

PATHWAYS TO GOOD GOVERNANCE



Part A: Governance

This governance section of the draft plan was developed through consultation with the special reference group established for CCP planning, but also draw heavily on the strategic plan tabled in January 2015 by the MCFN Governance Coordinating Committee.

Definitions

Governance: *Governance refers to the leadership and management components of community decision-making (including processes of grassroots community engagement in the governance process); as well as the oversight of various funds and resources of the First Nation; the protocols, processes and rules by which that leadership and management takes place; and the prevailing policies, priorities, activities and the working culture created by those entrusted with governments positions.*

Issues, challenges and opportunities

1. The Missanabie Cree First Nation will never really be able to achieve its aspirations as long as it restricts itself to the provisions of the Indian Act. We need to imagine a different governance future that is rooted in our traditional values and wisdom, but tailored to 21st-century realities and possibilities.
2. A major challenge is the scattered and urban nature of the Missanabie Cree membership. How members can more effectively participate in the ongoing work of community governance is a key question to be resolved. A great rethinking of how governance can be carried out in the 21st century will be needed.
3. Lack of adequate financing to pay for governance related activities is another crucial barrier.
4. How Missanabie resettlement in our homeland will be integrated into community governance presents another key question.
5. The Nation has a number of initiatives underway to work on this issue (e.g. the Governance Coordination Committee has produced a draft governance strategic plan).
6. Aspects of this issue involve how membership is determined and how the governance process itself will operate (e.g. will we draw on traditional governance processes?).
7. As well, the Nation needs to make wise use of both regional and provincial First Nations organizations that it is a part of (such as Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, Chiefs of Ontario, and Northeast Superior Chief's Forum etc.) to ensure that these partnerships add real value to the Nation's development.
8. In spite of the many efforts that the Nation makes to communicate more effectively with and to solicit participation from its membership, there is still a general sense that our communication needs to be strengthened, so that all who care to participate in our governance processes are adequately informed about what is happening and have practical avenues to be engaged.
9. Participants in the Community Story consultations said they would like to see a stronger voice for all community members, but especially for youth, women and elders to be engaged in the governance system.

10. On the other hand, community members need to be engaged to more fully participate and to step forward as volunteers in the work of achieving common development goals.
11. The Council sometimes struggles with internal issues, which are reflective of disunity within the Nation as a whole. This can sometimes be a serious problem. Internal consultation and other processes of Chief and Council need to be improved to enhance efficiency and unity.
12. In addition to paying for the human resources Missanabie needs, investing in and developing the capacity of Missanabie people to participate as full, conscious and highly skilled actors (and not just passive recipients of the services of others) in the process of community development is a fundamental goal of Nation building. Building up our people is Nation building. Therefore a comprehensive human resource development strategy will be required, along with the necessary funding to do this critical work.
13. There is sometimes tension around the role of elected leaders in their relationship with Band staff. Just where the boundaries of responsibility lie is sometimes either unclear or ignored. A new protocol is needed, spelling out the roles, responsibilities, boundaries and limits of authority of all players in order to maximize effective collaboration for the benefit of the Nation.
14. Individualistic as opposed to collective thinking creates barriers to finding common ground, and to achieving a collective understanding of where we are, where we want to go, and the best ways to achieve our goals.
15. Loss of our traditional language and cultural teachings by many of our members has left critical gaps in our collective understanding about who we are as a people and how we need to be together in order to make our Nation strong. If our governance is to be built on the foundation of our traditional knowledge and identity, then we need to strengthen the foundation of our people's knowledge and understanding of our own history, our traditional values and teachings, and our language. The first challenge in developing a Constitution for Missanabie Cree First Nation will be to come to consensus on the underlying values and principles we believe need to guide our governance and nation building process. What kind of Nation are we building? What values will we respect above all others? How will we treat each other? What are our rights? What are the responsibilities of citizenship? We can't really answer such questions without first coming to agreement on our core values and principles. .

Goal One: Develop and adopt a binding Constitution for Missanabie Cree First Nation that will serve as a fundamental charter for governance.

For the purposes of Missanabie Cree governance, a constitution can be defined as a statement of fundamental values, principles, processes and law according to which a people govern themselves. While it can always be changed through due process, a constitution is the Mother Law. From it flow all other laws, and in it the rights and responsibility of every citizen are spelled out. Clearly, any written constitution Missanabie produces necessarily stands on the foundation of Natural Law and Cree spiritual teachings and traditions. Therefore, a written Missanabie Cree constitution is fundamentally an instrument (or tool) to ensure that successive generation of our leaders and institutions govern the Missanabie Cree First Nation in accordance with the founding principles we hold dear and according to processes we deem to be fair and equitable, as well as accountable, transparent and effective.

*The Union of Ontario Indians has produced a template for First Nation constitutional development which may serve as a useful starting place. Most **constitutional frameworks** contain the following elements: a) founding beliefs, principles, purposes, and values; b) definition and description of citizenship--who is considered to be part of, or under the authority of the constitution, who is part of "us" and who is not (issues like the double-mother clause will need to be considered in this discussion); c) territory and jurisdiction defined; d) relationship with the greater regional and national entities versus community identity; e) relationship with neighbouring municipalities, Ontario, Canada, and other nation states defined; f) a **governance code**, which defines the responsibilities, authorities, and limits to authority of those who govern, and how governance will be structured and carried out, including essential processes of decision-making and legislation; g) an **election or leadership selection code**, which describes how those chosen for public office are to be elected or selected, and for what timeframes (e.g., would Council terms be 2 years or 4 years; should membership be staggered?); h) **government operations code**, which describes how the business of day-to-day Band operations interface with the governance process; i) a **financial code**, which describes how funds are to be managed and accounted for; and j) a **charter of rights and responsibilities** of citizenship, which addresses such issues as child rights, workers rights, property rights, political rights, social and economic rights, etc., and a citizen's responsibilities both generally and in relation to various bodies of rights.*

