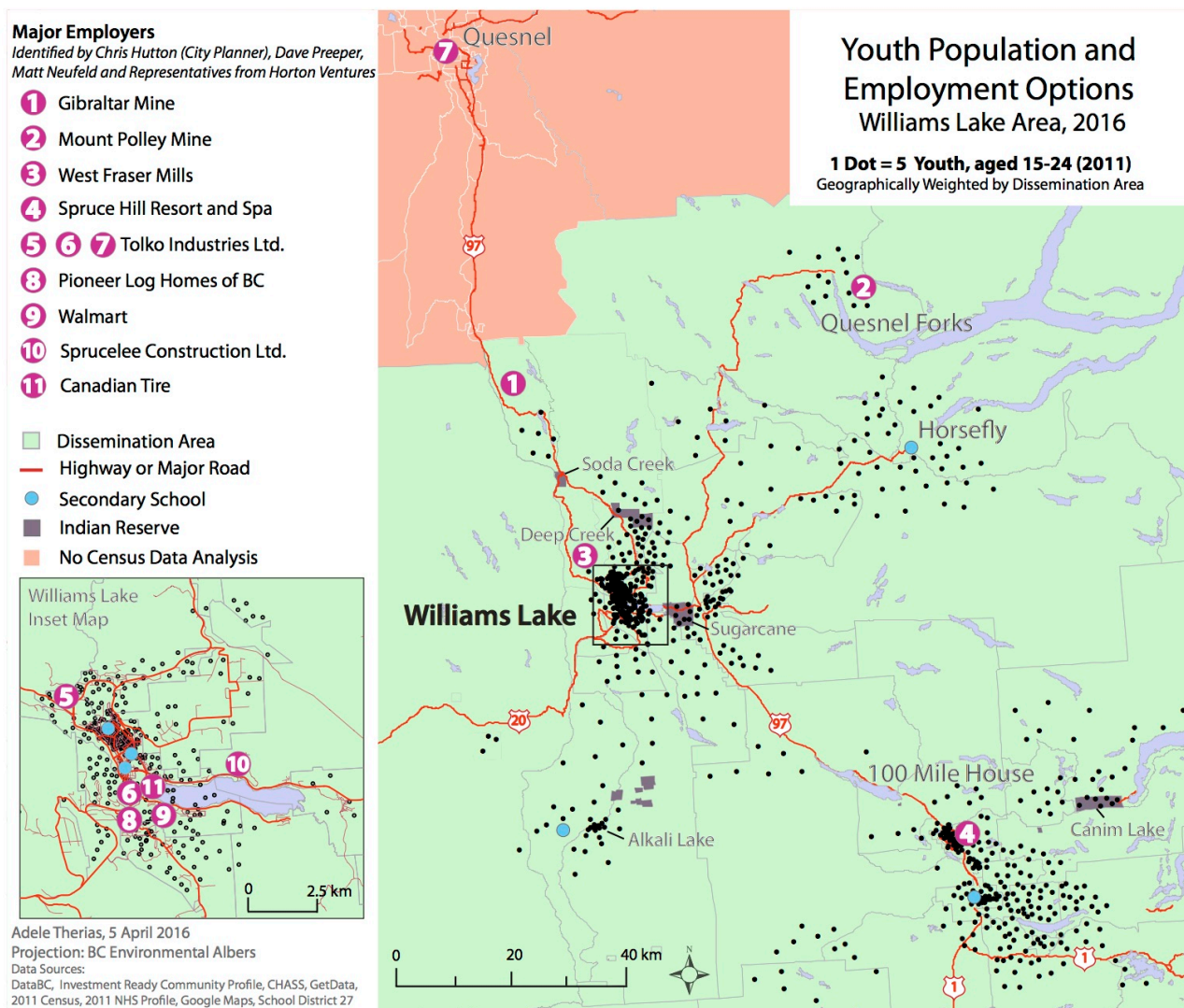


Figure 3: Map of Youth Population and Employers

### Economic Context

The four major industries in Williams Lake are forestry, mining, tourism and agriculture outlined in the Community Profile<sup>11</sup>. The heavy reliance on natural resources in Williams Lake impacts the surrounding environment and sustainability of the city. The Integrated Community Sustainability plan outlines Williams Lake's intentions to protect food security and promote local agriculture as well as protect cherished ecosystems that will benefit the environment as well as the tourism and agriculture industries<sup>12</sup>. The Williams Lake Timber Supply area is among the largest sources of timber in British Columbia with the majority of the wood harvested being pine. One of the major employers in the area is Pioneer Log Homes that builds state of the art cabins with local timber for clients around the world. There are two major mines in the Williams Lake

<sup>11</sup> City of Williams Lake. (n.d.). Investment-Ready Community Profile (Rep.).

<sup>12</sup> Williams lake: Imagine Our Future. (2010). Imagine Our Future Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Framework (Rep.).

Cariboo region that employ many people in community, the Gibraltar (copper and molybdenum) and Mount Polley (Copper and Gold).

## Needs Assessment

The following needs assessment has two sections. The first section, Youth Unemployment in Williams Lake, discusses the social and economic impacts of youth unemployment as well as the long-term impacts of youth migration and retainment linked to unemployment. The second section, Challenges to Public Transit, outlines the quality of the existing public transit service and structure and notes the additional transportation barriers for Indigenous communities around Williams Lake.

### **Youth Unemployment in Williams Lake**

With an unemployment rate of 11.5% in Williams Lake, which is higher than the BC average of 7.8%, the issue of employment in the city is one of high significance. Moreover, unemployment rates are heightened among young adults/youth, where residents between the ages of 15-24 only account for 14% of the labour force, only slightly rising to 18% employment or those aged 25-34<sup>13</sup>. In total, the unemployment rate for young adults in the community aged 15-34 sits at 34.33%<sup>14</sup>. Not only are the effects of youth unemployment widespread for individuals themselves, but so too does youth unemployment affect communities as a whole. Outlining the effects of this issue will thus speak to the importance of improving youth access to employment through transportation accessibility.

### *Economic Impacts of Youth Unemployment*

The inability for many young people to reach prospective employment opportunities negatively impacts youth themselves, their families, and the community in the following economic ways. Being unable to find a job at a young age hinders their ability to learn and acquire necessary skills to enter the job market. This perpetuates their inability to find work at a later age due to their lack of skills<sup>15</sup>. This can have detrimental consequences to their livelihood, both in the present and the future. It also makes it far harder to climb the ladder of opportunity in the job world, due to competition for well salaried and skilled labor work from individuals who were able to join the workforce at an earlier age<sup>16</sup>. The inability to access employment leads to a lack of monetary assets. This lack of funds from individuals can have negative implications on their families and the community.

When youth are unable to enter the job market, they are unable to support themselves and often rely on their families to feed and shelter them, putting economic strain on the family. In Canada a child costs on average 2,720 CAD a year to house<sup>17</sup>. And an on average additional cost of 3,228 CAD to feed a person aged 19-30 for one

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<sup>15</sup> Yee, Krystal. "How Much Does It Cost to Raise Kids in Canada?" Canadianliving.com. 2012. Accessed May 07, 2016/

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*



year<sup>18</sup>. This adds up to about an extra 5500 CAD a year per each additional person in a household. If a child does have a job, but no form of personal transportation, then many young people rely on their families to drive them to and from work<sup>19</sup>, which not only can add up in gasoline costs, but may also potentially remove some working hours, or their ability to work certain shifts for the parents<sup>20</sup>.

Youth unemployment also impacts the local economy. The inability for youth to find work due to accessibility leads to many choosing to move away from the community. This continually drains the Williams Lake community of new young workers entering the workforce, creating a disproportionate population of youth to elderly citizens, which eventually leads to the necessity of caring for the the high level of retired elderly people, thus draining a local community's economy<sup>21</sup>. In addition, the youth that choose to stay in Williams Lake, but continue to remain unemployed, are unable to purchase goods and services within the community which has a negative impact on the community due to a lack of economic revenue being cycled back into the community. In addition, many young people decide to collect employment insurance after receiving the minimum 600 working hours from a business to support themselves<sup>22</sup>, which in turn causes strain on the federal government, through which E.I. is funded. This in turn has small strain on the federal government, in which E.I. is funded through.

