

HOUSING STRATEGY

2020 – 2025

REPORT



February 2020



NISICHAWAYASIIHK

CREE NATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has taken extensive steps in working towards long-term and sustainable housing with due consideration to land, infrastructure, population, and financial factors.

In 2015, Chief and Council established strategic targets for Housing and Infrastructure as a means of achieving a high standard of living for NCN Citizens. Further to this, the Chief and Council commissioned the development of the Community Master Plan in 2018, which provides Road Map for Community Development.

Over the past two years, NCN Chief and Council have initiated the implementation of the Land Code to support Home Ownership, initiated plans for surveying of community lots and have secured government funding to build a new Water Treatment Plant to sustain ongoing community development. These steps have set the foundation for NCN to achieve a goal of 250 homes in 5 Years.

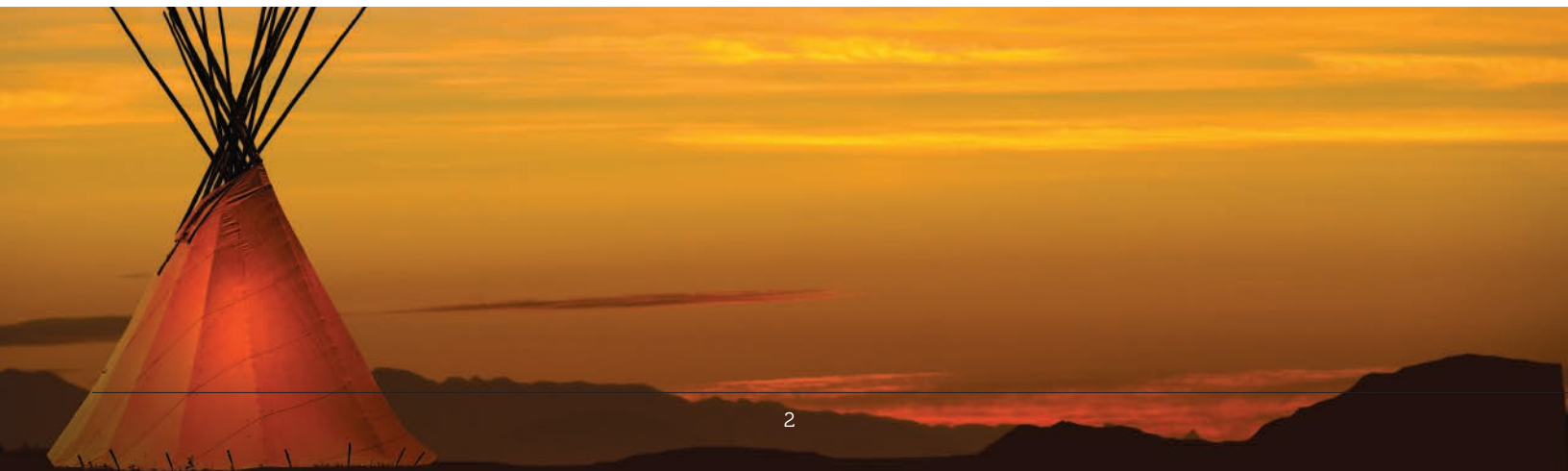
Achieving this goal will require extensive collaboration amongst all government departments including Lands, Environment, and Resources (LER), NCN Housing Authority, ATEC, Pewapun, O.K. School, NNOC, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and the Government Administration. It will also require accessing support and resources from external partners and initiatives such as CMHC and First Nations Market Housing Fund.

Through research, community discussions, and Housing Forums, the NCN Chief and Council have clearly defined the need and priority for housing in NCN. It remains a top priority for the current leadership. This Housing Strategy presents a high-level approach of how we will work together to take action.

Together, we will assert our sovereignty by taking responsibility to provide safe and secure homes for all NCN Citizens to live in peace and with dignity.

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INTRODUCTION

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has taken extensive steps in working towards long-term and sustainable housing with due consideration to land, infrastructure, population, and financial factors.

