



**Five Year Economic
Development
Strategic Plan:**

2016-2021

Chapleau Cree First Nation

Fox Lake Rd.

Chapleau, ON

P0M 1K0

Tel: (705) 864-0784

Web: www.chapleaucree.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the banks of Fox Lake, is the Chapleau Cree First Nation, located in Chapleau Township, in the Sudbury District, in northern Ontario. Access to the community is provided via Fox Lake Rd., off of Hwy. 129. Communities neighbouring the nation include the Town of Chapleau and Brunswick House First Nation. The city of Timmins is located to the east and slightly north respectively, and the town of Wawa is an equal distance away from Chapleau Cree First Nation, to the west. Currently the nation has a total of 409 members (<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357840942046/1360163658086>) with approximately 92 members living on the First Nation (2006, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapleau_Cree_First_Nation). A variety of opportunities exist within the Chapleau Cree First Nation for community members who desire to return to the Nation, a place to call home, or a place to get away from the traffic, noise, and bustle of urban living and return to the northern Ontario rural way of life.

The nation does not experience consistent population growth and has an aging demographic. This is due to the lack of infrastructure and available housing loan system for new construction on-reserve, limited availability of suitable and affordable living within the Town of Chapleau, and an equally limited growth of economy and new job development. That being said, there is an opportunity on the horizon for Goldcorp Inc. to establish a mining operation within the vicinity, resulting in increasing demands on both the Town of Chapleau and subsequently the community of Chapleau Cree First Nation. Correspondingly, with equal demand comes equal opportunity, and the Nation continues to work on its historic healing and community issues together with planning to address the possibility of new growth, the challenge of bringing some of its members back to the community and the economic development demands that this entails. This 5-year economic development strategic plan strives to address those items and provide a starting point for a plan of action to ensure any challenges and demands result in a positive impact on the community. This plan's priority is to address issues relating to economic development and additionally the plan will touch upon infrastructure issues as they relate to these areas.

It is important to recognize that the world is ever-changing and understand that the role of this plan is to guide an ever-changing Nation, and not to create or maintain one set end result.

The Chapleau Cree First Nation 5-Yr. Economic Development Strategic Plan was developed by the community to serve as a guide for future development through the goals, objectives, and vision presented within the plan. By working within the framework of these goals and objectives and vision developed by the community, the nation will have the ability to make informed decisions related to the community.

This plan was created to serve the following purposes:

- Develop a plan that encompasses commercial, recreational, institutional and residential uses.
- To protect the quality of life enjoyed by First Nation residents, any individual business owners, and the community as a whole.
- To protect and promote the wise utilization of the natural resources of the First Nation.
- Identify and assess economic development opportunities for the First Nation.

- Prioritize economic development opportunities.
- Visit the concept and report on economic development corporate governance structures as a component of an economic development strategy.
- Formulate a long term economic development strategy.

The review and analysis was carried out in two distinct phases, each comprised of a series of tasks and milestones. This approach resulted in the preparation of two progress presentations – one to the community and one to Chief & Council – and a draft and final document to be accepted by Chief & Council as the economic development strategic plan. This process included the following components:

- Community Needs Assessment
- Economic Development Assessment
- Existing Business Analysis
- Future Business Implementation Planning
- Draft Strategic Plan
- Final Strategic Plan

The foundation for successful economic development planning is a high level of organizational participation and input. Meaningful public participation in developing the Chapleau Cree First Nation 5-Yr. Economic Development Strategic Plan is also essential for identifying opinions, generating ideas, and building consensus for a “community vision” that will guide the Plan’s preparation. However direct community consultation within the specified timeframe of this project was hindered by the lack of successful applicants for the position of Community Lead; one which was designed to ensure that planning is responsive and representative of the membership, works directly with the community members, and completes effective training for job continuation within community economic development. Subsequently, the consultative process provided via person-to-person interviews with Chief & Council, band administration, band staff and community-owned business staff provided the opportunity for a cross-section of the community to shape their future, thus creating an attachment and commitment to the plan's implementation.

