

ESTABLISHING A PLANNING TEAM

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Summary

This fact sheet outlines what the planning team is, who the members of the team are, when they operate, and why they are important.

Keywords: planning team, managing the process, funding, building capacity

What is the Role of the Planning Team?

Your planning team guides, organizes, and develops your planning process. They give advice to Council about projects, policies, and procedures. However, your planning team should not make all of the decisions for your community. Instead, your planning team should engage with the community to understand their views. Your team must also consider the directions and recommendations by Chief and Council and administration.

One of your planning team's first tasks is to identify planning projects to include in the Community Plan. The planning team also:

- **Leads** the planning process, communicates with the community, and carries out related tasks as required;
- **Creates** an annual work plan;
- **Completes** and applies training related to the planning projects;
- **Interprets** community feedback to make recommendations to Council¹

Roles of the Individual Planning Team Members

The roles of individual team members is based on the tasks listed above. Before work begins, it is important to have each of your planning team members agree to expectations, meeting schedules, and roles of the group. This agreement is often called the terms of reference. Consistent attendance is important so that all team members share in the discussions and work.

Your planning team must work well together to be effective. Tension among team members can stop discussion, prevent ideas from flowing, and slow progress on projects. When forming a planning team, consider people who are able to work well together and even have fun. With that said, it is important to stay on track and make sure meetings focus on planning projects. All planning team members must be prepared to:

- Come prepared to each meeting;
- Bring forward the best, unbiased information possible;
- Attend capacity building events;
- Be informed on current events relevant to the team mandate; and
- Act in the best interest of the community.²

Who is Involved in the Planning Team?

Planning teams often include volunteers, band administrators, and elected leaders from the community. Selecting members for your planning team is an important step and must be done early in the planning process. It is important for your planning team to include people who can represent different groups in the community, but this can also be very complicated. Below are some ideas to help you start thinking about who might be on the team:

- Administrators, managers, or staff the band office;
- A mix of men and women;
- Board of Directors;
- Chief and Council;
- Leaders of local organizations and community groups;
- A mix of family groups, Elders, and youth.³

There are a few other considerations when choosing team members. It is important that members are prepared for the time commitment that the team requires. Planning team members should also be trustworthy and reliable. They should enjoy participating in discussion, passionate about your community, and eager to solve the issues that it faces. It is important to select members who know what is happening in the community and are able to access local knowledge holders.

“We involved the entire Squiala community. We have a representative Community Development Plan committee including elders, youth, council and staff. We also have a strong project team with fully involved council, staff, planning consultants, legal advisor, technical support from INAC, and staff and politicians from the municipality of Chilliwack. We let consultants go when they wanted to tell us what they thought we wanted, instead of listening to the community members.”¹⁴

– Squiala First Nation of the Slo:lo Nation, British Columbia

Who Adds to the Planning Team’s Success?

A good Community Plan relies on good direction and community consultation. While many First Nations plan without help from a professional planner, others find them valuable. If a professional planner is involved, they should help teach skills in the community. They should be a mentor and trainer to members of your planning team, “and not the leader or decision-maker.”⁴

A ‘community champion’ or the ‘planning champion’ can be helpful to your planning team. The champion often introduces “the idea of planning to the community and leadership, and can drive the process, gain support, and help build a planning team.”⁵ The champion brings people together, making them feel comfortable and included. They are passionate about working with and learning from members in your community.⁶ They may come forward as a result of a proposed development, a move into the Treaty Land Entitlement process, or an issue that gets people talking. Just like your planning team, the “champion needs to be based in the community, respected by community members, and prepared for a long-term commitment to the planning process.”⁷

In the implementation stage, your community starts carrying out projects identified in the planning stage. Lengthy projects often involved professionals like project managers and consultants. These people manage and oversee the day-to-day progress of projects.⁸ Regular progress meetings with the project management team, planning team, Chief and Council, and administration are important. These meetings make sure any “large changes to the costs, timelines or nature or quality of work” reflect the community’s desires.⁹

When Does the Planning Team Operate?

The planning team is involved with the Community Plan at every step in the planning cycle (Figure 1).

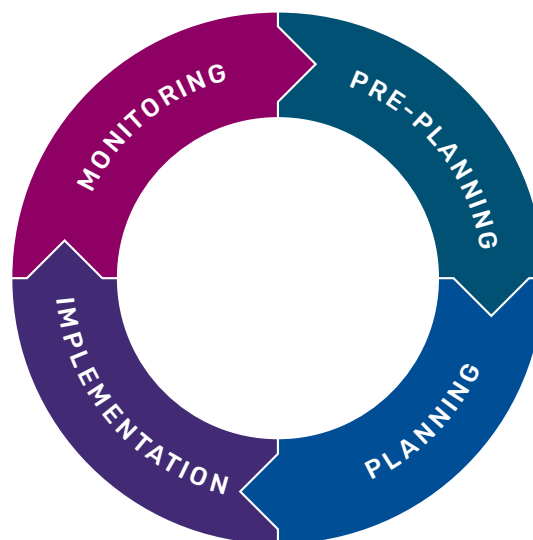


Figure 1 | The planning cycle.

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.) Used with permission.



Planning team members are part of the planning process until Chief and Council:

- Reviews the planning team and decides that membership should change to best serve the community;
- Disbands the team; or
- Dismisses a member for not adhering to the team's Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct.

Otherwise, team members can stay as long as there is need and funding.¹³

Final Thoughts

Your planning team makes sure your planning process stays on track from beginning to end. The team leads the process, organizes events, listens to community input, oversees projects, and reports progress back to community members.

The team works closely with Chief and Council, consultants, and community members to create a Community Plan everyone can be proud of.

Further Reading

Tsal'alh Comprehensive Community Planning Team Terms of Reference by Seaton Lake Band

This document makes recommendations to Council regarding administration of projects, policies, procedures that support the effective pre-planning, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Tsal'alh CCP.

<http://fnbc.info/resource/tsal-alh-comprehensive-community-planning-team-terms-reference>

Comprehensive Community Planning Training Program Materials by Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources

This provides variety of information resources to participants to support their efforts in the development and implementation of an integrated community sustainability plan. Resources are also available in English and French.

<http://www.yourcier.org/comprehensive-community-planning-training-program-materials.htm>

Endnotes

- 1 Seaton Lake Band, "Tsal'alh Comprehensive Community Planning Team Terms of Reference," *New Relationship Trust*, 2014, <http://fnbc.info/resource/tsal-alh-comprehensive-community-planning-team-terms-reference>.
- 2 Seaton Lake Band, 2014.
- 3 Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, "Comprehensive Community Planning Training Program Materials," *Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources*, 2007-2009, <http://www.yourcier.org/comprehensive-community-planning-training-program-materials.htm>, p. 2.
- 4 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, "CCP Handbook Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, Second Edition," *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*, 2013, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1377629855838/1377632394645>, p. 84.
- 5 Indian and Northern Development Affairs Canada, "CCP Handbook - Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia, First Edition," *Indian and Northern Development Affairs Canada*, 2006, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb_1100100021973_eng.pdf, p. 20.
- 6 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 18.
- 7 Indian and Northern Development Affairs Canada, 2006, p. 20.
- 8 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 48.
- 9 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 48.
- 10 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 38.
- 11 Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013, p. 45.
- 12 Indian and Northern Development Affairs Canada, 2006, p. 56.
- 13 Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, 2007-2009.
- 14 Indian and Northern Development Affairs Canada, 2006, p. 62.