*These are only some of the basic elements needed to ensure the rule of law (as opposed to the rule of personalities). What the law will be must be determined by the people of Missanabie Cree. Other elements that Missanabie Cree members have proposed (or implied) for their constitution include a **community participation code**, which specifies when and how community members must be consulted in the process of governance, as well as in community development planning and decision making; and a **community complaints and redress code**, which describes the process through which community members may lodge formal complaints to their government or may seek redress for alleged wrongs they have suffered. A **Missanabie Cree Court of Appeal** may also be considered to serve as a binding arbitration mechanism to resolve conflicts and to enforce the Constitution when violations are perceived to have occurred, with a framework of due process and fairness to all according to the principles, values and laws at the foundation of the constitution. Some First Nations (such as Carcross in the Yukon) have created legislation that is rooted in traditional story and symbolic images. The Missanabie Cree First Nation will examine all available models and decide for itself what to include.*

Strategy #1: Cultural and historical education of our people

As the foundation for our people's participation in our Nation's governance processes, we will develop and conduct a public education and engagement process with the goal of greatly expanding the knowledge and awareness of our community members about our history, our culture and traditional teachings, core principles and values of our community life in the past, and practical processes and protocols of traditional governance. This education process also needs to address such critical issues as the impact of losing our land base and of residential schools on our community life, how governance actually works at the level of the Band, surrounding municipalities, the Province and Canada, a basic understanding of treaties in general, Missanabie Cree's relationship with Treaty 9, and a general introduction to our rights as indigenous people under the Canadian Constitution and Canadian law.

This education and engagement campaign will take multiple forms, including an online course (or several mini-courses), face-to-face peer study circles and in-depth immersion workshops.

Strategy #2: Develop a statement of community values, principles and traditional teachings that continues to guide governance development

The very heart of any Constitution is a statement of values and principles from which everything else flows. We will hold a series of consensus-building consultations (both face-to-face and online) through which community members can articulate values, principles and beliefs that can be used to guide the political development process. This process needs to include all voices and pathways, including Christians, traditionalists and those often not heard in community assemblies. The final product of this work needs to be set out in a series of short values statements or principles, each with a concise explanation of the relevance of the statement to nation building. This document once agreed upon, will serve as the basis for the first section of our new Constitution.

Strategy #3: Strike a constitutional development committee

Utilizing the statement of community values (see strategy #2 above) and in consultation with members representing all sectors of the community, this committee (possibly an expanded version of the Governance Coordination Committee) will be empowered to: a) engage the community in ongoing consultation, b) do research to learn from other models and constitutional development processes, c) lead and coordinate the process of drafting the Constitution, and d) lead and coordinate the process of review, refinement and eventual ratification by community referendum.

Strategy #4: Choose a governance model

Develop the essential model of governance (such as re-adopting a modernized version of the clan system (some say the Mushkengowuk Cree didn't have a clan system like that used by the Anishnawbek, and others say they did in fact have such a system), or simply adopting the INAC Chief and Council system or some other model) by reviewing a menu of options used by other indigenous jurisdictions, and hold an in-depth community consultation to reach a consensus on how the community wishes to "constitute" itself. This will be done by creating a set of scenario options that fully explore how decision-making would work within each model selected for consideration.

The 2015 governance strategy document proposes

- a. an elected council as a decision-making body whose responsibilities are lawmaking, implementation of decisions, and protection of our rights as First Nation people.
- b. citizens who meet in annual assembly to discuss the business of the Nation, and
- c. an administrative body.

In light of experiences across Indigenous North Americans with a range of governance models, we will:

- a. finalize a model of governance
- b. describe how decision making will take place and
- c. decide how the day to day operations of government will function.

The work will result in the development of a *governance code*, that will either become part of our constitution or one of the core codes that circle around it.

Strategy #5: Ensure compatibility

With other governments, ensure that the implementing constitutional committee receives the technical help it requires to verify that the constitutional framework developed is legally compatible with the Canadian constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, harmonizes well with other governments (Canada, Ontario, neighbouring municipalities and other indigenous nations) and is practical and easily implementable in the Missanabie Cree context.

Strategy #6: Timelines and Ratification Process

The governance coordination committee, in its 2015 draft Governance Strategic Plan, proposes a 7 year constitutional development process with part of the constitutional/legal framework being developed and ratified each year:

Year 1. Citizenship Code

Year 2. Election Code

Year 3. Administrative Code

Year 4. Administrative Code Policies - conflict of interest, Chief and Council policy, redress mechanisms

Year 5. Financial Code

Year 6. Land and Resource Code

Year 7. Communication and Community Engagement and Full Constitution

This proposed timeline will likely need to be modified as immediate needs arise. For example, in order to ensure that the move back to our homeland takes place with in an orderly safe and environmentally sustainable legal framework, we will need lands and environment code to be in place as the move begins (anticipated for 2017-18).

We also recognize that the pace of Constitutional development depends a great deal on the financial and human resources that can be directed to the process. Our intention is to seek alternative funding that will enable us to speed up the process, recognizing at the same time the essential requirement of allowing our community members ample time to contribute, consult, and to reach consensus.

Strategy #7: Gradual Implementation

We anticipate that various pieces of what will eventually be our full Constitution will be implemented as they are developed and ratified.

