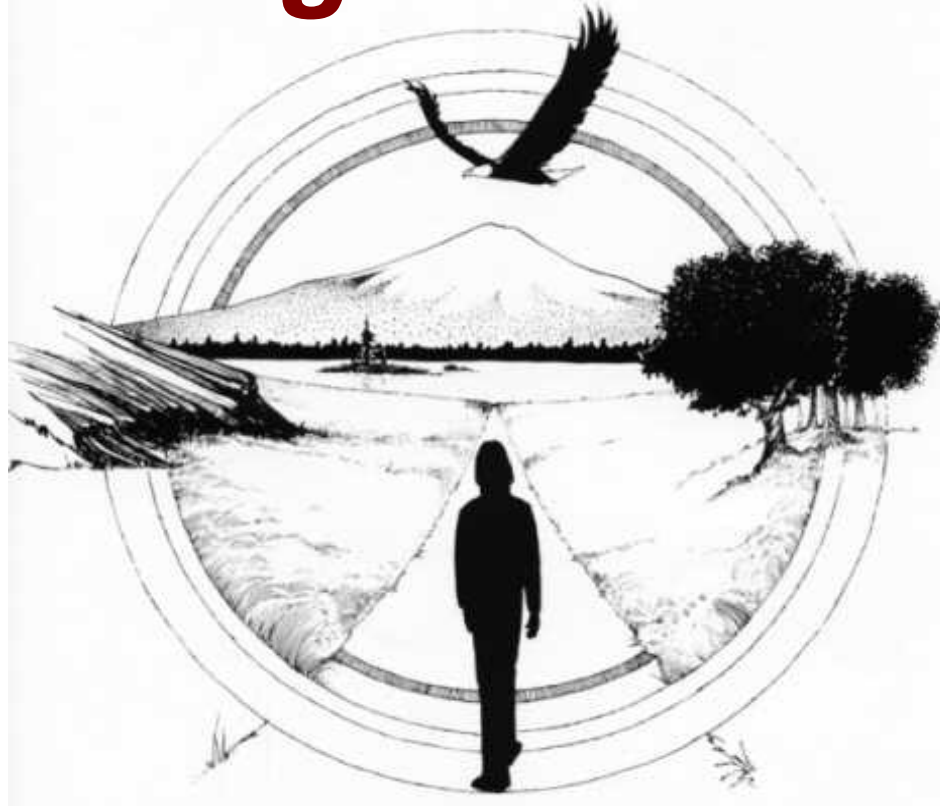


Creating Our Future



M'Chigeeng First Nation

Comprehensive Community Plan

January 2015

Developed by:



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PROLOGUE

After a long winter, there are many signs that spring is coming, and the land is waking up. Birds that migrated south in the fall begin to return. The smell of damp earth is in the air. The sounds of water running, the discovery of tiny shoots of green poking through the ground and new buds on the trees all tell us that the season of growing is upon us.

There are also signs that tell us when a community is waking up after a long winter of forgetting who they are and being asleep to their own true potential and possibilities.

1. Young people begin stepping forward, offering to do things for the community.
2. Leaders begin to really listen to the people and make significant efforts to ensure that everyone who has something to say can be heard.
3. The people begin accepting their own history and cultural past as a foundation for moving forward. Even those who previously rejected this past begin to accept it.
4. Other communities begin to look to the awakening community for leadership.
5. Calls for healing and unity may be heard from across lines of previous differences and conflict within the community. Significantly, there is a new willingness to look in the mirror and to look within to find the root causes of problems.
6. The progress of the community as a whole is increasingly seen to be inseparable from the progress of every individual. “No one left behind” becomes an important value.
7. Members of the community begin to step into the circle of the human family, bringing the gifts and strengths of the community to the world.

During the eight months of work that has led to the preparation of the M’Chigeeng Comprehensive Community Plan, all of these signs were evident in and around the process.

We saw young people stepping forward with ideas and initiatives for change. We saw leadership making significant and repeated efforts to ensure that the voices of the community members are heard, both in the planning work itself, and related to other important community matters. We saw many signs of Christians and traditionalists reaching out to each other and we saw many people from all backgrounds responding eagerly to opportunities to learn more about their history, language and cultural heritage.

Prologue, continued

M'Chigeeng has many accomplishments and strengths to build on as community members contemplate building the future they want for their children and grandchildren. Following is a summary timeline of strengths and accomplishments.

1940s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1950s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1960s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1970s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1980s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

1990s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2000s

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

*Note: Dear friends, we respectfully request the Steering Committee to carry out a brainstorming exercise to fill in this summary. It's needed so people can see the strengths M'Chigeeng has to tackle the hard issues it faces.
Four Worlds*

Prologue, continued

The plan represented within this document is strongly infused with the value that the welfare of the whole is inseparably linked to the wellbeing of each and every individual community members. Many of the plans, goals and strategies presented are specifically intended to support and assist grassroots community members, and their families. Some of the goals focus on Nation building in terms of reinforcing and expanding the capacity of community systems, programs, services as well as governance and management processes.

It is also true that M'Chigeeng members are now scattered far and wide and many are making outstanding contributions to human knowledge and progress through contributions in the arts, spiritual and cultural leadership, political leadership as well as technical and professional contributions across Canada and around the world.

All of this points to a highly important reality. The community of M'Chigeeng is experiencing a new awakening; a spiritual springtime that will eventually produce a rich and abundant harvest of new growth, positive change, healing and new possibilities for every member of the community.

What is a Community Plan?

A community plan is not the same thing as a “strategic plan” of the type often made by Chief and Councils, and various departments. A Comprehensive Community Plan is the action framework within which all strategic plans will now need to be made. It defines the primary vision and strategies for moving the First Nation and its people forward on the path of progress towards a sustainable life.

It is called a “community plan” because the foundation thinking and direction utilized in making the plan come from community members themselves. The M'Chigeeng Community Story document (a basic situation and needs analysis) carried out by community members, formed the foundation, and the draft itself was reviewed and endorsed by community members.

That is why a comprehensive community plan is not something to be ignored or superseded by successive groups of elected leaders. On the contrary, a comprehensive community plan should be a fundamental charter for Nation building that provides continuity and a guide to steady progress across successive administrations.

INTRODUCTION

This is a draft of the M'Chigeeng Comprehensive Community Plan. It is intended for final review by community members, staff, Chief and Council and other important entities and groups within the community. It has been produced after extensive input and review by M'Chigeeng community members, program staff and leadership and represents a strong community consensus about what the important issues and challenges are, and which steps are needed to create the community we want.

Phase One: Making the Plan

The process of making this Plan began in June 2013 when the M'Chigeeng First Nation approached Four Worlds Centre for Development Learning to serve as facilitators and technical support providers to the community in making a comprehensive community Plan. Phase One consisted of 3 parts, and resulted in this draft.

Part I entailed establishing a Steering Committee, appointed by Chief and Council, and finalizing an arrangement for implementing the planning process.

Part II consisted of a community-based needs assessment and situation analysis. During this phase, more than 200 community members participated in many large and small consultations, on the basis of which the following reports were produced.

1. The Rapid Program Review

This process consisted of interviews and meetings with all programs and departments within the M'Chigeeng First Nation focused on: a) the current state of programs and services, b) challenges and barriers to program effectiveness, c) staff analysis of community realities and needs, and d) assessment of program capacity to address the present and anticipated future community needs. The findings of the Rapid Program Review are especially relevant to the implementation phase of the Comprehensive Community Plan, since much of the real work in important planning areas such as economic development and employment, housing, infrastructure development, health, elders, education, and child and family services will fall to the community program staff to implement in a combined effort with leadership, voluntary organizations and community members.

2. The M'Chigeeng Community Story

The M'Chigeeng Community Story is the story of what happened to our people in the past and our understanding of how that past has shaped who and what we are today. It is also the story of what is happening to us today (the present), in the lives of our children and youth, in our family and community relations, in our social and cultural life, and in the

Introduction, continued

political and economic life both on and off the Reserve. But, the story would be incomplete without also talking about the future we want. What will our community look like when we achieve our goals? From the Community Story, we will be able to see clearly where we need to go and what we need to do to get where we want to go.

As the process began, the story was held in many pieces, like a puzzle. Different people held different important pieces of the puzzle. The Community Story was a way for all of us to come together, to fit our pieces of the story into a larger whole that we can all share.

The Community Story process uses a medicine wheel framework to facilitate a highly interactive dialogue about:

a. The wellbeing of M'Chigeeng people, using four main questions:

- i. What is going on in the life of M'Chigeeng children, youth, women, men and elders?
How healthy and strong are their families?
- ii. What can we learn from the past that can help M'Chigeeng individuals and families fulfill their potential for balanced, happy and prosperous lives?
- iii. What will things be like in a positive future for M'Chigeeng individuals and families?
- iv. What are the steps that can be taken to support the realization of this positive future?



b. Prosperity and the wellbeing of our community, again using four main questions:

- i. What is going on in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the M'Chigeeng First Nation? Are the community's programs, services and infrastructure meeting the needs of individuals and families? Is the community managing its natural resources in a way that contributes to present-day prosperity without compromising the wellbeing of future generations?
- ii. What can we learn from the past that can help the M'Chigeeng First Nation achieve greater wellbeing and prosperity?
- iii. What will things be like in a positive future for the M'Chigeeng First Nation in terms of how we function as a community and Nation?
- iv. What are the steps that can be taken to support the realization of this positive future?

The input for the M'Chigeeng Community Story was gathered between June 18th and 19th 2013 through a series of interviews and meetings. Every age group and segment of the community was represented, and significant efforts were made to include any and all who wished to make a contribution to the discussion.

Introduction, continued

3. *The Community Story Meeting*

An open community meeting held on June 19th, 2013 at the Lakeview School. This was attended by about 150 people, who worked in small groups, covering different topics during the day. This input is summarized under the following headings: 1) children, 2) youth, 3) women, 4) men, 5) elders, 6) family life, 7) governance and political life, 8) economic life, 9) social life, 10) cultural and spiritual life, 11) infrastructure, and 12) lands and natural resource management. [As well, a survey was posted on-line which provided the opportunity for members to provide input at their leisure.]

Each working group looked their theme through three distinct lenses: 1) **the Present** - what is life like now in the area?, 2) **the Past** - what was life like in the past in the area, and what can we learn from that past?, and 3) **the Future** - what would a good and healthy future look like in this theme area. More than 150 pages of notes from this meeting were compiled into a report called the M'Chigeeng Community Story 2013.

The first draft of that report circulated to community members, and in late November 2011 **three community verification meetings** were held, two on the Reserve and one in London to give community members multiple opportunities to comment on the draft. After the verification comments were incorporated, the final draft of the M'CHIGEENG Community Story was tabled in early December 2011.

Getting Ready to Make a Plan

Based on the **Community Story**, the M'Chigeeng First Nation Senior Management Team, in consultation with Chief and Council agreed that thirteen (13) distinct categories of planning would be included in the Comprehensive Community Plan. These areas are listed and defined below.

M'Chigeeng Community Planning Domains

1. **Health and Wellness**

Health refers to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Wellness refers to the values, choice making and patterns of living that lead to health. This component of the comprehensive community plan considers the full range of health and wellness related determinants, issues, needs, solutions and services that have to be addressed in order to support the health and wellness of M'Chigeeng First Nation.

2. Life-long Learning

Life-long learning refers to the opportunities that M'Chigeeng members have to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to live healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives. This theme recognizes that learning happens at all stages of the life

cycle from childhood to elderhood. It also acknowledges the value of supporting all members of the community to develop their gifts so as to enrich their personal lives, to contribute to the richness of family and community life and to achieve career aspirations. In keeping with this definition, this Chapter reflects on the important goals before the M'Chigeeng community related to early childhood development; schooling in the primary to secondary grades; formal (e.g. accredited) adult education including literacy, up-grading, post-secondary and job skills courses; and a broad range of community informal learning opportunities that enhance life skills, social and recreational life, cultural knowledge and identity, as well as family and community life.

In practice, life-long learning can be thought of in terms of four inter-connected fields of activity: 1) early childhood learning and education, 2) primary and secondary schooling, 3) post-secondary education and employment training, and 4) non-formal learning for life (self-improvement, family life, community development, etc.).

3. Prosperity Development

The ultimate source of all wealth and prosperity is the earth. In the traditional past, people understood this because they lived directly off the land. The economic issues of today are very different, but the basic challenge is the same: how can M'Chigeeng people earn a living by what they can harvest from the earth, produce or manufacture, sell or barter or by providing services to others? The M'Chigeeng First Nation can be considered to be prosperous when its individuals and families can adequately meet their basic needs through viable economic activity, whether that be through employment or through entrepreneurship. As well, true prosperity will mean that the collective resources of the Nation (e.g., lands, capital and infrastructure) are utilized in ways that are consistent with sustainable stewardship and ethical practices while at the same time ensuring the prosperity and wellbeing of the present and future generations.

4. Governance

Governance refers to the leadership and management 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 governance positions.

Introduction, continued

5. 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 accountability frameworks.

6. Justice

Justice refers to the maintenance of harmony and balance among the members of the community through the prevention of crime, the mediation of conflicts in ways that are fair and the restoration of harmony in cases where offences have been committed or conflicts are underway.

7. Social Development

Social Development refers to: a) the challenge of fostering social cohesion and unity between people, families and groups within the community and strengthening the community's collective capacity to think and act together for common purposes; b) promoting strong, safe and healthy families and healthy child development; and c) strengthening the wellbeing of key demographics with the community; namely, children and youth, women, men and elders.

8. Cultural Development

Cultural Development - "Culture" refers to both the general beliefs and patterns of life that people actually live, as well as to the language, traditions, wisdom teachings, customs, beliefs, moral values, ideals, stories, music, arts, ceremonies, traditional ecological knowledge, technologies and general practices that make up the ideal-traditional culture systems of the past. Culturally based development is the process of translating and applying the knowledge and wisdom of the traditional past into lived patterns of thought and action in the modern world, as well as the collective community work of agreeing on shared values for guiding our community development.

9. Infrastructure Development and Management

Infrastructure refers to the built environment of the M'Chigeeng First Nation. It includes basic utilities such as water, electricity, and waste management. It also includes housing and roads, as well as the buildings the community uses to support its programs and services such as the school, band office, and recreational centre. Infrastructure also refers to

Introduction, continued

churches and other buildings owned by community groups and the facilities that may have been developed to support economic activities (such as a business incubator or land that has been serviced with access to utilities).

10. Housing

Safe, affordable and appropriate shelter is a fundamental human necessity, and according to the United Nations, a basic human right. If “home” is more than a roof over your head—if it means having someplace to live where you are always welcome, where you are safe, and where you live alone or with the people closest to you—then a very significant proportion of M’Chigeeng’s population is virtually “homeless”. This is a matter that is certainly one of the most pressing social and economic challenges. It is more than a problem of constructing enough safe and affordable shelters for everyone, although that is certainly an important component of it. It is also linked to pressing social problems associated with affordability, overcrowdedness, dependency, availability of land for new construction, and the maintenance of safe and healthy living environments for all.

11. Lands and Environment Management

Ethical stewardship of the land and natural environment is based on the understanding that humans are part of the natural world and not separate from it. Ultimately, the land provides us with all that we need and its bounty must be shared among all of us. This means that we have the responsibility to manage our land and natural resources conscientiously to ensure that the way of life of the current generation does not harm the capacity of the land to meet the needs of future generations as we seek new and creative ways of thinking about land as a lever and contributor to prosperity development.

12. Emergency Response

Emergency response refers to the capability of all combined community resources and agencies to anticipate, prevent and effectively respond to fires, floods, natural disasters, catastrophic weather events, health emergencies, epidemics and other types of situations that could bring harm to people or property such that harm is minimized, people and property are protected, and mitigation of unavoidable damage or harm is undertaken in a timely and effective manner.

13. Off-Reserve Membership

A very significant and important part of the M’Chigeeng First Nation membership lives off-reserve in locations across Canada and beyond. These relatives are deeply connected to the families on-reserve, and they are legally citizens of M’Chigeeng and voters in elections. This portion of the plan will consider ways and means of ensuring that off-reserve members have a meaningful voice in community affairs, are able to contribute to community development, and to the extent of possible are able to benefit from programs and services offered by the First Nation.

Introduction, continued

The Plan Production Process

1. In August 2014 a draft planning document was produced and tabled by the Four Worlds team.
2. In October 2014 working groups reviewed the draft CCP and suggested additions and changes. This work resulted in the current document.

Next Steps

1. Input from a community review process (that includes visits to M'Chigeeng homes and a community meeting scheduled for January 31, 2015) will be incorporated into the plan.
2. Chief and Council will review the final draft and once it is refined to their satisfaction, they will adapt it with the understanding that although it looks forward to a 10-20 year horizon, the plan is always in draft. **It can always be changed, and should in fact be reviewed and updated annually.**

What's in a Plan?

Nearly every Band office in Canada has dozens of studies collecting dust on their shelves that no one is implementing. To qualify as a real **plan**, a guide to future action has to be connected to the minds and hearts of community members. It has to belong to people who fully intend to carry it out. ***A document is not a plan without this human connection.***

So, in order to develop and implement a truly viable Comprehensive Community Plan, a vibrant core group of community members, representing all important sectors of community life, needed to be engaged in the process of making the plan, and also need to be involved in implementing it. It has to be their plan. This core group needs to include representatives of Chief and Council and the Trustees of community funds, as well as all key departments and agencies, but also needs to include the voices of community elders, youth, women and men, including community members living off reserve wherever they may be.

Introduction, continued

What a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is and is not

A CCP is a general framework for guiding action. It is not a detailed work plan. In order to implement the CCP, the very next step (after the finalization of the framework) is to develop work plans with groups of implementers responsible for each of the identified work areas.

We have presented this CCP with a planning horizon of ten years. This is not to ignore 15 to 20 year projections and needs, but rather to focus the plan on what actually needs to be done and what can be done now in order to address the opportunities, issues, needs and concerns the community has identified.

This plan will need to be revised and refined annually and completely renewed every 3 to 4 years, beginning again with a renewal of the Community Story process (which basically maps the needs and dynamics that must be addressed through development efforts).

The CCP always has a ten-year horizon. In 2012 the target completion year for all goals is 2022. In 2015, the target for completion for all goals (many of then refined or completely new from those of 2012) will be the year 2025. No matter what the year, the ten-year plan is always looking ten years ahead.

The Critical Importance of Measurement

The only way to tell if the plan M'Chigeeng has made is leading the community to the outcomes that have been identified as goals, or if the implementation process is being carried out effectively, is to engage all participants in the plan in very frequent monitoring and evaluation processes. Whatever we measure tends to improve. For this reason monitoring and evaluation will be built into the implementation process from the very beginning. This process will be described in more detail in the final section of this Plan.

Always in Draft

A good plan is always in draft because the world is always changing. Unlike some concepts of strategic planning that try to lay out lock-step strategies to deal with issues that are months or even years in the future, this Comprehensive Community Plan is designed to be flexible, nimble and adaptive to ever-changing realities and conditions. The only way to really know if your plan is a good one is to implement it. As you do, you will soon find out: a) if you have the knowledge, skills and resources you need to carry out your plan effectively; and b) if your planned strategies and activities are actually leading to the results you want.

Introduction, continued

Change takes Time

Development takes time. It is not an instant-add-water-and-stir affair. There are long periods of seeming inactivity such as when the anxious gardener waits for the first signs of new seedlings breaking ground. There are setbacks. There are dramatic rushes of activity that appear to be significant, but the results of which, when the dust has settled, appear to amount to very little. And what appears to amount to very little can be of enormous and crucial importance when the potent process of time and the proper circumstances are combined.

The gestation period for a human fetus is nine months in the womb, and about twenty years after that. The time for the rebirth of a people falls into a similar category. The strategies outlined in this plan are not of the instant noodle soup variety. It will take time to learn how to effectively implement them, and more time for them to stimulate the growth and change in community outcomes the Plan calls for.

What we do know is that both the vision of change as well as the goals and strategies described in the M'Chigeeng Comprehensive Community Plan have been tested and found to be effective and successful in many community settings, both in Aboriginal Canada and around the world. **The two greatest predictors of success in such a Plan are unity and systematic action. If the implementers of this Plan can remain united in their efforts and if they persevere in systematically testing and continuously refining the strategies they have devised, success is only a matter of time.**

CHAPTER ONE: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Definition

Health refers to mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Wellness refers to the values, choice making and patterns of living that lead to health. This component of the comprehensive community plan considers the full range of health- and wellness-related issues, determinants, solutions and services that have to be addressed in order to support the health and wellness of M'Chigeeng people.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

The consensus of participants in the M'Chigeeng Community Story is that despite much improved health care services, the overall health and wellness of our community members has steadily declined since the 1950s, and it continues to worsen, especially among children, youth and young adults. This is due to a combination of factors including inter-generational trauma; chronic poverty; loss of language, culture and identity; poor health habits; and a deteriorating social safety net due to steady decreases in funding.

Health issues and challenges in M'Chigeeng can be divided into four categories of focus: 1) mental and social health, 2) physical health and chronic disease, 3) addressing the root causes (i.e., determinants) of health, and 4) addressing the specific health needs of elders, families (especially single parent families) and children and youth.

1. Mental and social health

An estimated 75-80% of households are in some way struggling with the impacts of inter-generational trauma, which is generating a wide-range of healing and wellness issues listed below in no particular order.

- alcohol and drug abuse
- fetal alcohol syndrome spectrum disorder (FASD)
- sexual abuse
- physical abuse, especially of women, children and sometimes elders
- psychological/emotional abuse
- lateral violence (in houses, in the community, in politics and in the workplace)
- bullying
- suicide (and the threat of suicide)
- low self-esteem
- chronic depression
- chronic anger and rage

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

- parenting issues such as emotional coldness, rigidity, neglect, poor communication and abandonment
- dysfunctional families and broken interpersonal relationships
- chronic conflict and disunity creating stubborn divisions among family, religions and political lines
- eating disorders
- sleeping disorders
- chronic physical illness related to spiritual and emotional states
- layers upon layers of unresolved grief and losses
- fear of change and personal growth, transformation and healing i.e., being offered to face the heart of the past, make amends and move on.
- post-residential school community environment, including paternalistic authority linked to passive dependency; misuse of power and control over others; a prevailing climate of criticism, put-downs, rumor spreading and attacks; and a community pattern of complaining about issues, but also attacking those who try to make changes and not supporting them, standing up and speaking out, or positively contributing to positive change

Note: All of these issues were reflected on in the M'Chigeeng Community Story. We don't yet have accurate statistics on the nature and extent of many of these problems, but what we do know is that these issues are present in the M'Chigeeng community and they have been linked (by a consensus of M'Chigeeng community members and health professionals) with intergenerational trauma. In fact, these same issues are present in most Aboriginal communities that have experienced historical and intergenerational trauma.

2. Physical health and chronic disease

Some of the most prevalent physical health and chronic disease issues include the following.

- obesity and overweight
- diabetes (and complications)
- heart disease
- asthma and chronic lung disease
- cancers
- stroke and hypertension
- environmental sickness (from mold, poor indoor air quality, etc.)
- frequent colds, flus and infections

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

These and other physical health challenges are impacting more people and at younger ages than ever before. The rates of overweight and obesity, childhood onset diabetes, and many other chronic illnesses are worsening. The impact of chronic illness in elders is also worsening due to the removal of many previously covered insured health benefits, which is putting a serious additional burden on elders and their families.

3. Addressing the root causes (i.e., the determinants) of health

It is clear that if we do not effectively address such determinants of health as poverty, housing and the impacts of trauma, we will never be able to bring our community to health. Of course, we also realize that dealing with such issues as poverty, housing and disconnection from culture are not with the usual mandate of a health and wellness program.

And yet, if we want to move beyond reacting to increasing levels of un-wellness to a strategy that actually moves our community toward health and wellness, we will need to find a way of collaborating with other departments and agencies to address the root causes that are contributing to the current health patterns our community is facing.

The Government of Canada identifies the following determinants of health¹.

- income and social status
- the strength of social support networks
- education and literacy
- employment and working conditions
- the social environment
- gender (health conditions and outcomes are different for men and women)
- personal health practices and coping skills
- healthy child development
- biology and genetic endowments
- health services (access, availability, affordability)
- the health of physical environments
- culture (i.e., connection to, support from, etc.)

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada, "What Determines Health", www.publichealth.gc.ca

While all these determinants are, of course, important for M'Chigeeng, we believe a priority needs to be placed on improving the following determinants (expressed in our own terms).

1. alleviating **poverty**, especially in families
2. connection to our **cultural identity**, knowledge and resources
3. adequate, affordable and healthy **housing**

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

¹ There are many ways determinants of health are expressed. This is just one typical listing.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

4. dealing with the impacts of **trauma**
5. building strong and enduring **social support networks**

It is our understanding that as we are able to make measurable improvements in these five key areas, we will see substantive improvement in health outcomes related to: a) mental and social health, and b) physical health and chronic disease.

4. Addressing the health needs of specific segments of the population, namely elders, families (especially single parent families), women, children and youth.

Elders are facing declining health-care insurance benefits, and this is putting some needed treatment and medical equipment out of reach. Other issues include: loneliness and isolation; the need for increased family and community support for daily living; and eventually, safe, pleasant and affordable care facilities. All of this is now in jeopardy due to severe funding shortages from the Federal government, and the lack of dedicated staff to work with elders to ensure they are getting what they need. Some families are stepping in. Some are not.

A estimated 65% of our **families** are living with addictions and mental health issues, high stress due to poverty/deprivation, food insecurity and poor diet; and dependency on welfare or other transfer payments. Many are also living with physical and sexual abuse. More than half of our families are single parent, and most of these are young women. Many of these single parent families are especially in need of support and help if they are to achieve health.

This means that many of our **children and youth** are at risk, living with parents suffering from mental health problems; addictions; domestic violence and abuse; poor parenting; lack of care and supervision; poor diet and lifestyle choices; and deprivation affecting self-esteem, social integration and access to recreation. Many children are living in unsafe and overcrowded housing, are disconnected from their own cultural history and heritage and are often alienated from their own families and much of the community. Such children and youth are seriously at risk for mental health challenges of their own, addictions, bullying and lateral violence, juvenile crime and suicide.

One size fits all programs focused on mental health and addictions will likely miss the mark for all three of these groups. Solutions need to be tailored to meet the real needs and life interests of these three special populations.

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

M'Chigeeng has many strengths and assets to help address these issues.

- Strong health programs with capable staff
- Drug strategy initiative

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments, continued

- Methadone program
- Saswaahins Centre
- Supported independent living opportunities
- Cell phone services
- Water treatment plant and tower
- Manitoulin Physio Centre
- Fitness Centre
- Kenjgewin Teg
- Strong little NHC organization
- Great Spirit Circle Trail - PMO
- Strong environment movement
- Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre
- Band's good financial standing makes new program directions possible

Thinking ahead to implementation

The selection that follows presents seven goals related to:

1. **Community healing**
2. **Culture** as a foundation for all health promotion and intervention strategies
3. **Reducing physical issues and chronic diseases**
4. The key **social determinants of health** (i.e. root causes) such as poverty, housing etc.
5. Addressing the needs of specific segments of the population, namely **elders, families, women, children and youth**.
6. **Community safety, and**
7. Establishing a **healing and learning** center (Gwekwadziwin)

This is a long-term development framework with a 10-year horizon. The whole plan cannot be implemented in the first year. **In order to begin implementation, it will be necessary to be clear on priorities** in the short and medium term.

While all 7 goals are important, **the highest priority coming out of community consultation is community healing**, and thus Goal #1 (related to supporting community healing) and Goal #7 related to establishing a youth healing and learning centre will need immediate focus in the short term.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

This certainly doesn't mean the other goals can be ignored, but only that initial innovation, resources and effort should be focused on priority areas.

Goal #1: Initiate, develop and support a community healing and wellness movement in M'Chigeeng that addresses addictions, abuse and the impacts of intergenerational trauma, and that:

- fully engages community members
- is professionally supported and guided by a **professional healing team** that is well trained in community recovery and trauma informed practice
- engages all age groups and walks of life
- draws on cultural strengths and resources available within and around M'Chigeeng
- is open and welcoming to everyone, no matter what their religious, political or family affiliations might be
- is fully supported by Chief and Council and all M'Chigeeng departments and agencies (not just the Health Department), all of whom participate in and contribute to the process of recovery and wellness development

Background Thinking: A community-based approach

Two levels of human resources are needed to carry out this work: a) a professional level healing team, and b) a voluntary healing brigade (like a volunteer fire department). Basically the volunteer team is needed because a) there will never be enough professionals available around the clock to work at the individual and family level, and b) a major part of the work of volunteers is to build a **community-driven healing movement**.

The role of professionals is to provide training, and professional backup to volunteers' efforts. This community-based approach incorporates and includes counseling and other professional interventions, but focuses on trying to make many safe spaces and viable opportunities for healing across the community in which community people are helping each other on their healing journey.

Strategy #1: Measuring Wellness progress. In order to determine whether or not wellness strategies are working, it is essential to establish a clear baseline (i.e., relevant data) identifying levels of community wellness, and then to conduct frequent measures of progress. This will be accomplished by collecting data related to such indicators as the % of households in which alcohol and drugs is a risk to safety and health, the % of children living in homes where addictions can influence their safety and well-being, the levels of reported cases of family violence, the number of alcohol and drug related police incidences (accidents, arrests, etc.), the % of individuals who are clean and sober, the % of individuals on an active healing path, the number of individuals who sought treatment in the past 3 months, the number of individuals volunteering for

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

community service, the number of community-healing-related activities in the past 3 months, the number of cultural activities in the past 3 months, etc. Such indicators will be used to develop a **community wellness report** card that will be compiled and publically released every 3 months.

Strategy #2: Build on the health we do have to form a **Healing Core Group**. At least 35% of the community members are relatively drug and alcohol free, have done at least some of their own healing work (few would say they are all finished), and many of them have much to give in supporting and accompanying community members on a healing journey. We will utilize their strengths, knowledge, experience, role model encouragement and participation to drive the development of a **volunteer community wellness core group**. This “core group” will be the backbone of a community healing movement. It will consist of people who are on a healing path, or are living a healthy life and are willing to work together to build a healthy community. This core group will:

- a. **be trained** to become a M’Chigeeng Volunteer Healing Brigade (like a fire brigade) that can be called upon to intervene in family emergencies and offer counseling and support with the support of staff professionals
- b. **facilitate** healing circles and support groups and other healing processes and events
- c. **organize healthy fun and social activities**
- d. **reach out, to bring in many new community members** into the healing process
- e. **organize educational events** about the healing journey
- f. seek, as a group, to **exercise a positive influence on community relations**, building unity, and encouraging reconciliation, forgiveness and understanding
- g. **be the eyes and ears** of the healing movement guiding the professional healing team and decision makers in continuously refining and improving the effectiveness of community healing efforts
- h. **target specific groups** that needs healing such as parents, youth, elders, men, women, survivors of abuse, etc.
- i. **work with cultural leaders** to integrate Anisinawbe teachings and knowledge into the community healing process
- j. **work with church leaders** to integrate their spiritual knowledge and resources into the community healing process

Strategy #3: Form a “Professional Healing Team (PHT)” consisting of trained therapists and counselors (from the Health and Wellness department together with key professionals from other agencies and departments that have a mandate for working on healing and recovery issues in M’Chigeeng) who will work together to guide, educate and support the healing of individuals, families and community systems. Utilizing a wide range of healing approaches and methods that fit the needs, including one-on-one counseling, small group work, peer support circles, and the use of non-conventional and traditional healing approaches. This team will receive in-depth and continuous training, will operate under a single integrated plan, and will gradually shift its focus from crisis response to risk prevention and health promotion.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

The Professional Healing Team will work as a **team** within the framework of a coordinated plan, and will take periodic measures of the effectiveness of their methods. As well, the Professional Healing Team will provide training and support to community volunteers who are helping with the healing work. The main strategic reason a Healing and Wellness Core Group is to be established is that a handful of paid professionals will never have enough time, energy and knowledge to address the full range of community healing needs. A platoon of volunteer helpers needs to surround and work closely with the Professional Healing Team, and that group is the Core Group (see strategy #2 above).

The methodology of the PHT will focus **both** on professionally delivered healing services and on healing processes that are organized and carried out primarily by community members (such as a sweat lodge, a healing circle, a social activity, or even AA meetings). A significant role of the PHT will be to **build the capacity of community members** (i.e., non-professionals) to contribute to the community healing process, and to accompanying them as they learn to become more and more effective in doing so

Strategy #3.1: Wellness Recovery Case Management Program. An individualized care-management program will be maintained for clients enrolled in the Methadone Program. This program will focus on decreasing prescription drug use and increasing counseling support and client maintenance. To implement this program we will require collaboration between ASI, the pharmacist, the Family Health Team and medical providers.

