



**Future
Summit**
Alberta 2002

Imagine our tomorrow...

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 2002

Alberta Future Summit 2002

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This document represents highlights of the report presented to the Government of Alberta by the Future Summit Co-Chairs and the External Advisory Committee. These highlights, and the complete report, are available on the Future Summit website at <www.futuresummit.com>.

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Table of Contents

A Message from the External Advisory Committee	1
Landscape of the Future	3
Albertans' Vision	3
Values and Guiding Principles	4
Strategies and Ideas for Action	5
The Economy	5
Learning	6
Fiscal Responsibility	7
Communities	8
Health and Wellness	9
The Environment	10
Governance	11
A Message from the Co-Chairs	12

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Alberta Future Summit 2002

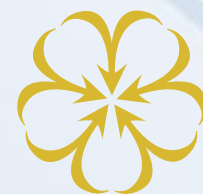
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**Future
Summit**
Alberta 2002

A Message from the External Advisory Committee

The Alberta Future Summit 2002 has given Albertans a voice in crafting the vision that will carry this province forward into the future.

As the External Advisory Committee, our purpose has been to provide a nongovernment perspective throughout the Future Summit process. We are pleased to have been part of this exciting project.

Albertans are proud of their province and optimistic about the future. They have high expectations and set high standards for themselves. But Albertans also realize that expectations must be realistic and results must be achieved in a responsible manner.

The Future Summit brought forward a diversity of ideas on how Alberta should plan for its future. While Albertans have different priorities and viewpoints, the Future Summit showed that far more unites us than sets us apart. The challenge now is for Albertans to build on the results of the Summit and work together to create a better future.

Albertans identified seven priorities for the future—the economy, learning, fiscal responsibility, communities, health and wellness, the environment and governance. The Future Summit helped to identify the dilemmas Albertans must confront as they balance these priorities and develop strategies to deal with them. The Summit also underlined the fact that the future cannot be compartmentalized. The choices Albertans make in one sector may have profound implications for other areas.

Many ideas were presented over the course of the Future Summit process. Some, such as developing wellness-based approaches to health and investing in education through lifelong learning, are traditional approaches which remain important to Albertans. Some, such as using the power of technology to develop new linkages and solutions, represent new challenges and directions.

Some of the ideas proposed at the Summit need further research and analysis and some must be considered in conjunction with larger strategies. Several common approaches were evident. These included the continuing need for comprehensive, long-term planning and long-range budgeting and investment. Long-term budgets and plans help Albertans find an appropriate balance between quality of life and economic development. They also help to stabilize the economy, which in turn contributes to a healthy environment and stable health, education and social programs.

Continued diversification is needed to strengthen and stabilize Alberta's economy. This reduces Alberta's vulnerability to the boom and bust of natural resource revenue fluctuations. It can help to renew Alberta's rural and urban communities, lower unemployment rates and provide opportunities for entrepreneurship. Alberta should continue to build on its traditional strengths by adding value to its products and services, while at the same time seeking new opportunities for diversification. In the future diversification must be connected to sustainability—for all parts of the province.

Paybacks in the future sometimes require investments today. Investments in infrastructure, research and education are investments in the province's future success. Albertans envisioned a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. They also recognized that highly skilled, well-educated workers will be the foundation of the global, knowledge-based economy of the future.

Albertans recognized the importance of effective governance and the ongoing need to clarify government roles and responsibilities. They recognized that stable funding is needed to maintain a sustainable health care system; provide Albertans with accessible, affordable, high-quality education; protect the environment; support communities; and preserve and enhance our quality of life.

Albertans understand that maintaining programs and building new ones comes with a price. They have high expectations, and although they may "want to have it all," there is a limit to what the province can afford. Managing expectations, defining core services, and balancing needs and resources are important first steps. Albertans need to weigh the options carefully, consider new approaches and make difficult choices.

Alberta's plan for the future must be developed as a package. Strategies cannot emerge in isolation. Rather, Albertans must consider the push and pull of competing needs—within a framework of fiscal responsibility and government balancing its budget. They must develop strategies based on cooperation, compromise and an understanding of the interconnectedness of the pieces that will shape the province. Albertans proposed a partnership approach for addressing key issues and maximizing the utilization of resources.