It is important that the Plan be developed through an open and good faith process; more is required than the mere appearance of participation and openness. Including the public in the process of updating the Plan will create an “ownership mentality” in the Plan and forge community support for implementing its goals and recommendations. The key is to effectively communicate with as many people as possible and include them in identifying the problems and issues, setting the community’s vision for the future, and developing implementation programs and strategies. Therefore, Chief & Council should consider the possibility of revisiting the process of hiring, mentoring and training the Community Lead position, with a title more cohesive with their goals and direction, which could consist of working within or managing an economic development corporation itself.

The following tools were used for distributing and receiving information as part of the review and analysis process.

Distributing Information:

- Email Contact
- Telephone Contact
- Slide and Audio-Visual Presentations

Receiving Information:

- Public Meetings
- Interviews
- Chief & Council as well as Working Group Direction/Guidance

Community Assessment

Land Use

Community character and sustainability is directly related to the use of land within a community. As a starting point Chapleau Cree First Nation could consider the development of land use designation. Coupled with an analysis of forest coverage (FP Innovations), a recommended land use classification can be completed for First Nation lands. Over two-thirds of the First Nation is currently composed of vacant forest and recreation lands.

Community Infrastructure and Transportation

Providing a means of drinking water, wastewater treatment and other essential day-to-day functions is a key component to the overall health and vitality of the community. The current state of infrastructure within the First Nation, as well as the infrastructure that will be needed in the future is hinged upon the desire for growth in comparison to the demand that will be placed on the community with new economic development opportunity. With an aging demographic, the community will need to consider infrastructure requirements for the care of this segment as well as the possibility of new housing development for members coming back to the community for work opportunities.

For the economic development assessment of the Chapleau Cree First Nation, the Consultant Planning Team created an inventory of all economic development initiatives owned and operated by the First Nation.

With the Nation being an integral part of the regional economy, the Consultant Planning Team using information provided by Statistics Canada developed basic profiles of the surrounding communities of:

- The Town of Chapleau

- Brunswick House First Nation

Upon completion of the overall economic development assessment, the economic development profiles of the surrounding communities and the community economic priorities identified in the interview process, the Consultant Team proceeded to analyze all of the economic development information for the Chapleau Cree First Nation and the surrounding business community.

Key Recommendations & Findings

Utilizing the economic development opportunity data, the Consultant Team developed a prioritized list of viable business opportunities attainable by community members and the First Nation for the next 5- (five) year period. This listing is provided within this report.

A review and analysis of the existing band-owned and operated business entities was also completed with data and review documentation being presented to Chief & Council in an interim project update in February, 2016. With analysis complete, all recommendations are private and confidential and will be shared only with Chief & Council for future direction, guidance and effective decision-making.

In conjunction with the existing business review, the opportunity to review the potential for a Chapleau Cree First Nation economic development corporation model also presented itself, for the purpose of managing business and community interests in a separate yet equally attentive fashion. The recommendations for such are also provided within this report document.

The potential to partner on economic development projects is also a possibility for the Nation, beginning with its immediate counterparts, being the Town of Chapleau as well as Brunswick House First Nation. Under the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, the development of a platform to manage this process has taken place, and strict attention will need to be paid with respect to community involvement, reporting processes and potential next steps as they relate to economic development benefits for all parties involved.

Similarly, the potential to partner with, or experience growth directly from, corporate Canada (i.e. Goldcorp) has been reviewed and future opportunities from this have been incorporated into this reporting document.

Critical to the development of any commercial business opportunities identified, will be the construction or expansion of community infrastructure including the possibility of commercial, residential or small business infrastructure, new housing opportunities and community service infrastructure (water, power, roads, waste), depending on location (on- or off-reserve). Similarly, the Chapleau Cree First Nation will need to consider a process and plan for the purpose of welcoming Band Members back to the community as new jobs arise – for best fit, training possibilities, grandfathering opportunities and effective human resource development.