Strategy #3.2: Aftercare Program. We will develop and maintain an Aftercare Program targeting community members who have come out of addictions treatment programs. This program will focus on relapse prevention, but will also place a strong emphasis on continuing the healing work begun during treatment, on creating a strong support network around the person, and on achieving optimum levels of mental health and wellness. Implementation of this initiative will involve NNADAP, M'Chigeeng Mental Health Program, our professional healing team more generally and the community healing core group of volunteers (who can play a very strong role if trained and supported to do so).

Strategy #3.3: Structured Relapse Prevention Program. This program will target present and past methadone clients, as well as others in the Aftercare Program and will consist of five training modules intended to teach a new coping and refusal skills, increase awareness of mental health and addiction triggers and how to deal with them, and to increase positive decision-making outcomes.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Strategy #3.4: Prescription Medication Disposal Service. This program will facilitate regular disposal of unused and expired prescription drugs in order to prevent unsafe use by unauthorized persons (including children and youth). The Health Center nursing staff will manage this initiative.

Strategy #3.5: Crime Reporting Information Sessions. Periodic information sessions to educate M'Chigeeng membership on how to report crimes safely and anonymously will be offered. As well, pamphlets (both in print and online) will be available. The intention of this initiative is to increase community ownership of the responsibility to report crimes, and especially those that endanger public safety (such as drug dealing). The overall goal is to promote a sense of safety for community members in reporting crimes.

Strategy #3.6: Addressing Sexual Abuse: Along with, and often hidden behind patterns of addictions, is the problem of sexual abuse. In recognition that abuse has occurred and is still taking place within our families and our communities, and that there is no specific program for dealing with it, a **Sexual Abuse Response Team** will be identified and trained, and specific intervention protocols will be developed that balance healing of victims and abusers and also that utilizes the combined power of the law and the support of the community to protect victims from further abuse and retaliation from making disclosures. This new program will be based on best practices in Aboriginal community sexual abuse intervention. (See for example "At the Time of Disclosure: A Manual for Front-Line Community Workers Dealing with Sexual Abuse Disclosures in Aboriginal Communities" Solicitor General Canada APC-TS 2 OA (1997); and "Responding to Sexual Abuse: Developing a Community Based Sexual Abuse Response Team in Aboriginal Communities" Solicitor General Canada APC-TS 1 CA (1997).

Strategy #4: Shifting from crisis response to health promotion. As CCP implementation begins, 80% of our human resources are used up on dealing with crisis, and only 20% on promoting health. We will be gradually shifting that ratio, concentrating more and more of our human resources on building the foundations of health.

Strategy #5: Develop targeted healing initiatives to reach the following groups: a) families, especially families led by single parents, b) youth and children, c) women, d) men, e) elders, and f) leaders. This strategic outreach will need to be carefully planned in consultation with the group that is to be targeted. Specific impact goals will need to be set and frequent evaluation measures taken to determine if the ongoing strategies are actually providing the desired results. The M'Chigeeng Drug Strategy (see appendix A) will be fully integrated into this work.

Strategy #6: Care for the caregivers. In order to develop staff capacity for community healing and recovery, it will be necessary to put a strong "workplace wellness program" in place that concentrates on supporting staff to do their own healing and recovery work. Staff can't bring to the community what they don't have themselves. An effective staff wellness program will require dedicated time within departmental and individual work plans as well as professional leadership and guidance during an extended period of time.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Strategy #7: Staff development and volunteer training. If we look at the cumulative outcomes of all current program efforts related to healing and wellness in M'Chigeeng between 2010-2014 (the four years preceding the preparation of this plan) we can see bright spots, but we can also see that what is happening has not yet successfully engaged the community in a wellness movement strong enough to turn the tide or the destructive patterns that dominate so many people's lives.

We therefore recognize that we need to change the way we are working if we want different results. For this reason, we will implement an in-depth **training and development program aimed at staff and key community volunteers focused on building our collective capacity to successfully promote healing and wellness in our families and community.**

This program will entail: a) focus on staff wellness as a foundation for the work, b) strong utilization of our cultural and spiritual resources, c) training a team of at least 30-50 people that combines professionals from key agencies and departments as well as community volunteers, and d) focusing training on these simultaneous dimensions of the work: i) staff wellness, ii) facilitating the healing journey of families and of the full range of ages and sectors of the community, iii) engaging the strengths of the community as primary drivers of a healing movement, and iv) trauma informed practice across all programs.

Strategy #8: An education campaign on trauma will be carried out focused on the types of trauma that have impacted M'Chigeeng people. What are its impacts? What is needed for trauma healing? How can cycles of inter-generational trauma be broken? It is very important that these things are well understood by front-line providers, leadership and managers, as well as by community members. Drama will be used as a significant component of this education process. The following list of the features of trauma-informed best practice provide examples of the type of material that will be covered.

1. Staff are fully aware of how trauma impacts human development, of the high prevalence of trauma, of the wide range of adaptations people make to cope with trauma and survive, and of the intimate connection between trauma and substance abuse and other mental health concerns.
2. Providers are aware that trauma survivors have experienced boundary violence and abuse of power, that they need to feel to be physically and emotionally safe, and that they may be currently in unsafe relationships.
3. Therefore client-professional interventions are characterized by welcoming intake procedures, adapting the physical space, providing clear information and predictable expectations about programming, ensuring informed consent and by creating crisis plans.
4. Service provider safety is emphasized through education and support related to vicarious trauma.
5. The client's safety and feeling of security are fostered, and client's sense of efficacy, self-determination, dignity and personal control are protected and nurtured.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

6. Opportunities for client choice, collaboration and connection are fostered through open communication, equalizing power imbalances, allowing expression of feelings without fear or judgment, providing choices as to treatment preferences.
7. Trauma-informed practice focuses on a strength-based approach and on building skills, helping clients to identify their strengths, working on further developing resiliency and coping skills, teaching and modeling skills for recognizing triggers, calming, centering and staying present, supporting an organizational culture of emotional intelligence and maintaining competency-based skills, knowledge and values that are trauma-informed.
8. Trauma-informed practice is relevant at the levels of interacting with clients, service culture, interagency and intersectoral collaboration and influencing social conditions creating the need for trauma-informed practice.

Source: "Trauma-Informed Practice" (2012) Nancy Poole BC Centre for Women's Excellence for Women's Health, Vancouver B.C.

Strategy #9: A campaign to stop bullying and lateral violence in our community. We recognize that bullying and violence are very widespread and that all ages and genders get bullied. We understand that children and youth are bullied at home, on the streets, at school, in public places—anywhere that bullies are encountered. We know that adults and even elders are bullied in the workplace, at home, in private and in public spaces and on social media. We see that bullying and lateral violence is embedded in the political culture of our community. We understand that bullying is creating incredible stress and harm to our people (and most especially to our children). That is why a "stop bullying" campaign is so essential to our community health and wellness.

This comprehensive public education and social marketing campaign will focus on: a) understanding the harm lateral violence and bullying does, b) recognizing the signs of lateral violence and bullying, c) learning how to intervene and stop bullying when it is occurring, d) reporting bullying to authorities, and e) understanding what to do if you are being bullied.

Backing up the communication efforts, the formation of an **anti-bullying and violence task force** authorized (by Chief and Council) to intervene, to stop bullying and to help both victims and perpetrators to heal.

- The establishment of standards, policies, enforcement measures and consequences related to bullying and violence for the schools, M'Chigeeng workplaces, public spaces, social media and the community.
- The translation of standards into community legislation that authorizes public intervention when needed.
- The use of community justice circles to deal with cases of extreme bullying and violence.
- The set-up of a community safe house for women, children and youth experiencing bullying.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

- The establishment of a peer helpers program to intervene to prevent bullying and lateral violence, to stop it when it is occurring and to report it when necessary.

Strategy #10: Offer specific support programs that help to deal with and prevent addictions in the community: a) continue harm reduction programs such as needle drop, needle exchange and the methadone clinic option; b. expand harm reduction efforts based on global best practice (to be completed by the end of 2015); and c. develop a baseline for the level of FASD in M'Chigeeng, and establish an FASD family and community support plan that is monitored and measured quarterly based on Canadian best practice.

Goal #2: Develop a strong cultural recovery program that contributes to all health promotion and intervention strategies

Strategy #1: In collaboration with the Gwekwadziwin project and the Kenjgewin Teg Institute, the Great Circle project, the Lakeview School Cultural language and program and cultural practitioners from the M'Chigeeng area and beyond develop:

- a. A **concept note** that articulates a basic model and a framework for action and an entry-level curriculum on “what a healthy person is” and “what the road to healing and recovery is”
- b. Based on the above, offer a series of workshops and retreats for the following: i) children and youth, ii) families, iii) staff, iv) elders, and v) the general public.
- c. Utilizing the framework, and the resources developed, integrate cultural teachings and resources into all community healing and wellness programs and initiatives

Strategy #2: Establish a Cultural Foundations Health Advisory Team to help Health and Wellness programs and initiatives to effectively utilize cultural resources as an important contributor to program success. This team will be attached to the M'Chigeeng Cultural and Language Institute Team (as proposed in Chapter 2 on Education as Goal 4, Strategy 1), either through resources provided for services or with a dedicated Health curriculum writer-researcher position.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Goal #3: Address and improve the status of key social determinants of health, namely: a) poverty, b) connection to cultural identity, c) housing, d) the impacts of intergenerational trauma, and e) social support

As identified earlier, negative mental health and wellness outcomes, as well as serious physical health outcomes and chronic diseases, don't simply happen to people for no reason. As well as being rooted in healthy choices and biological factors, they are (primarily) rooted in a constellation of **social conditions** referred to as "social determinants of health". In reviewing health outcomes in M'Chigeeng (and other First Nations across Canada) in terms of the effectiveness of programs and interventions over the past decade, it becomes apparent that a new approach is needed that addresses the **full spectrum** of root causes.

Since the root causes (i.e., determinants) that are the most prevalent to health outcomes in M'Chigeeng are social factors such as poverty, housing and wellness levels, it becomes very clear that: a) the Health Department cannot possibly be effective in addressing these broad spectrum social determinants alone, and therefore b) collaboration will be needed between such entities, agencies and departments as Health and Wellness, Education, Kenjgewin Teg, the Family Resource Centre, the Hub, the Economic Development Cooperation, and Chief and Council.

Strategy #1: Healing the roots. This strategy consists of developing five integrated strategies, each addressing critical social determinants of health, but all integrated together to maximize improved health outcomes. To achieve this, five standing committees will be formed, dealing with: i) poverty reduction; ii) strengthening cultural foundations; iii) promoting community healing and trauma recovery; iv) improving housing conditions, affordability and access; and v) developing strong social support networks for improved health, wellness and social development.

- These standing committees will work with all appropriate departments and entities to produce and implement one-year action plans with specific, measurable goals that are reviewed by the standing committee quarterly.
- The implementing actors (departments, agencies, etc.) will develop collaborative MoUs defining who will do what, who will provide which resources (human, financial) and who is accountable for which inputs, outputs and results.
- Each standing committee will consist of managers and key staff of agencies that are expected to do the work related to implementation plans, and representatives of relevant community committees.
- The Chair (or designate) of each of the standing committees will form a coordination/management team for the **Healing the Roots** initiative, chaired by the Director of Health or his/her designate.

Integration, not duplication - This strategy recognizes that there already exists, for example, a detailed strategy for healing and wellness (see Chapter One, Goal #1). The purpose of the standing committee is to ensure arms-length oversight of these strategic initiatives (Are they working? What needs to change?). Again the purpose of the standing committees is to ensure

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

that the various lines of action are mutually supportive. (For example, what are the healing components of poverty reduction or of building strong community networks that support movement toward health?)

Goal #4: Significantly reduce the levels of physical illness and chronic disease among M'Chigeeng members, so that M'Chigeeng health outcomes area as good or better than the rest of Ontario

Strategy #1: Focus on a determinants of health approach. As stated above, we recognize that the prevalence of chronic disease is related to such health determinants as poverty, poor and overcrowded housing, disconnection from cultural identity and teachings, and broken social support networks. Goal #3 will specifically address these factors.

Strategy #2: Institute a healthy choices support campaign. “Healthy choices” or life habits refers to such things as healthy eating, regular exercise, stress reduction, regular and sufficient sleep habits, freedom from addictions and having adequate social support for maintaining healthy choices.

The reality for many M'Chigeeng people is that they are blocked from making “healthy choices” by the circumstances of their lives. For some, poverty is an obstacle to healthy eating because they simply can't afford a healthy food basket. Recreation and physical activities are out of reach because they (or their parents) can't afford the cost of equipment and entry fees, and in any case have no transportation to take them to activities. For many, lack of awareness is an obstacle that is difficult to penetrate because they see themselves as too poor, too stressed, and too busy, or lacking whatever is needed to choose to build a different pattern. For many, change itself is intimidating, and being asked to make an effort to change triggers unresolved trauma, and so the person resists.

We understand that education alone is not likely to change unhealthy behaviour, and that pressuring people to change when they have many barriers preventing them from implementing healthy choices is not effective. Change has to come from within. This means that people need to make their own informed choices and change their life patterns at their own pace. But they also need support to be able to carry out or access the things they have chosen.

This is where the **Healthy Choices Support** initiative comes in. This initiative will: a) provide information, education and counseling services about healthy choices and how to access and maintain them; b) run a healthy food basket program (buying coupons, subsidies, etc.); c) coordinate cooperative childcare services to give parents/caregivers stress breaks; d) coordinate social support networks; e) facilitate the cooperative organization of healthy recreation options; f)

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

facilitate/coordinate learning, healing and personal growth opportunities; g) facilitate cooperative transportation options; and h) provide life-path planning services and implementation support.²

Goal #5: Develop tailored holistic health promotion and intervention strategies to meet the specific needs of: a) elders, b) families, c) women, d) children, e) youth

Strategy #1: Develop and implement a comprehensive elder-health program that addresses and regularly measures and produces a quarterly report card on:

- Mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing
- Access to needed medical services, medicines, and treatment options regardless of financial or family circumstances
- Development and maintenance of a top-notch home care service aimed at keeping elders in their own homes as long as possible
- Comfortable and well-serviced care facilities for those who need them, with easy and continuous access by family and community supporters
- Engage and support elders in contributing to the lives of others, to community decision-making and community development, and to the guidance of children, youth and families
- Personal growth, healing and continuous (life-long) education of elders

Strategy #2: Develop and implement a comprehensive family health support program (with particular attention to the needs of single parent families) that addresses, regularly measures and produces a quarterly report card on the following:

- Mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing
- Living conditions contributing to family wellbeing or the lack of it: a) income, b) food security, c) safety and security, d) housing conditions, e) transportation, and f) social support
- Family wellness levels: a) addictions, b) abuse or violence, c) mental health issues
- Engagement in healing, learning, growth and positive change process and opportunities

Strategy #3: Develop and implement a comprehensive child and youth healthy support program that addresses and regularly measures and produces a quarterly report card on the following:

- Mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing
- Child safety and environmental risk factors (such as ongoing addictions or violence in the home)

²See details of the Life-path concept in chapter three on Prosperity Development.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

- Especially tailored child/youth healing and recovery and the degree these programs are actually effective in helping children and your address their healing, recovery issues
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Goal #6: Address important community safety issues

Strategy #1: Address the full range of safety challenges with effective, measurable initiatives

- a. Youth and Children at risk - particularly lateral violence and bullying, late night partying, road accidents through the bullying and lateral violence initiative, enforcing curfews, and ensuring parental supervision of underage (18) children through education, monitoring and other appropriate interventions
- b. Enforce the dog by-law
- c. Ensure that leadership addresses the abandoned houses risk factor
- d. Activate the neighbourhood watch program
- e. Enhance and monitor community parks and playgrounds for safety
- f. Institute widespread training on home safety targeting children, youth and families (do's and don'ts)
- g. Offer self-defense, universal precautions and emergency preparedness training
- h. Conduct an environmental safety scan
- i. Implement an annual community clean-up campaign

Strategy #2: Appoint a Community Safety Committee to make and implement an annual safety plan. The Safety Committee should have the commitment of one full-time employee to carry out its work in collaboration with all relevant departments and agencies.

Chapter One: Health and Wellness, continued

Goal #7: Establish Gwekwadziwin Centre: a special place of learning for youth

In recognition that a very high proportion of M'Chigeeng mental health and addiction problems reside in the youth and young adult population, we will establish (in collaboration with other Manitoulin First Nations and the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising) **a residential learning and healing centre for young people** that focuses on health (the body), training (the mind) and cultural wellness (the spirit) and aims to prepare young people for a healthy and positive life.

Strategy #1: Based on approvals already given by the M'Chigeeng Chief and Council (resolution #239/11 dated August 11, 2011), the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising (CCMM - Resolution #523, November 28, 2011) and with a design supported by the Northeast Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) in a letter signed by Chief Joe Hare on August, 2014, a request for preliminary funding was submitted, and approved in November 2014 on an initial \$193,000 granted by Health Canada for the Capital design phase. The building will cost approximately 2.5 million to construct, and the partners will seek loans to finance the building.

Strategy #2: *It is proposed to complete the building and be fully operational by 2017, with 16-, 26- and 42-week programs.*

Strategy #3: The three (3) partners are M'Chigeeng First Nation, which will provide the facility; UCCMM, which will provide management and operation; and Kenjgewin Teq Educational Institute (KTEI), which will provide the cultural and learning program components.

Strategy #4: The M'Chigeeng community healing movement will be integrated with and fully supportive of the Gwekwadziwin program, both while clients are in the Center, and especially after they come out (i.e. aftercare)

CHAPTER TWO: LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Definition

Life-long learning refers to the opportunities that M'Chigeeng members have to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to live healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives. This theme recognizes that learning happens at all stages of the life cycle from childhood to elderhood. It also acknowledges the value of supporting all members of the community to develop their gifts so as to enrich their personal lives, to contribute to the richness of family and community life and to achieve career aspirations. In keeping with the above definition, this Chapter reflects on the important goals before the M'Chigeeng community related to early childhood development; schooling in the primary to secondary grades; formal (e.g. accredited) adult education, including literacy, up-grading, post-secondary and job skills courses; and a broad range of community informal learning opportunities that enhance life skills, social and recreational life, cultural knowledge and identity, as well as family and community life.

In practice, life-long learning can be thought of in terms of four inter-connected fields of activity: 1) early childhood learning and education, 2) primary and secondary schooling, 3) post-secondary education and employment training, and 4) non-formal learning for life (self-improvement, family life, cultural foundations, community development, etc.).

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

The following list of issues and challenges is taken from the M'Chigeeng (2014) Community Story and from consultation with the Education team.

1. The most significant challenge for M'Chigeeng education is to *make the shift from education as schooling; i.e., teaching focused mostly on academic success, to learning for a healthy, prosperous well-rounded life* (mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, social). While this focus includes academic excellence, it goes far beyond that to address the foundations for a healthy life, strong families and a vibrant and thriving community.
2. Our primary school achievement success in reading, writing and mathematics has improved, but is still far below the Provincial average at grade 3 and grade 6.
3. Health professionals estimate that 65-70% of children and youth are living in households struggling with addictions, violence and abuse, neglect and other impacts of intergenerational trauma. This means that many children and youth are coming to school with wellness issues and social problems (hurt, anger, sadness, trauma, addictions, PTSD, FASD, etc.). There is no comprehensive healing and wellness program integrated at any level of education in M'Chigeeng (early childhood, primary, secondary, post-secondary). Yet it is clear that child wellness levels are impacting learning success, as well as the day-to-day life of most child and youth learners.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

4. Less than half of our students who go on to high school stay in school and graduate.
5. M'Chigeeng students are now receiving a very basic introduction to Anishinabek culture and values at Lakeview School, as well as a brief exposure to Anishinaabemowin. What is missing is a full-blown curriculum that focuses on learning Anishinabek history, culture, values, and Anishinaabemowin that reaches all children. Many M'Chigeeng youth say they never got connected to spirituality and culture, and they really need that connection. Generations of M'Chigeeng adults have been taught to be wary or fearful of traditional drumming and singing, ceremonies, and traditional teachings. This cultural self-fearing/hatred is part of the colonialism we need to overcome.
6. The entire community needs to learn about the history of contact, treaties, and the historical trauma M'Chigeeng people have experienced in order to understand why people act and think they way they do, and in particular how their own thinking, behaviour, and trauma-history fits into a much larger pattern. This is an important step for community healing and recovery.
7. A significant number of young adults (ages 18-30) have dropped out of school and see very little hope for themselves. There is a significant gap in education programming tailored to meet the needs of this demographic.
8. A focus by Lakeview School on “learning” rather than “teaching” implies a shift to a learning-centered approach. In this regard, many youth say they are concrete hands-on learners, and that an abstract academic approach doesn't work for them.
9. Many contributors to the M'Chigeeng Community Story called for a new emphasis on preparation and training for the trades, and the linking of hands-on trades-related learning to real-world work opportunities.
10. There is a huge need for learning programs that support a personal growth and development journey into wellness, self-confidence, life-skills, acquisition of basic education skills (literacy, numeracy), and access to education and training that is linked to employment or small business opportunities. The elements of such a program need to be fully integrated with each other, and woven together in an individualized approach (one size does not fit all).
11. Kenjgewin Teg is our “M'Chigeeng Community College”. It does some very good work that is much appreciated by our community. Now it needs to be nurtured, grown and further developed to meet the full spectrum of adult/education and training needs of our whole community. Currently, Kenjgewin Teg tends to operate in isolation, not fully integrated with the rest of M'Chigeeng education programs.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

12. Early Childhood, Lakeview School, Kenjgewin Teg, and area secondary and Hub training programs are not nearly as mutually reinforcing and integrated as they need to be in order to offer someone life-long support for human and community development.
13. Currently there is no integrated plan for life-long learning that: a) identifies important learning needs at every age and stage of life, and b) systematically plans to address the full spectrum of learning needs ranging from families and early childhood development, personal wellness and cultural grounding to academic excellence, employment and entrepreneurial training, fostering excellence in governance, community program delivery and community development. No single authority now oversees this full range of learning needs. Budgets, staff mandates, vision, and ongoing program offerings are now fragmented.
14. The elders in residence program at Lakeview School is a good beginning in terms of truly engaging elders as guides and mentors in the lives of younger people. This model needs to be learned from (not necessarily copied) and further developed in all learning-related settings, including early childhood programs, Lakeview School, High School, Kenjgewin Teg, community youth and recreation programs, community healing programs, and community employment training and business development programs.
15. Infants and toddlers not yet in early childhood programs need focused and systematic professional attention to ensure that healthy child development is occurring. This is particularly true in homes where addictions and trauma are prevalent. In this regard, in-depth community consensus is needed on how to manage the balance between the rights of the child to safety and the means required for healthy child development (on the one hand) and (on the other hand) the rights of parents to privacy, respect and the freedom to choose their own path in life. In the middle of this dilemma is the child's need to be loved, nurtured and supported. Every inch of that journey is all about "learning".
16. One of the reasons many community members hold back from participating in community planning and decision-making activities is because they are not well educated about their own history, treaty rights, and cultural values, or about the specific issues that are being consulted about at any particular time. Political and governance matters need to be part of the school and community education curriculum such that becoming informed and engaged citizens is an explicit goal of life-long education.
17. For many, education needs to be grounded in success related to employment or business. On-the-job training, work/study programs and apprenticeships give these types of opportunities, but are not now readily available to most M'Chigeeng students. While some isolated initiatives provide experience-based learning opportunities, most aspects of

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

formal education are not oriented in this way. Underneath this type of learning is the goal of learning to create new opportunities and achieve goals through hard work, perseverance and discipline.

18. The primary educators of children are mothers. Parents are the foundation of life-long learning. Given the reality that M'Chigeeng parenting knowledge and practice were interrupted and undermined by residential schools, and the reality that upwards of 60% of families are now struggling with addictions and intergenerational-trauma-related challenges, developing and supporting parenting capacities has to be a fundamental goal for life-long learning in M'Chigeeng. Lakeview School's Adult Caregiver Engagement Strategy (ACES) is good, but only a start.
19. At least some children with learning disabilities and other special needs are not being adequately supported by the M'Chigeeng system. They are, instead, being stigmatized, and this can have a detrimental impact that lasts a lifetime (as reported by a significant number of participants in the Community Story).
20. Most M'Chigeeng young people are growing up much more connected to technology than they are to nature and the land, which is the foundation of our cultural identity. Education needs to be experiential in pursuing the goal of putting every child in contact with nature and helping them to be comfortable, familiar and grounded in their connection to the land.
21. Our education system is fundamentally colonial in nature. We are required to follow the Ontario curriculum and AANDC policies despite the fact that both have utterly failed generations of First Nations learners. We now need to assert our inherent rights to control and guide our own education system, to create our own policies and standards and our own curriculum that addresses our own learning priorities.

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

The following summarizes the strengths we have to build on in moving forward to address the challenges we face.

1. **Excellent staff at every level.** Great teachers, many with specializations such as literacy, special education, physical education, and music, with high staff retention at Lakeview School. Award-winning administrative leadership, a strong team spirit, unity of vision, preparation and commitment, and complete openness to their own learning, growth and continuous improvement. Daycare has maintained their license to operate for 40 years, many staff are Anishinaabemowin speakers. All staff are ECE certified after a tremendous effort by staff, much of it on their own time, and staff retention is stable. A new infant program has been initiated.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments, continued

2. **Hub creation.** Initial development of the Hub training centre completed and still growing, with promising results already being achieved.
 3. **Secondary school improvement.** There has been a recent improvement in secondary school outcomes, with increases in retention and graduation rates, and the addition of a secondary counselor that is providing more and better support to secondary students.
 4. **Kenjgewin Teg** is providing many bridging and post-secondary training opportunities, and it is our own creation, which means we can continue to build on the good work being done to create a full-blown university/college centre to meet many of our adult education and training needs.
 5. Many of our **Post-Secondary** students have been quite successful in many goals, including Masters and Ph.D., and these people can be role models to our younger generations.
 6. **Facilities.** We have a beautiful Early Childhood Centre, well stocked with resources, toys and books. Lakeview School is also well stocked with educational resources.
 7. **Funding.** The leadership of Lakeview School has been successful in attaining additional funds to cover all planned program needs for the past five years and into the foreseeable future, freeing Lakeview from dependency on the too-narrow and often inadequate financial support of AANDC (Indian Affairs).
 8. **Early Childhood and Lakeview School** are becoming stronger and together constitute an extremely important resource for future development. Beyond general parent and community support, **the elders-in-residence programs and the Parent Engagement program** are especially important assets.
 9. **Connection to the land.** M'Chigeeng is blessed with an abundance of land and environmental resources such as lakes and waterways, forests, bluffs, sugar bush and Clapperton Island, and with families in the community that are fully engaged in utilizing these resources. This traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) base, along with ready access to the natural world is a huge resource for life-long learning.
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Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Goal #1: To develop and build a made-in-M'Chigeeng life-long education system

We recognize the value and importance of meeting Provincial and national standards of achievement in education. At the same time, we will now assert our inherent right to control and guide our own education system, to create our own policies and standards, and our own curriculum that addresses our own learning needs and priorities. We also recognize that a fully integrated life-long learning education system (which addresses early childhood, primary, secondary, post-secondary and community non-formal learning needs) will require new forms of leadership and administration that will need to evolve as the system is developing.

Strategy #1: Utilizing a participatory community engagement process and ensuring that all institutional stakeholders are fully involved, **develop a made-in-M'Chigeeng “framework for life-long learning” strategy document that can be used as a guide to system development.** This document will include broad life-long **learning outcome goals** such as:

- a. **Holistic human development built on the medicine wheel model;** i.e., fully developing human potential in the mental/intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions of human capacity
- b. **Grounding in Anishinabek culture, language, history, values and wisdom,** which implies fluency in Anishinaabemowin and a deep and practical understanding of Anishinabek culture, historical experiences, and the application of Anishinabek values in contemporary life
- c. **Becoming engaged critical thinkers,** who have learned how to learn, how to engage with others in identifying and solving real-world challenges, how to read the socio-ecological context of their community and the world around them, how to see through oppressive systems to find ways of overcoming them, and how to be resilient in the face of adversity and change
- d. **Ethical citizenship.** Learners who have internalized the Seven Grandfather Teachings and who live them on a day-to-day basis and who carry an (internalized) strong moral compass into a life of respectful, fair, and open-minded engagement in community life and service to humanity
- e. **Academic excellence.** M'Chigeeng learners who have achieved literacy, numeracy and subject matter achievement outcomes equal to or better than their Provincial counterparts or those in the rest of Canada
- f. **Entrepreneurial Spirit.** This outcome refers not so much to an orientation to business, as to the spirit of enterprise that animates business and all other creative engagements with the world. It implies independent self-initiative, calculated risk taking, problem solving, and persevering in the pursuit of goals. At its base is the capacity to have a dream or a vision and to carry it through to completion.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

If these six broad outcome goals are to be achieved (or goals like them), this framework document also needs to define competencies that need to be developed in order for these outcome goals to become realized. For example, outcome goal “a” *Holistic human development built on the medicine wheel* needs to be further defined in terms of mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual “competencies”. What should the physical capabilities (i.e., competencies) be of 3-4 year old female toddlers, male toddlers, age 10, age 14, age 21, age 40, age 60, age 75? What should this person be able to know, to do, or to be at each of these stages of life? The same question needs to be asked about mental, emotional, or spiritual competency. Which developmental challenges does she face? Which supports and learning experiences does he need to have in his life in order to achieve his potential in the emotional realm?

From this it can be seen that a framework document is a foundation for developing a full-blown program, including curriculum. Unless we have defined competencies in some detail (whether it be related to reading, math, critical thinking or ethical decision making), we can’t develop a learning process we can be sure will lead us to the outcomes we seek, and we won’t be able to effectively integrate the full spectrum of resources we have in service to our educational goals.

Strategy #2: Develop a Life-long Education Council. This group will be the precursor to a super-board that will combine the following: a) an early childhood/daycare board, b) the Lakeview School Board, c) a secondary education board that oversees the relationship between M’Chigeeng secondary students and the schools they attend, and d) an adult education and training board that will oversee all post-secondary education and adult training programs.

These four sub-councils (early childhood/daycare, primary education, secondary education, adult education and training) will each operate independently but will also participate through selected representatives on the Life-long Education Council. The first act of the Council will be to develop a long-term (at least five year) **Life-Long Education** plan, beginning with the framework document described in strategy #1 above. The primary function of the Council is to coordinate between all the educational stakeholders and agencies to ensure a seamless and mutually reinforcing collaborative development process that serves the real life-long learning needs of M’Chigeeng people.

Strategy #3: Develop fully integrated work plans and alignment of human and financial resources behind shared goals across early childhood, primary, secondary and post-secondary education and adult training programs and agencies

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Goal #2: Develop and implement a M'Chigeeng Education Act

Strategy #1: Develop and implement M'Chigeeng's own Education law declaring M'Chigeeng to be a sovereign Nation, with the inherent right to control the education of its own people, base education firmly on Anishinabe cultural values and principles, set educational goals and standards, develop curricula, set standards for teacher certification and performance, and negotiate with other jurisdictions to obtain educational services as needed³

Goal #3: Education for Life: Focus education at all levels on building human and community capacity to meet the needs of healthy daily living, including learning for life-skills, personal, family and community wellness, full participation in community development and the responsibilities of citizenship in M'Chigeeng and Canada.

Strategy #1: Life-skills. Incorporate a graduated life-skills training program into the school curriculum from JK to grade 12. Offer life-skills emersion programs annually for those who didn't receive this training growing up. Reinforce life-skill knowledge and awareness in all training and post-secondary programs.

Strategy #2: Mnomaadziwin: Learning for Living a Good Life. This component focuses on moral values and ethical learning for life. A graduated (from JK and SK to grade 12) moral education program will be developed and delivered, designed to foster children's moral development foundation and ethical decision-making capacity. Based on Anishinabe Seven Grandfather teachings as well as on Christian moral teachings (there is no contradiction between these two), this curriculum will be implemented in daily learning, as well as applied in the living culture of education programs such as Lakeview School.

Strategy #3: Learning for personal, family and community wellness. Wellness recovery is a meta-issue in M'Chigeeng. It is an issue that affects solution-building of many other issues, such as chronic poverty and dependency, overcrowded and unhealthy housing, children at risk, and lateral violence and conflict in the community and the governance system.