Strategy #8: Final Ratification

Final ratification of the Constitution will be discussed at a Community Constitutional convention, and voted on in an open referendum.

Goal Two: Develop and implement a law of community participation; making effective community engagement and communication the backbone of Missanabie Cree governance.

***Participation:** Participation is the active engagement of minds, will, hearts and energy of people in the process of their own healing and development. Participation in governance means that the people being governed are actually co-governing; i.e., collaborators and partners in the process of bearing the responsibility for making wise, informed, just and sustainable decisions. Our traditional governance was by consensus of the people, and this is the idea we are pursuing. In order to govern by consensus, there need to be frameworks and mechanisms established through which people's participation in governance can take place. The following strategies are intended to provide pathways for the engagement of all sectors of our community in the process of governance.*

Strategy #1: Virtual Village

In recognition that our people are scattered across a vast territory and cannot easily come together for discussion and consensus building, we will create an online environment where we can all meet in a "virtual village". The technology to do this is readily available and not terribly expensive. Harvard University uses it to create a virtual university campus. You create an "avatar", which is a virtual character representing yourself, and with this online character you can manipulate (a little like a puppet) you can attend classes, go to music concerts, participate in discussion groups, serve on a committee, make purchases at online commercial establishments and much more.

The virtual village will have a community consultation centre, classroom, a ceremonial space and other features we decide to add, and will provide us a platform for meeting and discussions, information sharing and consensus building. Anyone with access to the Internet will be able to participate in our virtual community engagement sessions, no matter where in the world they may be.

Strategy #2: Annual Assembly

Each year we have and will continue to hold an Annual Assembly at our summer gathering. This Assembly provides an opportunity for all of our people who attend to discuss, debate, and build consensus leading to ratification of important decisions. The Annual Assembly has roots in a centuries old traditions of our people, who gathered in mid-summer and after in mid-winter as well. The rest of the year our people were scattered across the land following the game and the cycle of our seasonal activities.

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- Strategy #3: Seasonal Gathering
- Our traditional ceremonial cycle involved gathering in each season for prayer, ceremony, teachings, healing, and consultation. We will utilize seasonal gathering to renew our spirits, strengthen our vision and commitment to our Nation building process, healing, learning, reflection on the progress to date and mutual encouragement. The seasonal gathering will focus especially on uniting our hearts and minds together.
- Strategy #4: Elder and Youth Councils
- In recognition of the vital importance of ensuring that youth as well as elders have a continuous voice in our governance processes, we will establish and maintain elders circles and youth circles wherever our people live in sufficient numbers. These circles will chose representatives to participate in a Missanabie Cree Youth Council and a Missanabie Cree Elders Council. The two counsels will meet at or around the seasonal gatherings (i.e. quarterly) and the Annual Assembly to share their perspectives with the people and to advise. Chief and Council will seek the advice of the Elders Council and when appropriate, the Youth Council or important decisions in process. We anticipate that the virtual village platform will enable such consultations to take place wherever they are needed.
- Strategy #5: Missanabie Cree Internet T.V. News
- Utilizing an appropriate online platform (possibly the virtual village platform), we will broadcast an online Missanabie Cree New program once a month or on special occasions in which Chief and Counsel, staff and key committees can provide updates on what is happening. Members who don't have online access will be able to subscribe to a print version of each broadcast.
- Strategy #6: Bulletin Board
- Online bulletin board will post all scheduled events and meetings and notices. Members who don't have online access will be able to subscribe to a mail-out version.
- Strategy #7: Consultation Code
- Missanabie Cree will legislate a Consultation Code, (i.e., a law of inclusion) that requires Chief and Council as well as Band administration to consult with the community as part of the process of making important decisions and developing important projects. This code will define: a) what processes constitute "adequate consultation", b) required notice to community members in advance of scheduled consultations, c) the conditions under which consultation is required (i.e., types of issues, etc.), and how consultation processes are to be carried out.
- In developing this code, we recognize the need to build reasonable balance into the code, so that the ability of the people to participate is balanced with the need for things to move forward, and so the standard of participation

required is not set so high that is rarely, if ever, be achieved, and all forward momentum is stopped.

Strategy #8: Develop and implement a "Duty to Consult and Accommodate" protocol

This protocol will define what it means to adequately consult with the people of Missanabie Cree First Nation and provide both external and internal guidelines as to how consultation is to be undertaken in order to meet the "duty to consult and accommodate" legal requirements.

Strategy #9: Develop Missanabie Cree Associations in city centres where significant Missanabie Cree members reside.

The governance reality of our First Nation is that our people live in geographic clusters in places like Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Toronto, as well as in other centres across Canada. The political dilemma for elected leader is that our people in urban centres vote in elections and they want a voice in Band operations as well as a share of service dollars. This pressure is only likely to increase as Missanabie Cree establishes a reserve community on our traditional territory and begins receiving the standard funding packages from Indian Affairs, Health Canada and other federal agencies--all of who have funding regulations excluding off-reserve people from being eligible for most kinds of funding. This ineligibility policy is justified by the government because (it is argued) off-reserve people have access to all provincial funding programs that the rest of the Canadian population can access, so (they reason) First Nations off-reserve peoples don't need Aboriginal specific funding.

Aside from the political bind this puts elected leaders in (they need the support of off-reserve people to get elected, but are handcuffed by federal funding rules preventing them from delivering benefit to off-reserve people) Indigenous people know that there are important service gaps and real needs that are unique to the Aboriginal population.

All of this is a strong argument for the establishment of Missanabie Cree Associations in centres where our people reside. These Centres will meet the two important sets of needs.

