

2023-2028 and beyond.

SUMMARY

Guiding Our Path to a Brighter Future

Principles • Goals • Strategies • Next Steps

Our Vision

"Our Vision is to exercise sovereignty that sustains a prosperous socio-economic future for Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation."



SUMMARY

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Chief and Council

Chief Angela Levasseur Deputy Chief Marcel Moody Councillor Shirley L. Linklater Councillor Kim Linklater Councillor Cheryl Moore Councillor Ron D. Spence Councillor Jeremiah Spence

This document has been prepared with the objective of promoting opportunities for the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation by working toward strategies and actions that will assist NCN in becoming a self-sustaining, self-determining self-government. These strategies (although not specifically detailed) also consider and are developed to ensure that federal and provincial governments will continue to have a fiduciary responsibility to provide treaty and agreement funding, compensation and support under existing arrangements and agreements. NCN will work to ensure these agreements are fulfilled, while moving toward self-governance. The following strategies are not meant to replace, mitigate or remove government responsibilities.

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF AND COUNCIL

Tansi,

Having enjoyed strong, clear leadership from several successive governments, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation continues to thrive. As the most recent Chief and Council, elected in August 2022, it is our honour to represent and lead NCN into this next stage of our exciting future.

Our planning and decision-making process with Council and our Executive Management Team will continue to be based on our defining principles of selfsufficiency, sustained economic development and the thriving livelihood of our next seven generations. The Strategic Plan for our Nation embodies Chief and Council's pledge to work alongside our Citizens, partners, organizations and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) entities to lay the visionary foundation for our shared future.

Our current Strategic Plan builds on past accomplishments and is a result of the NCN Government defining its new direction. It also extends to guide implementation as we work to ensure a better future, improve lifestyles and enhance programs, services and infrastructure for NCN Citizens.

As we develop the plan, seek Citizen input and continue to evolve our action plan(s), several key factors are prominent parts of who we are and influence how the plans are shaped:

- We are a Strong, Tight-knit Nation of Proud People
- Our History, Culture and Land Continues to Shape Our Nehetho Nation
- Economic Development is important for Growing Opportunities
- We Must Improve Our Self-sufficient Self-Government
- We Need to Work Toward Instilling Transparency, Accountability, and Effective Communication
- We Are Committed to Financial Responsibility
- We will Continue to Honour Citizens with Fairness and Equality
- We must Focus on Creating a Political Balance within Our Nation

Respectfully yours,

Chief and Council Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

Top row (left to right): Councillors Kim Linklater, Deputy Chief Marcel Moody, Jeremiah Spence and Ron D. Spence Bottom row (left to right): Councillor Shirley Linklater, Chief Angela Levasseur and Councillor Cheryl Moore.



INTRODUCTION

The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Strategic Plan is designed to reflect the aspirations of the NCN community (both on- and off-reserve) and guide Chief and Council in its decision-making approach. This Plan is an expression of the NCN Citizens' and NCN Government's views, will help guide Chief and Council and inform their priorities over the next several years.

The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Strategic Plan defines the priorities and aspirations of the NCN community (on- and off-reserve) and serves as a guide for Chief, Council and the Executive Management Team (EMT) as they perform their duties in the best interests of all Citizens and aim for the shortand long-term success of the community. The Strategic Plan serves as a framework for policy and procedures, and informs budgetary and resource allocation for all NCN organizations, entities, and administration. It will be referred to when determining the goals and progress of all NCN department levels.

Chief and Council will refer to the Strategic Plan to compare its outlined goals with the actual achievements of the Nation, and will report its findings to Citizens through annual general meetings, newsletters, online media and more.

UNDERSTANDING NCN'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Chief and Council Governs NCN Organizations

NCN's seven-member elected Chief and Council governs all NCN organizations, which fall into five categories: NCN corporations, trusts, departments, agencies and joint ventures.

This chart provides only a general overview of the arrangement for NCN Corporations, Trusts, Departments, Agencies and Joint Ventures.