Finally, beyond the short-term or immediate effects of youth unemployment, this issue has long-term impacts that may affect employment opportunities for individuals later on in their life. Research has found that extended periods of unemployment early on in life can result in a phenomenon known as "wage scarring", which can persist for individuals later on in life, earning them less income in the long-run<sup>23</sup>. Much of "wage scarring" is the result of extended periods of unemployment causing desperation among youth. In essence, youth become tempted to take any work they can, which includes jobs which feature low wages and few opportunities for career progression<sup>24</sup>.

### *Social Impacts of Youth Unemployment: Crime and Health*

Beyond the economic consequences of youth unemployment, the social impacts of the issue are equally as significant. The problem of crime is one of particular relevance to the Williams Lake area, which was last listed as having the fourth highest crime rates in Canada, and often among the top two in British Columbia overall<sup>25</sup>. Gang and drug related activities often account for much of the cities violent crimes, and youth workers within the community have identified that such activities may have a link to

<sup>18</sup> Dietitians of Canada BC Region. "The Cost of Living in British Columbia: 2011." Dietitians of Canada. Accessed May 07, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Horton Ventures Focus Group. 12 May 2016. Raw data. Horton Ventures Employment Service, Williams Lake.

<sup>20</sup> Boyd, Monica. "Immigration, internal migration and the Distribution of Canada's Population." Population Change and Public Policy. February, 2005. Accessed May 07, 2016

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Horton Ventures Interview. 09 May 2016. Raw data. Childhood Development center, Williams Lake

<sup>23</sup> "The Jobless Young: Left Behind." *The Economist*, September 10, 2011. Accessed May 4, 2016.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21528614>.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Yorski, Monica Lamb. "Williams Lake Fourth in Overall Crime Rate." *Williams Lake Tribune*, July 25, 2014. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://www.wltribune.com/news/268533662.html>.

youth unemployment. Dave Preeper with the Williams Lake Child Development Centre noted that for some youth in Williams Lake, a lack of formal employment has encouraged illicit income earning, such as drug-dealing and gang affiliation; sending various other ripple effects throughout the community. While unemployment is certainly not the sole or deciding factor in crime committed by youth, Statistics Canada has noted the multifaceted nature of juvenile delinquency, and that unemployment may motivate certain criminal activity<sup>26</sup>. For instance, studies found strong links between property crime and extended male youth unemployment<sup>27</sup>. Meanwhile, they emphasize that employment among teenagers and young adults reduces the risk of criminal behavior by providing a steady income for youth. This income, as well as increased time under adult supervision and allowing for strengthened social and community bonds contribute to successful integration into Canadian society and the economy<sup>28</sup>.

In addition to crime, negative health consequences have also been linked to youth unemployment, posing a further challenge for Williams Lake. In particular, studies over the last few decades have consistently pointed to a correlation between unemployment and mental health concerns; the most common mental health issue being depression<sup>29</sup>. Meanwhile, Williams Lake community members have expressed that mental health services in the community, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and services within the Child Development Centre, are filled to the brim with clients. The effects of mental health problems on communities are of course widespread, though may often impact youth most. This is particularly true for Aboriginal youth in Canada, who face higher risk of suicide than non-Aboriginal youth<sup>30</sup>. Moreover, recently the Member of Parliament for the Cariboo-Prince George district (encompassing Williams Lake) called on the Canadian Government for a national strategy for suicide prevention and mental health, following a series of mental health emergencies facing Canadian Aboriginal youth<sup>31</sup>. While a correlation between poor mental health conditions and unemployment does not.

### *Youth Migration and Retention*

Many rural communities face the challenge of youth migration, which in turn, suggests the need for youth retention strategies in rural communities such as Williams Lake. There are many different reasons as to why youth are migrating from these communities in which they grew up. Studies have identified young people as being amongst the most restricted and disadvantaged from rural living, and increasingly are

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<sup>26</sup> Canada. Public Safety Canada. National Crime Prevention Centre. *A Statistical Snapshot of Youth at Risk and Youth Offending in Canada*. 2012. Accessed May 4, 2016.

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ststclsnpsht-yth/index-en.aspx>.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p20.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Murphy, Gregory C. and James A. Athanasou. 1999. "The Effect of Unemployment on Mental Health." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 72: 83-99.

<http://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/199367134?accountid=14656>.

<sup>30</sup> Canada. Public Safety Canada. National Crime Prevention Centre. *A Statistical Snapshot of Youth at Risk and Youth Offending in Canada*. 3. 2012. Accessed May 4, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Yorski, Monica Lamb. "MP Calls for More Mental Health Support." *Williams Lake Tribune*, April 14, 2016. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://www.wltribune.com/news/375774101.html>.

migrating to urban centers<sup>32</sup>. Reasons for such migration include lack of employment, education and social opportunities compared to those available in urban centers and larger cities<sup>33</sup>. Many youth intend to leave their rural communities after graduating high school because there are very limited opportunities and options available for those with higher education and occupational aspirations. This was outlined in our focus groups when asked if the participating youth were planning on staying in Williams Lake, almost all said they plan to move elsewhere. One participant noted that he would go as far as he needed to go for employment. Another participant also mentioned that it is not always the lack of employment options that “scare people away” from Williams Lake, but it is the violence and lack of higher education options available in the city. Many students in the focus groups said they were planning on leaving the community upon graduation to pursue post-secondary options elsewhere while others will be seeking employment. Approximately 25% of all clients seen by Michelle Obre, an employment case worker at Horton Ventures, have or are considering leaving Williams Lake due to

Transportation is also an issue that is cited as a cause for youth missing certain opportunities in rural areas<sup>34</sup>. With many employers being scattered about the community, ineffective public and private transport pose serious challenges for finding work<sup>35</sup>. Young people tend to be the largest group of out-migrants from rural communities and the consequences of this has great effects on rural communities<sup>36</sup>. Many of the negative outcomes are due to the loss of potential labour, community leaders, volunteers and parents of future generations<sup>37</sup>. This ultimately creates challenges for the sustainability of rural communities, especially in communities with declining populations, when economic and community development becomes more difficult<sup>38</sup>. One proposal to enhance young people’s opportunities in the research studied, is subsidies for transport or to improve public transportation systems in rural areas<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, an employment shuttle would benefit the community greater in the long term as well. In Williams Lake many of the employers are located outside of the city center. For example, Pioneer Log Homes, a significant employer in Williams Lake, has three job sites located on the outskirts of town with no form of formal public transportation to reach them. Another geographic barrier to employment transportation that was mentioned in one of the focus groups is that a significant amount of the jobs on the job board in the Work BC office are located outside of Williams Lake.

## State of Public Transit

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<sup>32</sup> Jentsch, Birgit. "Youth Migration from Rural Areas: Moral Principles to Support Youth and Rural Communities In Policy Debates." *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology* 46, no. 3 (July 2006): 229-40. Accessed May 4, 2016. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2006.00412.x/abstract>.

<sup>33</sup> Theodori, A., Ann E Theodori, & Gene L Theodori. (01/01/2014). *Journal of rural social sciences: Perceptions of Community and Place and the Migration Intentions of At-Risk Youth in Rural Areas*. Southern Rural Sociological Association.

<sup>34</sup> Jentsch, Birgit. "Youth Migration from Rural Areas". 2006.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Theodori, A., Ann E Theodori, & Gene L Theodori. "Perceptions of Community and Place and the Migration Intentions of At-Risk Youth in Rural Area". 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Jentsch, Birgit. "Youth Migration from Rural Areas". 2006.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

Run by BC Transit and funded by the Provincial Government, the city of Williams Lake currently hosts 4 fixed bus routes that run throughout the city's downtown core and a few areas on the outskirts of Williams Lake. The system includes six operational busses, served by 4 full-time drivers and 5 part-time drivers. Yet, transit ridership within Williams Lake remains low, with larger city buses often running empty<sup>40</sup>. Previous research on the transit system has pointed to a variety of reasons for this issue, including but not limited to an inconvenient bus schedule, a lack of bus stop safety, a lack of public awareness surrounding bus schedules and routes, and inaccessible transit routes<sup>41</sup>.

