

HIAWATHA FIRST NATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



Message from Chief Laurie Carr

Aaniin Citizens of Hiawatha,

In 2020, Council developed a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) for our people—a three-year effort to create a guiding vision through the voices of our Citizens. The CCP Report captures what you, our community, value most for today and for the next seven generations. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to work together toward this vision, as reflected in our annual reports.

Building on the CCP as our guiding north star, we have developed the 2025 Hiawatha Strategic Plan as its practical and actionable complement, designed to drive progress toward our shared vision. This Strategic Plan was created through an extensive series of workshops and planning sessions with Council and staff. Throughout those discussions we anchored on what we need to do to protect and strengthen our language and culture as the most important goal of our work.

The Strategic Plan outlines 58 key efforts, or ‘initiatives’, each with clearly articulated outcomes derived from the CCP. Recognizing our finite financial and human resources as a Nation, these initiatives have been carefully sequenced for the

future, beginning with those that have the highest impact and urgency for our community, and those that will build our capacities to serve generations to come. This plan aims to strike a needed balance between investments in community wellbeing and economic development to support sustainable growth for our community and promote a healthy future for our people.

Seven of these initiatives, which we call our “Big Rocks,” are key projects that rely on many different departments, touch many different goals, and typically require more resources and effort to complete. One of these is the revitalization of Serpent Mounds, an essential project for our community’s culture and economic growth. To get projects like these successfully moving forward, we will need close collaboration across departments.

We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to the Strategic Plan. Together, we are working to build a vibrant, proud, independent, and healthy community, rooted in the richness of our culture and traditional way of life.

Miigwetch,

Chief Laurie Carr
On Behalf of Council

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“We the Michisaagiig of Hiawatha First Nation, are a vibrant, proud, independent and healthy people balanced in the richness of our culture and traditional way of life.”

Acknowledgments

We want to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of many individuals and groups in the production of this Strategic Plan for Hiawatha First Nation.

First – to **Chief and Council** for their governance and direction in this strategic planning project, and for their steadfast commitment to realizing the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Community Plan. Your dedication to bringing this vision to life for the Citizens of Hiawatha has been instrumental.

Second – to **the staff of Hiawatha First Nation**, who participated generously in numerous one-on-one discussions, group working sessions, and offline reviews, providing essential insights and support throughout the planning process.

Third – to the **Centre for Indigenous Corporate Partnership (CICP)** and teams from the **Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and KPMG** who have worked alongside us in developing the strategic plan.

It has been an honour to work alongside you all and to witness the strength, insight, and unity of the Citizens of Hiawatha.

Who we are

We, the Citizens of Hiawatha First Nation, are deeply connected to our Michisaagiig identity—a source of strength and pride that shapes how we view ourselves and our place in the world. This identity is guided by the Seven Grandfather Teachings, which instill values of love, truth, honesty, wisdom, respect, humility, and courage. Our culture and traditions are not merely aspects of our lives; they form the foundation of who we are and the basis of our community. We believe that culture and language must be at the core of everything we do, influencing our daily actions and our long-term plans for Hiawatha's future.

Our community is situated on the north shore of Rice Lake, approximately 20 kilometers southeast of Peterborough, Ontario. The main community area is situated along the north shores of Rice Lake and consists of approximately 2,127 acres of land. Serpent Mounds, also located on the north shore of Rice Lake but not contiguous to the main community area, also forms part of Hiawatha First Nation. This sacred site covers approximately 72 acres of land and includes ancient burial mounds and traces of habitation dating back more than 2,000 years. Recognized as a National Historic Site, Serpent Mounds holds a special place in our history and hearts, underscoring the connection of our people to our land.

Together, as we look toward the future, we are committed to planning a path forward that respects our heritage and reflects our values. We do this not only for ourselves, but for the generations to come, ensuring that our culture, our language, and our identity continue to guide and inspire our community as we grow and thrive.





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1 – Summary of our Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will be implemented over a five-year period, beginning in 2025, with annual reviews to reassess priorities and timelines. Grounded in Hiawatha’s Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), the Strategic Plan is formed under four pillars, all of which are underpinned by **Culture and Language**. These four pillars—**Programs & Services, Community Development, Capacity & Governance, and Own-Source Revenues**—play a vital role in supporting Hiawatha’s vision for health, sustainability, and growth. The initiatives identified within are all interconnected and **come together to accelerate the holistic growth within our community, all while staying true to our culture and identity.**

- **Programs & Services** emphasizes advancing our education, health, and community directives to address the evolving needs of Citizens.
- **Community Development** aims to strengthen the Nation’s land and housing resources to ensure protection and well-being of our community.
- **Capacity & Governance** focuses on unlocking human resources by cultivating strong leadership and improving youth engagement.
- **Own-Source Revenues** seeks to drive financial self-sufficiency through community-owned businesses and partnerships.

Each of these pillars includes several projects, or ‘initiatives,’ each with a set of planned activities and estimated financial and human resources. Initiatives have been categorized into three primary execution phases: those commencing immediately (“Wave 1”), those scheduled to begin within one to two years (“Wave 2”), and those planned to launch in three years or later (“Wave 3”). Additionally, some initiatives that do not address immediate needs or require further definition will be placed in the “Well”—a

repository for initiatives that will not be actioned at this time but will be revisited in the future.

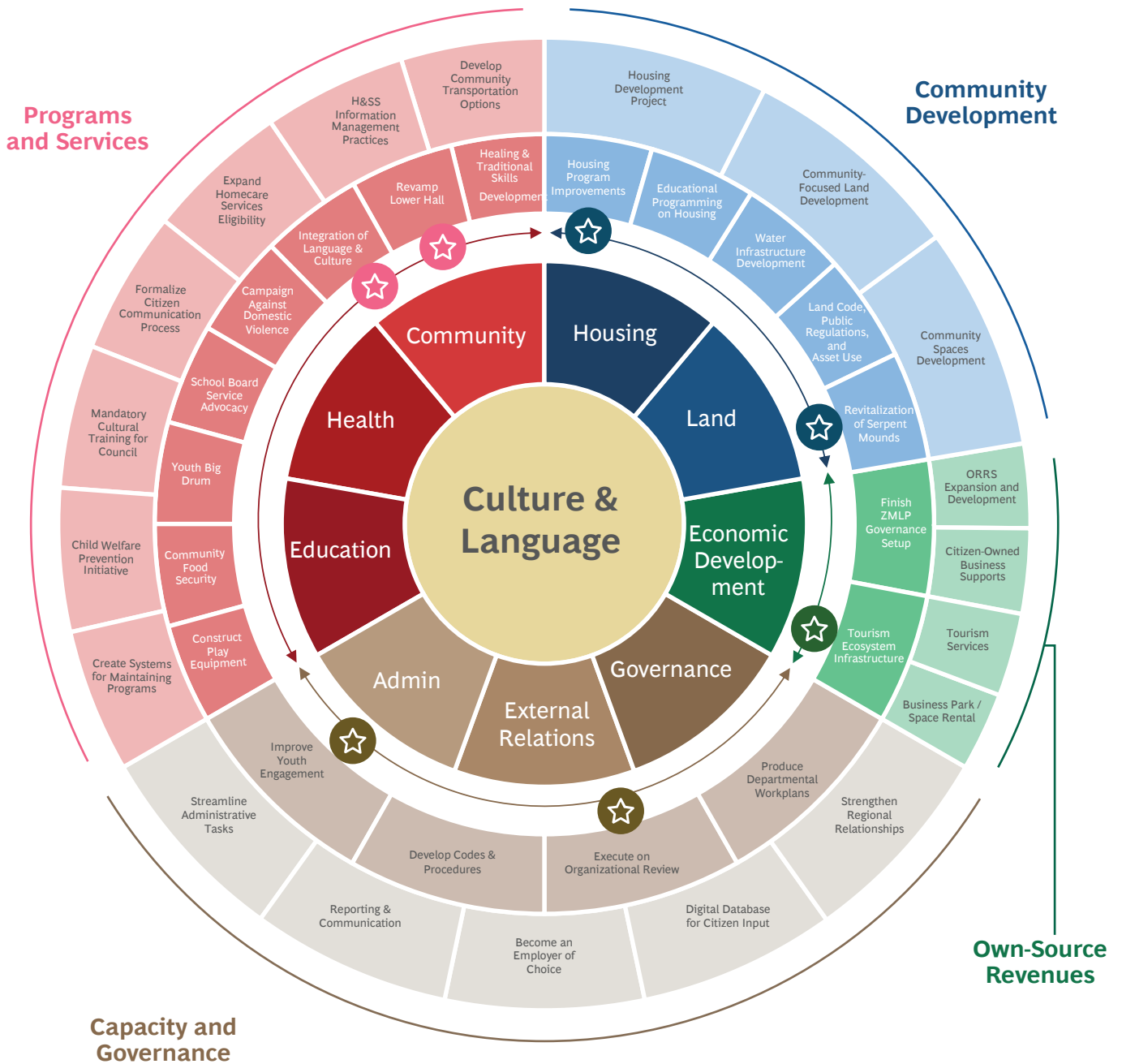
Wave 1 initiatives are prioritized for their high impact on our community and their role in building our internal capabilities, skills, and resources to support future projects. Within Wave 1, we have identified 7 critical ‘Big Rocks’—our most important, yet complex initiatives, requiring substantial resources to complete:

- **Integration of Language and Culture** into community life
- **Revitalization of Serpent Mounds**, honouring and respecting its cultural significance
- **Housing Program Improvements** to service and deliver more units
- **Improve Youth Engagement** to build Hiawatha identity and future leadership
- **Execute on the Organizational Review** to hire key personnel needed for the strategic plan
- **Revamp the Lower Hall**, a key asset needing updating, to service a variety of community needs
- **Develop Tourism Ecosystem Infrastructure** to support economic growth

While many of these are larger and complex initiatives, we have also approached this work with a bias to action, and identified several quick win actions we can take to advance our CCP and better serve the community. You will see the quick wins and full set of initiatives detailed in this document. For example, a quick win includes launching a housing survey ahead of the broader **“Housing Development Project”** initiative.



Visual summary of the strategy



2 – Our Strategy Journey

The Hiawatha First Nation Strategic Plan was crafted through a structured, phased journey rooted in community values and collective aspirations. This process was built on a foundation of comprehensive input, prioritization, and alignment with the community’s long-term vision.

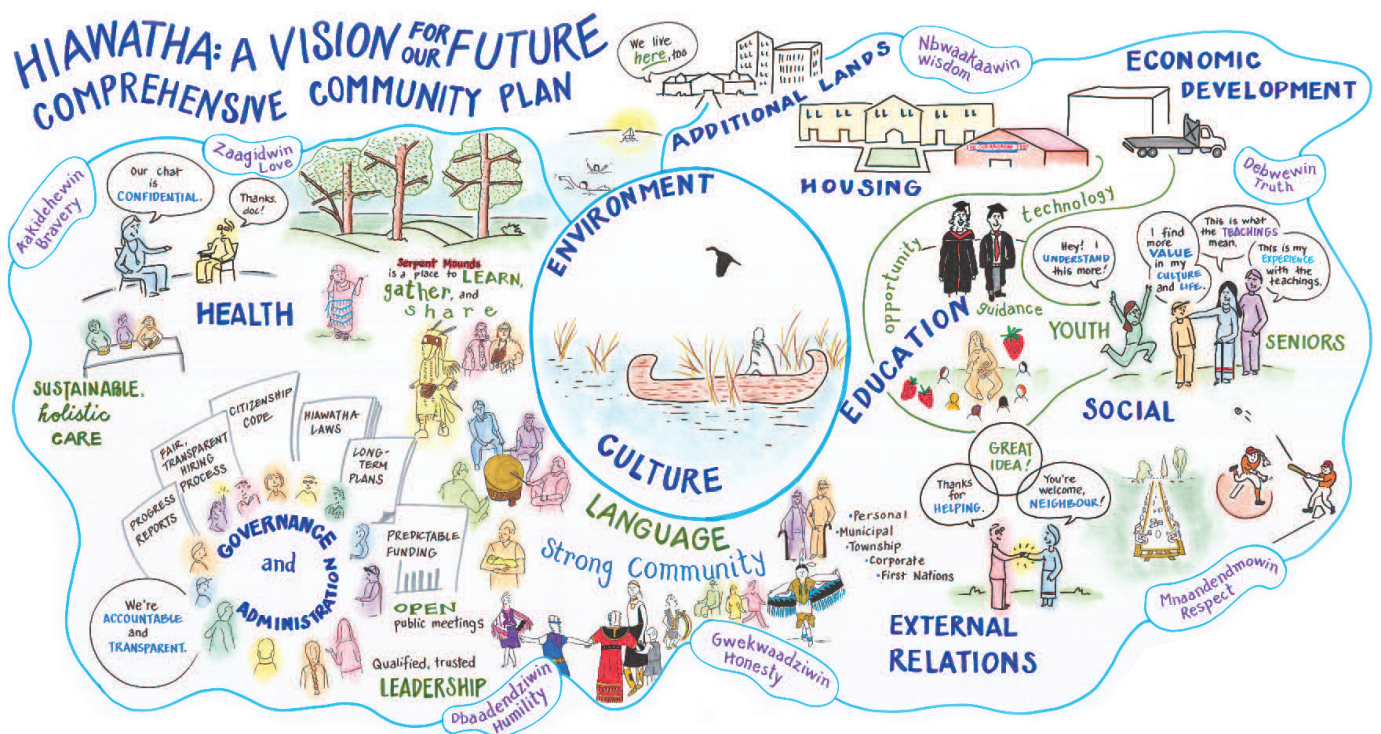
Our Starting Point

The strategy’s starting point was the Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) and its “Vision for the Future”, guiding principles, and action items from 2020. While the COVID-19 pandemic shifted priorities in 2020 and 2021, steady progress on the CCP has continued. Achievements across the ten CCP directives are outlined in Hiawatha’s 2022 and 2023 annual reports.

To drive implementation forward, Chief and Council determined that it would complement the guiding vision behind the CCP with the development of a tactical strategic plan. This plan would lay out a roadmap of prioritized and sequenced action items, while incorporating evolving needs of the community since the initial adoption of the CCP.

Inputs into Strategy

The development of the strategic plan involved extensive engagement across Chief, Council, and staff. One-on-one interviews with each member of Council and with 35+ staff members led to the development of a list of over 115 action items spanning all CCP directives. This list formed the initial universe of ideas and actions for Hiawatha First Nation to engage with in the near-to-long term. Topic-specific sessions were held with Council, staff, and ZMLP to refine and prioritize initiatives based on capacity and resourcing considerations.