There is no doubt that change is in the air. Alberta is growing. Our economy is increasingly global. New technologies are changing our communities, our workplaces, our environment and our view of ourselves and our world. But Albertans are prepared to confront these challenges. They welcome the opportunity to manage growth and change, to outline their priorities and to make strategic progress on the issues that face the province. More and more, Albertans recognize their citizenship in a global community.

The Future Summit has given Albertans a voice in shaping the future of the province. But the work has just begun. The problems are complex and the best path is not always easy to find. The challenge is finding solutions that do the most good for the most people.

We call on all Albertans—governments, the private sector, nonprofit agencies, community groups and individual citizens—to rise to this challenge. Building on the foundation of the Future Summit, let us work together and step forward toward the future.

Planning for the future is everyone's business.

External Advisory Committee Alberta Future Summit 2002

The Landscape of the Future

Albertans' Vision

When Albertans look toward the future they see a province with a strong economy and a skilled, productive workforce. They see a healthy environment and strong, safe communities. They see future generations of Albertans enjoying high-quality health care and lifelong learning opportunities. They see their governments living within their means. And they see individual citizens, governments, businesses and communities working *together*—getting involved, contributing and volunteering to make Alberta the best it can be.

Albertans see the province as a recognized world leader in scientific and technological research and development. They see a place where innovation drives progress in a self-sufficient, diverse, high-tech society. They see technology, partnerships, innovation and value-added business ventures as keys to future success.

Albertans' vision for the future includes (in no particular order of priority):

- accessible, affordable education
- a first-class health care system that promotes healthy living and wellness
- a clean, healthy environment
- a strong economy that makes it possible for all Albertans to share in the province's prosperity
- safe, caring communities supported by well-planned and well-maintained infrastructure
- effective government
- building a legacy for future generations—a legacy founded on:
 - *a province that is debt free*
 - *fiscally responsible, effective governance*
 - *sustainable economic growth balanced with responsible environmental management*
 - *sustainable health and education systems responsive to the needs of Albertans*
 - *thriving, secure communities*
 - *innovation and leading-edge technology*

Values and Guiding Principles

In the Future Summit consultations, Albertans identified the **personal values** they live by. Honesty, integrity, hard work and self-reliance were cited most often. Albertans also value patience, respect, acceptance of diversity, faith, compassion, openness and trust.

Albertans identified a broad span of **societal values** which reflect the recognition of others within society. These values were often expressed as principles which *Albertans as a society* value.

Albertans value children and families and mentioned family values in a variety of contexts. Some Albertans cited the need to emphasize and sustain family values. Some commented on the need for balance between family life and work. Some discussed families in relation to children: they spoke of the need to invest in children and keep them safe from neglect and abuse.

Albertans value freedom—freedom of choice, personal freedom, free enterprise and the freedoms that come from democracy and our system of justice.

Albertans value fairness, equality, respect and social responsibility. Many touched on the need to care for those less able to help themselves and the need to help one another. Respect was discussed in terms of respect for each other, for the environment, for elders and for the past. Equality referred to the equality of individuals and opportunities for all.

Albertans value inclusiveness, cultural diversity and acceptance of individual differences. They value safe, secure communities that provide opportunities to enjoy the arts, culture, sports and recreation.

Albertans value education as the door to the future and recognize children and young people as an important part of that future. They value continuous learning, innovation, knowledge and research.

Albertans value health and wellness. They value their province's natural environment and believe it should be protected. They value their communities and believe in community service with a true spirit of volunteerism. They also value good government—government that is accountable, accessible, fiscally responsible and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

Albertans proposed a broad range of **principles and approaches** that should guide the province—and individual citizens—in making decisions and choices. They felt that Alberta's decisions for the future should be based on the principles of accessibility, cooperation, leadership, adaptability, accountability and sustainability.

Strategies and Ideas for Action

The following is a summary of delegates' deliberations at the Alberta Future Summit 2002 in Red Deer, February 4–5, 2002. Detailed information is available in the full report, which also includes input from the province-wide consultations held from September through December 2001. (See the Future Summit website at <www.futuresummit.com>.)