Upon researching alongside youth within the community, our findings emphasized the link between poor public transit options and youth unemployment and/or underemployment. In fact, a 2013 study on youth unemployment in rural British Columbia communities noted that 45% of youth cited a lack of accessible transportation options as their number one barrier to employment<sup>42</sup>. In Williams Lake, our research findings point to three key challenges to the existing transit system: the ineffective structure, unreliable service and added barriers for Indigenous communities.

### *Challenges of Public Transit: Ineffective Structure*

Upon speaking to youth, employers and employment services within Williams Lake, it is clear that the existing public transit system features various structural challenges, which fail to accommodate youth employment. Among the most pressing structural issue is the scheduling of public transit in the community, which often does not align with employment schedules for youth, who often work shift work. For many young adults in Williams Lake, shift work begins between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM, yet public transit does not begin until after 7:15 AM on weekdays, and after 9:00 AM on weekends<sup>43</sup>. Meanwhile, public busses stop service between 5:00 PM and 6:30 PM, posing further challenges for youth who work evening shifts. With service, retail and the food industry making up much of Williams Lake's employment opportunities, many youth thus work hours which exceed the hours of transit operation.

When youth are unable to rely on public transit for commuting, not only is employment less accessible, but the safety of youth may be put at risk. One participant noted that after finishing with a shift at a local restaurant, she had to walk home alone at 11:00 PM due to the bus no longer running, not arriving home until 1:00 AM. The participant not only noted that this resulted in physical exhaustion, but fear for her own personal safety. Personal safety is an important though an often overlooked part of employment accessibility, and is a heightened concern for certain demographics,

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<sup>40</sup> Marjoribanks, Iain, Stephanie Soo, Stella Zhou, and Meagan O'Neill. *A Demand-Based Spatial Analysis of Transit Ridership and Demand for Service in Williams Lake*. Social Planning Council of Williams Lake. May 2015. Accessed May 1, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> McCreary Centre Society. *Negotiating the Barriers to Employment for Vulnerable Youth in British Columbia*. Report. Vancouver: BC Centre for Employment Excellence, 16. 2014. Accessed March 12, 2016. DesLibres.

<sup>43</sup> "BC Transit - Schedules and Maps." BC Transit. 2016. Accessed May 5, 2016. <http://bctransit.com/williams-lake/schedules-and-maps>.

including indigenous women and girls<sup>44</sup>. In the Williams Lake context, the proximity to British Columbia's "Highway of Tears", enhances these concerns; where a number of women have gone missing or been murdered after having to hitchhike on stretches of highway that are underserved by safe transportation options. In light of such circumstances, Williams Lake's Indigenous women/girls of Williams Lake's may experience increased safety challenges and by extension, employment barriers.

A second equally important structural downfall currently facing public transit in Williams Lake, is cost. For many, the cost of public transit has been cited as a barrier to employment transportation, with an individual fare of \$1.75 per ride, or a monthly student pass for \$36.00 per month. Though these prices are similar to transit fares within other parts of the province, these costs are unaffordable for many youth, including those who are low-income, and facing underemployment or unemployment as it is<sup>45</sup>. While some employment-seeking services in Williams Lake offer subsidized transit tickets for program participants, the cost of these tickets come out of income assistance programs. With many of our focus group participants seeing public transit as an unviable option (due to the structural barriers listed), such programming still does not allow them to get to work consistently; thus pointing to an ineffective income assistance expenditure. Meanwhile, where subsidized tickets/passes are useful, participants noted that they often take weeks to come through.

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<sup>44</sup> Wilson, Brenda. "Highway of Tears: Preventing violence against Women." Carrier Sekani Family Services, 2011. Web. March, 2016.

<sup>45</sup> CCATEC Interview. May 12, 2016. Raw data. Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Employment Centre, Williams Lake.

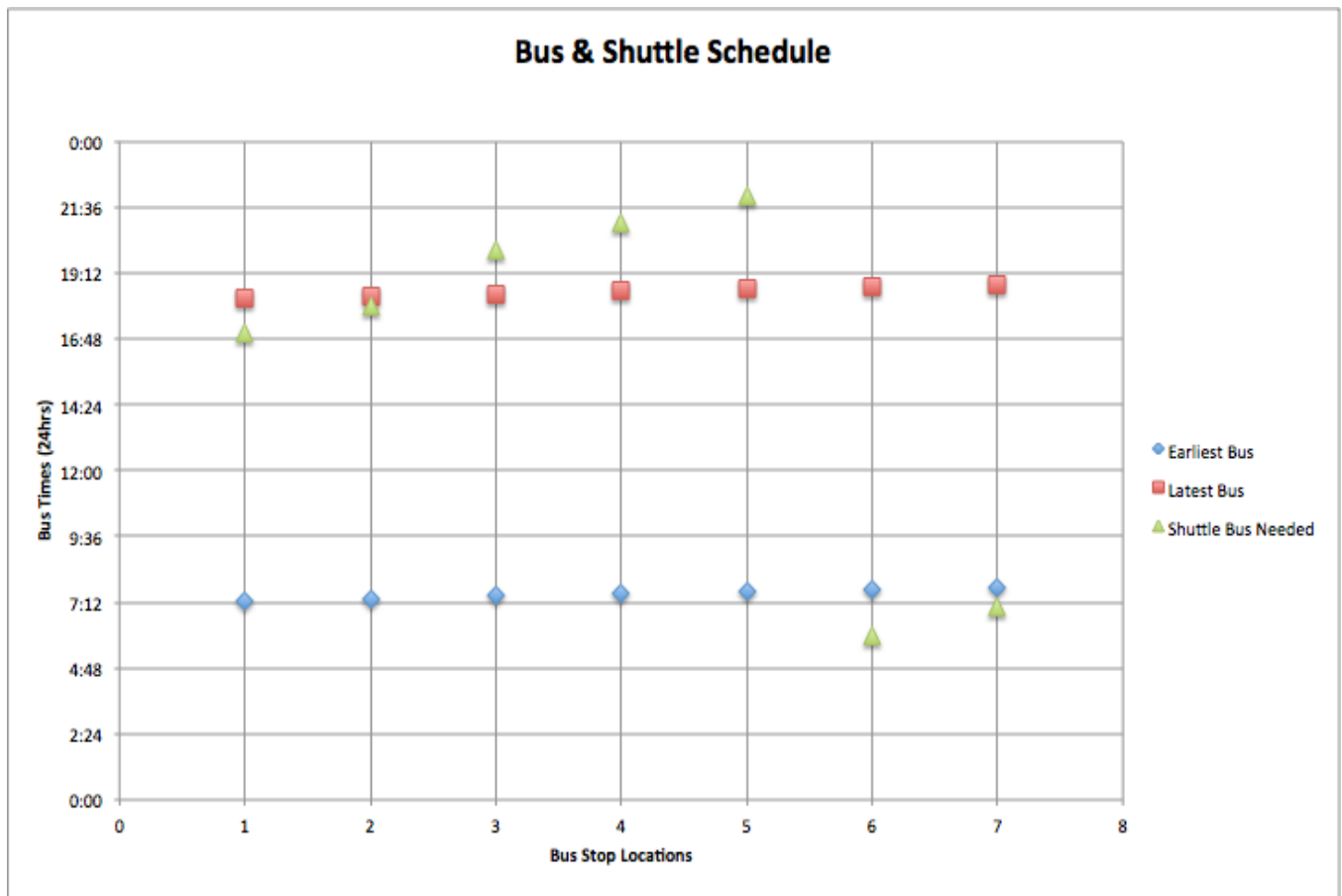


Figure 4: Graph based on focus group participants and Williams Lake bus route schedule. Indicates earliest and latest routes that “Community bus 1” currently operates on weekdays in addition to hours that youth hope for shuttle.

