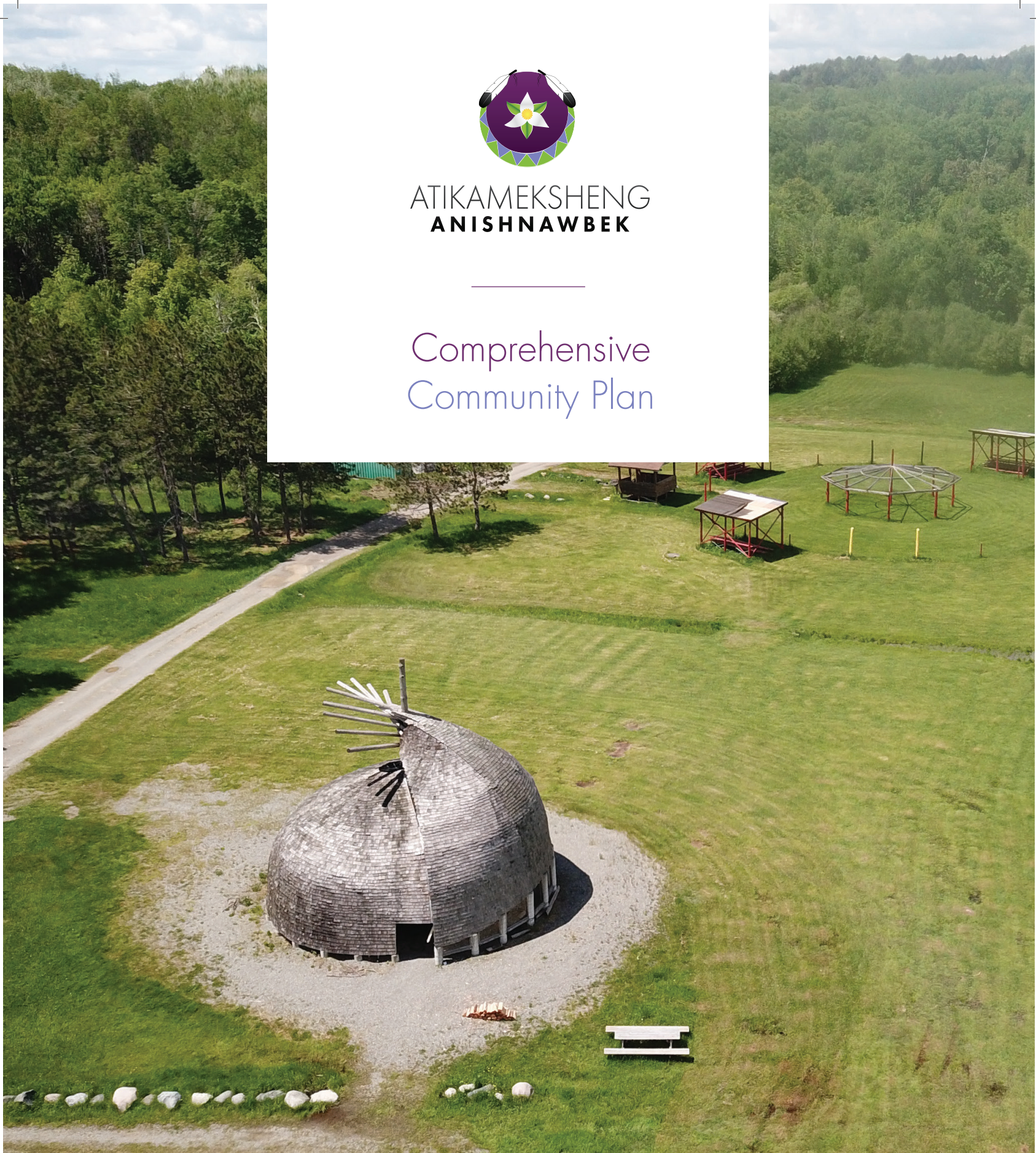




ATIKAMEKSHENG  
ANISHNAWBEK

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## Comprehensive Community Plan



MARCH 2020









**Developed by:**

Community members of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek,  
Atikameksheng Chief and Council, and Atikameksheng  
Anishnawbek Staff



**With the support of:**

Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning  
Box 395, Cochrane, Alberta Canada, T4C 1A6  
Ph. 403-932-0882  
[anyone@fourworlds.ca](mailto:anyone@fourworlds.ca) [fourworlds.ca](http://fourworlds.ca)

**For further information, contact:**

Brendan Huston, Chief Executive Officer  
Atikameksheng Anishnawbek [bhuston@WLFN.com](mailto:bhuston@WLFN.com)



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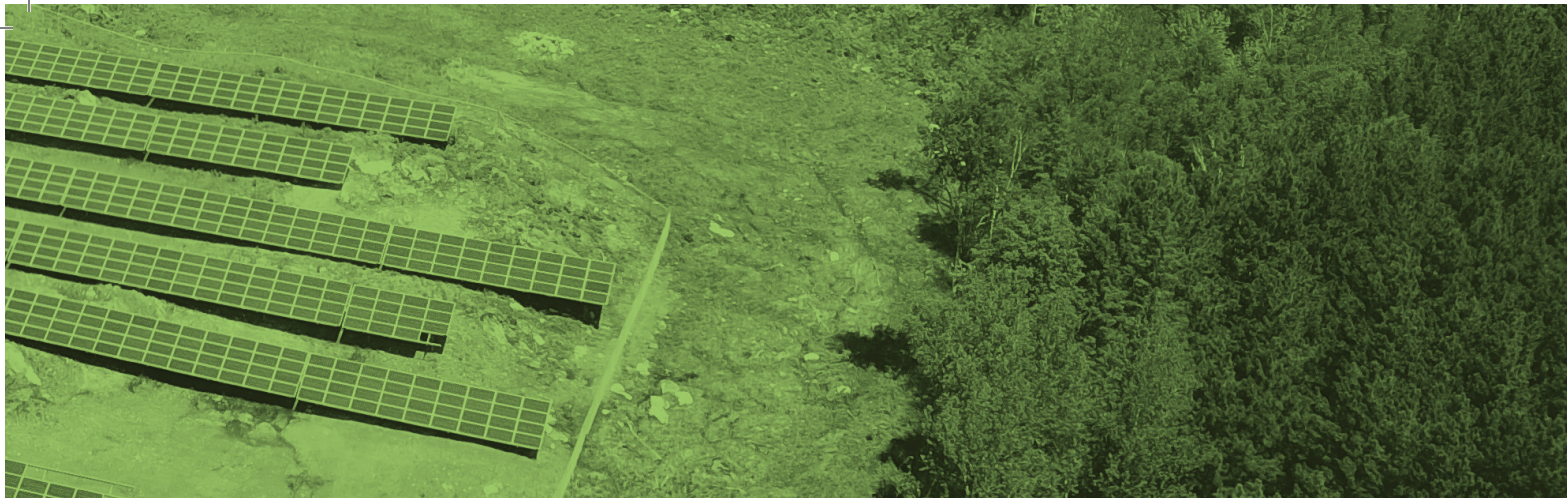
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## Our Vision

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek will thrive together as a strong and proud Nation by honouring our gifts of Anishinabemowin and the Life of the Land.

## Our History

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek are descendants of the Ojibway, Algonquin and Odawa Nations. In 1850, Chief Shawenekezhik, on behalf of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek signed the Robinson-Huron Treaty granting the British Crown and their people (Royal Subjects) a right to occupy and share the lands of the Anishnawbek. Originally named Whitefish Lake First Nation Reserve No.6 as established through the Robinson-Huron Treaty area in 1850, the territory spans from the valley of the

Vermillion River eastward to the valleys of the Wahnapiatae and Sturgeon River. Historically there was a trading post at Whitefish Lake established in 1824 from when the Hudson's Bay Company and the NorthWest Company merged in 1821. Some items have been recovered from the site in 1973 and many documented in the book called "Whitefish Lake Ojibway Memories", a copy of which is currently housed in a display cabinet at the Band Administration building. Historical content is being preserved in the repository

system at the Library (Kebdaasii Gamik) and is acquired through community donations and displayed on shelved while paper transcripts are converted into digital and are saved electronically. Efforts are currently being made to preserve Atikameksheng fluent speakers' dialect through audio/visual recordings which are being archived at the Library. Seniors are encouraged to actively participate and invest into the achieved in an effort to preserve and maintain Atikameksheng's language and history.

## Our Location and Population

The First Nation is located approximately 19 km west of the Greater City of Sudbury. The current land base is 43,747 acres, much of it being deciduous and coniferous forests, surrounded by eight lakes, with eighteen lakes within its boundaries.

As of April 2019, the total population

is 1303 members (433 on-reserve members, 870 off-reserve members).

The community has grown significantly throughout the years. Currently, there are 138 houses located in the community, 30 cottages owned by residents on various lakes throughout the First Nation. Along the northern

shores of Lake Penage, 43.5 acres of land was surrendered for cottage leasing purposes. Currently, there are 97 lots that have road access to the cottages. Not only is it road accessible but electricity and telephone services are available for the cottagers.

## Getting Ready to Make a Plan

Based on extensive consultation with Chief and Council, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek community members and staff, it was agreed that seven (9) distinct categories of planning would be included in the Comprehensive Community Plan. These are listed and defined below.

### Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Community Planning Domains:

#### 1. Recovering Language, Historical Memory and Cultural Foundations

As we understand it, “culture” refers to the general pattern of life by which people live. It includes their language and sense of identity; their customs, beliefs, values, morals, ideals, ceremonies and spiritual practices; as well as their sense of humor, ways of knowing and Indigenous skills, arts, crafts and sciences. From our perspective, it is not possible to talk about culture without also talking about spirituality, which is not referring to any particular religion, but rather to the human capacity to know and love the Creator and to choose ways of living as shown to us by the Creator’s Teachings that are life-promoting and life-enhancing. Spirit animates the heart of all living cultures. Without spirit, culture becomes dead, unable to grow and change. Therefore, culture also refers to the sacred spiritual teachings that must be harmonized with everyday life to create a healthy community.

#### 2. Health and Wellness

Health refers to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Closely related, wellness refers to the values, choice making and patterns of living that lead to health. This component of the Comprehensive Community Plan considers the full range of health and wellness related issues, determinants, solutions, and services that have to be addressed at the individual, family and community levels to strengthen and support the health and wellness of Atikameksheng people.

#### 3. Social and Community Development

Social development refers to the process of developing social cohesion and unity between individuals, families and groups within the community and strengthening the community’s collective capacity to think and act together for a common purpose. It also relates to promoting strong, safe and healthy families and community life within which children, youth, women, men and elders can flourish, as well as addressing specific root causes so as to achieve wellbeing outcomes for all of these groups.

Community essentially means “common oneness”. Wherever our people may live, we are all related. We are one family. Essentially, community is a web of relationships that are at once spiritual, personal, cultural, social, political and economic. These relationships can either be strong or weak, healthy or unhealthy.

Community development is the process of strengthening our relationships and building up our collective life in such a way that sustainable wellbeing and prosperity for all is the result.

#### 4. Prosperity Development

Prosperity development focuses on improving the economic wellbeing of Atikameksheng people by: 1) directly reducing poverty and the burden that comes with poverty for households and families, and 2) generating and managing wealth for the First Nation that will lead to financial sovereignty and the capacity to provide supports and services to Atikameksheng members that contribute to their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

#### 5. Lands and Environmental Stewardship

Ethical stewardship of the lands and natural environment within our traditional territory is inseparably linked to our understanding of Natural Law as given to us by the Creator and to our core identity as Indigenous people. Fundamentally, we understand that human beings, like all living things, are part of the natural world and not separate from it. Ultimately, the land is our Mother. She has given us everything we have ever needed to survive and prosper. It is our spiritual responsibility to treat her with profound respect and to protect her from harm.

This means that we have a sacred duty to take care of our lands and to use our natural resources conscientiously to ensure that the way of life of the current generation does not harm or diminish the capacity of the land to meet the needs of future generations. At the same time, we continually seek ways of sustainably utilizing the gifts our Mother gives us for the prosperity and wellbeing of our people.

#### 6. Life-Long Learning

Life-long learning refers to the opportunities that Atikameksheng Anishnawbek members have to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to live healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives. This theme recognizes that learning happens at all stages of the life cycle from childhood to elderhood. It also acknowledges the value of supporting all members of the community to develop their gifts so as to enrich their personal lives, to contribute to the richness of family and community life and to achieve career aspirations. In keeping with the above definition, this Chapter



reflects on the important goals before the Atikameksheng community related to early childhood development; schooling in the primary to secondary grades; formal (e.g. accredited) adult education, including literacy, up-grading, post-secondary and job skills courses; and a broad range of community informal learning opportunities that enhance life skills, social and recreational life, cultural knowledge and identity, as well as family and community life.

In practice, life-long learning can be thought of in terms of four inter-connected fields of activity: 1) early childhood learning and education, 2) primary and secondary schooling, 3) post-secondary education and employment training, and 4) non-formal learning for life (self-improvement, family life, cultural foundations, community development, etc.).

### 7. Infrastructure Development and Management

Infrastructure refers to the facilities and systems that support the community's basic operations and functions. This can include a whole range of amenities such as housing, public buildings, roads, waste handling facilities, water and sewage systems, electrical power generation and distribution, public transportation systems, emergency service vehicles and equipment, and high-speed Internet access.

### 8. Governance

Governance refers to the leadership and management components of community decision making (including processes of grassroots community engagement in the governance

process); as well as the oversight of various funds and resources of the First Nation; the protocols, processes and rules by which that leadership and management takes place; and the prevailing policies, priorities, activities and working culture created by those entrusted with governance positions.

### 9. Public Sector Management

Public Sector Management refers to the policies and procedures that have been put in place to guide the operation of the community's administration, programs and services, as well as the on the ground reality of how administration, programs and services actually function on a day-to-day basis to address the primary purposes which they are meant to serve as defined by ongoing work plans and policies.

## What's in a Plan?

Nearly every First Nation in Canada has dozens of studies collecting dust on the shelves in the Band Office because no one is implementing them. In order to be a real and successful plan, a concrete guide to future action has to be connected to the minds and hearts of community members. It has to truly belong to the people who intend to carry it out—it is they who hold the key to their success. A document is simply a document when it lacks human connection. A plan calls upon this human connection.

During a CCP consultation meeting in one First Nation, one of the participants shared this observation. We see the eagle staff, the symbol of our Nation, standing like a tree in the centre of our circle. When a child is born, we cut the umbilical cord only when the child breathes on its own. We bury the umbilical cord and the placenta at the root of the tree...We plant now for a tree of shade that our grandchildren will sit under. That is what this planning process is all about.

So, to develop and implement a truly sustainable Comprehensive Community Plan, a core group of Atikameksheng community members that represent all important sectors of community life were called upon to engage in the process of making this plan and they also must play a large part in implementing it. This plan belongs to them. This vibrant core group needs to include representatives of Chief and Council and the Trustees of community funds, as well as all key departments and agencies, but it also needs to include the voices of elders, youth, women and men.



## **What a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) Is and What It Is Not**

A CCP is a general framework for guiding action; it is not a specific and detailed work plan. It gives room for nuances that change over time, and the general nature of the CCP allows for flexibility and room to adjust the plan as needed. In order to implement the CCP, the step following immediately after the finalization of the framework is to develop work plans with groups of individuals who intend on implementing each identified work area.

This CCP is presented with a planning horizon of ten years, but it should not ignore the projections and needs 15 to 20 years from now. The intention on focusing on the first ten years is to immediately address the most urgent opportunities, issues, needs and concerns that the community has identified. Addressing the most pressing matters first will lay the foundation for future action in the community.

This plan will need to be revised and refined annually and completely renewed every 3 to 4 years, beginning again with a renewal of the Community Story process which maps the needs and dynamics that must be addressed through development efforts.

The CCP will always have a ten-year projected horizon. Each time the CCP is renewed, it will refine goals or even introduce completely new goals and strategies. For example, in 2019 the target for completion for all goals is 2029, in 2023 when the CCP is being renewed it will refine goals from the 2019 CCP and create new goals, with a projection of completion in 2033. The CCP is always looking ten years ahead to ensure the constant growth of the community while continually addressing the needs and desires of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek people.

## **The Critical Importance of Measurement**

The only way of measuring the success of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek in reaching the outcomes that have been identified as goals, and in effectively implementing of the plan is to engage all participants in very frequent monitoring and evaluation processes. Monitoring and evaluation will be built into the implementation process from the very beginning. This process will be described in more detail in the final section of this Plan.

## **Always in Draft**

A successful plan is always in draft because the realities that surround it are always changing. Unlike some concepts of strategic planning

that attempt to lay out lock-step strategies to deal with issues that are months or even years in the future, this Comprehensive Community Plan is designed to adapt to the ever-changing conditions. The only way to really know if your plan is a good one, is to implement it. As you do, you will soon find out: a) if you have the knowledge, skills and resources you need to carry out your plan effectively; and b) if your planned strategies and activities are actually leading to the results you want.

## **Change Takes Time**

There are no two ways about it; development takes time. It is not a 'simply add water' affair. There are long periods of seeming inactivity such as when the anxious gardener waits for the first signs of new seedlings breaking the ground. He will frequently visit the ground where he carefully lay the tiny seeds in the soil, wringing his hands for fear that he has done something wrong. There will also be periods of intense bursts of activity which seem to hold the promise of significant change, but once the dust has settled it has actually resulted in very little. However, what appears to amount to very little can be of crucial importance when the potent process of time and the proper circumstances are combined. Much like a house whose foundation has been carefully built beneath the soil where no one can see it, the structure would collapse without this essential step.


The gestation period for a human fetus is nine months in the womb, and about twenty years after that. The time for the rebirth of a people falls into a similar category. The strategies outlined in this plan are not of the instant coffee variety. It will take time and perseverance to learn how to effectively implement them and more time for them to stimulate the growth and change in community outcomes that this Plan calls for.

Although the future for Atikameksheng Anishnawbek may still seem a little hazy, what we do know is that the vision of change, as well as the goals and strategies described in the Comprehensive Community Plan, have been tested and found to be effective and successful in many communities, both in Indigenous Canada and around the world. The two greatest predictors of success in such a plan are unity and systemic action. If the implementers of this Plan can remain united in their efforts, and if they persevere in systematically testing and continually refining the strategies they have devised, success is only a matter of time.



# 1

Recovering language,  
historical memory and  
cultural foundations



✔ To reconnect Atikameksheng Anishnawbek citizens to the knowledge of our history and an understanding and appreciation of our traditions.

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✔ To re-establish our Anishnawbek cultural and spiritual practices and ceremonial life in the heart of our Nation.

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✔ To establish a permanent cultural development program to facilitate

and support our cultural development and historical learning processes.

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✔ To develop a permanent Atikameksheng Cultural Centre

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✔ To establish spiritual unity within our Atikameksheng family.

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✔ To build Anishnawbek traditional knowledge and wisdom teachings into our nation-building process.



## Definition

The knowledge of who we were as a people, how we lived, and how we understood our place in the world and within creation was passed on through our families, our stories and our ceremonies in an unbroken chain for thousands of years. With the coming of European settlers, especially after the Robinson Superior Treaty was signed in 1850, our way of life was shattered and our people were forced to leave their traditional territories in order to find a means of livelihood elsewhere. Our people became scattered across Ontario and beyond, and after a few generations, many of them lost touch with our language, history and cultural teachings. Some even lost their Anishnawbek identity.

But some of us did not forget. In fact, we remembered the ancient “Seven Fires Prophecy” which predicted that our land would be overrun and our way of life would be displaced and broken after the arrival of a “light skinned visitor”. The same prophecies also predicted that we would recover our traditional knowledge and identity, our ceremonies and stories, and the underlying wisdom teachings that guided our Anishnawbek way of life but, for that to happen, it would take an extraordinary effort, much of it led by a new generation of younger people, because many of our Elders would have lost the knowledge of the old ways.

We are now engaged in that process of collective remembering and recovery. This chapter of our Comprehensive Community Plan describes how this work will unfold as we continue our journey.

As we understand it, “culture” refers to the general pattern of life by which people live. It includes their language and sense of identity; their customs, beliefs, values, morals, ideals, ceremonies and spiritual practices; as well as their sense of humor, ways of knowing and Indigenous skills, arts, crafts and sciences. From our perspective, it is not possible to talk about culture without also talking about spirituality, which is not referring to any particular religion, but rather to the human capacity to know and love the Creator and to choose ways of living as shown to us by the Creator’s Teachings that are life-promoting and life-enhancing. Spirit animates the heart of all living cultures. Without spirit, culture becomes dead, unable to grow and change. Therefore, culture also refers to the sacred spiritual teachings that must be harmonized with everyday life to create a healthy community.

Culturally-based development is the process of translating and applying the knowledge and wisdom of the traditional past into lived patterns of thought and action in the modern world, as well as the collective community work of agreeing on shared values for guiding nation-building and community development.

This area of the CCP includes: 1) remembering and documenting our history, including how our people lived before European contact, what happened as European contact progressed through the fur trade

and colonialism, how it gradually destroyed our way of life, and what happened to our people after the formation of Canada and on to the modern era; 2) reintroducing traditional teachings, practices and ceremony to those of our people who want to understand and participate in these ways; 3) recovering our traditional knowledge and wisdom teachings to inform important nation-building work related to education, health and wellness, social development, family life, community justice, land and resource stewardship, governance and other important areas of life; 4) recovering our language and ensuring that it is never again lost.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

1. **Culture is more present in the community than in the recent past.** There is greater awareness and presence of our culture in many aspects of community life. We see it in what is offered through our programs, in what our children are learning in school, and in the general visibility of culture in the life of the community in events such as the inauguration of a new Chief and Council, or even the holding of the Community Story community gathering as we began work on our new comprehensive community plan.
2. **Many of us have forgotten our history and have been disconnected from our cultural roots.** Although a lot more families are paying attention to their cultural connections than was happening a generation ago, the fact is that not many of us know very much about our culture, traditional ceremonies, history, or teachings.
3. **We have rich cultural resources in the community.** Our community does have a fair number of traditional knowledge holders, pipe carriers and ceremonial leaders. We also have a few sweat lodges and the Teaching Lodge, and most of these are connected to particular families. We also have our traditional arbour, located on our pow wow grounds.
4. **We have people who know how to make drums and who know traditional songs,** but we don’t have a drum group or a teaching program for our young people.
5. **Some of our older people know quite a lot about gathering and making medicines or beading and making regalia and many other traditional arts and crafts.** Some of this knowledge stays within families, but for the most part, we don’t have a systematic way for people to learn these things if they want to.
6. **Land-based experiences are an important doorway.** Land-based teaching and learning experiences are proving to be a very powerful doorway for many of our people to find their way

back to learning about our language, traditional knowledge, teachings, ceremonies and way of life. Simply visiting our sacred sites scattered across our traditional territory can have a profound and galvanizing effect on those who want to learn about our history and our culture. Land-based experiences need to be built into our cultural development process.