In most cases, the strategies listed below had the support of all the delegates in the particular theme group. There was less consensus about some of the specific ideas for action.

The Economy

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see an economy that is robust, stable, resilient and diversified. A strong economy makes it possible for all Albertans to enjoy life and have meaningful employment.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Create a comprehensive, long-term, economic plan that extends over a number of business and political cycles and addresses infrastructure, fiscal policy and environmental needs.
- Continue to foster a globally competitive market economy.
- Pursue excellence in education at all levels—from preschool through postsecondary and beyond.
- Ensure that Alberta's economic development strategy recognizes the diversity within the province—capitalizing on the opportunities this presents and addressing the challenges.
- Create and sustain a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Delegates proposed a number of ideas for action. They believed Alberta should plan for the time when the province's energy situation changes. They suggested that an economic plan should include the development of alternative sources of energy. They also recognized that the plan must address regional needs, including value-added agriculture and the needs of Alberta's Aboriginal peoples. It must be supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transparent government policy and appropriate legislation and regulation.

Delegates recognized that Alberta's economy must be competitive within a global context. They identified excellence in education, a competitive tax structure and a productive labour force as important factors. They suggested that Alberta should reward educational achievement and build world-class universities that are recognized as centres of excellence in research and educational programming. They stressed that educational opportunities must be accessible to all Albertans and that curricula and delivery systems must meet a range of needs.

Summit delegates noted the importance of lifelong learning and health and wellness education.

They proposed the enhancement of learning through the effective use of technology and through the creation of educational partnerships between governments, organizations, the private sector and individuals. Delegates also recognized the importance of internationally focused research and development. They proposed that funding, support systems and mentorship be provided to promote innovation—from the initial research and development stages all the way through to the commercialization of research results. They suggested that young Albertans should be taught entrepreneurial skills and that access to venture capital should be improved.

Learning

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see accessible, affordable, high-quality learning opportunities that equip Albertans for the challenges of modern-day society. Education is valued. Alberta's citizens are well educated and have lifelong learning opportunities. Individuals have achieved their potential and contribute to building an inclusive, democratic community.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Identify learners' needs and develop learning opportunities that serve the needs of a diverse public.
- Develop an adaptable, innovative curriculum that reflects the current social context and meets the needs of individual learners of all ages.
- Identify and remove barriers to ensure that all Albertans can access learning opportunities.
- Explore and develop innovative governance and delivery models.
- Allocate resources to foster research, innovation, excellence and continuous improvement.
- Apply well-established, prudent standards to determine and implement the appropriate investment needed to maintain and manage existing infrastructure.
- Invest in innovative technologies that support a broad range of learning opportunities.
- Develop a funding and policy framework to support accessible, affordable, high-quality learning opportunities that equip Albertans for the challenges of the future.

Summit delegates identified a need for both short- and long-term planning. As a first stage, they proposed identifying learners' needs, reviewing curricula and developing learning opportunities that serve a diverse public. They suggested that a task force should be established to study education and learning. They also recommended that resources should be allocated to the development and delivery of technology-based learning through initiatives such as the Alberta SuperNet.

Delegates recognized that, for some Albertans, the high cost of tuition, literacy problems and the lack of family support services prevent access to learning opportunities. They noted the importance of ensuring that all learners, including those in financial need, have the opportunity to access education beyond Grade 12. They proposed the establishment of centres of excellence, the creation of funding partnerships between schools and the private sector and increased funding for learning research. They felt that research and development in a broad range of disciplines support continuous learning and help build a society that can adapt to change.