First, they will serve as a focal centre for community participation in the consultative social and cultural life of the Missanabie Cree First Nations. Second, they have the potential to serve as a coordinating hub for the provision of improved aboriginal specific services to our people.

We envision these centres to be legally established as non-profit societies, supported by a combination of funding sources, including: a) a share of the Band's own-source income revenue; b) social enterprises (i.e., businesses from which the profits go to the Association) operated by member in each locality¹; and c) special grants and contracts to deliver services from various government departments.

¹ Examples of what can be done include ideas such as: a) combination Laundromat, coffee house, etc. b) a home renovation service, a landscaping and snow removal company, etc.

Clearly, the viability of each Association will depend on the unity, determination and hard work of our members in each locality, but we imagine that each centre could have a paid coordinator to facilitate and expedite the work of volunteer committees and manage the operations of the centres.

Goal Three: Move past developing policies on paper that are only partially implemented.

There can be many reasons why good policies (on paper) are not fully implemented. Sometimes it is for lack of training of key actors (elected officials and staff). Sometimes new policy contradicts deeply engrained thinking and behavior. Whatever the reason, our best people spend hundreds of hours in consultation in the development of policies that are approved but not fully implemented. The following strategies are intended to bring policy implementation down to the ground.

Strategy #1: Education and training

It is important that elected leadership, staff and community members all receive basic training on why a policy was developed, and what the behavior expectations are of everyone concerned with its implementation.

Strategy #2: Quality management of outcomes

Unless measurement takes place as to the degree of success of policy implementation, and constant feedback is provided to decision makers, policy loses its capacity to bring change. For this reason we will develop evaluations indicators for all important policies and report outcomes to the community regularly. In this way the community can serve as a check and balance that will encourage necessary shift in behavior and outcomes.

Goal Four: Fiscal sovereignty

Fiscal sovereignty: *Fiscal sovereignty means that the First Nation will be in a financial position to make decisions without being controlled or adversely influenced by external entities (such as the government of Canada in Ontario) with direct or implied threats of lack of funding. There can be no true sovereignty without fiscal sovereignty.*

In order to achieve fiscal sovereignty, we will pursue the following strategies:

Strategy #1: Developing our own-source income (OSI) for the First Nation

Missanabie Cree First Nation, through its various economic development entities, will pursue the development of profitable businesses, investments, and partnerships that will bring a continuous revenue stream to the First Nation. This money will be unencumbered by government spending rules, thus enabling us to make decisions according to our own priorities and principles.

Strategy #2: Taxation, fees and levies

In order to recoup costs of developing a land base, Missanabie Cree will develop a system of user fees for service, and taxes for non-members and

external entities using our land base and we will explore other similar revenue streams that have been developed by First Nation's across the country.

Goal Five: Build capacity for continuous improvement of governance

While we are an ancient people, we are a very young First Nation, and we have much to learn about effective governance in the modern world. It is not only elected leaders and the next generation of leaders that will need to learn. Every one of our community members has an important role to play as co-governors of our Nation. Therefore, we all need to learn about such topics as our treaty rights and obligations, running effective meetings, consultation and decision making, conflict management, and transformation, community engagement, our rights and obligations under the Indian Act, how government works in other jurisdictions, community development and much more.

Strategy #1: Courses on governance and leadership

In order to address the ongoing learning needs of our people related to governance and leadership, we will offer a series of courses available to all of our people. These courses will be accredited and as a series will receive a certificate in Aboriginal governance and leadership for those who complete all the requirements.

Strategy #2: Online mini-courses

A series of online mini-courses following the same topics as the certificate program (see Strategy #1, above), but more simplified will be available to all. These courses will be an accessible and user friendly way to learn in order to prepare our members to more ably participate as co-governors of our Nation.

Goal Six: Establish a governance secretariat to oversee the constitutional development process, as well as to support Chief and Council in fighting ongoing political battles and in the development of legislation and policies.

Missanabie Cree will engage a coordinator with a strong legal background, wide experience building consensus through community consultation and excellent research and documentation skills to serve as the hub of the constitutional development process. The coordinator will be provided with a budget to engage research and technical help as needed, and will also serve as the executive facilitator for the Governance Coordinating Committee.

**CULTURE OF
HEALING AND
WELLNESS
WITHIN BAND
ADMINISTRATION**

**STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIPS
WITH APPROPRIATE
AGENCIES**

**A STRONG
SENIOR
MANAGEMENT
TEAM**

**PREPARE
FOR
MOVE TO
MISSANABIE
HOMELAND**

**PEACEBUILDING
THROUGH
EXCELLENCE
IN ADMINISTRATIVE
LEADERSHIP**

**RECONFIGURE BAND
ADMINISTRATION
TO FIT UNIQUE
REALITIES OF MCFN**

**IMRPOVE
STAFF
WORKING
CONDITIONS**

**ALIGN STAFF JOB
DESCRIPTIONS
TO GOALS OF CPP**

PATHWAYS TO PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT



Part B: Public Sector Management

Definitions

Public Sector Management: *Public Sector management refers to the policies and procedures that have been put in place to guide the operation of the community's administration, programs and services, as well as the on-the-ground reality of how administration, programs and services actually function on a day-to-day basis to address the primary purposes which they are meant to serve as defined by ongoing work plans and policies.*

Issues, challenges and opportunities

1. Human resource gaps need to be filled.

The Missanabie Cree Nation has been grossly underfunded for the entire period of time it has had administrative operations (since 1992). This underfunding has meant that many of the essential resources needed for effective programming and band operations have not been available. As a result the existing staff have been paid very low wages (compared to most other Bands), and there are capacity gaps across the organization. Under these conditions, what staff and MCFN Council have achieved therefore is nothing short of heroic. But now Missanabie Cree is entering a new era, as we prepare to return to our homeland. Going forward, it will be essential that critical human resources gaps are filled.