NCN TREASURY BOARD (MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHIEF AND COUNCIL) CHIEF AND COUNCIL – Governs Corporations, Boards, Departments, Joint Ventures and Agencies				
CORPORATIONS	BOARDS OF TRUSTEES	NCN DEPARTMENTS	JOINT VENTURES	AGENCIES
 Nisichawayasi Nehetho Culture and Education Authority (Elected Board) Wellness Centre (Board of Directors) Medicine Lodge (Board of Directors) Personal Care Home (Board of Directors) ATEC (Board of Directors) Mystery Lake Hotel (Board of Directors) Mystery Lake Hotel (Board of Directors) Nisichawayasihk Construction (Board of Directors) Dev. Corporation (Board of Directors) Dev. Corporation (Board of Directors) Thompson Family Foods NCN Store OT Gas Rising Sun Restaurant Meetah Building Supplies (Board of Directors) NCN Builders 	 Petapun Trust TLE Trust Nisichowoyosihk Trust Taskingahp Trust 	 NCN CEO Program/Officer Director Justice Committee Finance Public Works Human Resource Development Trust Office Wuskwatim Implementation Office Aski'otutoskeo Ltd. (AOL) Natural Resource Lands Dept. TLE/ATR Land Management Code Resources Fishers Assoc Local Fur Council (trappers) NCN Achimowin Radio Station 	 NCN Construction LP NCN CATERING LP Aski'nonukuchechekewin General Partner Ltd. Wuskwatim Pawer Ltd Partnership (WPLP) Toskingahp Power Corp. (TPC) 	 Housing Authority Arena Parks & Recreation – Youth Initiative



ABOUT NISICHAWAYASIHK CREE NATION

We are exploring many initiatives to ensure that the future of our children is prosperous and fulfilling.

NCN QUICK FACTS:

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is based in Nelson House, Manitoba, about 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg and 80 kilometres west of Thompson.

NCN has nearly 5,000 Citizens living in Nelson House, South Indian Lake, Leaf Rapids, Thompson, Brandon and Winnipeg. NCN's core reserve lands consist of 5,851.7 hectares as part of Indian Reserve 170, 170A, 170B and 170C.

NCN's Election Code was adopted in 1998 to ensure fairness, equality and transparency. It sets out in law the governance of our Citizens, protection of our lands, use of our resources and the election of our NCN Government. It established that democratic elections be held every four years to elect a Chief and six Councillors.

In 2006, NCN signed the historic Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement with Manitoba Hydro to build the Wuskwatim hydroelectric generation project. The PDA Supplemental Agreement was renegotiated and the PDA 2 was signed May 16, 2015.

In addition to the Wuskwatim Hydroelectric project, NCN's economic

development focus involves various major areas: creation of the NCN **Development Corporation, Economic** Development such as the Mystery Lake Hotel, NCN Store, Family Foods, Meetah Building Supplies and development of an Urban Reserve in Thompson. NCN is constantly working to broaden its economic base and has many projects in development. A legacy of the Wuskwatim project was the construction of the Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence, which provided training during Wuskwatim construction and now provides post-secondary programs to meet community and northern-Manitoba education and training demands.

No. I PROVER DEPENDENT

WHY DO WE NEED A STRATEGIC PLAN?

NCN has had community plans created and implemented in 1983, 1990, 2010 and 2014. NCN programs, departments and organizations work on and complete annual plans as part of their day-to-day activity. Many programs and projects in all areas of our First Nation work with and develop plans. Basically, these plans are an organized way to achieve something or reach a goal.

Following the NCN election in 2022, Chief and Council began the task to layout a strategic plan to better our Nation. Chief and Council took part in intensive planning to layout the plan for the next four years. The process included support, input and expertise from NCN Citizen consultants, facilitators, trainers, organization managers and Citizens. This executive team of planners helped to establish the framework to build a strong governance model via a variety of exercises, workshops and planning sessions.

Our ancestors have always used planning in the past, it is a part of our tradition and we look to learn from the past and the guidance of our Elders as we plan the steps for our future. NCN Chief and Council are well aware of the challenges in life, but we also see many good things to build and grow upon and make us proud to be NCN Citizens. Our NCN Government sees opportunity for development - we have built new houses, new facilities and we have many innovative and supportive programs for our people. We are enhancing opportunities for jobs and businesses, demonstrated by projects like Wuskwatim, Mystery Lake, Family Foods and our urban reserve initiatives.

We hope that the information in this Strategic Plan will help Citizens, partners and stakeholders to understand the activities that will be NCN Chief and Council priorities, the focus of assigned activities, who will be involved and where we hope to end up.

We can make a difference!





STRATEGIC PROCESS

To develop the strategies for our Nation's future, we had to first map out where we want to go. The strategic planning process was designed in steps to determine the situation NCN is operating in, and will be operating in the near future. It also evaluated what can be done to build on strengths or mitigate the challenges of situations.

Chief, Council, and EMT set out to create a Strategic Plan that will build on this current position of strength.

The steps for creating the Strategic Plan included or will include:

- Identifying the motivation of Chief, Council and EMT as they lead the NCN Community.
- Determining the current state of the Nation, including the phase of its lifecycle, its ability to create change, and its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Creating broad, high-level goals with corresponding action items that will be executed over the coming year.
- Identifying roles, responsibilities, timeframes and budgets to achieve those action items and goals.
- Implementing plans, actions and activities.
- Measuring and evaluating progress, editing and altering strategies and deliverables as required, while keeping overall goals in sight.