Fiscal Responsibility

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see careful planning, management and prudent forecasting. The government operates within a more predictable fiscal environment. Expenditures are controlled and, in good times, something is put aside to cope with swings in revenue. Individual Albertans take responsibility for contributing to their society.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Stabilize spending on programs and services by smoothing out government expenditures over economic and commodity price cycles.
- Maintain responsible, no-deficit budgeting practices.
- Eliminate the debt.
- Invest in Alberta's future success by investing in education today.
- Further the economic diversification of the province in order to reduce Alberta's dependence on nonrenewable natural resources.
- Develop outcome-based business and program plans that address Albertans' priorities and help sustain a high quality of life.
- Involve citizens, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations in government decision making and in the implementation of government plans and follow-up processes.
- Make government accountable and improve the transparency of government processes.
- Clarify government roles and responsibilities.
- Improve the efficiency of Alberta's revenue-generating systems.
- Foster innovation, leadership and openness to new ideas.

Delegates proposed several ideas for smoothing out government expenditures. These included the creation of a revenue stabilization fund and the development of specific endowments to support strategic areas. Delegates recognized that fiscal responsibility and a strong economy depend on self-reliant citizens and a skilled, educated workforce. To this end, they proposed investing in educational infrastructure, creating partnerships with industry and developing life skills, training and educational programs to ensure that Alberta can meet future demands for skilled labour.

Other ideas for action included tax incentives and small business loan programs, increasing spending on education and research, reviewing legislation and government programs, standardizing interprovincial regulations, streamlining government services and developing results-based business plans tied to established standards and benchmarks. Delegates also proposed seeking public and private-sector input in government consultations and fostering public-private partnerships to deliver products and services.

Communities

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see safe, caring communities in which citizens are empowered and make a positive contribution. Communities are founded on well-planned infrastructure which provides programs and services that meet people's needs.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Empower communities to develop sustainable, strategic, long-term community development and budget plans. Ensure accountability for these plans.
- Ensure the availability of stable, long-range funding to support Alberta's communities.
- Help disadvantaged and vulnerable Albertans maximize their potential.
- Create partnerships of citizens, business and government to ensure that all Albertans have homes that meet their personal and family needs.
- Support local initiatives that enhance quality of life.
- Support human resource development through training, retention of skilled workers and immigration.
- Encourage governments, industry and communities to work as partners in promoting and providing affordable, equitable education to all Albertans.
- Recognize the needs of both urban and rural communities.
- Ensure that Albertans are safe and secure in their homes, workplaces and communities.
- Promote economic diversification in Alberta's communities.
- Encourage partnerships to maximize the utilization of resources in Alberta's communities.

Delegates identified a need for sustainable, strategic, long-term community development and budget plans—and accountability for these plans. They also recognized the importance of solid infrastructure, legislation and policy that supports economic development initiatives in all areas of Alberta. Their ideas for action included using technology to expand market opportunities, developing venture capital pools to finance start-up companies, and providing incentives for businesses to expand and diversify into local communities.

Delegates believed that a partnership approach could help to maximize the utilization of resources in Alberta's communities. They proposed creating partnerships of citizens, businesses and governments to provide all Albertans with access to training, employment opportunities and affordable education. They also acknowledged the importance of volunteerism, the contributions of the not-for-profit sector and the need to develop recreation, culture and the arts to sustain community quality of life.

Health and Wellness

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see a first-class health and wellness system that promotes and supports healthy living and provides all Albertans with access to affordable, quality services when they need them.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Establish a healthy-living model that makes effective use of health and wellness teams. Address medical staff shortages in innovative ways.
- Review Alberta's health- and wellness-related legislation to ensure that essential services are defined, principles are identified, and the health care needs of all Albertans are adequately met.
- Create, support and maintain healthy lifestyle choices for all Albertans.
- Create a supportive environment and develop criteria for approving alternative approaches to health.
- Use continuous, outcome-based evaluation to increase productivity.
- Use incentives to promote health and wellness.
- Reduce poverty to reduce barriers to good health.
- Develop, manage and continue to evaluate long-range, sustainable, fiscally responsible budgets for the new health and wellness system.
- Educate individuals, health care professionals and other stakeholders about wellness.
- Develop and implement a confidential, comprehensive, secure health database to improve the efficiency of the health system. The database must ensure the security and confidentiality of patients' medical information. Assure patient/client control of information sharing with health care providers.