2. The need to re-conceptualize our model of Band administration.

Given the scattered geographical distribution of Band members, and the fact that many of us will always be "off-reserve" residents, traditional models of Band administration will need to be re-conceptualized. MCFN will soon become an organization that works with a small home-reserve community, as well as with clusters of community members living in Toronto, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, as well as in other centres across the country. This problem is further complicated by the reality that current Indian Affairs funding (AANDC) rules exclude off-reserve people from receiving most benefits and services that First Nations people living on reserves routinely receive. If we had scattered ourselves of our own free will, there might be some justification for withholding Band services, but because we were driven from our home unjustly and illegally, ours is a unique situation. Whether or not Canada recognizes and adjusts its rules concerning our people, we ourselves need to develop ways of serving our people wherever they live.

3. New type of partnerships needed

Part of our picture for governance and administration off-reserve is the reality that meeting human and community and development goals will require *new and creative partnerships* with appropriate agencies that are available and serve our people wherever our members live. This implies a much more outward looking orientation for our administration than simply attending to the Band's internal business. It may mean for example, opening MCFN coordination centres in some off-reserve localities.

4. Realignment of staff job descriptions

The job descriptions and work plans of the Band's staff will need to be adjusted to fully support the implementation of the CCP as well as to take full advantage of the talents and experience of staff. As well, new human resources will be needed to fill longstanding gaps.

5. Improvement of staff working conditions

The working climate and conditions of Band staff needs to be improved (e.g. the way that wellness issues are addressed and remuneration (i.e., competitive with wages levels in Ontario), regular staff evaluation, and advancement and insurance scheme.

6. Plan ahead for relocation of Band Administration to our homeland

As the resettlement process gets into full swing, the Band will need to anticipate what sort of administrative services will move to Missanabie, what services will be available to residents there, and how those services will be funded. Planning and negotiation with Aboriginal Affairs, and Northern Development Canada (AANDC-the new name for the department of Indian Affairs) will need to begin at least several years before any money will flow, so it is important to begin these talks sooner rather than later.

7. Community wellness and the need for healing as a barrier to effective public sector administration

The Missanabie Cree story and the rapid review both unanimously identified healing and wellness as the "most important social issue" the community faces, and pointed out that "unless a healing and wellness journey is nurtured and grown within MCFN, many other important issues will remain difficult if not impossible to resolve²."

These issues are not just "out there" in the community. They are also impacting Chief and Council functioning and day-to-day operations of Band Administration. ***Based on the principle that you can't bring to other people what you don't have yourself, it will be fundamental to success in Nation building that healing and wellness be introduced into the working culture and process of Band administration.*** Community healing is fundamental to effective community engagement and participation in the Nation building process.

8. Transforming the roots of conflict

Closely related to the issues of community wellness and community building, there are interpersonal and inter-family conflicts, mistrust and resentments bubbling beneath the surface of community life. These are especially noticeable at the time before and after elections, as well as related to human resources decisions (hiring, firing, appointments, etc.) in staff relations, in Chief and Council functioning, and in the relationships between Chief and Council and the community. The roots of these conflicts lie (for the most part) in old hurts and trauma from the past. While there may be differences of opinion on the substance of issues (such as should we concentrate on building up our land-base Reserve home, or should we build our communities in the cities where our people now live, or

² Rapid Review, p. 5

both?)--the conflict is not really about the substantive questions, as much as it is about hurt speaking to hurt.

Wherever there is disunity, there is a block in the energy (and therefore the capability) of the community to work together to solve its problems and build toward the realization of its dreams.

The development challenge is to create processes of healing the relationship of those harbouring conflict, and to develop the nurture bonds of friendship, love, forgiveness and unity across the entire community.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this issue. Where there is no unity, there can be no development and progress. Unity is the foundation upon which all Nation building work must stand. ***Therefore healing the relationships of those that need to work together for the benefit of all needs to be given the highest priority.*** As this work progresses, a huge reservoir of energy and creativity will be released.

The administrative challenge of a First Nation that does not have nearly enough human resources to do what needs to be done, is that the volunteer base it has to depend on is caught up (to a greater or lesser degree) in periodic flare ups of longstanding conflicts that interfere with effective public administration. It hasn't worked to consider this breakdown of social capital (trust, mutual bonds of respect, support and cooperation etc.) as if they were just part of the nature of the community and therefore "normal" and unchangeable. It is important to acknowledge that at the same time there is a very strong core of people in the community who recognize that conflict and disunity are holding back the progress of the Nation, and these people are willing to work across the fault-lines of family history and past resentments in order to get good things to happen. To be effective, MCFN administration will need to learn to be the facilitators of reconciliation and a new spirit of collaboration, and also to learn how to help those still stuck in conflict to move past the hurts they carry for the sake of future generations.

Reflections on growth:

This is a 10-year plan with a 20-year horizon. Some of what is to follow may seem out of reach because there is not enough money or the needed people to do what is being proposed, however the process of growth comes about by visualizing what is needed, and then moving confidently forward, step by step, day by day, if we cannot imagine it, we cannot create it. What follows are goals and strategies for the transformation and growth of Missanabie public sector

Goal One: Create a strong Senior Management Team

It is very easy for First Nations to get caught in the trap on implementing the programs that are downloaded to them through funding agreements with federal or provincial government departments. This arrangement tends to reinforce programming silos and create extra reporting and application burdens. It also makes it difficult for the community to address the root causes of persistent issues such as high unemployment, youth in crisis, poverty and dependency, and high incidences of addictions and other mental health challenges. Stepping out of this reactive pattern into a more proactive way of working requires consistent leadership from a team of capable senior managers. This goal lists strategies for the creation and operation of such a body.