³ The M'Chigeeng Education Act will be harmonized with similar legislation being put in place by other Ontario First Nations as informed by models prepared by the Union of Ontario Indians.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

A healing and wellness curriculum and learning intervention program will be developed. A foundational course in this program will be the trauma history of M'Chigeeng—what happened to our people during early contact, missionization, residential schools, etc. and how these experiences have shaped what is happening in our families and community today. The program will go on to provide knowledge and skills development for personal growth and healing and for community reconciliation.

Such a program would be offered at varying levels of complexity ranging from material suitable for young children, to material suitable for older adults who still retain living memory, grief and guilt from what happened in the past. The implementation of this programming will be carried out collaboratively between our Health and Wellness and Education agencies. Other learning programs related to community healing and wellness, will include *professional staff development and volunteer healing support worker training*. In addition to learning about healing, a children and youth healing program will be integrated into the life of education programs at every level, so that School becomes a “healing place”, a place of safety and support for the healing journey of children who have experienced trauma. This strategy will require full collaboration between the Health and Wellness and the Education Departments.

Strategy #4: Learning for prosperity development. This focus covers a wide-range of learning needs, from basic “life path” training (focused on helping a person make the journey from dependency to self-reliance, and entailing a combination of healing, life-skills, upgrading, employment readiness, job skills, and personal support), specific job skills and trades training, entrepreneurial and small business training, and specialized enterprise financing and management programs, including engagement of the First Nations as a partner in natural resource extraction and value-added industries (see Chapter Three for more detail on this focus area).

Strategy #5: Learning for participation in community development and citizenship. Being a “citizen” is not the same as being a “Band member”. A “citizen” is an actual participant in the shaping of community life, in making important decisions that affect everyone, and in contributing to the work of safeguarding and improving life for all.

A citizenship and community development learning program can be incorporated into the school curriculum, and into adult education and training, and by creating open opportunities for engagement and service, along with active coaching and mentoring support. All of these program initiatives will require dedicated and skilled professional attention in the form of curriculum development across the lifespan, and expert program delivery in a wide variety of appropriate settings. This entire stream of learning for daily living could be housed at Kenjgewin Teg, but managed by integrated collaboratives of stakeholders and providers.

Strategy #6: Re-conceptualizing the School Calendar. Goal Three and all the above-listed strategies are calling for adding many things to education programming beyond academic excellence. It is not reasonable or even feasible to expect school staff to do all of this new programming in the same timeframes and with the same financial and human resources they now have. As part of planning for a reconceptualized holistic approach to education, one that focuses on education for life

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

(including learning for human development, cultural and language learning, moral education, critical thinking, active citizenship, entrepreneurial spirit, etc., etc.), the life-long education plan needs to reconceptualize how the school calendar will be organized to allow for the time needed for children to become engaged with all of these important areas. Following are a few options to consider:

- a. Extended school days – adding an hour or more to each day to accommodate developmental programming
- b. Extended days (e.g., from 6 to 8 hours) for a 4-day academic week, plus a fifth day dedicated to personal growth, cultural and language learning, etc.
- c. Year-round schooling – students attend school in all 12 months of the year, with 2 weeks off every quarter break, and with one of the quarters (the summer months) focused on outdoor education, cultural learning and self development

All of these options would also include components of personal wellness, language, cultural learning, moral education, etc. integrated into the academic programs.

Goal #4: Establish a M'Chigeeng language, culture and history learning initiative to serve the needs of the entire community and its agencies

Strategy #1: Create an integrated strategy for language learning that encompasses the work of Lakeview School and the MAC School. Currently there is a kind of split between the Kenjigewin Teg and the community day care programs. This needs to be managed in a way that makes the best use of available funds and meets everyone's needs.

Strategy #2: Support the community day care to develop into a full language immersion facility that draws on best practice research and community consultation to ensure that this is done in the best possible way.

Strategy #3: Either utilize the Anishnabe Cultural Institute as a basis for assembling a team including an Anishinaabemowin language learning specialist, a cultural and historical research specialist and several curriculum writers, or establish a new Cultural and Language Institute to concentrate on the work of developing and producing graduated language and cultural learning materials and programs that support the day care immersion program and extend these gains first into K and SK and then into the elementary and secondary school levels. This team should be fully funded as adjunct to existing education staff and mandated to work as partners with the various educational institutions to design and deliver programs.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Strategy #4: Work with the Early Childhood, Lakeview School and Kenjgewin Teg programs to design and field test a **graduated curriculum for language learning** that focuses on oral fluency as a primary goal, and maintains a continuous chain of learning experiences and learning progress from JK to the end of Grade 12 that includes periodic immersion experiences with fluent speakers. Define a similar learning path for adult learners and develop and implement an adult Anishinaabemowin learning program, beginning with M'Chigeeng staff as a primary target. Ensure that language and cultural learning is based in the workplace, families and the community as well as in school.

Strategy #5: *As part of Anishinaabemowin curriculum development, develop standards and measures to assess progress, ensuring that evaluation is done in culturally appropriate ways.*

Strategy #6: Develop and test a curriculum focused on learning: a) **how we lived before contact**, i.e., pre-contact Anishnabe culture, life-ways, knowledge, values, stories, traditional ceremonies, cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge; b) **the history and impact of contact**, describing what happened to the connections of M'Chigeeng people, and particularly spelling out the history of trauma; and c) **loss or change**, the story of how M'Chigeeng (like many other

Anishnabe communities) was impacted by the historical loss, trauma and abuse, and also showing the rise of the Native rights and the Aboriginal healing movement—all together showing pathways out of present dilemmas and into patterns of sustainable wellbeing.

The goals for all this learning will include: i) re-establishing Anishnabek identity and pride in our people, and especially in the younger generations, ii) connecting our community development and governance processes to our cultural values foundation, and iii) providing guidance and important cultural information to inform community development and our programs related to Education, Health and Wellness, Family Development, Economic Prosperity, Management of Lands and Environment and Governance Development.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Goal #5: Improve academic outcomes in literacy, numeracy and subject matter knowledge to be equal to or better than that of our Provincial or cross-Canada counterparts.

Research shows that **significant improvement is possible**. A review of literature and programs across Canada completed in 2009 by the Canadian Education Statistics Council and published jointly by Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada found a number of key factors that are important for success, including: a) early diagnosis of learning disabilities and obstacles, b) direct and explicit instruction on how to overcome such barriers, c) lots of opportunities to practice new skills by students, and d) the availability of reading materials at various reading levels. All of this is combined in a model called “Response to Instruction” (RTI). (*Canadian Education Statistics Council, p.10*)

The same report also highlighted the importance of having a small class size (which M’Chigeeng does have), the need for explicit reading instruction in both middle and secondary school, and specific classroom strategies for reading improvement and for monitoring student progress (*Ibid, p.8*).

As well, this report emphasized the importance of articulating standards of competency and assessment to educators, students and parents, so that everyone can know at any given time how well an individual child or school system is doing. The importance of initial and continuous teacher training, and the continuous improvement of assessment tools and strategies in use at the classroom level were also discussed (*Ibid, p.9*).

Lakeview School is now working with the University of New Brunswick to develop strategies for student performance success. It is too early to tell if and to what extent these strategies will provide sustainable results in M’Chigeeng. This initiative is occurring in recognition of the fact that standard approaches are not working. Statistics related to Aboriginal student achievement across Ontario public schools are not significantly better than achievement being recorded in on-Reserve schools.

Typically less than half of Native students are reading at grade level. Many schools (both on and off-reserve) show results of around 25% reading at grade level, which is (roughly) the percentage of Native students that graduate from high school across Ontario each year. M’Chigeeng is already doing significantly better than that (roughly 35-40% at grade level and around 50% graduating). Nevertheless, even the significant improvement M’Chigeeng has made falls far short of the achievement scores for the general population.

The challenge we face is that the pedagogical approaches in common usage across Ontario schools have generally proven not to be very effective in addressing the learning deficits Aboriginal students face. We also know that teacher training and common educational practices are years behind leading-edge research and experimentation. There are many promising models and experimental programs worldwide that have shown that real change in outcomes is possible, but many of these experiments are context specific and not generally well known. We therefore conclude the following.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

1. M'Chigeeng needs a new approach that draws from global best practice, but is refined and perfected in the M'Chigeeng context.
2. This “new approach” will have to be developed. **It literally does not exist as a package that can be taken off some shelf.** We are going to have to look at promising approaches, experiment for success, and weave together a made-in-M'Chigeeng model, one that includes both home and school practices.
3. To undertake such educational reform will require that everyone involved (school board, principal, teachers, classroom support workers, parents, students) adopt a “humble posture of learning” for continuous improvement. *The likelihood is high that a combination of a number of different models and approaches will be able to make a contribution.* Some things will work with some students, other things with others.
4. **Very frequent measurement** of student progress at the classroom level will be required to test whether or not, and to what extent what is being done is actually helping.
5. The search for alternatives constitutes a kind of **participatory action research** program that the M'Chigeeng **system** needs to undertake over a period of several years. This work will need to be guided by continuous feedback from students, parents, classroom teachers and the principal, but will also require additional team and overall leadership and coordination at the system level. Such an enterprise will require sticking to the process over a period of years.

Strategy #1: The M'Chigeeng Education Authority and school professionals will undertake a systematic search for alternative approaches, methods, strategies and materials to teach basic literacy and numeracy. This project will need to actively test various approaches, measure for improvement, and as effective approaches are discovered, incorporate them into an evolving made-in-M'Chigeeng model for school success.

To carry out this work, M'Chigeeng will form a team of teacher-specialists who are conducting daily engagement with students at all levels across the M'Chigeeng system (from JK-SK to post-secondary and adult upgrading). This team will require a *team coordinator* who is a dedicated full-time research leader, with extensive experience in both early and remedial literacy and numeracy, and in working with both children and adults. This “student success coordinator” will be a curriculum development specialist who works with the teacher-specialist team to develop, test, and refine emerging solutions. The duration of this project is long-term, and will not be considered “finished” until M'Chigeeng learners are routinely performing on par or better than their counterparts across Ontario and Canada.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

Goal #6: Prepare M'Chigeeng learners to be free of dependency, self-reliant, and ready, willing and able to contribute through participation in employment, business and community service.

This goal focuses on the world of work, and on the preparation of M'Chigeeng community members to be independent, self-reliant and adequately prepared for employment or business. It entails shifting deeply engraved community dependency thinking and interrupting intergenerational patterns. We are well aware that facilitating such a shift cannot be done through education alone, and also that no single M'Chigeeng agency can do all that needs to be done to effect such a level of change. This section focuses on specific initiatives Life-Long Education can contribute.

Strategy #1: Develop and implement a “Life-Path Development Program” in a collaboration between the Hub training centre, Adult Upgrading, Family Development, Health and Wellness, and Kenjgewin Teg. This program is focused on social assistance recipients, and entails a journey of self-improvement, leading to increased independence, self-confidence and self-reliance.

The education component of this program entails a cross-over between counseling and personal growth, classroom learning, real-world work placement, and extensive and continuous social support. From the standpoint of the program as experienced by participants, the following elements need to be addressed or built into the front-line program.

- a. Personal Life-Path planning
- b. Healing and personal growth opportunities
- c. Learning about culture, history and identity
- d. Membership in a “core group” that bonds/grows together and mutually supports one another on the journey
- e. Life skills training
- f. Basic education opportunities (literacy and numeracy)
- g. An incentive system, involving income subsidization and top-offs as a reward for progress
- h. Job skills training
- i. Work experience and apprenticeship
- j. Exposure to entrepreneurship and small business training and experience
- k. Exposure to real employment and business opportunities
- l. Long-term support (3-5 years) through ongoing core group cohorts that continue to meet and receive program support as well as extended financial incentives
- m. Personal counseling and employment services
- n. Involvement and support for participants' families in the growth process

Such a program will take in cohorts of 20-30 participants, who will attend a day program for at least a one-year period. A series of classroom courses interspersed with experiential immersion opportunities and ongoing counseling and coaching will

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

be integrated into the program. *The life-path program will require a dedicated team leader and at least one full-time adult educator per cohort.* (More details on this program initiative will be provided in Chapter Three: Prosperity Development.)

Strategy #2: Comprehensive public education and communication campaign. In order to change public thinking surrounding dependency, and to create a receptive climate for moving the community from dependency to self-reliance

- a. A comprehensive public education, communication and engagement strategy focused on: 1) **influencing the public mind** to shift from dependency and entitlement thinking to a shared consensus valuing self-reliance, community service and mutual care for those who need it; 2) providing a clear understanding of what the journey is from poverty and dependency to self-reliance and prosperity (i.e., a vision of what it takes to succeed) with communication oriented to school children and youth as well as to the community; 3) **educating** community members about the practical steps they can take for self and family improvement; and 4) **engaging** community members in co-learning and action strategies leading to improved levels of personal, family and community wellbeing.
- b. Begin the public communication campaign at the school level with a strong emphasis on the importance of staying in school. Help young people to develop a positive vision for themselves, so they can “see” possibilities for themselves and their own future. As part of this initiative, *develop a junior business program* through which young people can get hands-on experience building a business and making money.
- c. Developing community consensus in traditional values and principles to guide the journey to prosperity.

Note: Many of the initiatives within this plan will require a communication strategy that outreaches to the public (both on and off Reserve). This work requires dedicated staff who would create public communication strategies that can work, with professional teams to help them to get their key messages out in ways that can be readily absorbed by the target audience. **It is proposed that a new communications program be established** with M’Chigeeng administration under the direction of the Chief Administration Officer. It is also included in this section to highlight the education component of the strateg, as the goal is for the M’Chigeeng public to learn new ways of thinking and acting.

Strategy #3: Significantly expand the scope and program offerings of Kenjgewin Teg to play the role of a full-blown community college for M’Chigeeng and other surrounding communities.⁴

⁴ If Kenjgewin Teg cannot easily be expanded in this way, then we propose to establish the **M’Chigeeng College of Human and Community Development** as a separate institution, focused on employment and economic development related training, as well as an ongoing training for the public sector and for community development.

Chapter Two: Life-long Learning, continued

- a. Offer brokered courses from accredited institutions related to work in mining, construction, and light manufacturing through greatly expanded program offerings
- b. Establish a school of business within Kenjgewin Teg, that focuses on entrepreneurial training, small business development and also that prepares learners to work in and even manage larger enterprises and collaborative business partnerships with off-reserve partners
- c. Establish a M'Chigeeng school of public service focused on staff training and development

CHAPTER THREE: PROSPERITY DEVELOPMENT

Definition

The Anishinabe concept of “Bimmadziwin” is often translated as “living a good life”, but what that really means is a way of living that honours the inseparability of spirit, nature and human existence. Prosperity within an Anishinabe cultural framework means living well within the balance of nature. It means having enough to meet basic needs, and to help other who are still in need. It means sharing and cooperating for the wellbeing of everyone, and it means honouring the living spirit within all life in the actions we take to pursue our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of our community.

The ultimate source of all wealth and prosperity is the earth. In the traditional past, people understood this because they lived directly off the land. The economic issues of today are very different, but the basic challenge is the same: how can M’Chigeeng people earn a living by what they can harvest from the earth, produce or manufacture, sell or barter or by providing services to others? The M’Chigeeng First Nation can be considered to be prosperous when its individuals and families can adequately meet their basic needs through viable economic activity, whether that be through employment, business or traditional pursuits. As well, true prosperity will mean that the collective resources of the Nation (e.g., lands, capital and infrastructure) are utilized in ways that are consistent with sustainable stewardship and ethical practices, while at the same time ensuring the prosperity and wellbeing of the present and future generations.

This area of the Comprehensive Community Plan focuses on the interrelated areas of: 1) business development, 2) employment creation, 3) human resource development, and 4) poverty reduction.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M’Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M’Chigeeng needs to address related to prosperity development.

1. The majority of M’Chigeeng people are living below the poverty line. 120-150 families are relying on Ontario Works (welfare), and some are trying to hold body and soul together on as little as \$350/month.
2. Living in poverty affects children, women, the elders and people with disabilities the most. It means not having enough: not enough healthy food, not enough to pay for children’s clothing or recreation needs, not enough for basic transportation or medical needs. It means deprivation.
3. Poverty is inseparably linked to poor health. It works two ways. Poverty creates stressors and life patterns that lead to ill-health, and in return poor health (such as addictions, depression, or physical ailments) can contribute to poverty in many ways. These two basic challenges are intertwined such that to solve either one, the other must be addressed.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

4. There are haves and have-nots in M'Chigeeng. Poverty in our community is both absolute (i.e., people living with real deprivation) and relative (i.e., huge disparities between the well-off and the poor). While basic needs are not being met for a significant number of our people, there are also a smaller proportion of our population that have all that they need and more. These "class" differences have generated prejudice among our people. Children know which group they belong to.
5. Unemployment (out of an available workforce of roughly 500 people) is roughly 30%.
6. People living in poverty or on social assistance experience low self-esteem, broken confidence and shame. Such people often feel "not good enough" or "not smart enough" to get a good job, or even an education, so "why try"? This self-defeating mentality becomes a trap for some.
7. Low income levels and high rates of poverty and unemployment are connected to dependency thinking, which in turn is anchored in the belief that others "owe" you a living, so why make an effort?
8. Dependency thinking is often embedded in addiction and mental health problems and a life history of trauma and abuse. Low levels of self-esteem from living in poverty leaves people apathetic, unmotivated and lacking in initiative to even make efforts toward self-improvement or to take care of one's self, family and home environment. This state of mind and being is a huge barrier to prosperity development for many of our people.
9. There is no systematic technical help for small businesses. Many of the roughly 30 existing small businesses struggle to grow, and new entrepreneurs need help in many ways (with business plans, product and market development, training, access to capital, legal and administrative support, etc.). M'Chigeeng has no program or designated helpers to work with the small business sector.
10. Band enterprises (the few that there are) have not been transparent in the process of their creation or in reporting and allocating revenues. The formation of Band enterprises should be to create own-source-income (OSI) that the Band can use to pay for its development priorities, especially those not covered by government funding streams.
11. Existing training and human resource development programs are not getting to the root causes of chronic poverty, unemployment and dependency. The "Hub" program is moving in the right direction, but needs significantly more resources and a wider mandate to be able to create the full spectrum of programs needed (healing, life-skills, basic education, employment readiness, job skills, social support, etc.).
12. Youth unemployment is over 60%, and youth feel there are no program opportunities to help youth to become employed, start a business or even to learn towards a better economic life.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

13. More women are employed than men, and this gendered difference creates consequences: a triple burden (home, family, work) for women, and a loss of role-identity for many unemployed men.
14. Barriers to employment or success in business include poor money management skills (budgeting, saving, investment, etc.), low self-esteem and sense of self-worth, low levels of education, no experience in the discipline required for a good work ethic (showing up, being on time, trying hard, etc.), lack of transportation and mental health and addictions issues.
15. Some elders living on a fixed income (below the poverty line) lack family support, and program dollars that used to help them have been cut back.
16. M'Chigeeng members who go away for education and training are often rejected in job competitions as "over-qualified" because the Band wage scales are so low that job seekers can get a job almost anywhere else for more money. We don't pay our people what they are worth on the open job market. "Why would anyone work for \$40,000/year when they can get \$55-60,000/year for the same work elsewhere?"
17. In order to really address our poverty and economic development needs, Band departments would need to create new initiatives that require working partnerships between Health, the Hub Employment and Training Centre, Economic Development and Education. Right now, no such collaboration is occurring that is focused on uplifting our people out of poverty.
18. Mental traps are common, such as a dependency mentality that thinks "the Band office will take care of me" or "I will always be on welfare" or the crabs in the bucket mentality (attack and pull down anyone who is having success so we all remain equally unsuccessful).
19. The M'Chigeeng Economic Development Corporation (HIAH) as well as the Training and Employment Hub lack adequate operational funding to do what needs to be done.
20. Many opportunities exist that could be capitalized on to create progress. Some examples follow.
 - The creation of partnerships between Band departments and Kenjgewin Teg Education Institute (KTEI)
 - The potential to expand KTEI into a full-blown community college
 - Renewed interest and engagement of M'Chigeeng citizens in creating community-led development initiatives
 - Opportunity to align community-led priorities with Chief and Council vision, aims and objectives, and program priorities
 - Opportunities to adopt private sector, for-profit mentality to the ownership and operation of Band enterprises (this would create an enabling environment for initiatives, creativity and entrepreneurship)

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

1. M'Chigeeng does have successful Band enterprises that are generating revenue; namely Castle Building Supply, Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre and the windmill project (MERE).
 2. We also have some 30 businesses, a few of them quite successful. This means we have a core of experienced entrepreneurs who understand what it is to be in business, and these people constitute a foundation of community knowledge for future business development.
 3. M'Chigeeng has good infrastructure (roads, lagoon, water treatment).
 4. Our central location in the Manitoulin region is an asset.
 5. Our willingness to take risks and try new things can make a real difference.
 6. Partnership organizations such as Great Spirit Circle Train, Ojibwe Cultural Centre and United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin can build our strength.
 7. Our community size of 1,000 with a potential workforce of 500 is also an asset.
 8. M'Chigeeng is recognized as a pilot community for e-health and mental health.
 9. We have a strong cultural community, with many who speak our language and are connected to our cultural roots.
 10. Accountability and transparency is a strong M'Chigeeng value.
 11. We have many well-educated community members.
 12. We have good facilities: Youth Centre, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute, arena, schools, Elder Centre, Ojibwe lodge, housing units (section 25).
 13. Our community is financially well managed and sound.
 14. M'Chigeeng is seen as a leader in innovative programming (mental health and Ontario Works).
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Goal #1: To create pathways through which every M'Chigeeng individual and family can make the journey from chronic poverty and dependency to sufficiency (i.e., having enough) and self-reliance.

This goal means that:

- the absolute impact of poverty on people will be reduced

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

- household income relative to the cost of living will increase
- the number of people and households living in poverty (i.e., below a made-in-M'Chigeeng poverty index defined threshold) will be reduced
- the sources of individual and family income will shift from dependency on government social assistance and other fixed income sources to a pool of wealth created by M'Chigeeng members themselves, rooted in personal and family income from employment or business, as well as in M'Chigeeng First Nation own-source-income

Strategy #1: Developing a made-in-M'Chigeeng poverty index. This combination of measures, when applied to individuals and households will reveal who is living in “poverty” and who is not. Such an index will take into account the cost of a *healthy* food basket, rents, heat, clothing, uninsured health care, transportation, communication, education, children’s recreation and other basic things M'Chigeeng people need in order to have a safe, healthy and dignified life. Federal LICO rates⁵ are generally considered too low by most real cost-of-living standards, which is why M'Chigeeng will develop its own index.

Strategy #2: Measure annually. Utilize the made-in-M'Chigeeng poverty index to measure the number of M'Chigeeng households living below the poverty line utilizing an annual census-survey and other appropriate data sources.

Strategy #3: Reducing the burden of poverty. Recognizing that it will take years to eliminate poverty in M'Chigeeng, and as an interim measure, a combination of practical measures will be implemented to reduce the burden of poverty, especially for the very poorest individuals and families. These measures will include initiatives such as subsidies for rent and food security, changing the policies and rules for social assistance to allow for extra earning, creating income-generation opportunities for families, cooperative buying and education and training. These measures will be developed in consultation with those whom the measures are intended to benefit.⁶

Strategy #4: Promote significantly increased income generation at the individual and household level through employment and business development. (see goals #3 and #4 below)

Strategy #5: Raising wage levels. Many of those living in poverty in M'Chigeeng are the working poor, people who are employed full or part-time but who don't earn enough to reach or exceed the poverty line. **M'Chigeeng will shift from a minimum wage to a living wage standard.** This will be accomplished through the following strategies: a) an awareness

⁵ Official Federal Low Income Cut Off (2014) are as follows. 1 person=\$23,647; 2 people=\$29,440; 3 people=\$36,193; 4 people=\$43,942; 5 people=\$49,839; 6 people=\$56,209; 7 people=\$62,581. More than 7 people add \$6,362 per person.

⁶It may be necessary to re-negotiate the relationship between M'Chigeeng, the Federal Government and Ontario Works in order to get more community control of social assistance regulations.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

campaign that publicizes the M'Chigeeng poverty index as a gauge for determining what a living wage should be, and b) because M'Chigeeng First Nation is the primary employer, and therefore the standard setter, the First Nation will undertake a review of all jobs to ensure they pay a "living wage", defined as "above the M'Chigeeng poverty index "cut off".

Goal #2: To create a "learning engine" that is focused on developing the human resources of M'Chigeeng First Nation so as to enable every person to achieve well-being and prosperity, and for those who need, to make the journey from chronic intergenerational poverty, dependency and unemployment to self-reliance, productivity and sustainable prosperity

Strategy #1: Learning needs assessment. To conduct a learning needs assessment related to anticipated employment market needs and business opportunities that will identify the qualifications for success, and provide an inventory of existing skills and capacity as well as the education and training gaps in the M'Chigeeng work force, and a strategy for filling those gaps utilizing the institutions and resources M'Chigeeng already has or can build upon.

Strategy #2: Life-path development program. Building on the work already underway under the umbrella of the Hub Education and Training Centre, a *life-path development program* will be established that systematically engages those receiving social assistance or who are trapped in dead-end, low-wage jobs to participate in a journey of personal growth, healing, self-development and employment preparation, and to support and assist these individuals to become engaged in steady employment or business activities.

The goals of the program will be:

- a. Increasing individual, family and community wellbeing, with the understanding that health and wellness are prerequisites to economic success
- b. Reducing the negative impacts of ongoing addictions and abuse, as well as the intergenerational impacts of trauma, as all of these affect the ability of individuals to participate as contributing and responsible members of their families and communities
- c. Decreasing dependency on social assistance and other transfer programs
- d. Creating economic opportunities and jobs, and moving the community gradually but steadily toward full employment and prosperity for all
- e. Increasing the ability of chronically unemployed (and underemployed) persons to improve their own capacities and to systematically learn and work their way into improved social and economic circumstances

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

f. Paying special attention to the social and economic advancement of youth

An Integrated Web of Front-line Programs: What is needed is an interconnected web of programs, services and incentives that all work together for one common purpose—to *support and assist individuals to move from dysfunction and dependency toward wellness, productivity and self-reliance*, or what some have called “*an honourable existence*”.

One way of measuring progress can be referred to as the “ladder of capacity development”, which describes four levels or stages that an individual on the journey might move through: Stage One –Unemployable and dysfunctional, State Two Marginally employable and wounded, Stage Three –Employed and working on themselves, Stage Four – Leaders.

Category	Indicator	Steps Needed
Stage 1 - Unemployable and - dysfunctional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ does not seek employment ♦ chronic pattern of substance abuse and ill health ♦ does not benefit from normal employment programming support ♦ has special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ healing ♦ sheltered workshops ♦ life skills ♦ sheltered work experience ♦ remedial learning
Stage 2 - Marginally employable and wounded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ unreliable work patterns ♦ frequently absent from work ♦ frequently in conflict ♦ low level of productivity ♦ personal crises as a lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ healing and personal growth workshops ♦ life and other relevant skills ♦ training ♦ work experience ♦ more responsibility and rewards that go with it
Stage 3 - Employed and working on themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ can hold a job in right kind of environment ♦ advancing in personal and job skills ♦ on a healing and learning path ♦ has taken responsibility for own development ♦ is sometimes supportive of others working up the ladder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ life skills ♦ job skills ♦ wellness ♦ technical support and coaching ♦ specialized training ♦ career planning
Stage 4 - Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ creatively using gifts ♦ emotionally competent ♦ have good human relationships ♦ able to manage money ♦ healthy families ♦ could hold a job on or off reserve ♦ capable of running own business with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ opportunities for continuous improvement in knowledge and skills ♦ access to funding ♦ job and business opportunities ♦ on-going personal wellness work ♦ a pattern of reaching out and helping others up the ladder

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

Essentially, *what is needed is a coordinated sequence of experiences and supportive program opportunities that systematically help individuals to move up through the levels of the “ladder of capacity”*. The following characteristics would need to be built into such a program effort.

- a. This **integrated program effort** needs to be planned, implemented and maintained under one umbrella administration.
- b. There needs to be an **integrated case management approach** across all departments and programs.
- c. A **single entry point** and one integrated intake process is also necessary.
- d. There also needs to be a **monitoring and measuring** system that enables us to track the progress individuals are making as a result of the support and encouragement of our programs, and also allows us to change and further develop our programs as needed.

Key Program Elements From the Participants’ Perspective

From the standpoint of the program as experienced by participants, the following elements need to be addressed or built into the front-line program.

- a. Life-Path planning
- b. Healing and personal growth opportunities, learning about culture, history and identity
- c. Membership in a “core group” that bonds/grows together and mutually supports one another on the journey
- d. Life skills training
- e. Basic education opportunities (literacy and numeracy)
- f. An incentive system, involving income subsidization and top-offs as a reward for progress
- g. Job skills training
- h. Work experience and apprenticeship
- i. Exposure to entrepreneurship and small business training and experience
- j. Exposure to real employment and business opportunities
- k. Long-term support (3-5 years) through ongoing core group cohorts that continue to meet and receive program support, as well as extended financial incentives
- l. Personal counseling and employment services
- m. Involvement and support for participants’ families in the growth process

Key Program Elements from the Standpoint of Inter-department Collaborative Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

At the inter-departmental and community level, the following additional elements need to be in place.

- a. Coordination of all related programs under an **inter-departmental management team and single coordinator**, preferably located under the same roof

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

- b. Work plans and business plans from all departments that outline how they will play their assigned role in an integrated program delivery approach
- c. An integrated (across all departments) intake, screening, referral and case management system that brings together all services for any one person into a single working framework (i.e., social assistance, child protection, health, education and training, housing and employment services). This will create a “one-stop shopping” for community members and will enable departments to coordinate their efforts in assisting individuals. It also prevents individuals from “falling through the cracks” or from playing one program off against another.
- d. The creation of economic and employment opportunities, so that as individuals work their way “up the ladder”, there are real opportunities for them to take advantage of
- e. A comprehensive public education, communication and engagement strategy focused on: 1) **influencing the public mind** to shift from dependency and entitlement thinking to a shared consensus valuing self-reliance, community service and mutual care for those who need it; 2) providing a clear understanding of what the journey is from poverty and dependence to self-reliance and prosperity (i.e., a vision of what it takes to succeed) with communication oriented to school children and youth as well as to the community; 3) **educating** community members about the practical steps they can take for self and family improvement; and 4) **engaging** community members in co-learning and action strategies leading to improved levels of personal, family and community wellbeing
- f. Begin public education at the school level with a strong emphasis on the importance of staying in school, help young people to develop a positive vision for themselves so they can “see” possibilities for themselves and their own future (as part of this initiative, develop a *junior business program* through which young people can get hands-on experience building a business and making money)
- g. Developing community consensus in traditional values and principles to guide the journey to prosperity

Direct Links to Employment and Business Opportunities

- a. Band departments and area employers and businesses will be recruited and supported to take on promising graduates from the life-path program as trainees.
- b. A strong focus on employment development that specifically targets life-path graduates will ensure that there are real jobs for those who are ready, willing and able to work. (See section to follow on small businesses and enterprise development.)

Strategy #3: M’Chigeeng Community College. Establish a M’Chigeeng Community College that focuses on employment preparation, trades and job training, and training for work in the community development and human resources program sector. This can be under the umbrella of the Kenjgwin Teg Education Institute if they are prepared to expand in this direction, or a separate institution can be established. In any case, phase one of this development will see courses brokered from other accredited institutions, linked directly to work opportunities in industries such as mining, forestry, building, transportation, etc.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

As well, the college will have a School of Business, focused on knowledge and skill building for businesses at both the grassroots and for larger enterprises, partnerships and joint ventures, addressing such critical areas as business financing, due diligence protocols, legal issues and management.

Strategy #4: Interim business Agreements (IBAs) with corporations. Because resource extraction industries such as mining are required by Supreme Court of Canada decisions to consult with and accommodate First Nations in order to obtain government approvals to operate, and because a lot of mining activity is now planned or underway in M'Chigeeng traditional territory, making IBAs with corporations presents opportunities. In our IBA negotiation process, we will negotiate benefits that can serve to build up the capacity of our people (i.e., our human resources) to participate and succeed economically (such as a treatment centre, training programs, equity partnerships and joint ventures).