Delegates suggested that essential services must be defined, legislation updated and Albertans consulted about what kind of health care system they want and how they want to pay for it. Their ideas for action included putting physicians on salary, reviewing the certification process for foreign-trained medical professionals and incorporating nurse practitioners into the delivery of primary health care services. They also proposed the establishment of a task force to investigate Aboriginal health issues.

Other suggestions dealt with research-supported alternative therapies, incentive programs to encourage healthy lifestyle choices, recreation, and wellness education. Delegates proposed the establishment of early intervention programs to ensure that children living in poverty receive adequate nutrition. They also recognized the need to identify the barriers faced by the poor in accessing health services.

The Environment

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see a clean, healthy natural environment where economic development and environmental protection are carefully balanced.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Develop a long-term environmental protection plan that is well researched, proactive and founded on solid science. The plan must include sustainable strategies, enforceable standards and measurable results. Governments, businesses, communities and individual citizens should be partners in the development and implementation of the plan.
- Establish ongoing, reliable funding for environmental research and conservation initiatives.
- Implement a program of incentives to reward and encourage good environmental behaviour and punish bad performers.
- Implement multi-level environmental education programs to foster awareness and encourage action that will ensure the ecological integrity and sustainability of Alberta's environment.
- Promote innovative resource management practices and ensure that the use of our natural resources will not result in environmental damage.
- Set standards, evaluate performance and establish monitoring procedures to protect the environment and improve environmental conditions across the province.
- Promote regional planning initiatives that safeguard Alberta's land and water resources, protect ecologically sensitive areas and preserve green space while fostering environmentally friendly economic development.

Delegates recognized the importance of integrating environmental policy across all three orders of government. They stressed the importance of improving public awareness of environmental issues through school curricula as well as through informal channels. They proposed the establishment of a decision-making framework based on the principles of "smart growth" and sustainable development. They suggested that Alberta should examine other leading environmental programs and adopt proven best practices in areas ranging from sustainable, value-added agriculture to community-based composting, increased use of public transportation, smoke-free environments, pollution control, conservation, re-use and recycling.

Delegates suggested that Alberta should commission a report on the status of the province's environment and use the findings to develop a conservation blueprint. They noted the importance of diversifying energy sources and researching wind energy, renewable energy sources and other alternatives to fossil fuels. They proposed that Alberta should establish and enforce measurable, science-based, environmental standards and demonstrate leadership in adopting market-based mechanisms to foster cost-effective solutions. The latter might include emissions-trading protocols.

Governance

When Albertans think about the future, they would like to see an innovative, effective, efficient, socially aware government that is accountable, responsible and responsive to its citizens.

Future Summit delegates proposed the following strategies for achieving this vision:

- Design a governance structure that will empower Alberta's communities and ensure that they are fairly represented in government.
- Launch an independent audit to clarify and define the responsibilities and accountability of the Alberta Government.
- If warranted by the independent audit, conduct an arm's-length evaluation of the effectiveness of the current governance structure, with a view to restructuring.
- Create the capability for strategic planning to help Albertans cope with the demands of an increasingly turbulent global environment.
- Develop an ongoing, interactive communication plan.

Delegates proposed reviewing the current governance structure and electoral process to identify problem areas. They suggested that citizens should be more involved in policy development and decision making and that the responsibilities of government should be clearly defined. They proposed regular reviews of government performance. They discussed the establishment of set election dates and an annual review process for MLAs.

Delegates discussed the need for Alberta to develop strategic planning capabilities as a tool for coping with the demands of an increasingly turbulent global environment. They proposed the appointment of a provincial Chief Strategic Planning Officer and an advisory committee on strategic planning. They also recognized that good communication is important for good governance.

A Message from the Co-Chairs

Albertans working together, imagining our tomorrow. That's what the Alberta Future Summit 2002 has been about.

The Future Summit has brought forward a wealth of ideas and viewpoints. While Albertans did not always agree on priorities or approaches, there is much that they hold in common. Albertans believe in self-reliance. They value a sharing, compassionate society in which all citizens benefit from the Alberta Advantage. They recognize that the issues that face the province are inextricably linked and that strategies for the future cannot be developed in isolation. Rather, an integrated, cross-sectoral approach is required.

