

Northern Policy Institute

Institut des politiques du Nord

Presentation to The North Superior
Workforce Planning Board

12 February 2014

A QUICK (recent) History of NPI

- Common Voice Northwest submitted 148 recommendations for Northern Growth Plan, a key one being creation of NPI
- Oct 2009: Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario includes establishment of a Northern Research & Policy Institute
- March 2011: Release of *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011* included NPI
- August 2012 MNDM Announcement of NPI

NPI Status

- NOHFC approved \$5 million funding – August 2012
- NPI Incorporated – December 2012
- Founding board chosen and appointed – February 2013
- CEO Search complete – appointed June 2013
- Contract with NOHFC signed – July 2013
- First funds received – August 2013
- Offices opened - September 2013
- First staffing and project commissioning – Sept/Oct 2013

NPI Letters Patent

- Proactive, evidence-based and purpose driven policy options that:
 - Deepen the understanding of the unique challenges facing Northern Ontario
 - Ensure the sustainable development and long term economic prosperity of Northern Ontario
- Research and analysis of
 - Existing and emerging policies relevant to northern Ontario
 - Economic, technological and social trends affecting northern Ontario
- Formulation and advocacy of policies that:
 - benefit northern Ontario and first nations communities
- Other complementary purposes not inconsistent with these objectives

What is a “think tank” anyway?

“It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.”

- Mark Twain

“Politics is the art of the possible.”

- Winston Churchill

“If you want to change the world, forget politics, win the war of ideas.”

- Friedrich Hayek

How do think-tanks succeed?

Ultimate success for a policy think tank is marshalling the evidence, forming a recommendation from what the evidence tells you, and having that advice followed.

If you say a policy should be changed, killed or created, success is having that policy changed, killed or created.

MANY roads to that success

- Parade Marshal
 - Where is EVERYONE ELSE going
- Cheerleader
 - What do we BELIEVE
- Permission Giver
 - What does the EVIDENCE say

The NPI role

- To identify what we “know” that just ain’t so
 - Avoid “executive paternalism” - If it sounds good – it must be good, right? Wrong.
 - Just because you want it...needs v wants, and prioritizing needs – that’s the tough part
 - Learn from the mistakes, and successes, of others

How?

- Research if necessary, but not necessarily research
- Ideas advocacy, not partisan, or ideological, but evidence driven
- **HAVING** an idea, is only step one, **COMMUNICATING** ideas is the primary role of Policy Institutes

Educate and Engage

- Community education and engagement
 - Get evidence into hands of public and decision makers
 - Comment on current and potential future policy directions
- Listen, learn and adapt to the evidence

BEFORE they call us

- There is a BIG difference between:
 - “working WITH a Policy Institute” and “HIRING a consultant”
- Independent means just that - look at terms of reference, ie:
 - “impact assessment of provincial owned and operated road to ring of fire” = consultant, decision predetermined, decision based evidence seeking
 - “assess WHETHER the province should own and operate a road to the ring of fire” = independent policy work, evidence based advice for decision making

Permission giving = LONG game

- Short term:

- Are people listening?
- Are people debating your ideas?

- Medium Term:

- Are people sharing your ideas?
- Are people advocating for your ideas?
- Are people ASKING for your ideas?

- Long Term:

- Are people implementing your ideas?

Areas of Focus - broadly

- Northern Growth (note NOT Northern Growth “PLAN”):
 - 1. Economy
 - 2. People
 - 3. Communities
 - 4. Infrastructure
 - 5. Environment
 - 6. Aboriginal peoples

Three Key Goals for NPI

1. Enhance Measurement, and the availability of those measures to all stakeholders
2. Building SUSTAINABLE community capacity: skills, knowledge, private capital.
3. Enhancing self-sufficiency
 1. Of individuals, communities, sub-regions and the region as a whole

How do we choose projects?

- Key questions:
 - Is it an important public policy issue?
 - More on that in a minute
 - Can we make a difference?
 - If everyone else is doing this work, we don't need to
 - Can we find the resources?
 - Data, research capacity, funding
 - **SECRET** – fourth question

Is it an important policy issue?

