

KEEPING YOUR PLAN ALIVE

Justin Grift

Indigenous Planning Studio

February, 2021

Summary

This fact sheet explains how comprehensive community plans can be implemented and sustained over a long period. It explores general strategies that can help maintain ongoing excitement and commitment to the plans by encouraging new updates and continued community involvement.

Keywords: community engagement, managing the process, building capacity

Why is it Important to Create Plans with Longevity?

Community plans take time, effort, money and many other resources. Your plan should be something you are excited about and proud of! This is why it is important to ensure they remain relevant until all goals are reached. To be successful, plans must be sustained and adequately implemented.¹ The lifespan of a plan will vary, depending on the aim of the plan and if a timeline is included. Community plans should strive to have long-lasting impacts for their communities and future generations.² A plan that is created and remains inactive or is neglected could generate distrust among community members and those involved in the planning process.

Part of the Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) mandate is to foster relationships, community involvement and capacity building.³ These outcomes will have more significant benefits if they are sustained over time. CCP is also defined as a holistic process that encourages a sustainable, self-sufficient future and strengthens governance capacity in communities.⁴ A process-based plan often spans over some time and reaps benefits for a community along the way (see Figure 1). Therefore, it is important to ensure that plans last!

When should you start thinking about keeping a plan alive?

Immediately upon beginning the initial stages of the CCP. During the development and pre-planning phase, the intention should be for a long-lasting process.⁵ Those involved in formulating the plan should also establish who and which groups will oversee and update the plan in the future.

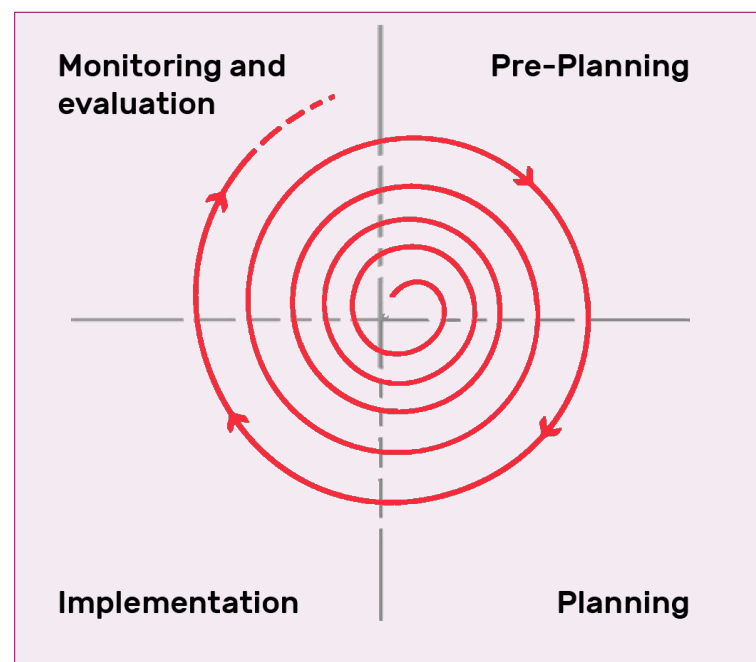


Figure 1 | The Planning Cycle: Spiral Diagram

Source: Adapted from (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada / Indigenous Services Canada. "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, Third Edition." 2013. Accessed October 24, 2016, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/daM/daM-IntER-bC/sTagIng/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf. p. 14.)

The spiral diagram represents the ongoing, non-linear, process of a community plan. With ongoing commitment and monitoring the plan progresses and continues to grow bigger. It can harvest benefits throughout its application and use.⁶

How Long is Long Enough?

It depends on the plan and the project in mind. A comprehensive community plan can last through multiple generations; it depends on how often it is updated and the community's commitment.⁷ That being said, a plan may have run its course and is no longer relevant; at this time, it may be more beneficial to begin a new plan. With ongoing communications and regular community engagements, members and those involved in facilitating the plan should know when a plan has run its course and when the set goals have been achieved.

Who is Involved in Keeping a Plan Alive?