### *Challenges of Public Transit: Unreliable Service*

In addition to the internal structural challenges facing BC Transit operations within Williams Lake, community-based research revealed that the quality of transit service in Williams Lake is a further issue for youth employment. After speaking to various professionals within the community, as well as youth, mutual distrust of the bus system contributed to the idea of youth being unreliable employees. When youth are able to utilize public transit, they complained of its inconsistencies, ranging from incompatible timetables, to arriving earlier or later than scheduled. For example, youth focus group participants mentioned having been left stranded before work, with the bus running earlier than scheduled. As such, youth understand transit as being unreliable, and therefore a barrier to employment.

By extension, major employers within Williams Lake emphasized their reluctance to hire youth, in part because of such unreliable transportation options. For one of the top employers in the community, Pioneer Log Homes, access to transportation is the first question asked in job interviews; and youth without drivers licenses and cars, are often seen as unreliable. On the occasion where such youth are hired, a primary mode of transportation has been informal carpooling networks, which are still seen as inconsistent. On one instance, five employees who carpooled together, missed their shifts due to vehicle breakdown. Hence, inconsistency becomes an issue for both the

employee and the employer. In sum then, unreliable transportation has been a significant factor in low rates of job retention for youth<sup>46</sup>.

### *Who is Impacted: Socio-economic Status*

The results of the challenges outlined above are widespread, impacting low-income, transit-dependent communities the most, including Dog Creek, Wildwood, Commodore Heights, and Glendale<sup>47</sup>. These impacts do not affect all youth in the same way, as research within the community has shown a distinction between experiences of youth within the 17-18 age group from the local high school and lower-income youth within the 20-30 age group participating in a job search program with Horton Ventures. Within the high school group of 17 students, 82% of participants had access to their family's car. These youth viewed public transit as a last resort and faced little to no transportation barriers for employment, considering their regular access to a vehicle. However, several individuals expressed having past employment difficulties, prior to obtaining their driver's licenses. One participant noted having to leave school one hour earlier to reach the workplace on foot for the start of their shift.

Meanwhile, among a focus group of 5 youth participating in a job search program with Horton Ventures, none of the participants had regular access to a car. In addition, many of these youth relied on employment insurance and/or income assistance. Hence, for the youth within Williams Lake who are lower-income and often unable to afford a car, city busses represent the only official option for transportation to and from work. As such, many of these youth still choose to walk to work, due to the incompatibilities bus and work schedules, in addition to unreliable service. However, all of the participants agreed that walking to work compromised their personal safety, and required an increased amount of time. One individual recalled walking for 4 hours total, in order to complete a 4-hour shift at a local fast-food restaurant. Furthermore, when individuals choose not to walk, hitchhiking becomes a viable option; with the Boys and Girls Club estimating that 20% to 25% of its' at-risk youth, hitchhike to get to work, which presents numerous safety concerns<sup>48</sup>.

### *Who is Impacted: Indigenous Youth*

Aboriginal youth face added barriers to employment due to a lack of access to job postings and difficulty accessing job sites due to transit issues and the high cost of transportation<sup>49</sup>. Studies in Northern Canada and British Columbia have shown that youth in rural areas face difficulties that are attributable not only to their physical distance from areas of work, but also the isolation that results from inadequate

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<sup>46</sup> Pioneer Log Homes Interview. May 12, 2016. Raw data. Pioneer Log Homes Headquarters, Williams Lake.

<sup>47</sup> Marjoribanks, Iain, Stephanie Soo, Stella Zhou, and Meagan O'Neill. *A Demand-Based Spatial Analysis of Transit Ridership and Demand for Service in Williams Lake*. Social Planning Council of Williams Lake. May 2015. Accessed May 1, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> McCreary Centre Society. *Negotiating the Barriers to Employment for Vulnerable Youth in British Columbia*. BC Centre for Employment Excellence, 2014. Accessed February 11, 2016. <http://deslibris.ca.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/ID/247437>.

transportation infrastructure<sup>50</sup>, which is very much the case in small communities surrounding the areas Williams Lake core. Tension arises between the youth's desire to stay within the community they are tied to, and the pull to move away to find better employment opportunities<sup>51</sup>.

According to an interview with staff from the Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Centre (CCATEC), approximately half of the participants in training programs live on one of the fifteen surrounding reserves and must commute between twenty minutes and a few hours to reach the program location in Williams Lake. Due to limited employment opportunities on reserves, many people find themselves obligated to commute into town to access employment. Considering that few have their own driver's license or car many youth rely on rides from their parents or guardians. Only Sugarcane reserve is accommodated by public transit into town, with reduced hours in comparison with the other existing BC Transit bus routes. The bus runs from three times per day from Tuesday to Friday (leaving Boitano Park at 10:30, 14:00 and 16:00), leaving out major work times and several weekdays. Existing community shuttles operate bi-weekly for medical services only. Relying on rides is often inconsistent and inconvenient, leading many youth to leave their reserves and find accommodation with other family members in town in order to gain more independence. The experience of transitioning from a reserve to the city has been seen to cause a culture shock for youth who find themselves within an unfamiliar social and cultural context<sup>52</sup>. For this reason, a service geared towards youth on reserve should consider integrating a support program for the transition experience. Youth living closer to the city core still face significant barriers to employment due to their inability to afford a license and car, and the unaffordability of public transit.

## Program Goals and Objectives

The aim of the research conducted is to develop a pilot job shuttle bus program that is geared towards making youth employment more accessible. The concept of a job shuttle bus is one which could address a variety of complex issues within Williams Lake, beyond just unemployment and transportation barriers. In establishing a shuttle, this project has the capacity to support the community whilst simultaneously addressing various social, economic and environmental issues within Williams Lake. Not only is better access to employment an important step in poverty reduction, but a shuttle could also begin to address various social challenges in Williams Lake - including safety issues, marginalization and youth empowerment. For instance, the shuttle system could address aforementioned public transit barriers in Williams Lake, by providing a transit option which better suits the schedules of youth. This is in addition to minimizing the amount of hitchhiking undertaken by Williams Lake youth - which is a major safety concern for the community. Furthermore, marginalization and empowerment are undertaken by orienting the shuttle program towards those who need it most; including

<sup>50</sup> Canada. Mount Allison University. The Council of Ministers of Education. *Literature Review on Factors Affecting the Transition of Aboriginal Youth from School to Work*. By David Bruce, Amanda Marlin, and Helen Raham. May 13, 2013. Accessed February 10, 2016. [http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/298/Literature-Review-on-Factors\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/298/Literature-Review-on-Factors_EN.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> CCATEC Interview. May 12, 2016. Raw data. Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Employment Centre, Williams Lake.



low-income, Indigenous youth, and young people who face challenges in their educational careers.

On a broader level, a further objective of the job shuttle proposal is to foster community building through community collaboration, networking and cross-organization coordination. The project intends to do this through involving various stakeholders within Williams Lake, including the Social Planning Council, the Child Development Centre, various employment seeking services (such as CCATEC and Horton Ventures), the Cariboo-Chilcotin School District, the Williams Lake Indian Band and various employers. Including these various groups in the implementation of this pilot project is vital to the program's success and is an important step in ensuring the program's long-term sustainability. Moreover, through creating a space which empowers youth and addresses various disparities faced by some groups, this project aims to foster a greater sense of community within Williams Lake. Organizations in the city have noted the capacity for a youth shuttle bus to diffuse some of the tensions which exist between different groups of youth, by establishing a common space for understanding and interaction.

Finally, the establishment of a youth job shuttle bus aims to heighten youth retainment within Williams Lake, where many youth have expressed their desire to leave the community in search of more opportunities, including employment opportunities. In providing an accessible and reliable form of employment transportation, a shuttle bus can address this issue of migration through a variety of means. First, it encourages employers to more actively hire youth, knowing that they have access to consistent and reliable forms of transportation. By the same thread, youth will ideally be encouraged to apply to a more broad spectrum of jobs, knowing they can get to their workplaces with ease, and safely. From there, young people can experience more stable, sustainable employment early on in their careers; encouraging them to continue to establish themselves within Williams Lake. With regards to many Indigenous youth living on Reserves on the outskirts of town, the shuttle also offers a new transportation option. This may enable such youth to access employment within the city centre (as opposed to out of town), while still maintaining close connections to their home communities. A shuttle could also address the opportunity gap often felt by Indigenous youth, which may in part drive youth migration.

