



*Guiding Our Path
to a Brighter Future*



STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Principles • Themes • Goals • Strategies • Actions



Our Vision

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

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Chief and Council

Chief Marcel Moody
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Councillor Bonnie Linklater
Councillor Patrick Linklater
Councillor Shirley L. Linklater
Councillor Willie Moore
Councillor Joe Moose

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

Planning for a Brighter Future

Tansi,

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 Need to be 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

We hope the words contained in this Summary and the full Strategic Plan (available online at ncncree.com or at the NCN Government Office) hold meaning and hope for all our Citizens. The intent of this Plan is not to be rigid, but to provide vision and direction for our NCN Government and people. It will guide us to where we hope to go and map out the way to get there.

We invite you all to read, ask questions and embrace the concepts, suggestions, reflections and principles captured in the Strategic Plan. It was done in the spirit of prosperity and with aspirations to improve the well-being of NCN as a whole. We hope to preserve that spirit as this process unfolds and we all work together to implement the ideas and ultimately celebrate our achievements.

Respectfully yours,

Chief and Council
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

Top row (left to right): Councillors Joe Moose, Willie Moore, Patrick Linklater and Ron D. Spence
Bottom row (left to right): Councillor Shirley Linklater, Chief Marcel Moody and Councillor Bonnie M. Linklater



ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

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.

This Strategic Plan Summary draws its information from many documents and sources, including the revised NCN Kihche'othasowewin (Constitution), Multi-Year Planning Survey, First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plan, Community Surveys, Wuskwatim PDA, PDA Supplement 2, Strategic Planning Overview and community meetings.

NCN has been working toward a fully self-governing First Nation and has achieved great successes over the past several decades. Actively encouraging economic development, NCN nurtures relationships and partnerships with other businesses and governments, invests heavily in economic development, is responsible for its own infrastructure and works to provide increasingly enhanced services to its Citizens. NCN will continue to build on the past successes and leverage all reasonable opportunities with targeted strategic direction.

When compiling this plan we have given careful consideration to the nine defined theme areas. These themes helped categorize each of the strategies. They will impact the decision-making process, resources,

workforce and the funds that are allocated in the implementation/action/work planning.

The nine strategic theme areas below have been considered in all of the 25 defined strategies.

- HUMAN RESOURCES
- ADMINISTRATION
- PROGRAMS
- FINANCE
- KIHCHE'OTHASOWEWIN (CONSTITUTION)
- CULTURE
- ORGANIZATION
- COMMUNICATION
- LINKAGES

More opportunities for feedback will occur periodically to assure that the Strategic Plan remains current and reflects the realities and aspirations of our Citizenship. NCN Chief and Council ask Citizens to keep an open mind, and maintain a positive outlook, when participating in future dialogue. If all participants follow a steady course and stick to fundamental principles, it is assured NCN will overcome obstacles and reach our projected destination.

We can make a difference!

INTERWEAVING OUR CULTURE AND TRADITION INTO THE PROCESS

Developing a Strategic Plan for our Nehetho Nation is a unique process – unlike standard models for businesses or organizations – our worldviews, culture, traditions, beliefs, Elder teachings, storytelling and approaches to government, laws and the connections with the land give us an exclusive perspective.

Our expansive history, location, unique agreements, treaties and trusts all mould and make up who we are, and ultimately influence the goals, strategies and actions we shape. For this reason we selected a culturally appropriate model for the framework of the Strategic Plan, based on a TIPI model designed by other First Nation organizations and adapted to be our own.

The Nisichawayasihk Nehethowuk traditionally live by reference to Kihche’othasowewin (the Great Law of the Creator), which is underpinned by spiritual and philosophical beliefs, values, principles and goals. The traditional customary principles are the support for our lives and all combine to guide and direct the conduct of individuals, families, community and nation. For these reasons the customary principles have been included in the planning of our strategies and are interwoven into each strategy.



NCN'S GOALS AND STRATEGIES WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE

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. The process identified four main goals, and then defined ways to achieve the goals. After this was done, a more detailed process defined the strategies and strategic objectives that follow in this summary document. These goals and strategies are not listed in order of priority.