Goal #3: Increase both the number and success of small business initiatives owned and operated by M'Chigeeng members

This goal means a significant increase in

- the number of profitable small businesses
- the number of new business start-ups that reach and attain profitability
- the number of M'Chigeeng people gainfully employed in small businesses

Strategy #1: Establish a Small Business Development Incubation Centre, that provides training, links to funding, technical support, assistance in developing various value-chain linkages and markets. The centre will actively recruit entrepreneurs, hold very regular public forums and workshops, be mobile so services can be offered when and where they are needed, and be flexible enough to offer support to a wide range of businesses. In addition to linking M'Chigeeng entrepreneurs to government and private funding and support services, the Centre will play a key role in helping to incubate new and developing businesses into success. A business success constraint matrix tool will be developed and made widely available to help entrepreneurs and their technical helpers to analyze business possibilities.

Strategy #2: The M'Chigeeng Small Business Development Centre will have a seasoned and capable core staff with a broad range of experience in helping Aboriginal businesses succeed.

Strategy #3: Establish a small business development loan fund to give fledging entrepreneurs the chance to: a) access needed capital for initial business start-up at cost (i.e., covering administrative costs but not market interest rates), and b) help entrepreneurs establish a credit rating that will enable them to access open market loans.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

Strategy #4: Tracking small business progress. Set tangible targets for the number of successful businesses to be established, and monitor business success utilizing meaningful indicators at least once per quarter. Design and implement support services to fit the evolving on-the-ground needs of M'Chigeeng businesses.

Strategy #5: Establish a small business council or cooperative (or a M'Chigeeng Chambers of Commerce) to enable small business workers and owners to provide mutual support and advice, to consult about common needs and concerns, to collectively promote local businesses to the world, and to provide guidelines and direction to the **Small Business Development Incubation Centre** and the M'Chigeeng First Nation Government more broadly.

Strategy #6: Create an enabling environment. M'Chigeeng First Nation will place a high priority on small business development, understanding that it is the backbone of any strong economic strategy. This means that creating an enabling environment for small businesses in practical terms, such as creating access to credit, ensuring land is available for development, and creating policies and legislation that favour M'Chigeeng small business and protect local businesses from unfair competition will become an important focus of Band government and administration.

Strategy #7: Create legislation to regulate and protect M'Chigeeng businesses modeled after the "Indigenous Commercial Code" created by the University of Toronto School of Law that establishes the rules for business operations in M'Chigeeng.

Goal #4: Create a diversified portfolio of initiatives geared to own-source revenue generation for M'Chigeeng First Nation

- One important goal is to (gradually) generate revenue equal to or more than what is now received from government transfer payments from all sources. This is needed to ensure financial sovereignty, and will afford M'Chigeeng relatively unconstrained options in choosing its own path in Nation building. This does not imply that Canada will be relieved of its
- fiduciary responsibilities to our people, but only that we will be able to manage the full scope of our programs and operations without fear of cutbacks, loss of our only funding sources, or loss of control of our own destiny.
- This goal involves the start-up of such options as the purchase and operation of businesses, the purchase and development of lands, the start-up and/or takeover of public utilities such as electrical generation and distribution, the establishment of a schedule of fees and taxes for various usages of M'Chigeeng land and resources and many others.

Strategy #1: Youth economic engagement. Youth (age 18-30) are the most ignored group in M'Chigeeng in terms of undeveloped social and economic potential despite the fact that they are a significant proportion of the population. HIAH will direct a significant proportion of its programming to reach out to this demographic with training and support services, and to

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creating business and employment opportunities targeted to youth. Specifically, a youth ambassador program will provide a foundation for youth development initiatives and a cohort of the “life-path” program (described under goal #2 above) will be dedicated to youth.

Strategy #2: Strategic land use. Land use planning to optimize the potential economic benefit from our land base (including Clapperton Island) will be undertaken, both for Reserve lands and for lands we (for strategic reasons) decide to purchase. In undertaking this planning work, the community will be extensively consulted, especially related to dealing with the sensitive issue of land re-allocation.

Strategy #3: Strategic Partnership and Joint Ventures. In order to enter into profitable businesses we will seek partnerships with experienced companies and individuals who are already successful in our targeted line of business, so that they can mentor us into the capabilities we will need for success. These “deals” will be very cautiously made to ensure that M’Chigeeng retains control of our own ventures, that our people are trained and given the opportunities to step into the business process, and so that there is an exit strategy for the partner in ventures which we seek to become sole operators. Some of these ventures will require the negotiation of a favorable Impact Benefits Agreement (IBA), particularly in dealing with resource extraction industries such as oil and gas.

Strategy #4: Culture and language as an economic advantage. Within the global marketplace, culture and language can have important economic value. For example, the intact language and cultural heritage of Manitoulin Ojibwe people, their strong connection to the land, their deep and long history and wisdom teachings preserved in artifacts, ceremonies, songs and traditions—all of this has enormous appeal in the international cultural tourism market. To realize that potential requires the creation of “products” such as experiences, cultural shows, tours and related materials such as books and films. As well, culture and language can have a huge value as a “brand”. Because of its association with concepts like Bimmadziwin (living well, in harmony with spirit and nature), M’Chigeeng values can be associated with many products ranging from sustainable housing to country foods to clothing.

In recognition of these factors, M’Chigeeng will develop a culture and language component of its long-term economic development plan.

Strategy #5: Strategic Infrastructure Development. In order to develop profitable ventures on our own lands, we will need to develop the infrastructure (such as roads, water, sewer, power, buildings) that make what we have to offer attractive to perspective partners.

Strategy #6: Develop a comprehensive taxation strategy that will enable M’Chigeeng to collect revenues from royalties, user fees, licenses, taxes on business operations, and eventually income tax for members earning at sufficient levels,

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

including a strategy to recoup the taxes M'Chigeeng members living off-reserve are now paying to the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Goal #5: Strengthen and firmly establish the M'Chigeeng Development Corporation (HIAH) to be the primary instrument of wealth generation for M'Chigeeng First Nation, as well as the primary engine and facilitator of business and other forms of economic development

Strategy #1: Public engagement in investment and economic development decision-making. A high degree of transparency and accountability will be exercised by HIAH and M'Chigeeng First Nation related to investments and ventures under consideration, as well as to the performance of existing ventures and investments and the dispersal of revenues generated by them. HIAH is a public, wealth-generation instrument, and so the M'Chigeeng public has an important role to play in guiding decisions and in oversight of performance and outcomes.

Strategy #2: Gradually shift control of economic development from the political arena (i.e., Chief and Council) to a fully enabled and competent Economic Development Corporation (i.e., HIAH). In the medium to long term, the leadership role of M'Chigeeng Chief and Council in establishing linkages and opening opportunities will continue to be essential. Once initial steps are taken, files will be turned over to HIAH to conduct due diligence and make recommendations. Decisions on investments will be made by Chief and Council only if M'Chigeeng First Nation is providing funding or is in some other way an investor in the initiative. Otherwise, go-forward and other critical decisions will be made by the HIAH Board of Directors. Ongoing business management will be carried out by HIAH or its designates at arms-length from Chief and Council. In order to reach this level of strength, the following steps will be implemented.

- *Develop a graduated plan with benchmarks* measuring HIAH's readiness to take full control of economic development activities through a gradual step-by-step process.
- *Adequately staff HIAH.* HIAH Corporation cannot develop in its capacity without the necessary staff and that will require short-term investment. The HIAH Corporation will engage a capable full-time manager to provide leadership in the economic and business development areas, as well as an investment and due diligence specialist, a small business developer and an executive secretary/bookkeeper. Initial funding to establish the Corporation may need to come from the Band, but within 5 years, the HIAH Corporation will be able to sustain its own core costs through profit sharing and management contracts related to M'Chigeeng enterprises.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

- *Utilize OSI (own source income)*⁷ to generate growth. A HIAH “sustainability and growth fund” will be created through which a proportion of OSI from band enterprises (initially 30%, but reducing as more enterprises come on stream) will be utilized to fund HIAH core operations and seed new ventures. This investment will create a virtuous circle of growth as depicted in the following diagram. As more and more of M’Chigeeng’s enterprises make money (due to wise investment and good management by HIAH), the fund will grow, ensuring HIAH’s financial independence from Band funding.



Strategy #3: Five-year economic action plans. HIAH will engage the M’Chigeeng public in making, implementing and monitoring five-year economic action plans that fit within the framework of the CCP (i.e., this framework).

Goal #6: M’Chigeeng First Nation will create public policies and operational protocols that enable and support our community’s journey toward self-reliance and sustainable prosperity as follows

Strategy #1: Removing disincentives and installing Incentives for individuals. We will systematically search out and remove disincentives to self-reliance within our system and replace them with incentives. For example, many people have criminal records that constitute a barrier to employment, even though offences are from a long time ago. We will work together with relevant external authorities to create a process and mechanisms through which an individual can earn his/her way into having their records cleared. Similarly, if a person earns a little extra cash, their next Ontario Works cheque is

⁷ Own source income (OSI) refers to income from Band controlled business and not from government funding.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

“clawed back” that amount. With that disincentive, why would a person even try to develop an income stream? A new, more flexible policy is needed which encourages initiative while not allowing double dipping.

Strategy #2: Ending political interference related to the disbursement of social and economic benefits. In the past, individuals who were denied benefits could often circumvent program officers and have their decisions (made correctly according to established policy) overturned. This meant that individuals were routinely given money or other benefits that they weren’t entitled to, which has the double effect of undermining public policy and guidelines that were established for very good reasons, as well as reinforcing entitlement and dependency thinking.

This practice was part of the political culture of M’Chigeeng for many years. Politicians were/are expected to provide benefits upon request in exchange for votes. Some politicians say privately that even today, if they don’t give benefits when people ask for them, they will lose their vote. In order to move the community beyond a chronic dependency and entitlement mentality, Chief and Council will commit themselves to abolishing this protocol.

Strategy #3: Create a political and policy environment that encourages and supports efforts made toward self-improvement and avoids in any way enabling continued dependency and entitlement thinking and behaviour. Following on the example of Chief Louie of the Osoyoos Band in B.C., this “tough love” approach will require that leadership continuously articulate the following message.

- a. Prosperity and much-improved economic outcomes for our people are possible and achievable, and we are committed to supporting anyone prepared to work hard to get there. But we will not continue to support dependency.
- b. Our economic prosperity and the wellbeing of our children and future generations is severely handicapped by our chronic patterns of addictions, dependency and poverty. We must overcome these patterns as individuals, as families and as a community if we are going to prosper. (Note that to be able to say this with credibility, the speaker will need to be someone who “walks the talk”.)
- c. There are many exciting and promising opportunities before us, and other First Nations across the country are already well advanced in their journey toward prosperity. We can learn from them and we can make big improvements, but we’re going to have to work hard and smart and utilize all of our Indigenous creativity. We’re also going to have to work together. While individuals can succeed, our greatest strength is our people working together. That’s our competitive advantage.
- d. The Harper government is clearly on a path of reducing federal funding to First Nations. A 20% reduction in the next few years is a realistic expectation. We can’t wait passively as our population grows and the money available to support our people shrinks. We need to act now to build up our own-source-income. This will mean an end to our old patterns of large-scale dependency. The money just isn’t going to be there. The gravy train is being decommissioned. This will require (over the next five to ten years) a complete overhaul of our social assistance programs so that those who need support can get it, but those who are physically and mentally capable of working will have to work.

Chapter Three: Prosperity Development, continued

*It is understood that this shift will need to come gradually and that unless there is actually work to be had, the shift can't take place. To make such a shift will require very wise policy changes that **encourage** and **enable** people to get off welfare, but that don't take related benefits away too fast (such as rent and utilities support) and then draw people back into dependency because such cost burdens cannot be covered from the income earned in a low-wage (entry-level) job.*

Goal #7: Specific initiatives for immediate implementation are as follows.

- 1. Prepare a feasibility plan for a traditional healing lodge and wellness centre on Clapperton Island*
 - 2. Prepare a feasibility study for a recycling transfer station*
 - 3. Develop a business plan to transform the Arena into a profit centre*
 - 4. Conduct a market analysis/feasibility study on the creation of a M'Chigeeng-based construction company*
 - 5. Develop a plan and feasibility analysis for the creation of a M'Chigeeng business and commercial centre (1,000 acres?)*
 - 6. Move forward on the development of a M'Chigeeng-based grocery store/pharmacy/department store for completion by the end of 2016. Explore the possibility that this development could be the anchor business for a larger M'Chigeeng business and commercial centre*
 - 7. Make plans to further develop the M'Chigeeng Marina as a potential profit centre*
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Goal #8: Reporting on economic development progress

Strategy #1: develop a report card that can be used to regularly and systematically measure and monitor progress toward greater individual, household and community/Nation wellbeing, using such indicators as the following:

- The number of individuals and families living below the poverty line*
- The number of new jobs created within the community*
- The number of private small business start-ups in the community*
- The amount of revenue generated by Band-owned enterprises*

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- The amount of revenue from Band-owned enterprises that is being re-invested into community wellbeing and prosperity initiatives

Strategy #2: Economic development reporting protocols. Currently economic development progress reporting is made directly to Council, bypassing the Economic Development Department, HIAH, Band administration and the community. A new protocol needs to be developed that has reporting channeled through the Economic Development Department and then forwarded to the other stakeholders: HIAH, Band administration and the community.

CHAPTER FOUR: GOVERNANCE

Definition

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 working culture created by those entrusted with governance positions.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

1. **M'Chigeeng does not have a written constitution of our own making**, rooted in our traditional values and governance practices. In the absence of our own system, we default to Indian Affairs and to governance practices that often ignore our traditional values and that leave many of our people virtually excluded from the political process. This has the effect reinforcing the divisions among us. We need a framework for self-government that everyone has to follow, and it needs to be a framework that is rooted in our Anishnabe identity, values and practices. The community needs to be fully engaged in creating the M'Chigeeng Constitution.
2. **No sovereignty without financial sovereignty**. There are many strings attached to both Federal and Provincial Government funding. Government funding is almost always prescriptive. In other words, M'Chigeeng has to fit into the government's idea about what needs to be done rather than being able to address the actual needs and realities of the community. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC – formerly INAC) dictates how they want us to be and what they want from us. As long as we depend on this kind of funding, exercising our inherent right of self-determination in governance is very hard to do. *There can be no real sovereignty without fiscal sovereignty*. That's why developing our own sources of revenue needs to be a high governance priority. Achieving sovereignty in governance also requires decolonization of our governance thinking, particularly related to how our Anishnabe traditions can contribute to better governance processes and protocols.
3. **Trust deficit between community members and community governance**. Membership has a lot to say about many issues, but many of our people feel despair or negativity about speaking up. Many don't trust Band government to really listen. Politicians are perceived as being self-serving and inclined to do whatever they want no matter what the people say. The people have been taken out of the political system.
4. **Community participation blocked**. M'Chigeeng averages 50-100 people at community meetings. This means that a very small percentage of the total population is influencing or making decisions. Some people are afraid of the repercussions for

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

speaking their minds. It's after the meeting—in the parking lot—that people talk about their true feelings. Community participation is a critical component of First Nations governance. Chief and Council need to work

hard to promote attendance at meetings and encourage people to speak out. What is missing is a clear plan for community participation that states how and when consultation will occur. Within our Anishnabe traditions, the process of governance needs to involve everyone, not just a few people behind closed doors.

5. **Transparency and accountability.** Community members and many staff expressed that there is a chronic absence of transparency and accountability about what Band revenues there actually are and what happens to that money, as well as about Council spending decisions.
6. **Confusion of roles between politics and administration.** There is a general perception that Chief and Council members often confuse their role as political decision and policy makers and political advocates with that of administration and program leaders. Community Story participants stated, “Chief and Council need to focus on the vision—the big picture—and not get bogged down with micro-managing day-to-day operations. They need to let go of their personal agendas. There needs to be a firewall between political leadership and program implementation.” There is a need for a much more clearly defined separation of administration and politics.
7. **Limits of authority for Chief and Council members need to be clear.** Chief and Council are not elected to have unlimited powers and authority. The roles, responsibilities and limits of authority of the Chief and of the Councilors need to be clear. The Chief should not be able to dictate whatever he wants.
8. **Perception of nepotism is hard to counteract.** People perceive that there is nepotism on Council. However, as one Councilor put it, “When you're actually sitting on Council you believe that you are trying to make it transparent.” What is needed is a clear pathway by means of which the Council can demonstrate its efforts to be participatory, transparent and accountable.
9. **Unhealthy political culture.** According to Community Story participants, the prevailing political climate in M'Chigeeng does not invite frank and open consultation on issues, often punishes anyone who expresses views contrary to those in power, allows and even encourages lateral violence, and perpetuates factionalism and disunity. The roots of our unhealthy political culture grow out of the need for healing from intergenerational trauma and historical abuses of the past. Sometimes they are related to things that happen to individuals or between families. Therefore *healing is a critical issue that needs to be part of governance development.*
10. **Governance focus needs to be on key Nation building challenges.** Community voices were strong in identifying two fundamental issues that should be the focus of M'Chigeeng governance attention; namely: 1) the promotion of healing and wellness among our people and our community systems, and 2) lifting our people out of poverty and dependency.

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

11. **Role of elders, women and youth in governance.** Currently the voices of elders, women and youth are not adequately represented in community governance and decision-making. Each of these groups has unique contributions to make, as well as their own issues and concerns to be addressed. Their under-representation in governance and decision-making leaves large gaps in our governance processes and outcomes.
12. **Need for governance-related education and training.** In order to participate effectively in community governance, community members need to be informed about issues, as well as about their rights and responsibilities as M'Chigeeng citizens. As well, everyone from elected leaders to technical staff need to be educated as to their respective roles, responsibilities and limits of their powers, and about community development and Nation building challenges and best practices. None of these kinds of education and training are now happening in any systematic and consistent way.
13. **Relationship with other Indigenous governments and agencies.** M'Chigeeng's relationship with Indigenous bodies such as the Union of Ontario Indians, the Chiefs of Ontario and the Assembly of First Nations needs to be clarified. Much better communication and protocols for collaboration with these bodies are needed so that M'Chigeeng can both contribute to and benefit from these relationships. Currently there is a very low level of understanding at the grassroots level about the benefits that come to membership from these associations and what costs M'Chigeeng pays for these benefits.

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

1. **A solid Governance foundation.** While there are many challenges and issues surrounding governance in M'Chigeeng, there is also a foundation of considerable strength and stability to build on. Council elections have been held regularly and without any real interruption in Band operations. Chief and Council are meeting consistently and working hard to carry out their responsibilities. Financial audits have been consistently clean for many years; a strong administration and set of programs have developed, in part at least as a direct result of Chief and Council leadership; and many important governance policies have been developed such as a Conflict of Interest Policy and an Executive Limitations Policy.
2. **M'Chigeeng has a very engaged grassroots** made-up of hundreds of people who care deeply about their community and are willing to standup, be heard, and participate constructively in building the future if given a supportive and welcoming atmosphere and meaningful opportunities to influence plans and decisions.
3. **M'Chigeeng has a fully functioning governance and administration** that meets all of its fiduciary and management obligations.
4. **M'Chigeeng has received clean audits for many years running.**

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments, continued

5. **There has been consistent strategic thinking and action at Chief and Council level.**
6. **M'Chigeeng has already had its first woman Chief** (Isadora Bebamash)
7. Policy Development is well advanced, with policies already adopted to limit the authority of Chief and Council (i.e., members), and a Conflict of Interest Policy.

Goal #1: Develop a binding constitution for M'Chigeeng First Nation that will serve as a fundamental charter for governance

Definition

For the purposes of M'Chigeeng 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 responsibilities of every citizen are spelled out. Clearly, any written constitution M'Chigeeng produces necessarily stands on the foundation of Natural Law and Anishnawbe spiritual teachings and traditions. Therefore, a written M'Chigeeng constitution is fundamentally an instrument (or tool) to ensure that successive generations of our leaders and institutions govern the M'Chigeeng 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.

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 a 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 Anishnawbek tribal entities versus community identity; e) relationship with neighbouring municipalities, Ontario, Canada, and other nations 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., should 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 government functions 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

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addresses such issues as child rights, workers rights, property rights, political rights, social and economic rights, etc., and the responsibilities of citizenship 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 M'Chigeeng. Other elements that M'Chigeeng members have proposed 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 **M'Chigeeng Court of Appeal** has also been proposed, to serve as a binding arbitration mechanism to resolve conflicts and to enforce the Constitutional Code 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.

Strategy #1: Public education. Develop and conduct a public education and engagement campaign regarding: a) knowledge of our Anishnabe traditions, heritage, and wisdom teachings as they apply to our political process; b) knowledge of our history, and particularly the history of our treaties and the impact of colonization and residential schools on how we are today; c) an introduction to how government actually works at the level of the Band, surrounding municipalities, the Province and Canada; and d) knowledge about what our rights are, based on our own interpretation of treaties, the Canadian Constitution and Canadian law.

Strategy #2: Develop and articulate a statement of community values, principles and traditional teachings that can be used to guide governance development. Hold a series of consensus-building consultations through which community members can articulate values, principles and beliefs that can be used to guide the political development processes. This process needs to **include all voices** and pathways, including Christians, traditionalists and those often not heard in community assemblies.

Strategy #3: Strike a Constitutional Development Committee. Utilizing the statement of community values (see strategy #2 above), and with members representing all sectors of the community, this 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 eventually 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 Anishnabe clan system, simply adopting the INAC Chief's Council system or some other model) by reviewing a

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menu of options produced by other 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.

Strategy #5: Compatibility. Ensure that the committee receives the technical help it requires to verify that the constitutional framework developed is legally compatible with the Canadian constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms, harmonizes well with other governments (Canada, Ontario, neighbouring municipalities and the greater Anishnabe nations) and is practical and easily implementable in the M’Chigeeng context.

Strategy #6: Establish a governance secretariat to oversee and coordinate the constitutional development process, as well as to support Chief and Council in fighting ongoing political battles. M’Chigeeng 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.

Strategy #7: 24 to 36 month mandate for start-up to referendum. This entire process of constitutional development is expected to take from 24 to 36 months for detailed research, community consultation, drafting and refinement of key sections, consensus building, and finally a referendum. The process of constitutional development will be at arms-length from Chief and Council, rooted in continuous and broad-based community consultation, and will require dedicated staff attention as well as specialized technical assistance. When a final draft is agreed upon by the Constitutional Development Committee, it will be discussed at a community constitutional convention, and voted on in an open referendum.

Strategy #8: Gradual implementation. Once adapted, an implementation plan will be developed that sets a timetable (perhaps over 12 months) for a gradual transition to full implementation.

Goal #2: Legislative renewal

Strategy #1: Legislation review: In every 5-year period, conduct a full and comprehensive review of all M’Chigeeng legislation (by-laws, codes, ordinances, binding policy). Eliminate or update as needed and create new legislation to fill current gaps.

Strategy #2: Create an Own-Source Income Oversight Act. Own-source income (OSI) is income derived from the Band’s enterprises or collected through fees or taxes, etc. OSI is distinguished from funding received from governments and is

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therefore free of encumbrances such as government-imposed spending restrictions and government accountability rules. Nevertheless, accountability for the management of OSI funds is owed to the community. Legislation is needed to set the standards for management, dispersal and accountability for OSI funds. Typically, First Nations establish one or more OSI

separate accounts. OSI monies are not put into “general revenue”, which is usually reserved for Federal funding dollars. At least annually, a report is presented to the community on the status, management and use of OSI funds for the previous reporting period. OSI funds are typically managed at arms-length from Chief and Council by the Economic Development Board or some other designated body. The “Own-Source Income Oversight Act” will set the rules and protocols through which M’Chigeeng will receive, manage and disperse own-source revenue.

Goal #3: The Law of Participation – making community participation the backbone of M’Chigeeng governance

Participation is the active engagement of the 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: Youth inclusion: a) establish and nurture a **M’Chigeeng Youth Assembly** (consisting of all youths between the ages of 12 and 25 years) that meets quarterly to discuss youth and community affairs, and to plan and work together for the benefit of all; b) each year a **youth council** will be elected by plurality vote (i.e., all youth are candidates and those with the most votes in each age category are automatically elected) consisting of 12 youth, 3 aged 12-15, 3 aged 16-19, 3 aged 20-25, and 3 of any age. The function of the youth council will be to coordinate youth affairs, including the four quarterly youth assemblies, and to provide ongoing youth input and advice to Chief and Council and Band administration; c) the Youth Council will elect two representatives, one male and one female, to sit as full voting members of Chief and Council; d) Chief and Council will provide the Youth Council a permanent budget to operate the Youth Assemblies and other activities; and e) a permanent, full-time **youth coordinator** staff position will be established, to work with youth volunteers and other relevant departments and staff to support and facilitate youth activities.

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Strategy #2: Elder inclusion. In recognition of the traditional role of our elders as advisors and guides, the following strategies will be implemented: a) a M'Chigeeng Elders Council will be created, to be self-managed by the elders through their own election of officers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc.); b) Chief and Council will provide the Elders Council with a budget to support their functioning, and administration will assign a staff member to support the work of the Elders Council; and c) the Elders Council will select two representatives to sit on Band Council as elder advisors when important decisions are in the process of being made, Chief and Council (as a matter of normal procedure) will ask the Elders Council for advice before making important decisions. The advice of the Elders Council will be conveyed by the elder representatives.

Strategy #3: Women's inclusion: a) To give women a stronger voice in the governance process, a bi-annual **M'Chigeeng Women's Assembly** will be held to discuss community issues and challenges from a woman's perspective. These women's assemblies will be empowered to propose legislation and new initiatives to Chief and Council, and to work with Band administration in their implementation. b) A special course within the M'Chigeeng School of Public Service (see goal 9, strategy #1 below) will focus on empowering women and preparing women to run for public office, serve on Council committees and boards, and provide leadership in M'Chigeeng community initiatives.

Strategy #4: Consultation Code. M'Chigeeng will legislate a Consultation Code, 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 give community members in advance of scheduled consultations, and c) the conditions under which consultation is required (i.e., types of issues, etc.).

Strategy #5: Membership code: Review, update and clarify the M'Chigeeng membership code as an immediate priority.

Strategy #6: Strengthen the capacity and roles of committees of Council. Committees of Council constitute an important mechanism through which community members can participate in the governance process. To reinforce the capacity and the important role of Committees of Council the following strategy will be implemented: a) Chief and Council will adopt binding procedures to incorporate the proposals and background advice of committees into their decision-making process. b) All committee mandates will be reviewed and updated annually. Where it is practicable to do so, committees will be given delegated authority to decide and implement measures that fall within their defined mandate without being subjected to review by Chief and Council. The conditions under which Chief and Council may override or review legitimate decisions of committees will be defined. c) Committees will be required to submit annual work plans, quarterly reports against those plans, and an annual capacity development plan. These must be approved by Chief and Council. d) Committee work will be

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

evaluated annually for performance against their goals. e) Committee members will be required to participate in all designated training programs as part of their committee responsibilities.

Strategy #7: Transparency through public access to Chief and Council meetings. In order to ensure open and transparent decision-making in which all community members can participate, Chief and Council meetings will be publically broadcast utilizing community television and internet capabilities with a strict limitation placed on in-camera, closed own sessions defined in the “Law of participation” described above

Goal #4: Strengthen and maintain community trust and confidence in M’Chigeeng governance and leadership

In order to restore and maintain community trust in our governance processes the following measures will be taken.

Strategy #1: Increase community participation in governance through (at least) *quarterly community consultation gatherings* and other measures such as home visits, family-based consultation and involvement of as many community member as is practicable in various committees and Boards. “Consultation and accommodation” will be the hallmark of collective political life, as we strive to keep our people in the center of our processes of governance.

Strategy #2: Articulate, adopt and widely publicize the highest standards of integrity in governance for M’Chigeeng leadership. Essentially integrity means saying what you mean, meaning what you say, and doing what you promise or agree to. Integrity in governance means governance that adheres to sound moral and ethical principles and operates with honesty, consistency and faithfulness to the principles, rules and agreed-upon standards. For example, it will be considered a breach of integrity for elected officials to make a code or policy, and then fail to follow it themselves.

Strategy #3: Refining sound financial management by: a) finalizing and implementing a Financial Management Code; b) providing quarterly updates to the community on current financial status, including revenue for all sources and actual expenditures; c) implement KMPG’s 10-year financial action plan (which will be easily accessible to the community); d) use financial incentives to encourage departments to work together and to break down silos; and e) implement legislation that limits deficit spending without explicit community assent.

Strategy #4: Own-source Income Financial code: Create a separate Own-Source Income Financial Management Code that separates the financial management, spending regulations and public reporting obligations for all own-source income

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

derived from Band enterprises, taxation, user fees and all other sources from the accounting for funding received from Government to finance Band operations and programs.

Strategy #5: Build accountability and transparency into the fabric of M'Chigeeng governance culture by: a) providing accurate public financial reports showing the services, amounts, and dispersal of all Band revenues; and b) Chief and Council taking the community into their confidence before important decisions are made so that M'Chigeeng citizens can understand what the issues are, in their full complexity, and have the opportunity to give their input as a contributor to the decision-making process.

Strategy #6: Semi-annual healthy governance report cards. Develop and implement a *semi-annual healthy governance report card* produced by the governance secretariat at arms-length from elected officials and senior managers, and based on extensive staff and community input, that measures key indicators such as: a) Chief and Council following their own rules and policies; b) community has been consulted on important matters and is made to feel welcome to participate in ongoing governance processes; c) financial transparency maintained; d) political culture (environment) is free of lateral violence, criticism, allocations and putdowns; and e) seldom-heard voices (youth, elders, the poorest, etc.) are encouraged and able to be part of the political process.

Strategy #7: Improve communication between Chief and Council, Band administration and the community, utilizing the following measures: a) quarterly community consultation sessions; b) councilors assigned to advocate for people that have concerns so their concerns are heard, even if the councilor doesn't agree with the views expressed; c) much improved mail-outs (attractive, plain language, simple but thorough, good graphics); d) establish a M'Chigeeng government reading room with minutes, audits, reports, proposals, studies and other relevant documents on display; e) home visits (political leaders and staff visit families in their homes to listen to them and share what's going on. Each family gets at least one visit a year outside election time); f) M'Chigeeng community broadcasting will be re-established, (just as CBC unites Canada, our own MBC will be the "voice of M'Chigeeng"); g) special public education initiatives to inform members about important governance issues; h) community dialogue sessions will be held in different areas of the community to give everyone ample opportunities to participate; i) the M'Chigeeng website will be revised to allow 2-way communication with members through a segregated sign-in part of the website; and j) targeted use of other social media tools such as Facebook and twitter will enable leadership to share important ideas or information in a timely fashion.

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Goal #5: Strengthen the cultural foundations of governance

The cultural foundations of governance consist of the clan system, Anishnabe language, history, wisdom teachings, ceremonial life, arts and traditional governance structures, protocols and values. Our Anishnabe self-government process can only be as strong as our knowledge and our connection with this foundation, which we will strengthen utilizing the following strategies.

Strategy #1: Creating a charter of community values and core principles to guide governance (see goal one, strategy #2 above). This cluster of values and principles to guide governance thinking and behaviour needs to be informed by the living knowledge and traditions of the Three Fires Confederacy, with due consideration to the powerful role women played in leadership, to the idea that the strong never oppressed the weak, to the principle of balance in all things within Nature, to the principle that everything can be affected by energy and so positive thinking is key to effecting development, and to the principle that we all come from a Sacred Source, and because of that spark in each one of us, everyone is deserving of respect and no one should put down or impose themselves on others. These are only examples, but our governance will acquire spiritual depth as we better understand our own values and traditions.

Strategy #2: Carefully consider the integration of the clan system into our governance processes

Strategy #3: Investing in and supporting language renewal and usage in our governance process.

Strategy #4: Developing and implementing a core curriculum for training leadership, staff and community members about how Anishnabek lived before contact, about the history and impact of treaties, colonization and residential schools, and about how the past has shaped our present-day governance.

Strategy #5: Create a M'Chigeeng Cultural Council, consisting of knowledgeable women, men and youth to oversee and guide the integration of cultural concepts and resources within governance and program development, and to screen outside resources (researchers, experts, traditional practitioners, etc.) who are brought into the community to support community development and the implementation of the CCP.

Strategy #6: Holding regular spirit lodges and seasonal ceremonies focused on seeking guidance and infusing the governance process with love, unity and inspiration.