These goals and objectives for a youth job shuttle bus relate directly towards the issues that the Social Planning Council works with. As such, we feel that this program has the capacity to feasibly be implemented, with the support of other community organizations and grant funding. We recommend that this project is first implemented as a pilot, focusing initially on providing shuttle access to the major employment hubs within the city's core. After first introducing the shuttle on a small-scale, steps to implement the shuttle for all of Williams Lake, including providing access to the city's outskirts, should be undertaken - keeping in mind the various logistics laid out by our research.

## Potential Program Structures

Research on public transit in Williams Lake undertaken by a group of UBC researchers in 2015 alongside the SPC and the City of Williams Lake, have concluded that addressing transport barriers vis-à-vis working with BC Transit is unfeasible in the short-term<sup>53</sup>. Challenges with dealing with the Provincial Government and a large organization such as BC Transit pose immense difficulties, ultimately deterring widespread transit reform in Williams Lake. As such, we have identified a youth job-shuttle bus as the most feasible option for addressing transportation gaps in Williams Lake. With community support, a shuttle bus can exist outside the system of BC Transit, thus allowing it to better cater to youth in Williams Lake specifically.

Drawing on existing shuttle systems within Williams Lake then, the following section presents various options for the organization of a youth job-shuttle. Currently the mines in Williams Lake are successfully running a shuttle to take their own employees such as Mount Polley Mine that is a 1.25 hour commute between Williams Lake and the job site. Although there are some barriers to the feasibility of a shuttle program, for example unsuccessful shuttles that have run in the past, our research through the focus groups and interview processes outlines the best ways to potentially structure the shuttle for youth to run successfully and sustainably. One local business named 'Barking Spider Mountain Bikes,' had ran a shuttle system in the past that had taken mountain bikers to the top of two local peaks and back. They said that at five dollars per person, they needed 20 people to take the shuttle system per run in order to make a profit. The length of time to each peak was about 25 to 30 minutes (approximately one hour round trip). The shuttle system they ran was eventually deemed unsuccessful since it did not make a profit. However, the employees did not know how much money it would have cost to simply break even. It is also not taken into consideration that that shuttle system was hauling up to 20 mountain bikes at a time, in a trailer, and going up hill, both of which have a large impact on the amount of gas consumed. Moreover, many of the participants that would have used the bus, ultimately fit within a niche demographic who were using the bus for a very specific means for leisure. A shuttle used for youth employment consists of a much more broad group and thus would be a more feasible undertaking. With an employment shuttle for youth, we have calculated potential routes, prices and structure in order to launch a successful pilot program in the community. The sections below offer suggestions and considerations when formulating the shuttle structure.

### *Involving Major Employer(s)*

Youth have expressed the importance of having employers involved with the shuttle system in order to support with funding the vehicle operation and staff as well as coordinating shifts to allow for more efficiency. For example, a partnership could be established between the Child Development Center and Pioneer Log Homes, one of the major employers in the area. Representatives from Pioneer Log Homes have expressed that they place a high importance on the employee's transportation methods, yet experiences inconsistency of transportation from their employees. Hence, a shuttle

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<sup>53</sup> Marjoribanks, Iain, Stephanie Soo, Stella Zhou, and Meagan O'Neill. *A Demand-Based Spatial Analysis of Transit Ridership and Demand for Service in Williams Lake*. Social Planning Council of Williams Lake. 11. May 2015. Accessed May 7, 2016

would allow for a consistent transportation method for employees and a more accessible opportunity for youth who would otherwise be unable to reach the workplace. Pioneer Log Homes has expressed interest in potentially supporting the shuttle through funding and scheduling, depending on the reliability of the shuttle and the quality of workers. The youth organization would take part in the screening process for youth workers by suggesting people who demonstrate the potential to succeed in the workplace. Based on this, one possible structure for the bus would include involving major employers within the community – all of whom would contribute in part to the funding and/or logistics of the bus. If using this option, we recommend collaborating with the following employers: Pioneer Log Homes, Walmart, McDonalds, Tolko Industries, Mt. Polley Mines and other mining organizations in Williams Lake.

### *Business Opportunity*

A second option, is structuring the shuttle as a youth-driven business venture, as suggested by CCATEC. A shuttle system as a business model not only would provide employment for the individuals who are initiating the project, but would also allow for a system that is not dependent on external funding to be sustained. A start-up business could be initiated with help from a Community Futures small business grant, and could be presented to the Economic Development Officer, Susan Fournier, as a beneficial project for economic development in the community<sup>54</sup>. The individuals who maintain such a program may take on more ownership of the project and ensure its sustainability and reliability. In order for this option to be successful, it would need to be sensitive to the social tensions in the community, particularly with regards to relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (CCATEC). Guidelines would need to be established in order to ensure an inclusive and safe program, and a community organization should be responsible for overseeing the programs operations, and providing support and mentorship for the youth involved.

### *Collaboration Between Community Organizations*

A third structure proposes that various community organizations within Williams Lake collaborate in the formation of a job shuttle. Various community organizations around Williams Lake have expressed interest in such a system, including the Child Development Centre, the Boys and Girls Club, Horton Ventures, CCATEC, and GROW. The SPC may also be a valuable community organization to include with the creation of a shuttle bus as their goal is to promote and foster connection between community groups and could act as a central point of communication and support. Coordination between these groups could lead to a resilient program that would reach a greater number of youth. There are a number of existing transport resources that may be used within Williams Lake. For example, Boys and Girls Club vehicles could be utilized during a pilot project, and a bus sitting with the Boys and Girls Club could be used after considerable repairs<sup>55</sup>. Currently, a youth-worker at GROW used their personal expenses to provide transportation for some youth conducting job searches<sup>56</sup>. The same worker also emphasized the demand for such a program, citing that she knows at least 12 youth from her organization alone, that would use such a service on a weekly

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<sup>54</sup> "Interview with Chris Hutton, City Planner of Williams Lake." Interview by author. May 4, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> "Interview with Matt Neufeld." Interview by author. May 5, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> "Interview with representative of GROW." Interview by author. May 5, 2016.

basis. Additional participants could be gathered from the numerous partner organizations, which would thereby decrease costs.

While the primary role of this shuttle would be to arrange transportation to and from work for youth who have been identified as needing this transportation alternative, an additional purpose of the bus, designated for youth in the job application process could also be beneficial<sup>57 58</sup>. The shuttle would transport youth to various employers in order to distribute their resumes and cover letters on a weekly or monthly basis. This idea could be integrated with Horton Ventures, GROW and CCATEC as they also do training programs and offer employment support for youth.

## Budget and Logistic Considerations

When choosing a program structure, there are several key considerations to keep in mind including the shuttle route, safety, operating costs and affordability and methods of communication. Depending on the program structure decided upon, these logistics might vary. Below are some considerations that have surfaced as a result of conversations with community members, interviews, and focus groups.

### *Shuttle Route*

Conversations with youth, employers and employment caseworkers within Williams Lake have emphasized the need for a job shuttle bus to operate along certain routes within the community, which are relevant to where youth are located, and which employers they are trying to reach. An important aspect of a community shuttle bus, is for drop off locations to be within walking distance of major employers. Youth and employment officers noted the importance of having busses run to and from the following locations:

#### Pick-Up Locations:

- I. Oliver Street
  - A. Encompasses the Boys and Girls Club
- II. 3rd Avenue North at Cameron Street
  - A. Skyline/GROW Schools, Williams Lake Employment Services, Academy of Learning College
- III. 6th Avenue North at Comer Street
  - A. Encompasses Lake Secondary School
- IV. Carson Drive at Central Court
  - A. Encompasses Carson Drive Apartment Buildings

#### Drop-Off Locations:

- I. Prosperity Way

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<sup>57</sup> CCATEC Interview. May 12, 2016. Raw data. Cariboo Chilcotin Aboriginal Training Employment Centre, Williams Lake.