1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FACTS

This section offers a synopsis on the development of this economic development strategic plan, the recommendations that have been included, and their associated potential outcomes.

1.1 APPROACH

The implementation and development of this strategic plan was prearranged and reviewed by the Chapleau Cree First Nation Chief & Council as well as their executive, to warrant that it complied with the vision and mission of the community and organization as well as the Chapleau Cree First Nation Blueprint for the Future document. Where possible, Chief & Council Members as well as Chapleau Cree First Nation staff, together with the organization's businesses, partners and counterparts were interviewed and requested for input over the course of the plan development process, which entailed June, 2015 through March, 2016.

This planning document integrates operating recommendations to allow for ease of implementation in steps clearly identified for Chapleau Cree First Nation.

1.2 OPERATIONAL PLAN

Before instituting an economic development strategic plan, the operational factors were first examined by reviewing current performance as well as the current status of the economy and subsequent environment in which the First Nation as well as its stakeholders' function. Its vision and mission were then related to detailed goals intended to be reached over the next 5 (five) years. The goals were outlined in response to community as well as customer-base needs, and offer direction for Chapleau Cree's Chief & Council, their new Economic Development Officer, as well as their administration. For each goal there have been specific, prioritized initiatives identified that will enable them to be achieved. These are summarized below with the goals being identified in bold font.

1.2.1 Capacity-Building

- increased economic development capacity through employment and training initiatives
- reviewing potential for an economic development corporation and additional staff
- enhanced management and operations of existing business entities, with increasing new business development activities

1.2.2 Enhancing Advocacy

- establishing a core Chapleau Cree First Nation business marketing plan

1.2.3 Improving Regional Networking

- establishing a strong networking capacity with regional counterparts and stakeholders

1.2.4 Continuing a High Level of Service Standard

- Maintaining continued best practices for:
 - e) Chapleau Cree Auto Repair
 - f) Chip Stand
 - g) Pimii Kamik Gas Bar
 - h) Small Engine Repair

1.2.5 Introducing New Businesses/Services & Initiatives

- (based on interviews with Chief, Council and all administrative and business staff) reviewing potential for entities such as:
 - Bookkeeping – BOB – Aboriginal
 - Woodworking
 - Catering
 - SBC (Small Business Centre)
 - Tim Horton's/Coffee Shop/ M&M Meats
 - Condo/Hotel
 - Subdivision – Goldcorp
 - Cement Truck/Mix
 - Bingo/Bowling/Poker
 - Retail: Stationery Store
 - Mining/Exploration/CPY
 - Aquaculture (Sturgeon)
 - Greenhouse
 - Beams – Sawmill
 - Medical Services
 - Internet Business - Centre

- Tamarack – Toys, Flooring, Product - WW
- Pine – IKEA Partner – WW
- Cedar – Rails, Rustic Furniture – WW
- Daycare
- Entertainment Complex
- Sporting Goods Store
- 3M Distribution – Warehouse
- Sign Company
- Energy (Co-Gen, Farms)
- Carbon Credits
- Tea Company, Mushrooms, Blueberries
- Knife Manufacturing
- Wooden Sheds
- Grocery Store – (ie “Pick of the Crop”)
- New Senior Complex
- Lodge/Tourist Camp
- Training Company
- Manufacturing Centre
- Craft Co-op
- Call Centre
- Environmental Company
- Energy (Panels)
- Government Procurement Opportunities
- Charity/Foundation
- Golden Route – (Kathy’s Kitchen)
- School Supplies
- Children’s Clothing
- Work Cloths for Miners

1.3 CONCLUSION

The Chapleau Cree First Nation economic development strategic plan finishes, noting that the Nation has taken considerable steps within the economic atmosphere it operates, which of late has undergone both negative and positive change. That being said, it also identifies that Chapleau Cree First Nation must build its own operational capacity and assume a small number of networked improvements/initiatives. These initiatives can also be viewed as opportunities, but will still require that Chief & Council, administration and operating staff combine their abilities and attributes to achieve them.