In 2015, the Chief and Council endorsed a Strategic Plan which highlighted the following goals and objectives:

STRATEGY 5: TARGETING HOUSING AND WATER SYSTEM CRISIS WITH STEPS TOWARD IMMEDIATE ACTION AS PART OF GOAL 1: IMPROVING OUR STANDARD OF LIVING:

- A) Improve home maintenance – Use PDA Supplement 2 monies and our ability to forward commit under Taskinigahp Trust to renovate houses;
- C) Educate members about housing shortage and work jointly with ATEC to encourage Citizens to train to build and maintain houses;
- F) Refine strategies to construct new homes – we want to build new housing units over the next several years using our ability to forward commit under Taskinigahp Trust. First Nations home ownership funding and other sources of funding such as CMHC housing may be obtained. We will also need to pass and implement our own laws to help achieve this goal;
- K) Clarify and develop a mandate for public works, NCN Construction LP and the Housing Authority;
- L) Ensure new houses and renovations of existing houses are completed to national standards/code; and
- N) Address challenges of getting insurance for houses.

Further to this, the Chief and Council commissioned the development of the Community Master Plan in 2018, which provides Road Map for Community Development.

COMMUNITY NEED

Using the population projection, the housing shortfall can be calculated for the next 20 years.

To reduce housing density to the recommended value, the required number of new houses required annually is calculated.

HOUSING INVENTORY

According to the Asset Conditioning Report from 2011 there are 451 housing units in NCN. Based on an infill analysis completed in 2018, there are now 430 existing homes in the community. Using a 2018 population of 3128 residents, the housing density equates to 7.2 residents per housing unit.

The recommended goal for housing density for the community is 4.5 residents per housing unit. This will prevent overcrowding and ensure that homes last for longer periods. This Strategic Plan will consider density as an important factor in working towards the strategic housing goals for the next 5 years.

Using the growth rate of 1.20%, population projections were estimated for the next 20 years. Based on these projections, the Chief and Council estimated the Required Housing Needs for NCN over the next 20 years. This provides the big picture of what we need to build at the very minimum.

TABLE 1 – HOUSING REQUIRED BASED ON POPULATION GROWTH

Year	Pop.	Housing			
		Expected	Required	Shortfall	Density
2018	3128	430	687	257	7.2
2023	3314	556	736	180	6.0
2028	3501	661	778	117	5.3
2033	3687	766	819	53	4.8
2038	3873	871	861	0	4.4

UN Special Rapporteur on Housing, statement October 4, 2005:

“... the human right to adequate housing is the right of every woman, man, youth and child to gain and sustain a safe and secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity ...”

REQUIRED HOUSING

Based on the research that has been completed, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has a shortfall of 257 housing units as of 2018. In order to reduce the housing density to the recommended 4.5 residents per housing within 20 years, 431 homes will need to be built.

This equates to about 110 new homes required every 5-year period at a minimum in order to reach the goal housing density by 2038. However, we know that many NCN Citizens would like to build or purchase their own homes. We believe that we can build 250 homes in 5 years with a combination of rental units, rent-to-own homes, and privately-owned homes.

There are currently 430 existing homes within the community. There is also space for approximately 78 infill lots. However, with 250 new homes in 5 years, the 78 infill lots are not enough to support the growth of the community. Of the 431 homes accounted and the 78 infill lots available, 172 new lots will be required within the next 5 Years.

LAND REQUIREMENTS

The lot sizes for the 250 new homes is recommended to be 100 ft x 200 ft, similar to the typical lot size in R.C. Point. This is the lot size assumed for detached single family homes. This size of lot is adequate for most residential trailers as the dimensions will accommodate a double-wide unit with dimensions of 30 ft x 80 ft.

In addition to these typical lot sizes, a new sub-division plan will consist of other sized lots such as high and medium density apartments, 6-plex and 8-plex units, and family pods.

The preliminary plan requires a gross area of 356.2 acres of development area to accommodate On-Reserve residential development over the next 20 years.

