

GETTING EXCITED ABOUT PLANNING

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Summary

This fact sheet provides information about how community planning can be a valuable tool for Indigenous communities seeking to plan for their future and work toward greater self-sufficiency.

Keywords: community engagement, managing the process, building capacity

What is Community Planning?

Community planning is setting a direction for the future of your community. This includes the use of land, resources, services, and facilities. The end result should improve the health and well-being of your community.¹ In First Nations, community planning is a process that helps communities become more self-sufficient and build capacity.² A central idea in community planning is that the process is driven by the community rather than an exclusive group of leaders. The community planning process should be the result of a group effort and reflect the community's vision for its future.

Planning in Indigenous Communities

Planning in Indigenous communities is unique for a number of reasons. Indigenous communities have different social, economic, and legal systems than non-Indigenous communities. Also, planning is not required in Indigenous communities. In non-Indigenous, long-range planning is required and must meet provincial standards.

Even though it is not required, many Indigenous communities see the benefits of planning. Community planning is an ongoing holistic process that touches on many topics like those in Figure 1. It helps your community build a roadmap to better sustainability, self-sufficiency, and capacity. Community planning includes input from as many community members as possible, including Elders, youth, and family representatives. Including a wide range of community members is important to the process. This helps community members understand other people's views on community needs, values, and priorities.³



Figure 1 | Planning Areas Wheel.

Adapted from (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada / Indigenous Services Canada. "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in BC." Digital image. 2013. Accessed October 24, 2017. http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb2013_1378922610124_eng.pdf. p. 2.) Used with permission.

Community planning can help your First Nation work toward planning activities and goals including:

- Creating a shared community vision for your future,
- Defining priorities for future development, and
- Highlighting important cultural and ecological places that need to be or protected.

Often one of the first priorities for Indigenous communities is creating a Community Plan. These plans should be driven by the community. Information gathered through community engagement helps to build Community Plan. This often includes what its priorities are and what it wants for its future.

Strategic Planning Documents

There are a number of names for long-range planning documents. In non-Indigenous communities in Manitoba, they are usually called Development Plans.

In Indigenous communities, they are usually called Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs) or Community Land Use Plans (CLUPs). These are only two examples, however, and there may be many other names for this type of planning document.

This set of fact sheets will use Community Plan to refer to any type of community-driven visionary or strategic planning document.

Why Plan?

The purpose of planning is to discover your community's vision, goals, and priorities. These are presented in a formal document known as a Community Plan. The plan is then used to guide future development. There are many benefits to having a Community Plan. This type of document sets and communicates your community's shared vision. It also provides a roadmap to achieve that vision.

Working toward these goals can build up your community. Planning can also help your community become more self-sufficient. Because it is not required on reserve lands, however, many First Nations need to communicate basic information about planning to community members and councils. This shows how they can benefit from a planning process.

Demonstrating the Value of Planning

Indigenous planning has always existed. Indigenous communities pre-date Canada and were planned according to their own traditions and sets of practices.⁴ Since there has not been of history of formal, regulated planning

Once implemented, an effective community plan can:

- Empower your First Nation by putting your community in control of creating its own future
- Build capacity within your community by developing skills
- Improve communication within your government
- Improve communication between government and community members
- Coordinate decision making efforts
- Identify and solve problems
- Create a long-term vision that can help link projects beyond short election cycles
- Coordinate future development
- Anticipate future infrastructure and development needs
- Identify and protect valuable places, resources, traditions, cultural values, and practices
- Celebrate your traditions and culture
- Establish a positive vision for your community
- Address negative or painful community issues
- Promote healing and reconciliation
- Attract investment by communicating a clear interest and direction⁵

within Indigenous communities, planning is a new concept for many Indigenous communities. If your community is interested in planning, introduce the concept of planning to community members and councils. This should be done in a way that shows the potential value of planning for the community. To build support for the process, it is important for your community to take time to understand the benefits of planning and address questions or concerns. This also helps to build the relationships and participation required for successful community planning.

It is also important to communicate specific benefits and opportunities relevant to your community. This shows the value of planning to community and council members by creating a discussion. There are a number of ways to do this. One may be showing examples of other communities' plans and explaining how they helped the communities. The Community Plans included in the Additional Resources section below may be a good starting point. For more about how to use existing examples in order to demonstrate value,

see the fact sheet on Conducting Precedent Studies. A precedent study is usually done by the community's planning team. The planning team is the group of people selected to manage planning processes in a community.

For more information about this, see the fact sheet called *Establishing the Planning Team*.

Final Thoughts

Planning can be a helpful tool to develop new skills, build capacity, strengthen relationships, and create a shared vision for the future. More importantly, planning can be a way for your community to work toward self-sufficiency and control over your future. As First Nations plan for the future, we see the positive impacts continue to unfold.

Further Reading

CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in BC by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

This handbook discusses how community planning can benefit communities and breaks down the community planning process into stages. The stages outlined in this handbook present only one approach to Indigenous Community Planning

Indigenous Community Plans

Looking at the experiences of other First Nations can help to demonstrate the value of planning to community and council members in your own community. There are many other Indigenous Community Plans freely available online

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| Westbank First Nation Land Use Plan | http://www.wfn.ca/docs/2007-01-land-use-law-schedule-a.pdf |
| Tsawout Comprehensive Community Plan | http://tsawout.com/files/Lands/CCP/Tsawout_CCP_1-52.pdf |
| ?Aq'am Community Strategic Plan | http://www.aqam.net/sites/default/files/AQAM_Our_Thinking_v2.pdf |

Endnotes

- 1 Canadian Institute of Planners, "About | CIP," *Canadian Institute of Planners*, (n.d), <https://www.cip-icu.ca/About>
- 2 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "CCP Handbook: Comprehensive Community Planning for First Nations in British Columbia," *Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada*, 2006, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-BC/STAGING/texte-text/ccphb_1100100021973_eng.pdf
- 3 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006
- 4 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006
- 5 Hirini Matunga, "Theorizing Indigenous Planning," in *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning*, eds. David C. Natcher, Ryan Christopher Walker, & Theodore S. Jojola, MQUP, 2013, p. 3-32.