

Executive Summary

Business Description

The Hagwilget Village Council is interested in creating a reconstructed historical Cultural Village comprising of four historical long houses, totem poles, smokehouses and storage sheds at the base of the Hagwilget Village Canyon along the banks of the Bulkley River. This attraction would recreate the original village of Tse Kya at its original site, and would serve as an interactive learning centre where visitors could gain an appreciation of the Wet'suwet'en life and culture. The site would form the foundation of an excellent business model for revenue generation and sustainability through the attraction of tourist and convention markets to the area. A fully developed convention centre would be created in the next phase of the plan to develop a vehicle to keep people overnight and draw three and five day conventions into the area.

The *Cultural Village* would provide the flavour, or experience of the site, and the *Convention Centre* would provide all the amenities required to house people and keep them in the area overnight.

These historical buildings will sit at the base of one of the most scenic backgrounds in the Bulkley Valley. Towering over the canyon on the right side is the Hagwilget Suspension Bridge and on the left is Stekyooden Mountain (Roche De Boule). Although the Hagwilget Suspension Bridge is presently a high volume tourist attraction – largely due to the drawing power of the world renowned 'Ksan Historical Village – the general absence of tourism infrastructure and services results in few economic spin-offs and benefits for the community of Hagwilget itself. The Hagwilget canyon is situated on the traditional Gitksan territory of the Wilp, "Spookw". Many community members of Hagwilget descend from both the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en lineage. The Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan historical, socio-economic and governing structures are based on the hereditary system. The traditional system is still practiced today, along with songs, stories and feast system.

This plan will represent the business case of this enterprise by marrying the information collected through the feasibility research along with the business model of this proposition. The Hagwilget Cultural Village and Convention Centre will offer a vast array of components of both an indoor and outdoor nature. Elements portrayed will include living conditions, daily routines, traditional diet, and processes for making clothing and crafts – all of which would provide tangible economic opportunities for interested community members. Some examples of our potential offerings include:

- *A museum housing historical artefacts of the Wet'suwet'en people;*
- *Reconstruction of the original totem poles along the rivers edge;*
- *Local fishing excursions with First Nations guides and/or visits to a functioning smokehouse located in the village that would offer the visitor insight into the traditional methods of catching and preserving salmon;*
- *Hiking, mountain-biking, river rafting and horseback riding using interpretive signs and local guides;*
- *Story telling and interpretive videos such as Chasing Shadows: The Simon Gunanoot Story, that would serve as a means to share the history and culture of the Wet'suwet'en and Gitksan people;*
- *A First Nations restaurant offering traditional cuisine;*
- *A workshop for local artisans and carvers to develop and market their arts and crafts, and a gift shop/open market in which they could offer their products for sale;*
- *A number of self-contained cabins that would cater to visitors/groups looking to stay in the area for several days; and, performances including native dances, ceremonies or rituals. A full conference centre will augment this in future phases.*

The Hagwilget Village Council envisions that these historical buildings will serve as an interpretive site for visitors to the canyon who will learn about the rich history and culture of its people. It is thought that visitors should feel as though they participated in an authentic experience. An example would be a full recreation of a village where staff re-enact the role of different 'community' members going about their daily routine. Visitors would walk around the village and interact with the various characters who would explain what their role is, what it is they are doing and explain any special processes or rituals around what they do. The attraction may also incorporate plays, dances, interpretive signage and technology to help better tell the story. Visitors may be offered the opportunity to participate in some activities giving them a hands-on learning experience.

Competitive Advantages

Hagwilget will have a number of competitive advantages over sites like 'Ksan, although the vision of the site is not be competitive with 'Ksan, but to be complimentary to the services currently being offered. Hagwilget has a superior location over competitors in that it is in an aesthetically pleasing location on the banks of one of BC's most beautiful rivers and within a walled canyon, as well, tourists travelling to 'Ksan and Old Hazelton must pass the Hagwilget Bridge in order to get there. The Cultural Village will be located directly under the bridge on a river shelf and very noticeable from the road above.

Hagwilget will also offer a more intense experience for visitors with artisans doing a variety of activities representing the cultures of both the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples. These activities will not only be experiential, but are also envisioned to be interactive. Tourists will be able to work along side master carvers and other experts in 'trying' to create art through traditional means.

Hagwilget also plans to have a Conference Centre that will be connected with the Cultural Village. This will allow tourists to enjoy the activities of the village without worrying about having to return to a bus to take off for either Prince George or Prince Rupert. They can

take their time to enjoy, interact, and spend money on the activities of the Cultural Village. Accommodations will prove to be an enormous revenue generator for the site, primarily as an overnight service, but as a strong secondary, a way for tourists to spend more money at the Cultural Village, including the gift store, 'for-fee activities', and food/beverages.

Marketing Strategy

Hagwilget will focus on partnering with organizations already involved in the tourist sector in British Columbia. This will consist of bus tour operators in Western Canada, various tourism marketing organizations (Tourism BC) in the province, and enterprises currently attracting traffic into the area such as 'Ksan, fishing operators, universities focusing on First Nations studies, and other organizations promoting the Hazelton's as a destination.

While the conference facilities are being built, we will focus our marketing on government, private sector, and non-profit/for profit associations to hold their conferences/conventions, training sessions, retreats, and other corporate events at the Hagwilget site.

Some of the marketing collateral that we will use includes:

- Brochures
- Expansive Website
- Direct Mail
- Presentation materials (videos, CD's, and print collateral)
- Direct contact through the telephone and follow up presentations

We will use two separate campaigns to develop both the tourist and conference markets. Depending on whom we are marketing to, the Conference Centre and the Cultural Village will play a primary or secondary role. To illustrate the point:

When marketing to the tourist sector, we will promote the experience of visiting the Cultural Village and the accommodations and food/beverage services offered so that visitors can stay overnight and have a wider experience at the Cultural Village. When marketing to the convention market, we will promote the state of the art conference facilities, luxurious rooms, world-class food and beverage service, and state of the art technology. As an added bonus, conference attendees can visit the Cultural Village for some exceptional experiences around the components of the conference. Imagine a small feast on the banks of the river

on the welcoming night on the conference. Attendees will receive an experience they wouldn't get in the big city, while still having access to the technology required to keep current with their business.

Ownership

The concept of the Hagwilget Cultural Village and Convention Centre is currently controlled 100% by the Hagwilget Village Council. Hagwilget Village Council also owns the land, on which the Cultural Village and the proposed Convention Centre is to be built on. Hagwilget will seek out partners to facilitate the development of both these sites through a strategic partnership structured as a co-venture.

Confidentiality and Recognition of Risks

Confidentiality Clause

The information included in this business plan is strictly confidential and is supplied on the understanding that it will not be disclosed to third parties without the written consent of the Hagwilget Village Council.

Recognition of Risk

The business plan represents our best estimate of the future of the Hagwilget Cultural Village and Conference Centre. It should be recognized that not all of major risks can be predicted or avoided and few business plans are free of errors of omission or commission. Therefore, investors should be aware that this business has inherent risks that should be evaluated prior to any investment.