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Goal #6: To create and nurture a healthy political environment free from criticism, backbiting, attacks, lateral violence, conflict and disunity, and Instead characterized by respect, kindness, love, courage, humility, truthfulness, wisdom, and unity

Strategy #1: Moral leadership training.⁸ Develop and implement a moral leadership training program based on the 7 Grandfather teachings, aimed at creating an organizational and community climate that encourages and supports the development of moral capabilities at the root of the 7 Grandfather teachings

Strategy #2: Develop a code of behaviour and conduct expected of public office holders and Band employees that reflects the 7 Grandfather Teachings and other agreed-upon moral leadership capabilities

Strategy #3: Conduct a lateral violence awareness campaign, accompanied by an in-depth training program for public office and staff

Strategy #4: Healing for leadership and staff. Healing and wellness has been identified as a meta-issue for M'Chigeeng; i.e., an overarching issue that needs to be addressed in order to get to the roots of other key issues. We recognize that underlying the hurtful and divisive aspects of our political culture is the need for healing of intergenerational trauma and conflict between certain individuals and families. We also recognize that our leadership and administration can't help the community to heal if leadership and staff themselves have not done their own healing work and addressed their own healing issues. We know that at the root of much of the lateral violence and conflict we experience in our political and workplace culture is the need for healing.

To address this, we will: 1) offer elected leaders, member of boards and communities and senior managers a **specifically focused 12-month personal growth and healing program, consisting of four weekend retreats** and a wide range of weekly and monthly activities and support services; and 2) **develop a wellness in the workplace program for M'Chigeeng administration** consisting of regularly scheduled circles, training workshops and retreats. This program will be a permanent part of our work life. Every employee will be encouraged to have a personal wellness plan, and will receive counseling and other support as needed.

Our assumption (which will need to be tested) is that as leadership and staff becomes healthier, their interactions with each other and with the M'Chigeeng public will also become healthier. We understand that community member healing is also

⁸Nur University in La Paz, Bolivia has a Moral Leadership training program for public servants that addresses moral capabilities such as the capability to evaluate one's own strengths and weaknesses without involving ego, "the capability to imbue one's actions with love", "the capability to build unity in diversity", "the capability to sustain effort, to persevere and to overcome obstacles", and "the capability to oppose one's lower passions by focusing on higher purposes and capabilities".

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

needed to address the overall issue of a healthy political climate. That is why achievement of goals in Chapter One on healing and wellness are also critical to success in developing a healthy political culture in our community.

Strategy #5: Monitor and evaluate. Since whatever is measured tends to improve, we will conduct a **semi-annual leadership and staff wellness inventory** to measure our progress toward the goal of healthy people in a healthy workplace. We will develop indicators that can be used to assess the ongoing development of a healthy political climate, and we will publish a semi-annual report card (see goal 2, strategy #4 above) utilizing indicators such as: 1) Chief and Council and staff are working together in unity of thought and a action and differences of perspective are harmonized to achieve the best possible results for the community; 2) community members feel welcome and safe to speak their truth at public meetings, without feeling the need to be angry or abusive; and 3) complaints against managers and staff are handled respectfully, and in a way that gives everyone a fair and unbiased hearing.

Goal #7: To achieve steadily increasing degrees of sovereignty in self-government

Strategy #1: Decolonization learning. We recognize our thinking and even our political imagination has been shaped and limited by generations of colonization. We know that our movement towards sovereignty must begin within ourselves as we move past old habits of dependency and internalized models of governance that divide us. We will therefore commit ourselves to a path of learning about the impacts of our colonial past, and to establishing new patterns of political thought, and action that will lead toward a new, more truly Anishnabe governance system (see goal 9, strategy #1)

Strategy #2: Review the Membership Code to address the status of the approximately 220 children (in 2014) who live in the community, but are growing up without status on reserve because one of their parents is non-Native. This issue is critical not only because of the identity and wellbeing of these children, but also because the Band cannot now receive funding from AANDC to provide services for them.

Strategy #3: Increase own-source-income to 20 million dollars a year by the year 2020. We know that the greater the degree of our fiscal independence, the more freedom we will have to chart our own governance pathways. For this reason, achieving goals in this CCP related to Band enterprises described in Chapter 3 (Prosperity) are linked and interdependent with the achievement of true sovereignty.

Strategy #4: CCP, not AANDC. In order to shift from Indian Affairs (AANDC) and other government funding dictating our development path to us, we are making this long-term, community-generated Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP). The

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

implementation of our CCP will pull all program efforts and all funding into a single integrated framework. Once adopted by the community, the CCP will be legislated into a legal framework that subsequent administrators can change only by consent of the community after in-depth consultation. The CCP sets out the directions and strategic framework for action, as well as for course corrections for at least 10 years into the future. Through this approach a new Chief and Council will need to work within the framework of the CCP, and external funders will need to adapt their funding formulas to support community-generated goals and strategies.

Goal #8: The highest priority of M'Chigeeng governance will be to address the most critical issues we face as a Nation; namely, 1) the need for healing and wellness, and 2) uplifting our people out of poverty

To ensure this focus is effectively addressed, the following strategies will be pursued.

Strategy #1: Healing and wellness. A community healing and wellness strategy will be developed, and its implementation guided and led by a “*community healing and wellness task force*” made up of key managers and staff as well as selected community members and elders. The task force will measure progress quarterly, publish a quarterly healing and wellness report card, and continuously improve the strategic implementation for effectiveness. The healing and wellness task force will be adequately resourced to lead the community healing work, and will report bi-annually to Chief and Council. (See Chapter One of this CCP for more details.)

Strategy #2: Monitoring and measuring poverty. Based on the goals and strategies outlined in Chapter Three (Prosperity), a M'Chigeeng Poverty Index will measure the progress of M'Chigeeng people as they make their journey out of poverty and dependency to self-reliance and prosperity. Results will be reported to the community quarterly and the implementers of anti-poverty measures will report to Chief and Council semi-annually. Our assumption is that regularly measuring progress (or the lack of it) and regularly reporting to the public and to Chief and Council will focus the attention and the resources of political decision-makers on these two priority issues.

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Goal #9: Strengthen M'Chigeeng's relationship with outside Indigenous entities to ensure clear two-way communication, to maximize benefits and opportunities for M'Chigeeng, and to ensure that M'Chigeeng can play its part in contributing to regional and national consultations and campaigns

The United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin, the Union of Ontario Indians, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Assembly of First Nations and culturally based linkages such as the Three Fires Confederacy all exist to benefit the members communities that comprise those organizations, either through pooled services or to serve as a platform for advocacy and collective action.

Strategy #1: Community-based review. The M'Chigeeng governance secretariat (see goal 1, strategy #6 above) will lead a review of M'Chigeeng membership in these and any other relevant Indigenous organization and networks. A fact sheet summary of the roles, services provided and activities of each organization will be developed, along with the known costs and benefits to M'Chigeeng. Then, a community consultation session will review these proposed summaries and make recommendations to Chief and Council for how to make relationships with each entity more effective in terms of M'Chigeeng's investment in time, human resources and other costs, and in terms both of net benefits to our community and how to communicate important news related to M'Chigeeng's involvement with these important regional and national organizations to M'Chigeeng citizens.

Goal #10: To promote ongoing learning for continuous improvement of M'Chigeeng governance. We recognize that there are no formal or even informal training grounds to prepare our people for political leadership, or for the weight and complexity of public service in our key departments. The performance of anyone called to public service can only be based on what their life has prepared them for. If we want different outcomes as a Nation in our governance and public sector, we are going to have to learn our way into new modes of thinking and acting that will lead to the new outcomes we deserve.

Strategy #1: Establish the M'Chigeeng school of public service (MSPS). The government of Canada, most provinces and most larger municipalities have their own schools of public service. We recognize that running M'Chigeeng First Nation is comparable in complexity, diversity of issues and degree of difficulty to running a small country. More details about the course offerings for such a training program are included in Goal 10 of the next chapter on Public Sector Management.

Strategy #2: Governance leadership development program: Please see Goal 11 below for strategies specifically related to preparing the next generation for governance leadership roles.

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Strategy #3: Other means for public education. We will also employ public media (newspapers, TV, radio) and social media to reach out to community members who do not take courses from MSPS. For example, a series of plain language and artistically attractive pamphlets can be developed on such topics as the history of treaties, residential school impacts, the Indian Act, how Band government works, and the role of the Union of Ontario Indians, AFN, and other external Indigenous organizations, etc.

Goal #11: Enhance Council functioning

Council already has some excellent policies to safeguard and enhance its functioning. In some instances, however, the application of these policies needs to be improved, as the following examples demonstrate.

Strategy #1: Councilors commit to being well prepared for each meeting (e.g. reading all briefs, reports and other documentation; preparing questions and input for consultation processes; etc.).

Strategy #2: Councilors commit to following the agenda set for the meeting and sticking to due process to amend the agenda if required.

Strategy #3: Councilors commit to participating in decision-making processes from the standpoint of a search for consensus and the decisions that are in the best interest of the Nation as a whole rather than supporting the agenda of special interest groups or personal goals

Strategy #4: Council will refrain from making decisions when walk-ins are in attendance

Goal #12: Prepare the next generation for governance leadership roles

Strategy #1: Include youth representatives on Council (one male and one female)

Strategy #2: Support the formation and functioning of a Youth Council (with its own set of governing principles and protocols)

Chapter Four: Governance, continued

Strategy #3: Ask the Youth Council to prepare a youth development plan (including a budget) that can be presented to Council

Strategy #4: Put youth development on the Council's agenda at least twice a year and give youth the opportunity to help facilitate and participate fully in this session

Strategy #5: Design and implement a youth leadership training program. In order to prepare the next generations for leadership in governance, M'Chigeeng will establish and operate an certificated youth-focused training program that entails the following elements: a) a series of courses that build the foundational understanding needed for excellence in First Nation governance (including moral leadership, community engagement, Anishnawbe history and cultural foundations, the legal basis of First Nations governance, etc.); and b) job shadowing of political leaders. This program will be offered at least once every two years and will be adequately resourced for success (e.g. have designated a program leader [could be part-time] and a budget to this work).

CHAPTER FIVE: PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT CCQ CT

Definition

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.

This section of the plan deals with: 1) the creation and operation of a Senior Management Team, 2) an increase in inter-departmental/program collaboration, 3) eliminating political interference in Band administration and programming, 4) filling specific staff and system capacity gaps, 5) strengthening staff management process, 6) developing and implementing an effective results-based monitoring and evaluation system, 7) strengthening policy implementation, 8) strengthening community inclusion, and 9) restoring community unity, 10) enhancing employee remuneration and benefits, and 11) maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, as well as input from staff and leadership during the *Rapid Review of Programs and Systems* conducted in November 2013, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to public sector management.

1. **Collaboration and coordination across departments and programs** to achieve common community development goals is understood to be important but, in practice, is still far too weak and inconsistent to achieve the synergies needed for real transformation and progress.
2. **Political interference in administration and programs is still an issue.** Despite general awareness and much open discussion on this issue, and also despite the development of detailed policies trying to prevent it, Chief and Council sometimes still try to micro-manage staff and administrative decisions, retain control of hiring and firing, override managers when community members complain about a decision, by-pass or override the work of committees and boards, and ignore technical professional advice. This pattern has the serious effect of undermining legitimate policy and program authority, weakening the reputations of managers and staff and diminishing program capacity to engage community members in processes of needed growth and change. It also generates low staff morale, considerable distrust of Chief and Council and disbelief in "due process", which can be overturned if you "get to the right person".

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

3. There are significant **system-wide capacity gaps** related to staff positions, orientation, skills and knowledge, and overall system capacity challenges.
4. **More systematic results-based measurement** is needed to promote continuous improvement. In other words, departments and the system as whole need to learn how to measure outcomes in order to test the effectiveness of strategies and programs in relation to the most important community development goals. For example, to what extent are families being lifted out of chronic poverty? Are more children and youth healthy and safe? Is the number of addicted persons and addiction-impacted families going down? Is a higher proportion of school age children reading at grade level or above? Each of these examples represents a goal that is (or ought to be) targeted by one or more programs. We need to know to what extent current strategies and program efforts are working so we can either adjust and improve the strategy and continue it, or look for another path.
5. **The system** (i.e., each program and all the programs combined in an integrative framework) **needs a monitoring and evaluation plan** that measures the appropriate indicators and interprets data outcomes at least quarterly so that course corrections can be made in a timely manner, and decision-makers can be assured that spending is producing the intended results.
6. **Policy implementation is lagging far behind policy-making.** Policy-making, especially related to effective governance and administration, is well advanced in M'Chigeeng First Nation. A lot of work was done in 2012-2013: However, despite the approval of key policies such as the Conflict of Interest Code, Governance Code of Conduct, Office of the Chief and Councilors Executive Limitation Policy, and a Harassment Policy (which falls under the organization's personnel framework), none of these have been fully implemented, and some of the main reasons why some of the policies were developed continue to be a problem for the organization.
7. One of the primary gaps in effective governance and programming in M'Chigeeng First Nation is **the lack of effective and consistent community engagement**. While some efforts have been made, there is a general pattern that has persisted for years of making important decisions and plans and launching new initiatives and programs without consulting the community. This is a problem for many reasons related to effective governance and to the fundamental prerequisite for effective community development (you can't develop the community without the community). In order to implement a truly community-based, community-driven comprehensive community plan, significant steps will be needed to bring the community fully into the process.
8. **Conflict, disunity and separation are hindering progress.** The root meaning of the word "community" is common oneness. When there is lack of harmony, unity of hearts and minds, and connection that is shattered by patterns of conflict and feelings of estrangement, separation and resentment, it becomes very difficult to advance a community development agenda. Two specific patterns of conflict need to be addressed in M'Chigeeng: a) longstanding family-

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

based conflicts, competition and animosity (which manifest themselves in politics and the administration of programs); and b) a more generalized pattern of lateral violence, toxicity and conflict in both the workplace and the political culture of the community.

Assets, Strengths and Resources

The following strengths of the M'Chigeeng public sector management systems and procedures were identified during the interviews with Band managers and front-line staff conducted in the fall of 2013.

1. M'Chigeeng has begun moving toward integration and collaboration across departments and sectors.
2. Record keeping, particularly of vital statistics, is strong.
3. Policy development is well advanced and fairly sophisticated.
4. The recognition of the harm being done by lateral violence and taking active measures, such as special training aimed at reducing it, have contributed to better human relations in the Band office and better service delivery to the public.
5. The evident pattern of periodic reflection on progress and of making systematic efforts to continually improve is relatively rare in First Nations, but becoming stronger in M'Chigeeng.
6. The community wellness professionals have a good grasp of how to bring real healing to the community (a strength), but they need help in realizing their ideas within the M'Chigeeng system.
7. The First Nation has very strong financial management, which is based on solid legislation and is characterized by consistently good audits, always running surpluses (not deficits) and a seven-day "cooling-off" period for extra-budget spending decisions by Council.
8. M'Chigeeng has a well-functioning administration and senior management team with a solid base in strategic planning, systematic follow through and an orientation to learning for continuous improvement.
9. M'Chigeeng is recognized for innovative and successful programming in a number of areas:
 - a. Social development and key social issues have received thoughtful innovation and support from leadership and administration (such as the creation of the Family Resource Centre).
 - b. M'Chigeeng has been recognized for having a model school program.

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Assets, Strengths and Resources, continued

- c. M'Chigeeng has 50 to 60 small businesses (many more than much larger First Nations), and these entrepreneurs constitute a valuable resource for future small business development, both in expansion of existing businesses and in adding new business start-ups.
 - d. There is a concentration of culturally-based businesses and institutions, including the Ojibwe Cultural Centre, the great Circle Trail program and many private crafters, artists and galleries that could be gathered into a kind of virtual "hub" for cultural tourism and marketing cultural produce.
 - e. M'Chigeeng has good basic infrastructure services such as clean water, sewer and waste disposal.
 - f. M'Chigeeng has made an important step toward developing its own college; i.e., Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (KTEI), which can serve as a hub for many kinds of learning needed for community development and Nation building.
 - g. The Ojibwe Cultural Centre constitutes yet another significant asset that can contribute to the recovery of Anishnawbe cultural foundations for individuals, families and for community development.
 - h. Band control of child welfare through the creation of the Family Resource Centre is preserving M'Chigeeng children and families from a system that is simply not working for most First Nations.
 - i. The successful introduction of several Band-operated green business ventures in the energy sector is an innovative step.
 - j. The Hydro-Energy Subsidy Code is bringing financial relief related to winter heating to households living in poverty.
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Goal #1: Create a strong Senior Management Team

It is very easy for First Nations to get caught in the trap of 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 low school performance, high unemployment, youth suicide, 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 senior managers. This goal lists strategies for the creation and operation of such a body.

Strategy #1: Hold meetings of the Band's senior managers at least every two months

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #2: Allocate time at each Senior Management Team meeting for the following functions: a) check-in from members in terms of their own wellbeing, the issues with which they are struggling personally and as managers, and the successes they have achieved; b) a learning focus related to their joint work (e.g. outcome measurement, workplace wellness, participatory program planning, etc.); c) reflection on progress toward their common objectives and the implementation of their decisions; and d) planning for their next steps.

Strategy #3: Develop an integrated work plan within the structure of the CCP that encourages inter-departmental collaboration (in other words, departmental work plans should respond to the CCP's overall goals rather than being developed in isolation).

Strategy #4: Review and adjust all departmental plans to align with the overall work plan (which is derived from the CCP)

Strategy #5: Review all staff positions and job descriptions to align them with this new planning structure

Strategy #6: Allocate financial and human resources on the basis of CCP goals and ensure that inter-departmental initiatives are resourced

Goal #2: Increase inter-departmental/program collaboration

Various program front-line staff working in isolation from other programs are often able to see that they need the expertise and help of another program to achieve important goals, but they feel they don't have the power and authority to get it to happen. This goal lists strategies for enhancing this work.

Strategy #1: The Senior Management Team develops a focus on stimulating effective collaboration and the creation of resource sharing agreements, plans, and inter-departmental management and implementation systems (see Goal #1 above)

Strategy #2: Expand the current "Hub" that focuses on reducing welfare dependency and preparing people for employment by adding Health and Wellness and Economic Development staff to the Hub

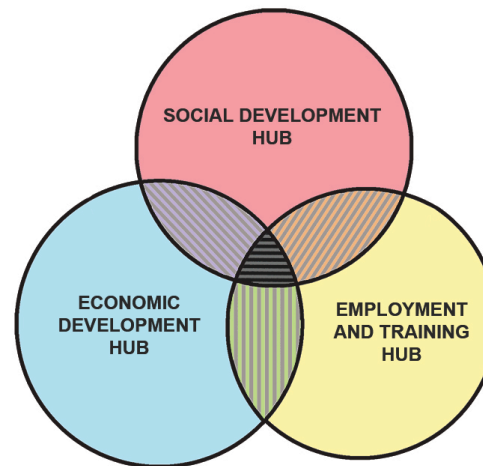
Strategy #3: Develop a new social development hub that could include the Family Resource Centre (which could be thought of as a family-centered social development program), Health and Wellness, and a new Child and Youth Development initiative that would bring Education and Recreation to the circle

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #4: Create yet another hub that focuses on economic development; i.e., job creation, small business development, enterprise development and related human resources development⁹ and create strategic external partnerships with colleges/training institutes, businesses and industry. In this model, the current Economic Development Coordinator position and the HIAH will be merged, and HIAH will become the operator of the Economic Development Hub.

1. Each Hub would have its own integrated team consisting of staff from appropriate collaborating departments and programs.
2. Areas of overlap between two or more of the Hubs' mandates will be jointly managed through MoUs, joint planning and staff and resource sharing.
3. Efficiencies of scale, avoiding duplication of services and mutual reinforcement of outcomes will be important administrative goals for this arrangement.
4. In the long term, it will be ideal if the three hubs can be physically located either in the same building or facilities that are at least adjacent to each other.

See the diagram below for the new proposed structure.



⁹ The primary difference between hub one and the proposed hub three is that the current hub works to get clients employment and business ready. Hub three would continue that journey, helping a person to develop a specific job or business skill, to find a job or start a business and to make the linkages for access to credit and support they need to help with their business, and to support them periodically as they go through the inevitable ups and downs of transition

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #5: Provide regular learning opportunities for Band staff related to cross-sectoral team functioning and the design, implementation and evaluation of cross-sectoral initiatives

Goal #3: Eliminate political interference in administration and programming

Despite a growing awareness and much open discussion on this issue, and also despite the establishment of a detailed policy trying to prevent it, this issue still needs focused attention. Some strategies to this end have already been listed in *Chapter Four: Governance* (see, for example, Goals 3 and 5). The strategies below are designed to ensure that leaders who care deeply about the progress of their community can feel confident in their administrative and program team, and that team earns this confidence by demonstrating competence in program delivery and by providing very regular measures (based on sound monitoring and evaluation methodology) through which politicians can “see” the results of the money they are authorizing be spent.

Strategy #1 Review the M’Chigeeng Governance Code and, if necessary, revise it to include: a) prohibitions against political interference with day-to-day program decision making; b) complete separation of politics from the HR decision-making process of the organization; c) a firewall between politics and community development decision-making and initiative management; and d) clear consequences for violations of the code

Strategy #2: Develop a mechanism, apart from regular Council meetings, through which the Senior Management Team can report to Council (or a committee thereof) at least once in every quarter to provide updates on program development and ongoing program outcomes (based on formal monitoring and evaluation), as well as to discuss the implementation of new programs and policies and the continued development of existing ones. This mechanism should also provide Council with the opportunity to share its vision, needs and important decisions with the Senior Management Team.

Strategy #3: Develop an Executive Responsibilities and Limitations Code for the office of Band Councilor

Strategy #4: Council works with the Senior Management Team to develop a system of outcome measurement for the work of administration, programs, and Council itself, by means of which progress and program effectiveness can be tracked, reflected on and continuous improvement promoted

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #5: Provide Chief and Council with focused training on how to shift from being a “management” board to a “governance” board, in terms of its orientation and functioning

Goal #4: Address specific staff and system capacity gaps

In order to successfully implement the goals of the CCP, a number of key staff and system capacity gaps will need to be addressed. The strategies below focus on gaps related to: a) community wellness leadership; b) economic development leadership; c) strengthening the functions of the Family Resource Centre; d) strengthening programming that address cuts for health services for the elderly, the disabled, individuals with mental health challenges and prenatal care; e) youth programming; and f) social development.

Strategy #1: The Healing and Wellness Chapter of the CCP has already called for the formation of a community healing and wellness movement with the involvement of volunteers and a professional healing team that can spearhead and guide this work. For this to be successful ***a healing and wellness team leader will need to be appointed to coordinate the work and help the Senior Management Team provide needed leadership and cross-system management support to this vital process***

Strategy #2: ***Ensure that the HIAH Economic Development Corporation has strong direction and capable staff and that the role of the current economic development officer is adjusted to complement this process.*** Most current reporting on the progress of the Band’s economic ventures goes straight to Chief and Council, bypassing the Economic Development Officer, HIAH, and even the community. This is both a management and a communication issue. The feasibility and wisdom of creating a protocol by which all economic projects are asked to report to the Economic Development Officer, who would then automatically pass on reports to Chief and Council, HIAH and the community should be investigated.

Strategy #3: ***Support the Family Resource Centre to utilize the CCP planning process to develop a long-term family engagement strategy and to assess its own capacity needs in consultation with the Senior Management Team***

Strategy #4: ***Carry out a comprehensive assessment of the human and financial resource needs for implementing effective programming for segments of the population that have been adversely affected by funding cuts for their services:*** the elderly, the disabled, individuals with mental health challenges and prenatal care; and work with Chief and Council and the Senior Management Team to secure the needed resources

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #5: Appoint a Youth Development Team, with a strong team leader who will be given the responsibility for implementing integrated youth programming (as called for elsewhere in the CCP)

Strategy #6: More directly link economic development and social development planning, since you can't get real economic progress without addressing many of the social issues (such as poverty, addictions, domestic and other types of interpersonal violence, dependency thinking and low education levels)

Strategy #7: Two-way communication. A two-way communication strategy will be implemented that utilizes media such as webcasting and a community television channel to ensure that there is an open and steady flow of two-way communication between community members and M'Chigeeng programs and administration.

Strategy #8: Inter-departmental collaboration protocols. The Senior Management Team will develop, implement and monitor a protocol for establishing collaborative working relationships between departments and programs. This protocol will require that a memorandum of agreement be signed between collaborating programs spelling out: a) the goals of the collaboration; b) who is responsible to do what, when, etc.; c) how costs will be shared between the collaborators; and d) how the collaborators will be supervised and evaluated. The Senior Management Team will approve all collaborative arrangements, ensuring that their purpose and impacts are aligned with the goals and strategies of the CCP and also providing ultimate oversight in terms of guiding the collaborators for success.

Goal #5: Strengthen staff management processes

There appears to be a significant trust gap between Council and employees (including managers). Chief and Council demonstrate that they don't trust staff to do things right by retaining control of key areas such as human resource hiring and firing and program spending limits. The following strategies are intended to strengthen the authority of departments and programs within the boundaries of clear policies and protocols.

Strategy #1: Strengthen staff participation and voice in the process of making departmental plans. The CCP is an overarching planning framework that addresses development work for at least 10 years into the future. Derivative quarterly and annual work plans at the level of programs and individual employees that are aligned with the overall aims and goals of the CCP still need to be made. To ensure that line staff have the creative space and opportunity to contribute to the development of strategies, each department will be required to hold participatory planning and evaluation sessions that contribute to work plan development at least twice a year.

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #2: Internal communication protocol. An internal employee communication protocol will be developed that ensures that every employee (and not just managers) receives relevant communication concerning the implementation of the CCP.

Strategy #3: Streamlining HR hiring processes. Current hiring procedures are making it hard or impossible to get the staff needed for departments and programs to achieve their goals. For example, Council now has to ratify even 1-year term positions, but this process can often take as long as 6 months to complete. By then half the term has already passed. Hiring processes need to be streamlined to be completed in a timely manner. This means that human resource policies and processes need to be carried out at arms-length from Chief and Council under the direction of the HR Manager and supervised by the Senior Management Team. A strict firewall will be maintained between politicians and staff hiring and firing.

Strategy #4: Solving complex HR problems involving senior managers. Currently, many such issues are dealt with directly by Council, thus circumventing HR policies and protocols. Issues involving senior managers will be dealt with by the HR Manager and the employee in question's Board or Management Committee. The Senior Management Team will review the resulting decisions to ensure fairness and the proper application of HR policy.

Strategy #5: Departmental budgets. Annual work plans with budgets will be submitted to the Senior Management Team, vetted and refined, and submitted to Chief and Council for final approval. Once approved, managers and employees will be expected to carry out the plans they have submitted within the spending limits of their approved budgets. Managers and workers will have clearly articulated spending authorities and limits, as appropriate for their level of responsibility.

Strategy #6: Instigate a policy of regular (at least annual, but preferably bi-annual) personnel evaluations for both staff and managers that is aimed at enhancing performance and ensuring alignment with the CCP's goals and strategies and serving as the basis for salary increments and other advances.

Strategy #7: Departmental support for annual community events. M'Chigeeng has a number of officially approved community events, that include Winter Carnival, Summer Family Fun, the Annual Pow Wow, the New Years Pow Wow, Aboriginal Day, the Annual General Meeting, and the Christmas Day Elders Hamper and Gift Delivery. By Band Council resolution, Chief and Council will, from time to time, endorse which events are to be considered "annual community events" All departments will then automatically be expected to contribute staff time and energy to making these events a success.

Strategy #8: Volunteer service. In order to encourage staff to be involved in community development, and as part of M'Chigeeng's corporate social responsibility, every staff member is required to contribute at least 5% of their paid time and an equal amount of unpaid time per month volunteering for some activity that benefits the community. Volunteer service will be assessed as part of annual staff performance reviews.

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Goal #6: Develop and implement an effective results-based monitoring and evaluation system

M'Chigeeng Departments are relatively good at collecting vital statistics (such as the number of social assistance recipients or the number of cases of diabetes or clients on a methadone program). What is not being done consistently is the monitoring and evaluation of programs and services to determine to which extent they are achieving desired community development outcome goals. The M'Chigeeng *system* (i.e., each program and all the programs together within an integrated framework) need a **monitoring and evaluation plan** that measures the appropriate indicators and interprets data outcomes at least quarterly, so that course corrections can be made in a timely manner, and decision makers can know if, and to what extent, human resource commitments and spending are producing the intended results. The following strategies are designed to build capacity within the Band administration and program system to do this work.

Strategy #1: Develop a made-in-M'Chigeeng outcome mapping strategy¹⁰ for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all programs and initiatives

Strategy #2: Establish a monitoring and evaluation unit of M'Chigeeng administration with professional staff that work with all departments and programs to ensure that adequate measurement and reporting are ongoing and to provide decision-makers with the data needed to make informed assessments of ongoing initiatives and sound decisions

Strategy #3: Provide training to all program managers and staff in outcome mapping evaluation processes

Strategy #4: Consider enrolling M'Chigeeng in the ISO program for Band administration, which requires the establishment of a "Quality Management" (QM) program that holds all staff and managers accountable for planned outputs and outcomes, and ensures Senior Management oversight of ongoing work on a monthly basis

Strategy #5: Measuring workplace safety. The health and safety of M'Chigeeng workers will be regularly monitored, with special attention to the issue of lateral violence, harassment, and wellness in the workplace. Wellness in the workplace report cards will be prepared and published at least twice per year.

¹⁰ See Outcome Mapping: Building learning and reflection into development program by Sarah Earl, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo, Ottawa, IDRC, 2001-01-01, ISBN 1-55250-021-7 (for PDF download).

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #6: Monitoring alignment of all work plans. All departmental programs and employee work plans (often required by funders in their own preferred format) will be aligned with the goals and strategies of the CCP, modeled after the Quality Management model. M'Chigeeng will establish a quarterly monitoring system of all program and employee activities to ensure that day-to-day activities are, in fact, aligned with the goals and intent of the CCP, and where adjustments and changes are needed, they actually take place. This quarterly management system will be tied to human resources (HR) performance measures, rewards and consequences.

Goal #7: Strengthen policy implementation

A lot of good work has been done, particularly in 2012-2013, related to policy making and especially to developing policy concerning effective governance and administration. For the most part, however, key policies such as the Conflict of Interest Code, the Governance Code of Conduct, the Office of the Chief Executive Termination Policy and an Anti-Harassment Policy (which falls under the organization's personnel framework) have yet to be fully implemented.

Strategy #1: Chief and Council members will implement legislation requiring them to follow their own legally constituted policies, which spell out consequences for not doing

Strategy #2: Establish a formal complaints process through which any M'Chigeeng member can lodge a complaint and have it dealt with without prejudice, retaliation or disrespect in a timely, effective and appropriate manner

Strategy #3: Hold a joint session between Chief and Council and Senior Management at least once a year to evaluate progress on policy implementation

Strategy #4: Down-to-earth financial reporting. In recognition of the fact that community members are the “ultimate shareholders”, financial reporting to Chief and Council from programs and administration will be expanded to at least bi-annual financial reporting to the community at large. This new reporting protocol will spell out who reports, when reporting will happen and how. The “down-to-earth” part of this strategy stresses the importance of reporting in plain language and in ways that are accessible to the average community member who simply wants to know where the money is coming from, how much money there is, where money is being spent and what results are being achieved.

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Goal #8: Strengthen community inclusion

Real development comes from within. It cannot be delivered to people like a box of groceries or a packet of pills, any more than sewing wings on a caterpillar is a way to make a butterfly. For whatever reasons, M'Chigeeng community members have not been deeply engaged either in planning for or in implementing community development for some time. Yet there is every reason to believe that when community members are effectively engaged, the will and energy needed to propel effective community healing and change processes will become evident and readily available. The importance of community engagement in all aspects of the community development work has already been emphasized in other chapters of the CCP, and so the strategies here focus on overarching recommendations.

Strategy #1: Provide special training to all program managers and staff about participatory program planning, implementation and evaluation

Strategy #2: Require all departmental and cross-departmental work plans to include a section on community inclusion

Strategy #3: Hold quarterly community development forums that include elements such as the following: a) small and large group consultation on various initiatives and programs, b) progress reports from various work teams, c) opportunities for learning about topics relevant to community development, d) cultural sharing and teachings, and e) opportunities to socialize and share food.

Goal #9: Restore community unity

Toxicity in the workplace is resulting in distress for employees, sometimes to such an extent that staff consider leaving or do leave their employment. It has also been reported that some Band members do not apply for staff vacancies because of the workplace gossip and conflict they are afraid they will encounter. Conflicts can be categorized as those that have their roots in longstanding family differences and those that are part of the lateral violence that has its roots in intergenerational trauma. Whatever the source of conflict, these patterns are impeding the capacity of the Band's administration and workforce to achieve their goals.