7. **We need to write down our stories before the Elders who know them pass away.** Many of the Elders that knew the old stories have already passed away, and there are only a few left. It's urgent that we write down the stories now.
8. **We need a history book.** We don't have a book that tells our history as a community, where we lived before, how we used the land, how we organized our life together, etc., and we need that history for our future generations.
9. **How do we bring historical and cultural teachings to our members who live in urban centres?** We don't know how connected our members who live in urban centres are to our cultural traditions and knowledge and we need to find out what kinds of support they would like in this regard.
10. **All our spiritual teachings need to be respected.** Some of our families follow the Christian way in the Catholic or some other church, and some families follow the traditional way. There are also a growing number of families who don't follow any spiritual path. Although there is some division among out people over religion, there is less than there was a few generations ago.
11. **We have almost no fluent Anishnawbek speakers from our community.** There are a few people who are fluent who live here, but they are from Wikwemikong, a community that has kept their language strong.
12. **We do have quite a lot going on connected to language learning** such as a language program in the schools, language classes in the library, and the option to take Ojibwe rather than French in school, etc. The Language Coordinator at the Library is developing a language teaching and learning approach for Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and is a resource person for translation services in verbal or written formats. The Language Coordinator also acts as a support in providing an area for Elders and fluent speakers in the community to visit and converse in the Ojibway language daily.
13. **A dedicated cultural program is needed:** Although many of our programs are incorporating elements of culture, we don't have a cultural program per se that is dedicated to recovering our historical memory, history, cultural practices and language. The development of a comprehensive language strategy needs

to be included in this program.

14. **Cultural knowledge and wisdom teachings need to be incorporated into our nation- building process** - To build our nation on the foundation of who we are as Anishnawbek means utilizing important principles and teachings from our culture to inform the development of every component of our community life, including healing and wellness, the education of children and youth, the care of our Elders, the wellbeing of families, lands and natural resource stewardship, economic development, and governance.

## Goals and Strategies

- ✔ **Goal 1: To reconnect Atikameksheng Anishnawbek citizens to the knowledge of our history and an understanding and appreciation of our traditions**

### Strategies

- 1.1 **Establish a Language, Historical Memory and Cultural Foundations implementation team** consisting of key players from within staff and from across the community, including knowledge holders living away from Atikameksheng. This implementation team would consist of a small coordination circle drawn from staff, and a larger circle of knowledge holders, elders and practitioners from staff and community.  
  
This implementation team will be the bundle holder for implementing CCP Chapter One entitled "Recovering Language, Historical Memory and Cultural Foundations. They will be authorized by Chief and Council to create and implement action plans, to submit a budget, to manage funds, and to engage community members in the work of achieving the goals of the CCP related to their work area. It is understood that traditional knowledge holders need to be paid for their work, which cannot proceed without their expertise and support. This implementation team structure is an interim measure until such time as a focal point department or program is established to carry on this work.
- 1.2 **Research, develop and publish a book of our history** that tells the story of who our people were and how we lived before European contact, as well as the story of what happened to us as a result of European colonization and settlement, the establishment of Canada, treaties, residential schools, the 60s scoop, and the ongoing result of unresolved inequalities in Canada's treatment of Indigenous people through government systems and programs. The story would end by telling the



story of how our people are recovering our identity and our sovereignty and rebuilding our nation.

- 1.3 **Develop artistic programs** (e.g. drumming, dancing, theatre, film and music) to accompany the written material. This material will draw on interviews and other work done by our young people.
- 1.4 **Establish well catalogued and curated historical and cultural archives at Atikameksheng** built on research material collected for the preparation of the book of our history, and that would allow researchers and students of our history to access original documents and continually improve and update our historical understanding.
- 1.5 **Develop curriculum and deliver programs and courses** to help our people learn about our history and our culture. These programs and courses will be delivered through a combination of strategies, including online video conferences, short-term workshops, on- the-land activities, culturally oriented conferences,



and the creation of community core groups working on historical and cultural learning.

- 1.6 **Create special opportunities for historical and cultural learning for Atikameksheng Anishnawbek children and youth.** In addition to the materials and teaching and learning processes described above, special attention will be given to historical and cultural learning through specialized programs in schools led by existing and additional Indigenous liaison workers, as well as through weekend and summer cultural immersion activities.

- 1.7 **Create summer jobs for our young people that focus on helping them learn our cultural teachings, language, and on-the-land skills.**
- 1.8 **Place a strong emphasis on Anishinabemowin; i.e., on learning to understand and speak our language** in all of our historical and cultural learning programs and activities, as well as to create language learning materials and immersion opportunities in cooperation with other Anishnawbek speaking communities that already have well- developed language programs.

## ☑ **Goal 2: To re-establish our Anishnawbek cultural and spiritual practices and ceremonial life in the heart of our Nation**

### Strategies

- 2.1 **Build on our existing knowledge holders and ceremonial leaders,** as well as on recognized and respected Elders and ceremonial leaders from other communities, hold regular teaching lodges and ceremonies to serve the needs of our people, beginning at Atikameksheng, and eventually also in the heart of our communities in centres like Toronto and Sudbury.
- 2.2 **Design and implement a comprehensive cultural development training program for a new generation of cultural leaders** who will eventually serve our people by engaging them as helpers and supporters in the process described in strategy 2.1 above, as well as through special engagement and learning activities focused on their own development.
- 2.3 **Develop singing and drum groups** for all ages in all the population centres where our people reside.
- 2.4 **Bring ceremony and cultural teachings into important activities and transitions in our community life,** including important community meetings, the swearing in of a new Chief and Council, school graduations, honouring and recognizing achievements of community members, and other important activities as supported by community members.
- 2.5 **Develop a yearly calendar of ceremonies,** including rites of passage, that are part of our on-going programming as well as our special family camps and on-the-land activities.

## ☑ **Goal 3: To establish a permanent cultural development program to facilitate and support our cultural development and historical learning processes**

## Strategies

**3.1 Ensure adequate human and financial resources.** This program will have its own program leader and staff as well as the needed financial resources to carry out an ambitious workplan involving the engagement of community members both as resources and as learners in cultural development and historical learning.

**3.2 Draw on diverse funding sources and volunteerism.** In recognition that it's not easy to find stable funding for cultural programming, and also in recognition of the traditional value that cultural ceremonies and services are something that people give to one another voluntarily, not something that paid staff are engaged to deliver to people, the long-term goal will be to develop a strong community-based network of knowledge holders and practitioners who will provide supports and services to one another. But, to jumpstart this process, some paid staff will be needed to provide training, support and nurturing to a growing network of community members who are engaged as volunteers.

Funding from government sources, foundations and private donors will be sought. Additionally, own source income will be accessed in order to stabilize a well-established program.

**3.3 Establish a social business in the form of a cultural tourism destination** with learning programs and immersion tours for non-Indigenous Canadians who want to learn about our Anishnawbek history and culture. As this business develops, it will provide employment, particularly in the summer months for our young people who want to learn and earn, and it will also provide revenue that will help to sustain our cultural development program. This social business could be linked to tourism-oriented activities initiated by the City of Sudbury and other First Nations across the Northeast Superior Region.

✓ **Goal 4: To develop a permanent Atikameksheng Cultural Centre; i.e., a dedicated building to be used year-round for ceremonies, teaching and learning, cultural archives, storage of artifacts, and hosting cultural tourism activities**

## Strategies

**4.1 Develop a plan for the Cultural Centre** through community consultation. At this time, it is envisioned that the Cultural Centre's facilities will include exhibit and archival storage space, facilities for fine and performing arts, and spaces for community healing and cultural activities.

**4.2 Seek corporate and private funding contributions for the Cultural Centre** from businesses conducting activities within our traditional

territory and from sympathetic donors in the private sector.

✓ **Goal 5: To establish spiritual unity within our Atikameksheng family**

## Strategies

**5.1 Hold a spiritual unity conference** in which spiritual leaders from all the churches and our cultural and spiritual knowledge holders sit together in the same circle to discuss ways and means of establishing spiritual unity among the people for the sake of healing and nation-building.

**5.2 Conduct an information and education campaign to encourage spiritual unity.** Utilizing social media, the newsletter, slots at public meetings and community gatherings, and any other means that are practicable, work towards changing the conversation of the community in ways that recognize the common spiritual heritage of all humanity, and the importance of respecting one another's spiritual paths and working together for the good of all.

**5.3 Engage both traditional and church representatives in providing spiritual leadership in community activities.** Actively seek the advice of church and traditional cultural leaders when struggling to solve difficult problems, and actively request the help of these leaders to engage their constituent circles in coming together to work on important community goals.

✓ **Goal 6: To build Anishnawbek traditional knowledge and wisdom teachings into our nation-building process**

## Strategies

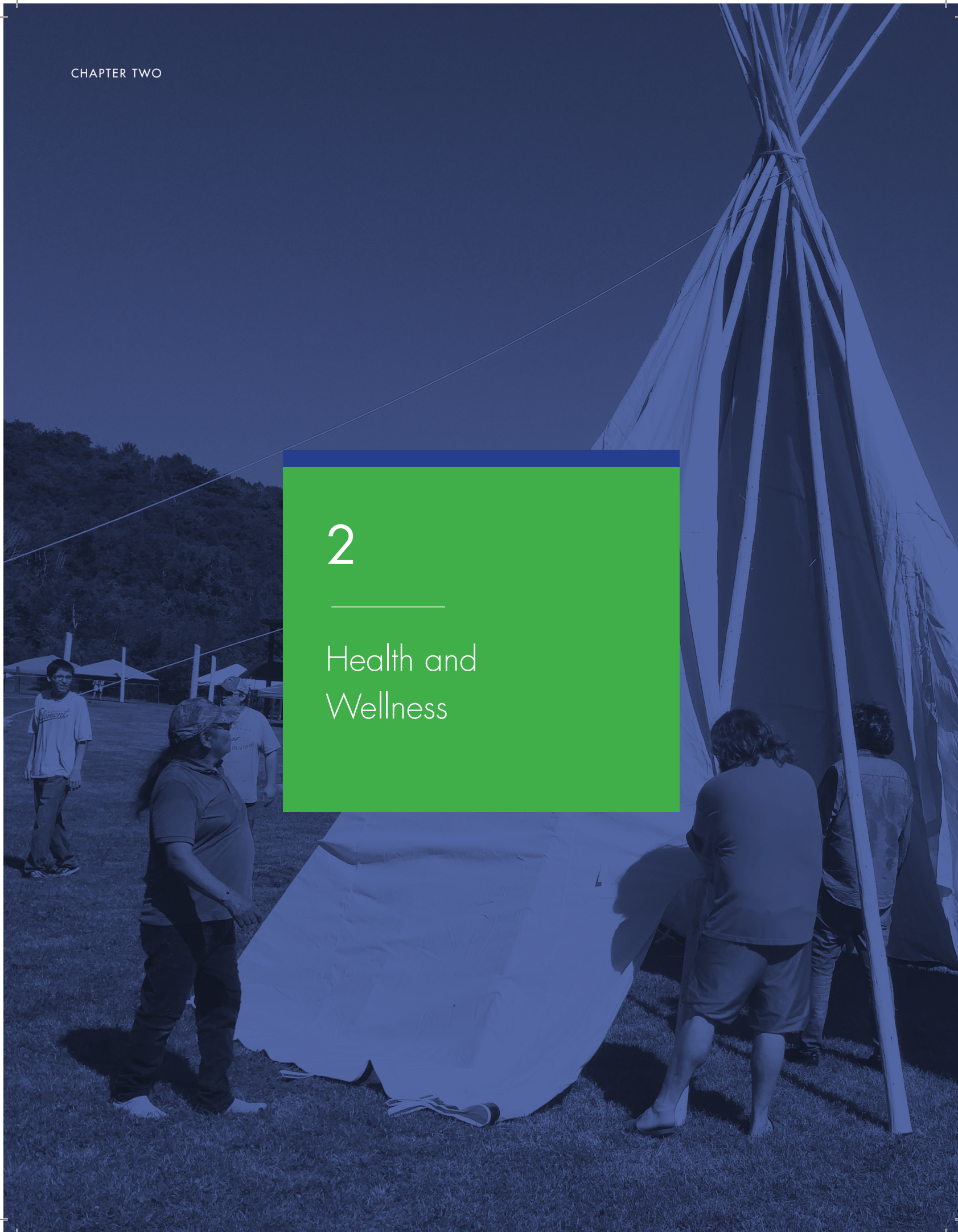
**6.1 Make the articulation of cultural foundations and guiding principles a requirement of every program strategy and workplan development.** The provision of support to this activity will be one of the mandates of the cultural program team.

**6.2 Engage Elders and professional researchers to support the work of researching cultural foundations** and guiding principles for important initiatives such as governance reform or establishing a community healing program.




# 2

## Health and Wellness







✔ To foster individual, family and community healing and recovery from the impacts of intergenerational trauma and related mental health problems.

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✔ To create the full-spectrum of addictions recovery treatment and support options within the Atikameksheng Anishinabek community.

✔ To significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic disease.

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✔ To transform the status of key determinants of health that now contribute to chronic disease and mental health challenges.



## Definition

Health refers to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Closely related, wellness refers to the values, choice making and patterns of living that lead to health. This component of the Comprehensive Community Plan considers the full range of health and wellness related issues, determinants, solutions, and services that have to be addressed at the individual, family and community levels to strengthen and support the health and wellness of Atikameksheng people.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

1. **Addictions, mental health and related issues are affecting a significant proportion of our community members wherever they live.** Community professionals that work with families on reserve estimate that somewhere near 70% of households where children and youth are living have ongoing and extensive alcohol and drug abuse and/or mental health challenges that are creating at risk environments for our young people.
2. **Intergenerational trauma is at the root of much of the health and wellness issues we face.** Nevertheless, It is important to recognize that not everyone who has experienced trauma and abuse in their lives is damaged and dysfunctional as a result. In fact, many of us went through a period of personal pain and suffering, but came out stronger and even more resilient as a result. Yet, a significant number of our people were hurt by what happened to them, either in residential schools, at the hands of various government systems, because of pervasive prejudice in the general society, or through violence and abuse occurring between our community members and within our families. We now understand that the hurt and dysfunctionality that some of us inherited and are still living with is likely to continue across generations until it is interrupted through a transformative healing and recovery process.
3. **Addictions, and particularly opioids, are having serious health impacts on our people.** The numbers of our young people being impacted by drug abuse seems to be significantly increasing, and the severity of impact is also increasing. We've already had a number of deaths that seem to be directly related. 10 to 20 years ago, the main problem was alcohol. While alcohol abuse persists, it has much subsided in terms of an overall community problem compared to a few decades ago, but it has also been replaced by

what could certainly be called an epidemic in the misuse of prescription as well as illegal and sometimes deadly drugs, including fentanyl.

4. **What we are currently doing in terms of professional and program response is not adequately addressing the wellness issues in the community.** We have approximately 40 professionals working in programs such as mental health, addictions, and family wellness related services. Some of these professionals work for Atikameksheng, and some work for allied agencies including Maamwesying, Nogdawindamina and Niigaaniin. Despite the combined efforts of all of these programs and professional workers, community wellness outcomes are not significantly improving, and in some ways, they are worsening. The collective analysis of a newly formed Community Healing Strategy Team is that we are providing Band-Aid solutions that don't address the underlying issues.

**Some of the other program weaknesses that were identified are as follows.**

- Programs are operating in their own silos, leading to duplication and lost opportunity for combining knowledge, skills and resources.



- Program policies sometimes exclude people who need help and create barriers to access.
- Community members lack trust in our service providers due to fears that confidentiality will not be preserved.
- Our programs focus on individual wellness but have not

effectively engaged the community or even thought about community wellness, and research shows that these two dimensions are inseparable.

- We are only beginning to understand how to draw on our cultural resources and what they could contribute to the community healing and recovery process.
5. **Community members are experiencing a wide range of wellness-related issues.** These include a high rate of addictions, incidences of early death related to addictions, people driving drunk and high in the community, persistent drug trafficking in the community, lateral violence, family breakup, and a general feeling of helplessness and desperation that is growing in the community. Many people say they don't know how to find balance and peace in their lives.
  6. **Our wellness issues are linked to other persistent problems that our people are facing.** In addition to intergenerational trauma, significant determinants of wellness that need to be addressed include loss of identity, historical memory, language and cultural connection; chronic poverty, unemployment and the sheer hardship of life it produces for individuals and families; the lack of affordable housing; the lack of available transportation, especially on weekends; persistent dependency and entitlement thinking; the loss of parenting skills; and for some, an over-engagement with technology that contributes to isolation and lateral violence in the community.
  7. **We don't have the background information and data we need to build more effective programs.** There is much that we don't know that we ought to know. We don't have adequate statistics for such things as how many people require which kinds of services; how many households are living with addictions and other at-risk behaviour; how many children are exposed within families to these behaviours and who they are; how many people are seeking treatment or have just returned from treatment and need aftercare support, and who these people are; which treatment modalities are the most effective in helping our people based on experience, or even which treatment modalities are currently in use in our various program offerings. We also don't know how to overcome the silos that we currently work within. We really have no way of telling (at this point) whether or not or to what extent our programs are actually doing any good, because we are not measuring.
  8. **There are system-level barriers slowing down or preventing our effectiveness.** At the political level, the two-year election cycle can mean that policies and priorities can shift before there is time for real changes take effect. Communication at all levels is a challenge. Community people don't know which services are available. They also don't know which

community challenges and issues are actually a priority of political leadership because, historically, this has not been well communicated. There is very poor communication, and sometimes none between our various programs, despite the fact that to actually help our people to succeed there would have to be collaboration and frequent, as well as effective, communication. Federal and Provincial Governments often hand down program mandates and structures as a condition of funding instead of drawing on community wisdom and experience to develop programs from within.

9. **Our youth face many wellness-related challenges.** These include a very high proportion of youth abusing drugs and alcohol (estimated 80%); significant number of youth impacted by mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety; children and youth exposed to domestic violence; many children and youth inheriting intergenerational trauma and related issues because they are living within unhealthy families and not receiving much positive reinforcement in their lives resulting in low self-esteem; sexual activity at a very early age and children having children; lost connection with family, culture and community; social media creating isolation, lateral violence and social anxiety; and the absence of targeted programs for youth healing and recovery.
10. **Atikameksheng women are facing health and wellness challenges.** A significant number of our women are unable to access needed health services, have had funding denied for needed treatments including surgery, can't afford prescribed medications, and are experiencing what seems to be an increase in the incidence of serious chronic diseases. All this on top of basic mental health and addictions challenges, being the victims of domestic violence and abuse, unresolved grief and loss and intergenerational trauma.
11. **Men's wellness has not been effectively addressed.** While the following does not describe all of our men, it does describe a significant number of the them. Many of our men grew up lacking healthy role models, and filled with self-doubt, without self-love, sometimes without a moral compass, and without knowing who they are, leaving them feeling disconnected from family, culture and community. These life circumstances are compounded by chronic poverty, unemployment or very low wages leaving many men feeling disempowered, ashamed, isolated and depressed. The social role of men has been changing. Men used to be providers. Now more women get the jobs and many men stay home and do very little. Our men are spending less and less time with children and youth, and less time on the land teaching our cultural skills. Many of our men have experienced violence and abuse at a young



age and not healed from this, which is creating barriers in their ability to interrelate within family and community. Men say they are afraid to heal and transform themselves for fear of being judged because of feelings of shame and guilt.

12. **Family wellness is challenged by many factors.** Broken families create huge stress for single parents and sometimes generates behaviour that exposes children to risk. A significant number of families are experiencing wellness issues including addictions and mental health problems that are affecting all family members and creating at-risk situations for children and youth. Lack of affordable housing on reserve forces families to live away from extended families and community causing more isolation and disconnection, a situation that can be made worse by poverty and lack of access to transportation. Indeed, poverty and inadequate housing are significant barriers to personal and family wellbeing. Along with the deprivations created by sheer poverty can be the lack of access to healthy and adequate nutrition, needed dental and medical care, decent clothing, recreational opportunities, childcare services, transportation, telephone and Internet services, healthy housing and living conditions, a social support system, and many other things. Some people have called this the “poverty trap”, and while it could be called an “economic issue, it is also a social and health issue that affects human wellbeing. That is why strategies intended to improve health and wellness must be linked to affordable housing and poverty alleviation strategies.
13. **The Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Community Wellness Strategy** was launched in September 2019 at the direction of Chief and Council. This strategy engages professional helpers from all the community programs and allied services that have anything to do with healing and wellness. The purpose of the strategy is that all these professionals and helpers need to work together with community members to develop an integrated program initiative that actually leads to improved healing and wellness outcomes for community members. Core elements of the strategy will be reflected in the goals and strategies to follow.
14. **There has been little attention paid to care for the care-givers,** although many front-line workers are impacted by intergenerational trauma and other wellness challenges themselves, most valiantly continue providing the best services they can, or they know how to give to their clients. Eventually however, this path leads to burn-out and other personal harm to the care-givers, as well as reduced effectiveness in the care that is given.
15. **Atikameksheng is richly endowed with cultural resources,** i.e. people who know the language, the history, the teachings and

ceremonies and are willing to share these in order to help the community on its journey toward wellness.

## Goals and Strategies

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek will achieve optimum and sustainable mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellness at the level of individuals, families and the whole community by the year 2040.

### ✔ **Goal 1: To foster individual, family and community healing and recovery from the impacts of intergenerational trauma and related mental health problems**

#### Strategies

- 1.1 **Comprehensive community healing and wellness strategy:** Fully develop and implement a comprehensive community healing and wellness strategy leading to significantly improved and measurable health, wellness and addiction related outcomes.
- 1.2 **Engage and mobilize community members as full partners in the implementation of the Community Wellness Strategy:** This critical component of the strategy calls for engaging community members to become the owners and drivers of a community healing movement through which community members work together to support the community healing journey. The core of the strategy involves recruiting key individuals who are already on a healing path and are willing to share their experiences to support others. Within this wellness core group, there needs to be a targeted recruitment of role model youth, women, men, and elders, as well as spiritual and cultural leaders and other persons who feel they want to contribute. Important elements of the strategy also include the following:
  - *targeted learning initiatives* to build the capacity of community members to play their role;
  - *regular monthly meetings and quarterly wellness-oriented community gatherings and workshops* to build a community of practice, a sense of common purpose and vision, as well as collective strength and mutual support;
  - *the creation of a community volunteer healing support team* that receives extra training and can help with crisis intervention and ongoing support (a little like a volunteer fire brigade); and
  - *the development of community generated and implemented strategies*
- 1.3 **Develop a measurement and data collection system** to provide implementers of the Strategy with the information needed for the development of effective interventions, as well as for measuring progress and refining various lines of action to get better results.
- 1.4 **Strengthen collaboration between all the relevant agencies, and**

**programs** that need to contribute to the healing and recovery work, such that all programs and professionals are operating within the framework of one integrated plan, with coordinated leadership and a shared and fully integrated accountability system, so that everyone is working collaboratively for the same outcomes utilizing the best resources available from all the programs and services.