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Goal 1: Improving Standard of Living JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Strategy 1: Ensuring the Safety and Well-being of NCN Citizens

It is the responsibility of NCN's Justice Committee to assist in interpreting, creating and enforcing laws to protect NCN Citizens and maintain the right to live safely. We strive to promote healthy families and safe communities through collaborative efforts between all community services. We will also work to provide education and awareness of addictions, drug/alcohol concerns, family violence issues, amend laws, refine policies/code, identify community crime watch patrol options, enhance RCMP support and review zero-tolerance initiatives.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Strategy 2: Meeting or Exceeding Quality Standards of Care for NCN Citizens

Health and wellness in our community involves many organizations working together. NCN is fortunate to have holistic care services to provide the foundation of care for all ages. Organizations like the Personal Care Home, NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre, Nurses Station, school dental care and NCN Medicine Lodge are required to work jointly to provide a "full-care" system to NCN Citizens. We will work to have improved collaboration, drug/alcohol treatment, create a comprehensive health framework, improve CFS and social issues, explore women, child and homeless shelter options, protect the identities, culture and kinship ties of Citizens, implement quality health standards and improve mental and physical healthcare. We will also explore disaster management plans, and expanded medical and health services.





EDUCATION, TRAINING AND JOBS

Strategy 3: Enhance Educational/Job/Training Systems, Programs, Facilities and Services to Improve Opportunities

From preschool and kindergarten to high school, university and job training, the roots of future prosperity for NCN lies in providing seamless, beneficial and effective learning. Whether it is improving knowledge of Cree and tradition; training students and new skilled tradespeople; enhancing organizational efficiencies; increasing public involvement; seeking accreditations; planning for a new high school; reducing gang activity and safety in schools; improving our teacher training, or teaching life skills and traditional culture to youth – education and training are the pillars for a stronger Nation.

RECREATION

Strategy 4: Growing and Developing Additional Recreational Activities, Facilities & Programs

A diverse range of sporting, arts and activities are required to broaden the solid foundation of recreational programs in Nelson House. With growing and changing interests of our people and the challenges of increasing facility/program costs, we must carefully manage assets for capacity building, expand or build new facilities, increase participation, expand jointly run programs and continue to hire qualified staff within our budgets. We will also work to develop a Comprehensive Community Recreation Participation Plan.



PUBLIC WORKS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

Strategy 5: Targeting Housing and Water System Crisis with Steps Toward Immediate Action

For many years, housing has been and continues to be one of the biggest concerns that our Nation faces. Poor housing conditions, overcrowding, vandalism and fire damage have added to the ongoing housing shortage and concern. Allocating funds for this work is critical. A recent housing survey identified many Citizens are concerned with overcrowding, mould, a need for better training for home repairs and expressed a need for a multiplex facility. Many Citizens are also interested in ownership of their own home and beautification of the community with gardens. Improvements to our water treatment system are also among the priorities. We will also work to employ more Citizens for housing construction, educate and train our people, improve housing code/standards, insure houses, report effectively, clarify mandates and explore the feasibility of a multiplex.





SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Strategy 6: Improve Social Well-being Via Sustainable Programming/Services that Promote Self-sufficiency

Social assistance was developed to offer financial support to First Nation members. However the impacts have created dependencies and other social concerns for our Citizens. Although we will 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 – we will also work toward generating opportunities for Citizens to join the workforce. If we want life to improve in our Nation, we must also contribute and work toward prosperity and self-sufficiency via our own means, transition Citizens off social assistance into the workforce, define income inequality and explore linkages with program to address socio-economic indicators. We will promote and develop more job opportunities, encourage life-skills training and financial management, do an analysis of our workforce, review SA policies, explore paperless payment options and take “active measure” initiatives to empower NCN Citizens.



Goal 2: Creating a Strong Nehetho Government

GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Strategy 7: Establish a Foundation of Accountability and Transparency in Governance

Any model of Government aspires to deliver maximum results with the investments made into their public service, programs and economies. Multiple levels of responsibility must be defined to deliver programs and services, assure public trust, security and continuity through efficient use of resources. Overall integrity in the application of laws, codes/standards and policies will also be essential, along with improved organizational structure, audit standards, reporting, delegation and options for open-meeting procedures.