<sup>58</sup> Horton Ventures Focus Group. 12 May 2016. Raw data. Horton Ventures Employment Service, Williams Lake.

- A. Encompasses Walmart, McDonalds, Dollarama, Subway, Bell Wireless Dealers
- II. South Lakeside Drive at Hodgson Road
  - A. Encompasses Pioneer Log Homes of B.C. (Headquarters)
- III. Chilcotin Bella Coola Highway at South Lakeside Drive
  - A. Encompasses Tolko Industries

Williams Lake Shuttle Bus Routes and Current Bus Routes:

The first two maps shown are prospective drop off and pick up sites without current city bus routes, or proposed routes in order to show the spatial relations of them with in William’s Lake. The first shows Williams Lake and Sugar Cane, while the second focuses in on just the down town of Williams Lake. All of the following maps were created on ‘Google Maps.’

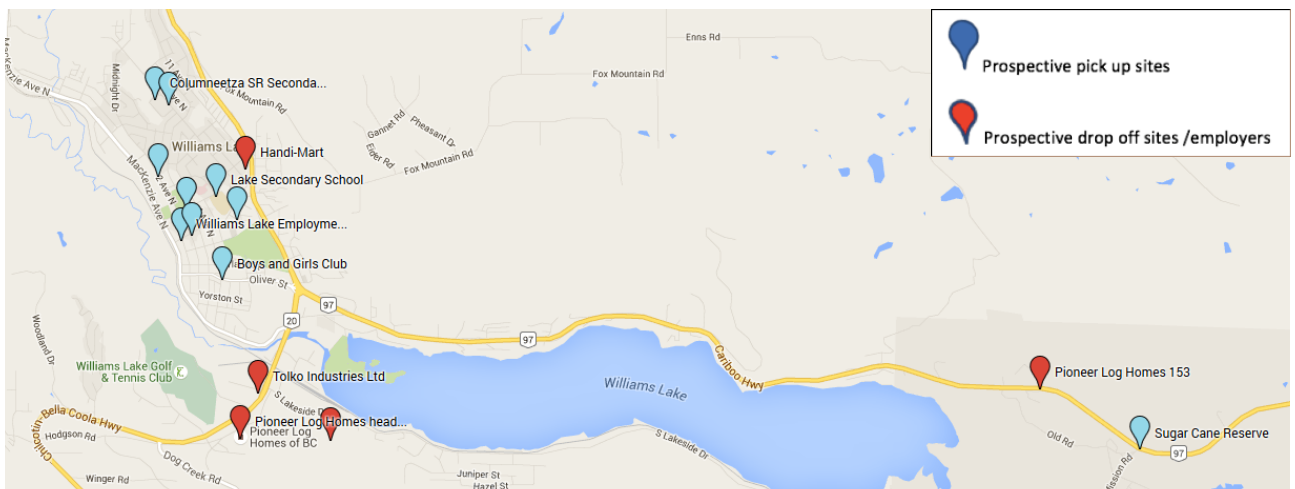


Figure 5: Map of Pick-up and Drop-off Locations (a)

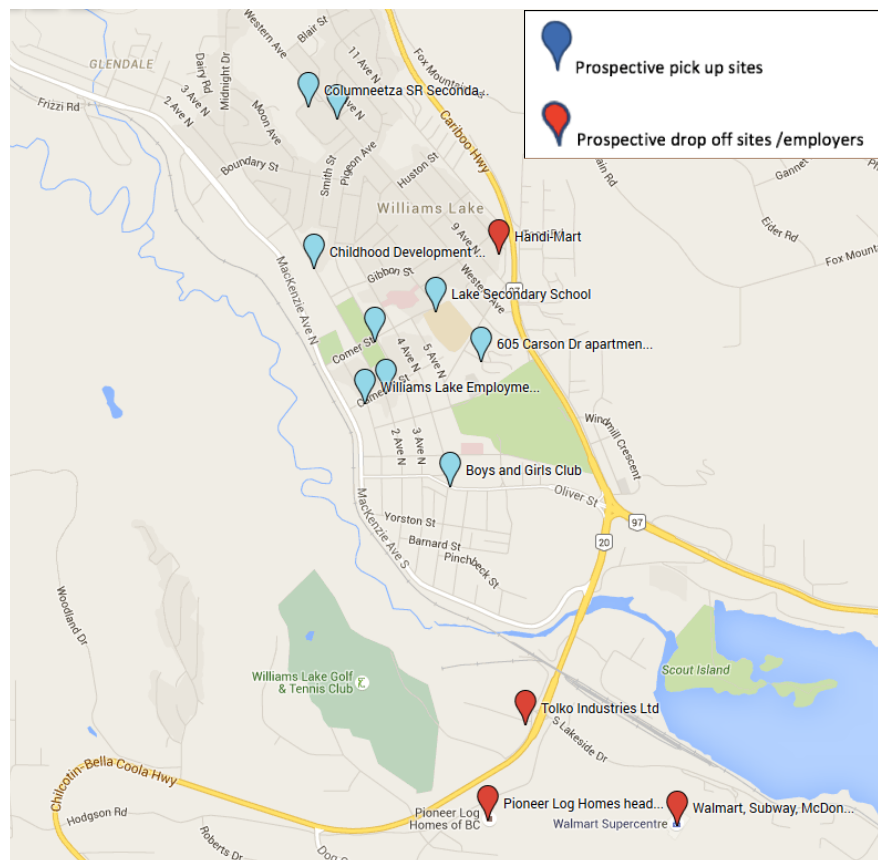


Figure 6: Map of Pick-up and Drop-off Locations (b)

Current Bus Routes and prospective pick up and drop off sites:

The current public transit bus routes roughly go to all of the places identified as areas of need for the shuttle bus for both pick up and drop off sites. So although the route the busses take do cater to areas that need them, most of the areas require transferring busses to get a relatively short distance- turning what should and could be an easy and fast commute, into a sometimes long and daunting task. For instance to get from Columneetza Secondary school to Wal-Mart, one must take the community bus route to Boitano Park and Borland and then catch the South Lakeside bus from there. With each bus only running about once an hour, if the timing is not just right an individual may have to wait as long as 2-3 hours to get across town to work. It is the same with transferring from the Broadway bus to the South Lakeside bus, and in regards to the Sugar Cane bus route, although it is only one bus transfer as well, the commute can take an extremely long period of time, especially since (as mentioned before) the route has extremely inconvenient arrival and departure times<sup>59</sup>.



Figure 7: Map of Existing Bus Routes (a)

<sup>59</sup> BC Transit - Schedules and Maps." *BC Transit*. 2016. Web. 5 May 2016.