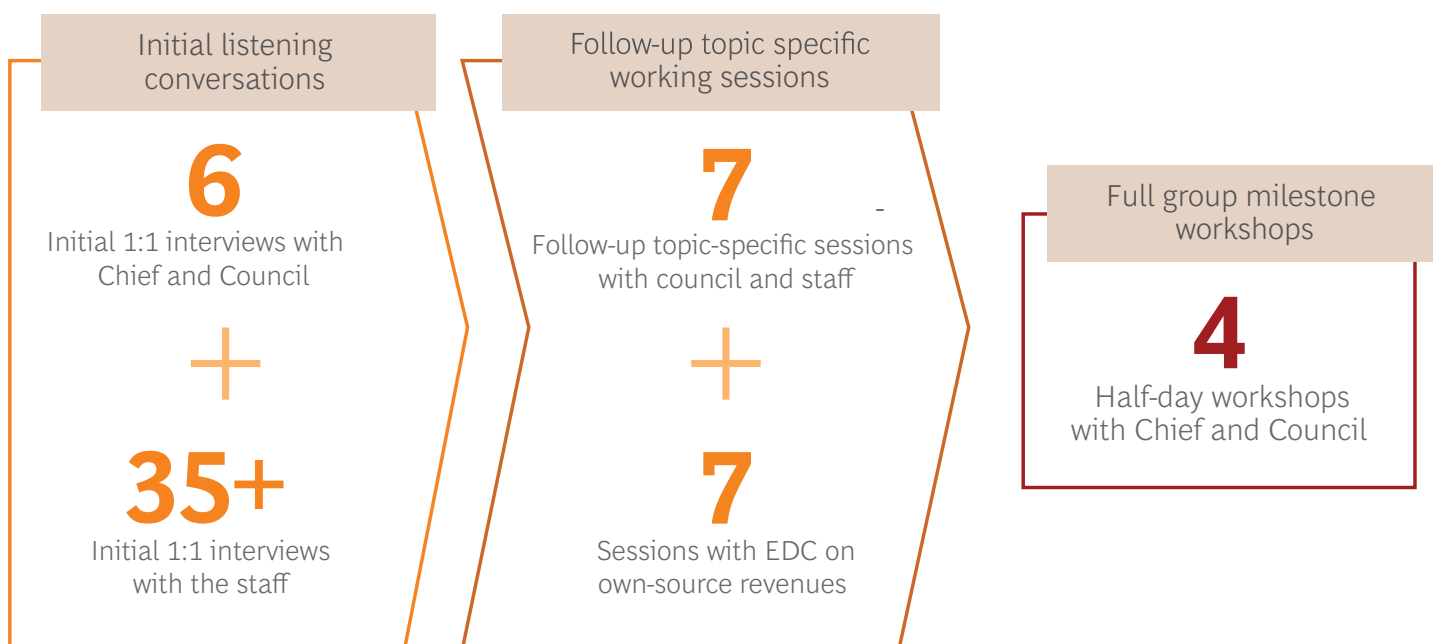
Where We Are Today

The strategy matured into a prioritized list of 58 themes (initiatives), structured across three distinct implementation waves. Each initiative is crafted with an understanding that Hiawatha First Nation’s strategy and action plans are designed to support holistic community goals, rather than operating in silos. Additionally, Hiawatha First Nation recognizes that many initiatives are interconnected and have the potential to fulfill multiple directives, enhancing their impact across various facets of community life.

To bring our Strategic Plan to life, we have defined clear roles and responsibilities across our team to ensure effective implementation. **Chief & Council** has and will continue to provide guidance and support for major decisions, while the **Director of Operations** will take lead on the overall execution of the plan. The **Operations Manager** will manage tracking and progress, ensuring all initiatives remain aligned with our goals. Each initiative is led by an **Initiative Champion** from senior management, who will oversee the work on the initiative and drive progress. The **Working Team** will carry out day-to-day tasks while also ensuring cohesion and continuity across any interdependent tasks in other initiatives. Together, these roles create a structured framework, with each contributor playing a vital part in advancing our strategic priorities.

We will also be leveraging four new elements to support successful execution. Supporting **action plans** will provide clarity on each initiative’s milestones, goals, and resource needs, while a **holistic accountability process** will help us track progress, manage risks, and celebrate achievements. **Status update tools and summary lists** are being put in place to support staff communication, helping teams stay organized and request support where most helpful. Lastly, a **socialization plan with Citizens** will ensure that we remain connected to our community, keeping Citizens informed and engaged through spring and fall community meetings to discuss updates on the strategic plan. We will also add a dedicated section to our website for the strategic plan, along with an open digital forum to gather public comments and feedback.

This structured approach is guided by our holistic accountability objectives: to support achievement, minimize administrative burden, measure effectiveness, and celebrate progress. Each initiative has a defined path forward, ensuring an efficient use of resources and accountabilities tied to community goals. By aligning our efforts with these goals, we ensure a collaborative and transparent journey towards making the Strategic Plan a reality.





3 – Overview of the Waves

To help carry out the Strategic Plan successfully, each initiative has been grouped into one of three waves based on its impact potential, its importance for strengthening our skills and capabilities, and its readiness for execution.

Wave 1: Action Today:

Wave 1 initiatives have clear objectives and defined resource needs, making them ready for immediate action. These initiatives will help Hiawatha build momentum and create a strong foundation for future waves.

Wave 2: Action Near-Term:

Wave 2 initiatives require additional planning and coordination before they can be fully actioned. Some of these projects may need initial groundwork or more planning with a clearer sense of resource needs before they can begin.

Wave 3: Action in Future:

Wave 3 includes initiatives that are important to Hiawatha's vision but aren't ready to move forward just yet. These projects may have complicated steps,

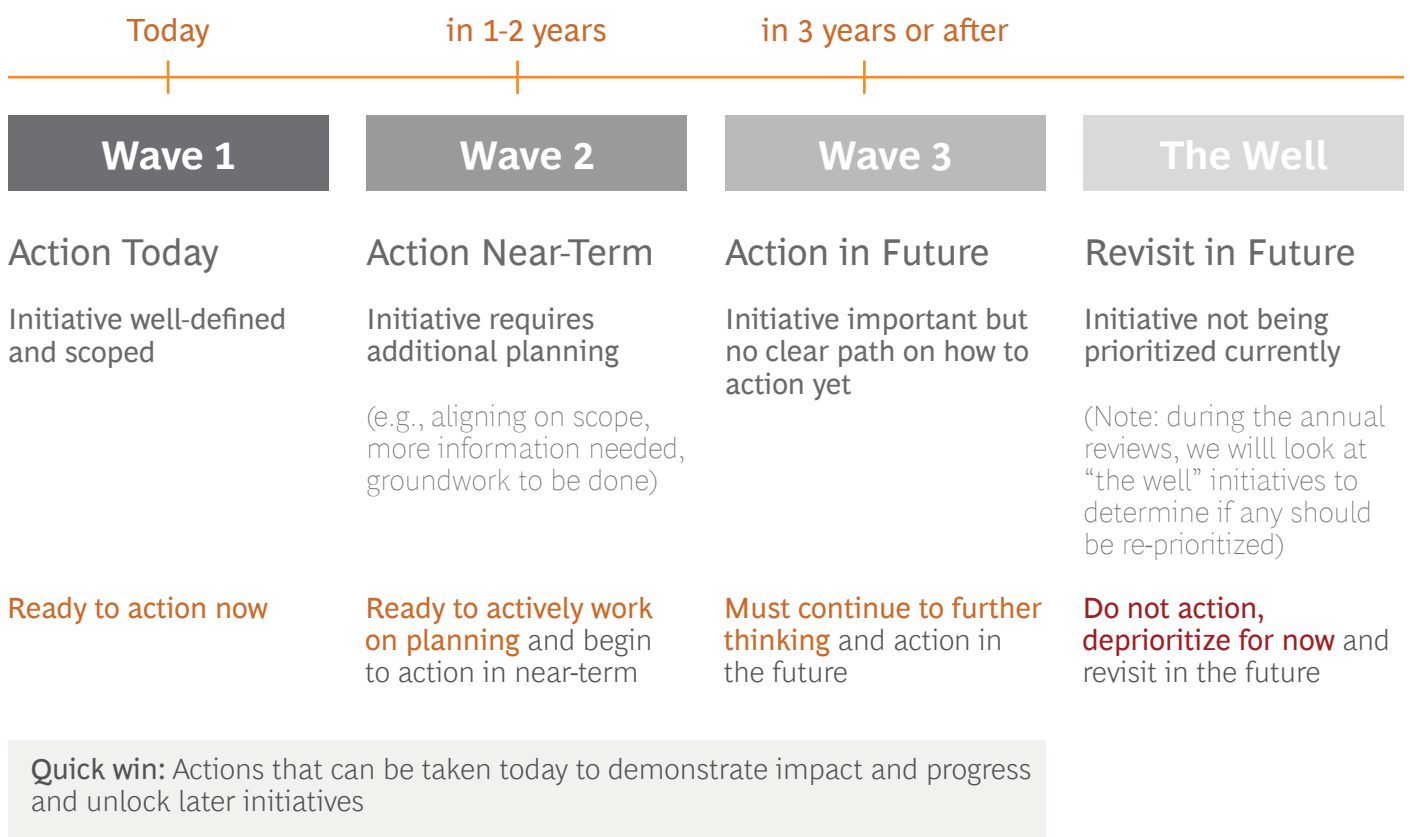
unresolved challenges, or need more planning down the road. It could also just be that we have insufficient resources to prioritize them in the present. Though not immediate priorities, we will continue to plan for them and begin when the timing and resources are right.