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- Strategy #1: Organize Band administration around the primary goals of the comprehensive community plan (CCP), and hire a well trained and experienced senior manager for each of the following areas:
- a. Social and cultural development which focuses on healing and community wellness, the recovery of the cultural foundations of Nation building, and targeted initiative to help families, youth, elders, and special needs groups to overcome health and social barriers.

Social and cultural development responsibilities will include:
 - health and wellness
 - education and training
 - childhood family services
 - b. Economic development which focuses on the prosperity of Missanabie Cree families as well as on the generation of wealth for the Nation.

Economic development responsibilities will include:
 - job creation
 - social business development
 - own-source income generation through Band owned business and investments
 - management of economic partnerships and joint ventures

This entire area will be operated at arms length from politics through the Missanabie Cree Development Corporation, but will function on a day-to-day basis collaboratively and totally integrated with the other Band program areas.
 - c. Infrastructure, lands and environment which focuses on the development and ongoing maintenance of Band Infrastructure (buildings, roads, utilities, etc.) as well as oversight and management of Missanabie lands and environmental sustainability within the framework of a Lands Management Plan and an Environmental Management Code.
 - d. Political development which focuses on developing and implementing the Missanabie Cree Constitution and related legislation, and supporting Chief and Council in their critical work of lobbying government as well as strategic negotiation with business, government and other entities.
 - e. Administration and finance which focuses on leadership and coordination, of Band operations and a continuous improvement of the organizations financial management capabilities.
- Strategy #2: Hire a capable senior program leader for each of these 5 areas. These people will be able to provide program development leadership, and will gradually attract needed funding and staff as well as develop a functioning department.
- Strategy #3: Shift the role of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to that of an overall Program Development Leader, assigned the responsibility guiding the reorganization of Band operations and providing leadership in each of the five program areas described in Strategy #1. (i.e. 1) social and cultural

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development, 2) economic development, 3) infrastructure, lands and environment 4) political development, and 5) administration and financial.

Strategy #4: Hold regularly scheduled senior management meetings to ensure the organic integration of all initiatives, programs and policies, to prevent slipping into operational silos and ensure that to the greatest extent possible all initiatives are integrated and mutually reinforcing.

For example, healing and wellness is a health issue, but it is also directly related to success in job creation and small business development. Similarly, training programs are needed to help youth to anchor their identity in our Missanabie history and culture, and this kind of training needs to be integrated into preparation for employment.

Goal Two: Reconfigure the Band Administration so that it is capable of serving both an on-reserve population (to be established) and an off-reserve population centres.

Strategy #1: Hire an off-reserve program development coordinator to focus on engaging off-reserve populations in the ongoing process of nation building, and in the development (or brokering) of needed programs and services.

Strategy #2: Work with the political/governance coordinator to develop Missanabie Cree Associations (see Goal 2 Strategy 9 above) in centres where sufficient members of our people reside. Utilize these associations as a primary platform for community engagement and for the coordination of services and outreach programs.

Goal Three: Establish strategic partnerships with appropriate agencies and programs in the city centres where our members reside that will give them access to Aboriginally appropriate services that address their social and economic development needs.

Strategy #1: Education of our members

We will develop and implement an education initiative aimed at informing our off-reserve members of their rights regarding access to programs and services operated in the jurisdictions where they live, and also about the real limitations imposed on Missanabie Cree (and all First Nations) by the federal government funding rules which prevent many kinds of Aboriginal funding (and therefore services) from flowing to off-reserve residents, who are (by law) entitled to access provincial services.

Strategy #2: Work with program providers in the centres where our people live to ensure that program and service address the cultural and historical realities and meet the needs our people bring with them into programs and services.

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Goal Four: Improve staff working conditions

Strategy #1: Improve staff salary scales so that they are competitive with similar positions in other Bands or in the non-profit sector, so that we can attract and keep the very best people, and so that our staff are being paid a living wage (i.e. enough to live a dignified life).

Strategy #2: Establish a staff health and life insurance scheme.

Goal Five: Realign staff job descriptions to support the implementation of CCP (this plan)

Strategy #1: All staff should have work plans that address goals related to one of the five work areas (as defined in Goal #1, Strategy #1 above,) i.e. 1) social and cultural development 2) economic development 3) infrastructure, lands and environment 4) political development, and 5) administration and finance.

Goal Six: Plan ahead and prepare for the move of Missanabie Administration to our Missanabie Homeland.

Strategy #1: Establish a reasonable estimate of expected dates for making the move, based on the removal of all legal obstacles and the preparation of adequate facilities and needed infrastructure.

Strategy #2: Develop reasonable estimates of the expected population of Missanabie home reserve in years 1 through 5 after resettlement. These numbers will be needed to negotiate Federal program dollars to which the Band will be entitled.

Strategy #3: Engage Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and other appropriate funding agencies to negotiate funding levels and start dates for programs available to reserve communities. The Missanabie negotiator must be prepared (perhaps with the support of Northeast Superior Chief's Forum) to present a list of reasonable demands based on what other Bands are already receiving. These negotiations need to start without delay, because it takes governments at least a fiscal year to adjust their allocations to include new categories.