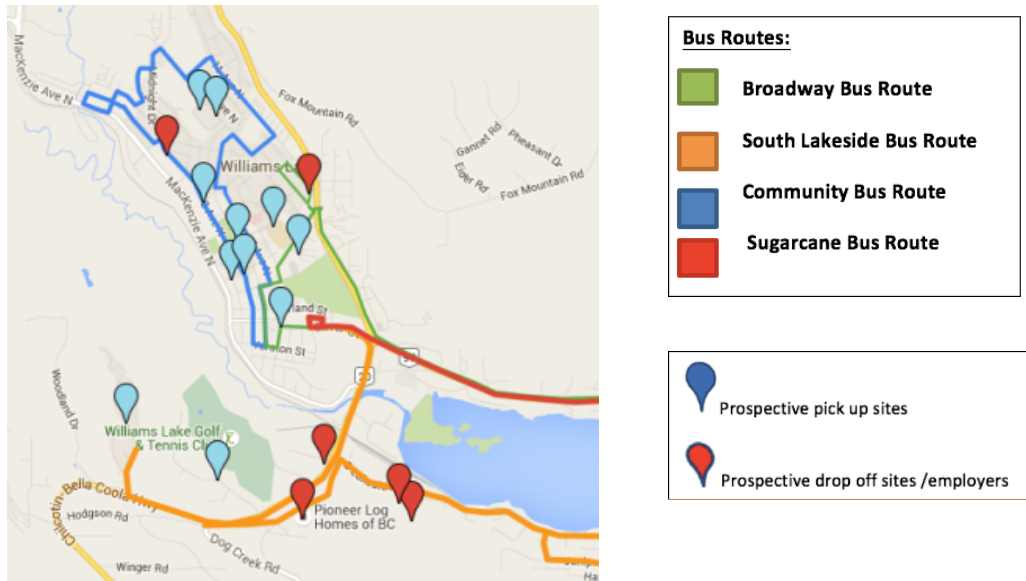
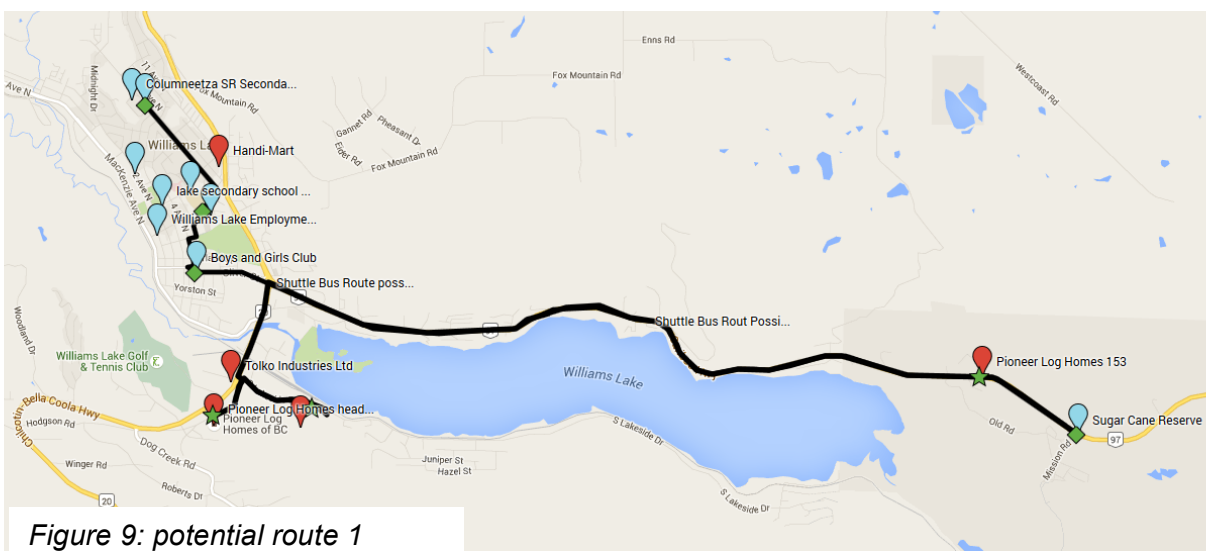
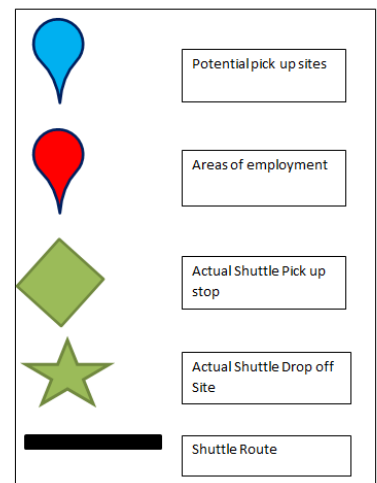


Figure 8: Map of Existing Bus Routes (b)

**Potential Shuttle Bus Routes for the Williams Lake Community:**

The following routes show the potential routes using a black line. The Green diamonds are areas of pick up specifically addressed by the route being displayed, while the green stars represent employers/ drop off sites specifically being met by the route being displayed. Although drop off and pick up sites are shown with different icons, they of course can be both drop off and pick up sites and do not have to be one or the other. The distances given in each route were figured out in google maps.

The first route displayed starts at the Columneetza Secondary School, which is also in close proximity to where many people live (Western Ave). Its second pick up site is at Lake secondary School at Comer St. and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., followed by the Boys and Girls Club located at Oliver and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Afterwards the shuttle goes to Sugar Cane, then from there it has a drop off site at Pioneer Log Homes site 153, then up to Pioneer Log Homes headquarters located on Hodgson Rd., followed by Wal-Mart located on S.



Lakeside Drive. Afterwards, the shuttle would return to Columneetza Secondary School along the same route that it came. The route is roughly 50 km long, which is long distance to drive, but nearly half of the trip (~22 km) is from the drive out to Sugar Cane and back.

The second route is much shorter and starts at Horton Venture (Williams Lake Employment Center) located on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Cameron St., followed by the Boys and Girls Club on Oliver St. and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. The shuttle route then goes directly to Pioneer Log Homes headquarters on Hodgson Rd, followed by Wal-Mart on S. Lakeside Drive, before heading back along the same route. The trip in total is roughly 11km round trip.

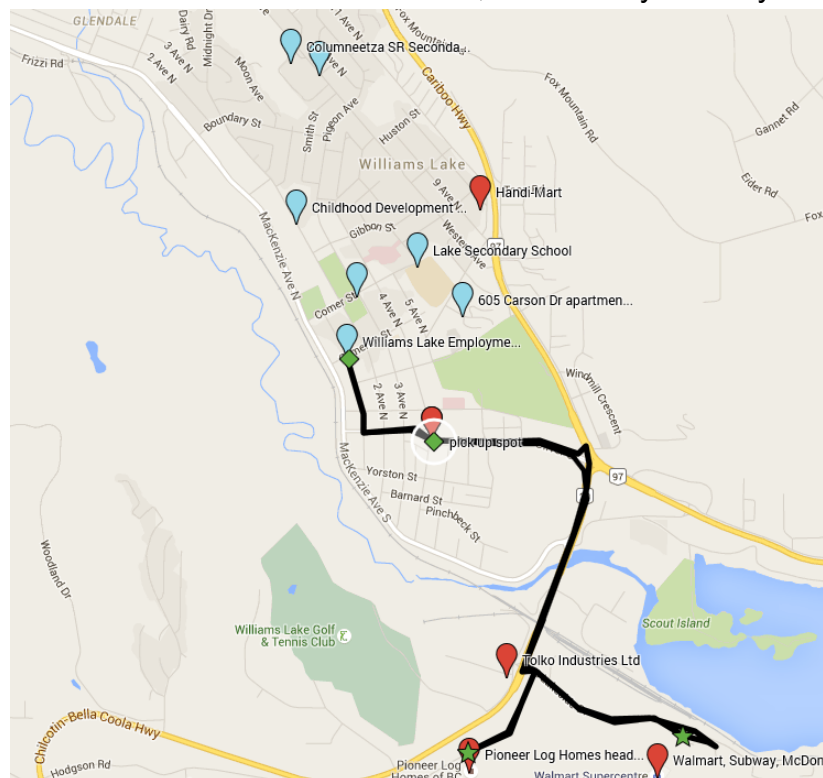


Figure 10: potential route 2

Route three starts at Lake Secondary School, and then has its second stop at Carson Dr. and Central Ct. (in order to cater to the 605 apartment complexes) then the shuttle heads East to the Cariboo Highway and starts traveling South. It has a third pick up and drop off spot near Mackenzie Ave S. The Shuttle then continues on to Sugar Cane, where it turns around, has a drop off site at pioneer log homes site 153, then it arrives to the Chilcotin-Bella Coola Highway, has a drop off site at Tolko industries, then heads to Wal-Mart for its final drop off site, along S. Lakeside Drive before turning back. The routes total distance is roughly 50 km, although, once again, about 22km of this is from driving to Sugar Cane and back.