- This is where you come in:
 - Are people talking about it
 - Headlines, letters to the editor, direct feedback via NPI online consultation tool
 - Government Initiatives
 - Federal, provincial, municipal
 - Stakeholder and interest groups
 - Industry and professional associations, Unions, Chambers, Grassroots community orgs, opposition parties
 - Experts DO know
 - “ivory tower” academics, “bureaucrats”, “vote obsessed” politicians; all good and reliable leading indicators of future issues

NPI Projects Commissioned

- Review of federal aboriginal education act
- Northern data bank – NOHFC, MNDM, Fednor, NODN, Norcat have ALL agreed to work with NPI to release as much data as possible (now working with Statscan and other local data holders)
- Land use planning driven locally and oriented to growth vs driven centrally and oriented towards control
- Anti-poverty efforts – GAI vs the min wage
- A better way to “set” minimum wage – average industrial wage vs GDP
- Income splitting for parents with children under 18 – a(n) (Northern?) Ontario mirror to the federal 2015 plan
- Potential for Port/Airport Authority model to fund, build and manage Ring of Fire infrastructure

RFPs in development

- Online community consultation tool
- Shared Internships to build local policy capacity in small rural, remote and First Nations communities
- NPI website – “evidence portal”
- Demographic trends – and policy directions
- Lessons in local control and entrepreneurship
 - Membertou model
 - Westbank First Nation – Medical Tourism
 - Subsidiarity in the EU – lessons for NO
- Wealth transfer and “balance of payments” (update and analyze trends and any potential policy responses)

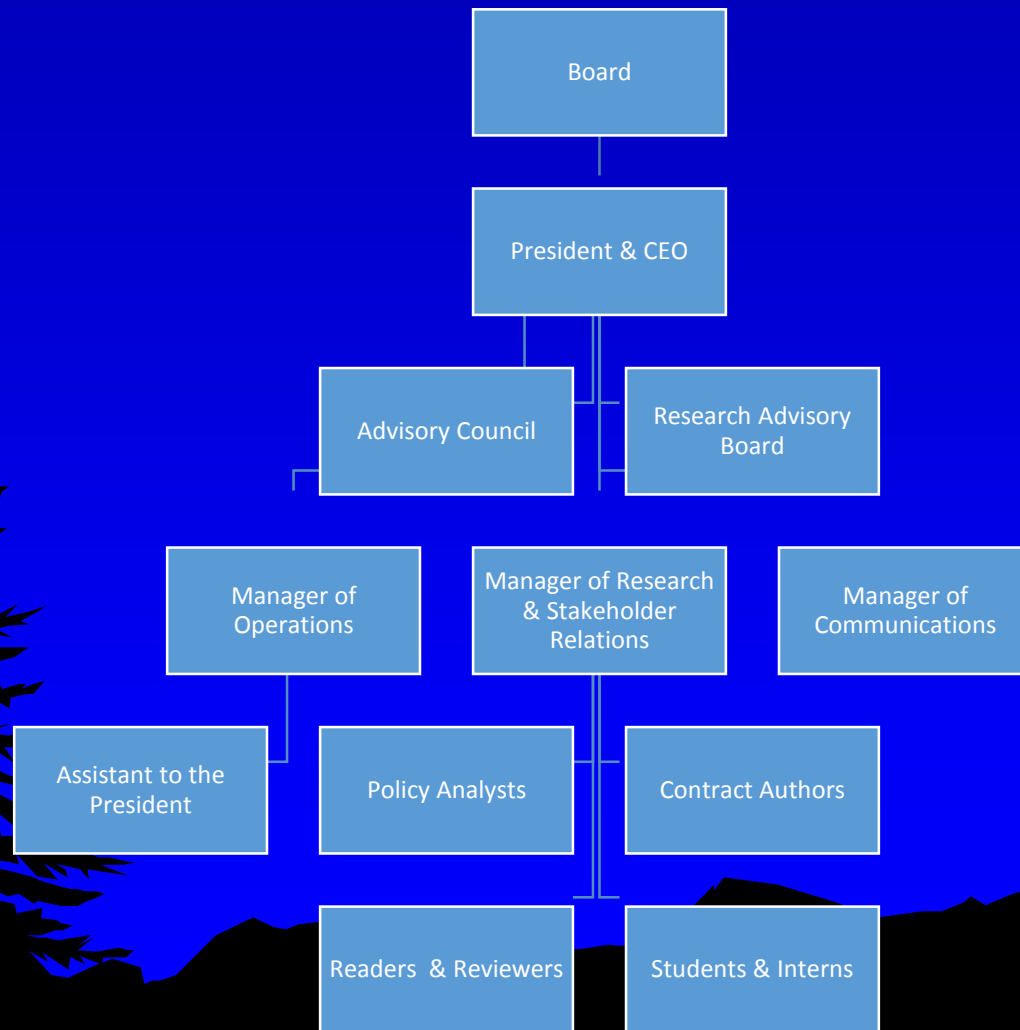
Projects under discussion

- Northern performance measures – community level
- Looking at the cost of smaller class sizes – sizes in line with the literature on 15 or fewer in early grades
- Looking at potential applicability and cost for Netherlands approach to community based elder care
- Potential framework for community development or benefits negotiations/agreements with proponents **IN** their community or **IMPACTING** their communities
- MANTARIO series – we can't be a province **BUT** can we be: free trade zone, special economic zone, special tax zone, signatory to New West Partnership