Quick Wins:

Quick Wins are focused actions that can be taken immediately to generate momentum, laying the groundwork for Wave 2 or 3 initiatives today. By achieving these early wins we can demonstrate progress, build confidence, and set the stage to fully begin executing the initiatives.

The Well:

The Well contains initiatives that, while relevant, are not being prioritized for action at this time. These initiatives may present valuable opportunities in the future, but require further scope and definition or more information. They will be revisited in annual reviews, providing flexibility to respond to emerging needs or shifts in community priorities.



4 - Community Development

The vision for Community Development centers on creating a vibrant, sustainable, and culturally enriched environment that serves all Citizens, both on and off-territory. It emphasizes the importance of preserving Hiawatha's cultural heritage, fostering social connections, and enhancing quality of life through thoughtful infrastructure and housing initiatives. This vision is not only about physical development but also about empowering Citizens with the resources to participate actively in the growth of our community.

Since the CCP, Hiawatha developed and finalized the Serpent Mounds business plan and hosted the 2024 Powwow at Serpent Mounds. Hiawatha also celebrated the opening of the new L.I.F.E Centre, recently upgraded with the L.I.F.E Centre Solar Project, and the installation of fibre optic servicing across Hiawatha. We constructed a water treatment plant and other clean water infrastructure and have secured funding for additional hookups under the Water 2.0 project. On the housing front, Hiawatha built several new homes, including two new semi-detached units as well as other standalone units, and we are now beginning the construction of our Elders Complex. Through the sequence of initiatives described below, Hiawatha will continue building a resilient, welcoming community that honours its traditions while preparing for the future.

Wave 1 Initiatives (Action Today)

- ☆ **Revitalization of Serpent Mounds.** Reopen Serpent Mounds based on the community-approved revitalization plan, focused primarily on cultural reinvigoration, environmental responsibility, and education; protection and respect for the sacred mounds will remain of the utmost importance; the entire area is an archaeological site and will continue to be treated as such; generating revenues (through campsite and cabin rentals and cultural tours) is recognized as important for financial sustainability. However, making money is not the primary goal and the mounds must not be exploited.
- ☆ **Housing Program Improvements.** Increase the effectiveness of the housing program to service and deliver more units by better aligning program offerings with community needs and implementing financial levers to grow the size of the program.
- **Water Infrastructure Development.** Expand the centralized water treatment and distribution system as well as point-of-entry treatment systems

to deliver safe and reliable drinking water to more homes in the community. A second phase of the development is already funded and underway to better community health, with a third phase in the works.

- **Land Code, Public Regulations, and Asset Use.** Develop a variety of regulations and codes that improve safety within the community for people and their possessions, backed by proper enforcement to contribute to a well-managed, resilient community.
- **Educational Programming on Housing:** Equip Citizens with knowledge about housing options, financial literacy, and property maintenance to support informed decisions about homeownership and upkeep.

Wave 1 initiatives have been prioritized for immediate action due to their foundational importance and readiness. The **Revitalization of Serpent Mounds** is positioned as a priority to continue progress started with the revitalization plan from 2020. Similarly, the **Housing Program Improvements** initiative addresses a critical need to refresh community housing supports to better meet current and future needs. Immediate improvements in **Water Infrastructure Development** are also necessary, with projects already funded and underway to expand reliable water access. **Land Code, Public Regulations, and Asset Use** is also prioritized to establish safety and sustainable land governance and management. Lastly, the **Educational Programming on Housing** aims to empower Citizens with essential knowledge for homeownership, supporting Hiawatha's commitment to sustainable living.

Quick Wins complement these efforts by delivering immediate groundwork and momentum for Wave 2 and Wave 3 initiatives. For example, a housing survey will help gather crucial data for a future **Housing Development Project**, while ground scans for the cemetery are necessary for planning for the next stage of Community-Focused Land Development.

Wave 2 Initiatives (Action in Near Term)

- **Housing Development Project.** Expand housing options by constructing a mix of new homes that balance affordability and sustainability, with potential locations identified and community surveys guiding the project.



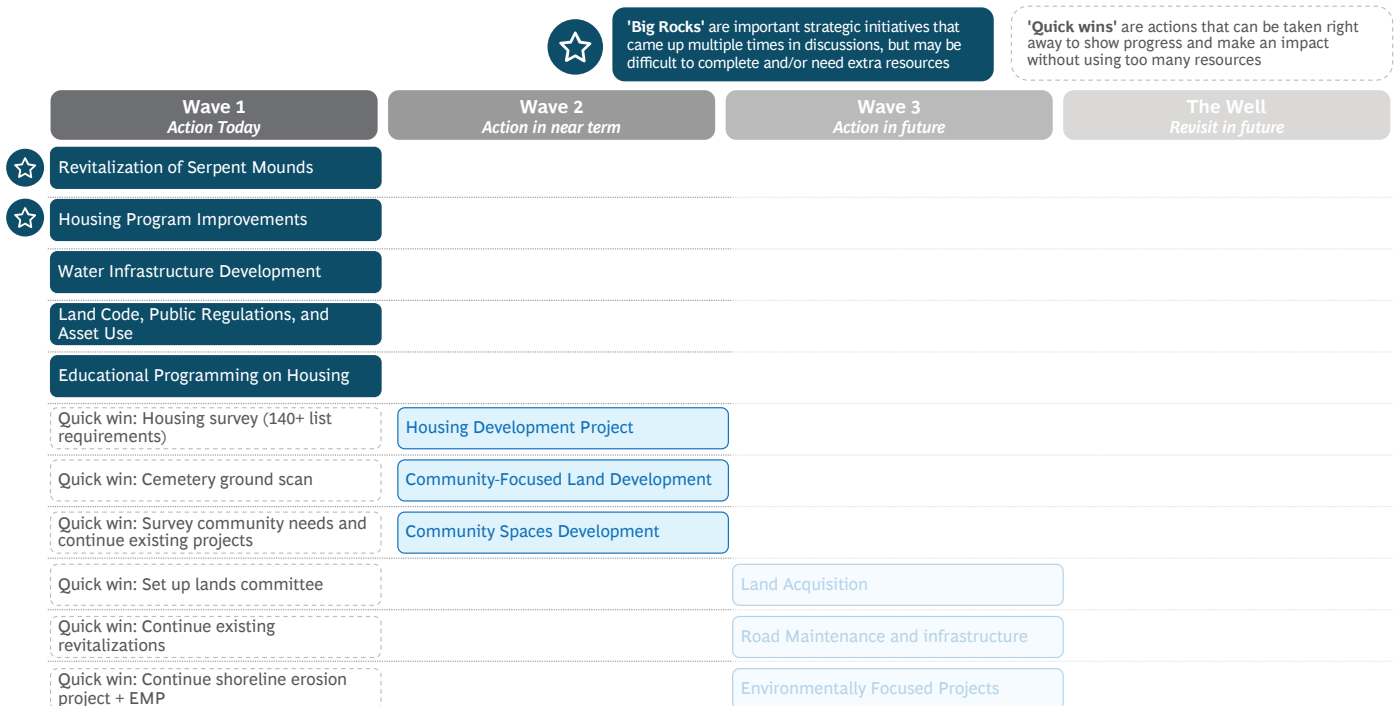
- **Community-Focused Land Development.** Make improvements to community natural or land-based infrastructure including things such as improving our cemetery, expanding public waterfront access, creating parks and walking trails to support community well-being, and environmental preservation.
- **Community Spaces Development.** Develop 3rd spaces for community-use—social environments distinct from home (1st space) and work (2nd space), where people can gather without appointment. 3rd spaces foster social connection and a sense of belonging in community and can include things like youth centers, libraries, and open-gym times.