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation has achieved great success in self-sovereignty over the past several decades, including securing its own Aski Pumenikewin land code and Othasowewin constitution. We have become a recognized leader among First Nations in Manitoba and across Canada, and were named Community of the Year in 2022.





THE MOTIVATION

To ensure our priorities were aligned as a group, and to create parameters within which we could strategize, we began by defining our reasons for taking positions in office and choosing to expend our time and efforts in this way. Articulating our motivations will give us guidance as we move towards our goals.

Many ideas came forth, from protecting our resources and assets to building relationships as a path to future success. These concepts were distilled down to three "Why" Statements.

We are the future ancestors of NCN, and our actions will dictate the future of our children, grandchildren and unborn.

We–leadership, management, admin staff and Citizens–love and care for our community, and we are community-driven and action-oriented.

We will demonstrate strong, resilient leadership that is transparent and accountable to our Citizens.

THE CURRENT STATE OF OUR NATION

Chief, Council and EMT set out to articulate NCN's current stage within the typical lifecycle of an organization. Generally, these stages are differentiated as start-up, growth, maturity, decline and death.

The group agreed that NCN is balanced between the start-up and growth phases.

- New government as of August 2022
- Assessing progress
- The need for a unified plan
- New and evolving priorities every four years
- · Receiving outside recognition for our economic development and governance
- · Continuity of programs, governance and finance without third-party management

These are exciting stages, during which rapid growth, progression, strong engagement and expansion are the focus.







NCN leadership believes there is great opportunity to drive for bold results over the next five years.

Through leveraging what is already working and striving for new success, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation will be carried by momentum and a solid strategic plan into its next stage of prosperity.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Performing this common analysis allowed the group to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of and to NCN. Generally, strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organization and are controllable. Opportunities and threats are external to the organization and cannot be controlled. However, through solid planning, we will have the ability to choose how we react to them.



NCN Strengths

- teamwork
- leadership
- progressive foundation

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NCN Weaknesses

- funding/finance
- capacity
- communication



- lands and resources
- economic development
- people
- partnerships

Threats to NCN

- external forces
- community resistance
- internal oppression, systemic racism, paternalism, colonialism

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NCN'S ABILITY TO CREATE CHANGE

An integral aspect of the ability to meet and achieve goals is the speed at which a community can create change. The group compared NCN's speed and agility to that of Canada's, and discussed the ways in which NCN is keeping pace and how it is falling behind.

Those ideas included:



The takeaway from this discussion was that NCN is not competing with Canada, or in fact, many other community or organization. We can focus on the local context and what matters most to NCN Citizens.





ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A strategic plan can only be successful if executed by a strong team with clear alignment and a shared understanding of who carries which weight within the organization.

While there are many key interest groups and stakeholders, the main contributors to NCN's success and their responsibilities were identified:

Citizens

- elect leadership based on platforms
- · communicate their priorities
- trust/believe/support leadership
- hold leadership accountable

Chief and Council

- engage Citizens and take their perspectives into account
- set high-level direction and pivot as required
- assign tasks to CEO and admin
- put adequate staff in place and hold them accountable

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Executive Management Team (EMT)

- take direction from Chief and Council
- develop policy
- keep Strategic Plan front and centre
- provide direction to directors and staff
- drive director alignment

Directors and Staff

- day to day implementation of Strategic Plan
- delivery of programs/services/communications/reports
- creates and delivers feedback loop of Citizen requests and priorities up to CEO and Chief and Council



INVOLVING KEY INTEREST GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROCESS

In order for a strategic plan to be successful, the Nation as a whole, partners and key interest groups must participate, take ownership and responsibility of the process and be accountable by taking part in working to achieve the goals, strategies and action recommendations. Our key influential stakeholders in the process include:





"THE BIG THREE"

Having completed an evaluation of NCN's current state, Chief, Council and EMT put forth ideas for the broad areas of focus over the next five years. Then, as a team, they categorized all of those ideas into three main goals, and also created step goals, the one-year initiatives that would move the three Big Goals steadily forward.





Goal 1: Optimizing Governance

"We will optimize our governance to drive our sovereignty and selfsufficiency."

Chief Angela Levasseur, Goal 1 Lead

Strategy:

Review all laws and by-laws with EMTs and directors so that everyone is aware of and knows the laws.

Lead: Grace Kyoon-Achan, CEO, Joyce Brightnose

Metric: All laws reviewed by EMT and directors by year-end.

Strategy:

Resolve and finalize the four outstanding land/claims agreements to gain better control and maximize the benefits of our lands/resources.

Lead: Gord, Grace Kyoon-Achan, CEO, Councillor Jeremiah Spence

Metric: All four agreements reviewed by year-end.

Strategy:

Hold quarterly community engagement meetings so our Citizens are informed and can provide feedback on governance matters.