Strategy #4: Seek private sector (Corporate and Foundation) funding to support the first five years of resettlement and administration due to the special historical circumstances of Missanabie Cree First Nation (having been illegally deprived of land and economic base).

Goal Seven: Make participation in an on-going healing and wellness program within Band administration an integral part of daily work life.

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As community members have emphatically stated elsewhere, the challenge of community healing is a "meta-issue", i.e. an issue that needs to be addressed in order to successfully solve almost all other challenges the Nation faces. This problem is not just "out-there" in the community. It is also imbedded in the dynamics of Band administration and staff relations. In order for the workers in the Band to be capable of serving as the facilitators and helpers of community healing, the entire team (Chief and Council and staff) need to willingly embrace and consistently pursue personal growth and healing processes. If this is not done, these community leaders will not be able to bring to the community what they do not have themselves.

Strategy #1: Healing retreats. Four healing retreats will be held each year with professional support and guidance.

Strategy #2: Daily spiritual centering and at least weekly healing circles will be held at the Band office.

Strategy #3: A conscious focus on healing broken (or dysfunctional) relationships within the staff and leadership will be part of the focus of the retreats and circles mentioned above.

Goal Eight: Peacemaking through spiritually grounded administrative leadership

As stated in the issues section (#8, p. 58) Missanabie Cree has been hobbled by interpersonal and inter-family conflicts, mistrust and resentments building beneath the surface of community life. These issues periodically spill over into the ongoing work of Band governance and administration.

Missanabie Cree faces the challenge of not having the paid human resources it needs to do the most important Nation building and community development work that needs to be done, so it is essential that Band administration become supremely adept at engaging and supporting volunteers to be an integral part of public sector management and administration.

As stated earlier, wherever there is disunity there is a block in the energy (and therefore the capability) of the community to work together to solve its problems and to build toward the realization of its dreams.

Leadership for the creative of the *new collective centre* that is free of disunity and conflict and focused entirely on positive work of nation building is essential for long-term success.

We know this can be done because it is already being done. We have seen extraordinary cooperation and positive engagement in the consultation processes related to the comprehensive community plan (CCP). The strategies that follow are intended to reinforce and strengthen this encouraging trend.

Strategy #1: Build a special community engagement team.

Appoint (from within existing leadership and staff) a community engagement and volunteer coordination team, and provide this team with in-depth training in facilitation, consultation, and conflict transformation. Ensure that this work is culturally and spiritually grounded

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- Strategy #2: Utilize the team to work with all community committee and consultative processes to:
- a. infuse a positive spirit, vision and ground rules into the process
 - b. provide support and facilitative assistance to all community working groups to help them to have all possible success in making their contribution
 - c. organize at least quarterly community building events and processes to honour both the contributions of community volunteers and to educate the community as to the vital role of unity and a positive spirit in the process of nation building (i.e., it's not only what we do, but how we are together with each other when we do it that makes a strong Nation).

It is not enough to outline vision, goals and strategies for the areas of development identified by the community as being of critical importance to community wellbeing and success. If left there, the Missanabie Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is unlikely to never be truly implemented. Section Four: Governance and Public Sector Management already has many strategies for using the CCP Framework in this document to develop more detailed implementation plans for each sector of work. What follows is a summary of the steps that can guide the work of implementing the CCP.

1. A Permanent Steering Committee

A permanent Steering Committee (a Senior Management team plus leadership and community representatives) will be established that is representative of all key departments and agencies responsible for any part of the Plan's implementation. The Steering Committee should have representatives of grassroots community members, staff, leadership, and the Boards of Community Trust or other agencies. This group should be empowered by Chief and Council and the Trustees of independent community entities to guide and direct the implementation process.

2. CCP Coordinator

A senior-level manager/Coordinator should be hired (or seconded) to the role of CCP Coordinator. This should be a full-time senior director level position. The Coordinator's role is to work under the direction of the Steering Committee to facilitate the implementation process. This work will include providing support to implementing departments and agencies, coordinating collaborative efforts across departments, leading ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress, and facilitating capacity development related to CCP implementation.

3. Work Plan Development and Alignment

Each department, program or entity that has responsibility for carrying out some part of CCP implementation will need to develop a detailed work plan which identifies specific actors and their roles, short-term measurable goals and strategies, timelines, resource requirements, progress markers and evaluation indicators. Teams assigned to each of the areas of work within the plan will need to be brought together in a planning workshop and provided with technical support in the development of their work plans. Each separate program manager within these work groups will need support in adapting his/her team's work plans to accommodate the activities required for CCP implementation. All front-line workers will also need support in aligning their work plans and day-to-day activities with the goals and strategies described in the Plan.

Is this really necessary?