Wave 2 initiatives focus on essential developments that need additional planning and preparation. The next **Housing Development Project**, for example, is dependent on the results of future community surveys and the strategic selection of a housing mix that can meet growing needs of our community once construction of our Elders Complex is complete. **Community-Focused Land Development**, which includes improvements to public waterfront access and public park infrastructure, is also included in this wave as any projects undertaken will require significant community input and partnership planning before they can begin.

Wave 3 Initiatives (Action in Future)

- **Land Acquisition.** Acquire additional land to expand Hiawatha’s land base, support cultural heritage, and strengthen the economic base by creating new opportunities for development.
- **Environmentally Focused Projects.** Safeguard the natural resources and ecosystems that co-exist within our community through activities focused on environmental protection and management.
- **Road Maintenance and Infrastructure.** Invest in updating existing roads and developing new roads so that we have safe and reliable means of transportation and accessible lands.

Wave 3 initiatives are important but require more extensive planning before they can be implemented. Projects like **Environmentally Focused Projects** and **Land Acquisition** are in this wave, recognizing that although they are essential for cultural and social growth, they are dependent on further understanding of community needs, desires, and available resources. The **Road Maintenance and Infrastructure** initiative is also designated for future action to allow us time to plan, as we are just completing the revitalization of Paudash Street and paving of Sopers Lane.



5 - Capacity & Governance

The vision for Capacity & Governance is to establish a resilient, inclusive, and transparent governance framework that strengthens internal operations, empowers Citizens, and facilitates community engagement. Since the CCP, Hiawatha has continued to progress its organizational evolution and capacity building with the completion of its organizational review and hiring of several key roles.

Wave 1 Initiatives (Action Today)

- ☆ **Execute on Organizational Review.** Mobilize resources necessary to implement the organizational review that was recently completed, thereby increasing workforce and operational capacity. The review had identified a variety of roles, responsibilities, and staffing needs to enhance operational clarity and efficiency.
- ☆ **Improve Youth Engagement.** Make improvements to programming to better engage youth in community life, empowering them to actively connect with our cultural traditions and participate in shaping our future.
- **Develop Codes & Procedures.** Establish standardized processes and decision-making guidelines that will support effective and efficient governance of the Nation that is transparent and consistent for community.
- **Produce Departmental Workplans.** Document and report on clear goals and objectives for each department, improving accountability and alignment within Hiawatha's administration.

Wave 1 initiatives target foundational elements critical to capacity and governance. These immediate actions create a strong base to unlock other initiatives and promote inclusive, responsive governance.

Quick wins build upon these efforts by strengthening our reporting to Citizens, staff, and other local organizations, which are a core focus of initiatives in Waves 2 and 3. Activities include providing closure on the staff survey by reporting on what elements are still under active review, and closure for Citizens on things such as the Cannabis and Food Needs community surveys. They also speak about updating our consultation guidelines so that we can be more proactive in our workings with Municipalities regarding the Duty to Consult.

Wave 2 Initiatives (Action in Near Term)

- **Strengthen Regional Relationships.** Build upon relationships with local municipalities, community partners and collaboration with local First Nations to foster mutual respect and understanding.
- **Digital Database for Citizen Input.** Establish a digital platform to collect and track input from Citizens, especially those living outside of Hiawatha, ensuring their voices are heard in governance.
- **Become an Employer of Choice.** Develop and adopt policies that make Hiawatha an attractive workplace for skilled professionals, with changes that improve incentive structures, increase employee satisfaction, and help retain quality employees.
- **Reporting & Communication.** Improve information sharing and reporting both internally and externally to ensure that Citizens and staff are staying informed and engaged on critical issues, and to preserve decision-making transparency.
- **Streamline Administrative Tasks.** Improve administrative processes through automation and better data management to free up resources to focus on more important activities.

Wave 2 initiatives build on the foundation by expanding the community's capacity to engage both internally and externally. Initiatives like developing **Digital Database for Citizen Input** ensure that Citizens living outside of Hiawatha are actively included, while efforts to **Strengthen Regional Relationships** with neighbouring communities will create partnerships that support Hiawatha's broader goals.

Wave 3 Initiatives (Action in Future)

- **Enhance Human Resource Capacity.** Align internal human resource capabilities to support organizational growth via leadership training, technical skills development, and proper succession planning.
- **Organizational Chart Reorientation.** Implement systems of Traditional Governance, which will require better defining types of roles and making adjustments to the hierarchical nature of inner workings so that there is broader consultation, reduced siloing, improvements to inter-departmental communication, and enhanced coordination.

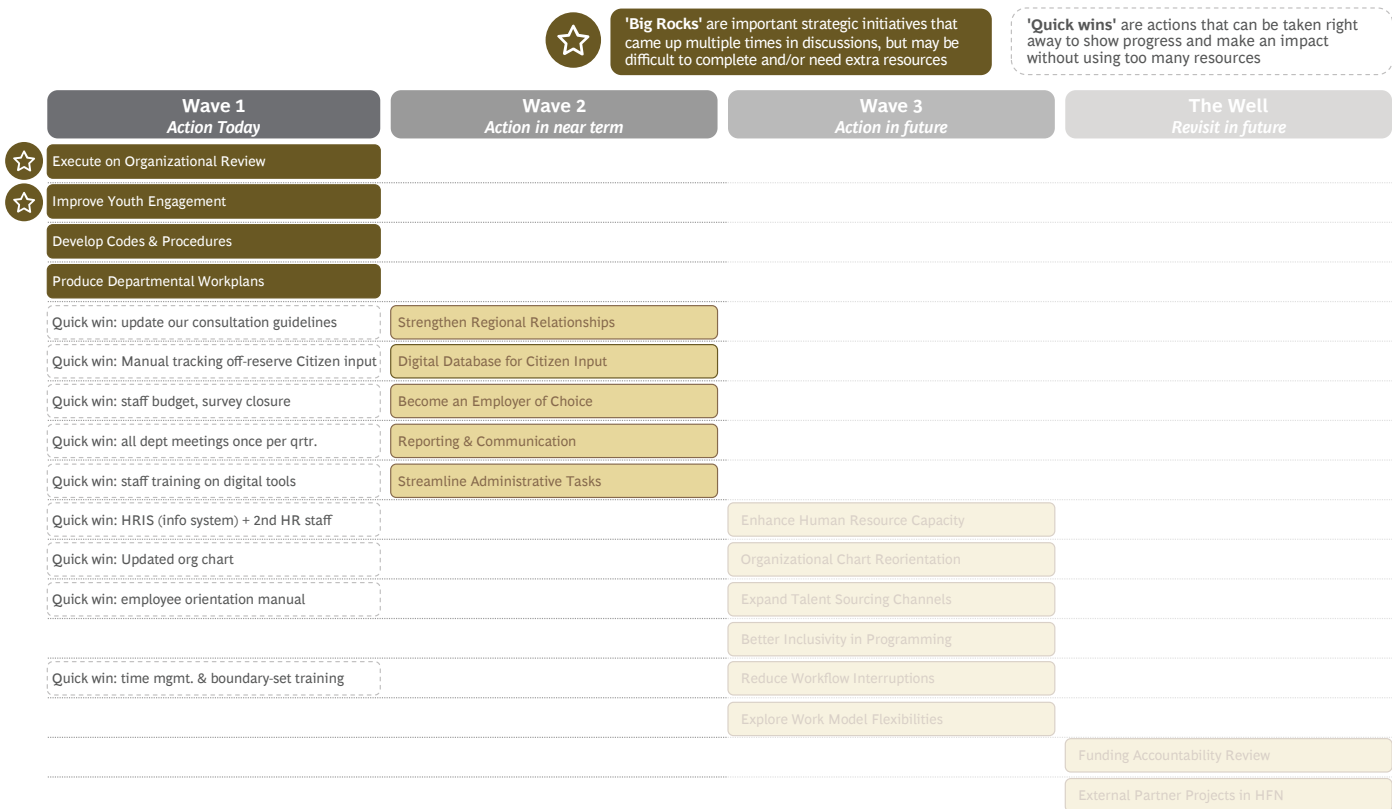


- **Expand Talent Sourcing Channels.** Utilize new methods to source and develop skilled employees by creating internship, professional development, and career advancement opportunities.
- **Better Inclusivity in Programming.** Foster better inclusivity in the community and workplace, by promoting diverse perspectives and cultural sensitivity in staff training and community programming.
- **Reduce Workflow Interruptions.** Implement strategies that minimize disruptions, enhancing productivity and focus when handling administrative activities.
- **Explore Work Model Flexibilities.** Explore options for more flexible working arrangements such as remote work opportunities to enhance work-life balance, increase job satisfaction, and improve employee retention.