KIHCHÉ'OTHASOWEWIN, LAWS AND POLICIES

Strategy 8: Update and Improve Our Kihche'othasowewin

NCN Chief and Council are pleased to move to the next stage of the formal review process to develop and finalize the draft Kihche'othasowewin (Constitution) for NCN. This stage consists of the final consultation meeting with NCN Citizens prior to a vote to adopt our Kihche'othasowewin. We will work to ensure Treaty and Inherent Rights for NCN Citizens (regardless of residency); layout a framework with principles, categories and timeframes for completion; document and define Chief and Council portfolios; improve management practices; clearly communicate the definition of roles and authorities; improve understanding of provincial and federal legislation; ensure our process is not solely driven by the legal process or advise and become fully self-governing in the future as we incrementally reassert our jurisdiction.

Strategy 9: Improve Organizational Structure of NCN Government, Departments, Programs and Organizations

NCN's organizational structure defines how activities such as task allocation, coordination and supervision are directed toward the achievement of organizational aims. We require the structure to act like a viewing glass through which individuals both within the organization and from an outside perspective can relate and understand how all the "working parts" of the First Nation relate to, and connect with each other. Understanding the structure also helps to identify where inefficiencies or strengths may be identified. We will work to improve organizational hierarchy, develop policies for organizational law, design an accountability framework, add staff or services where needed, develop a community plan, track progress and explore preferred practices used by other governments.

Strategy 10: Develop and Improve Laws and Refine Law Enforcement Procedures

Laws and law enforcement generally refers to any system by which a governing group act in an organized manner to ensure the laws are created, managed and clear. Those laws are enforced by discovering, deterring, rehabilitating, or disciplining any persons who violate the rules governing the Nation. As a self-governing First Nation, NCN is responsible for managing and adapting our own laws and determining effective ways to enforce them. We will also define roles and responsibilities, explore Citizen crime-watch programs, protect land, treaty and inherent rights, establish a code of ethics/conduct, work to remove Band Council Resolutions (BCRs) and amend election laws.



Strategy 11: Strengthen Relationships Between NCN Organization Board of Directors and Chief and Council

To facilitate NCN Citizen participation in planning and management of services with NCN Government, its organizations, corporations and departments, a board of directors should be assigned where appropriate. Essentially it is the role of the board of directors to hire the Director/CEO or general manager of the organization and assess the overall direction and strategy of the organization. The Director/CEO or general manager is responsible for hiring all of the other employees and overseeing the day-to-day operation of the business and reporting to the Board. We must also ensure board rules, goals, strategies, recruiting, assessment, evaluation, decision-making, process and planning are aligned with that of Citizens and Chief and Council.

Strategy 12: Ensure Integrity, Ethics, Inclusion and Fairness

To make sure the NCN Government is held accountable, acts with fairness, is unbiased, shows integrity and honesty, and works in an ethical manner; a mechanism for dispute resolution will be established, refined and set in place. Outside experts may be contracted for mediation and codes of conduct implemented. This will ensure, on- and off-reserve NCN Citizens, Government officials and employees of NCN-operated entities, are entitled to a fair resolution process for legal matters as well as concerns and conflicts between Citizens and NCN Government. This will be done under the enforcement of NCN policies and laws.

Strategy 13: Preserve, Document and Recognize NCN's Customary Laws and Practices

Our NCN Customary Laws govern the conduct and co-existence of the families and peoples over the millennia. These principles and customs are evident in the culture, language, beliefs, protocols, and traditions that have survived through time and continue to exist in modern context. Customary law is recognized, not because it is backed by the power of written or government laws, but because each individual recognizes the benefits of behaving in accordance with other individuals' expectations – given that others also behave as expected. We will find ways to preserve and pass on this knowledge, improve two-way communication with Citizens, historians/elders and record or document our Customary Laws.