There are a variety of people who can be involved in keeping a CCP alive. From the onset, your planning team, who creates the plan, must delegate tasks and responsibilities to those who will oversee the process. Each person involved in these phases plays a part in the longevity of the plan. Ongoing commitment and leadership from the Chief and Council is also important. The involvement and advocacy of community members is often critical too. Therefore, everyone should be involved in keeping it alive.

What are Some Strategies to Keeping Plans Alive?

1. Risk management (during Pre-planning and Planning phases)

Challenges that may disrupt your plan in the future should be anticipated and considered early on. At the pre-planning stage, you and your team should list the potential risks that may arise in any planning phase. This would allow you to predict where things could take longer to complete or that may require more community engagement. After writing down these risks, you and your planning team should prepare a response for each. This will allow for the plan to move forward without too many obstacles.⁸

Here is a list of risks that could occur and impede on the success and longevity of your plan:

- Increase in costs and lack of resources or funding
- Change in Chief, Council or administration during any stages of the plan⁹
- Time: the implementation and development of the plan could require more time than allocated initially
- Lack of technological resources (printers, computers, access to email, etc.), or lack of accessibility and/or technological skills
- Other external factors could impede the success of the plan (pandemic, fire, flood)¹⁰
- Conflicts or disagreements between community groups and the administration in your community

2. Transform long-term plans into short-term goals (Pre-planning Phase)

As mentioned above, plans are usually processes that last over a certain amount of time. They can vary from 10-year plans to more short-term projects. During the process, you may find that your community loses sight of the broader goals and objectives. To avoid this, you should create short-term targets.¹¹ These targets should be straightforward and manageable. Keep it as simple as possible. Articulating these shorter targets among the planning team, administration, Chief, Council and community is also essential. Identifying who is responsible for addressing these targets will lead to your larger goals being met (see Figure 2).

A planning team can consist of

a lands manager, consultant, planner, Chief, Council and other community groups.



Figure 2 | Flow chart with short-term targets, for long-term plans

3. Evaluation: analyze, revision, updates (Monitoring phase)

Evaluating the effectiveness of your plan and how it is benefitting your community is important to not only see how you are doing during the implementation but also at what is working and what is not.¹² An evaluation can include reviewing a checklist, discussing progress or handing out a survey to your community for feedback.¹³ This will also allow for your community to see the status and the results of the plan. Evaluating your plan and its effectiveness can be done by establishing key performance indicators (KPIs).

An evaluation also leaves the possibility for new goals and objectives to be established, and for the community to personalize the plan even more.¹⁴ A revision of the plan would also allow for new updates on the current challenges and situations present in your community.¹⁵ Revitalizing your plan with new colours and styles should also be considered. Ensure that current technologies and software are being used.

KPIs

are tools that determine how effectively an organization is achieving its objectives. See [Understanding KPIs](#).



Risk Management

Anticipate, identify and plan for setbacks and unannounced events that may alter the plan.



Set manageable targets

Avoid getting overwhelmed by a large plan and set smaller objectives.



Evaluate and revise

Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan regularly and update with new technologies when possible.



Remain transparent

Be prepared to share what is working and not working with your community, this will help foster trust and confidence.



Community engagement

Encourage community input on the plan among all ages and groups often.

Figure 3 | Summary of strategies to keeping plans exciting

4. Outcome sharing, transparency (throughout ALL phases)

It is critical that there is a great degree of transparency for all involved with the plan. Allowing the Chief, Council, administration and members of the community to see every step of the process will lead to greater satisfaction along the way.¹⁶ Ongoing openness will also instill trust, which will propel the plan to excel in the future.