- 1.5 Strengthen the spiritual and cultural foundations of every aspect of the work** so that our Anishnawbek values, teachings and cultural resources are fully integrated into our strategic thinking, program strategies and options, and program decision-making.
- 1.6 Create a Professional Healing Team** capable of leading both individual and collective healing processes and training others to do so, and who are fluent with a wide range of healing modalities to meet the wide diversity of needs and preferences of our community members.
- 1.7 Create and diligently maintain a care for the care-givers oriented in-house healing and wellness program** within Atikameksheng staff, with special attention to ensuring front-line healers and support workers are buffered from the impacts of working closely and continuously with traumatized individuals and families, and often triggered themselves by these experiences.
- 1.7 Create a focus on families as a key entry point into the community healing process**, as families potentially create the safe and loving environment in which individuals can grow, develop and flourish.
- 1.8 One size does not fit all.** Create a wide range of program options to meet the varied needs and preferences of individuals, families and identifiable community subgroups. Provide offerings both within program offices and meeting spaces and within the wider community wherever people are willing and able to be engaged for healing and recovery.
- 1.9 Target people who want support when and where they want or need it**, through allied programs and services including those of the justice system, shelters, schools, etc.
- 1.10 Decolonize our programs** by asking funders to support the plans we create from our understanding of the needs rather than simply implementing programs that have been developed from the outside.
- 1.11 Healthy public policy:** Consolidate and streamline support for the Comprehensive Healing Strategy implementation process at the Atikameksheng political and senior administrative levels

to ensure that policies in human and financial resource allocations, human resource decision-making and human service policies related to social assistance, housing and access to other services align with the implementation of the emerging Community Wellness Strategy.

- 1.12 Continuous engagement in ongoing learning:** Engage in ongoing learning for continuous improvement of strategic interventions and outcomes, guided by ongoing measurement, wise practice and the guidance of our elders and knowledge holders.

## 🎯 **Goal 2: To create the full-spectrum of addictions recovery treatment and support options within the Atikameksheng Anishinabek community**

### **Strategies**

- 2.1 Detox and Treatment:** Given that it can take anywhere from 4 to 6 months to get a client into a detox centre and a similar span of time or longer to find a spot in an addictions treatment program in northern Ontario (by which time a client could be dead or no longer willing to engage in treatment), Atikameksheng (possibly in collaboration other nearby communities and agencies, and possibly utilizing land-based options) will develop and implement a detox and treatment program, giving priority to supporting our members who decide to embark on a healing journey.
- 2.2 Aftercare:** Atikameksheng will develop a community based after-care program utilizing a combination of professional counsellors and community volunteer support groups. Where necessary, safe and healthy housing options (perhaps in the form of group homes, or volunteer adult foster care) will be provided while a person is still vulnerable as they continue their healing and recovery journey.
- 2.3 Community-based prevention:** The classic question about whether it is better to put a fence at the top of the cliff or to park ambulances at the bottom illustrates the critical importance of community engagement in addictions prevention, healing and recovery, beginning with children and junior youth, focusing on strengthening the wellbeing of families, and providing everyone with healing and recovery options readily available in the community that target the specific needs of youth, women, men, elders, and other vulnerable groups. "Prevention" includes community-based treatment, but also building positive alternatives to an addictive lifestyle, which usually involves positive social support, positive recreational options, available counselling and life path planning, and support to help individuals move towards



economic self-reliance and prosperity, as well as always involving considerable learning about how to have healthy relationships and a healthy life.

#### 2.4 Traditional justice as a contributor to health and wellness:

Traditionally our people sat together and confronted individuals when their misbehavior was harmful to themselves and others. These days, harmful behaviours might include physical and sexual abuse, bootlegging and drug dealing, especially targeting young people, break and enter and theft to support a drug habit, driving while impaired, vandalism, threats, intimidation, violence, and bullying. Many of these behaviours stem from wellness issues and the need for healing. The contemporary Canadian legal system is supposed to be able to deal with most of these things, but often does not. We who live close to the grassroots can see problems coming from a long way off, and we need to reestablish traditional mechanisms to confront harmful behaviours in order to protect our people.

For these reasons, we will reestablish traditional justice processes involving elders and knowledge holders, family members and those impacted by hurtful behaviours in order to stand up against behaviour that is hurting our people. Once a person is ready to stop the hurtful behaviour, we will support them on their healing journey.

### ✓ Goal 3: To significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic disease

#### Strategies

##### 3.1 Conduct a baseline study to identify current realities and trends related to chronic disease affecting Atikameksheng people. Specifically, the following data is required.

- Which diseases are impacting our people?
- How do current incidence data compare to 5 to 10 years ago? Is there an increase or a decrease? Are there any obvious reasons for changes that are occurring?
- How does Atikameksheng data about chronic diseases compare to the general population in the Sudbury area, In Canada, and with other Indigenous people?

Note: this research could be conducted in stages. Stage I could be an observational study by health staff focused on on-Reserve people only. Results could be compared to data from the Sudbury Health Authority. Stage II could be a formal anonymous survey to all community members and help could be sought from local universities to provide technical assistance for this study.

3.2 Though health education and engagement based on findings from the above study, but also on health literature more generally, we will determine the most common chronic diseases and develop a disease prevention protocol based on research findings and best practice. As well, we will develop initiatives to engage our community members in healthy living options, particularly related to the following:

- diet and nutrition,
- environmental factors,
- sleep,
- substance abuse,
- stress, and
- exercise and fitness.

To do this, we will learn from best health promotion practices both from within Indigenous communities and from worldwide literature and experience.

3.3 Dedicated Chronic Disease Prevention Program: Canadian health statistics show that Indigenous communities have some of the worst chronic disease outcomes of any population of the country. Diabetes, cancers, heart disease, stroke, lung disease—we've got it all. Helping our community members to learn how to live differently is part of the solution, but we also know that high levels of poverty and other social determinants have a huge impact on how healthy a community is or is not. A chronic disease prevention unit will be created within the health department, that will carry out the following activities:

- healthy living research;
- health communication and education; and
- collaboration with other appropriate agencies and programs such as housing, economic development and education to create viable strategies to address the social determinants of health most seriously impacting the chronic disease picture in our community.

### ✓ Goal 4: To transform the status of key determinants of health that now contribute to chronic disease and mental health challenges, including poverty and unemployment, access to healthy food, access to affordable housing and transportation, fostering social support and belonging for all, access to health and social services needed to address health challenges, affordable access to required treatment, access to affordable medication, and access to knowledge and information required to maintain health

## Strategies

**4.1 Create an inter-departmental strategy for addressing each of the following critical social determinants of health affecting Atikameksheng.** (Note: The term “social determinants of health” refers to critical social factors that contribute to or “determine” who is healthy and who is not. For example, worldwide statistics repeatedly affirm that the poorest people have the worst health.” Critical social determinants for our community are: a) chronic poverty, b) unemployment, c) food security, d) affordable housing. and e) transportation.)

For each of these factors, the following steps will be required.

- Consulting with community members directly experiencing stress related to these determinants to understand the nature and impacts of the problem.
- Engaging community members in the search for solutions that can work for them.
- Engaging relevant departments and programs, as well as allied agencies, in consultation about what is possible for solution building in the short run and beyond.
- Conducting a worldwide literature and best practice search, including Indigenous community-originated solutions
- Incremental implementation guided by continuous measurement, inspired by an ongoing learning and oriented to continuous improvement.

**4.2 Filling health services access gaps:** Due to severe cuts in uninsured health benefits, a significant number of our people living below the poverty line are faced with a situation of not being able to afford prescribed medication, and/or not being able to access needed medical procedures, treatment

or equipment, including mental health care, addictions treatment, dental care, eye care and surgery. To address this issue the following steps will be taken.

- Conduct a rapid situation analysis utilizing a combination of focus groups, interviews and surveys in order to determine which specific gaps are impacting our people and in which ways.
- Follow-up with a rapid review of what other jurisdictions, including Indigenous communities across Canada, are doing to try to address these gaps.
- Based on the above reviews, develop an action plan for each particular kind of gap in consultation with providers, insurers, community members, and Chief and Council.
- Experiment with solutions, review frequently and keep working towards continuous improvement.
- Create a new position within the health department called Community Health Engagement Coordinator whose role includes the following:
  - to engage and support community members in playing their role in developing health solutions;
  - to facilitate committee consultation on health needs and gaps and to communicate these to the rest of the health system;
  - to support the health measurement and continuous improvement process by ensuring community participation is at the centre; and
  - to ensure that community members are given space to play a strong role in program design, development and evaluation.






# 3

## Social and Community Development



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- ✔ To develop and implement a comprehensive community wellness strategy that meets the needs of all age groups, families, and the community as a whole.  
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  - ✔ To develop a senior care and support system that addresses their full range of wellbeing and support requirements as they age.  
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  - ✔ To develop additional infrastructure that will support the needs of community members.  
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  - ✔ To engage Atikameksheng citizens at the grassroots in the work of rebuilding the close-knit fabric of traditional community life that was once ours through processes of community development.
- ✔ To ensure that community programming for all age groups is coordinated across all departments and programs and provides holistic (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual) support for all age groups, families and the community as a whole.  
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  - ✔ To strengthen community development in urban centres where significant numbers of Atikameksheng members live.  
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  - ✔ To dedicate the human and financial resources needed to achieve the goals listed above.

## Definition

Social development refers to the process of developing social cohesion and unity between individuals, families and groups within the community and strengthening the community's collective capacity to think and act together for a common purpose. It also relates to promoting strong, safe and healthy families and community life within which children, youth, women, men and elders can flourish, as well as addressing specific root causes so as to achieve wellbeing outcomes for all of these groups.

Community essentially means "common oneness". Wherever our people may live, we are all related. We are one family. Essentially, community is a web of relationships that are at once spiritual, personal, cultural, social, political and economic. These relationships can either be strong or weak, healthy or unhealthy.

Community development is the process of strengthening our relationships and building up our collective life in such a way that sustainable wellbeing and prosperity for all is the result.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

### Children and youth:

1. **Our next generation is losing a connection with our traditional teachings and way of life.** Since many of our families are living off reserve, they are also losing a connection to the Atikameksheng home community.
2. **Many of our children and youth are spending a great deal of time using technology** rather than interacting face-to-face with each other and family members. This is sometimes negatively affecting their physical and mental health. They are getting very little exercise, sometimes developing high anxiety about social media communications, and often become isolated from other people. On the positive side, technology is giving them exposure to other cultures and to information to which they would otherwise not have access.
3. **The health of our children and youth is suffering** because of a lack of physical activity and of a diet that consists of too many processed foods.
4. **It does not feel safe for our children and youth to be out in the community** because of the number of strangers that come into the reserve, drunk drivers and what seems to be an increase in crime.
5. **Wellness issues in the community** (e.g. addictions, domestic violence and mental health challenges such as depression) put children and youth at risk of abuse and neglect both at home and in the community.
6. **Too many of our youth are also involved with addictive substances and suffering from mental health issues.** In some instances, they are also involved in sexual activity at a young age. Children are having children.
7. **Some of our children are struggling with low self-esteem.** They don't have a lot of positive reinforcements in their lives.
8. **Youth have many strengths such as energy and creativity.** Their ideas are fresh and they can work around a problem. They need a stronger voice in the life and decision-making processes in the community.
9. **More programming for children and youth is needed, especially for youth between the ages of 13 and 21.** This programming needs to be scheduled for after school hours and on weekends and needs to be coordinated to avoid duplication among various agencies and services. Careful consideration needs to be given as to how to overcome barriers such as the lack of public transportation that makes access to programming difficult.

### Men and Women (aged 26 to 55):

10. There seems to be an **increase in cancer and other serious illnesses.** Individuals seeking treatment for health issues sometimes encounter barriers, such as having funding denied for some treatments or being unable to afford prescriptions that are not covered under non-insured health benefits.
11. **Many of the adults in our community are suffering from the impacts of unresolved intergenerational trauma.** This is impacting their capacity to play positive roles in their family and community life.
12. **Poverty, the lack of housing, low levels of education, and other social conditions** are contributing to the wellness challenges that too many of our people are experiencing.
13. **More programming is needed that targets the health, education, and employment and entrepreneurship support needs of both men and women.** There are not enough employment opportunities in the reserve community.
14. **The community needs a safe house** where women can work toward better mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health and where they can learn about their culture. As well, **a facility is needed where children can be cared for in the community** while their families are unable to do so. A community day care is an urgent priority.
15. **The role of men is changing** with more of the women working outside the home. Some men are having a difficult time adjusting to the expectation that they should contribute more to the daily management of the household. Because of changes in life style, men are spending less time on the land with the younger generations.



16. There is a sense that the men who are living at the Independent Living Centre experience isolation and shame that they are not able to care for themselves and to play a productive role in family and community life.

#### Seniors (aged 55 plus):

17. Because of breakdowns within families and a growing focus on formal programs and services rather than the volunteer spirit and informal support systems that were so common in the past, **Elders are not being called upon to provide guidance and to pass on cultural and survival skills like they did in the past.**
18. Some families are deeply divided and **care for the seniors/Elders falls through the cracks.**
19. **Families need education and support to do long-term planning for the care of their seniors.** This would include re-building stronger bonds between seniors and youth.
20. **Many seniors feel isolated** because they cannot easily get out to do their own shopping or to participate in family and community life. There is a lack of transportation and also of volunteers to visit them and help them with some of their daily living needs.
21. **More programming is required to meet the needs of our seniors,** including an Elders/Seniors Lodge that would provide 24-hour care and more in-home support.

#### Family Life:

22. **Not all Atikameksheng Anishnawbek families are healthy.** Wellness issues, such as addictions and other mental health challenge among family members. are placing children at risk and sometimes tearing families apart.
23. In some cases, families have lost their parents, and this **grief and trauma is impacting their unity and capacity to live well.** The elder members of the family were the ones that kept everyone together, but once they are gone, family members have tended to go their own ways.
24. **Families are not as physically active as they used to be.** People don't walk as much as they used to and families don't play games outside as much either.
25. **Some families are struggling to meet their daily living needs.** They don't have employment and may not have the education they need to secure a good job.
26. **Some don't have adequate housing or are homeless** and there is not enough housing on the reserve to accommodate them.
27. **Our culture and language are key to keeping our families and community strong,** but too many of us have lost our language and our connection to our culture.

28. **The community has lots of services for families, but they are not well used.** In some cases, people are very busy just trying to make ends meet. Some families don't have transportation to get to the programs and services that might be helpful to them. Community members may also not trust community services. Even divisions within families can keep some people from participating is someone from a different family, religion, economic status, etc. will be there.

#### Community Unity and Solidarity:

29. **The community does not come together the way it used to.** Families don't spend as much time visiting each other, playing games or just hanging out and talking. We also don't have community gatherings like we used to. Community members need to create opportunities to celebrate community and not just rely on programs to organize community events.
30. **Our people live in many places across the province and the country.** Of course, Sudbury is home to many of our members, but we also have many families living in places like Toronto. In many cases, these families do not feel deeply connected to the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek reserve community or even to other Atikameksheng families that live near them. Although our members, wherever they live, have the right to vote in elections for Chief and Council, they do not feel that they have the opportunity to participate in an ongoing basis in the cultural and social life of the community or in the ongoing decision-making that is shaping the nation. Many of our members have expressed their desire to be able to learn the language and cultural traditions, but feel that they don't have the opportunity to do so.
31. **In decolonizing our understanding of community,** we understand that, traditionally, before European settlement and colonization broke up our way of life and forced us out of our traditional territory, our pattern of life was not tied to a single locality. In fact, our people lived in relatively small family clusters scattered across our traditional territory. Each family had its own hunting and trapping areas that were known to and respected by all of us. We did come together in the summer season in large inter-family gatherings for fishing, socializing, ceremonies, negotiations, planning cooperative ventures, and important decision-making. Midwinter was also a time for gathering, feasting, ceremonies and socializing. The rest of the time we live scattered across the land, and this was largely for environmental and economic reasons. The land simply could not support too many of us living in one place for very long.

Treaties were made with various groups of our people living in different places, and reserves were established according to these treaties and based in the European idea that people live, \

**32. Community building, wherever our people live, is the first problem in community development.** Many of our people living in cities and towns across Ontario have become disconnected from their Indigenous identity and heritage, from Atikameksheng community life and from each other. It is only recently that Chief and Council have begun to call our people together who are living in urban centres. Community building will require leadership and initiative from within the collective of our people living in urban centres. Although Atikameksheng Chief, Council and programs are committed to nurturing community development wherever our people are living, it is understood that “community development” is not something that can be delivered to people like a box of groceries. It has to be homegrown. It has to be led and energized by grassroots Atikameksheng people themselves. Once something is started and moving, it can be supported, nurtured and guided, and resources can be directed to help in that process. The challenge is to ignite and nurture that spark of community life within each population centre where our people are living.

**33. Supporting community development requires human and financial resources.** Since federal funding from Indigenous Services Canada only supports programming for people living on reserves, there is a real challenge to finding the resources to support and accommodate community development in other centres. In the long run, our First Nation’s economic development initiatives will be able to contribute to this process, but those initiatives are only emerging at this time. It is also recognized that there are many existing programs and resources aimed at meeting the needs of Indigenous people in larger city centres such as Sudbury and Toronto. The challenge ahead will be to build collaborative relationships with these programs and agencies, while at the same time continuing to build our unique community identity and to base the development of programs and initiatives on the self-identified needs and aspirations of our people.

**34. We know that some Atikameksheng Anishnawbek people who live in communities outside the reserve also struggle with the same types of wellness and daily living challenges as people who live on the reserve,** but we don’t have any accurate information about the circumstances of their lives.

## Goals and Strategies

✓ **Goal 1: To develop and implement a comprehensive community wellness strategy that meets the needs of all age groups, families, and the community as a whole**

### Strategies

Note: The strategies for this goal are described in Chapter Two of this Comprehensive Community Plan.

✓ **Goal 2: To develop a senior care and support system that addresses their full range of wellbeing and support requirements as they age**

### Strategies

**2.1 Elders/Seniors Lodge:** Construct an Elders/Seniors Lodge based on careful consideration of a suitable location, a design that incorporates cultural features, and the needs of elders/seniors as they age.

**2.2 Senior in-home support system:** Strengthen the community’s in-home support system so that it meets the needs of all seniors who wish to remain in their own homes.

**2.3 Senior support volunteer program:** Create a strong volunteer program that ensures that no seniors remain isolated and are unable to meet their daily living needs with dignity and that builds many opportunities for youth to build strong relationships with seniors/elders.

**2.4 Opportunities for Elders to play their traditional role:** Create many opportunities for elders to share their cultural, language and other types of knowledge with other members of the community, and especially with children and youth.

**2.5 Education program for family members:** Create an education program to assist families to remain actively involved with their senior members and to plan for the needs of their elders as they age.

✓ **Goal 3: To develop additional infrastructure that will support the needs of community members**

### Strategies

**3.1 Safe place for women:** Create a facility that is a safe place for women to work on their wellness issues, support each other, and gain knowledge and skills that will assist them to achieve their aspirations.

**3.2 Keeping children in care in the community:** Include space in the above-mentioned facility or create another facility that will provide care for children in the community during times when their families are unable to do so.

**3.3 Day care facility:** As a matter of priority, build a day care facility.

✓ **Goal 4: To engage Atikameksheng citizens at the grassroots in the work of rebuilding the close-knit fabric of traditional community life that was once ours through processes of community development**

## Strategies

### 4.1 Community outreach / community development staff

**position:** Create a full-time community outreach / community development staff position whose mandate will be to engage community members in working together to address critical community issues and to improve community life. For example, the creation and operation of a community healing and recovery movement, the recovery of historical memory and cultural knowledge, as well as child and youth recreation and on-the-land activities are all things that community members can lead and support.

### 4.2 Counter dependency thinking to build grassroots involvement:

Use a combination of cultural teachings, public messaging, one-on-one persuasion, role-model examples, and positive incentives for volunteers to directly counter dependency thinking habits created by the colonial process our people have experienced. A new narrative is needed that says that our community is as strong as we make it, and each of us must contribute what we can or, in fact, there will be no community.

### 4.3 Engage spiritual and cultural leaders:

Bring together the spiritual leaders (including those representing Christian churches) and cultural knowledge holders in the community to build commitment and a plan for working together to heal community divides and strengthen community identity and unity.

### 4.4 Community development training:

Provide both staff and community members with a comprehensive training program focused on developing knowledge, skills and a menu of options related to community development leadership and practice.

## ✔ Goal 5: To ensure that community programming for all age groups is coordinated across all departments and programs and provides holistic (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual) support for all age groups, families and the community as a whole

## Strategies

### 5.1 Collect data related to social development conditions:

Create a data collection strategy that gathers information related to social development conditions for Atikameksheng citizens, both those living in the reserve community and in other centres (e.g. # of individuals that are homeless, and/or living in poverty, number of children in care, number of individuals involved with the courts, etc.). Use this data to set priorities and design solution across program initiatives.

### 5.2 Integrated, community-driven program planning:

Create an integrated program plan for the Health and Social Development Department that addresses community needs and then integrates services and program dollars to provide the most effective support network.

## ✔ Goal 6: To strengthen community development in urban centres where significant numbers of Atikameksheng members live

## Strategies

### 6.1 Community hubs in urban centres:

Establish Atikameksheng "hubs" or community associations that will focus on community building and comprehensive community development in localities where significant numbers of Atikameksheng citizens reside. The following steps will facilitate this development.

- Wherever there is a will coming from our citizens to establish community development activities, bring together a core group of local champions who are willing and able to anchor and facilitate the community building and development process and support them in creating a one-year strategy.
- Hold quarterly community development forums in localities where hubs are established.
- Once a hub is established, with plans and activities underway, engage a part-time hub coordinator to provide coordination, administrative continuity and organizational support for hub activities.

## ✔ Goal 7: To dedicate the human and financial resources needed to achieve the goals listed above

## Strategies

### 7.1 Atikameksheng Community Development Program:

Establish an Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Community Development Program that will focus on the achievement of the goals listed above.

### 7.2 Community outreach / community development staff position:

This program will have at least one full-time community outreach / community development staff position (see 4.1 above).

### 7.3 Community development training:


This program will also take the lead in providing community development training to staff and community volunteers (see 4.4 above).



# 4

## Prosperity Development





✓ To significantly reduce, and eventually to end chronic poverty of our individuals and families.

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✓ To create significant sustainable wealth for our First Nation by establishing a wealth generation engine and acquiring the capabilities and institutional structures needed to effectively sustain, manage and grow our wealth.

✓ To ensure that the work of enhancing the prosperity of our community members and that of building the wealth of our First Nation are mutually reinforcing.

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✓ To achieve prosperity without compromising the wellbeing and sustainability of the natural world.



## Definition

Prosperity development focuses on improving the economic wellbeing of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek by: 1) directly reducing poverty and the burden that comes with poverty for households and families, and 2) generating and managing wealth for the First Nation that will lead to financial sovereignty and the capacity to provide supports and services to Atikameksheng members that contribute to their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

In order to achieve the goals outlined in the above definition, two outcome objectives will be pursued simultaneously.