Strategy 14: Enter into Self-Government Negotiations

To promote NCN autonomy and control over our Nehetho lives, tradition and culture through exercising self-determination and self-government initiatives, we must work with other levels of government to negotiate and “stand for” our own interests. If we wish to restore and obtain greater authorities over our lands, resources, service areas and programs, we will need to effectively continue to deal with other external governments at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels. We must also know and define our treaties, entitlements, rights and privileges, retain and continually enhance our legal responsibilities regarding these matters and flex our rights while seizing optimal opportunities.



CULTURE LANGUAGE AND TRADITION

Strategy 15: **Declare, Redefine, Preserve and Maintain Our Nehetho Language**

Our Cree (Nehetho) language and tradition has been a significant part of who we are since time immemorial. NCN Citizens refer to our presence in North America going back 'Mechemach' Ohchi – to a time that does not have a date. The diversity and long history of our culture will continue to form who we are as a First Nations People. Significant actions must be taken to ensure we preserve and celebrate the blessings of the Creator and the teachings passed on by our ancestors by protecting/teaching our written and spoken language, recognizing customary laws, documenting and standardizing our Nehetho written language, and by creating archives, libraries, landmarks and museums for our history and artifacts.

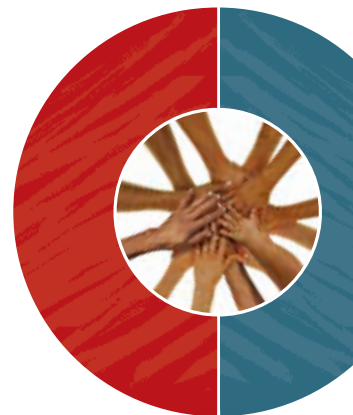
Strategy 16: **Create Programs and Services that are Culturally Sensitive**

To respect our traditions and history, we will work to restore practices of accountability and efficiency that are effectively delivered to meet the diverse cultural needs of NCN Citizens. We must enhance programs and services to meet the growing demands for traditional food, ceremonies, camp-outs, powwows and festivals; include cultural aspects in more events; and honour our NCN medicine people and traditional/spiritual leaders. We must also value our bereavement policies to align them with tradition and budget responsibilities.

LINKAGES AND COMMUNICATION

Strategy 17: **Boost Community Involvement and Two-Way Communication**

Nelson House is a small community of connected families, and, although spread out over a large area, it is critical for Citizens to be involved in the affairs of the Nation, support one another and enlist to help achieve the goals of the Nation. The NCN Government and organizations are also accountable to keep Citizens familiar and involved with Chief and Council's activities. We must improve linkages, increase participation/sharing of information, develop a communication strategy, clearly define federal and provincial jurisdictions, improve elections, define citizenship rules, improve Cree and English radio, TV, electronic and print news distribution, conduct meaningful community surveys and explore advisory council or off-reserve strategic plans.





USKE PUMENEKEWIN (LANDS, RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT)

Strategy 18:

Manage, Protect, Preserve and Monitor Our Lands and Waterways While Enhancing and Teaching Our Way of Life



NCN has identified three overarching priorities in planning for land use including managing and monitoring our lands and water, teaching our way of life and protection/preservation of our land. We will work to ratify the Land Code; develop a Comprehensive Land Use plan and Resource Management Plan; enhance lands policies; increase reserve-lands owed; define resource governance board roles and responsibilities; fulfill Manitoba Hydro's monitoring study requirements (through to 2012) and include community-driven perspectives in decision-making.



3 Goal 3: Enhance Economic Development and Local Economy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 19:

Create a Long-term, Stable Economic Development and Local Economy to Enhance Self-sufficiency and Reduce Dependencies

NCN's economic development will focus on the state of our NCN Governments ability to improve our standard of living by initiating revenue generating, fiscal arrangements and economic opportunities in the public and private sectors. This will include the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of higher wealth, and the creation of an overall improved, sustainable quality of life. We will work to achieve greater control over economic development and income-assistance funding/programs; explore regional or community health sector opportunities and revenue-sharing casinos; create an economic/business development fund; explore partnerships to develop natural resources; develop a marketing plan; expand urban reserve opportunities and maximize NCN's existing business, housing construction, programs and infrastructure.