2 BACKGROUND

Chapleau Cree First Nation has determined that it requires a definitive economic development strategic plan to provide guidance for its Chief & Council, staff, and business management.

As a background for the following segments of the plan, this section in brief outlines current changes/growth in the First Nation business development sector and the associated position of Chapleau Cree First Nation. As well, it defines the next steps in building the economic development strategic plan document.

2.1 FIRST NATION BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The majority of First Nation communities are working to get the most out of today's opportunities offered them via political pressures. Opportunities such as:

- New government-level business funding and financing programs
- Natural and human resource development
- Land claim settlements

They are also using their own values and conforming conventional business practices to their specific cultures in order to create businesses, increase number of jobs and generate wealth in and for their communities.

This can be seen in the upswing of entrepreneurship and increase in First Nation businesses, which, generates increased demand for debt financing and personal equity. Other options for financing are subsequently required, as these entities grow and continue on through the business life cycle. As well as the standard debt financing there is a growing need for:

- Start-up Capital
- Business Loans
- Larger Term Loans
- Lines of Credit
- Operating Loans; and,
- Equity Gap Funding.

Despite these needs, the makeup of the majority of these businesses provides complicated issues for most mainstream sources of financing and funding. They are principally small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have the perceived higher risk stemming from their smaller size and their inability to capitalize via what would be considered as standard collateral. First Nation or Aboriginal SMEs in particular present additional financing challenges, often resulting from there being a greater proportion of beginning-stage businesses. As well, on-reserve businesses

can present the potential for more challenges with respect to there being fewer incorporated businesses due to tax-free status and a more limited market opportunity in some rural/remote locations.

2.2 FIRST NATIONS IN BUSINESS

Aboriginal communities entering into business for themselves is a growing sub-section of the financial makeup of Canada. Chapleau Cree First Nation is a part of this system which has self-funded or financed a large portion of their business ventures, accessing equity gap funding through the main source of debt financing and business development funds available to First Nations. Due to the fact that First Nations are often limited in their ability to secure financing via conventional pathways, in part because their needs may be too small and/or they carry higher risk factors, communities have worked with Aboriginal Financial Institutions to obtain loans to assist and ensure the establishment and continued operation/growth of their businesses.

Each AFI is distinct in regards to capabilities and capacities, structure, client focus, services and communities/catchments it serves. Their community services/involvement provide them a distinct opportunity and capacity to hold more confidence in grass-roots-based credit worthiness in order to make up for any deficiencies in their loan applicants' financial situations. The result of this is a high approval rate for new applicants and a reasonable loan performance.

Unfortunately, many First Nations are operating their business models in a social capacity, injecting new equity into businesses that are lagging, in efforts to maintain job levels, as opposed to review and reorganization for improvement. This, coupled with high interest rates through restricted/narrow financial assistance programming, do not offset their operational costs of administration and subsequent business losses. Therefore, for some, their capital base is disintegrating rather than building, resulting in the community not being able to keep up with current business/community needs and an increasing demand for services/products. Another side effect is that some are unable to provide the level of business management aftercare and support services required in order to increase their opportunity for success and alleviate their high risk.

Persistent and steady growth and development of both the operational and financial capacities of such individual First Nations as the Chapleau Cree First Nation to meet these needs and counter such problems is subsequently the main impetus of this economic development strategic plan.

2.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The approach to developing Chapleau Cree First Nation's economic development strategic plan has been designed to include input from key stakeholders including community members, community business management and staff, administrative staff, Chief & Council, and counterpart organizations. Chief & Council, assisted by their Band Administrator, retained supervision of the Chapleau Cree First Nation Economic Development Strategic Plan project

team comprised of Walter Kornas, Christopher Kornas, Rick Saul, Liz Kornas and Spring Sault of The Zarex Business Centre, and ensured that prior related work, such as the Chapleau Cree Blueprint for the Future and the 2014 Chapleau Cree Skills Assessment Final Report were taken into consideration.