### 1. Addressing individual and household poverty through:

- a. The development of human resources – This refers to the process of building up the capacity of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek people to participate in and contribute to the process of achieving prosperity for all, either as actors on behalf of the First Nation, or as employees and entrepreneurs of viable businesses earning a livelihood for themselves and their families. A sustainable economy is not just about money. It is also about people—the choices people make and the capacities they are able to contribute.
- b. Employment and private business development for individuals and families – Sustainable livelihood for individuals and families is a critical outcome of a successful prosperity development plan and the backbone of any successful economy. This pathway refers to the work of building up the capacity of individuals and small groups for success in employment or business ventures.

### 2. Growing and managing wealth for the First Nation through:

- a. Wealth generation for the First Nation – This refers to the own-source revenue that the First Nation earns through various types of impact benefit agreements, land rents, resource revenue sharing, strategic business partnerships, and the wise investment of these resources to ensure their continued growth and sustainability.
- b. Strategic management of the process of growth through appropriate types of instruments and levels of organization – This is the system management component of our strategy (the brains), consisting of a streamlined and effective business development, financial governance, and integrated management structure, such as a community economic development corporation (or a similar organizational model) that will coordinate and lead all aspects of our strategic prosperity development process.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

1. **We are still living in a third world situation:** Many of our families are living below the poverty line (estimated to be

roughly 70%). Many have a hard time making ends meet.

People on social assistance and other fixed income are especially struggling. For individuals living in poverty, even basic necessities are out of reach. Even those who are among the working poor find the basic cost of living often exceeds their income.

2. **Impacts of poverty:** Poverty is driving some of our people to take desperate measures, such as drug dealing, in order to get by. Poverty is also a significant contributor to the mental health, addictions and even physical health challenges faced by many of our people. Poverty is therefore effectively reducing the potential creativity and productivity of our people. Some just don't have the energy to try. Others have given up hope, and now believe that a better life is just not possible for them.
3. **The lack of affordable housing** is an essential component of the poverty trap that many of our people find themselves stuck in. Such a high proportion of any income they receive has to go to rent that there is almost nothing left to live on.
4. **Barriers to individual and family prosperity** among our people include low levels of education, wellness issues, dependency thinking, and a sheer lack of opportunities such as available jobs, access to training programs, and support for small business development.
5. **No significant help for small business:** The community sees no substantial effort being made to support grassroots people to start or to grow small and medium-sized businesses that could occupy the industrial park, give employment to some people, and enrich the community.
6. **Drawing on the knowledge and strength of successful local entrepreneurs:** Atikameksheng does have a number of small and quite successful businesses, and our local entrepreneurs are passionate about their businesses and about their potential to contribute to real growth in the community. These people are a resource that the whole community needs to learn how to draw upon.
7. **Diversifying small and medium sized business ventures:** There are a lot of smoke shops and a few other businesses, but really not much variety or diversity of entrepreneurial ventures. Why don't we try other things such as a restaurant or coffee shop, a laundry, a daycare, a taxi or bus service, or cultural tourism? There are lots of possibilities. Our people just need encouragement and support, and probably training to help them succeed.
8. **Will the Business Park help local entrepreneurs:** Why is it taking so long for the Business Park to be open for business? Will there be any room for local entrepreneurs in that space?

9. **Taxes for on-Reserve businesses:** Some community members have repeatedly expressed that on-Reserved businesses should be paying taxes to the reserve, and also paying for the utilities and services that they use. Others hold that their rights as Indigenous people mean that they should not be levied taxes. A clear policy on this issue is needed.
10. **Recouping federal taxes paid by our citizens:** Community members believe that it is legally possible for Atikameksheng to receive the tax dollars paid by our members living off reserve, if those members give consent. We should be going ahead and setting up this arrangement.
11. **Fiscal sovereignty:** Our intention is to achieve fiscal sovereignty; i.e., to have enough unencumbered, own-source revenue to be able to invest in our people and future wealth production initiatives as we see fit without interference from government or other sources. Most of the money now received from government sources has very narrow requirements about how the money can be spent, which makes it very difficult for us to independently pursue our own goals using that money. For the long-term healing and development of our people and also weaning ourselves of dependency on government funds, we need to steadily grow our collective income from sources other than government, such as through business partnerships, investments, land rents, resource royalties and our own business operations.
12. **Balancing our need for independent financial resources with the sustainability of our lands:** Our teachings tell us that the source of all wealth is the earth, and that we have been given a stewardship responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of the natural world, particularly within our traditional territory. We always lived from the resources given to us by Mother Earth at the same time as protecting the sustainability of the natural environment in alignment with our sacred teachings and natural law. We are committed to continuing this path, which balances the wellbeing of nature and economic success.
13. **Ensuring that short-term revenue contributes to long-term wealth generation:** We recognize that securing own-source revenue is just the beginning. Impact benefit agreements and royalties will bring short-term income, but not income that is sustainable. We need a strategy for wealth transformation; i.e., by taking short-term temporary income and investing it in such a way that it is transformed into long-term benefits for our people.
14. **Basing our future economic development on our cultural values and identity:** In the past, our people took care of one another. There was no such thing as poverty for some and riches for others. If one family was in need, we all helped

out. If some of us had food, it was shared with everyone. The idea that some people among us could be poor and others not was unknown until the settlers came and we began to change. We need to find ways in these modern times to honour this important cultural principle that has always distinguished us as a people. We recognize that the whole world is struggling with the gaps created by an unjust economic system between those who have and control everything, and those who have little or nothing. We need to think deeply about what kind of economic development we really want. Do we just want to replicate what the wider world is doing in terms of a path for our economic development, or do we want to create something that is uniquely ours, and that is rooted in our sacred teachings that distinguishes us as a people unique from all others? How do we take care of the poor amongst us? How do we achieve economic prosperity for all? How do we do it while at the same time fulfilling our responsibilities to protect Mother Earth?

## Goals and Strategies

### ✔ Goal 1: To significantly reduce, and eventually to end chronic poverty of our individuals and families

#### Strategies

- 1.1. **Create a “LifePath” program and related supports that enable our people to make the journey from chronic poverty to sustainable well-being and prosperity.** The journey from chronic poverty and dependency to sustainable self-reliance has many steps, and they are not all the same because we are all different and have different needs. Building on the success and lessons learned from the Skills Partnership Program, this constellation of programs and services will be woven together, along with appropriate supports, to meet the specific and unique needs of our grassroots community members who are willing to work their way up the ladder toward a more sustainable and prosperous life. Some of the most important steps on this journey for many of our people will include personal counselling and life path planning, personal growth and healing, life skills learning, academic upgrading, built-in incentives to encourage sticking to the path long enough to succeed, family and community support and encouragement, job skills training, connection to employment opportunities, workplace support; and for others, entrepreneurial training, small business development support, access to credit, business incubation, ongoing business coaching, financial management support, etc.

Begin a pilot of this initiative in the very early stages of CCP



implementation, working with those families that express a strong desire to improve their social and economic outcomes. Once this initiative is fully operational, it will be able to support the Life Path journey of our grassroots citizens both on reserve and in population centres where significant numbers of our members reside. (Note: See Annex A for a full description of a generic Lifepath program.)

**1.2 Lifepath program as coordinator and glue.** We recognize that there are many existing programs (both regional Indigenous and urban-based initiatives) doing some of what the Lifepath program sets out to do. We also recognize that there is no single program that combines all the needed elements and sticks with an individual as they make their journey over many long months and even years. This is exactly what the Lifepath initiative will do, wherever it operates. It will provide the glue; i.e., continuity and connections so that an individual can move smoothly through all kinds of program opportunities and to be supported and continuously progressing both during the active periods and the gaps.

**1.3 Support for small and medium-sized business development.** Part of what is required for success in business development is that we create appropriate linkages with existing programs in order to access credit, entrepreneurial training, support for business planning, market assessment, product development, startup incubation, and ongoing small business monitoring and growth. Where programs either are not accessible, effective, or nonexistent, it will be necessary for Atikameksheng to create a program that will meet the need. Above all, it will be critical that the Lifepath team provides continuous support and encouragement in a kind of one-stop shopping arrangement that links clients to the resources they need.

**1.4 Setting goals and measuring progress.** In order to know whether or not, and to what extent, initiatives we undertake are actually helping individuals and families to make their way out of poverty, we have to have accurate data that tells us, for any given time: a) how many of our members are living below the poverty line; b) where each of these individuals or families resides; c) what the impact of poverty is on the wellbeing of these people, including children; and d) any steps now being taken that are likely to lead to progress (i.e., measurable improvements, such as increased income, engagement in training, finding a job or starting a business, etc.). For example, if we say that overall roughly 70% of our people are living at or below the poverty line. How much can we reduce this number in 1-2 years, 5 years, or 10 years?

The following goals are proposed.

- Two years – 5% reduction in the number of individuals or families living in poverty
- Every year after that, an additional 5% reduction

**1.5 Establish an incubator mall for small business development.**

This would be a building containing a number of spaces (for example 12 spaces) that could be occupied by new small businesses struggling to find their feet. The building would have electricity, heat and plumbing. Businesses could operate out of these spaces at a reduced cost as they receive technical support and other kinds of assistance in helping them to develop. Some such programs limit the amount of time a new business can stay in the incubator mall to five years, but during that time, the business is growing and also receiving support, including support to help them establish themselves on their own in another location. Creating serviced lots where local businesses could establish themselves might be a part of this initiative.

**1.6 Link monitoring and evaluation to continuous improvement of performance and outcomes.** We recognize that unless we change what we are now doing along strategic pathways leading to new outcomes, there will be no progress or improvement of outcomes. This will require rigorous measurement, reflection on the results of that measurement, and ongoing training and technical support carried out in very short, iterative loops; i.e., quarterly cycles of planning, action, reflection, and learning; repeated over and over, with the expressed goal of fostering continuous improvement of performance and outcomes.

☑ **Goal 2: To create significant sustainable wealth for our First Nation by establishing a wealth generation engine and acquiring the capabilities and institutional structures needed to effectively sustain, manage and grow our wealth**

**Strategies**

- 2.1 Establish a clear policy for how our own-source revenue (OSR) will be utilized to ensure that a significant proportion (i.e., at least 60%) is invested in such a way that there is a multiplier effect resulting in the net growth of our wealth.** This leaves 40% to address immediate needs. In this way, we will not fall into the trap of spending away the money that we need to invest in order to grow sustainable wealth in the long term. Instead, our wealth will gradually and steadily increase, and we will eventually be able to derive benefits that flow from that wealth.
- 2.2 Establish a Community Development Corporation** to serve at arm's length from our political structures as a sustainable wealth production and wealth management platform.

- The Development Corporation will consist of a highly competent and efficient financial governance and management structure capable of staying on top of a minute-by-minute understanding of the fundamentals of revenue in, expenses out, current balances, anticipated revenues, cash flow, due diligence related to investments, etc.
- The Corporation will be governed by a clearly articulated and agreed-upon vision, mission, values, and appropriate strategies that are guided by culturally grounded and spiritually informed principles
- The Corporation will be responsible for negotiating impact benefit agreements, carrying out due diligence for prospective investments, developing appropriate business partnerships, as well as managing ongoing business ventures and monitoring all current agreements to ensure that terms and conditions are met.
- The Corporation will be able to ensure that all of the strategic pathways that are integral parts of the First Nation's prosperity development strategic plan have adequate human and financial resources for success, are appropriately integrated with each other to form a system of mutual support, and are continuously monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, ongoing learning, and continuous improvement.
- Attached to the Development Corporation, but at arm's length from it, will be a variety of financial instruments such as trust funds to hold and grow wealth, insurance programs to protect the process and the people it serves, as well as special funds for purposes such as education and old-age benefits.
- The governance structure of the Community Development Corporation will include annual rounds of consultation with our citizens, at which in-depth reports are shared about efforts and progress made during the past year, consultation about ongoing plans and processes are held, and new proposals from citizens as well as outside entities are considered. An annual citizen summary report will be prepared that accurately reflects the discussions and consensus in the annual round of consultations.
- As a matter of policy, individuals currently holding positions as members of Chief and Council will not be able to simultaneously hold a seat on the board of the Development Corporation.
- To protect the long-term integrity of our investments, we will establish policy and legislation to guide, secure and ensure safe investment practices and to ensure that a specified portion is set aside for future investment and another portion is set aside for investment in people and community development.

✓ **Goal 3: To ensure that the work of enhancing the prosperity of our community members and that of building the wealth of our First Nation are mutually reinforcing**

## Strategies

- 3.1 Develop a policy for the utilization of the 40% of OSR not designated for investment in wealth generation.** A suggested allocation is as follows.: a) support for programs and initiatives that will enhance sustainable prosperity and wellbeing of Atikameksheng people, including supporting affordable housing, food security, addressing gaps in health services, addressing unfunded educational needs and opportunities, as well as family recreation and other daily living needs; b) support for job readiness and entrepreneurial startups for our members; c) supplementing Atikameksheng administration and program efforts; d) investment in the Nation's business initiatives; etc.
- 3.2 Invest in businesses that will create opportunities for Atikameksheng individuals and families to earn their livelihoods.** This does not preclude investment in other kinds of businesses, but it does suggest that, along with such investments, training and support systems should be provided as a kind of an opportunity on-ramp for our members that would like to be engaged in that business.
- 3.3 Invest in businesses that build on the strengths of our people.** The development of economic opportunities for people requires engaging our people in the search for and development of those opportunities.
- 3.4 In developing joint ventures and IBAs and other partnerships, ensure that, to the extent possible, both Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and our grassroots Atikameksheng people can derive benefit from the agreement.**
- 3.5 Invest in business ventures located in population centres where our people are living,** such as Sudbury and Toronto, so that they can participate directly in these activities.

✓ **Goal 4: To achieve prosperity without compromising the wellbeing and sustainability of the natural world** (in other words, to build our prosperity within a framework of environmental sustainability and in harmony with our traditional knowledge and teachings about the land, which say that all wealth comes from the land, and that our sacred responsibility is to protect the integrity and wellbeing of our mother, the earth)

## Strategies

- 4.1 Establish environmental management standards** to protect the sustainability of the natural environment, and apply those standards in assessing the feasibility of all economic ventures with which Atikameksheng Anishnawbek is in any way associated.
- 4.2 Focus our economic ventures on those which enable us to use green technologies and methodologies,** and conversely to avoid economic ventures that are environmentally unfriendly.



# 5

## Lands and Environmental Stewardship





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- ✓ To map and inventory our traditional territory.  
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  - ✓ To rationalize the Nation's codes and policies related to land use and environmental stewardship and create implementation processes and structures.  
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  - ✓ To create mechanisms to ensure that Atikameksheng benefits equitably from all forestry, mining and other land use activities begin carried out on its traditional territory.
- ✓ To work with the Provincial Government and other regulatory bodies to ensure that their policies fully support Indigenous land rights and adopt environmental stewardship practices that align with Indigenous knowledge and values.  
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  - ✓ To fully resource a Lands and Environmental Stewardship department/program.  
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  - ✓ To create a lands and environment related communication strategy.

## Definition

Ethical stewardship of the lands and natural environment within our traditional territory is inseparably linked to our understanding of Natural Law as given to us by the Creator and to our core identity as Indigenous people. Fundamentally, we understand that human beings, like all living things, are part of the natural world and not separate from it. Ultimately, the land is our Mother. She has given us everything we have ever needed to survive and prosper. It is our spiritual responsibility to treat her with profound respect and to protect her from harm. This means that we have a sacred duty to take care of our lands and to use our natural resources conscientiously to ensure that the way of life of the current generation does not harm or diminish the capacity of the land to meet the needs of future generations. At the same time, we continually seek ways of sustainably utilizing the gifts our Mother gives us for the prosperity and wellbeing of our people.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

1. Atikameksheng Anishnawbek is richly endowed with good land that includes forests, lakes, plants for medicine and gathering of traditional food—plenty of land for our use into the foreseeable future.
2. There's a lot of community tension around the issue of land-use, however. Participants feel that current policies don't allow members to use the land so that it could benefit them.
3. At the same time, we see some of our prime land going to loggers and leases to private businesses or non-member individuals.
4. Community members feel they are not receiving enough information to understand what is going on with land management. Why are decisions being made as they are? What are the rules? What are the policies? These things are not at all clear to the public. Much more transparent communication is needed.
5. There are some obvious land-use and environmental issues. For example, loggers and some community businesses are not paying fees associated with their work, our dumpsite is already overcapacity, and non-bandmembers are illegally dumping.
6. Right now, the administration does not have enough human resources to do the job that needs to be done. What is needed is a full department of qualified professional staff.
7. There is big need for Chief and Council to work in a transparent and collaborative way with community members to establish a workable land-use plan. What is needed is a land-use plan which includes policies, rules, environmental regulations, monitoring procedures and consequences for rule breaking. Everyone would then have to follow this plan, including Chief and Council.
8. Our environmental management plan is in draft form and has not been updated since 2014.
9. We voted on a Land Code in 2008 that applies to our Reserve

lands. There is a Land Code committee that is working through the process of implementing this Code.

10. Our traditional values mapping project is doing GIS mapping and is conducting interviews with our members about land use.
11. Our forest management plan is finalized and is in the process of being implemented. Our environmental management plan is currently in draft.
12. There is lots of activity on our traditional lands with respect to mining. Each of these ongoing plans, permits and claims are being mapped on our land. We work with the proponents to see how we are going to benefit (e.g., through revenue sharing or employment opportunities). We currently have 7 or 8 agreements. We have a small committee that looks at the agreements that come before us. We link our work to the values mapping project so that we know what the current land use of our members is. We also have a public consultation process. Further, we are currently working on an aggregate and mineral policy to guide all this activity in the future.
13. Our Moose Project started in April 2019 in the reserve boundary lands under a climate change program to identify the impact of climate change on the moose population (moose population health and adaptation strategies).
14. The Land Department is responsible for monitor the 89 25-year leases on Lake Panache. These lease agreements were negotiated with the "Ojibway Road Campers' Association" (retroactive to April 2010) and replace the previous lease administered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

## Goals and Strategies

- ✓ **Goal 1: To map and inventory our traditional territory; specifically, to create a detailed map of the topography, as well as our traditional economic, social and cultural uses of the land, and including land-use activities being carried out by external agents**

### Strategies

- 1.1 **Data gathering mechanisms:** Utilize a combination of community-based research and consultation, guardianship expeditions, expert testimony, satellite imagery and GPS mapping.
- 1.2 **Carry out this mapping project in stages,** so that even after the first stage, a reasonably accurate map showing the general shape of the territory and its boundaries, as well as important ongoing activities, is completed, and with each successive stage, more and better information is added to refine the map.
- 1.3 **Develop or adopt a database** that can easily incorporate new information supplied by community members (e.g. images of activity occurring on traditional land captured by cell phones by hunters or individuals carrying out other traditional land use activities).



✓ **Goal 2: To rationalize the Nation's codes and policies related to land use and environmental stewardship and create implementation processes and structures**

**Strategies**

- 2.1 **Cultural foundations:** Hold a community consultation process and interviews with key knowledge holders to create a statement of values and principles that provide the foundation for all Atikameksheng land use and environmental stewardship legislation and practices, perhaps stated in the form of guiding principles.
- 2.2 **Carry out a review of the Land Code** (which applies to Reserve lands) that was ratified in 2008 to determine which changes, if any, need to be made and then create a comprehensive implementation plan, including clear monitoring processes.
- 2.3 **Carry out a review of the Environmental Management Plan** to determine which changes, if any, need to be made and then create a comprehensive implementation plan with clear policies and processes for handling violations both on reserve land and in our traditional territory.
- 2.4 In the long term, **establish an Environmental Review Board** at arm's length from elected officials to review and oversee environmental decision-making.
- 2.5 **Create a guardianship program** that ensures that environmental protection standards are being complied with by all land users, including Atikameksheng members, the Nation as a whole, and outside resource extraction industries. This program could become part of a student summer internship program.
- 2.6 **Ensure that the Forestry Management Plan has a systematic implementation plan** are applied to forestry activities both on reserve lands and in our traditional territory and that this plan aligns with the updated Environmental Management Plan
- 2.7 **Compliance of mining activities:** Ensure that Land Use and Environmental Management plans are applied to the activities of the mining sector within Atikameksheng traditional territory.

✓ **Goal 3: To create mechanisms to ensure that Atikameksheng benefits equitably from all forestry, mining and other land use activities being carried out on its traditional territory**

**Strategies**

- 3.1 **Carry out a best practice survey of benefit agreements** negotiated between First Nations and industries operating in their traditional territory, with emphasis on northern Ontario cases, but covering best practice across the country.
- 3.2 **Develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for benefit agreements** on the basis of this best practice review that can be used to enter into agreements with industry partners.
- 3.3 **Ensure that the human resources are in place** to ensure that benefit agreements are aligned with Atikameksheng stewardship

principles, are also in our best long-term economic interest, and are complied with as agreed.

✓ **Goal 4: To work with the Provincial Government and other regulatory bodies to ensure that their policies fully support Indigenous land rights and adopt environmental stewardship practices that align with Indigenous knowledge and values**

**Strategies**

- 4.1 **Engage with the Provincial Government** in dialogue about issues that are impacting the capacity of Atikameksheng to fully implement and monitor its land use codes and environmental stewardship policies
- 4.2 **Support the work of regional Indigenous organizations** that are actively working to ensure that Provincial Government land use and environmental protection policies protect the rights of First Nations and stewardship values and practices they honour.

✓ **Goal 5: To fully resource a Lands and Environmental Stewardship department/program** (Note: Whether the Lands and Environmental Stewardship portfolio remain part of the Planning and Infrastructure Development Department or not, it will require a full complement of staff with expertise in the development and implementation of Codes, the development and monitoring of equitable impact benefit agreements and partnerships with private sector partners, sector (e.g. forestry and mining) management, negotiating with government partners, and managing specific guardianship and mapping projects.)

**Strategies**

- 5.1 **Develop a short- and medium-term human resource plan and identify funding sources** (government programs, own-source revenue from benefit agreements, etc.) for covering the costs of this expanded staff positions

✓ **Goal 6: To create a lands and environment related communication strategy that ensures that community members have access to information related to policy, codes, procedures, and status of ongoing processes**



**Strategies**

- 6.1 **Create a regular feature in the community newsletter** that highlights new developments related to land use and environmental stewardship issues, policies, and implementation actions.
- 6.2 **Compile a user-friendly guide related to land use and environmental stewardship documents, policies and legislation** that can guide ongoing work as well as provide accessibility to all community members.