Strategy #1: Chief and Council and the Senior Management Team build on the momentum of the CCP engagement work to collaboratively create a visible community reconciliation process. The simple, open and public recognition of the need to heal the longstanding and deep-rooted differences that are separating individuals and families, along with the commitment to work with all concerned to bring this about would be a powerful beginning.

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Strategy #2: As part of that process, hold **regular (at least monthly) community talking circles** at which community members can be supported in the work of resolving their differences for the sake of the community and future generations (Note: Such circles will be much more effective if members of Chief and Council promote them, encourage members to come, and actively sit with the people in the circles, not as “leaders”, but as community members pursuing their own healing.)

Strategy #3: *Institute a wellness in the workplace campaign with an emphasis on personal growth and skill building oriented to healthy human relations in the workplace*

Strategy #4: *Form a conflict transformation intervention team*,¹¹ made up of volunteers from leadership, staff and the community; provide this team with special training in the conflict transformation approach

Goal #10: Enhance employee remuneration and benefits

Like most First Nations across Canada, M'Chigeeng cannot currently offer its employees the same wages and benefit packages as they might receive from other public and private sector employees. To attract and retain the best human resources, this shortfall will need to be addressed.

Strategy #1: *Carry out a labour market study that provides an industry standard for the work done by M'Chigeeng employees and compares this standard to current conditions*

Strategy #2: *Develop a long-term employee benefit plan that stages progress to fill the gap in a staged and systematic manner*

Strategy #3: *Identify revenue channels for financing this plan*

Strategy #4: *Provide transparent communication to current and prospective employees about the efforts the Band is making* to meet or exceed industry standards in terms of employee wages and benefit packages

¹¹ Something like the Navajo Nation's “Peacemaker” program, which combines traditional teachings and ceremony with restorative justice processes aimed at finding a lasting solution to conflict

Chapter Five: Public Sector Management, continued

Goal #11: Create and maintain a culture of continuous improvement

Strategy #1: Establish the M'Chigeeng school of public service (MSPS). The government of Canada, most provinces and most larger municipalities have their own schools of public service. We recognize that running M'Chigeeng First Nation is comparable in complexity, diversity of issues and degree of difficulty to running a small country. In order to build our capacity to create and build the kind of governance system and community outcomes we want, the M'Chigeeng school of public service will offer a wide variety of courses and programs. Fundamentally, to get where we want to go, we are all going to have to go back to school, but it needs to be our own school. Following is a list of the types of courses and programs MSPS will offer.

- Indigenous governance 101 – an introduction to how Band governments work, how they emerged out of treaties and the Indian Act, how government funding and Band council decision-making works, and the roles and responsibilities and limits of authority of elected leaders (this course could be required for all elected leaders or even for all candidates in elections)
- Pre-contract history and cultural foundations of Nation building
- The history of treaties and M'Chigeeng's relationship to Canada and Ontario
- Moral leadership
- Effective decision-making models
- Community development
- Facilitating community consultations

These are only examples. The potential list is very long, and would cover all aspects of Indigenous community leadership, management, finance, social and economic development, planning, infrastructure, lands and environment, etc. We envision the “M'Chigeeng School of Public Service” as a program of an expanded Kenjgewin Teg Education Institute. Courses can be accredited either independently through legislation or by association with accredited institutions such as the Ryerson School of Public Administration. The core of this strategy is to establish a permanent mandatory training program that re-orientes and prepares our political leaders and our staff for the highest standards of excellence in governance, public service and Nation building.

Strategy #2: Language renewal. Develop a language in the workplace strategy that includes incentives and mechanisms for encouraging the use of the language in the workplace and in program efforts.

CHAPTER SIX: JUSTICE

Definition

The M'Chigeeng First Nation sees the need for a comprehensive approach to justice that: a) takes into account the need to prevent problems before they escalate to the point of intervention by law enforcement agencies and the courts, b) solves many disputes between individuals and families using constructive conflict resolution processes, and c) uses a restorative justice approach to restoring balance and harmony when offences have been committed by members.

This area of the Comprehensive Community Plan focuses on the interrelated areas of: 1) crime prevention, 2) alternative dispute resolution, 3) community and culturally based justice programming for both offenders and victims, 4) creating a culturally based healing and wellness centre, and 5) enhancing the safety of the community and its members.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to justice.

1. Women are still experiencing domestic violence and other types of abuse.
2. Children and youth are not always safe in families that have high rates of substance abuse and other social issues. Youth need more options for safe homes where they can go when they feel unsafe.
3. Some elders live in fear of having their homes broken into or being bullied, especially by relatives or young people who want to get their money.
4. Substance abuse (including prescription drugs), family violence and other forms of abuse (sexual abuse, child abuse), as well as increasing crime rates (including driving under the influence and drug dealing) are factors impacting safety in the community.
5. Other mental health issues also contribute to crime.
6. Policies and by-laws around public drinking are often ignored without consequence. Children and youth seem to expect that drinking and partying is a normal part of becoming an adult.
7. The police are not visible enough in the community (e.g. in the neighbourhoods and at the Lake). It's common to find evidence that youth have been using drugs and drinking in certain locations.
8. Some community members wonder if the police are completely impartial with respect to whom they charge and whose behaviour they turn a blind eye to.

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

9. Underage young people are able to buy tobacco at local smoke shops and to get access to alcohol from people who are willing to buy it for them. Community members are afraid to speak about this for fear of reprisals.
10. There are certain houses in the community where people gather because they know that drugs are available there.
11. Vandalism is a concern. Public buildings start to look run down and this makes M'Chigeeng look like a rough community.
12. Cars drive through the community much faster than the speed limit, endangering those who are walking or biking on the sides of the roads.
13. Other kinds of criminal or unethical behaviour are happening in the community (like people using scanners to gather private information or listening in on telephone conversations).
14. The mainstream justice system far too often fails First Nations people. They are greatly over-represented in prisons. As well, many of the missing women are Nishnaabeg.
15. Land disputes occur in the community because of the way that land is being sold and because of what is perceived by community members as an inequitable distribution of land by means of CPs (certificates of possession).
16. Disunity and lateral violence affect community governance, social and family life and other community relationships. This disunity tends to become intergenerational.
17. High levels of disunity and crime can be linked to a loss of identity, knowledge about cultural traditions and language. Children and youth are growing up without being taught respect for parents and other authority figures.
18. Community members of all ages, but particularly children and youth experience bullying.
19. Some community members claim that some elected leaders are in league with drug dealers, that drug dealers have bought off some members of the Anishnawbe police force and that it is because of these factors that drug dealers in the community are not arrested, even though almost everybody knows who they are and what they are doing. Even if this is not true, the perception of corruption needs to be addressed so that justice can be seen to be served.
20. The impact of not arresting drug dealers is that children and young people suffer and even die.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

M'Chigeeng does have some assets and strengths upon which to build.

1. There is less tolerance for domestic violence and sexual assault than in the past. People are now willing to talk about it and what needs to be done to make sure it doesn't keep happening.

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Strengths, Assets and Resources, continued

2. Many community residents are supportive of using alternative justice measures that align with traditional concepts of justice and dispute resolution.
 3. M'Chigeeng has programs aimed at addressing the social issues underlying the behaviour that brings people into contact with the justice system: a drug strategy with policies and procedures as well as a methadone program.
 4. Community wellness professionals have a good grasp of how to bring real healing to the community.
 5. M'Chigeeng has many strong families.
 6. M'Chigeeng's leadership and administration invest thoughtful support for innovation to promote social development.
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Goal #1: Develop and implement a comprehensive crime prevention program

This goal is aimed at decreasing the number of individuals who commit offending behaviour as well as the incidence and severity of offenses.

Strategy #1: Carry out an effective practices review of existing prevention programming in other communities to use as the foundation for M'Chigeeng's work

Strategy #2: Develop a comprehensive crime prevention strategy that addresses the root causes of crime and draws on strategies such as: a) encouraging higher visibility of law enforcement personnel, b) building neighbourhood watch programs, and c) using lighting and other measures (such as cleaning up or destroying old buildings where people meet to use illegal substances) to reduce the number of "trouble" spots in the community. This strategy should draw on community consultation (e.g. through door-to-door interviews, speaking to people when they come to the post office to collect their mail and other avenues) and create opportunities for community participation in all aspects of the creation and implementation of crime prevention programming.

Strategy #3: Introduce programs into the school curriculum and other programs for children and youth that educate them about the consequences of substance use that may bring them into trouble with the law

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Strategy #4: Special prevention programs for children and youth will focus on a combination of outdoor wilderness challenges, cultural and language learning, personal growth and healing opportunities, and creating strong positive peer support.

Strategy #5: Develop a “natural helpers” program that will train youth to support their peers to stay out of trouble

Strategy #6: Promote healthy lifestyle activities for all age groups and other segments of the M’Chigeeng population

Strategy #7: Create many visible reminders of the Seven Grandfather Teachings in the community (e.g. a wooden billboard in Pinewoods Park)

Strategy #8: Develop a communication strategy to raise awareness about the incidence and types of offending behaviour in the community, the strategies and activities of various community agencies who are working to prevent and reduce crimes and the opportunities that exist for community members to become involved in crime prevention

Strategy #9: Make reporting crimes safer and easier. In conjunction with Health and Wellness, develop a public awareness campaign about how to report crime anonymously and safely, with special attention to reporting crimes that hurt people, such as drug dealing, physical and sexual abuse, bullying, elder abuse, home invasions, etc. Make information about reporting available on line and ensure that there are trained individuals ready and able to receive and appropriately act on crimes when they are reported.

Goal #2: Develop an alternative dispute resolution program

This achievement of this goal will provide community residents with a culturally based dispute resolution option.

Strategy #1: Establish a community peacekeeping/dispute mediation body (either elected or appointed) that includes at least one male and one female elder in its membership and that provides reconciliation and problem-solving services (such as regular circles) to individuals or groups of individuals such as a family or working group

Strategy #2: Create a school-based peace-building program by strengthening the capacity of students at all ages to solve their problems or interpersonal conflicts in a constructive way

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Goal #3: Develop a community and culturally based justice circle program

This goal is designed to provide community-based options either pre- or post-sentencing for both youth and adult offenders for a range of offences as negotiated with the provincial court and to offer victims safety and other types of support.

Strategy #1: Carry out a best practices review of existing programs (e.g. the UCCM Justice Project) to provide the foundation for this work

Strategy #2: Create protocols and a coordinating mechanism for family group conferences that will help youth involved in minor offenses take responsibility for their actions, make amends and make better choices in the future

Strategy #3: Negotiate clear program parameters and access to financial resources from the provincial justice system for a phased diversion program that gradually takes on increasing numbers of offenders and a variety of types of cases

Strategy #4: Collaborate with other Band programs (such as Health and Wellness and Training and Employment) **to ensure that offenders diverted to community options can access cultural teachings, addictions treatment, mental health services, academic upgrading, employment training and other options that will support them to become productive community members**

Strategy #5: Collaborate with other agencies already providing such services (e.g. tribal council or provincial government programs) to ensure that all M'Chigeeng members are supported at all stages of legal proceedings (from preliminary hearings to sentencing)

Strategy #6: Support the reintegration of offenders into the community after they have served a sentence or been out of the community for any other reason related to their offending behaviour by offering them access to the “Good Life” program and the same kinds of services as described under Strategy #4 above

Strategy #7: Ensure the safety of victims of crimes, provide them with the opportunity to share victim impact statements and support them through every stage of legal proceedings related to the offence against them, and support their own healing processes through the creation and implementation of a comprehensive victim services program

Strategy #8 Create a victim-offender reconciliation process for victims and offenders who want to participate

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Goal #4: Build a culturally based healing/wellness and rehabilitation centre

The aim of this goal is to build and operate a community, culturally based centre that can support the prevention, offender diversion, and victim healing programming described in this Chapter, as well as work on the root causes of many of the offenses that are committed by community members.

Strategy #1: Conduct a feasibility study to identify possible locations (Old Morrow property, Clapperton Island), architectural design, funding needs and program options (e.g. youth healing using community leaders and role models, offender diversion, victim healing, women fleeing violence, family healing and reconciliation). Extensive community consultation should be part of this feasibility study. The already planned Gwekwaadziwin Youth Healing and Learning Centre (see Chapter 1 Health and Wellness, Goal 7 for more details) may be part of the answer for this strategy..

Strategy #2: Secure funding and move to implementation

Goal #5: Implement measures to enhance the safety of M'Chigeeng residents and the community as a whole

This goal covers many aspects of creating a safer community, including improvements to community infrastructure, safe homes for youth, protocols for dealing with elder abuse and domestic violence, and using community policies and by-laws.

Strategy #1: Conduct an environmental safety scan and implement an annual community clean-up campaign

Strategy #2: Institute widespread training on home safety, targeting children, youth and families (dos and don'ts)

Strategy #3: Improve lighting in the community and safety for pedestrians or cyclists as they use the community's roads. Enhance and monitor community parks and playgrounds for safety.

Strategy #4: Collaborate with other relevant departments to focus on the safety of children and youth with respect to such issues as lateral violence and bullying, late night partying and road accidents through special education and health initiatives, curfews, and ensuring parental supervision of underage children

Strategy #5: Raise awareness of the issue of elder abuse and develop protocols for dealing with such abuse that ensure that elders (and their family members) can report abuse without danger of retaliation

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Strategy #6: Identify safe homes in the community for youth who are fleeing any kind of abuse or are returning to the community after being incarcerated and ensure that youth have information about their options

Strategy #7: Ensure that women fleeing violence have support and safety

Strategy #8: Compile a compendium of existing community by-laws and policies that are intended to enhance the safety and peace of the community and make recommendations about needed changes (Note: The following areas can be considered: land use regulations, commercial practices licensing and regulations, environmental protection, public safety, limits on public behaviour, use and treatment of public buildings and infrastructure, elder safety and protection, dog control.)

Strategy #9: The provision of banishment for drug dealers. Conduct a community referendum on the question of whether known and convicted drug dealers should be banished from the community, subject to strict terms for re-entry and reintegration.

Strategy #10: Community re-entry. If and when a person has been banished or sent to jail for a crime, we will develop a protocol for supporting them when they return, and also for ensuring that they don't return to a life of crime.

Strategy #11: Sexual abuse healing and recovery. Sexual abuse is both a crime and a cause of trauma and un-wellness. The victims and abusers need healing. M'Chigeeng will establish a community sexual abuse intervention and healing program, modeled after the experiences of the Community Holistic Circle Healing Program (CHCH developed and proven so effective by Hollow Water, Manitoba First Nation. This program uses the combined power of the law and the will of the community to confront abusers, support victims, and put abusers through a difficult, lengthy but effective abuse recovery program in partnership with the courts. M'Chigeeng will work with existing resources and agencies and with the legal and judicial sectors to establish such a program because current criminal approaches send people to jail, but they come out still abusers. They remain unhealed and the community remains at risk.

Strategy #12: Enact drug strategy legislation that makes it easier (than under provincial law) to identify and charge drug dealers and to rehabilitate offenders with drug problems.

Chapter Six: Justice, continued

Goal #6: Establish a M'Chigeeng Justice Committee

M'Chigeeng will establish a Community Justice Committee, empowered by supporting legislation to be the primary implementer of all justice-related programs and strategies in the community.

Strategy #1: Elected Committee. The community will elect a Community Justice Committee

Strategy #2: Justice Coordinator. A trained justice professional will be hired to work with the Community Justice Committee in the implementation of programs and measures.

Strategy #3: Collaboration with the provincial system. The M'Chigeeng Justice Committee will collaborate with the Ontario justice system, with a primary focus on crime prevention, rehabilitation and restorative justice.

Strategy #4: Collaboration with UCCM. M'Chigeeng will collaborate with the UCCM Justice program particularly in sharing the use of the Justice Circle Program when a restorative justice approach is deemed appropriate by the M'Chigeeng Justice Committee.

Strategy #5: Getting M'Chigeeng members on jury duty and getting them access to legal aid. The Committee will work to get M'Chigeeng members involved in the Ontario justice system by: a) providing support to members who have to go to court, b) getting M'Chigeeng members onto jury duty, and c) getting M'Chigeeng members access to legal aid services.

Goal #7: Establish a M'Chigeeng Court of Appeal

The purpose of this court is to uphold and interpret the M'Chigeeng constitution and subsequent legislation, to serve as a binding arbitrator in disputes and conflicts related to challenges to the decisions or actions of elected political leaders or M'Chigeeng administration, as well as to serve as a (last resort) binding arbitrator in disputes arising between M'Chigeeng citizens (for example, land disputes) or between M'Chigeeng members living on-reserve and external agencies and entities carrying out operations within the jurisdiction of M'Chigeeng First Nation

CHAPTER SEVEN: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Definition

Social development refers to: a) the challenge of fostering social cohesion and unity between people, families and groups within the community and strengthening the community's collective capacity to think and act together for a common purpose; b) promoting strong, safe and healthy families and healthy child development; and c) strengthening the wellbeing of key demographics within the community such as children and youth, women, men and elders.

This area of the plan includes: 1) the creation of a Social Development Hub, 2) initiatives to enhance community wellness and cohesion, 3) strengthening family development supports, and 4) specific program focal points to address the needs of the different segments of M'Chigeeng's population—children and youth, women, men and elders.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to social development.

Community Wellness and Cohesion

1. The community is deeply divided and many people do not trust each other. Gossip is common and people hold on to grudges. As a result, rather than living in a welcoming and supportive community climate, people feel lonely and isolated. They limit their involvement because of trust issues.
2. Because adults are not willing to let go of the mistrust and judgments they have of each other, the children end up imitating them.
3. There are many kinds of divides: between family members living on- and off-reserve, within and between families because of hurtful things that have happened in the past, between members who follow traditional spiritual practices and those who are active in churches, between families on the basis of social class or the geographic area of the community in which they live, etc.
4. Volunteering seems to be a thing of the past. In the early 90s, M'Chigeeng still had a volunteer system at the Arena. Volunteers also coached and supervised sports activities. Now everyone gets paid.
5. There are real barriers for some people to participate in community events, such as poverty and the lack of transportation.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

6. People are using electronics a lot for their social life. There is not enough face-to-face interaction between people. Family life and community social life are both being affected when people spend so much time online.
7. Drinking is also too much a part of social life. This means that people are not spending family time together. A lot of people won't go out unless they've had a few drinks.
8. In the past, there were movies at the community hall every Sunday. Now we have a big complex, but there is nothing going on in it.
9. There are activities for children, youth and elders, but there is a gap for adults from the age of 30 to elderhood. We need other types of activities like just playing games with each other. These types of activities have a recreational value but they also create a space for people to communicate more and break down the barriers that now divide them.
10. People say that there was more togetherness in the past; people got along more. Labour was often done through kindness between people. They would share harvests and fish catches between families. Things have changed and now members keep things for themselves.
11. People don't know everyone else who is living in the community. If we don't know people, we don't know their past history and if they are safe neighbours or not.

Families

1. Many families face a number of challenges such as poverty, domestic violence, and addiction issues. There are even some families in which none of them express love for each other. In reality, there is often a lot of love, but people do not know how to show it in a healthy ways because it has never been learned from previous generations.
2. There are a lot of single parent families.
3. Many kids are growing up with a lack of supervision and learning about responsibility. In the past, people would rely on neighbours to help look after the kids, but things have changed and community involvement in raising kids is limited.
4. There is concern that parents don't have the knowledge about how to be parents because many parenting skills were lost in the generations impacted by residential schools. For example, parents do not know how to build a strong work ethic in their children, to teach kids to be contributing members of the community, or to even teach basic cooking skills.
5. Many families are also lacking funds for their kids to attend extra-curricular activities. This leaves youth feeling embarrassed and bored, distracted by technology, and with too much time on their hands. Some recreational areas in the community (like parks) are not safe and well maintained.
6. Residential schools and the Sixties Scoop disrupted the family unit in a drastic way.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

7. Families have become materialistic and attached to their electronic devices. They do not just play and work together the way they did in the past.
8. There is a disconnection and divide between families living off reserve and families living on reserve. Off-reserve families can end up feeling like outcasts.
9. Families are not receiving enough informal support from other family members, neighbours or community members in general or more formal support in terms of the programs and services they need.

Children and Youth

1. A lack of parental guidance results in poor behaviour and in children being left to raise themselves. Even children 3 to 5 years old look after themselves when parents sleep in due to late night activities.
2. Many things are contributing to the self-esteem issues children and youth are facing today. Some of them lack connections with role models to teach them life skills and offer guidance during a time many are being faced with obstacles. These barriers to developing strong self-esteem are experienced both at home and in the community—barriers such as bullying, peer pressure, violence, and early exposure to drugs and alcohol.
3. Bullying may be one way that youth gain a sense of power in their lives. Those that are being bullied, however, end up feeling afraid and under a lot of negative peer pressure.
4. This makes it hard to find themselves as young people and feel clear about what direction to take in life. Instead of being guided down a healing path, many youth are turning to drugs and alcohol to cope with these challenges and their pain. This may feel like the only choice for some youth who have nowhere to go or no one to turn to for support and to feel safe.
5. With no family supports and limited community resources, the kids feel that no one is interested or available to hear and support them. This is a contributing factor to suicide and community members feel a deep pain when young people choose to end their lives.
6. There is a problem with violence against women being normalized for children and youth in the community. It is what many see in their home life, in the community, and in the media. There are different standards for boys and girls—boys feel safer.
7. Children and youth are learning from technology and media, not from their families and community. Teenagers are referred to as “screenagers”. Instead of outdoor activities, they are too busy on the computer and the Internet, checking Facebook or gaming. Many of the games are violent, and with a lack of parental supervision, minds are being molded by the media and electronics.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

8. Youth are not reaching out and visiting Elders in the community to learn. Perhaps they are afraid to do so. Many youth know about the Seven Grandfather Teachings, but they do not respect them or live by them. They need to be properly taught. By spending time with Elders, they could learn respect and teachings about the Seven Grandfathers.
9. Parents are not providing the discipline children and youth need. Parents have a hard time disciplining their kids. In the past, youth had to listen to their parents or else they would be scolded. Today there is a lack of mutual respect between parents and their children. If the parents want to discipline them, some kids threaten to inform CAS or the police. Parents are being charged now.
10. Children and youth do not feel safe in the community. They can't always get rides home after they have been with their friends or at a recreational program. Streets/roads are not well lit, there are not enough sidewalks and there are drunks out in the community.
11. Youth feel they do not have enough opportunities to participate in spiritual/cultural activities and to learn about their traditions.

Women

1. Some women are isolated and are unable to see themselves as part of the community. These are the ones that don't have much education, have too many children, are single moms, and are living poor. Many don't leave the house much, even to find work or go back to school.
2. A significant proportion of the families in M'Chigeeng are single parent homes (one estimate put the number at 50% of households), and most of these are headed by women.
3. Most single-parent families headed by women face poverty. It's just really difficult to make ends meet on one income, and even more difficult if you rely on social assistance for daily living needs. It's painful to have to try to explain to your children why they can't have the things that they think are an ordinary part of life (like pizza).
4. In fact, rather than being a support system for each other, women can fall into the trap of gossiping and calling each other down. This behaviour is part of a system of lateral violence that is causing so much pain and separation.
5. Many women do not follow a spiritual path on a daily basis (whether this is through traditional spiritual practices or a church).
6. There are not enough mental health and sheltering services for women right in the community.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

7. Women also want and need help to establish informal support systems (like peer groups) that can provide both encouragement and practical advice around educational and career goals, parenting, meeting the family's basic needs, etc.
8. Today women are too busy and have lost some of the life skills from the past, like gardening, canning food, sewing, or gathering berries.

Men

1. In the past, men were motivated to work hard because they viewed themselves as providers for their families. Now, many men are struggling with an identity crisis due to changing roles in their families and the community. No longer the breadwinners, they find themselves staying at home to parent their children. With limited or no role models for these men, many feel shame in the community because they feel they are not needed in traditional roles, have nothing to offer, and are unmotivated and unable to get well-paid work.
2. Many men struggle with low self-esteem, which can be caused by a number of circumstances: role reversal with women, lack of skills to get employment, no access to training, and lack of communication skills.
3. Family life is impacted when men are struggling with their identity. For example, many children are staying home with their fathers, but some men ignore their responsibilities as a father and get caught up in their addictions.
4. Youth in the community are growing up without male role models and this is a problem because when young men start their own families, they lack respect for their spouses and family members.
5. Struggling with addictions often means that the fathers have a hard time financially contributing to the family. It also contributes to weak ties and connections between family members. This demonstrates how the issues of men struggling with their identity trickles down to youth.
6. Due to employment issues in town, many men leave for jobs. This is hard on family life, leaving kids at home with no male role model.
7. Men are not involved or connected with the community like they were in the past because of a number of challenges. First, there are no programs and activities for men to participate in like the ones held for youth and elders. Secondly, if there is programming, it is hard to motivate the adult men to participate. There is a lack of services and support to help them with their issues.
8. Men are holding grudges against one another and not communicating. This is not good role modeling and does not support the development of the community.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

Elders

1. Some elders are being bullied, especially by relatives who want to get their money, or even have their homes broken into by those who want to steal from them. For these reasons, they may be afraid to live on their own.
2. Most elders are living on low fixed incomes. Their health needs are often increasing, and insured services have been cut, which puts a big burden on them. Some can't make ends meet and really need more attention and support.
3. Some elders feel very isolated. They may live alone and be single. They can't get out easily (some don't have cars or they are no longer able to drive) and they are not geographically close to family members. They would like to participate in community activities and to go on more trips. Elders may also be afraid to live on their own. They want to be visited frequently.
4. Many elders feel that they are now not able to easily do the things they used to enjoy, but for some of them it is difficult to ask for help. For example, they may want to get out for a walk, but are afraid to do so because of dogs, cougars and bears. Elders do not want to feel that they have to give up all their ambitions. They don't want to just sit at home. They would still like to learn new things.
5. Some elders need practical help to stay in their own homes as long as possible. This can include help with yard work, cutting firewood, and help in the house—cooking and cleaning.
6. Services for elders are being cut. There is never enough money to install safety equipment (like walk-in showers) for elders or to give all the elders lifeline bracelets. Fewer medical services are being funded by INAC (like dentists). Disabled elders have to get moved to Wiky or Gore Bay. We're starting to panic because there will be more and more elders and we're not going to have the funds to take care of them.
7. Elders don't want to be forced to go into a home. They want to stay active as long as possible. "When you're ready, you're ready," they say.
8. Families seem to have lost the habit of visiting their elders and involving them in family life. The younger family members just seem to be too busy.
9. In some instances elders are being expected to raise their grandchildren because their own children are caught up in addictions and other harmful life patterns.
10. Children and youth no longer spend a lot of time with their grandparents. They don't really have a connection with the elders.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

11. Many elders do not feel that they have a clear and strong role in the community through which they can contribute their knowledge, skills and gifts and fulfill their traditional role.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

The M'Chigeeng First Nation has strengths that it can draw on to overcome its disunity and to promote the wellbeing of all segments of its population.

1. M'Chigeeng hosts annual events that promote social interaction and build cohesion: Winter Carnival, Aboriginal Day, MFN Pow-wows (Labour Day weekend and New Years Day), Family Fun Weekend, Minor Hockey, NNAW Week, fall/spring/march/summer break children's/youth camps
2. M'Chigeeng members can be proud of their achievements: the first First Nation Training/Hub Centre, a strong Minor Hockey program (Island champions several years in a row, Little NHL Champions, different divisions), Hockey for Development School (1 week during fall break), MFN Pow-wows are gaining momentum and dancers, bi-annual youth conference, KTEI Fall Harvest (2 days), Children's Language Immersion Program, bi-annual volunteer recognition events, etc.
3. M'Chigeeng has infrastructure to be proud of: Training/Hub Centre, local secondary and post-secondary institutions, Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, Community Complex/Recreation Centre, Youth Centre, Health Centre, Wellness Center, Great Spirit Circle Trail, Rehabilitation Centre on Manitoulin, and KTEI.
4. M'Chigeeng has a strong foundation of cultural values and practices that can guide social development, including the re-establishment of a strong sense of unity and solidarity. For example, in the past, the Seven Grandfather Teachings and the Clan System ensured that community members respected and honoured one another, and did not abuse property or their intimate partners. By organizing members of the community into different areas of responsibility according to their clan, there was order.
5. A workshop on lateral violence, which was attended by five people from M'Chigeeng, has provided some insights into the dynamics of this issue and what can be done to work on it.
6. Community members are publically speaking out for the need for community healing and reconciliation. This issue has come "out of the closet".
7. There are many strong and healthy families in M'Chigeeng. Not only are they able to enjoy a balanced life pattern, but they are also able to serve as role models and mentors for others.

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strengths, Assets and Resources, continued

8. The Family Resource Centre is serving as a focal point for family development support and services.
 9. Band leadership, administration and services are committed to better support children and youth in all aspects of their development.
 10. There is less tolerance for domestic violence and sexual assault than in the past. It used to be a deep secret, but now people are willing to talk about it and what needs to be done to make sure it doesn't keep happening.
 11. Men are more willing than ever to share their feelings and challenges and to commit to addressing their wellness needs.
 12. Elders recognize that they have more services available to them than they used to, such as medical transportation and clearing the snow from their driveways or sidewalks. There are also translators who help them communicate with caregivers. For many, the bus has made a big contribution to the quality of their lives.
 13. The majority of our elders are healthy. The majority of them are safe. Their families, for the most part, are there for their needs if they are still at home. There are community-sponsored events to meet their social, economic, political and cultural needs.
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Goal #1: Create a Social Development Hub

The work of social development is linked to many different departments and agencies in the community (e.g. Health, Education and Training, Economic Development, Family Services, Recreation, and Infrastructure). But, no matter how effective these departments are, they cannot, by themselves, bring about the type of transformation of social conditions that M'Chigeeng is committed to achieving. Departments clearly will need to work together, but as well, much of the work needs to be done by community residents as they build their personal wellness, their family relationships and the service they provide to their community. Although Band staff will have particular services that they offer to the community, their primary role is to encourage, mobilize, facilitate and support the work that community members need to do for themselves. The establishment of a Social Development Hub that can serve as a unifying focal point is the purpose of this goal. This Hub would see staff from relevant Departments positioned together in a one-stop-shopping operation that is similar to what already exists in M'Chigeeng with the Employment and Training Hub. The Social Development Hub will be capable of addressing the full spectrum of community issues and needs related to social development as identified in this Chapter of the CCP.

Strategy #1: Establish a Social Development Hub/Council (with representatives from relevant Band departments as well as from community-based agencies and other community volunteers) that can serve as a hub for this area of work

Strategy #2: Ensure that the Hub has a clear mandate and reporting structure

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #3: Designate a lead for the Hub (e.g. a staff member from Health or Family Services or a new position)

Goal #2: Greatly strengthen the bonds of unity, solidarity, trust, respect, love and caring across all fault-lines in M'Chigeeng and develop effective processes for healing community relationships

This has been identified as the key issue that is holding the community back from achieving its full potential. The following strategies are designed to move into the future from a positive foundation.

Strategy #1: Conduct participatory social research focused on more deeply understanding the root causes of social development challenges and identifying effective interventions. (Note: this work will require dedicated funding; e.g. from FedNor, the Trillium Foundation or some other source.)

Strategy #2: Move to the positive. Invest resources in the of the community that wants to move forward in a positive way, rather than focusing the majority of volunteer and program energy on the 20% that are not yet ready to give up dysfunctional life patterns. Positive energy will gradually attract more and more individuals to constructive relationships.

Strategy #3: Introduce and use talking circles as a primary tool for reconciliation. These circles will be organized and held in many different settings: people's homes, public buildings, and the work place. They can be sponsored by many different groups: the school; health programs; income support programs; traditional spirituality groups; churches; and youth, elders, women's and men's programs, etc. To implement this strategy it will be necessary to recruit and train many volunteer facilitators.

Strategy #4: Hold monthly community-building feasts/gatherings that have the following three components: a) inspiration (prayers, stories and teachings that call participants to "higher ground"); b) consultation (talking together about plans, achievements, issues); and c) food and fun (to uplift the spirits and bring happiness to the gathering)

Strategy #5: Invite traditional spiritual leaders and church representatives to create a visible working group that actively creates unity by carrying out unity dialogues and collaborative service projects

Strategy #6: Develop a proactive communication strategy that highlights community achievements and cultural teachings about the inter-relationship of all members and the values and practices that safeguard our common wellbeing and security

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #7: Ensure that all governance and public sector operations are entirely free of backbiting, bullying, nepotism or other harmful practices that reinforce community disunity

Strategy #8: Encourage candidates to run for public office that will move past a tendency to make decisions based on the interests/views of extended family voting blocks to instead make decisions based on strengthening the social fabric of the whole community

Goal #3: Strengthen families and ensure the wellbeing of children

The existing Family Resource Centre is an excellent start and, with the right support in terms of human and financial resources, will be able to ensure that M'Chigeeng's families can thrive. An essential part of this goal is building the awareness that every child is a trust of the whole community, and so, everyone has a role to play in ensuring that children can achieve their full mental, emotional, physical and spiritual potential.