The development process involved the following activities:

- Use of '*Appreciative Inquiry*' as a means to obtain positive feedback on related processes that are successful for the community and its business endeavors
- First Nation business and administration visitations
- Presentation/review with Chapleau Cree First Nation Chief & Council as well as community updates
- Business management/staff, community administration and Chief & Council interviews
- Review of stakeholder input/needs

In July, 2015 the Chief and project Councillors vetted a draft outline of the economic development strategic planning process as provided in presentation form and were given the opportunity to provide feedback at that time; an assessment of the operation's historical performance as well as current timelines for objectives/processes, and their progress.

In December, 2015 the community was given opportunity to review progress of the economic development strategic planning process and were provided occasion to participate and comment. A review of the shifting operating economy which was becoming the Nation's new environment was also performed during this period, with the task of obtaining feedback from the Town of Chapleau as well as Goldcorp mining staff with respect to potential future project development.

During the period of January – March, 2016 the project team attempted to conduct scripted telephone interviews with remaining Councillors, as well as administrative and business staff of CCFN. Efforts were also made to complete visitations/interviews with all businesses and the newly hired Economic Development Officers (EDO) in order to secure their perspective and guidance on:

- a) Current service standards to the community
- b) Input on existing products/services as well as the potential for new opportunities
- c) Capacity of the organization to meet existing need and potential for growth with possible future increased demand
- d) Potential goal-setting for priorities based on market and shifts in economic opportunity

A community survey for Band Members living both on- and off-reserve as well as the hiring of a community project lead for training and economic development skills transfer which were previously laid out as a 'next steps' in the economic development strategic planning process

were foregone due to lack of interest/uptake in job postings. In an attempt to streamline the project and reduce the potential for dissipated/diluted data, Chief & Council received a project update presentation in February, 2016 and provided further direction.

And finally, input from the following key stakeholders was sought via phone, email and face-to-face meeting, with the objective of sourcing input on successful services/products and marketing programs that meet the market needs as well as grow business partnership models.

- Town of Chapleau Economic Development Department
- Brunswick House First nation
- Tembec
- FTP Innovations

In March, 2016, Chapleau Cree First Nation Chief & Council required the first draft of the Chapleau Cree First Nation 5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan. The result is the document provided here for review.

3 OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Prior to the development of the economic development strategic plan, a review of the operational performance of Chapleau Cree First Nation businesses was conducted, consistent with the changing business atmosphere and stakeholder environment.

3.1 STAFF INPUT

In reviewing the operational performance of each business, staff members were requested to provide their input on the following questions:

- What products and services do you feel are done especially well and why do you feel they work so well?
- Do you feel that this business effectively meets the specific needs of the market it services?
- If the current processes for business management stayed the same (no change whatsoever), what will this business be doing in 1 yr., 5 yrs., etc. What do you feel the results would be?
- What do you feel should be some of the key goals for this business to accomplish over the next 3 (three) years?
- Are there any new products and services that you would like to see provided by this business and can you provide a brief description on how those products and services may be designed?
- What are your thoughts on the effective development and management of Chapleau Cree First Nation businesses by an economic development corporation?

3.1.1 Outcomes

Since its land-base establishment, Chapleau Cree First Nation has made significant advancements in community-owned business development. The capacity for business development by individual First Nation entrepreneurs is also becoming more and more uncomplicated due to the efforts of the Nation in creating and managing effective working partnerships with other area First Nations, local town government as well as corporate entities. Both training and promotion are key programs of focus, allowing market access where it would not normally be so.

The staff of the businesses as well as the organization has demonstrated a desire and flexibility when facing individual project challenges. Efforts to improve growth in sales and services are ongoing, and response from the organization is positive for the implementation of an economic development corporation to manage growth and market current and future business entities.