Hiawatha’s workforce and governance structure. **Enhance Human Resource Capacity, Organizational Chart Reorientation, and Expand Talent Sourcing Channels** ensure that Hiawatha’s administration can support the community’s evolving needs. Initiatives to **Better Inclusivity in Programming, Reduce Workflow Interruptions, and Explore Work Model Flexibilities,** reflect Hiawatha’s commitment to a balanced and forward-thinking governance model.

The Well contains a couple initiatives that are not immediate priorities, namely **Funding Accountability Review**—identification and challenge of overly prescriptive and cumbersome programming requirements, and **External Partner Projects in Hiawatha**—various partnership opportunities within community that require limited capacity and funding resources from Hiawatha. We will assess opportunities as they are presented, but do not plan on actively pursuing opportunities in this regard.

Wave 3 initiatives are planned for longer-term focus and aim to foster resilience and adaptability in



6 - Own-Source Revenue

The vision for Own-Source Revenues in Hiawatha First Nation is to advance towards a self-sustaining economy that uses the community's cultural and environmental assets and creates economic opportunities for Citizens. In order to build the capacity, skills, and resources needed for our community to flourish, we need to bolster our economic engine. Economic growth will provide us with resources to reinvest in our community, our youth, and programming to support the people of Hiawatha.

Since the CCP, we have set up Zhooniya Makak ("Money Basket") to be our economic development corporation and hired its Chief Executive Officer, as well established the Bijiinago Noongom Waabang ("BNW") Trust to manage the wealth of our Williams Treaties investments for generations to come. A list of Citizen-run businesses has also been added to the Hiawatha website. By continuing to build an economy rooted in local expertise and resources, we aim to support job creation, enhance financial independence, and provide Citizens with avenues for entrepreneurship.

Wave 1 Initiatives (Action Today)

- ☆ **Tourism Ecosystem Infrastructure:** Develop infrastructure to support local tourism, positioning Serpent Mounds as a cultural and environmental centerpiece that aligns with Hiawatha's unique identity.
- **Finish ZMLP Governance Setup:** Finalize Zhooniya Makak's partnership agreement and governance framework to establish a clear process for facilitating the endowment and managing future investments.

Wave 1 initiatives are focused on laying the groundwork for future economic activities. **Tourism Ecosystem Infrastructure** provides a strong foundation for economic growth, directly integrating with Serpent Mounds, while the **Finish ZMLP Governance Setup** initiative will ensure we have high-functioning economic development corporation to participate in regional infrastructure development and business ventures outside of Hiawatha.

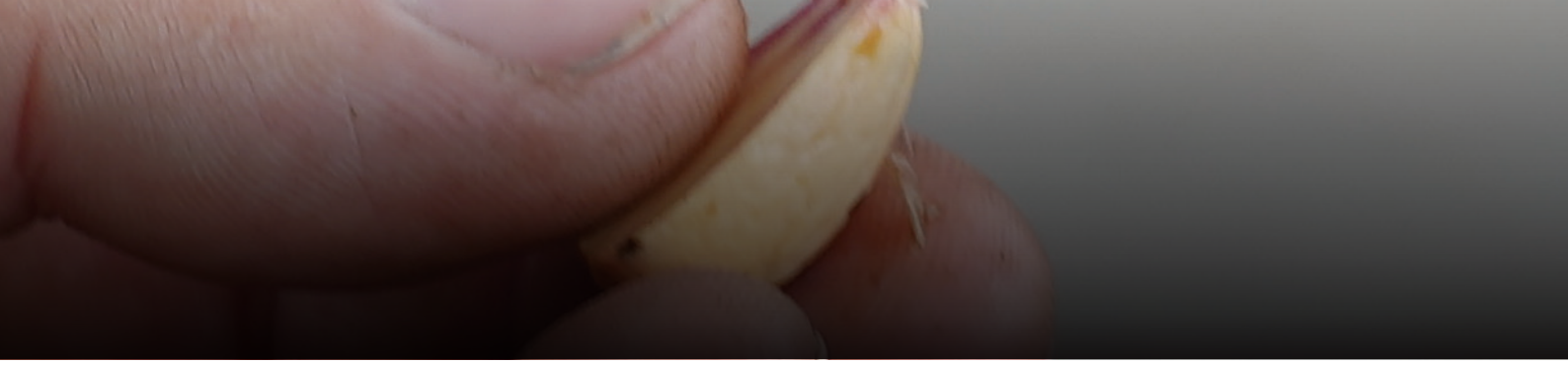
Quick wins such as diesel and petrol signage installation will bolster our existing business at the

Old Railroad Stop ("ORRS"), modular farming and an exploration of a crowd-funded business support services model offer promising opportunities to introduce economic activities with immediate, visible impact.

Wave 2 Initiatives (Action in Near Term)

- **ORRS Expansion and Development:** Build upon existing own-source revenue streams investing in new operational capabilities, products and services.
- **Citizen-Owned Business Supports:** Provide tools and support for Citizen-owned businesses, including direct support with grant applications, a business development handbook, and advice to promote entrepreneurship.
- **Tourism Services:** Develop tourism services that showcase the Hiawatha community, knowledge, and land by offering guided tours, cultural experiences and other services that highlight our heritage and environment.
- **Business Park / Space Rental:** Construct a business park or rentable space for local and external businesses, fostering economic growth and job creation.

Wave 2 initiatives focus on leveraging current assets and existing opportunities, increasing support to local businesses and tourism. The **ORRS Expansion and Development** will require significant planning but will result in enhancements to an existing Hiawatha-owned business. **Tourism Services** will harness the lived experiences of our community but may require some time to find the right individuals and provide them services training. **Citizen-Owned Business Supports** will help incentivize private business operation, creating a balanced, robust, and inclusive local economy. A **Business Park / Space Rental** will require some feasibility research, but if developed, it would help cultivate local entrepreneurship. Currently, private businesses in Hiawatha are limited to areas of commercial-residential mixed designation.