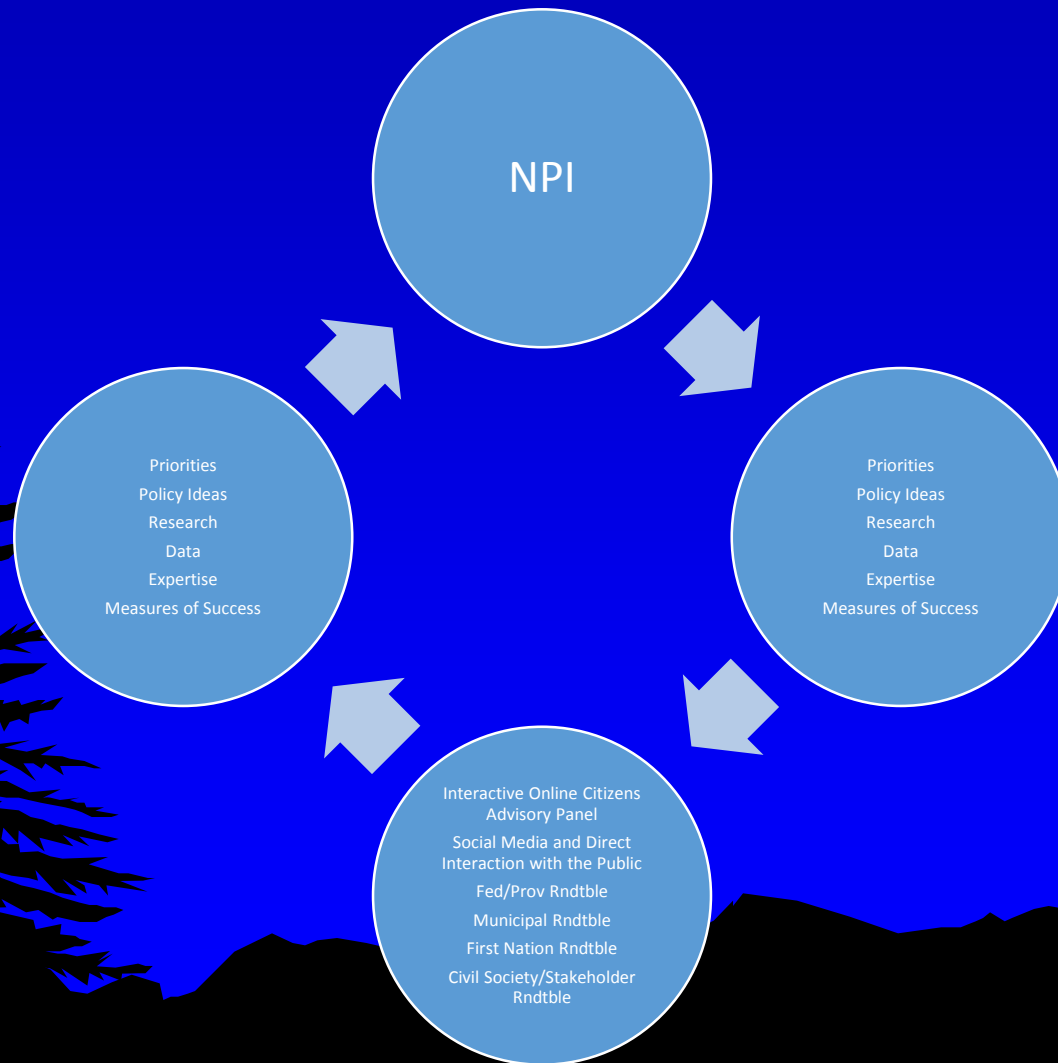
Projects under consideration

- Defining selection criteria for setting infrastructure priorities, then applying them to the ring of fire specifically, and the northern inter-modal plans more broadly
- Analyzing best practices for funding infrastructure and applying those to the ring of fire and the multi-modal plan
- Looking at the potential applicability and cost of having our children “sleep in boxes” like the Finns
- The recent PISA results and what that says for how our kids should learn math (and other previous lessons ignored from PISA)

Key players INSIDE NPI



How NPI works WITH the Community



We are “up and running”

- Give me a call or drop me an email:

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*Any Questions
about NPI?*