Introduction
This project examines how the economic development strategies of Nunavut might set the stage for communities to harness the potential of economic activity and produce sustainable community economic development. In order for Inuit to take control of the course of economic development in Nunavut, it is first necessary to determine whether the territory’s economic development goals and action plans are laying the groundwork for a self-determined indigenous economy.

Background
An increase in shipping activity due to reduced sea ice cover in a warming climate will result in increased economic activity in Nunavut [1, 2]. Economic development can be “boom-and-bust” or it can follow a more sustainable model that produces long-term benefit for local communities [4]. If the economic system benefits external entities at the expense of Nunavummiut, this will result in a neo-colonial regime [see 2, 5, 6, 9]. Alternative strategies for development are required if sustainability is a goal [3]. Community economic development (CED) links economic and social factors. CED also emphasizes the importance of community buy-in, local participation, and local leadership [8]. The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) is a U.S.-based research initiative that asks “How have some indigenous nations been successful at achieving their own economic, political, social, and cultural goals, while others are having difficulty accomplishing the same things?” [7].

Research Questions
What are the goals of the Government of Nunavut’s economic development strategies?
Do the strategies include a realistic roadmap for reaching the stated goals?
How do the contents of the economic development strategies compare to what the literature, and in particular, the Harvard Project’s Nation-Building framework, say will produce sustainable community economic development?

Key Findings
Most coded statements were visions or intents. Relatively few were action items (Figure 1). 5.75% of the action items met the S.M.A.R.T. criteria for feasibility; the arts and tourism strategies perform remarkably better than the remaining strategies (Figure 2). Strategic vision was the most frequently occurring nation-building theme (Figure 3). Nation-building leadership was the least-frequently occurring nation-building theme (Figure 3). Sustainability was the most frequently occurring emerging theme (Figure 4).

Conclusions
The strategy documents describe foundational principles and visions for economic development, but relatively few action items are presented. This indicates that the government of Nunavut is currently in a visionary stage of its planning process. The action items do not consistently meet the S.M.A.R.T. criteria for feasibility. The arts and tourism strategies perform remarkably better than the remaining strategies, indicating that the arts and tourism sector may be better prepared to implement their development agendas. Strategic vision is a well-represented theme, but nation-building leadership is not emphasized in the documents. Nunavut’s planners need to increase the focus on nurturing local leadership in order to actualize their strong strategic vision.

References