WUSKWATIM PDA

Strategy 20: Ensuring Optimal Benefits for NCN from the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement and Supplemental Agreements

The 10-year process leading to approval of the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement involved intensive expert negotiations between NCN and Hydro along with comprehensive consultations with NCN Citizens. The negotiation process first produced an Agreement-in-Principle and further negotiations resulted in a Summary of Understanding, which formed the foundation for the final Project Development Agreement. The Agreement provided an equity partnership in the project of up to 33 percent. The project also offers considerable economic benefits to NCN through jobs, training and business opportunities. Through its ownership position, NCN will receive long-term benefits via sustainable income from power sales. Since the finalization of the PDA Supplement and PDA Supplement 2, NCN must continue to ensure maximum returns and benefits for our Citizens moving forward. We will need to continue to monitor the current global and project economic impacts and ensure the Agreement works optimally for both NCN and our partners. We will also explore amalgamation of Trusts.



Goal 4: Improving Finance Administration and Capital

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FINANCE

Strategy 21: Provide Sound Fiscal and Financial Planning, Advice, Analysis and Coordination in Support of Informed Policy and Decision-making

NCN's finances depend on informed decisions and responsible management of our revenues and expenses. NCN must practice open, accountable and fiscally responsible government and advance strategic corporate initiatives through interdepartmental or inter-organizational cooperation. We will also develop and administer effective financial management frameworks in which departments and corporations can administer their budgets with appropriate independence and accountability; reduce deficits; automate systems; consolidate finances and auditing methods; standardize annual reporting and policies; attract, develop, train and engage talented people to continue to provide service to the public; provide reporting and updates to Citizens in a timely manner and ensure timely reporting to governments for AANDC and other finances.



ADMINISTRATION

Strategy 22: Ensure Effective and Responsible Administrative Functions

Administrative practices and effective admin functions are important to the operations of all NCN run organizations, departments and entities to ensure the proper function of day-to-day operations and management. NCN must automate more functions online and invest in technology; work to improve efficiencies in staffing and management by exploring ways to delegate responsibilities and maximize productivity; centralize information management and archives; review security/structure of filing system; improve employee orientation/training; improve and enhance feedback mechanisms; balance support and control; ensure “quality control”; and develop effective administrative policies and functions.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Strategy 23: Train, Recruit and Enlist a Competent Workforce and Volunteers

The responsibility for workforce development has typically been placed on the government’s and public schools. Schools, training and the employer are required to create a responsible, well-trained workforce. Workforce development often takes a holistic approach – addressing issues such as matching jobs to skills, connecting Citizens to suitable jobs and ensuring workplaces and benefits are suitable to expectations. Programs to train workers are often part of a network of other human service or community opportunities. We must connect with training partners, design culturally respectful education programs, improve post-secondary education opportunities, retain qualified personnel, increase NCN’s pool of professionals, review HRM roles, improve work standards and environment, provide apprenticeships and recruit more volunteers.

Strategy 24: Administering Proficient, Capable Human Resource Management

NCN’s Human Resource Management (HRM) is designed to maximize employee performance and perform actions outlined in the strategic objectives. HRM is primarily concerned with the management of people within our NCN Government and organizations and focuses on policies and systems. We will continue to create recruitment/retention initiatives, improve safe-work environments, improve continuing-education and professional development, improve social/emotional health of workers, explore wage parity options, improve job description/policies and identify learning and training needs of staff.

CAPITAL

Strategy 25: Grow and Enhance the Management of Capital Assets

NCN’s growth in capital has helped achieve improved wealth, however, we must continue to improve our capital and develop viable assets for our Nation while growing our returns on investments. To achieve our strategic objectives, we must continue to build on capital assets inventory as part of the auditing process; assign personnel to centralize capital, fleet, deficit and/or lease management and planning; improve tendering processes; improve record of capital assets; establish a reserve fund and building maintenance/management plan; and link capital more directly with economic development.



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.



Guiding Our Path to a Brighter Future



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

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