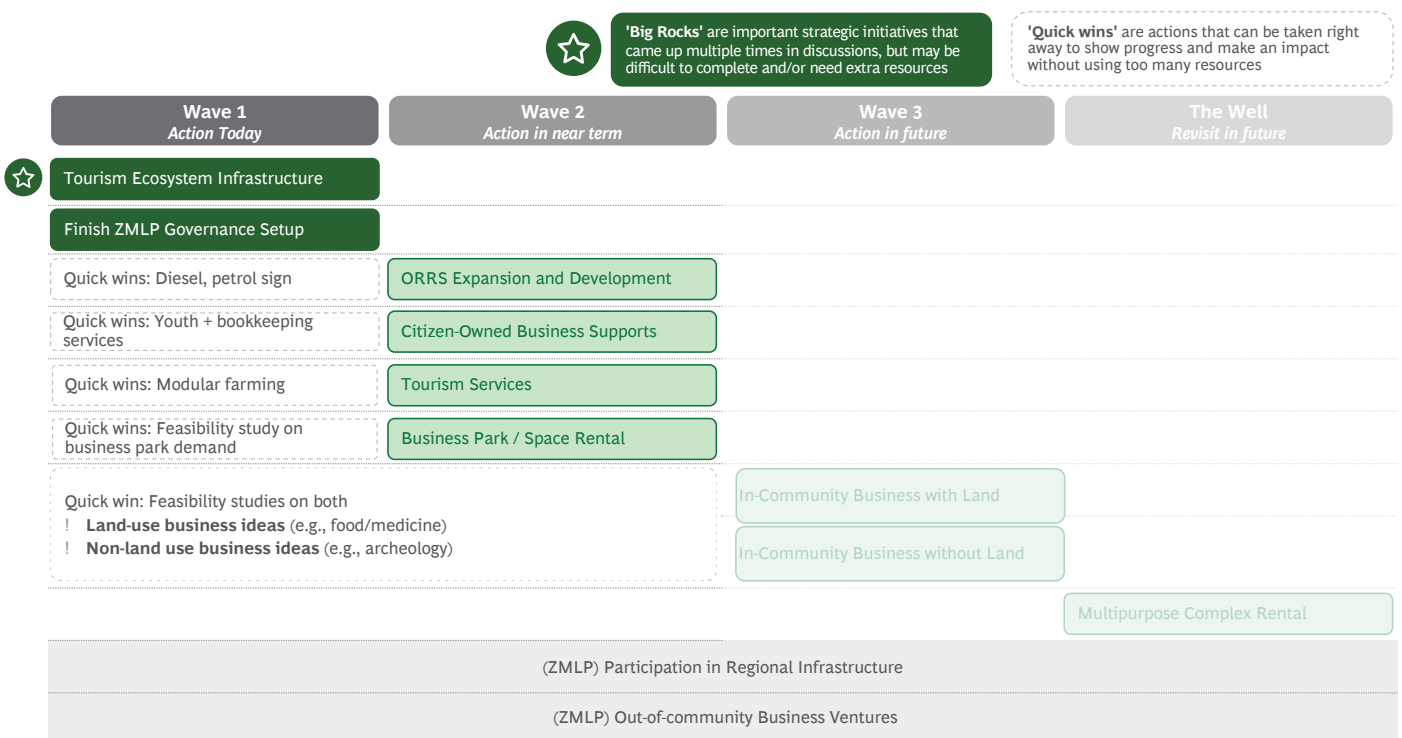
Wave 3 Initiatives (Action in Future)

- **In-Community Business with Land:** Explore businesses requiring a physical presence, such as grocery sales, agriculture, and processing and manufacturing to drive own-source revenues and create local jobs.
- **In-Community Business without Land:** Develop advisory or remote service businesses that leverage local expertise in fields such as archaeology and environmental consulting, that require minimal land-base.

Wave 3 initiatives target the development of physical business infrastructure and service-based businesses that require significant long-term business planning and resource allocation. These initiatives support Hiawatha’s vision of a diversified, self-sustaining economy, contributing to both local needs and economic growth.

The Well contains initiatives that are not immediate priorities but may present valuable opportunities in the future. One such initiative is the **Multipurpose Complex Rental**, envisioned as a versatile space for events, conferences, and community activities. While this complex could serve as a revenue generator, its development would require substantial resources and extensive planning. It would also require differentiation from our existing facilities such as the Gathering Place. Given the existing infrastructure needs and potential overlap with other land-use plans, this initiative has been set aside for future consideration.

Participation in Regional Infrastructure Development and **Out-of-Community Business Ventures** have been marked separately, to be assumed by Zhooniya Makak as they fall intuitively under its mandate.





7 - Programs & Services

The vision for Programs & Services in Hiawatha First Nation centers on fostering a supportive, culturally grounded community where all Citizens have access to essential resources, education, and health services. Since the CCP, Hiawatha has considerably expanded its social, mental health, and community services through enhanced spaces and staff capabilities. We have also formed partnerships with other First Nations and public health organizations to introduce quality health services in our community, rooted in holistic well-being and inclusivity. On the cultural side, Hiawatha has continued re-invigorating traditional practices with its land-based learning activities, including popular activities such as ice-fishing.

Wave 1 Initiatives (Action Today)

- ☆ **Integration of Language & Culture.** Incorporate language and cultural practices into all aspects of Hiawatha operations, through the translation of common programs and activities into Anishinaabemowin, organizing regular language classes for community and culturally-relevant programming.
- ☆ **Revamp Lower Hall.** Redesign and update the Lower Hall so that it is a versatile, welcoming space that can meet a variety of needs, suitable for community activities, education, and cultural programming.
- **Healing & Traditional Skills Development.** Develop an integrated land-based learning program that provides opportunities for cultural learning, with dedicated spaces and resources for healing and ceremony.
- **Campaign Against Domestic Violence.** Launch a formal campaign to raise awareness and provide resources to support and protect our community from domestic violence.
- **School Board Services Advocacy.** Advocate for our culture and language to be represented across all levels of the school boards that our children receive education under. From service delivery to extra-curricular activities, meetings and learning should reflect our community values, incorporate traditional knowledge, and cultural relevance in education.
- **Youth Big Drum.** Develop a community youth group centered around the big drum, offering participants important teachings and language and providing them with a meaningful and positive way to connect and express themselves in a way that will help build self-esteem and future cultural leaders.

- **Community Food Security.** Address ongoing food security needs by ensuring that fresh and nutritious food is accessible to community on a regular basis. Work towards food-sovereignty by growing fresh produce and cultivating sources of protein to support a well-balanced diet.
- **Construct Play Equipment.** Purchase and install additional equipment that fosters community connection, promotes early childhood interaction, and supports active lifestyles.

Wave 1 initiatives address immediate needs and foundational cultural elements. **Integration of Language & Culture** is critical to embedding Hiawatha's identity throughout daily life, while **Revamp Lower Hall** will create a welcoming community space for gatherings and traditional knowledge-sharing. Initiatives like **Campaign Against Domestic Violence** and **Healing & Traditional Skills Development** provide essential health and social outcomes.

Wave 2 Initiatives (Action in Near Term)

- **H&SS Information Management Practices.** Educate the community about measures employed to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of Citizens accessing health and safety programs so that the community trusts and can feel confident in accessing services.
- **Expand Homecare Services Eligibility.** Broaden eligibility criteria for homecare services to make supports more accessible to community, especially elders.
- **Formalize Citizen Communication Process.** Establish consistent and comprehensive communication channels between staff and Citizens, ensuring transparency and accessibility of services and information.
- **Mandatory Cultural Training for Council.** Create a compulsory training program for Council members to align incoming leadership and decision-making with community values, history, and traditions.
- **Create Systems for Maintaining Programs.** Design and institute a system for regular evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness, and holistic alignment of all programs based on evolving community needs.



- **Child Welfare Initiative.** Develop a child welfare law and other family preservation programming that protects the safety, well-being, and development of our youngest people.
- **Develop Community Transportation Options.** Provide accessible transportation options so that Citizens can more travel between Hiawatha and Peterborough to access programs and services.

Wave 3 Initiatives (Action in Future)

- **Citizen Education Around Program Access & Healing.** Educate Citizens on available programs and healing resources, address lateral violence and stigma around accessing ceremony to ensure Citizens feel safe and supported, and decolonize program accountabilities so that we can build stronger community connections and support networks.
- **Address Culture of Expectation.** Center programming engagement around connection and identity, leaning away from material rewards and toward community education and camaraderie.
- **Expand Medical Needs Coverage.** Improve medical needs coverage through various increases

to community health service capacities, such as finding a physician that can issue prescriptions in Hiawatha.

Wave 3 initiatives are important for community health but will be challenging to implement. Initiatives like **Address Culture of Expectation** and **Citizen Education Around Program Access & Healing** cover issues that are deeply rooted in generations of colonization. **Expanding Medical Needs Coverage** depends on us securing the financial resources needed to find and hire a qualified individual. In the meantime, we are looking at ways to work with local health organizations to bridge health service gaps, such as our recent partnership with the Asphodel Norwood Medical Centre to help Citizens navigate the pressing shortage of family doctors.

The Well includes the **Expand Post-Secondary Student Support Program** initiative, which hopes to enhance resources and opportunities available to youth so that they can be successful in their educational journeys academically, financially, and emotionally. The prospect of this initiative is highly subject to Government funding reform, which has been an ongoing campaign for years.