Supported in their efforts by its strongly committed Chief & Council, Chapleau Cree First Nation's newly hired Economic Development Officer will have an array of support services to provide to the community, such as small business establishment/expansion training, future board development initiatives, best practices workshops and financial literacy/business debt financing management.

Conversely, there have been obstacles as well. The Nation's effectiveness in extending its services beyond that of the standard yearly budgets from a business management perspective is limited. With a potential business restructuring to incorporate an economic development management team via a corporation, Chapleau Cree First Nation can overcome its 'just-in-time' response and management hurdles, improve financial resources and business management communications, and increase customer/market benefits via the development of more small- to medium-enterprises (SMEs) in an improved business management and development atmosphere.

Federal government reporting is noted as being extremely structured, and as a result, the Nation has struggled in managing businesses in an actual business model as opposed to a council/administrative model. Making this change, (having businesses fall under a separate corporate umbrella) would secure substantive operating and management capacity beyond that of the standard band administration.

From the perspective of business offerings, there is not yet sufficient preservation or effective management of sales and capital via project monitoring and effective marketing. Where the small engine repair and the convenience store are operating in a moderate-to-well capacity, the auto repair and chip stand businesses are struggling, with a lack of business management focus to make necessary improvements.

There is also insufficient marketing or inadequate direct business support for Chapleau Cree First Nation's entities in meeting market needs that extend beyond the borders of the actual community itself. Partnership development, special marketing designed for the Town of Chapleau as well as other local First Nations, together with new products and services to grow with the changing economic atmosphere are currently under-supported.

3.1.2 Strengths and Weaknesses

In investigating past capabilities and current progress, as well as reviewing Chapleau Cree First Nation's capability in moving forward, the project team reviewed the organization's comparative strengths and weaknesses.

The Nation's comprehensiveness and breadth are seen as its core strengths - a fundamental need and concerted effort to grow and effectively manage its own business development as well as enhance community-based entrepreneurship is supported by Chief & Council, the administration and business staff.

The organization has a very competent Council and exceptionally capable staff with apparent

lines of communication and accountability. As a direct result, functioning associations with counterparts in its partnership realm and additional external stakeholders continue to be strengthened.

In terms of weaknesses, the organization is first and foremost dependent on primary government funding resources with an overly structured budgetary and reporting/funding process that doesn't carry over well into the business sector. This results in Chapleau Cree First Nation having insufficient human and financial resource capacities to effectively meet changing/growing needs of their businesses and future offerings. This is indicated via a deficiency in wide-ranging support/promotion and advertising/awareness policies, fragile grass-roots connections to adjacent town and First Nation community populations, and insufficient special-sector knowledge-base for new business development.

3.2 CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The project team examined today's current economic environment in which the Nation is operating, to illustrate the changes that are happening, and what they mean in terms of related opportunities and threats for the community in terms of business management and development.

3.2.1 Operating environment

Today's business environment was reviewed from the perspective of the end-user, being the First Nation community member and/or resident of the Town of Chapleau, in an effort to identify primary changes that directly affect Chapleau Cree First Nation's business operations.

Of key note is the recent development of the potential for Goldcorp operations to establish a mine entity within a 7-year window (dating from 2015). The outcome of this is the:

- Amplified importance of new business development and management processes now, to meet future need
- Showing of support for a broader variety of feasible business projects/larger collaborations
- Expanding the sustainable approach for such projects through the inclusion of development as well as implementation, aftercare and effective marketing
- Increased emphasis on a business form of accountability as opposed to a band administration form

As a result of new corporate entities coming into the market place, data indicates that increasingly complex and larger opportunities are presenting themselves, and therefore an

increased demand for business operating capacity and capital will be required. Regardless of augmented business project complexity, there remains a consistent requirement for all-encompassing and wide-ranging business support services and networking, resulting in both improved financial and business management.