# 6

## Life-Long Learning



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- ✔ To establish an Atikameksheng language, culture and history learning initiative to serve the needs of all citizens regardless of where they live as well as the programs and services of the Nation
  - ✔ To prepare Atikameksheng learners to be free of dependency and ready, willing and able to contribute through participation in employment, business and community service
  - ✔ To build the capacity of leaders, staff and active community volunteers to

contribute to Atikameksheng's community development and nation-building aspirations

- ✔ To develop an Atikameksheng "public service school" that will systematically build the skills of administration and program staff to implement the goals of the CCP
- ✔ To create a learning program for the new Daycare Centre that will provide a solid foundation in early childhood development based on Atikameksheng language and culture

## Definition

Life-long learning refers to the opportunities that Atikameksheng Anishnawbek members have to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to live healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives. This theme recognizes that learning happens at all stages of the life cycle from childhood to elderhood. It also acknowledges the value of supporting all members of the community to develop their gifts so as to enrich their personal lives, to contribute to the richness of family and community life and to achieve career aspirations. In keeping with the above definition, this Chapter reflects on the important goals before the Atikameksheng community related to early childhood development; schooling in the primary to secondary grades; formal (e.g. accredited) adult education, including literacy, up-grading, post-secondary and job skills courses; and a broad range of community informal learning opportunities that enhance life skills, social and recreational life, cultural knowledge and identity, as well as family and community life.

In practice, life-long learning can be thought of in terms of four interconnected fields of activity:

1) early childhood learning and education, 2) primary and secondary schooling, 3) post-secondary education and employment training, and 4) non-formal learning for life (self-improvement, family life, cultural foundations, community development, etc.).

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

1. **Daycare:** There is very broad consensus in the community that a daycare is a top priority. This facility would fill an urgent need for child care for working parents and also ensure that the children who attend this facility receive support for health, culturally informed early childhood development.
2. **Primary and secondary school-based programs that support healthy personal and cultural identity:** Although some of the schools which Atikameksheng children and youth attend are making efforts to provide learning experiences that include Ojibwe language learning options and the inclusion of some information about Indigenous history and culture, much more could be done. As well, some of the schools in urban centres where our members live may not adequately recognize the cultural background of these students.
3. **Special education needs of Atikameksheng primary and secondary school students:** Too many Atikameksheng children and youth are struggling because of challenges within their family and community life and because of their own mental health issues. One area that requires strengthening is the gathering of data about student learning and related support

needs and the effectiveness of current strategies in addressing those needs. There is also no systematic process in place for supporting Atikameksheng students and their parents who live in urban centres.

4. **K – 12 Education Program:** This education program of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek currently manages tuition agreements and school bus transportation. It also advocates with school boards to ensure that support services for our students and parents will foster success for students. Education Support Workers are an important part of a comprehensive strategy for addressing the learning needs of our students.
5. **Post-secondary education:** Like other First Nations, Atikameksheng administers post-secondary funding for its members according to eligibility criteria and funding deadlines.
6. **Youth Centre and Program:** The on-reserve community has a youth centre and child and youth program targeting individuals between 7 and 21 years of age. The Youth Centre is open evenings and weekends. This is a wonderful strength. A challenge for some children and youth is the lack of public transportation that will allow them to participate.
7. **On-the-land activities:** The youth program cannot fill all the learning needs of our youth. Many more adults need to step up to mentor youth, especially with on-the-land activities that teach traditional life skills and that reinforce positive personal and cultural identity. Also critical is strengthening the relationships between children and youth and Elders. This will provide benefits





for children and youth who can learn so much from the wisdom of the Elders, and well as for the Elders who need more opportunities to assume their traditional roles in family and community life. As well, those Elders who are isolated and who would welcome some practical support such as snow shovelling would benefit from this type of support from youth.

8. During the Atikameksheng Community Story process, members described learning needs in a number of areas such as:

- language
- history
- cultural knowledge and practices
- traditional skills
- academic upgrading to improve functional literacy and numeracy and promote eligibility for post-secondary education opportunities
- healing and wellness related knowledge and skills
- job skills,
- entrepreneurship
- healthy relationships
- parenting

Some of these topics are being covered through existing program offerings. For example, the Skills and Partnership Program is an environmental training and development program that aims to increase the employability of Indigenous women and youth in Atikameksheng and surrounding Indigenous communities in the Greater Sudbury area. There are also programs within the Health and the Education and Social Services Departments.

There are some duplication and gaps in these non-formal education offerings.

9. Some Elders feel that they lost their language and traditional cultural knowledge through the residential school system and other colonizing processes and they would like the opportunity to regain what they have lost.
10. Band staff have also identified some learning needs, including community development, research, monitoring and evaluation, and program planning that responds to community needs rather than the funding criteria of outside agencies.
11. Some learning needs identified by Atikameksheng governance and management systems include developing a strategy for identifying and reaching Atikameksheng membership living in urban centres, incorporating cultural knowledge and practices into governance systems and services, and developing agreements with federal and provincial funding sources that address community identified

needs rather than allowing external criteria to dominate the design and implementation of learning programs.

## Goals and Strategies

- ✔ **Goal 1: To establish an Atikameksheng language, culture and history learning initiative to serve the needs of all citizens regardless of where they live as well as the programs and services of the Nation**

### Strategies

- 1.1 Create an integrated strategy for language learning that can be implemented through the offerings of all program initiatives that currently work in this area.
- 1.2 Ensure that the community Day Care, which will be established during this CCP timeframe, has a full language immersion component that draws on best practice research and community consultation to ensure the most effective program possible.
- 1.3 Place a language learning team in the Atikameksheng Cultural Centre that could include such personnel as an Anishinaabemowin language learning specialist, a cultural and historical research specialist and sever curriculum writers. Part of the work of this team will be to research the best language learning programs already available from other sources and incorporate them into the language programs offered in our community.
- 1.4 Develop agreements with the schools that Atikameksheng children and youth attend related to the offering of language programs and provide them with the materials developed by the language learning team.
- 1.5 Develop and test a curriculum focused on learning: a) how we lived before contact (i.e. pre-contact Anishnawbek culture, lifeways, knowledge, values, stories, traditional ceremonies, cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge); b) the history and impact of contact, especially the story of how Atikameksheng Anishnawbek individuals and the community as a whole were impacted by historical loss, trauma and abuse, and also showing the rise of Indigenous rights and the Aboriginal healing movement, which together show pathways out of present dilemmas and into sustainable wellbeing. Collaborate with other North Shore Ojibwe communities, many of which have similar needs and goals, to maximize the impacts of available resources.

The goals for all this learning will include: a) re-establishing

Anishnawbek identity and pride in our people, and especially in the younger generations; b) connecting our community development and governance processes to our cultural values foundation; and c) providing guidance and important cultural information to inform community development and our programs related to education, health and wellness, social development, economic prosperity, the management of lands and the environment, and governance development.

✓ **Goal 2: To prepare Atikameksheng learners to be free of dependency and ready, willing and able to contribute through participation in employment, business and community service**

This goal focuses on the world of work, and on the preparation of Atikameksheng community members to be independent, self-reliant and adequately prepared for employment or business. It entails shifting deeply rooted community dependency thinking and interrupting intergenerational patterns. We are well aware that facilitating such a shift cannot be done through education alone, and also that no single Atikameksheng agency can do all that needs to be done to affect such a level of change. This section focuses on specific initiatives lifelong learning can contribute.

## Strategies

### 1.1 Develop and implement a “Lifepath Development Program”

in a collaboration between the Economic Development, Health and Wellness and Education and Social Services Departments. This program is focused on social assistance recipients, as well as any other community members who want to learn, and entails a journey of self-improvement, leading to increased independence, self-confidence and self-reliance.

The education component of this program entails a cross-over between counseling and personal growth, classroom learning, real-world work placement, and extensive and continuous social support. From the standpoint of the program as experienced by participants, the following elements need to be addressed or built into the front-line program:

- a. personal Lifepath planning
- b. healing and personal growth opportunities
- c. learning about culture, history and identity
- d. membership in a “core group” that bonds/grows together and mutually supports one another on the journey
- e. life skills training
- f. basic education opportunities (literacy and numeracy)
- g. an incentive system, involving income subsidization and t

- op-offs as a reward for progress
- h. job skills training
- i. work experience and apprenticeship
- j. exposure to entrepreneurship and small business training and experience
- k. exposure to real employment and business opportunities
- l. long-term support (3-5 years) through ongoing core group cohorts that continue to meet and receive program support as well as extended financial incentives
- m. personal counseling and employment services
- n. involvement and support for participants’ families in the growth process

This weaving together of many combined but separate program streams will come about by drawing on existing programs, no matter who is offering them, filling in gaps where there is no existing program, and (most important) maintaining coherent coordination between the many separate initiatives and the core program, which will act rather like the hub of a wheel that has many spokes.

Such a program will take in cohorts of 20-30 participants, who will attend a day program for at least a one-year period. A series of classroom courses interspersed with experiential immersion opportunities and ongoing counseling and coaching will be integrated into the program. The lifepath program will require a dedicated team leader and at least one full-time adult educator per cohort.

### 2.2 Comprehensive public education and communication

**campaign:** To change public thinking surrounding dependency, and to create a receptive climate for moving the community from dependency to self-reliance:

- a. A comprehensive public education, communication and engagement strategy focused on: a) influencing the public mind to shift from dependency and entitlement thinking to a shared consensus valuing self-reliance, community service and mutual care for those who need it; b) providing a clear understanding of what the journey is from poverty and dependency to self-reliance and prosperity (i.e., a vision of what it takes to succeed) with communication oriented to school children and youth as well as to the community; c) educating community members about the practical steps they can take for self and family improvement; and d) engaging community members in co-learning and action strategies leading to improved levels of personal, family and community wellbeing.
- b. Begin the public communication campaign at the school level with a strong emphasis on the importance of staying in school. Help young people to develop a positive vision for themselves, so they can “see” possibilities for themselves and their own



future. As part of this initiative, develop a junior business program through which young people can get hands-on experience building a business and making money.

- c. Develop community consensus on traditional values and principles to guide the journey to prosperity. In this regard the importance of understanding how colonization has impacted all of us, and what it means to have a “decolonized mind” will be important, as well as learning the critical role of such core values as respect for all, courage and kindness, and how these can create the enabling environment needed for success for all of our people.

Note: Many of the initiatives within this plan will require a communication strategy that outreaches to the public (both on the reserve and in other centres where Atikameksheng members live). This work requires Atikameksheng communication staff to help create public communication strategies. In order to address this, the communication specialist will need to work with professional teams to help them get their key messages out in ways that can be readily absorbed by the target audience

- ✔ **Goal 3: To build the capacity of leaders, staff and active community volunteers to contribute to Atikameksheng’s community development and nation-building aspirations**

#### Strategies

- 3.1 Learning is a key driver of change. For this reason, it will be important to develop a modularized training program that includes themes such as the following: a) personal wellness and development, b) healthy relationships in the family,



community and workplace, c) understanding community development tools, d) building program development from the ground up, e) community engagement and facilitation skills, and f) small business development.

- 3.2 Establish “core groups” of the course participants who will “learn by doing”, that is, who will take on specific community development challenges for which they have a passion on a volunteer basis

- ✔ **Goal 4: To develop an Atikameksheng “School of Public Service” that will systematically build the skills of administration and program staff to implement the goals of the CCP**

#### Strategies

- 4.1 Carry out a learning needs assessment among the administration and program staff to identify key topics, such as participatory research and program monitoring and evaluation skill.
- 4.2 Include learning components designed to decrease lateral violence in the workplace.
- 4.3 Assign a designated professional learning coordinator to the Human Resource Department.
- 4.4 Schedule at least quarterly training sessions that address identified professional development needs.

- ✔ **Goal 5: To create a learning program for the new Daycare Centre that will provide a solid foundation in early childhood development based on Atikameksheng language and culture**

#### Strategies

- 5.1 Conduct research designed to identify best practice related to early childhood education programs in Indigenous communities
- 5.2 Ensure that the Daycare is staffed with individuals with a strong background in early childhood development, as well as in Anishnawbek culture and values.



# 7

## Infrastructure Development and Management



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- ✓ To develop a 40-year infrastructure capital plan
  - ✓ To increase public safety in the community
  - ✓ To strengthen the financial and human resource capacity of the public works department
  - ✓ To develop a 30-year housing strategy/plan

- ✓ To ensure that emergency response measures are effective
- ✓ To develop long-term infrastructure plans for off-reserve community hubs
- ✓ To communicate regularly and effectively with community members about infrastructure planning and implementation processes

## Definition

Infrastructure refers to the facilities and systems that support the community's basic operations and functions. This can include a whole range of amenities such as housing, public buildings, roads, waste handling facilities, water and sewage systems, electrical power generation and distribution, public transportation systems, emergency service vehicles and equipment, and high-speed Internet access.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

### Public Works

1. The **public works program** is responsible for maintaining Band buildings and constructing new facilities, road building and maintenance, waste management, utilities, and emergency services.
2. **Road maintenance** is generally very well managed through snow ploughing in winter and regular grading the rest of the year.
3. **Solid waste** is being managed at the community dump, which is gated to control access. There is some sorting of waste for recycling purpose. The community is generally litter free.
4. Each house has its own septic system, and many of these are old and need to be renewed. An application has been submitted for the funding to renew aging septic beds. The new Business Park is on the Sudbury sewer system.
5. The cost of Ontario Hydro is approximately \$2,300/month just for the Band office. Clearly, it could be beneficial to create lower cost and greener alternatives. To that end, Atikameksheng is researching options for moving toward **greater self-sufficiency with respect to energy**, including solar, wind, water, and geo-thermal options.
6. The **Atikameksheng Solar Park** sells power to the grid and the revenue thus generated is currently targeted to paying for the cost of developing this facility. A long-term plan for this facility is needed.
7. Public works does not have sufficient **human resources** (e.g. admin assistant, an asset/property manager for all Band buildings (including the Business Park), wastewater and water technicians, and additional staff for the maintenance of both roads and Band buildings.
8. **We have outgrown our Band office.** Expanding the existing building or constructing a new Band office are both being considered.
9. Some major renovations have been completed on the **Community Centre** (new roof, siding, boiler system and A/C units, and a new sound system has been budgeted for).
10. A **Daycare** facility is considered an urgent priority by the community.
11. **Other public facilities** that are being considered include an

Elders Lodge, a Sweat Lodge, a Cultural Centre, a Child and Youth Centre (which could include the Daycare), and an outdoor covered skating rink.

12. **Additional wellness facilities** could include a detox/treatment centre (that could also serve other Indigenous people in the region, including Atikameksheng members living in Sudbury); an extended care facility, a foster care facility that would shelter children who are currently unable to be cared for by their parents, and a women's centre/shelter (which could be in the same building as the foster care facility).
13. Not all our public facilities are accessible for people with mobility issues. This limits their participation in community life, because some doorways aren't big enough for wheelchairs or there are no ramps leading up to doorways. Last winter, one of our Elders fell and cut his head because of this. This should never happen.
14. A plan is needed for the Wolchuk property to determine the infrastructure that will be needed for its Intended use. (It has been suggested, for example, that this site would be appropriate for an extended care facility or some type of tourism centre.
15. The first structure of the Business Park is currently almost completed with Nogdawindimin committed as an anchor tenant. The second lot will be developed when a tenant has been identified.
16. The question is being raised by community members about whether the Business Park will include facilities for local businesses and an incubation centre for new small business start-ups.
17. We need better transparency about how our infrastructure funds are being used. Many of our members don't know how much funding there is for infrastructure, and what it is being used for.
18. Atikameksheng has an emergency response plan and trained personnel able to implement it.
19. We have a GIS system but has fallen into disuse, and needs to be populated with the location of all existing infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity etc. North Shore Tribal Council has offered to help with this project.

### Housing

20. There is a Housing Committee that is working to review housing policies and procedures.
21. We have 56 rental units and 39 certificate of possession units. There are about 52 Section 95 units. CMHC's Section 95 provides guaranteed loans to build, buy or renovate non-profit rental housing in First Nation communities.
22. We recently got a new subdivision that is very beautiful, but it is not sufficient to meet our housing needs.



23. More housing is urgently needed. Far too many people are living in overcrowded conditions. Suitable land for building more houses needs to be identified.
24. At the time of the writing of this CCP, there were about 50 people on a waiting list for rental housing. This is a low estimate, for reasons stated below.
25. Our homelessness study is outdated, so we don't really know how many of our members are homeless.
26. There are also no accurate statistics about how many members might want to move into the Atikameksheng community if enough housing were available, but it is believed that there are some that would.
27. Some of the Band housing has problems with mold and other health issues.
28. Although progress is being made, the Housing Department is still struggling with high rates of rental arrears. The precise figures for this need to be incorporated into a comprehensive housing development plan.
29. There is no budget to support renovation and maintenance on privately owned homes. This is a problem because most of our members are living below the poverty line and cannot afford necessary upkeep and repairs.
30. We are an aging population, which means there is an increasing need for seniors housing that can accommodate the changing needs of elders as they age.
31. There is no comprehensive housing strategy that takes all the above factors into account.
32. The Housing Department has gained some human resources and now has a full-time housing assistant and a housing asset maintenance person. There are also some interns working with this Department.
33. We do not have a comprehensive plan for housing for seniors, in part because we do not know what their needs and housing preferences are.
34. The Nation also needs to develop a policy and plan related to supporting housing for our members who live in places like Sudbury and Toronto.
35. A comprehensive housing plan is needed that looks carefully at a variety of models: transition housing, family clusters, senior housing (clustered), homes suited for fostering, rental housing, rent-to-own housing, privately owned housing, etc.

## Goals and Strategies

- ✔ **Goal 1: To develop a 40-year infrastructure capital plan that sets goals and identifies funding for new construction as well as ongoing maintenance and upkeep or current infrastructure in a phased process of growth consisting of five-year plans between the years 2010 and 2050 and create a companion capital plan**

### Strategies

1.1 An important part of our Infrastructure Capital Plan will be an Assets Management Plan that anticipates repairs and maintenance needs on all public buildings (such as the need for a new roof, new flooring, new furnace system, etc.). Also, as part of this plan, we will identify funding for the infrastructure priorities identified in the community story and CCP process which includes the following:

- a daycare facility (which could be a part of a new Child and Youth Centre);
- an Elders Lodge (which could be part of a new extended care facility that serves Atikameksheng Anishnawbek as well as other Indigenous people in the area);
- a Cultural Centre;
- a foster care facility that could also house a women's centre/shelter;
- an outdoor covered skating rink;
- a public works garage that is more central to the community;



- a new Band office or a renovation of and extension to the existing facility;
- bypass road from business Park to the landfill site;
- tourism area with a hotel;
- splash pad for the outdoor rink;
- separate entry to the business Park from Highway 55; and
- streetlights on the corner entering the reserve and Business Park.

1.2 Prepare a financial and design plan for a community sewer system.

1.3 Research “green” energy options for all new Band building to reduce reliance on Ontario Hydro, and create a plan for implementing the best option.



1.4 Make and implement a plan for the development of the Wolchuk property.

1.5 Review the three staged plan for developing the business park annually to ensure that its implementation is still feasible under current conditions, and also that the business Park is contributing to social good, for example by providing incubation space for new community small businesses or employment for people by giving space to band-owned enterprises.

1.6 Develop a capital plan that anticipates the cost of new construction year by year as well as the cost of the upkeep and maintenance of all public facilities at least 5 years in advance so that plans can be made that accommodate the lag in receiving any funding grants available from government.

## ☑ Goal 2: To increase public safety in the community

### Strategies

- 2.1 Carry out a property and public safety audit in the community that focuses on preventing vandalism, increasing safety for people as they move about the community, and improving accessibility for individuals with mobility issues.
- 2.2 Create a phased plan for addressing the issues identified in the audit (e.g. improving lighting, building sidewalks, building wheelchair ramps and ensuring that washrooms and doorways in public buildings can accommodate wheelchairs, etc.).

## ☑ Goal 3: To strengthen the financial and human resource capacity of the public works department

### Strategies

- 3.1 Carry out a human resource needs assessment for the public works department. Anticipated needs include an administrative assistant, and assets manager for all public buildings (including the Business Park), wastewater and water technicians and more staff for the maintenance of both roads and Band buildings.
- 3.2 Create a phased plan for bringing these new staff on board and identify the financial resources needed to do so (e.g. through a share of the revenue from the Business Park, own-source revenue, government funding programs, etc.).

## ☑ Goal 4: To develop a 30-year housing strategy/plan

### Strategies

- 4.1 Taking into account probable future land tenure policies, prepare a housing needs assessment that identifies both immediate and anticipated needs looking at a 10-, 20- and 30-year horizon.
- 4.2 Research green/sustainable housing construction and energy options and develop a made-in-Atikameksheng code that emphasizes green construction.
- 4.3 Carry out a community consultation (design charette) to generate ideas for housing options to address the identified needs (e.g. cluster housing, high density options, housing for single people, senior's housing, multi-generational housing, rental housing, rent-to-own housing, private ownership, approaches to incorporating cultural design features, etc.).
- 4.4 Create a plan for reducing reliance on Ontario Hydro that investigates strategies for introducing green/sustainable options into all new housing as well as retrofitting existing housing.
- 4.5 Prepare an assessment of housing maintenance needs and



prepare a plan for carrying out needed repairs, not only for current needs, but on an ongoing basis.

- 4.6 Implement an ongoing communication strategy to educate Atikameksheng Anishnawbek about the housing strategy, about current initiatives, and about their responsibilities as renters and home owners.
- 4.7 Prepare a housing needs assessment for Atikameksheng Anishnawbek living in centres like Toronto and Sudbury. This would identify the homeless population, people living in substandard or overcrowded housing or in housing that costs more than 30% of the monthly income, as well as individuals who would like to purchase housing but are unable to secure a loan to make a down payment. It would also look at special housing needs such as transitional housing and rent-to-own social housing.
- 4.8 Create a housing support plan to address the needs identified in 4.7 above. This plan could include purchasing or leasing an apartment building or houses that would be available for rent to Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, and/or a special loan fund for households who want to purchase housing.
- 4.9 Develop policies and concrete plans to support the housing needs of seniors as they age with a focus on keeping them in their homes as long as possible by providing necessary supports, retrofits, access ramps, etc.
- 4.10 Develop policies and strategies to support the needs of homeowners on-reserve, many of whom are living below the poverty line in aging properties that need repair, maintenance and upkeep.
- 4.11 Investigate the feasibility of the current housing committee gradually evolving toward becoming an independent housing authority that operates at arm's length from Chief and Council and Atikameksheng administration.

#### ☑ **Goal 5: To ensure that emergency response measures are effective**

##### **Strategies**

- 5.1 Under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer, conduct an annual review of Atikameksheng's emergency response plan and procedures to ensure that they always reflect current conditions.
- 5.2 Ensure that all partner agencies are kept up to date on this emergency response plan, that their contact information is up to date, and that appropriate agreements and protocols are in place.

5.3 Carry out annual emergency response simulations to test the procedures.

5.4 Prepare an emergency response information package that is distributed to all households and program services in the community.