Planning for the future wasn't an easy task, but Albertans rose to the challenge. We extend our thanks to the thousands of Albertans who participated in the process. Through the Future Summit exercise, Alberta grew stronger as a province.

It has been a pleasure, for both of us, to serve as co-chairs of this initiative. We are honoured to present this report to the Alberta Government on behalf of the Future Summit Steering Committee, the External Advisory Committee, and especially, on behalf of the Albertans who participated.

Through the Future Summit process, Albertans proposed many strategies and ideas for building the future. It has been an exciting journey, but the work has just begun. Costs and benefits will need to be analyzed. Options and trade-offs will need to be considered. Choices will need to be made. The strategies developed at the Summit provide an excellent starting point for the work that lies ahead as Alberta steps forward, boldly, toward the future.

Premier Klein has said the Alberta Government will review and respond to these strategies. Those that are accepted will be turned into actions in the government's 2003–2006 business plan. The challenge now is for all Albertans—governments, communities, corporations and individual citizens—to work together to create a better future.

(original signed)

Greg Melchin
Minister of Revenue
Government of Alberta

(original signed)

Doug Mitchell
Chair
Alberta Economic Development Authority

Consulting with Albertans

The Alberta Future Summit 2002 was a province-wide public consultation designed to give citizens a voice in planning for Alberta's future. From September through December 2001, over 4,000 Albertans contributed their thoughts, ideas and insights.

More than 2,300 Albertans completed the Future Summit workbook, *Imagine Our Tomorrow*, which contained 18 questions designed to generate a broad range of possibilities for the future. Albertans of all ages responded to the questions. Almost 75% submitted their responses online.

Over 40 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) hosted 60-plus Future Summit consultations for their constituents. More than 800 Albertans participated in eleven day-long Regional Forums held in nine centres across Alberta.

Centre	Date	Co-Chairs
Edmonton	October 10, 2001	Paul Byrne, President, Grant MacEwan College Tony Vandermeer, MLA, Edmonton Manning
	October 11, 2001	Steve Snyder, President and CEO, TransAlta Corporation Ian McClelland, MLA, Edmonton Rutherford
Red Deer	October 17, 2001	Irene Lewis, President and CEO, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA, Red Deer North
Calgary	October 24, 2001	Darshan Kailly, President, Canadian Freightways Ltd. Cindy Ady, MLA, Calgary Shaw
	October 25, 2001	Irene Lewis, President and CEO, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Karen Kryczka, MLA, Calgary West
Peace River	November 7, 2001	Paul Byrne, President, Grant MacEwan College Gary Friedel, MLA, Peace River
Grande Prairie	November 8, 2001	Fred Estlin, Past Chair, Board of Governors, Grande Prairie Regional College Mel Knight, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky
Vermilion	November 16, 2001	Mary LeMessurier, former Minister of Culture, Government of Alberta Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster
Fort McMurray	November 23, 2001	Eric Newell, Chairman and CEO, Syncrude Canada Ltd. Guy Boutilier, MLA, Fort McMurray
Lethbridge	November 27, 2001	Don Lowry, President and CEO, EPCOR Utilities Inc. Broyce Jacobs, MLA, Cardston-Taber-Warner
Medicine Hat	November 28, 2001	Gail Surkan, Mayor of Red Deer Rob Renner, MLA, Medicine Hat

Future Summit Regional Forums

On February 4–5, 2002, 260 delegates gathered in Red Deer to discuss the ideas generated during the initial Future Summit consultations. Using the input from these consultations as their starting point, the delegates drafted strategic directions and ideas for action for the seven areas Albertans had identified as priorities—the economy, learning, fiscal responsibility, communities, health and wellness, the environment and governance.

Summit delegates represented a broad cross-section of Albertans. They included experts and private citizens from all age groups and all walks of life. They were working Albertans, business people, volunteers, seniors and students. Alberta's Aboriginal communities were represented, as were the labour sector, arts and cultural groups, sports and recreational organizations, environmental groups, municipalities and the health sector. Over two days of intensive discussion and debate, delegates considered a diversity of opinions and worked hard to find common ground. The strategies and ideas they developed are the basis of the Future Summit report.



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