Strategy #1: Develop a comprehensive family healing and development plan with specific protocols for carrying out family interventions that pay special attention to the needs of “children having children”, single parent families, families struggling with addictions and other social issues, families receiving social assistance and living in poverty, and families with special needs children (Note: this plan needs to be developed collaboratively with other community agencies such as the Health Department, the schools, employment training, income support, child protection, etc.) This program needs to give a high priority to healing from grief, loss and trauma for family members of all ages. This program approach will focus on nurturing the roots of wellbeing rather than just on crisis response. Consider the image of apples on the tree and some on the ground at the base of the tree. Most mental health program focus is on picking up the apples already fallen on the ground and trying replace them on the tree. We will focus on nurturing the roots of the tree so the apples can thrive and don't have to fall to the ground. (The apple tree metaphor is borrowed from the work of psychologist Dr. Derrell Tonenah, who has provided training to some M'Chigeeng members.

Strategy #2: Ensure that this program has stable and adequate funding to implement this plan

Strategy #3: Assess the human resource needs and fill the gaps with well-qualified personnel (e.g. a team leader with extensive expertise in child and youth development (including mental health issues); community mobilization; program planning, management and monitoring; grant writing; etc. All staff should receive training in trauma-informed practice.

Strategy #4: Reorient social development programming to create a focus on recognizing and encouraging volunteerism and peer support of all kinds. We now expect some of the social development functions that used to be taken care of through neighbours helping neighbours or other kinds of informal support to be carried out by professional Band

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

staff. Some of the attention of that staff now needs to be given to rebuilding social support systems, in other words, putting the heart back into the work we do as a community to support families and others in needs of support. We have become “transactional” rather than “relational” in our way of treating people. Rules and procedures are necessary, but we also need to find a balance.

Strategy #5: Develop a range of innovative programs to achieve the family development plan goals (e.g. a variety of parenting support initiatives, a variety of healthy family activities, land-based programming, teenage pregnancy prevention programming, Big Brothers/Sisters, programming that focus on ensuring a healthy early beginning for all children, etc.)

Strategy #6: Ensure that the focus of Child Protection services is on strengthening and supporting families. If necessary, bring the function of Child Protection into the Hub’s mandate, and ensure that it is fully integrated with other areas of social development work.

Strategy #7: Create a M’Chigeeng foster family program that offers loving and responsible care for children whose families are unable to provide continuous and adequate care (this will require training and a review of personnel and other policies that facilitate this service)

Strategy #8: Increase and enhance childcare programs (e.g. early childhood, after school, etc.) to ensure that every child is well cared for regardless of family circumstances

Strategy #9: Encourage and support families receiving social assistance or struggling with addictions and life challenges to participate in the “life-path development” program described in *Chapter Three: Prosperity Development*

Strategy #10: Recruit, train and support community role models/volunteers (including elders who can become mentors to one or more families) who can play prominent roles in the implementation of family development programming. These helpers will need training, care-for-the-caregivers supports, and sometimes practical help with issues like babysitting and transportation.

Strategy #11: Create a baseline and monitoring tools to evaluate progress according to relevant indicators (e.g. number of teenage pregnancies, number of families living in poverty, number of children affected by fetal alcohol [or other drugs], number of families in which a member is actively using addictive substances, etc.)

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Goal #4: Develop and implement a comprehensive youth development strategy

Youth in M'Chigeeng who participated in the *Community Story* consultation process were very clear about their aspirations to become stronger in their identity; to retain their language and traditional skills; to develop their full potential in their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions; to enter into a fulfilling career according to their talents and interests; and to become healthy parents and contributing members of their communities. Yet, in reality, many of them are struggling with feelings of hopelessness, with the feeling that they don't have a voice in their families and the community, with the sense that they aren't receiving the education that will help achieve their goals, and with life patterns that are destructive (e.g. addictions, preoccupation with electronics, and unhealthy sexual and other types of relationships). This part of the community's social development clearly needs a greater and more effective focus.

Strategy #1: Create on-going youth consultation opportunities (with both junior youth (ages 11/12 to 14/15) and youth (ages 15 to 20/25) to engage them in planning, developing and implementing youth-led social, recreational and learning activities

Strategy #2: Around this core of youth-led initiatives, add program-driven opportunities related to their full spectrum of needs: a) healing and personal growth; b) strengthening cultural identity and knowledge; c) social and recreational opportunities for all interests, talents and ages (sports, music, drama); d) character development and moral guidance; e) safety and freedom from bullying and intimidation, f) learning for life (including parenting, life skills, citizenship and employment skills); g) employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; h) and opportunities to serve others and contribute to a better community and world

Strategy #3: Recruit volunteer male and female mentors to spend time with children and youth in their formative years and facilitate different kinds of activities to match interests and talents

Strategy #4: Ensure that the Youth Development Program is well resourced with a strong team lead and staff that are willing to work during evening and weekend hours

Strategy #5: Work closely with the schools to build strategies that promote school retention, academic success, and opportunities for cultural programming and learning for life

Strategy #6 Work closely with the Health Department to ensure that children and youth receive effective support for physical and mental health concerns

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #7: Develop strong program links with the economic development hub to ensure that youth have real employment and entrepreneurship opportunities

Strategy #8: Provide youth with meaningful opportunities for participation in community decision-making (see Chapter Four: Governance)

Strategy #9: Fully support high school students who need to clock 40 hours of volunteer “work experience” through recognitions, training opportunities, awards, etc. Where appropriate, focus on the social development programming (such as support to elders and to programming for children).

Goal #5: Ensure that women have opportunities to develop their full potential (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual)

Women play a strong role in M’Chigeeng community life and Band programs. At the same time, they still face barriers to achieving their full potential and leading a life free of abuse.

Strategy #1: Create a focal point for women’s development within the Health Department and develop a women’s development strategy within that Department’s overall work plan

Strategy #2: Provide a variety of options for women’s personal growth and development through Band programming, but also by encouraging the formation of informal self-help groups (sponsored by traditional societies/groups, churches, interest-based groups, etc.)

Strategy #3: Ensure that women can access a full range of educational opportunities ranging from basic literacy and numeracy to post-secondary (affordability, availability, encouragement, etc.)

Strategy #4: Encourage single-parent women, women receiving social assistance and women struggling with addictions and other issues to participate actively in the “life-path development” program (See Chapter Three: Prosperity Development)

Strategy #5: Celebrate and acknowledge the role of women in M’Chigeeng’s cultural traditions and create opportunities for women to fulfill that role in community life

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #6: Promote policies, programs and infrastructure (like shelters if needed) that prevent domestic violence and that provide safety and other kinds of support for women

Strategy #7: Ensure that women have access to a full range of activities that enhance their physical wellbeing from walking clubs, to sports teams, access to weight and aerobic training equipment, yoga, dance, etc. (affordability, availability, encouragement, etc.)

Strategy #8: Encourage the participation of women in community leadership (including Chief and Council) through leadership training, encouragement, etc.

Strategy #9: Create workplaces that have family friendly policies (e.g. that offer flexible work schedules, that offer access to child care, that have an active workplace wellness program)

Goal #6: Ensure that men have opportunities to develop their full potential (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual)

Many men report experiencing low self-esteem due, in part, to the role reversal the community has undergone in the recent past related to gender roles. When low education levels and other issues have prevented men from being able to provide for their families, they have a hard time maintaining their equilibrium. As well, addictions and other unhealthy life patterns continue to be a challenge for some men.

Strategy #1: Create a focal point for men's development within the Health Department and develop a comprehensive strategy for men's development within the Department's overall work plan

Strategy #2: Encourage unemployed or underemployed men to participate fully in the "life-path development" program described in Chapter Three: Prosperity Development

Strategy #3: Provide a variety of options for men's personal growth and development through Band programming, but also by encouraging the formation of informal self-help groups (sponsored by traditional societies/groups, churches, interest-based groups, etc.)

Strategy #4: Encourage men to contribute their skills and knowledge through many different kinds of volunteer opportunities

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #5: Create a dynamic healthy lifestyles movement among men, with healthy role models taking a lead in encouraging other men to fully develop their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions

Strategy #6: Build strong links between the men's development program and the Economic Development Hub to ensure that men have viable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in the community

Strategy #7: Celebrate and acknowledge the role of men in M'Chigeeng's cultural traditions and create opportunities for men to fulfill that role in community life

Goal #7: Develop a comprehensive elder wellness and support program

The various concerns of elders were listed at the beginning of this Chapter. They range from meeting their basic living needs to ensuring their safety in their homes and the community and to ensuring that they have the opportunities and supports to continue to play a strong role in the community's development.

Strategy #1: Develop a tool for assessing and monitoring the needs of all of the community's elders with respect to their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions (including their basic living needs, supports to stay in their own homes as long as they desire, supports to deal with life's challenges and to give and receive love, support for transportation, etc.).

Strategy #2: Create individualized support programs for all elders that address these needs. Special attention will be given to those already in long-term care, to make sure their needs for love, support and care are met.

Strategy #3: Build strong collaborative links between all relevant Band Departments and programs to ensure the implementation of these individualized support programs

Strategy #4: Create a dedicated corps of volunteers to provide support for many elements of the individualized support programs

Strategy #5: Create the necessary protocols and education measures to ensure that elders are no longer victims of any type of intimidation or abuse

Chapter Seven: Social Development, continued

Strategy #6: Conduct an audit of the community's infrastructure and programs to ensure that the barriers that elders may experience to full participation are addressed

Strategy #7: Celebrate and acknowledge the role of elders in M'Chigeeng cultural traditions and create opportunities for elders to continue to fulfill that role in community life (especially in terms of providing wisdom teachings to children and youth and in preserving the Ojibwe language and traditional culture)

Strategy #8: Create a supplemental support program to help elders and their families deal with their health and daily living support expenses that continue to be cut by government services

Strategy #9: Continue to construct housing that provides graduated supports for elders as their needs change

CHAPTER EIGHT: CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Definition

Culture refers to the general pattern of life by which people live. It includes their sense of identity, their customs, beliefs, values, morals, ideals, ceremonies and spiritual practices, as well as their traditional language, ways of knowing, and indigenous skills, arts, crafts and sciences. It is not possible to talk about culture without also talking about spirituality, which is not referring to any particular religion, but rather to the human capacity to know and love the Creator and to choose ways of living that are life-promoting and life-enhancing. Spirit animates the heart of all living cultures. Without spirit, culture becomes dead, unable to grow and change. Therefore, culture also refers to the sacred spiritual traditions that must be harmonized with everyday life to create a healthy community.

Culturally based development is the process of translating and applying the knowledge and wisdom of the traditional past into lived patterns of thought and action in the modern world, as well as the collective community work of agreeing on shared values for guiding our community development

This area of the plan includes: 1) an emphasis on language learning by all community members and the use of the language in the family, workplace and school; 2) the creation of many, many opportunities and channels for community members to learn cultural skills, values and traditions; 3) the documentation and use of M'Chigeeng's history and cultural knowledge; 4) the further incorporation of cultural content and processes into the school curriculum; 5) the use of cultural resources to promote healing and other important program initiatives; and 6) the development of the M'Chigeeng First Nation's human resources to support cultural development.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to cultural development.

1. Spirituality is closely tied to culture. We become spiritually lost when we don't learn about their own culture, including knowledge about how to live off the land and use the plants and medicines. Many adults don't know language or culture. Knowledge of Anishinaabe history, values and teachings is absent in many lives.
2. Significant levels of addictions and other symptoms of intergenerational trauma are seriously impacting family life, the wellbeing of children and youth, and inter-family community relations. This is a sign that people have lost their connection to their cultural and spiritual identity.
3. Life is becoming more materialistic. Many people are too focused on electronics and material possessions.

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

4. The roles of women/men/elders/children/chiefs and other leaders have changed in a way that is no longer firmly connected to cultural knowledge and practices.
5. Children are losing their language, cultural values and identity. They need the opportunity to learn more about their history, clan system and the roles that everyone should play according to cultural values. Now, the only place where they hear their culture and language is from their grandparents.
6. Most youth don't go outdoors anymore or value a connection to the land. This may be something that could help youth with their addictions, get over their boredom, and connect more with their beliefs and values. Some community members have worked with youth struggling with addictions in the outdoors—camping, hunting, and fishing. In their experience, youth who get this opportunity start to come around. Time away from electronics, going into the bush and learning what they need live a good life is grounding for young people.
7. Education is not culturally appropriate enough for children and youth. There is also a lack of spirituality in the school curriculum. If youth are not learning spirituality in school, from the Elders or at home, from where will it come?
8. Many women do not follow a spiritual path on a daily basis (whether this is through traditional spiritual practices or a church).
9. With modern life, men have lost some of the roles, behaviours and attitudes that kept them healthy. For example, in the past, men were motivated to work harder because they viewed themselves as providers for their families. The roles between men and women were clearly defined and men felt like they had a purpose in life. They were physically active daily with hunting, fishing, making maple syrup, and harvesting from their gardens. They knew how to survive through tough times, often teaching themselves or helping one another out. With all this responsibility and work, men often had little leisure time to spare. Culture, spirituality, and language were an every day part of life for men. They were healthy, had good communication skills, took responsibility and shared humour in their language. They would listen more in the past and talk less.
10. Spirituality is not celebrated and talked about openly by many people. This contributes to a general lack of understanding, and sense of disconnection in the community. People maintain an independent spiritual practice at home but members rarely engage as community. There is still a conflict in some cases between those who are active in the churches and those who practice traditional spirituality.
11. Cultural values and practices need to be more systematically incorporated into the governance of the community.
12. The lack of connection to cultural values has resulted in a loss of sharing, caring, empathy and trust in the community's family and social relationships. A strong sense of family is necessary for the unity of the Nation. People need to regain

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

the passion and commitment to contribute their time and creativity to the work of community development and Nation building.

13. The community does not seem to have enough resources (human and financial) to really do what is needed for cultural recovery and development.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

M'Chigeeng still has many assets and strengths upon which to build in addressing the issues and challenges described above.

1. Many youth understand that in order to have a positive future they need a strong identity as Anishinaabe people and a foundation of good moral beliefs. They are expressing an interest in learning traditional survival skills (like making a fire with flint), and participating in traditional ceremonies (such as the sweat lodge and berry fast). They also want to participate in more beading and other craft activities.
2. Women now have more opportunities to participate in cultural activities such as drum groups, pow wows and sweats than in the past.
3. Elders are still a powerful resource for recovering and maintaining the Ojibwe language and cultural skills, practices and values.
4. The number of cultural activities in the community has been increasing. These include the harvesting of medicine plants, sweat lodges, pow-wows and visits from healers.
5. There is a local concentration of culturally based businesses and institutions, including the Ojibwe Cultural Centre, the great Circle Trail program and many private crafters, artists and galleries that could be gathered into a kind of virtual "hub" for cultural tourism and marketing cultural products. Local artists use a variety of techniques/mediums and are renowned around the world.
6. There are community members who are very knowledgeable about cultural traditions and practices (such as Medicine Pipe Carriers).
7. The Lakeview School has a commitment to incorporating cultural teachings into its curriculum.
8. Our community is beautiful (Manitoulin), with fresh water, recreational areas, and land for medicine harvesting.

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Strengths, Assets and Resources, continued

9. M'Chigeeng has developed a number of programs designed to recover and maintain cultural strength: Language Declaration, Anishinabemowin Revival Program, Immersion Program, Aboriginal hypertension management program, traditional annual Pow-wows (New Year's Day, Labour Day, Daycare, Lakeview School), Aboriginal Day Celebration, KTEI Fall Harvest (2 days), Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, Great Spirit Circle Trail, Hiking Trail (for medicines)
 10. There is an ongoing push and research to support the assertion of inherent and treaty rights.
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Goal #1: Establish a M'Chigeen Cultural Development Council mandated to develop a long-term language and cultural development strategy and to oversee its implementation

Strategy #1: Establish a language and cultural development program team either based at the Ojibwe Cultural Institute or at a newly created agency focused on culture and language development (See Goal 4, Strategy 3 in Chapter Two on Life-long Learning). This team will consist of cultural and historical researchers, an Anishinawbe language specialist and at least two curriculum writers.

Strategy #2: Work closely with the M'Chigeeng Education, Health and wellness and other appropriate Departments and programs to ***integrate M'Chigeeng culture and Anishnawbe language into the work and life of CCP implementation***

Strategy #3: Financing cultural programming. Initial costs for cultural programming will need to be shared between principal users of program outputs such as Education, Health and Wellness and the HIAH Corporation. A long-term strategy will need to be developed, possibly integrating cultural services and the development and marketing of cultural tourism products.

Goal #2: Provide many opportunities for Ojibwe language learning and use in school, the work place, the home and community life

The following strategies are chosen to assist M'Chigeeng members to regain fluency in Ojibwe and to have the Ojibwe language become a natural part of everyday life.

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Strategy #1: *Gradually increase the number of classes participating in the Immersion Program in Lakeview School* by one every year

Strategy #2: *Create language learning tools* that are accessible for all community members free of charge

Strategy #3: *Hold language classes in the evenings or have them available on line* (on the MFN website). Use a variety of instructors for these programs.

Strategy #4: *Hold a Summer Family Camp Immersion program at Clapperton Island*

Strategy #5: *Provide recognition and incentives* (e.g. certification) *for Band employees to become proficient in the language*

Strategy #6: *Provide materials, encouragement, mentoring and other types of support for parents to use Ojibwe in the home and to teach their children.* Children need to hear and learn the language before they can read and write it; they need to understand and speak it first.

Goal #3: Provide many opportunities for learning cultural knowledge, skills and practices

This goal explores the many opportunities that can be created to incorporate cultural knowledge, values and practices into family, workplace and community life.

Strategy #1: *Encourage whole family involvement in all cultural activities* (make sure workshops and other learning opportunities are “age friendly”)

Strategy #2: *Encourage the holding of a broad range of traditional ceremonies* such as naming, walking out, flag, welcoming, water ceremonies

Strategy #3: *Provide education about traditional medicines and healing practices:* a) how to harvest, prepare and use traditional medicines, and b) the use of ceremonies to deal with pain and sickness

Strategy #4: *Provide education about traditional foods* (both berries and other plants and animals such as deer and moose): a) how to harvest and use, and b) their health benefits

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Strategy #5: Teach children and youth about the safe use of guns (including information about PAL requirements) **and the proper protocols for harvesting animals.** Sponsor an annual community harvest/hunt.

Strategy #6: Create and post/distribute an annual calendar of cultural events in the community (both sponsored by individuals/families or by the Band)

Strategy #7: Use media and signage to build awareness about the importance of culture and about specific cultural knowledge/skills/values/teachings

Strategy #8: Use the OCF/Saswaahns/pow-wow grounds as a site to teach/practice traditions (or designate another area that is accessible and near water)

Strategy #9: Hold monthly cultural development days within MFN administration and programs to foster greater collaboration and awareness about cultural knowledge that can be incorporated into Band programming

Strategy #10: Recognize “ceremonial or cultural leave” for Band employees

Strategy #11: Incorporate traditional drumming, dancing, singing and story telling into social activities

Strategy #12: Develop a community passport incentive program to encourage participation in cultural activities

Goal #4: Document and utilize the Nation’s cultural knowledge and history

M’Chigeeng’s history is an invaluable source of information about its cultural values and traditional knowledge and practices. Documenting this history, including the impact of colonial processes such as residential schooling, is an essential for building a strong cultural identity and for creating cultural learning materials. It also helps other peoples learn about and appreciate the cultural richness of the M’Chigeeng First Nation.

Strategy #1: Document and develop a comprehensive library about the history and culture of M’Chigeeng First Nation

Strategy #2: Record M’Chigeeng First Nation history on an ongoing basis (i.e., continue with MFN History Book III; “Year in Review”)

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Strategy #3: Develop materials about the history of residential schooling and its impact on the Anishinaabe people

Strategy #4: Profile MFN historians and their contributions

Strategy #5: Develop new videos about history and culture and air them and existing resources on the community channel

Strategy #6: Use other media such as newsletters and social media to educate community members about M'Chigeeng's history and culture

Strategy #7: Create special resource material about the contributions that FN peoples have made to their own nations as well as to society as a whole

Strategy #8: Incorporate education about M'Chigeeng's history and culture into many occasions in the community (e.g. community meetings, youth gatherings, school events, Band programs)

Strategy #9: Celebrate Aboriginal Day (June 21) through sessions about Anishinaabe Cultural teachings

Goal #5: Strengthen the cultural content of the school curriculum

The Lakeview School and the early childhood programs are already making a strong effort to include cultural content into their programs. This goal is designed to strengthen those efforts.

Strategy #1: Encourage and provide incentives for educators (at all levels of the system from JK to adult) **to become knowledge about cultural traditions**

Strategy #2: Develop an extensive library of special cultural resource material (e.g. books, videos) **for all age levels and subject matter as relevant**

Strategy #3: Incorporate cultural activities into the school program: fish, gather berries, harvest and eat traditional foods in cooking or home economics classes; use elders to tell traditional stories and legends in language and social studies classes; play traditional games (such as Indian Ball) in physical education classes; and use traditional dancing and drumming as part of drama or music classes

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Strategy #4: Further encourage meaningful interaction between Elders and students in the school setting (especially to help children learn respect and wisdom)

Goal #6: Use cultural teachings to promote healing

A strong healing and wellness movement has been identified as a critical foundation for M'Chigeeng's community development and Nation-building efforts. Cultural knowledge and practices are an important component of this work.

Strategy #1: Hold quarterly community talking circles (facilitated by an elder) **to increase community wellbeing and solidarity**

Strategy #2: Incorporate regular (e.g. monthly) talking circles into Band programming for all ages

Strategy #3: Incorporate cultural teachings and values into all health and wellness programming

Strategy #4: Recruit spiritual leaders who practice traditional ways and those that represent the churches to create initiatives that heal the divisions between them and model collaboration, trust and a commitment to community betterment

Strategy #5: Support elders (with encouragement and resources) **to mentor specific families that are struggling with wellness issues**

Strategy #6: Support healthy family development through access to traditional teachings about the roles and responsibilities of parents and children

Strategy #7: Encourage the balanced development of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of children through the use of traditional values and teachings

Strategy #8: Incorporate teachings about what it means to be Anishinaabe into all Band programming

Strategy #9: Support meaningful interaction between Elders and all other members of the community

Chapter Eight: Cultural Development, continued

Goal #7: Develop and dedicate human resources to support cultural development

Dedicated human and financial resources will be needed for M'Chigeeng to meet its language recovery and retention and cultural development goals.

Strategy #1: Hire a full-time (with benefits) **cultural development coordinator:** a) secure funding, b) develop job description, c) hire suitable individual

Strategy #2: Provide a dedicated budget for cultural development

Strategy #3: Provide training and volunteer recognition for community members to assist with cultural development activities (fishing & hunting, harvesting medicines, facilitating talking circles, giving language classes, documenting history, creating learning materials, etc.)

Strategy #4: Create an elders mentor program

Strategy #5: Ensure gender balance in all cultural development programming

CHAPTER NINE: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Definition

Infrastructure refers to the built environment of the M'Chigeeng First Nation. It includes basic utilities such as water, electricity and waste management. It also includes roads and related equipment such as street lighting, snow cleaning and public transportation vehicles. As well, it includes the buildings the community uses to support its programs and services such as the school, band office and recreational centre. Churches and other buildings owned by community groups, recreation and other facilities that may have been developed to support social and economic activities (such as a cultural centre or a business incubator) or any land that has been serviced with access to utilities are also part of infrastructure.

Note: Although housing could be considered part of infrastructure, because of its central position in social life, it has been given a chapter of its own.

This area of the Comprehensive Community Plan focuses on the interrelated areas of: 1) maintaining and operating existing infrastructure, 2) developing new infrastructure to support social and economic development on the basis of wise priority setting, 3) extending and enhancing public utilities/services, and 4) achieving sustainability in terms of financial and human resource capacity related to the development and maintenance of infrastructure.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to infrastructure development and management.

1. There are so many infrastructure needs that a reactive response to crisis cannot manage the problems. A more systematic, proactive approach is required.
2. The community lacks a comprehensive inventory of infrastructure and assessment of its value. As well, there is no systematic forecast of the costs of maintaining or replacing infrastructure or of acquiring new infrastructure to meet needs that will arise in the future.
3. Existing water and sewer systems are insufficient to support the new housing that must be created to support the needs. As well, existing telephone lines cannot accommodate more users.
4. Internet access is currently very slow.
5. Some roads need repair.
6. Some public buildings need repair (e.g. both the Complex and the Arena need significant work)

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

7. The same equipment is being purchased by different departments (e.g. canoes, lawnmowers). In some instances this equipment could be shared, avoiding expensive duplication. No central storage place for this type of equipment exists.
8. Because the funds to purchase equipment often comes from external funding sources, people do not feel a sense of ownership or responsibility for it. As a result, equipment is frequently not maintained properly or gets broken or lost.
9. Community members have expressed an interest in a long list of new facilities:
 - A new Band office that can accommodate all programs,
 - a multi-purpose recreational centre with an indoor pool and fitness centre,
 - a new daycare,
 - more playgrounds/parks,
 - community garden (with rain barrels) or farm,
 - a family healing centre,
 - a new water treatment facility,
 - a halfway house,
 - a grocery store,
 - a post-secondary education facility,
 - a warehouse manufacturing plan, and
 - a carpentry/construction learning centre.
10. As well, several infrastructure service improvements have been listed:
 - road upgrades,
 - a public transportation system,
 - a better drainage system, and
 - better lighting for some buildings (and this will contribute to energy savings).
11. On the other hand, community members observe that the recreation/youth centre has largely become a bingo hall. It is not really being utilized as anticipated and is regularly broken into. There is little use investing in new infrastructure if the community does not take ownership for it.
12. M'Chigeeng does not have the financial resources or pool of skilled labour to implement all these kinds of infrastructure development projects.

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Strengths, Assets and Resources

M'Chigeeng does have some assets and strengths upon which to build.

1. M'Chigeeng has basic infrastructure

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Band office | • Building maintenance | • Health centre | • Library |
| • Community Hall | • Treaty grounds | • Fire Hall | • Hardware store |
| • Al-Care Treatment Centre | • Gas station | • Lakeview School | • Road maintenance |
| • Day care centre | • Ball diamonds & running track | • churches | • casino |
| • Daycare Centre | • Road maintenance | • Headstart building | • Restaurants |
| • Elders Housing | • Waste disposal site | • Water treatment plant | • Community radio station |
| • Mall with retail businesses including a grocery store, bank, post office | • Senior Extended Care Centre | • Recreation centre with weight room | |

2. M'Chigeeng is a community services hub for other First Nations in the region: Mnidoo Mnising Employment & Training, Kina Gbezhgomi Child & Family Services, Mnaamodzowin Health Services, Noojmowin Teg Health Centre, UCCM Tribal Police and Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute.

3. M'Chigeeng is implementing a renewable energy turbine windmill project and has solar panels installed on the roofs of the community complex, Lakeview school and the Band Administration office.

4. M'Chigeeng has financial stability and a good track record for managing capital projects (accomplishments in the past 10 years include construction of 60 housing units, construction of a new Band Administration Building, additions to the fire hall and health centre, renovations to 100 housing units, and construction of a water treatment plant). UCCMM Technical Services are available for advice and inspections to ensure that construction meets code requirements.

5. M'Chigeeng has lots of local contractors with equipment and access to local gravel pits as needed. Castle Building Centre is located on reserve.

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Goal #1: Develop an infrastructure development master plan for the next 10 years (including a budget and proposal for financing) and have the appropriate, trained staff to oversee its implementation

This goal provides an implementation framework for the other goals in this chapter. It will ensure the community can move beyond ad hoc and reactive infrastructure development to systematically addressing priorities.

Strategy #1: Create a complete inventory of M'Chigeeng's current infrastructure, as well as its anticipated life span

Strategy #2: Document the maintenance cost of all infrastructure and procure a reliable estimate to such costs in the future

Strategy #3: Prepare a long-term plan for the renovation and upgrading of existing Band infrastructure

Strategy #4: Identify priorities for new infrastructure development, drawing on demographic projections, economic development opportunities and plans and social and cultural needs (Note: a **Recreation/sports Complex** with a pool has consistently been mentioned as a priority in community consultations.)

Strategy #5: Work with a professional planner to combine the above elements into a master plan and ensure comprehensive community participation in this work

Strategy #6: Develop a long-term capital plan to identify resources for this master plan, which might include seeking a variety of grants, using own-source revenue, levying a variety of user fees (including fees for access to the community's infrastructure for people from other nearby communities), and developing public-private partnerships

Strategy #7: Develop a list of human resource needs related to the development and implementation of the master plan and include this information in funding applications and other financing strategies

Goal #2: Enhance the capacity of civil society to become involved in the planning, construction and operation of community infrastructure

This goal is aimed at creating a sense of ownership for community infrastructure, for decreasing the financial burden for the Band, and for building capacity in a broad range of skills among community members.

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Strategy #1: Develop a community participation policy for the development of community recreational and social infrastructure (i.e., infrastructure that does not include basic utilities and Band operations). This policy could include requirements related to community contributions (financial and/or in-kind) related to planning, building and operating infrastructure.

Strategy #2: Create an incentive system for such participation that might include user fee reductions, opportunities for training, public recognition, etc.

Strategy #3: Create a communication tool to share information about the community's progress toward achieving community participation goals and other targets related to progress on particular infrastructure projects.

Goal #3: Complete needed repairs, upgrades and extensions to Band-owned buildings

This goal is aimed at ensuring the continued use of existing Band infrastructure in the most efficient way.

Strategy #1: Enhance public safety and prevent the defacement or destruction of facilities through upgrading the community's lighting and security systems

Strategy #2: Operationalize the long-term plan (see Goal #1 above) for repairing, upgrading and adding on to existing Band-owned buildings (such as those listed under the section on *Strengths, Assets and Resources* above)

Strategy #3: Ensure that all work is completed according to code

Goal #4: Upgrade basic utilities and services

This goal deals with basic infrastructure such as roads, water treatment facilities, water and sewer lines, waste management, etc.

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Strategy #1: Undertake feasibility and environmental impact studies (drawing on the data collected under Goal #1, strategies 1 & 2 above) and create a capital and human resource plan to undertake the following priority projects:

- Upgrade the Gaaming and Lakeview lagoons
- Maintain the community's roads
- Extend water/sewer lines

Strategy #2: Work closely and persistently with AANDC to ensure that funding and approval for these projects are provided

Strategy #3: Carry out a feasibility study for the development of a public transportation system for members to have easier access to the community's facilities and activities (Note: This could be a public-private partnership.)

Strategy #4: Complete the work already begun on the development of a comprehensive, cost-effective solid waste management/recycling facility

Strategy #5: Identify and install a high-speed Internet system

Goal #5: Identify priority infrastructure needs to support sustainable social, cultural and economic activity (including labour force development)

This goal creates a framework for supporting economic and social development through proactive attention to infrastructure needs.

Strategy #1: Work closely with the Band's economic development agencies, Chief and Council and the private sector to **identify priority infrastructure needs that will support well-thought out (and environmentally friendly) economic development (e.g. small business incubation centre and industrial park)**

Strategy #2: Work closely with Kenjgewin Teg Education Institute, the Education Department and other stakeholders to **develop a long-term plan for the construction of a post-secondary institution** (MFN College) to build resources for the capacity needs anticipated by the CCP and other planning processes (Note: Such an institution could begin virtually and only gradually create bricks and mortar.)

Chapter Nine: Infrastructure Development and Management, continued

Strategy #3: Carry out a feasibility study related to the construction of a community grocery store with other small retail outlets (such as a post office, smoke shop, LCBO), build partnerships with investors and potential funders and implement those project determined to be feasible

Strategy #4: Implement the priority new infrastructure projects for which proper feasibility, capital planning and other preparatory work has been carried out (e.g. a recreational/sport centre with a pool, a family healing centre, outdoor recreational facilities, cultural sites) (Note: see Goal #1 above)

Strategy #5: Ensure that all the above projects are built to code

CHAPTER TEN: HOUSING

Definition

Safe, affordable and appropriate shelter is a fundamental human necessity, and according to the United Nations, a basic human right. If “home” is more than a roof over your head—if it means having someplace to live where you are always welcome, where you are safe, and where you live alone or with the people closest to you—then a very significant proportion of M’Chigeeng’s population is “homeless”. This is a matter that is certainly a significant social and economic challenge affecting the lives of M’Chigeeng families.