#### ☑ **Goal 6: To develop long-term infrastructure plans for off-reserve community hubs such as Sudbury and perhaps Toronto that emerge from community consultation and ongoing activities in the lives of those communities**

##### **Strategies**

- 6.1 Utilizing the principle that "form follows function", the growth of these infrastructure plans needs to be anchored in local community development activities and the needs that the community identifies that flow from them. A viable short-term plan might see facility rentals for community gatherings once a month and smaller activities twice a month. A longer-term plan might be to purchase a building that could support itself through various commercial uses and at the same time provide needed space for the community. Each local situation will be different and will continue to evolve as the community develops.

#### ☑ **Goal 7: To communicate regularly and effectively with community members about infrastructure planning and implementation processes**


##### **Strategies**

- 7.1 Hold regular community consultation process to collect data for needs assessment processes whenever new projects are being considered. Special design charrettes will give community members the opportunity to share their ideas about innovative ways to create new facilities.
- 7.2 Create a communication strategy to provide regular information about progress on infrastructure development and maintenance projects, as well as information about how projects are being funded.

# 8

## Governance



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- ✔ To fully implement our Anishnawbe value that the purpose and primary focus of our governance system is to guide and support the journey of our people into sustainable well-being and prosperity
  - ✔ To create a truly participatory governance system in which every citizen, no matter where they live, can have a meaningful voice in influencing and guiding our collective decision-making
  - ✔ To implement legislation to strengthen and re-Indigenize our governance system
  - ✔ To gradually reclaim our traditional governance values, principles and

practices within a de-colonized governance structure of our own making.

- ✔ To create a political culture within our community animated by love, encouragement and mutual support between community and leadership, and characterized by behaviours such as respect, honesty and service above self.
- ✔ Our political leadership will be assertive in standing up for our rights in terms of getting our fair share from economic activities taking place on our traditional lands, including holding Canada and Ontario responsible or upholding our rights under the law

## Definition

Governance refers to the leadership and management components of community decision making (including processes of grassroots community engagement in the governance process); as well as the oversight of various funds and resources of the First Nation; the protocols, processes and rules by which that leadership and management takes place; and the prevailing policies, priorities, activities and working culture created by those entrusted with governance positions.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Community Story situation and needs assessment process and other meetings related to community planning held on reserve, in Toronto and in Sudbury, as well as analysis provided by staff and leadership during the Rapid Review of Capacity study completed in the early stages of the planning process, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that Atikameksheng Anishnawbek needs to address related to governance.

1. **The political culture of the community is changing.** The current Chief and Council have made significant efforts to inform, communicate to and directly consult community members in order to bring them into the centre of the governance process.
2. **Nevertheless, there is a long legacy of political leadership operating in isolation from the community that has left behind trust issues, both**

between community members and leadership and between administration and program staff, and leadership. These issues are being worked on, but it will take time, patience and goodwill on everyone's part in order to create the ideal relationships everyone wants.

3. **There is still a significant number of community members who do not feel included** in the governance process and are not being reached by the outreach efforts through Facebook, flyers, online newsletters and regular meetings currently happening.
4. **Some citizens feel alienated.** Some citizens who live in centres other than the reserve feel that the only time they are needed or consulted is when it's time to vote.
5. **Barriers to feelings of inclusion and participatory governance still exist in the way we do things.** One of them is related to the complaints process. Recently a formal system was initiated requiring people to write down their complaints on a form and submit them in advance of speaking at open Band meetings. Some people don't want to bring their complaints to public meetings and don't want to have to write something down. They just want to be able to talk person-to-person to their elected leadership in an informal way. It seems to some community members that leadership and senior administration are not open to hearing questions and concerns in a non-judgmental way.
6. **There is a need for political leadership to bring themselves much closer to the people,** to take the people into their confidence and to truly listen to them and talk with them; i.e., to be in constant dialogue with them.
7. **We have moved far away from our traditional values, principles and practices.** We need to decolonize our government system. Some of the features of that traditional system that we need to bring back include the following.
  - Every person had a voice through family-based and clan consultation.
  - Traditional governance was not something only the leaders did. Everyone had roles and responsibilities to play in governance.
  - There was a close connection between traditional governance and our traditional spiritual beliefs and values such as the Seven Grandfather Teachings that were used to guide our interactions with each other. They were the ground rules; i.e., the behavioral code that insured that we remain unified, respectful and effective in our governance.
  - There was a strong role for women, and especially elder women, in our governance processes.
  - Decision-makers did not isolate themselves from the people in their process of making decisions. They consulted constantly, and also received and carefully considered the counsel of wise elders and spiritual guides.





- Decisions were made collectively on the basis of consensus. There was no top-down, autocratic decision-making.
  - The prime value was the good of all. Every individual was cherished and valued, but not at the expense of the good of the whole community.
  - Leadership took many different forms. Those who were knowledgeable, skilled and experienced in a particular area were recognized as leaders for that particular area.
  - Traditional leadership rallied the energy, intelligence and skills of the collective for the common good, guided by consensus.
  - No important decisions were ever taken without asking for guidance from the ancestors, spirit guides, and the Creator, usually through prayer and ceremony.
  - Leadership was about service above self and not ever about personal gain or notoriety. Because every individual was a contributor to the traditional governance system, everyone had to prepare themselves for a life of service and of putting the community first and self second.
8. **In the recent past, our political system became quite hierarchical, sometimes top-down, autocratic and disconnected from the community.** Sometimes there was conflict and negativity that paralyzed the Council's functioning and turned much of the attention and energy inward. We believe that for the most part, these behaviours were rooted in the learned behaviours from our families created by intergenerational trauma, loss and change. Some of these interaction patterns included suspicion, fear, mistrust, manipulation, lateral violence, putdowns, and other hurtful behaviour.
  9. **Since this kind of somewhat dysfunctional political culture has been prevalent in our very recent past, we know that it could come back again** if we don't consciously decide to change how we do things and then systematically work together for continuous improvement.
  10. It's important to recognize that despite the fact that there were problems in recent times, **past Chiefs and Councils worked hard to bring good things to the community, and they were often successful in doing so.**

## Goals and Strategies

- ✓ **Goal 1: To fully implement our Anishnawbe value that the purpose and primary focus of our governance system is to guide and support the journey of our people into sustainable wellbeing and prosperity**

### Strategies

- 1.1 **To develop a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP)** with a 10-15-year horizon rooted in extensive community consultation and consensus about long-term goals and objectives,
- 1.2 **To align the strategic plans of Chief and Council, as well as administration and all programs, with the goals and strategies of the current Comprehensive Community Plan.**
- 1.3 **To work collaboratively with administration and programs and to provide leadership in the implementation of the Comprehensive Community Plan.**
- 1.4 **To monitor and evaluate the processes and outcomes of the CCP implementation process.**
- 1.5 **To frequently (at least quarterly) consult with grassroots community members** about the progress of the goals, strategies and outcomes of the CCP.
- 1.6 **To ensure the smooth succession of leadership for Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) implementation with the installation of every new Chief and Council** in recognition of the fact that the CCP is rooted in community will, intent and purpose as reflected in extensive and ongoing community engagement and consultation processes.

- ✓ **Goal 2: To create a truly participatory governance system in which every citizen, no matter where they live, can have a meaningful voice in influencing and guiding our collective decision-making**

### Strategies

- 2.1 **To hold open quarterly community reflection and consultation meetings** which engage grassroots community members in the work of reviewing the progress of CCP implementation and community development more generally, as well as the operation of all initiatives and programs. These meetings will entail both large and small group discussion on planned topics as well as space for open contributions and questions. Everything will be recorded and available in a timely manner after the meetings.
- Face-to-face meetings will be held in population centres such as Toronto and Sudbury as well as at Atikameksheng.
  - Online participation through media platforms such as zoom, GoToMeeting, or WhatsApp will make it possible for members wherever they live to be a part of these meetings.
  - Written reports will be posted on a special community development website.
  - Written contributions by members will also be circulated on the website for everyone's consideration.

## 2.2 Chief and Council will host periodic coffeehouse evenings for informal discussions.

**2.3 The creation of community hubs.** In population centres such as Sudbury and Toronto, our members will be encouraged to organize themselves into Atikameksheng Community Associations or “hubs”. These hubs will be encouraged and supported in strengthening the bonds and connections between individuals and families, in holding social gatherings, in planning and carrying out local community development activities and programs, and in magnifying the voices and highlighting the needs and concerns of citizens living within a particular hub area in the process of community governance. As these hubs grow and develop, they may require a space to meet and staff to coordinate activities and services.

It is important to note that Federal funding from Indigenous Services Canada does not pay for programs and services off-reserve, or even cover costs for services extended to citizens living off reserve. It will therefore be critical and important to identify other sources of funding, including community fundraising, the Band’s own-source revenue (OSR), as well as federal, provincial and municipal funding streams to support community development initiatives in hub locations.

**2.4 To simplify the community complaints process** so that there are multiple avenues through which complaints or concerns may be made known to elected leadership and responses communicated back to the complainant.

**2.5 To develop Band Council portfolios** focused on key community demographics including children, youth, women, men, and seniors, so that the needs, aspirations and concerns of each of these groups can be adequately represented in the governance process.

**2.6 To establish a permanent youth representative position on Band Council**, to be elected by youth, and to **work closely with and support the further development of the Atikameksheng Youth Council**, to consult with them frequently and to provide resources to them for their activities.

**2.7 To establish an Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Elders Council**, both to focus on issues of concern to seniors and to provide advice and counsel to elected leadership, particularly when making difficult decisions or dealing with complex and sensitive issues.

## ✔ Goal 3: To implement legislation to strengthen and re-Indigenize our governance system as follows:

- **Election Code** – that will enable us to move to four-year election cycles and ensure that our traditional values are guiding our election procedures
- **Citizenship code** – that allows us to exercise our own sovereignty in deciding who is and it was not a member of our community, regardless of Indian Affairs status recognition. We need to be able to recognize and embrace all of our relatives and family members as being part of us, and to ensure that everyone has access to the rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership, which need to be specifically defined in this code.
- A **Code of conduct** for elected officials and staff

### Strategies

3.1 In each case, the Code will be drafted by a designated committee, referred to legal counsel and to elders for review, circulated to the community for consultation and eventually passes into legislation by Chief and Council.

## ✔ Goal 4: To gradually reclaim our traditional governance values, principles and practices within a de-colonized governance structure of our own making. We understand that this will be an evolutionary process that will need to develop slowly and deliberately, in full consultation with our community members, and guided by our best Anishnawbe knowledge holders





### Strategies

- 4.1 **Develop and implement a learning program** through which leadership, staff and community members can learn **about our traditional Anishnawbe governance system**, including structure, processes, guiding values, principles of operation, behavioral norms and the role and function of leadership.
- 4.2 **Begin implementing what we already know.** For example, we know that the Seven Grandfather Teachings served as a kind of code of conduct for traditional community interaction. We can begin by developing a set of behavioral norms guided by those teachings, and this can be formalized in a Code of Conduct for elected officials and staff. We also know that in addition to consulting grassroots community members before making important decisions, traditional leadership often consulted wise elders and asked for guidance and almost always asked for help in making decisions from spirit guides, ancestors and the Creator through ceremony and prayer. These things can be implemented now, but we're going to have to learn how to do them properly and effectively. For this we will need to support of wise elders and knowledge holders.
- 4.3 Based on what we can learn from our elders and knowledge holders, we will then **develop a "culturally-based governance strategy"** which will lay out pathways for the creative development of new approaches to community governance based on old values and traditions, by taking into account contemporary realities and conditions.

- ✔ **Goal 5: To create a political culture within our community animated by love, encouragement and mutual support between community and leadership, and characterized by behaviours such as respect, honesty and service above self**

### Strategies

- 5.1 **Bring our cultural teachings to the centre of our political culture**, and call one another to a code of behaviour guided by those teachings as a regular part of all community meetings and gatherings.

- 5.2 **Utilize our cultural resources, such as traditional knowledge holders and elders as well as ceremony, to call our grassroots people to higher ground** as we deliberate together for the purposes of community development.

- 5.3 **Keep a discipline within our meetings and gatherings in which everyone's behaviour is expected to conform to the Seven Grandfather Teachings or ground rules inspired by them**, and if necessary to enforce these ground rules so that our people, including elected leadership and staff, are protected from lateral violence and abuse, and so that the prevailing culture of our meetings remains that of respectful engagement, love and encouragement.

- ✔ **Goal 6: Our political leadership will be assertive in standing up for our rights in terms of getting our fair share from economic activities taking place on our traditional lands, including holding Canada and Ontario responsible or upholding our rights under the law**

### Strategies

- 6.1 **Education and training** – A series of training seminars will be developed and presented for elected leadership, staff and interested community members about what our rights are in light of the law of the land, recent court decisions, and the experience of Indigenous communities across Canada.
- 6.2 **Hiring a Governance Coordinator and Creating a Governance Department** – A special department within Atikameksheng Anishnawbek will be created to implement governance development processes, including alignment of our governance and administrative processes with our constitution; drafting and implementing legislation; implementing decisions made by Council, ensuring that our administrative governance mechanisms and processes such as committees and the drafting and promulgation of policies and procedures are carried out according to our constitution and our codes, and ensuring that our elected leadership is aware of our rights in cases of potential violation, and are fully informed about possible mitigation and response strategies.



# 9

## Public Sector Management



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- ✔ To address critical human resource gaps
  - ✔ To redesign our work patterns and retrain our workforce in order to be able to work in new and more effective ways to achieve the outcomes identified in the Comprehensive Community Plan
  - ✔ To develop and implement an Own-source Revenue Policy and management system
  - ✔ To develop and implement a Land-Use and Environmental Management Plan along with appropriate legislation
  - ✔ To review and restructure the Boundary Claim Trust
  - ✔ To develop a comprehensive communication strategy
  - ✔ To maintain and continuously monitor and improve a records and document management system that meets the needs of all parts of our governance
  - ✔ To continuously monitor and update our IT system and the providers we utilize
  - ✔ To effectively manage the implementation of the Comprehensive Committee Plan

## Definition

Public sector management refers to the policies and procedures that have been put in place to guide the operation of the community's administration, programs and services, as well as the on the ground reality of how administration, programs and services actually function on a day-to-day basis to address the primary purposes which they are meant to serve as defined by ongoing work plans and policies.

## Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the Atikameksheng Community Story process and other meetings related to community planning, as well as analysis provided by staff and leadership during the Rapid Review of Capacity study completed in the early phases of the CCP planning process, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that Atikameksheng Anishnawbek needs to address related to public sector management.

1. **Human resources gaps and challenges:** One of the most challenging issues faced by administration and programs is the lack of critically needed staff. Reasons why there are gaps in staffing are rooted in several structural issues: a) funding is never enough to meet the real needs. Federal funding is years, and in some situations, decades behind the population growth of the community and the emergence of new and greater needs. b) Salary levels on-reserve are determined to a great degree by the level of funding received from government sources, and those funding levels do not allow us to create a salary grid that is comparable to similar kinds of jobs in other locations. It makes it very difficult for us to recruit and retain qualified workers. This
2. **Under-resourced departmental and program budgets:** There is simply not enough money in Government budgets at current funding levels to do all the work that is necessary in our Community. Most departments are at least 30% underfunded. We have reached the limit of being able to do more with less. Some of our most diligent employees are overworked to the point of high stress. We recognize that we can't just keep adding on to their workload. We are going to have to rethink how we do things in streamline our operations for greater effectiveness. In some cases, we are going to have to use our own- source income to supplement the administration program dollars we receive.
3. **Reactive work plans and working in silos:** Departments and programs are often responsive to funding criteria rather than working proactively, based on a clear assessment of needs. Progress is also hampered by the fact that many programs work in silos, rather than sharing resources and tackling issues collaboratively. Annual work planning needs to become much more strategic and integrated into the implementation of the Comprehensive Community Plan's goals and strategies. We need to learn how to work together across departments and programs, both to maximize the best use of resources and to draw on the expertise of the full spectrum of knowledge and skills required to address community issues.
4. **Own-source revenue challenges:** Progress is being made in terms of negotiating agreements with industry that bring in own-source revenue, but we are only at the beginning of realizing our potential in this regard. Nevertheless, it is critical that a clear policy be developed and promulgated that defines how this revenue will be spent, and what the rules are for determining its distribution. The goal of achieving revenue streams at least equal to the amount of government funding that we receive (roughly \$4 million annually) from non-government sources is still a long way off, but the work of engaging partners and developing agreements requires a full-time staff person that focuses on this important challenge.
5. **Boundary Claim Trust:** The 1998 Northern Boundary Claim was settled for \$14 million. Only the interest on this amount is being used (between \$400,000 and \$600,000 annually), but now the Trust is running into a number of difficult challenges. With inflation, the value of the Trust is actually decreasing.





We would need the capital to be \$17 million for the Trust to have the same value as it had in 1998. For this reason, it is becoming imperative that we grow the Trust through investment of a portion of the capital, but to do this requires a vote by the membership. Also, the Trust has now reached the 21-year limit, at which time the bylaws of the Trust require that its terms of operation be reconsidered. The Trust now provides support for such items as post-secondary education; non-insured health benefits; accessing language and cultural programs; recreation and funerals costs; and many other things such as the Winter Carnival and Christmas dinner; as well as infrastructure and equipment costs. The amount of paperwork required to manage all of these disbursements every year is quite onerous. Clearly a rethink of the whole Trust operation is needed.

5. **Lands and environmental management:** There has been considerable concern in the community over what is perceived to be the lack of transparency and clarity about Lands and Environmental policy, and the rules that need to be followed in order for individuals and groups to be able to use the land. There have been repeated calls for a well-documented and promulgated Land Use Plan and a Land Use Policy that clearly lays out the who can use which lands for which purposes, and what the process needs to be in order to access lands for personal and commercial use.
6. **Communication:** The need for improved communication was repeatedly stressed by staff and by participants in the Community Story. Sometimes people complain that information is not available which has actually been repeatedly announced and posted through the newsletter and the website. Fundamentally, communication is a two-way street. Those who have information that needs to be shared need to do it in a way that can be heard and understood by those who need to hear it. The other side of the picture is that those who need information have to make an effort to pay attention, attend meetings, read the newsletter and website posts and listen when information is being shared. One identified issue is that the weekly newsletter tends to (for the most part) serve as a vehicle for distributing announcements, but does not provide any detailed explanation or analysis about initiatives that are underway and what is being achieved. The Band has recently hired a new Communication Coordinator who is working hard to improve the communication between elected leadership, programs and staff, and community members. A Comprehensive Communication Strategy is being developed.
7. **Administrative coordination:** As administration and programs

continue to evolve and further develop in order to align the entire system for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Community Plan, the importance of effective, open and constructive communication between all players cannot be overstated. The Band used to have monthly staff meetings. These have been discontinued in favour of departmental meetings and more informal discussions. There is still a need, however, for overall coordination of the organization in alignment with the goals and strategies of the CCP. This implies that people have to talk to each other across the boundaries of programs and departments, and there needs to be some platform for facilitated consultation of this sort. There is a real need for teambuilding, and cross departmental teambuilding will become increasingly important as interdisciplinary initiatives are launched. This requires building trust, agreeing on a common vision and goals, and collective commitment to common goals and strategies. Somehow, what will become an increasingly complex and interactive system needs a brain; i.e., some sort of senior leadership team. This kind of complex system leadership should not fall only on the shoulders of the CEO or political leadership. It needs to be shared.

8. **Records management:** Records management continues to be an issue. The docu-share program is obsolete and no longer serving the needs of the system. A common platform for sharing information easily and efficiently needs to be established.
9. **Our IT infrastructure and services are obsolete:** Our IT infrastructure and provider services for telephone and Internet are no longer serving us well. An entirely new media service plan is needed. There are many issues, most of them small, but together they have the cumulative effect of slowing down our efficiency and, therefore, our effectiveness. For example, shouldn't the Health Center have its own number and receptionist? Right now, the majority of calls that come to the main number for the Band are calls for the Health Centre. If we have common document storage, how can we ensure that all who need to have access can easily get it while protecting the security and integrity of the system and of our information?
10. **Financial management:** The Band went through a kind of crisis several years ago when it was discovered that funds had been misappropriated by an employee. Since then, the Finance Department staff have been working diligently to ensure that everything is done properly and on time, and the decision-makers have the up-to-date financial information they need at hand. One challenge is to implement a fair process by which all programs contribute a share of their budget to the Band for their administrative costs. Although

this is standard procedure, there are gaps in our system in this regard. All departments now need to be transparent about their revenue so that an across-the-board policy can be established and implemented. Processes are needed to ensure that financial administrators understand First Nations Financial Administrative Law, and that our Financial Audit Committee is fully functional.

## Goals and Strategies

- ✔ **Goal 1: To address critical human resource gaps by hiring qualified persons, with preference to hiring our own qualified people, but with careful attention to ensuring that those we bring into our administration and programs bring the capacities we need to advance our administrative, community development and nation-building processes**

### Strategies

1.1 The following leadership and technical positions are fundamental to the effective functioning of the organization and the successful prosecution of the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Community Plan, and need to be given priority, whenever there is a vacancy.

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Director of Economic Development
- Director of Health and Wellness
- Director of Social Development and Education
- Director of Infrastructure, Housing and Lands
- Lands and Environment Planning Specialist
- Comprehensive Community Plan Coordinator
- Business Partnerships and IBA Monitor
- Office Manager
- Communications Coordinator
- Governance Coordinator

Additionally, the lubricant that ensures the effective functioning of the system are critical support positions that make it possible for senior directors and technical personnel to concentrate on the essentials of their jobs. These personnel would include competent administrative support, an IT specialist, and competent front-line staff in every field capable of carrying out strategic objectives as part of a well correlated effort.

1.2 **Moving our system toward wage parity:** One of the prime barriers for attracting and retaining professional staff in almost any field is the fact of considerable wage gaps between what is paid to workers in Sudbury and across Ontario versus what

Atikameksheng is able to pay, which is directly related to inadequate funding levels coming from the Federal Government. What should be happening is that First Nations positions should be budgeted for at the same level as Federal Government salaries, but getting the Government to move to that policy is politically charged, and at best, a distant hope. The following steps will be taken by Atikameksheng Anishnawbek to move our system toward wage parity as quickly as possible.

- a. Conduct a comparative study of wages on and off-reserve for the full slate of jobs in our administration and programs, updated at least every three years. This process will be staged, beginning first with the priority positions listed Strategy 1.1 above, and then carrying on the rest of the positions.
- b. Develop a top-up system, drawing from own-source revenue (OSR), but limited to a specified percentage of annual OSR. In this way, non-government revenues from all sources grow, our ability to top up more and more positions will also increase without compromising other community needs as we move our system towards a fair and living wage for all.

- ✔ **Goal 2: To redesign our work patterns and retrain our workforce to be able to work in new and more effective ways to achieve the outcomes identified in the Comprehensive Community Plan**

### Strategies

2.1 **Understanding how we got here:** Conduct a detailed program by program analysis of our work patterns and priorities in terms of understanding what we are actually doing now, understanding where current strategies and patterns of everyday work life have come from, and understanding to what extent what we are doing now is getting us where we want to go.