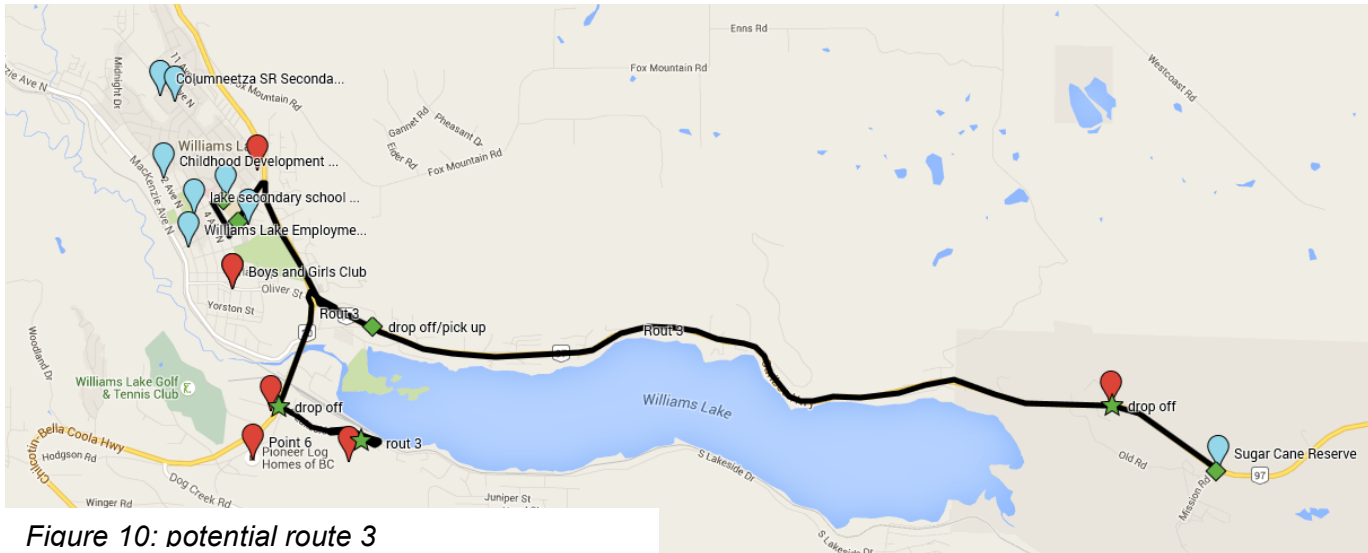


Figure 10: potential route 3

The fourth potential route starts at the Columneetza Secondary School, and then heads south along Smith St. onto Pigeon Ave, where it makes a stop three blocks West of Lake Secondary School on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and Comer St. The shuttle then heads south to Cameron St and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to Horton Ventures for its third pick up site. Afterwards the bus travels south along Mackenzie up to the Chilcotin-Bella Coola Highway, stops at Tolko Industries, and then makes its final stop at the Wal-Mart on S. Lakeside Drive, and then turns back, the total trip is about 12 km round trip.



Figure 11: potential route 4

### Safety Considerations

Ensuring the safety of a job shuttle bus is critical to the initiative, as it addresses many of the barriers that dis-incentivize the existing public transit system for youth. Participants in nearly all of our focus groups noted the importance of employing reliable

and trustworthy bus drivers, with the ability to take control of situations with unruly passengers – which is an apparent issue with the current transit system. Bus drivers should also have the appropriate licensing for driving busses, referring to a class 4, unrestricted B.C. commercial driver's license<sup>60</sup>. Moreover, staff from CCATEC emphasized the importance of having a driver with an adequate knowledge of the context of Williams Lake, and who is sensitive to the dynamics between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth; who may face different employment and transportation barriers. As a way to ensure this sensitivity, interviewees recommended connecting with Williams Lake tribal councils for collaboration.

Focus Group participants also emphasized the importance of strong infrastructure within the job shuttle. The shuttle should be equipped with effective seat belts, and proper insurance. In our first focus group, a participant noted that current old, under-equipped busses which often run from Reserve communities within Williams Lake, can be a safety hazard due to the community's bumpy roads. Hence, shuttle seats should be in good shape and feature effective seatbelts.

In terms of shuttle stops, pick-up and drop-off locations should be in fairly open, and well-lit public spaces. Research collected on safety concerns surrounding Williams Lake's existing public transit pointed out the importance of well-lit stops so that riders can clearly see their surroundings<sup>61</sup>. Stops should also be located along the suggested pick-up and drop-off locations, but away from areas that are popular for alcohol consumption. For instance, Boitanio Park has consistently been understood as unsafe for young riders both in the daytime and at night<sup>62</sup>.

#### *Cost and Affordability Considerations:*

The cost of running a shuttle is highly dependent on the type of vehicle used and the distances covered. For the 50km job shuttle route, we roughly estimate it would cost \$42 per trip. This is assuming that the bus operator is paid \$20/hour, \$12 for gas at an assumed price of \$1.00/L, \$10 for insurance other another additional fees. For the 12km job shuttle route, it would cost roughly \$29 per trip. This is calculated with the same assumptions as the previous bus routes<sup>63</sup>.

There are other additional start up costs that may also arise. Refurbishing an older bus such as the one available from the Boys and Girls Club another cost consideration. One would also need to consider the seating capacity of the bus to calculate the amount each rider must pay in order to sustain itself. Assuming the bus can hold 20 individuals, the cost that each individual must pay for the 50km trip is \$2.10. Other Boys and Girls Club vehicles are also available on a part-time basis with different seating capacity which would require a different amount to be charged for each passenger.

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<sup>60</sup> "License Classes and Types." ICBC.com. 2016. Accessed May 5, 2016. <http://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/types-licences/Pages/Licence-classes-and-types.aspx>.

<sup>61</sup> Marjoribanks, Iain, Stephanie Soo, Stella Zhou, and Meagan O'Neill. *A Demand-Based Spatial Analysis of Transit Ridership and Demand for Service in Williams Lake*. Social Planning Council of Williams Lake. 11. May 2015. Accessed May 1, 2016.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, 10.

<sup>63</sup> "Browse all Heavy Trucks " Fuely. Accessed April 30, 2016. <http://www.fuely.com/truck>

Focus group participants have indicated that the price they are willing to pay for the service is highly dependent on the level of convenience and safety offered by the shuttle. Two participants noted that they would be willing to pay \$2.50 if they could be dropped off right at their workplace while a third expected that he would consider paying up to \$5.00 if the service was offered at a convenient time. Many participants agreed that a monthly pass in the form of a card would be more convenient than paying for daily tickets. They suggested a format in which it would be possible to be refunded for unused trips if there was a change in their job situation before the end of the month and the remaining trips were not used. Participants from Horton Ventures expected that contributing funds from Income Assistance to such a shuttle, rather than public transit tickets, would be a more effective service.

### *Communication Methods*

When asked about the best ways to maintain contact with bus shuttle riders, several of the focus group participants expressed interest in a smartphone app that would allow for easy access to the shuttle schedule. The majority of participants expected a website or automatic reply texting number to be the most effective means of communication, while some participants in the 25 to 30 age range, expressed interest in an automatic voicemail that, when called, would share the updated schedule.

Participants also suggested physical posters and schedules in public places and businesses, as an effective promotion method, as well as announcements over the radio. Representatives from the Child Development Centre, GROW, CCATEC and Pioneer Log Homes expressed interest in promoting the service through personal communications if the need for such a transportation option is expressed by a young person.

### Conclusion

Considering the particular context of Williams Lake as highly industrial and spread out city with considerable disparity between high and low-income groups, a select group of people without private transportation face large challenges of mobility. These challenges include youth who are no longer attending school, youth enrolled in alternate schooling, youth from lower income families, and youth from Indigenous communities. A shuttle service designed to facilitate access to employment for these groups of youth could be a valuable way to fulfill needs that are not met by the existing public transit. If approached in a holistic way, such a program could contribute to a decrease in the rate of unemployment among youth by addressing one of the major barriers to employment, strengthening the resilience and independence of youth, fostering connections between community organizations, and having a beneficial long-term impact on the retainment of youth in the community. It is suggested that any direction chosen for this project should begin as a pilot program on a small scale with a small group of participants, followed by a review and suggestions for improvement or growth.

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