VISION

The NHA Board holds a vision of NCN as a modern residential community. Affordable good quality homes will be available on a rental basis for all NCN residents. There will be opportunities for NCN members to buy their own homes located on land leased from NCN.

All homes will be built in accordance with National Building Code standards.

“Progressive, Innovative and Sustainable Housing for every family; providing a safe and beautiful environment to live and grow.”

The overall environment will enhance the value of homes. Streets will be paved and well lit and kept clean through civic support and individual efforts. Home standards will be maintained through an active NHA program of home inspections, repairs and renovations.

Individuals will assume increasing responsibility for the care and maintenance of their homes so that the life span of houses can be expanded. All rental units will be occupied under Tenancy Agreements and rental fees will be collected on a regular basis. Provisions will be made to meet the housing needs of Elders and handicapped NCN members.

The NCN community will establish a reputation for having quality, affordable, energy-efficient homes and for taking pride in the appearance and upkeep of their homes and property.

MISSION

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Housing Authority will empower all NCN Citizens to take responsibility and ownership of their homes; and ultimately their community by:

- Operating an Efficient Housing Administration for the benefit of all NCN Citizens
- Developing, enforcing, and evaluating Property Management and Home Maintenance policies designed to empower NCN tenants and their families;
- Implementing a Universal Rent Regime that is fair and establishes a housing market for NCN;
- Implementing a Home Ownership Program that provides sustainable options that will lead to success for NCN Citizens;
- Leading collaboration with public services, lands management, economic development, and social services for the development, upkeep, and beautification of NCN; and
- Coordinating opportunities for capacity enhancement through education, and training for all tenants and community members.

CORE VALUES

The Core Values and Principles were derived from community feedback obtained through the 2019 Housing Forum. These Values and Principles will guide NHA operations and NCN governance to create and maintain a strong organizational culture and business practices.

QUALITY

The NHA will strive to achieve and maintain the highest quality in workmanship, materials, and service. Quality assurance will be a guiding principle in the day-to-day housing services provided to NCN members.

FAIRNESS

The NHA is governed with fairness to ensure consistency in the applicability of policies and procedures. Policy development will be rooted in the principles of equality and consistency.

SAFETY

The NHA will exercise precautionary measures in all tasks to prevent risks to housing staff, tenants, home owners, and community members.

PEACEFUL LIVING

The NHA will strive for the safest homes in a clean and beautiful community for all NCN Citizens

SELF-DETERMINATION

The NHA strives to exercise full autonomy is designing a Housing Program that reflects the needs and goals, as determined with NCN Citizens.

The NHA is committed to an empower approach to the development of all policies, strategies, and educational opportunities; supporting NCN Citizens to reclaim responsibility for their own homes, achieving a sense of independence and pride.

COMMUNICATION

The NHA will communicate with the public on a quarterly basis and with its partners on a monthly basis.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The NHA is committed to ensuring the responsible use of NCN's financial resources for the maximum benefit to NCN's Citizens regarding their housing needs.

The NHA will report publicly to NCN Citizens on an annual basis.

CURRENT STATE

WHERE ARE WE AT TODAY?

LEADERSHIP

NCN has a consistent Board of Directors with members that understand the housing needs of the community and bring forth ideas for change and growth. The Housing Authority is led by an Executive Director with a clear succession plan to develop a long-term Executive Director over the next 2-4 years.

MANAGEMENT

In addition, the Housing Authority has a strong Housing Supervisor with extensive experience in housing management and a background in carpentry. The Housing Supervisor provides support and direction to the Housing Teams.

The Property Manager has successfully increased rental revenues over the past 18 months and has been establishing tenancy agreements with all tenants.

The Housing Authority Administration has recently received training in AIS that will enable the NHA to monitor the homes more effectively and respond to work orders more efficiently.

ADMINISTRATION

Currently, 99% of units in NCN are rental units that fall under the categories of CMHC Homes, Band Homes, Trust Homes. A small number of homes are privately-owned without land tenure.