2.2 **Redesigning job descriptions and workflow:** Utilize a Quality Management system of engaging workers as primary consultants to work alongside other technical specialists, we will begin with the goals and outcomes to be achieved and the strategies needed to achieve them clearly in view, and then work backwards toward activities, new patterns of work, new job descriptions. In this way, new workflows will be developed, tested and refined. This process will significantly streamline many of our programs and day-to-day operations, will eliminate duplication, identify gaps and significantly improve outcomes.

- ✔ **Goal 3: To develop and implement an own-source revenue policy and management system that takes into account two fundamental goals. First, to ensure that a significant proportion of all revenues are invested in a**



wealth generating engine that will bring increasing a sustainable revenue to our community as these investments grow and yield returns; second, to ensure that a significant but lesser portion of revenue is dispersed annually to meet community needs that are aligned with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Community Plan

#### Strategies

- 3.1 **Consult with technical experts** with a wide breadth and depth of experience in managing trust funds and income from investments, businesses, partnership agreements, royalties and IBAs of other Indigenous communities across the country to determine the best available options for structuring wealth generation, for apportioning what is invested versus what is spent, for prioritizing annual spending, and for determining basic principles or long-term management of the wealth generation system.
- 3.2 **Develop a draft policy** that clearly spells out how annual own-source revenue will be managed, the percentage that will be invested in future wealth generation versus the percentage to be spent during a given year, and the criteria for accessing and utilizing annual disposable revenues in alignment with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Community Plan.
- 3.3 **Community consultation:** Before finalizing the policy, hold community consultations through which members are educated about the reasons behind the proposed policy and the mechanisms that will be available to them for accessing annual available funds. Based on community advice, refine and finalize the policy.

- ☑ **Goal 4: To develop and implement a Land-Use and Environmental Management Plan along with appropriate legislation that together clarifies rules, protocols and processes through which our lands may be accessed and used for personal, community and commercial purposes**

#### Strategies

- 4.1 **Develop a draft Land-Use Plan for community consultation.** Based on previous community consultation and technical studies already completed, develop a first draft Land-Use Plan with a 50-year horizon that anticipates opening up lands for residential housing, summer cottages, camping, expanded commercial and light industrial activity; identifies environmentally and culturally protected areas; anticipates

recreational needs and the expansion of community public buildings; and clearly defines how a legislated Land-Use Plan can be revised and updated as required.

- 4.2 **Hold a series of community consultations to ensure that the full range of community needs and concerns are taken into account in the completion of a revised final plan.**
- 4.3 **Enact legislation that puts the Land-Use Plan into law,** ensuring that the rules and processes for applications for land-use have been adequately publicized, and the administrative resources are in place to support the implementation plan.
- 4.4 **Create an Environmental Management Plan:** Based on an environmental inventory identifying types of land, forest, fauna, waters and wildlife on our Reserve lands and in our traditional territories, and also on the considered advice of appropriate technical experts, and taking into account what other jurisdictions such as Ontario and other Indigenous Communities have legislated, draft a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan that balances our traditional stewardship values, scientific findings, community concerns, and anticipated economic needs.
- 4.5 **Community consultation:** Hold a round of community consultations to ensure that the full range of community needs and concerns are taken into account in the final version of our Environmental Management Plan.
- 4.6 **Enact legislation:** Based on model legislation from other jurisdictions, including Indigenous jurisdictions, and on our own Environmental Management Plan that spells out environmental regulations, authorization of monitoring and enforcement, and consequences for violation, enact binding legislation supported by appropriate education of the public and funding for enforcement.

- ☑ **Goal 5: To review and restructure the Boundary Claim Trust so that the funds can be sustainable, and so that the mechanisms and policies that guide its implementation are practicable to administer and are focused on meeting current community needs**

#### Strategies

- 5.1 **Seek advice from technical experts:** Conduct a best practice review by consulting technical experts who have experience in managing trust funds for Indigenous communities about the best way to structure the fund so that it can continue to benefit committee members, but at the same time be sustainable (bearing in mind that the fund is currently losing value due to inflation and is becoming burdensome to administer in its present form).

**5.2 Community consultation:** Share the advice gathered from the best practice review and listen to community advice and concerns with particular attention to the advice of past Trust Board members. Take these into account in the drafting of a proposed structure.

**5.3 Review of proposal:** As community members and consulted experts comment on the draft proposal, refine accordingly.

**5.4 Reconstitute the Trust** based on the new proposal.

☑ **Goal 6: To develop a comprehensive communication strategy, taking into account the following specific communication realities and needs**

- the reality that Atikameksheng is still very much a relationship-oriented society that prefers oral and face-to-face communication;
- the reality that our most important relationships are rooted in families, and that it is through the extended family/clan system that we can most effectively reach everyone by working through key individuals from each family group;
- person-to-person outreach to homes is probably the most effective way of reaching and engaging people;
- the need for elected leadership to communicate with community members, both in the sharing of information and in receiving community guidance during the process of making decisions;
- the need for community members to be heard by elected leadership and by administration;
- the need for effective two-way communication between elected leadership and administration and programs;
- the need for effective communication across programs and between front-line workers;
- the need for effective communication mechanisms that are available to community members living in centres away from Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, and the corresponding need for leadership, administration and programs to be able to communicate with these members; and
- the need to communicate with specific segments of our population such as youth, elders, business people, etc.

## Strategies

**6.1 Community engagement about strategy making:** The only way to make an effective communication strategy is for all those who share a need to communicate to consult together about what would work best for them and how everyone needs to accommodate everyone else in order to make communication work.

Clearly one size does not fit all in terms of communication strategies. Communication needs to be tailored to the understanding and preferences of those to whom it is directed. But every community member should know how they can access the information that they need about program offerings,

opportunities and the ongoing processes of decision-making, community development and nation-building. And every citizen should know how they can make his/her voice heard.

This is why all stakeholders in our communication strategy need to be co-designers, implementors and testers of the strategy.

**6.2 Pilot the strategy:** After community consultation, develop a draft strategy for testing and community review. Rather than trying to refine the draft strategy through more talk, we will implement our first draft plan and test its effectiveness through extensive consultation with all stakeholders. After a period of 4 to 6 months of testing and consultation, during which the plan will be continuously refined and further developed, the strategy can be adopted, with the understanding that it will continually evolve.

☑ **Goal 7: To maintain, continuously monitor and improve a records and document management system that meets the needs of all parts of our governance**



## Strategies

**7.1** Through the use of the latest version of Microsoft SharePoint, ensure that effective protocols and procedures are in place so that vital records are always accessible to those who need them and kept out of the reach of those don't. In particular, the following needs careful attention

- storage and accessibility of funding agreements and reporting requirements;
- reporting forms connected to each agreement;



- copies of reports submitted related to each agreement;
- copies of all BCR's filed both according to date and topic; and
- copies of all official band policies, filed according to issues covered by the policy.

**7.2 Consult with technical experts and ask for advice as to the best possible systems and options through which we can standardize our record-keeping processes.** Special consideration is needed regarding health and social service records that will enable them to be accessible to all service providers working with particular individuals and families in need. The fact that the systems are, to certain extent, dictated by outside funders means that we need pay careful attention to our own information needs and ensure that in addition to meeting funding requirements, we can actually access and utilize our own records.

✓ **Goal 8: To continuously monitor and update our IT system and the providers we utilize to ensure we are getting the best systems available for the money we are spending, and that we are actually meeting our IT requirements**

### Strategies

**8.1 Consult with a range of technical experts and providers** to determine the following:

- what programs, systems and equipment we actually need in order to accomplish our work;
- should we continue outsourcing IT services, would it be more efficient and effective to have our own in-house IT technical provider;
- we have fiber-optic cables. How can we best utilize them to serve our needs; and
- what best-bet options are available to us in terms of systems, equipment and providers over the next 2 to 5 years? 5 to 10 years?

**8.2 Once a new system is selected, allow a trial period of 3-6 months** before finalizing the purchase of equipment or the contracting of services.

✓ **Goal 9: To effectively manage the implementation of the Comprehensive Committee Plan, taking into account the ongoing changes in community conditions, needs and priorities, and also taking into account the evolving capacity of administrative and program staff and management**

### Strategies

**9.1 Ongoing learning for continuous improvement:** We must recognize that unless we change the way we think and the way we do things, we will continue to get the same results and community outcomes that we were getting before we made our CCP. Therefore, we will install a comprehensive learning program focused on building the capacity of management and staff to lead and carry out development and nation-building activities. Some of this learning will be formal, through training courses and programs, and some will be learning by doing, supported by coaching and technical assistance, but we will continually evaluate our progress in light of our experience and our learning.

**9.2 Senior Management Team:** To effectively coordinate and manage our CCP, which will require collaboration across many departments and programs, we need to be collectively managing our entire system with an overview to the organic interactions between all the moving parts. For this reason, we will establish a Senior Management Team that will meet at least monthly to review the goals of the CCP, support ongoing implementation work, and hold each other accountable for the work we all promise to do.

**9.3 Quarterly CCP weeks:** Once in each quarter; i.e., every three months, a week will be set aside for the following activities:

- review of all initiatives and actions underway, with a specific focus on process and outcome indicators;
- consultation on what is working and what needs to be revised;
- learning for continuous improvement of our practice and our outcomes;
- community engagement through an open community meeting and feast that brings the community into the picture of CCP implementation;
- community education and support for community initiatives; and
- planning the next three months of work.

**9.4 CCP Implementation Coordinator:** A permanent senior management level position will be established to work closely with the Senior Management Team, senior directors, the Chief Executive Officer as well as Chief and Council and key community volunteers to ensure a smooth and effective coordination of the ongoing CCP implementation process.

ANNEX A

ANNEX A

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## Mapping the Healing Journey





[Excerpted from Mapping the Healing Journey The final report of a First Nation Research Project on Healing in Canadian Aboriginal Communities, Phil Lane, Jr., Michael Bopp, Judie Bopp, Julian Norris, Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unity, Solicitor General Canada, 2002]

## Lessons about Healing and the Healing Journey

The lessons learned about healing in Aboriginal communities can be summarized in the following way:

- Healing is possible for individuals and communities. Both appear to go through distinct stages of a healing journey.
- The healing journey is a long-term process, probably involving several decades.
- Healing cannot be confined to issues such as addictions, abuse or violence.
- Healing interventions and programs have most impact when they take place within the context of a wider community development plan.
- Community healing requires personal, cultural, economic, political, and social development initiatives woven together into a coherent, long-term, coordinated strategy.
- Such a coherent strategy requires integrated program development, funding delivery and on-going evaluation.
- Healing is directly connected to nation building. At some point, there needs to be a merger of program efforts between community healing activities and movements towards self-government and community development.

### What is Healing?

1. Healing is a developmental process aimed at achieving balance within oneself, within human relationships and between human beings and the natural and spiritual worlds. It has to do with choosing to live in harmony with the basic values and teachings that are at the core of all Aboriginal (as well as other) cultures. "Healing" actually describes a wide range of initiatives, impulses and efforts happening at the levels of the individual, the family, the community, organizations and institutions and the nation.
2. The concept of healing in Aboriginal communities focuses on well-being rather than on sickness. It focuses on moving the population toward wholeness and balance. It includes all levels of the community from individual to nation, and embraces politics, economics, patterns of social relations and the process

of cultural recovery. To those schooled in the abstracted disciplines of Euro-Canadian universities, such broadened definitions seem to include everything and therefore seem to mean nothing. The important point that Aboriginal people keep making is that their way of life—which was an integrated system of many dimensions—was taken away and if healing doesn't mean restoring some form of life that can support human well-being, then what does it mean?

3. There are two distinct impulses within the community healing process. "Healing as recovery" essentially involves moving away from the pain and suffering experienced by a community in crisis. "Healing as wellness" involves moving towards and maintaining healthy patterns of life.
4. The healing journey may well take generations. It took generations for many communities to internalize the pain and trauma they now carry and it may take generations to move past them. Healing is possible, however, and although there will always be a need for programs to help people heal from the pain and suffering which is an inevitable part of life and to learn skills for healthy living, the type of intensive healing work which is now required will not necessarily always be needed. Currently, there are some special situations (such as the legacy of residential schools and years of colonialism), which require intensive healing work. In time this work is likely to shift from recovery to rebuilding new patterns of life.
5. Healing as Decolonization. At this point in history the healing journey has a lot to do with overcoming the legacy of dependency and dysfunction that are the result of decades of colonization, missionization and residential schools. The term "healing" refers to restoring human and community integrity and well-being that were destroyed by the aftermath of such historical trauma. It is certainly not confined to the restoration of mental health and the ending of dysfunctional behaviors such as abuse, addictions and violence, though it does, of course, include these things. Those working on the front lines of it sometimes describe community healing as "decolonization therapy".

### The Community Healing Journey

1. The healing process seems to go in cycles. There are periods of great movement and apparent growth and periods of stagnation and retreat. This is true of any learning endeavor, from an individual mastering a new skill to an organization reorienting itself around new principles. It is very important for those leading and supporting healing to understand the learning process. Often what seems to be stagnation and retreat is actually a plateau on which important consolidation and learning takes place. The periods of rapid growth are invariably preceded by long periods



where “nothing much happens.” Learning how to track these cycles is an important step in itself so that people can gain an appreciation for the type of work that must be done at the various stages of the journey.

2. Periods of rapid growth and development are often triggered by a crisis of some sort. If properly managed, such crises can create opportunities to mobilize people for rapid learning and coordinated action. Once the crisis loses its edge (either because the issue is dealt with to a significant extent or because people become discouraged, apathetic, bored, etc.), the healing process can really bog down as well. Because the healing work has become organized around a series of crises, it can be very difficult to shift gears in order to take advantage of new opportunities to mobilize the community to take responsibility for its problems.

### The Individual Healing Journey

1. People can heal, change, learn and grow. There are inspirational and effective leaders of healing processes nationwide who are a living testament to the possibility of transformation. Program initiatives across the country clearly demonstrate the life-altering power of engaging individuals (no matter how unhealthy they may be) in a long-term, systematic transformation process leading from dysfunction to wellness.
2. The personal and community healing journeys go hand-in-hand. The leaders of the healing movement have to pay careful attention to their own wellness or they will not be able to work effectively in their communities. At the same time, progress with the general wellness levels in the community gives the leaders the courage to continue and eventually the human resources they need to build on.
3. It is not possible to talk about “healing” or the “healing journey” in one simple definition. We can talk about the attributes that someone acquires through personal healing. For example, healthy people do not need to control others, are not crippled by fears from the past and have gained skills to look after themselves. They have strong confidence and self-esteem, respect themselves and others and can listen to what others say about you without taking it inside.
4. It is also possible to talk about healing in terms of the medicine wheel. Healing involves the whole person—body, mind, spirit and feelings. It involves the whole individual, the whole family, the whole community and the whole nation. It involves the whole cycle of life from childhood, to the time of youth, to our adult years and to eldership.
5. People only begin their healing journey when they are ready

and that is often when they hit bottom. At this point, when they are in danger of losing something (i.e. their freedom, their relationship, their children, their job), people are ready to work. We have to be ready to work with people when they are ready (not in our time frames and on our terms).

6. Every recovering individual needs to have a dream (i.e. a vision and a plan) that lays out a pathway to a better future. The dream grows as people go further on their healing journey. For some the dream may entail getting more education and training. For others it may mean having access to credit or investment dollars. For still others, it may mean building viable partnerships or obtaining needed support and approval from the community leadership.

### Elements of the Healing Journey

1. Many different healing methods and modalities have been tried in communities. The lessons, both from community experience and the literature, is that there are many ways that are of value. Nothing works all the time or is appropriate for everyone. Body therapies, breathwork, spiritual healing, energy work, individual and group counseling approaches (of which there are more than 200 different documented forms), participation in traditional healing ways, participation in religious activities, recreation, skills training, arts and music, support groups, relaxation techniques and mind/body practices all have something to offer. Skilled helpers in communities are aware of the multiple entry points available and are able to guide different people to a modality that will be helpful for them.
2. A major piece of the healing journey is understanding the past. What happened to us? What choices did we make that led to the layers of hurt? What was done to us? What did we lose? What did we use to have that we need to recover or rediscover?
3. “Forgiveness” is a controversial concept, given the justice-related issues connected to the legacy of residential schools. Nevertheless, forgiveness is an essential part of healing. Unless people learn to forgive (not forget), they are still holding onto feelings that hurt them. The healing journey requires taking full responsibility (as individuals, families and communities) for the work that needs to be done to overcome that legacy.
4. Often it takes a crisis (such as a disclosure of abuse on the part of a prominent person) to help the community overcome its denial that a problem exists and to recognize the need for healing.

## Lessons about Supporting the Healing Process

### The Role of Leadership

1. Leadership for healing normally comes from one of three sectors: grassroots community members, professional agencies and departments, or political leadership. Eventually, as communities heal, all three sectors become engaged.
2. A community's healing journey is often initially catalyzed by a small group of people who devote themselves to this work over a period of many years, frequently at great personal sacrifice and with very little recognition. In many communities, women have been the real backbone and catalyst for the healing work.
3. The participation and support of political leaders is a critical piece of the healing journey for communities. When it is missing, the healing process seems to limp along or lose momentum. The control over several important prerequisites to community healing resides within the governance system and leadership patterns of the community.
  - a) Leaders seem to have the power (perhaps granted to them by a passive population) to stop healing processes if those processes appear likely to pose a threat (such as shedding light on past or present abuse or corruption).
  - b) Leaders are carefully watched and they set the tone of approval and encouragement or disapproval and discouragement for healing. Those who are in the early stages of their healing journey are especially vulnerable to influence by leaders.
  - c) Leaders have the capacity to manage the community's program resources (money, people, energy) well or poorly. The result can be a coordinated and sustainable effort or the dissipation of valuable resources and opportunities.
  - d) There is a fundamental need to plan for healing and development over the long term. Unless leadership leads in insisting that this comprehensive planning work take place, it is unlikely to happen.
4. Support from the community's political leadership makes a big difference. It validates the importance of the healing work, it helps channel resources for healing work and it empowers people. Some of the critical contributions leaders make to the healing process:
  - a) Role modeling healthy patterns in their personal and professional lives;
  - b) Visibly supporting community healing initiatives and demonstrating their importance by showing up;
  - c) Listening to the people and encouraging them when they

achieve small successes; and

- d) Building opportunities, programs, policies and systems to help people in their healing journey.
5. The leadership of elders is critical. A small group of elders can create a powerful movement for healing in a community if:
  - a) They build a circle of trust and unity among themselves;
  - b) They start with their own healing;
  - c) They develop a vision of the kind of processes and outcomes they want to see happening;
  - d) They persevere, even if it takes years;
  - e) They get the right people to help them;
  - f) They build on their successes, baby step by baby step;
  - g) They step into the role of traditional elders by assuming moral authority and by offering their services in ways the community can learn to trust; and
  - h) They set up a code of conduct for their members and use their own circle of elders to protect the integrity of the elders initially by supporting and if need be, counseling and challenging their own members.

### Creating Organizations and Building Community Capacity to Support Healing

1. A very important step occurs when the community healing process becomes consolidated through a defined program with a paid staff, financial support and recognition by the community's political leadership. Volunteers, who are often personally supporting activities from their own pockets, simply cannot carry the scope of the work that needs to be done forever. It is also





important for the community to take ownership of the healing work by dedicating resources to it and making healing an integral part of the ongoing life of community programs.

2. At the same time, this step has its own dangers. The healing process is at risk of becoming just another service that people expect to have delivered to them. In this way, people shift responsibility for the community's wellness to a group of "experts" who will take care of things. Healing is not something that can be delivered to people, it is something that requires the active involvement of the whole community. Healing grows from the inside out. It is easy to fall into the trap of becoming a "program" which provides certain services for people. But this way of operating can reinforce the dependency thinking underlying other community problems.
3. The inadvertent adoption of a "program mentality" is actually a very common outcome when communities try to systematize healing processes. Once you have a program with funding, employees, reporting schedules, etc., you quickly become part of the status quo. There is a tendency to lose sight of the original vision and to do everything you can to justify the continued existence of the program you have worked so hard to create. The key development challenge at this stage becomes learning how to constantly renew and revitalize the core of the healing process, at the same time as you are building structures (such as programs) which allow the healing work to continue. This is by no means easy, since many of the systems (e.g. the political system, the health system and the education system) within communities are themselves out of balance. The healing process must be able to continually question the status quo and maintain its transformational edge.

### Collaboration and Participation

1. As programs become more established and professionalized, it is important to maintain community participation. Programs that do not pay close attention to this often run into difficulties. A key element of a healing program's work is to build and maintain community understanding and involvement in the healing work.
2. It is very difficult to maintain integration between all the programs and departments devoted to social development within the community. The tendency is for people to retreat into their own departments. Although a healing program may begin as an inter-agency collaboration, the tendency is for it to become viewed as an independent program. This trend has had a detrimental effect on the healing work in communities, but many front-line professionals don't seem to have both the energy and the particular skill set required to maintain an

inter-agency collaborative focused on the healing work. Often the missing element is leadership.

3. The more a community is able to maintain inter-agency unity in its vision, planning, program delivery and evaluation, the more consistently and effectively it is able to support healing initiatives. In practice, this capacity seems to develop in conjunction with the overall healing process.
4. The community core group that dedicates themselves to the healing work can benefit a great deal from the right type of support from the outside. They need to see models of what can be done, they need support to learn self-confidence and new skills and language to facilitate healing processes and they need validation and recognition from outsiders who see what they have accomplished.

## Lessons about Healing as the Rebuilding of Nations

### Linking Healing and Economic Development

1. Healing is inseparable from social and economic development and nation building. While everyone knows this intellectually, in practice in most communities there has been a functional separation between healing activities and the work of political development, economic development, housing and even human resource development (training and education).
2. This orientation constitutes a new emphasis in perspective within the Aboriginal "healing community" across Canada in the past few years. During several previous national studies conducted by Four Worlds, there were always a few people in every community who made vague references to the linkages between healing and community development, but now those linkages are front and centre in everybody's minds. While in the past there was always a conceptual divide in many communities between those who advocated for economic development as a solution versus those who advocated for healing as a solution. Now many leaders of thought in community healing are saying that economic development and political reform are healing and need to be actively pursued as part of the healing agenda.
3. The economic dimension and particularly the addiction many communities have to the welfare system, needs to be included in our analysis of community healing. There are direct and fundamental relationships between the lack of productive work opportunities, structurally enforced poverty and hopelessness on the one hand and the capacity

individuals and communities have (or don't have) to move beyond patterns of hurt and dysfunction into constructive processes of development on the other hand. When people have enough income to meet their basic needs with dignity and can participate in society without shame, some of their pressing healing issues are being addressed.

4. There is a critical need to greatly expand the stable funding base of the healing movement. One way to do this is to link healing directly to economic development by working with those in recovery to create businesses that provide a living wage to workers and a steady income (i.e., the profits of the business) to healing programs.