'Big Rocks' are important strategic initiatives that came up multiple times in discussions, but may be difficult to complete and/or need extra resources

'Quick wins' are actions that can be taken right away to show progress and make an impact without using too many resources

Wave 1 Action Today	Wave 2 Action in near term	Wave 3 Action in future	The Well Revisit in future
☆ Integration of Language & Culture			
☆ Revamp Lower Hall			
Healing & Traditional Skills Development			
Campaign Against Domestic Violence			
School Board Service Advocacy			
Youth Big Drum			
Community Food Security			
Construct Play Equipment			
Quick win: Educate on H&SS practices	H&SS Information Management Practices		
Quick win: Secure external support	Expand Homecare Services Eligibility		
Quick win: Increase existing communications	Formalize Citizen Communication Process		
	Mandatory Cultural Training for Council		
Quick win: 2nd family enhancement worker	Child Welfare Prevention Initiative		
Quick win: Priorities for next fiscal budget cycle	Create Systems for Maintaining Programs		
	Develop Community Transportation Options		
Quick win #1: Comms to Citizens + with staff	Quick win #2: Lessons on lateral violence	Citizen Education Around Program Access & Healing	
Quick win #1: Start tracking engagement	Quick win #2: Shift to Citizen made gifts	Address Culture of Expectation	
Quick win: Secure second diabetes nurse		Expand Post-Secondary Student Support Program	
Quick win: political push through ISC for funding			Improve Post-Secondary Student Support Program

8 - All relations impact

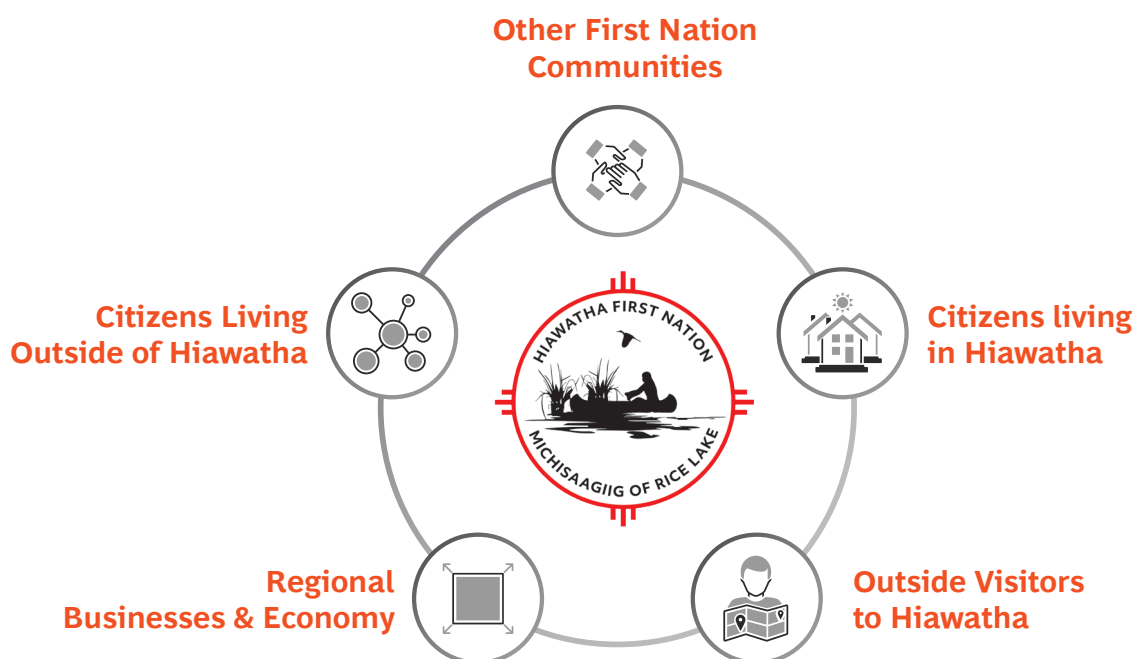
“The Strategic Plan is created to make a positive impact that benefits not only Hiawatha First Nation Citizens, but also the many groups and communities connected to Hiawatha. By focusing on an ‘All-Relations’ approach, Hiawatha aims to strengthen connections, enrich cultural experiences, and support economic growth for everyone involved.”

- **Citizens Living in Hiawatha:** For those residing on-territory, prioritized initiatives focus on building local capabilities and strengthening a shared sense of identity. The expansion of programs and services will deepen community connections and provide greater support, while targeted economic development efforts aim to enhance well-being and create new opportunities within the community.
- **Citizens Living Outside of Hiawatha:** For Citizens living outside of Hiawatha, this strategic plan is aimed at strengthening connections to our culture and language, helping individuals form a sense of pride in their identity as Anishinaabeg. As part of this effort, we have identified new ways to extend program access to Citizens living outside of Hiawatha, despite the constraints imposed by our funders, and we will ensure this remains an active effort in our working processes as we execute against the strategic plan.

In addition to efforts geared toward improving communication to Citizens living outside of Hiawatha, the initiative Digital Citizen Input Database has been established aimed at improving how we collect input from Citizens so that our

decision-making can better reflect the needs of all Citizens, wherever they live. It will provide a structured way to collect insights from Citizens living outside of Hiawatha, ensuring their voices play a meaningful role in expanding programs and services.

- **Other First Nation Communities:** The strategic plan seeks to build stronger bonds with neighbouring First Nation communities by fostering joint initiatives and shared learning experiences. This collaboration will enrich cultural connections and support a broader network of Indigenous communities working toward common goals.
- **Outside Visitors to Hiawatha:** Prioritized initiatives include the development of cultural and tourism experiences that will provide visitors with enriched opportunities to engage with our community, heritage, and the sacred site of Serpent Mounds. By offering meaningful cultural exchanges and deeper engagement, Hiawatha fosters mutual respect and understanding between visitors and the community.
- **Regional Businesses & Economy:** The strategic plan’s economic impact aims to go beyond Hiawatha, boosting economic activity in nearby areas surrounding Rice Lake and Greater Peterborough. By creating local business opportunities and partnerships, Hiawatha’s initiatives will help grow the regional economy and positively impact the broader community.



9 - The Interconnectedness of Initiatives

Our strategic plan is built on the understanding that initiatives do not stand alone. They are deeply interconnected, each influencing and supporting multiple facets of our community’s vision. Recognizing this interconnectedness is crucial to ensuring that our plan is comprehensive and cohesive, not just a collection of siloed priorities.

“You cannot get good health outcomes without proper housing, but conversely, good housing outcomes require proper health services.”

One powerful example of this interconnectedness is the **Revitalization of Serpent Mounds**. Serpent Mounds is much more than a project under Community Development. It represents our cultural heritage and holds educational, recreational, and economic significance. The success of the Serpent Mounds initiative relies on contributions from multiple areas:

- **Culture & Language:** As a sacred and historic site, Serpent Mounds connects us to our Michisaagijig identity. The site can be used for teaching traditional knowledge, ceremonies, and language, making it central to our cultural and language preservation initiatives.

- **Land Management:** As we develop Serpent Mounds, we must ensure responsible land use and protection of sacred spaces. This involves careful archaeological planning, regulatory compliance, and environmental stewardship.
- **Education and Health:** Serpent Mounds offers educational opportunities for both Hiawatha Citizens and visitors. Through organized programs, we can share knowledge about our history, cultural practices, and environmental stewardship, enhancing both mental and spiritual well-being.
- **Economic Development:** Revitalizing Serpent Mounds creates tourism opportunities that generate revenues through events, guided tours and experiences, and partnerships with local businesses. In turn, this can support Hiawatha’s broader goals, contributing to our financial self-sufficiency.

Each project milestone will involve different experts from our capital projects, lands, archaeology, economic development teams and others taking lead. Under our collaborative approach, we have established consultation checklists, to ensure that each step includes the necessary voices and input from all relevant areas.

For the prioritization, we thought along directives & topics...

... but a single priority can involve many directives & topics