Lead: Joyce Brightnose, Councillor Shirley Linklater

Metric: Number of quarterly meetings recorded.

Goal 2: Transforming the Delivery of Education

"We will transform the delivery of education to maximize capacity across NCN organizations by 2026."

Councillor Ron D. Spence, Goal 2 Lead

Strategy:

Assess all staff to determine priority skills gaps that need to be addressed with on-the-job training.

Lead: Leonard Linklater, Director of Operations, Councillor Kim Linklater

Metric: Priority gaps identified by April/May.

Strategy:

Develop a strong Collective Bargaining Agreement to attract and retain quality teachers to ensure all children and adults have access to quality educators.

Lead: Councillor Ron D. Spence, Chief Angela Levasseur

Metric: Timeline TBD

Strategy:

Secure funding for ATEC to sustain local and regional programming, with a future plan of accreditation.

Lead: Leonard Linklater, Director of Operations

Metric: Core funding secured by year-end.



Goal 3: Increasing Economic Independence

"We will increase economic independence so we can improve the standard of living for our Citizens."

Deputy Chief Marcel Moody, Goal 3 Lead

Strategy:

Develop a process to explore all potential partnerships to increase our economic independence.

Lead: Deputy Chief Marcel Moody

Metric: Process in hand by March 2023, with a further tentative metric of reinvesting NCN source revenue by up to 50 per cent.

Strategy:

Review and implement the procurement policy so it supports the local economy.

Lead: Grace Kyoon-Achan, CEO

Metric: Procurement policy implemented by February 2023.

Strategy:

Build a strong economic strategy to protect and enhance the financial future of our Nation.

Lead: Councillors Cheryl Moore, Kim Linklater, Ron D. Spence

Metric: Strategy created by April 2023.

MAKING THE PLANS WORK FOR NCN

To ensure progress continues on the three main goals, the Strategic Plan will be an action item on the Chief and Council agenda when they meet every two weeks on a go-forward basis. The focus will be the goals that are being met with resistance, or are facing barriers. This method allows the team to focus on action and forward progress.

An Operational Plan may be created that will link to each goal in the Strategic Plan. It will provide information on responsibility, execution, required resources, estimated timeframe, targets and tracking methods. EMT and directors may use Detailed Implementation Plans to guide and direct activities that support the three main goals. These activities will be monitored to ensure they maintain alignment with founding principles, goals and strategies.

NCN government and departments will ensure necessary systems and structures are in place the facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Available resources for and financial implications of the Strategic Plan will be reviewed. This will highlight gaps such as required funds, human resources, facilities, equipment and more. NCN government and departments will ensure necessary systems and structures are in place the facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan.



MONITORING AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

The NCN Strategic Plan will guide activities in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation over the next five years. It will be reviewed every year and will evolve as per the needs of the Nation.

Various methods will be used to track progress to ensure the plan remains current and relevant. These qualitative and quantitative measurements

will provide a way to measure success, accomplishments, setbacks and stalemates. This information will provide valuable information that will be relayed to NCN Citizens.

These trackable items may include:

- employee recruitment and retention
- governance laws and policies
- profitable, accountable NCN businesses and corporations
- the maintenance of heritage, language and traditions and even increased interest
- improving housing situation
- healthy, fit and thriving Citizens
- · continuous work towards self-sufficiency

Various methods will be used to track progress to ensure the plan remains current and relevant. These qualitative and quantitative measurements will provide a way to measure success, accomplishments,



Next Steps, Implementing the Plan, Monitoring and Measuring Outcomes

Chief and Council and the Strategic Planning committee will work to engage in meaningful participation and feedback with management, organizations and NCN Citizens. We will continue to develop the work/action plan(s) as part of the planning process and report periodically on progress and achievements, while continually assessing and adapting our plans to meet the needs of our Nation and Citizens.

RESOURCING AND IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC/ACTION PLAN

The operational plan outlines the day-to-day program of work based on the aims and practices of the strategic plan. It is also referred to as a "work plan" or "detailed implementation plan." This is reviewed and agreed upon annually or periodically. The details of the operational plan are linked to each objective in the Strategic Plan and will provide information on:

- What will be done next?
- Who is responsible?
- How it will be done?
- What resources will be required (staff, volunteers, users, management, premises, location, equipment and budgets)?
- What success will look like or what targets should be reached and how will it be tracked?
- What the estimated timeframe will be?

TRACKING, MONITORING AND REPORTING

In addition to reviewing NCN's Strategic Plan each year, NCN Government will track progress through various methods, to adapt and revise the plan as necessary. This will ensure the plan is current, relevant to the identified concern areas and provide a way to measure successes, accomplishments and achievements. It will also provide a tool for reporting and communicating to our Citizens.





For more information about the NCN strategies or to obtain a copy of the complete Strategic Plan, please contact:

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