### The Need to Transform Structures and Systems

1. What is needed is the creation of an integrated holistic system that provides critical pathways for healing, personal growth and learning, leading to a significant improvement in the social, economic and political life of the person, the family and the community. In other words, as individuals become healthier, there needs to be a range of opportunities opened to them that lead to better housing, greater levels of economic security and prosperity. As well as a significant increase in the capability (i.e. power and capacity) of the person to participate in planning and creating the future.
2. "Healing" needs to go (conceptually) far beyond ending hurt and dysfunctional patterns. It also needs to include building a new pattern of life that is healthy and pursuing visions and dreams of possibility. In so far as healing is restoring balance to a people and society that were thrown out of balance by what happened to them in the past, then that restoration must go far enough to return the people to a form of life that extends beyond meeting the basic minimum requirements for survival. "Healing as restoration" must also mean creating the conditions within people and their society that will support and enhance the realization of human potential.
3. Planning Recovery - Healing is much more than an individual journey into sobriety or personal wellness. It is the rebuilding of a nation. You don't rebuild a nation without systematic long-term work. You need a plan. A National Reconstruction Plan should address a number of levels simultaneously:
  - a) The dreams and aspirations of individuals;
  - b) The transformation of the current political system;
  - c) The development of a sustainable economic foundation;
  - d) The recovery of language and culture; and
  - e) The preparation of future generations of children (to name a few important areas).
4. The creation and implementation of such a comprehensive plan

requires resources and sustained support over a number of years. The attempt by some to limit the definition of "healing" to exclude almost all of the above (in the interest of restricting legal liability) is extremely troubling and problematic when viewed from the standpoint of nations in recovery.

5. If recovery doesn't mean gaining back all of those collective capacities that were lost (i.e. taken away by the process of residential schools) then what does it mean?

### The Role of Spirituality and Culture

The renewal of spirituality in general and indigenous cultural forms of spirituality in particular, is very central to the healing journey for most Aboriginal communities. When communities have been forcibly separated from their own spiritual roots for a long enough time, a lack of vision and coherence at the core of community life tends to make it difficult for the people to "see" any pattern of life for themselves other than the one in which they are currently enmeshed. On the other hand, it has been clearly demonstrated that rekindling spiritual and cultural awareness and practices can greatly strengthen the coherence and vitality of a community healing process.

## The Individual Healing Journey

### Stage 1: The Journey Begins

*The healing journey of individuals often begins when they come face to face with some inescapable consequence of a destructive pattern or behavior in their life or when they finally feel safe enough to tell their story.*

They may have spent a significant part of their life unaware or denying that the pattern is destructive or may have believed that the rewards of the behavior outweighed the costs. But here they are (in jail, facing other legal consequences, pregnant, their spouse leaves, fired from work, tired of living this way, losing their kids, someone close dies, a spiritual awakening, being confronted, etc.) with some desire to change the way things are. The answer must be to stop the behavior. At this point people often enter some kind of treatment/therapy/support group or they may do it alone. Either way, the healing work remains the same. Often people make many attempts to start their healing but retreat again into denial and pain. When the threat of consequences outweighs the fear of opening up and trusting others or when people feel "sanctuary" (i.e. a sense of safety) in the relationship they develop with those working to support their healing then the journey can really begin. Usually the first steps involve telling their story, at first just to get it out and later to understand how the story is related to the pain and dysfunction in their lives.

It can be very hard to stop the behavior. The consequence of stopping may appear worse than continuing. People may go through many



cycles of relapse and recovery. They may become stuck in this cycle for years - even a lifetime. The cycle will continue until they address the primary driving forces that gave rise to and maintain their patterns of dysfunction and addiction. There are two main reasons for this.

1. Substance abuse is usually a whole lifestyle and most addicts are part of an addictive sub- culture. Whether addicts get involved with the substance and then progress to the lifestyle or gain a sense of belonging within the sub-culture and find that substance abuse is the price of entry, their lives become oriented around a culture of addiction. Within this addictive sub-culture, the addicts' basic human needs are met - albeit in a way that has very high costs. Their friends and family, their group membership and sense of belonging, their activities, their daily routines, their diet, their social role, their sense of purpose and order, their dress, their language, their sexuality, their rituals, symbols and music, their livelihood and much more are shaped by the addictive sub-culture. Their whole world and identity are bound up with it. "Quitting" is like trying to get out of a moving vehicle. Treatment is not simply competing with the intoxication experience; it is required to provide an alternative pattern of living. Many people learn this the hard way when they return home from treatment centres.
2. Once the addictive behavior is stopped, traumatic feelings and fearful consequences often surface. Feelings of shame, worthlessness, anger, rage, grief, loneliness, guilt, depression and sadness may have festered and built up for years. Once addicts "quit," they become aware that such feelings dominate their inner landscape. They are likely to face terrifying ordeals - confronting abusers, being confronted by victims, accepting one's inner nature or calling, taking responsibility for one's life. They may have no effective coping strategies to replace the addictive behavior itself. A vicious cycle can ensue in which the addiction is used to treat the symptoms brought about by the withdrawal from addiction or just the complexities and stresses of daily life itself.

The healing journey seldom means returning to a previous healthy life. It is a rite of passage which requires a separation from the old identity, a period of learning, guidance and support and the forging of a new identity, new patterns of life and new relationships.

### Stage 2: Partial Recovery

*At this stage individuals have mostly stopped their addictive behavior, but the driving forces that sustained it are still present.*

At this stage the journey involves struggling to uncover the roots

of trauma from the past that caused the pain and dysfunctional behavior. It can be slow and painful work, but it can also be tremendously exhilarating. While the recovery is precarious, people often experience enthusiasm, excitement and renewed energy. They are doing something with their lives. They make discoveries about themselves. They may join new communities within which they gain acceptance and which rewards them for participating in the healing process. A new vision of possibility emerges. During this transition stage people need a lot of support. Many become involved in healing communities of some kind, whether they be therapeutic (such as A.A. or community treatment programs), religious (such as a church group) or focused on traditional cultural ways. These groups often meet many needs that were previously met by the addictive lifestyle and people may fully and wholeheartedly immerse themselves in this new "culture" (in some cases for the rest of their lives). The culture of recovery replaces the culture of addictions.

### Stage 3: The Long Trail

*Once someone has reached a hard-won sense of stability, it takes a great deal of courage, discipline and motivation to continue in the healing journey.*

The momentum begins to wear off, the length of the journey becomes apparent, support may drop off ("she's just obsessed with healing!"), opposition may be encountered ("Why can't she just let sleeping dogs lie?") and there is life to get on with. Many people stop doing the healing work once the pain becomes bearable or once life seems manageable. This can be a dysfunctional stability where the old behavior is no longer dominant ("I'm sober") but the consciousness that generated it still exists. It may come out in what seems to be less drastic or destructive ways. It may manifest in unhealthy and compulsive relationships with people, work, food, tobacco and gambling.

Ultimately, this stage is about developing a new identity and life pattern. It may be long, slow work. There may be long periods of stagnation, enlivened by periods of growth and change. There will be many mistakes made, many lessons to be learned. New strategies and patterns will be tried on. Some will fit and some won't. Each person must find his or her own way through.

It is hard to walk this path alone. There are many things that can help a person to keep going: renewal experiences, supportive community, guides and mentors, participating in a disciplined path (such as traditional ceremonial cycles and activities) and on-going education. Much of the work is invisible because a person is building new foundations, putting down new roots.

### Stage 4: Transformation and Renewal

*Ultimately the healing journey is about the transformation of consciousness, acceptance and spiritual growth.*

At this stage of the journey, it is no longer about dealing with the demons of the past. It becomes an attraction to a higher vision. There is a conscious determination to build one's life and community around life-enhancing principles (spiritual laws, original teachings, healthy virtues, etc.). There is a conscious articulation of the vision that motivates and draws you. The experience of the hurt self diminishes and the experience of universal self grows. As one's consciousness becomes more fully aligned with life-enhancing principles, one's outer life also naturally goes through profound changes. New relationships emerge. New pathways of expression and of service to the community become important parts of an emerging pattern of life. At this stage it often happens that people no longer need the "culture of recovery" and so participation in "healing" activities declines. Nevertheless, the self-centered focus of addictions has been replaced by a much more outward-looking orientation to serving others and a personal identity of dysfunction is replaced by a much richer, deeper identity anchored in culture and community.

## The Four Seasons of Community Healing

### Background

In our consultations with the six partner communities, and drawing on knowledge and experience from many other communities, it became clear that the community healing process also seems to go through distinct stages or cycles. Four distinct stages were identified:

*Stage 1: The Journey Begins (Thawing from the long winter)*

*Stage 2: Gathering Momentum (Spring)*

*Stage 3: Hitting the Wall (Summer)*

*Stage 4: From Healing to Transformation (Fall)*

Taken together, these stages form one type of "map" of the healing



process, which can be useful both for understanding the current dynamics of the community process and determining future actions and priorities. It must be stressed at the outset that these stages are only approximate models of complex real-life events. They are not "the truth" although there is truth in them. They also do not take place in a linear way. They are more like ripples unfolding in a pool, where each new circle contains the previous ones. Following a review of this model by the six partner communities, it should be stressed that the cycle identified here could just as easily begin in the spring. The important thing is that it is a cycle.

As each stage progresses, those involved further develop their understanding and power to transform existing conditions. This development is primarily driven by a dynamic cycle of action and reflection that generates learning.

### Stage 1: Winter - The Journey Begins

This stage describes the experience of crisis or paralysis that grips a community. The majority of the community's energy is locked up in the maintenance of destructive patterns. The dysfunctional behaviors that arise from internalized oppression and trauma are endemic in the community and there may be an unspoken acceptance by the community that this state is somehow "normal".

Within this scenario one of two things may happen:

1. Key individuals begin to question and challenge the status quo, often making significant shifts in their own lives. Their personal journey is often characterized by service to their community as they begin to reach out to other individuals to provide mutual support and initiate healing and crisis intervention activities. These activities often are undertaken at great personal sacrifice and they frequently encounter intense and very real opposition from within the community.
2. Another starting point is the program route, in which existing programs and agencies, often frustrated with their inability to affect the scale of the crisis they find themselves dealing with, begin to work closely with other allies in the community to develop a wider strategy. Often interagency groups are formed and begin planning collaborative interventions and initiatives.

Both starting points lead to similar effects. "Healing" begins to make it onto the community agenda. Core groups begin to form that are oriented around health, healing, sobriety, wellness, etc. and these groups begin to lay the foundation of an alternative reality, often with significant support from outside the community in the early stages. Another key source of support and inspiration at this stage are key elders who have kept the cultural ways alive.

### What is driving this stage?

One or more of the following:

- Dedicated key individuals (often women) responding to their



awareness that things are bad and there is an alternative.

- Leaders and staff within programs tasked with addressing the consequences of some part of the “crisis”.
- Visionary and courageous political leaders within the community creating an “enabling climate for healing”. All three are essentially responding to a particular problem (alcohol abuse, suicide, etc.).

### **Community consciousness - how is the nature of the situation perceived?**

- It is often denied at the community level. Those driving the process often view the key tasks as creating awareness of the need for healing and may be largely focused on the outward face of the problem (e.g. “alcohol is what is holding us back”).

### **What types of action are being taken?**

- Personal healing and revitalization experiences, formation of informal core groups and networks for mutual support.

### **What are the results and indicators of success?**

- People begin their own healing journeys. A growing number of people seek help for a particular presenting issue or problem. Success/failure is measured in stark terms (drinking vs. not drinking).

### **What are the restraining forces?**

- Restraining forces, often from within the community itself, ranging from denial of the issues to overt and intimidating opposition directed at key individuals.

### **What is being learned?**

- The mechanics of the individual healing journey are being mapped out and modeled.

## **Stage 2: Spring - Gathering Momentum**

This stage is like a thaw, where significant amounts of energy are released and visible, positive shifts occur. A critical mass seems to have been reached and the trickle becomes a rush as groups of people begin to go through the healing journey together which was pioneered by the key individuals in Stage One. These are frequently exciting times. Momentum grows and there is often significant networking, learning and training. The spirit is strong.

New patterns of organization begin to emerge. A recognizable network oriented around healing begins to develop which is legitimized by the community, often with political support. The healing process begins to take visible form as programs and organizations. There is often a lot of volunteer energy at this stage, but professional organizations are also beginning to emerge. The way the “problem”

is seen also begins to change. There is a gradual shift from a sickness to a wellness model and the focus begins to move from presenting problems to the underlying core issues and traumas.

There is great hope and optimism at this stage. People have the sense that if enough individuals and families can begin the healing journey, then the “problem” will be “solved”.

Those driving and involved in the process invest huge amounts of time and energy into the community healing movement. There is still opposition but it is generally overshadowed by the enthusiasm of the healing movement.

### **What is driving this stage?**

- A growing awareness of the scope and scale of the problem within the community. The lid has come off the box and it becomes very hard to put it back on. The growing momentum makes it easier for people to “get on board”.

### **Community consciousness - what is the nature of the situation?**

- The underlying issues (such as residential school trauma, sexual abuse, etc.) that give rise to the presenting problems become recognized and addressing these “root causes” is accepted as a solution.

### **What types of action are being taken?**

- More and more people are going through treatment and becoming involved in programs, services and healing gatherings, etc.

### **What are the results and indicators of success?**

- Increased numbers of people are on a path of sobriety and wellness. There is a growing sense of hope, momentum and transformed vision. People now believe that community healing is possible.

### **What are the restraining forces?**

- There is also a lack of capacity within the community in terms of services and trained service deliverers. The inability of service providers to work together effectively, a lack of available resources, absence of or token political support and resistance to healing by groups within the community all push against the momentum that has been built.

### **What is being learned?**

- The process of individual healing becomes more clearly articulated and a recognizable pathway begins to emerge with local relevance for people to follow.

### Stage 3: Summer - Hitting the Wall

At this stage there is the feeling that the healing movement has hit the wall. Frontline workers are often deeply tired, despondent or burned out. The healing process seems to be stalled.

While there are many people who have done healing work, there are many more who seem left behind. There is the growing realization that it is not only individuals, but also whole systems that need healing. There may already be some new initiatives in these systems (education, governance, economics, justice, etc.). In some cases, these initiatives appear to become institutionalized and to lose the sense of spark and hope that characterized them in Stage Two. In other cases, while awareness has begun to shift, old patterns of working persist for lack of new (and culturally relevant) models and strategies. The honeymoon stage is over as the community begins the difficult work of transforming deeply entrenched patterns and reconstructing a community identity that was forged in oppression and dysfunction.

There are often a series of paradoxes at Stage Three:

1. Relations with organizations, agencies and forces outside the community are being transformed. There is often far more openness and the prevailing climate has shifted. The availability of outside support is much greater than in the past. At the same time, support and collaboration within the community itself may have actually decreased, as old patterns begin to re-establish themselves and a "healing fatigue" sets in.
2. Just when a significant number of adults seem to have sobered up and regained control over their lives, a new and seemingly worse crisis seems to be breaking out amongst the youth. Youth crime is on the increase. Alcohol use is replaced or augmented by drug use.
3. Many adults seem to have gained new addictive patterns to replace alcohol abuse. Gambling is becoming a serious social issue, along with prescription drug abuse and other self-medicating behaviours. It also becomes apparent that drinking covered up many other things and community secrets begin to emerge. Despite increased sobriety, things actually seem to get worse.
4. To those on the frontlines it may seem as if a lot of people have "dropped out" of the healing movement. Many people don't get involved or show up like they used to. At the same time there may be the emergence of a relatively healthy group of people within the community whose energy is focused on their own lives and the lives of the families. No longer engaging in the "culture of addiction" they would rather spend time on family activities and live their lives than be actively involved in the "culture of recovery".

What appears to have been a wall may in fact be a long plateau. One of the characteristics of a plateau is that not much seems to be happening and you don't seem to be going anywhere, but it is actually where the foundation for all future advances are being

laid. On reflection, it is clear that there have been significant gains during this stage. The community norms have shifted; "bad" isn't as bad as it used to be. More people are engaged in positive activities. Capacity is growing within the community as more people access training, education and employment.

There is often a cultural and spiritual revitalization that has developed parallel with the healing process, both shaping and being shaped by it.

As Stage Three develops, a new analysis emerges. There is the dawning realization that "healing" alone is not enough and never will be. Healing from the hurts of the past does not build the future. There is growing awareness of the need for decolonization (of thought patterns and structures) and the need to address structural obstacles to development, such as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada rules, racism, poverty, etc. The realities of the economy of scale become apparent. There is only so much you can do as a small community to address such things by yourself.

#### What is driving this stage?

- The organizations and initiatives that have grown out of the previous stage. Healing becomes increasingly institutionalized as professional capacity develops within the community - a key challenge becomes maintaining community participation. Also driving the process (although not necessarily overtly) are the agendas of funding agencies that provide the material support for healing initiatives.

#### Community consciousness - what is the nature of the situation?

- Complex and competing patterns of analysis emerge and people rarely stop for long enough to take a hard look at the current situation. Feelings of despondency and frustration exist side by side with a realization of progress being made and a nagging question: "Is this as good as it gets?"

#### What types of action are being taken?

- Specific program initiatives develop and there is increasing control over programs and services that affect community life. Increasing numbers of community members become trained to develop and run initiatives and expertise grows.

#### What are the results and indicators of success?

- There is an increase in community participation in and support for healthy activities.
- The climate has shifted such that negative behaviours (such as public drunkenness, family violence, sexual assault) are no longer tolerated or considered "normal".
- Public policy (i.e., local and government rules and practices)



has shifted toward legitimizing healthy standards of behaviour and supporting and enabling healing efforts.

- New programs and services now exist to support individual and family healing.
- More people are seeking out education and training opportunities leading to self-employment.
- There is a greater awareness and acceptance of traditional cultural values and a stronger tendency to incorporate traditional approaches into community initiatives and activities.

### What are the restraining forces?

- Few viable models exist for how to work holistically and community agencies are hampered by an inability to work together.
- Funding comes in isolated pockets and may require considerable energy and creativity to harness to the community healing agenda or there may simply be too little funding for too short a period with too onerous a set of strings and reporting requirements attached.
- There is pressure to “produce results” rather than reflect and refine approaches.
- Dealing with the pain and suffering of community members day after day, begins to weigh on front-line workers and key volunteers, draining their energy and vision.
- Political agendas and in some cases corruption and other networks of vested interests, may oppose the momentum for healing.
- Old tensions, conflicts and habits that were put aside during the excitement of Stage Two re-emerge at this stage.
- Momentum and support for healing slows once a dysfunctional stability emerges and once the overt crisis is over.
- New forms of social problems emerge, especially amongst the growing number of youth.

### What is being learned?

- There is a great deal of individual learning, training and skill development going on. A key challenge is that learning often does not make the shift to the level of the whole institution because time is not taken to reflect on and apply the considerable learning that has taken place.

### Stage 4: Fall - From Healing to Transformation

In Stage Four a significant change in consciousness takes place. There is a shift from healing as “fixing” to healing as “building” as well as from healing individuals and groups to transforming systems. The sense of ownership for your own systems grows and the skill and capacity to negotiate effective external, reciprocal relationships develop. Healing becomes a strand in the nation-building process. Civil society emerges within communities and the Aboriginal community at large

and a shift of responsibility begins to take place. The impetus for healing moves from programs and government to civil society.

The leaders of the healing movement in Stage Two are now entering a new stage in their own lives. They are approaching elderhood and their analysis and vision has matured and deepened. They have shifted their focus from putting out fires to building new and healthy patterns of life and their own families and networks often begin to significantly reflect such new patterns. A search begins for new partnerships, alliances and support for addressing larger scale issues.

### What is driving this stage?

- The realization of the limitations of current approaches, the growing participation by community members in the wider economy, the increased interconnection of the Aboriginal community, the shifting macro-political agenda and wider socio-cultural forces (e.g. increased urbanization, youth culture, the Internet, etc.).

### Community consciousness - what is the nature of the situation?

- A shift to a systemic analysis and from “healing” to nation building and transformation.

### What types of action are being taken?

- Networks and alliances with other groups, increased community take-over of programs and services, design and delivery of locally relevant training, conscious modification of mainstream programs to fit local needs.
- Community economic development ventures now being used to partially fund community development initiatives.

### What are the results and indicators of success?

- Increased control over and responsibility for the fundamental patterns that shape community life.

### What are the restraining forces?

- The scale of ongoing effects of trauma and suffering amongst community members, “siphoning off” of competent leaders into industry and government, political systems that continually maintain division and disunity within communities. Government systems not only haven’t caught up with the level of holistic analysis increasingly understood by communities, but existing policies and rules are geared to maintain dependency and external decision making.

### What is being learned?

- Learning like healing is constantly evolving and is dependent upon experience. (The story is still unfolding.)





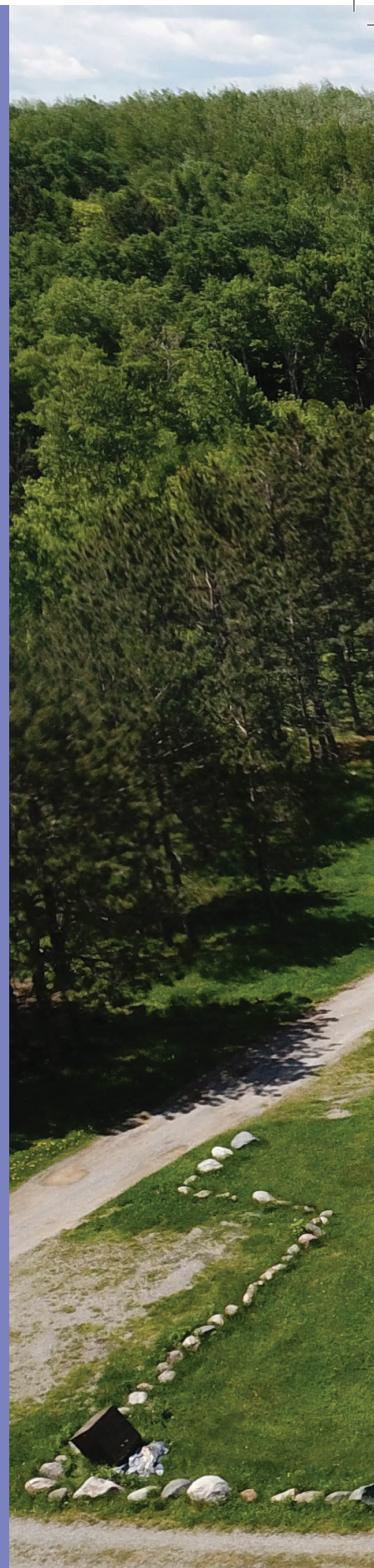




For further information, contact:

Brendan Huston, Chief Executive Officer  
Atikameksheng Anishnawbek [bhuston@WLFN.com](mailto:bhuston@WLFN.com)





**ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**  
25 Reserve Rd –Naughton,  
ON P0M 2M0

**Telephone:** 705 692-3651  
**E-mail:** [receptsec@wlfm.com](mailto:receptsec@wlfm.com)  
**Website:** [atikamekshenganishnawbek.ca](http://atikamekshenganishnawbek.ca)