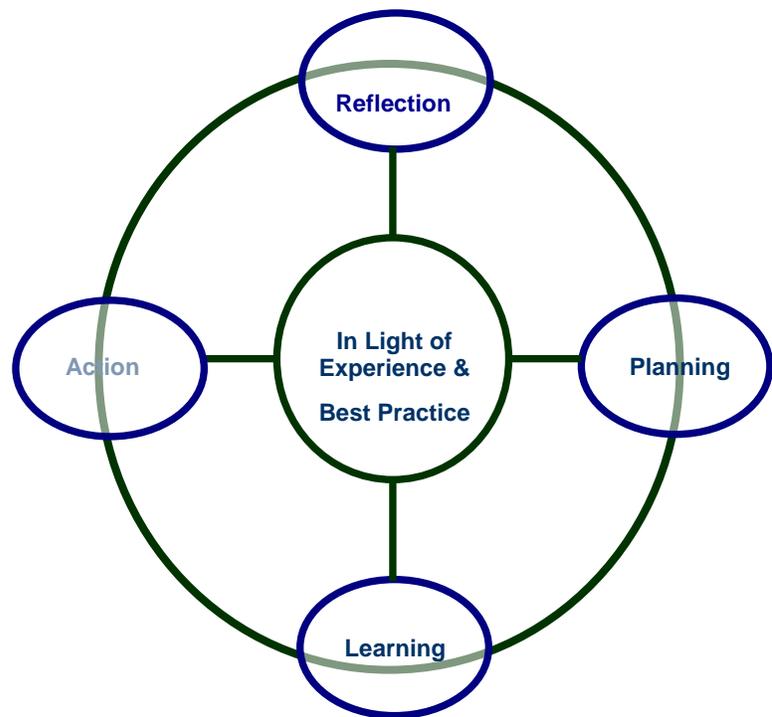
If all the work teams within the Missanabie First Nation continue to think and do as they have always done, then the community is likely to get the same results and outcomes it has always gotten. Those old results and outcomes have been identified by the community as being no longer enough. Too many Missanabie individuals and families are still struggling with issues that prevent them from realizing their full potential—issues such as poverty, addictions, inter-generational trauma, and dependency thinking. Somehow community agencies and services will have to forge a new way of working that will produce greater wellbeing and prosperity.

Achieving this goal may mean that financial and human resources will have to be reorganized. Certainly it will mean that Band departments and services will need to work together under the protection of a clear and shared vision of possibility and the pathways that lead to that vision. This journey will require

commitment to an on-going process of learning—learning that is shaped by trying out new ideas, reflecting on the impact of those experiments, and consulting together about next steps over the months, and even years to come.

4. Quarterly Reflection Workshops

What we measure tends to improve. In order to ensure that the process of CCP implementation maintains a steady and manageable pace, quarterly reflection (monitoring and evaluation) workshops will be organized by the CCP Steering Committee. These workshops will involve reflection on the experiences of participants in implementing the Plan and what is being learned through these experiences about how to be more effective. By measuring outcomes against progress indicators (developed by each work team), the entire network of CCP implementers will gradually become more and more effective in getting to the desired results. Community members who are supposed to be benefitting from the work underway and who are playing a part in implementing parts of the Plan will be an integral part of these quarterly reflection gatherings.



5. A Learning Engine

Experience worldwide has shown that in order to move a human system (individuals, families, groups, institutions, community networks, all interacting in a living system) from one set of outcomes to another, the **core dynamic of change is learning**. We will need to learn how to think and act differently together in order to get different results.

This learning can happen in many ways, but it is not likely to happen by itself. It needs to be facilitated and guided intentionally and it needs to be directly linked to the process of implementing the Plan. Whatever it is that people need to learn in order to be more effective in getting the results we are seeking—that is the learning agenda. The proof of learning is in the results. We will have learned what we need to learn when we are getting the results we want.

Some of the key areas for Missanabie Cree First Nation learning that have been identified during the CCP planning process include the following: a) personal wellness and healing; b) transforming community conflict; c) building healthy organizations and workplace cultures; d) community development; e) developing effective interventions and programs to address key social issues; f) addictions, abuse and trauma; g) Missanabie cultural foundations; h) effective leadership for change; i) group facilitation; j) grantsmanship and fundraising; k) small business development; and l) shifting from a poverty mentality to an orientation of managing wealth.

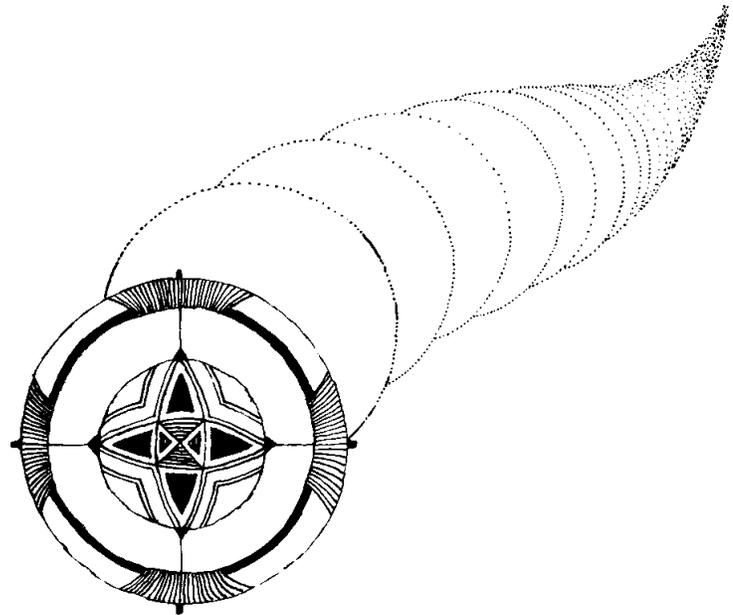
These are only examples. The challenge is to provide a regular rhythm of needed learning experiences to a solid core group of implementers. This kind of learning is different from what most of us got in school.

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It is oriented to action and rooted in ongoing work. It starts with reflection on the experiences people are having in trying to implement the plan, and it directly connects to evaluation (reflection) and the planning of new action.

The key to implementing this “learning engine” within comprehensive community planning is to view these four “moments”; i.e., a) *action*; b) *reflection* on actions taken and your experience with taking action; c) *learning* from the collective and cumulative experience of the whole network of implementers and from formal training that is plugged into the process at strategic intervals; and d) *planning*, which is basically re-affirming or refining your ongoing plans.

This process advances, cycle after cycle, all the while building capacity and moving ever closer to the realization of the goals of the Plan.



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