Through research, community discussions, and Housing Forums, the NCN Chief and Council have clearly defined the issues, needs and opportunities for housing in NCN. It remains a top priority for the current leadership. This Housing Strategy presents a high-level approach of how we will work together to take action to address the issues and embrace all opportunities to support our goals.

United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People, Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.

ISSUES

- Limited financing for new builds
- Lack of processes (work tracking, rent payments, down payments)
- Project Management
- Lack of inspections and conditions reports
- Illegal activity in NCN homes
- Rent collection and payments
- Excessive and constant renovations
- Challenges with supplies and materials – availability, timeliness
- Over budget – status quo
- No monitoring, evaluation, or follow-up
- 500+ NCN Citizens on the Wait List
- No landscaping, driveways, fences

RISKS

- Larger deficit/debt year after year
- Low standards leads to poor quality and moisture
- Constant renovation state
- Population growth is increasing = housing demand increasing
- Education of tenants and occupants
- Pest & Animal Damage

OPPORTUNITIES

- Efficient Housing Administration Office
- Effective Communication
- Universal rental regime where everyone pays
- Public Selections for lots, houses, renovations, upgrades
- Develop quarterly budgets for renovations
- Give 100% responsibility to tenants
- Educate and support tenants to uphold policies through Tenancy Agreements
- Access Habitat for Humanity, CMHC, First Nations Market Housing
- Rally community involvement
- Apply for grants
- Family input into the design
- Offer benefits and incentives for Rent-to-Own and Mortgages
- Innovative market designs

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: EFFICIENT HOUSING ADMINISTRATION

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- In-house Management Expertise
- Effective Communication
- Professional Training, Standards, and Ethics

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Universal Rental Regime
- NCN Regulations and Standards
- Quality Assurance – Materials and Workmanship
- Reduced need for renovations

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: INCREASE HOME OWNERSHIP AND REDUCE HOUSING DENSITY

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Establish Land Tenure (leasehold)
- Established Market Housing – Rent-to-Own and Mortgage
- Home Ownership Program
- Planning and completion of 250 New Builds

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4: PROMOTE HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR NCN CITIZENS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Appealing yards and community spaces
- Tenant Incentive Program
- Animal and Pest Control

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #5: PRIORITIZE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR HOUSING STAFF, RELATED SERVICES, COMMUNITY EDUCATION, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Certified Housing Manager
- Certified Landscapers
- Trained Housing Counsellors

- Minimum 2 Journeymen in all trades by 2022
- Reclaimed Responsibility for All Homes
- Health and Safety Training
- Youth Build

Efficient Housing
Administration

Professional
Property
Management,
Maintenance,
and Support

Increase Home
Ownership and
reduce Housing
Density

Promote higher
quality of
life for NCN
Citizens through
Collaborative
Community
Beautification

Prioritize
education and
training for
Housing Staff,
related services,
community
education, and
educational
opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION – STARTING POINT

Key stakeholders from all NCN entities came together to prioritize key elements of the strategic plan. Each strategic goal and objective that was identified as the highest priority will serve as the starting point for implementation. These activities will be initiated and carried out within the next three months.

BUILDING INTERNAL CAPACITY

- Board Governance Training – aligned with Regional Working Group
- Housing Management and Coordination – Recruitment of NCN Home Ownership Manager and Housing Inspectors
- Establish and maintain an Electronic Systems Reporting

WORKING TOGETHER

- Establish partnership table with key stakeholders to build on collaborative strategies:
 - a. ATEC Training Centre – Youth Build
 - b. Pewapun Construction
 - c. Fine Option Program/Work Opportunity Program

EFFECTIVE PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Produce a 5 Year Plan for New Builds
- Education Strategy

PREPARING FOR CHANGE – LOOK OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

- Increased playgrounds- parks, rinks and benches
- Implement Waste Management Plan with garbage bins in areas & annual garbage pick-up schedule





**"Progressive,
Innovative and
Sustainable
Housing for
every family;
providing a safe
and beautiful
environment to
live and grow."**



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