This area of the Comprehensive Community Plan focuses on the interrelated areas of: 1) the construction of new housing, 2) the maintenance of existing housing, 3) the development of policies that enable the housing program to be financially self-sustaining, and 4) the development of human resources to work in this sector.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M’Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M’Chigeeng needs to address related to the construction, maintenance and financing of housing.

1. The community does not have enough housing, especially apartments and other affordable housing units. There are currently more than 15 families that do not have their own housing in MFN.
2. M’Chigeeng does not have the financial resources to build enough new housing to meet the needs.
3. Many MFN families are living in severely overcrowded conditions that are generating very serious physical, mental health and safety risks. The lack of adequate, affordable, safe housing for all is a serious social issue that is contributing to many other social problems.
4. In any given year, the Band receives enough funding to build between 2 and 10 homes, but this pace of growth is not even keeping up with population increases.
5. The policies that determine who will be allocated housing are not transparent to everyone.
6. The lack of housing is cited as one reason why members move out of the community.
7. Many homes have been damaged by mould and are not safe for human habitation. Some housing may not have been built to code and others may also have a number of structural and other problems.
8. A significant and growing number of “virtually” homeless youth shift from house to house, sleeping on couches and floors to avoid having to go back to an intolerable situation at home.

Chapter Ten: Housing, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

9. The pervasive wellness issues and chronic dependency on income assistance payments have resulted in homes that have been damaged or poorly maintained.
10. The “housing as a treaty right” movement has convinced many MFN people not to pay even a very modest rent, and this is driving the Band further into debt and making it impossible to secure financing for more housing.
11. Many community members cannot qualify for mortgages or for loans to renovate their housing.
12. The need for new housing is greater than what can be supported with existing utilities (water and sewer systems). As well, existing telephone lines cannot accommodate more users.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

M’Chigeeng does have some assets and strengths upon which to address this critical infrastructure and social issue.

1. MFN has an active Housing Committee that is committed to finding solutions to this high priority issue.
2. MFN has human resources with skills in construction management and in a wide range of trades that are essential for the construction of housing. There are also young people who will be able to become trained in the needed trades.
3. There are lots of local contractors with equipment.
4. Castle building Centre is located on the reserve and can supply needed materials.
5. There are surveyed building lots ready for construction. Water and hydro are available.
6. UCCMM Technical Services is available for advice and can carry out inspections to ensure that code requirements are met.
7. In the past 10 years M’Chigeeng has constructed 60 housing units and renovated 100. It has a good track record for managing capital projects.
8. M’Chigeeng First Nation can apply for CMHC funding for home construction, CMHC RRAP funds for renovations and SATF funding to create training opportunities and construction jobs for members on Ontario Works.
9. The water treatment plant currently services all housing units, including water delivery by truck.

Chapter Ten: Housing, continued

Goal #1: Create a comprehensive housing policy and plan

This goal will ensure that the other goals described below will be pursued in a systematic way with the human and financial resources they need.

Strategy #1: Using the goals below, *develop both broad policy and an actionable work plan* that mobilizes all the agencies that have a role to play (e.g. the Housing Committee, Chief & Council, Housing Officer, CPPW)

Strategy #2: *Work toward the establishment of a Housing Authority* (as a maturation of the Housing Committee)

Strategy #3: *Conduct a demographic trends study* to determine the future housing needs of the Nation

Goal #2: Construct enough housing to catch up to the need by 2021

This goal is aimed at ensuring that all members have safe, affordable and appropriate housing.

Strategy #1: *Conduct research to identify housing models from around the world* that can be adapted to develop innovative, cost-effective, environmentally friendly (e.g. utilizing geo-thermal heating) and culturally appropriate housing options

Strategy #2: *Identify and utilize all relevant funding sources* to support housing construction

Strategy #3: *Create a variety of housing options* such as smaller condo-apartments for seniors and single people to free up larger homes for families

Strategy #4: *Ensure that all new housing is built up to code* (e.g. by using the services of UCCMM Technical Services to make sure that a qualified architect and inspector sign off on all housing construction projects)

Strategy #5: *Ensure that the development of access to utilities* (water, sewer, electricity) keeps pace with housing construction

Strategy #6: *Establish and implement a transparent and equitable housing policy for the allocation of homes*

Chapter Ten: Housing, continued

Strategy #7: Acquire land for the construction of new housing from Chief and Council allocation or through a private purchase

Goal #3: Develop policies that will enable M'Chigeeng's housing program to become financially self-sustaining

One of the obstacles to achieving the goal of housing for all is that the Band itself has been responsible for virtually all the costs. This goal is designed to create a balance, through a combination of rental properties and an attractive home ownership program.

Strategy #1: Implement a social marketing and incentive system to ensure that all residents meet their rental or mortgage commitments

Strategy #2: Develop and encourage a home ownership scheme through which MFN on-reserve members are assisted to become homeowners, and set a target of 30% home ownership by 2021, thus increasing self-reliance and decreasing the financial burden of the M'Chigeeng First Nation. Part of this program could be to assist members with the paperwork that is required at banks for mortgages or other loans. The Nation could also consider offering members a subsidy toward new home construction to assist with the down payment.

Strategy #3: Work closely with M'Chigeeng's Ontario Works program to ensure that funds allocated to housing are used in support of the Band's housing policy and plan and that members on Ontario Works are receiving effective support to become self-reliant

Goal #4: Maintain all housing at a level that ensures safety and health

This goal will share responsibility for maintenance between the Band, renters and homeowners.

Strategy #1: Ensure that all housing is maintained to acceptable safety and health standards (e.g. furnace filters are changed regularly and every home has fire and carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers and sump pump alarms).

Strategy #2: Establish clear standards for home renters with respect to maintaining the property in good repair, a regular inspection system, and a system of incentives and disincentives to ensure compliance

Chapter Ten: Housing, continued

Strategy #3: Provide education and awareness to members related to home maintenance and repairs

Strategy #4: Develop a very proactive plan to address mould issues in current housing and to make sure that new housing does not develop this problem

Strategy #5: Support the formation of neighbourhood groups that will take responsibility for the upkeep of common property (such as neighbourhood playgrounds) and will assist seniors, single parents and other members of the community who need help maintaining their properties

Goal #5: Develop human resources adequate to the implementation of the above goals

This goal is aimed at building the capacity of M'Chigeeng First Nation to meet its goal of housing for all, and to do so in a way that allows the Nation and its members to benefit from this important economic sector.

Strategy #1: Apply for Ontario Work's SATF for dollars to train a carpentry crew

Strategy #2: Apply for LDM support to assist with labour costs

Strategy #3: Investigate private-public partnerships that will ensure that Band members receive training and preferential access to jobs

CHAPTER ELEVEN: LANDS AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

Definition

Ethical stewardship of the land and natural environment is based on the understanding that humans are part of the natural world and not separate from it. Ultimately, the land provides us with all that we need and its bounty must be shared among all of us. This means that we have the responsibility to manage our land and natural resources conscientiously to ensure that the way of life of the current generation does not harm the capacity of the land to meet the needs of future generations, as we seek new and creative ways of thinking about land as a spiritual responsibility and a contributor to prosperity development.

This area of the comprehensive Community Plan focuses on the interrelated areas of: 1) sustainable environmental protection and the management of natural resources such as soil, water and forests; 2) land use planning; and 3) future land claims.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to land and resource management.

1. The M'Chigeeng First Nation controls only a small part of its traditional territory and has been striving to regain sovereignty over additional land. For example, the Band is asking that the Sucker Creek land be given reserve status.
2. M'Chigeeng has not been able to achieve the recognition that would allow it to assert its sovereignty at resource management tables with industry players and the provincial and federal governments.
3. M'Chigeeng does not have enough land to meet all its needs: a) community land for cultural and recreational activities and community infrastructure, b) space for all families now and in the future to have homes, and c) land for business development. Most of the existing land is already assigned to members under CP (certificate of possession) titles, so the Band has very little land to assign for the purposes mentioned above.
4. CP land is being sold by Band members, but clearer regulations are needed to monitor these transactions and ensure that the benefit of a few does not harm the needs of the whole community.
5. Land use is not always managed in a systematic, equitable and environmentally responsible way. For example, cottage development on the lake has been happening without proper oversight to protect the land and water from contamination (proper septic fields and safe water systems). Some of this cottage land is leased by non-native people.
6. M'Chigeeng lacks a well staffed and resourced land management department and a comprehensive land management plan to systematize this area of its development. Fishery managers should be included in this staff.

Chapter Eleven: Lands and Environment Management, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

7. M'Chigeeng lacks adequate environmental protection policies and legislation. Enforcement of existing legislation is another issue (including enforcement of the law prohibiting night hunting).
8. A few families have managed to get control of a large portion of the land through private deals related to CP sales. In some cases, the ownership of this land is disputed because of the lack of proper registration of such sales.
9. Waste management is a significant challenge and current systems aren't adequate to the job.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

Although the list of issues and challenges may seem daunting, M'Chigeeng also has some wonderful assets and strengths upon which to build.

1. M'Chigeeng is located on a beautiful land rich in resources and opportunities. Sometimes it's easy to take these things for granted, but people from elsewhere are very interested in doing, learning and seeing this land and our cultural strengths. Lots of visitors come in the summer and tourism could be built into a much bigger economic opportunity.
2. The people of M'Chigeeng have a strong sense of love for and identity with the land. They recognize their responsibility to serve as stewards of the land and want to further strengthen their commitment and systems to fulfill this obligation.
3. M'Chigeeng has 8,059 acres of Reserve land. The Band purchased 5,652 acres on Clapperton Island and has built some cabins, a cook area and an arbor as a site for cultural and environmental activities, especially for youth. This resource could be used much more than it currently is. The band also has another 30 acres in water lot claims and 1,000 acres "up the hill".
4. M'Chigeeng has valuable property, including the Manitoulin Hotel and Conference Centre and the Sudbury Apartments.
5. M'Chigeeng already has a focus on green energy with the windmill project and solar panels. It also has a water treatment facility.
6. M'Chigeeng is working hard to improve solid waste management by closing the dump and instigating a recycling program.

Goal #1: Staff and resource a Land Management Department

There was strong consensus among those who participated in the Community Story consultations, as well as the staff review of that document to determine priority goals and strategies, that this area of M'Chigeeng's development requires greater capacity in terms of human and financial resources. It is just too important to the Nation's spiritual and cultural identity,

Chapter Eleven: Lands and Environment Management, continued

economic prosperity and social wellbeing not to have a dedicated department with professional staff and enough funding to take the steps outlined in the goals and strategies described below.

Strategy #1: Seek out land management training opportunities (such as the environmental planning course in Saskatoon). **Encourage members to complete such courses so that they will acquire a complete set of capacities** needed to plan for the future, and establish the legislation and policies that will protect the environment, including wildlife, medicines, sacred sites, rare species and the natural beauty and character of the land.

Strategy #2: Conduct a strategic planning process to determine the structure, staff and resource needs of a Land Management Department that is capable of achieving the goals and strategies listed below.

Strategy #3: Identify resources to staff this Department and recruit staff. Some of these resources may be able to be identified through drawing on capacity within existing departments whose mandate overlaps with this area of work. New resources will also need to be found (e.g. from revenue from leased land, businesses, etc.).

Goal #2: Develop a long-term land use code and plan

The achievement of this goal will require collaboration between the land management, economic development, social development and infrastructure departments, as well as governance bodies. It will regulate land use with reserve land, but also resource usage in M'Chigeeng's traditional territory. It will make sure that the people of M'Chigeeng will be able to continue to enjoy traditional activities in nature such as fishing and hunting and that households will have the land they need to support healthy living through gardening and small farming activities (e.g. raising chickens, pigs, cows, sheep, etc.). These kinds of activities help children connect to the land.

Strategy #1: Significantly increase the land base through land acquisition and negotiation to have more traditional territory designated as reserve land. This work needs to be carried out within the context of a long-term land acquisition policy and plan that anticipates future needs. This strategy will require consistent attention to the work of filing and following up on land claims that are in accordance with the provision of the treaty.

Strategy #2: Create policies to manage the sale of CP land. One suggestion is to have a policy that the community would be given the first option to buy any such land that is put up for sale. Another consideration is that young families need to have an equal opportunity to acquire land for their own households.

Chapter Eleven: Lands and Environment Management, continued

Strategy #3: Develop a formula/process for achieving balance in land designation for nature preserve and for family, commercial and community (e.g., infrastructure and common cultural/recreational) use. Achieving this will require intensive and transparent community consultation to consider the need for job creation (e.g. through the development of a centralized business centre/industrial park with a combination of Band and private businesses, including those owned by non-M'Chigeeng members). An important question is where the land to do this could come from when there are other urgent needs such as land for homes and other primary considerations such as the need to protect the environment.

Strategy #4: Value and maintain existing land and its facilities and create safe neighbourhoods. Local parks have broken glass and aren't safe for children. Basic maintenance includes cutting the grass and having washroom facilities. Other outdoor facilities (e.g. Johnny's Park) are no longer well managed.

Strategy #5: Establish a process for the creation of the land use code and plan that creates numerous opportunities for community participation (e.g. through focus groups, working groups, community meetings, referendum on ratification, etc.).

Goal #3: Develop environmental protection policies and legislation

Many current land use practices are not as environmentally sound as they could be. Some resources (such as the fish stocks) are being depleted. Infrastructure is not taking advantage of green options, and business and lease land development is not being regulated on the basis of environmental impact. The following strategies are intended to address these issues.

Strategy #1: Create a comprehensive environmental protection plan that includes policies, standards, legislation, oversight protocols and enforcement policies and practices that go beyond the minimum standards of the provincial and federal governments. This plan would cover all aspects of land use, including Band infrastructure, housing, commercial development, resource utilization (such as hunting and fishing, but also the use of forests, rocks, etc.). This plan would include provisions for the management of leased land and curtail the further development of cottages on the waterfront.

Strategy #2: Create monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to implement the environmental protection plan. The Environmental Review Commission is one element of such a mechanism, but monitoring and enforcement will also require dedicated human and financial resources. Some of this work may be able to be done through citizen groups that have received training and monitoring tools.

Chapter Eleven: Lands and Environment Management, continued

Strategy #3: Create an Environmental Review Commission that is charged with reviewing all land use applications. This Commission would have community representatives and a mandate and operating procedures that ensure transparency and accountability and protect it from political interference.

Strategy #4: Focus on green energy (e.g. low-energy homes) and green infrastructure projects (e.g. a water treatment process that utilizes an environmentally friendly lagoon)

Strategy #5: Improve waste management infrastructure and policies to comply with high environmental protection standards. Although steps have already been taken to improve solid waste management, both in terms of educating community members and also in terms of managing a wide range of waste materials, some materials that could be recycled are still ending up in the landfill.

Strategy #6: Replenish fishing stocks. Local fisheries have been depleted, in part by the Nation's lack of attention to proper management. This situation needs remediation. Another aspect of being good stewards of the fish stock is ensuring that the lake water is not being contaminated by cottage development on the waterfront or other activities that impact the water table.

Goal #4: Educate community members, and especially the youth, to value the land and understand how to protect the environment

Young people need to understand where they come from. Coming from here means that they know the cedar, the oak, the tree fig, the whitefish and the trout. If you go to the city and then come back, you realize that we have all the wonderful species of plants and animals that children want to learn about. When they choose to live here, they will do so because they respect the land.

Strategy #1: Encourage wise use of household land to provide adequate and energy-efficient housing as well as for growing nutritious food in an environmentally friendly way.

Strategy #2: Include opportunities for M'Chigeeng members of all ages to learn to value the land and understand how to protect the environment. These programs will focus on learning about culture, values and sacred teachings, as well as about ecology and the land and all its plant and animal life. They will also encourage young people to choose land management and environmental protection as career options.

Strategy #3: Further develop and wisely manage Clapperton Island as a resource for environmental education and healing, especially for youth, but also for community members of all ages.

Chapter Eleven: Lands and Environment Management, continued

Goal #5: Create an archive to store records of traditional land use and environmental protection practices and the history of land use up to the present

This goal will contribute to the achievement of the other goals through the creation of a library/database that will support the creation of a comprehensive land management plan, the process of acquiring additional land, the settling of land disputes, and the creation of environmental protection policies and enforcement mechanisms.

Strategy #1: Carry out a variety of research projects designed to recover traditional knowledge about land and natural resource use and environmental protection strategies

Strategy #2: Compile a database of current land use (CP ownership, leased land, land used for hunting, fishing and other traditional activities, land used for economic activities, etc.)

CHAPTER TWELVE: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Definition

The aim of emergency response measures is to protect the safety of M'Chigeeng residents, buildings and land from natural and man-made disasters, including flooding, fire, unusual weather events, chemical spills and disease epidemics.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to emergency response management.

1. The community does have a comprehensive and integrated emergency response plan that covers the wide range of possible disasters (e.g. flooding, fire, chemical spills and disease epidemics) that originate either within the community or at the level of larger jurisdictions. This plan needs to become more concrete through the development of both short-term and long-term goals.
2. As part of such a plan, M'Chigeeng FN needs clear protocols and agreements with the many jurisdictions and entities outside the community that become involved in the case of a natural or man-made disaster.
3. The community does not have a centralized emergency response centre that has a clear chain of command and the equipment, human resources, policies and systems to mount a comprehensive response to any type of emergency (although it does have a fire station and ambulance service in the next town).
4. As well, the M'Chigeeng FN needs by-laws and policies that define what constitutes a state of emergency and what the procedures are that will guide the community's response (e.g. how the resources from all Band departments can be redirected to emergency response, what the response is that is expected of individuals, and how information will be communicated, etc.).
5. A prime source of labour for mounting a response to emergencies is the individuals who are local contractors. A culture of dependency thinking can create barriers, however, since these individuals often expect to receive additional payments for such work.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

M'Chigeeng does have some assets and strengths upon which to build.

Chapter Twelve: Emergency Response, continued

Strengths, Assets and Resources, continued

1. M'Chigeeng FN has the framework for an emergency response plan and has a designated Emergency Response Coordinator.
 2. M'Chigeeng FN has an Emergency Centre with fire and ambulance services and the personnel working with these services have important skills.
 3. M'Chigeeng FN has human resources with a broad range of relevant skills (from policy development to construction).
 4. The community does have a comprehensive locator system (e.g. building numbers for all houses and public facilities, road names or numbers for all transportation routes).
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Goal #1: Establish an emergency response management team consisting of key M'Chigeeng staff and service providers and develop a comprehensive and integrated emergency response plan

The purpose of this goal is to provide a long-term guide for the ongoing development of an effective emergency response system in M'Chigeeng.

Strategy #1: Review the existing plan, update as required and include concrete short- and long-term goals and strategies

Strategy #2: Consult extensively with other relevant agencies in the development of this plan (police, fire department, Health Department, Band administration, regional, provincial and federal emergency response agencies, etc.)

Strategy #3: Hold community consultation sessions to provide input and elicit cooperation

Goal #2: Secure adequate financial and human resources

A plan cannot be effective without dedicated human and financial resources. The purpose of this goal is to ensure that emergency response measures will be able to be implemented efficiently when needed.

Strategy #1: Prepare a detailed budget and human resource plan for implementing the goals and strategies of the emergency response plan

Chapter Twelve: Emergency Response, continued

Strategy #2: Make application to Chief & Council for OLG funding

Strategy #3: Engage all Band Departments to determine what they can contribute, given their responsibilities

Strategy #4: Investigate opportunities for funding grants from federal/provincial government and other sources

Goal #3: Create a centralized Emergency Response Centre

This Centre will be responsible for coordinating an efficient and effective response to all types of emergency (e.g. flooding, fire, chemical spill, disease epidemic, plane crash, severe weather event)

Strategy #1: Acquire a back-up power system for Lakeview School so that it can serve as an evacuation centre (with the advice of a professional engineer)

Strategy #2: Create a community map with designated emergence response points

Strategy #3: Develop clear lines of authority and communication protocols for emergency response

Strategy #4: Negotiate the roles and responsibilities of community agencies (the Health Department, the School and Daycare, Police and Fire Department, the Band administration staff, private contractors)

Goal #4: Create the by-laws and policies that will support an efficient and effective response to all types of emergency

A plan requires specific by-laws and policies to be implemented (e.g. related to compliance with evacuation orders, the presence of safety equipment in workplaces, or the safe handling of toxic materials, etc.).

Strategy #1: Carry out a best-practice review of the policies and by-laws of other jurisdictions, especially those with similar geographic, demographic and other characteristics

Strategy #2: Work closely with Chief and Council to develop M'Chigeeng's policies and by-laws

Chapter Twelve: Emergency Response, continued

Strategy #3: Develop monitoring and enforcement procedures and designate responsibility for this work

Goal #5: Negotiate partnerships and protocols with other stakeholders

The purpose of this goal is to create the protocols that will enable M'Chigeeng's emergency response system to coordinate effectively with those of other jurisdictions so that M'Chigeeng First Nation benefits from existing programs to prevent or respond to emergencies and that M'Chigeeng's response links seamlessly with that of other agencies.

Strategy #1: Establish protocols for smooth coordination with existing community emergency responders: e.g. police, fire department

Strategy #2: Establish protocols for smooth coordination with provincial and federal government emergency response systems and facilities (such as hospitals)

Strategy #3: Establish protocols for smooth coordination with the emergency response systems of other nearby communities

Goal #6: Ensure the preparedness of community members

Not only does the Band need a comprehensive emergency response system, community members also need to understand what they must do to prevent harm to themselves and their families, as well as to help other community members.

Strategy #1: Prepare information materials for distribution at the household level with clear instructions about how to respond to emergencies

Strategy #2: Make sure that all Band operations, as well as private enterprises in the community have disaster response materials that they can post in the work place and that can be used as a reference guide

Strategy #3: Hold annual community-wide mock disaster training events

Strategy #4: Provide all work places and schools with the materials they need to hold regular emergency response drills

Strategy #5: Educate community members about the importance and use of emergency response equipment such as fire extinguishers, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: OFF-RESERVE MEMBERSHIP

Definition

Although some First Nations people living off-reserve retain a strong relationship with a reserve community, others feel no connection to their home reserve and may be second or third generation city residents. Because of jurisdictional disputes over responsibility for service delivery to off-reserve First Nations people, this population may experience difficulty accessing both federal services provided on-reserve and provincial programs available to the general public. They may also experience challenges in participating in band decision-making if they seek to retain a connection to a reserve community.

This section of the plan addresses the needs, issues and concerns of the off-reserve members living in such centres as Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto. It includes strategies for: 1) improving communication between the Band governance and administration systems and off-reserve residents, 2) creating many different kinds of opportunities for off-reserve members to be involved in community planning and decision making, 3) creating access to information about the provisions and implications of legislation that impacts the status and opportunities for First Nations, and 4) creating a comprehensive benefits package for off-reserve Band members that is financially sustainable and contributes to self-reliance.

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Based on community insights shared during the M'Chigeeng Community Story process and in other meetings related to community planning, the following observations summarize the issues and challenges that M'Chigeeng needs to address related to off-reserve membership.

1. The fact that some family members live on-reserve and others in various communities elsewhere has, in some cases, created a feeling of separation within families. There is also a feeling of separation among families that live on-reserve and those that live off-reserve.
2. Off-reserve members sometimes feel like second-class citizens or outcasts and are sometimes thought of and treated that way by on-reserve members. Some off-reserve members say that when they phone Band programs, staff are not helpful.
3. Off-reserve members do not have the same capacity to participate in community governance and decision-making.
4. On the one hand, some off-reserve members are asking for more information (such as annual reports). On the other hand, the cost of mail-out communication is prohibitively expensive to use as an option for keeping off-reserve members informed.
5. Existing infrastructure has not kept up with the opportunities that technology could offer for better information for and the greater involvement of off-reserve members. New computer systems are needed.

Chapter Thirteen: Off-Reserve Membership, continued

Issues, Challenges, Opportunities, continued

6. Off-reserve Band members do not have the same access to Band programs and services. They may also sometimes experience difficulty accessing the services offered to the general Canadian public because of their status as First Nations peoples.
7. The M'Chigeeng First Nation does not receive transfer funds from the federal government to provide basic services to off-reserve members. This fact is sometimes not well understood by off-reserve people.
8. Some off-reserve members feel that a portion of OGM (Rama \$) should be allocated to provide support for some of their needs. They also feel that some of the own-source revenue of the Band should be similarly allocated.
9. Political tensions are created by off-reserve people who expect and demand services from Band administration when no funding has been provided to serve the off-reserve population. Some off-reserve people can vote in elections; this puts stress on politicians to “do something” for off-reserve voters in order to get re-elected.
10. M'Chigeeng does not have the land, other infrastructure or funds to construct housing for all the members who might choose to come back if housing were available. There are also not enough jobs in the community to provide livelihood opportunities for all those who might want to move back to the community.

Strengths, Assets and Resources

In addressing this critical concern, M'Chigeeng has some strengths and assets.

1. Off-reserve members have many skills, gifts and knowledge that could benefit the Nation in its community development and Nation-building efforts.
 2. There are off-reserve members who have a keen interest in and commitment to M'Chigeeng.
 3. Band leadership and administration are committed to improving communication with and the involvement of off-reserve members. The following statement represents a strong consensus on their part: *Our off-reserve people are part of us. We will include them in every aspect of our community and support them as best we can. We will develop a strategy to move toward off-reserve involvement in community planning and decision making and in creating a meaningful and sustainable benefits package for them.*
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Chapter Thirteen: Off-Reserve Membership, continued

Goal #1: Create better communication processes for off-reserve members

This goal focuses on creating as accurate and complete a database as possible of the contact information for off-reserve members and developing mechanisms to provide them with accurate and timely information about the issues before the community, the initiatives that are being undertaken to resolve those issues, and the progress to date.

Strategy #1: Develop a more comprehensive and up-to-date database with contact information for off-reserve members: a) ask on-reserve members to help update the addresses (email and postal) and telephone numbers of their family members, b) ask these new contacts for information for other off-reserve Band members they may know, c) continue this process until 70 to 90% of all off-reserve members are in the database.

Strategy #2: Create a page on the website for off-reserve members to record their contact information

Strategy #3: Improve access to information for off-reserve members: a) survey off-reserve membership to get a clearer picture of their demographics, information needs and access preferences (e.g. website, email, newsletter, web-based forums with Chief and Council, web-based access to community meetings, etc.)

Strategy #4: Ensure that the website is always operating and is kept up-to-date with frequent (at least monthly) new postings (including a blog page for each department)

Strategy #5: Have a radio phone-in talk show to provide updates on the political issues the community is facing and what is happening in the community, and to provide opportunities for members to provide ideas and suggestions (some people, like elders, may not use computers)

Strategy #6: Consider having at least annual community meetings (e.g. in Friendship Centres) with the Chief (and perhaps some Councilors or the Band CEO) **in those locations with the highest concentration of Band members** (e.g. Sudbury, Toronto, Chicago)

Strategy #7: Include specific provisions for communication with off-reserve members in M'Chigeeng's overall communication plan.

Strategy #8: Appoint specific individuals with a solid understanding of the issues affecting off-reserve issues to reach out to M'Chigeeng members in centres such as Sudbury, Toronto and Chicago to explain the rights of off-reserve members and the real limitations of Federal Government funding, and to facilitate consultations about what a realistic and appropriate benefits package would look like.

Chapter Thirteen: Off-Reserve Membership, continued

Goal #2: Create multiple opportunities for off-reserve members to be involved in community planning and decision-making

The purpose of this goal is to create mechanisms for off-reserve members to participate in community decision-making and community life as much as possible. It is important for them to feel that they have a voice.

Strategy #1: Utilize the information-sharing processes described under Goal #1 to gain the input of off-reserve members into the making of important decisions

Strategy #2: Create protocols and mechanisms to respond to input from off-reserve members in a timely, helpful, informative and courteous manner

Strategy #3: Ensure that off-reserve members receive a copy of the Community Story and the CCP, that they know how to provide feedback, and that their feedback is acknowledged

Strategy #4: Use a 2-way web-based platform to broadcast Chief and Council meetings, as well as all important community meetings, so that on-line participants can contribute

Goal #3: Create better awareness about the provisions and implications of federal and provincial legislation (such as Bill C-31) that impacts the status and opportunities for First Nations

The aim of this goal is to ensure that off-reserve Band members fully understand their rights under such legislation.

Strategy #1: Create and distribute a variety of small fact sheets that summarize the basic meaning and implications of all recent federal/provincial government legislation that affects First Nations (using the website, email, newsletters, etc.)

Strategy #2: Designate a contact within Band administration that is available to answer questions about these matters

Strategy #3: Actively pursue measures that will ensure that the Nation can exercise its rights to determine its membership, such that the 200 or so children and youth who are community members living on the reserve and who have a non-Native parent become eligible for AANDC funding. Currently the Band is responsible for funding services to them and this situation takes a big toll on the Nation's budget.

Chapter Thirteen: Off-Reserve Membership, continued

Goal #4: Create a comprehensive benefits package for off-reserve Band members

This goal is designed to help balance some of the inequities in terms of access to services and other benefits between on- and off-reserve members.

Strategy #1: Establish a trust fund for financing an off-reserve membership benefits package

Strategy #2: Mount an information campaign that encourages off-reserve members to take advantage of the provision under Federal legislation to redirect their Federal tax dollars to the M'Chigeeng Nation. These funds could then be used to build a trust fund to finance an off-reserve benefits package.

Strategy #2: Carry out an effective practice review of benefit packages that other communities have created for off-reserve members

Strategy #3: Develop a made-in-M'Chigeeng off-reserve benefits package that is financially sustainable and that promotes self-reliance and positive life-styles while at the same time creating access to some of the types of services that on-reserve members have and that off-reserve members cannot access from other sources¹²

Strategy #4: Incorporate the housing needs of off-reserve members who might wish to return to the community in the development of the Nation's comprehensive housing plan (see the chapter on housing in this CCP)

¹² One such package has been developed by the Sawridge First Nation in northern Alberta.

NEXT STEPS – MOVING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

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 M'Chigeeng Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is unlikely to never be truly implemented. Chapter Five: 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 (the 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 his/her work plans. Each separate program manager within these work groups will need support in adapting their 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.

Implementation - Moving from Talk to Action, continued

Is this really necessary?

If all the work teams within the M'Chigeeng 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 M'Chigeeng 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.

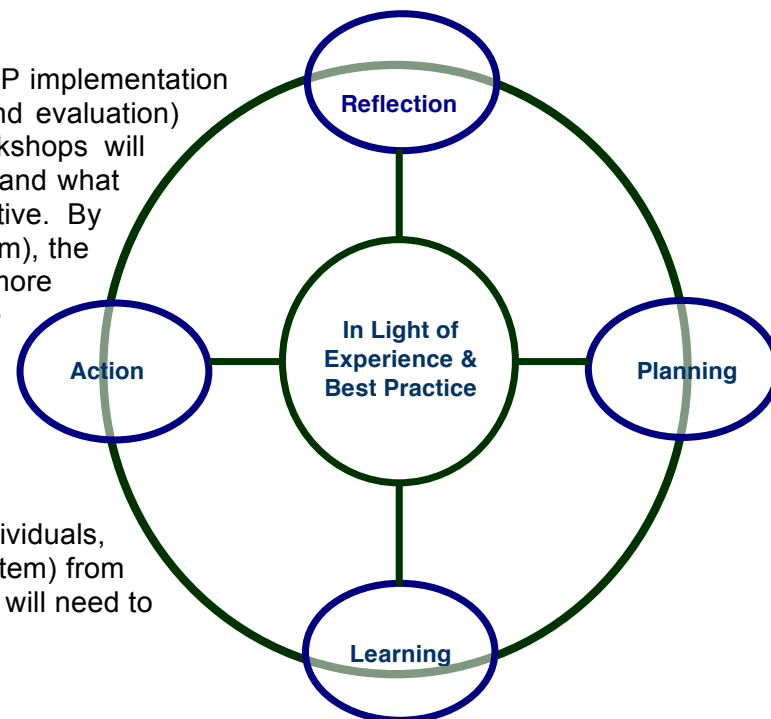
Achieving this goal may mean that financial and human resources will have to be reorganized. Certainly it will mean that Band departments and services will need to work together under the protection of a clear and shared vision of possibility and the pathways that lead to that vision. This journey will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



Implementation - Moving from Talk to Action, continued

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 M'Chigeeng 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) M'Chigeeng 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. 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.