5. Community engagement (throughout ALL phases)

Keep conversations going, encourage everyone to discuss and invite all to the table. Keeping all members involved and excited is crucial. Engaging with your members will also allow for opinions and ideas to be shared that could simplify or customize aspects of the plan. These engagements can be facilitated in different ways to reach the Elders of your community and all ages and groups. Activities like school workshops, council meetings, outdoor presentations would all help foster curiosity, trust among members and long-lasting relationships.¹⁷

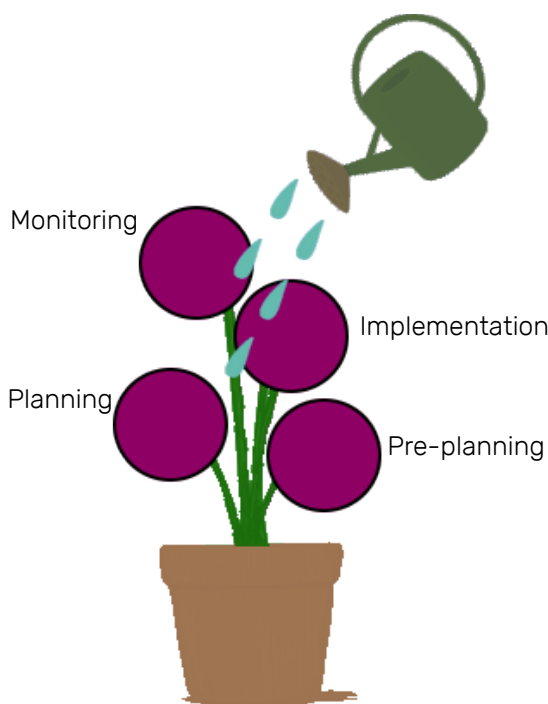


Figure 4 | Nourishing the plan at all stages, to encourage a long-lasting plan

What resources are needed to keep plans alive?

Encouraging the continuity of a plan will require a large amount of community capacity. As seen above, this can be done through different types of community engagements, group gatherings and workshops. Giving members up-to-date information, demonstrating the outcomes and the benefits of a plan will provide more transparency and greater community support.

Other resources that will be necessary are financial support and time. Once a plan is launched, finances will be necessary to update and evaluate. Some financial support may be required to facilitate community engagements. Time is also critical in keeping a plan on course. Investing significant amounts of time in engagements, reviews and check-ins will be important.

For more information on collecting input from your community, see [Engaging Your Community](#).

Final Thoughts

A plan that remains relevant and is long-lasting can provide your community longstanding results. This requires work from the community as a whole. Consistent commitment from Chief and Council, Elders, community leaders, and youth is all important. Having regular public engagements, updating the plan, predicting potential risks and remaining transparent, all play a role in the longevity of a plan. In sum, a good plan needs good and sustained support from all.

Further Reading

CPP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia by Indigenous Northern Affairs Canada (2017)

This handbook elaborates on all the stages of the CCP, including a section on monitoring and evaluation that would be helpful to look over.

https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-REGIONS/STAGING/texte-text/ccphandbook4ed_1613061207384_eng.pdf

Gaining Momentum: Sharing 96 Best Practices of First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning by Jeff Cook (2009)

This resource provides ideas and practices that would help keep a long-lasting plan. It includes practices that can be adopted throughout all phases of the plan.

<http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/comprehensive-community-planning-long-version.pdf>

Endnotes

- ¹ Jeff Cook, "Gaining Momentum: Sharing 96 Best Practices of First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning", Beringia Community Planning Inc., 2009, p.113.
- ² James Roach, National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association, "Developing a Community Land Use Plan", Vancouver, BC, 2018, p. 15
- ³ Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, Third Edition," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2016, Accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf. p.1.
- ⁴ INAC, 2016, p.1.
- ⁵ INAC, 2016, p.4.
- ⁶ INAC, 2016, p.18.
- ⁷ INAC, 2016, p.13.
- ⁸ INAC, 2016, p.49.
- ⁹ INAC, 2016, p.49.
- ¹⁰ INAC, 2016, p.49.
- ¹¹ Jeff Cook, 2009, p.101.
- ¹² NADF, 2017, p. 123.
- ¹³ NADF, 2017, p. 125.
- ¹⁴ James Roach, NALMA, 2018, p. 30.
- ¹⁵ Jeff Cook, 2009, p. 116-119.
- ¹⁶ Pikangikum First Nation, "Our Healing Journey" Pikangikum First Nation's Comprehensive Community Health Plan", 2014, p. 171.
- ¹⁷ James Roach, NALMA, 2018, p. 35.