3.2.2 Opportunities and Threats

Chapleau Cree First Nation currently embraces business financial management challenges from operating under its band administration model. Subsequently, it continues in its process to try to counterbalance the possibility of diminished business capacity versus its potential to access program funding in the form of grant capital. The organization needs to revisit its efforts to offer broad-based business management support as well as financial management support services via a structured business model and approach. Aftercare will also play a big role in this, should the development of a one-off or perhaps a joint-venture project take place.

The community should also be assisting the return of Band Members to the area and be considering the demographics of the future growth and business market for the Nation. This may also lead to opportunities such as:

- Improved/enhanced infrastructure for growth, leading to new housing starts and improved economy
- In-depth training initiatives targeted at specific segments or for particular sectors
- Development of mentoring to assist entrepreneurs in their business management and operation

Should such opportunities not come to fruition however, there are also considerable threats. Most important is the risk of continued attrition of the organization's capital base, coupled with the possibility of subsequent reduced capability. What this means is that, with the potential for an inadequate management and marketing capability for existing and new business, the organization will also have difficulty in maintaining a constant service level. Without this, the requirement for new business development growth and new jobs may reduce and/or become constrained with respect to its potential for capacity-building in its catchments. This could cripple Chapleau Cree First Nation's economic development mandate and services.

The current economic status for Canada specifically may also play a factor which could prove an unfavourable pressure over the course of the next 5 (five) years. Lessened effective business development and subsequent job opportunities may be triggered in the Nation's market as the opportunity for employment in other parts of the province, with better housing opportunities and lower cost-of-living expenses appeals more than taking the risk of relocating to or continuing to do business with Chapleau Cree First Nation or the Town of Chapleau. Being already considered high-risk for new growth and development, the impetus for proper pre-planning and effective business model approaches to growth and development are imperative.

4 OPERATIONAL PLAN

This segment illustrates Chapleau Cree First Nation's business development and management vision and mission and subsequent role/mandate as recognized through planning initiatives that are instituted and carried out via its recognized internal programs as well as current general business direction.

4.1 ROLE & MANDATE

Chapleau Cree First Nation has taken on the following role/mandate as being most appropriate for serving its membership and the surrounding communities and business clients.

- Providing business that supports local needs for First Nation People, communities and organizations.
- Supporting and promoting business development that assists the same, focusing on the increase of local commerce.
- Visioning a future where prosperous businesses employing increasing numbers of community members continue to benefit from services provided by the Nation, leading to an improved business climate and a better quality of life.
- Committing to business excellence in every way.
- Remaining confidential, respectful, fair, honest, courteous and professional in all dealings.

4.2 OPERATIONAL GOALS & INITIATIVES

In an effort to provide the highest quality level of service standard, Chapleau Cree First Nation will need to perform specific duties as a whole to accomplish parity with its business vision/mission. Therefore, the following goals have been identified by the project team as answering client-base and stakeholder requirements, and will provide direction to Chapleau Cree First Nation's Chief & Council, and administration:

- Capacity-Building
- Enhancing Advocacy
- Improving Regional Networking
- Continuing a High Level of Service Standard
- Introducing New Programs/Services & Initiatives

Each of these goals has specific activities linked to it, which denote the process by which the

Nation can accomplish that goal. These details are further outlined as follows.

4.2.1 Capacity Building

Considered a key initiative in the economic development strategic plan, this section pertains to taking what exists within the operation and building on that. Example: Continuing the professional development of the community's economic development staff after having hired the best suitable candidate; hosting individual band-owned businesses to attend local job fairs as opposed to providing one primary contact from the Nation as a whole; etcetera. Such initiatives are designed to improve the operational capacity of the organization, and are examined further below.

4.2.1.1 Increased Economic Development Capacity Through Employment & Training Initiatives

The potential for a community-owned business or an individual entrepreneur to improve on their quality level of service exists in many forms and opportunities. As an example, skills-upgrading is provided to CCFN catchments through the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council, at various venues (or in-house) via training workshops, as well as networking. Chapleau Cree First Nation could look to partner with Mushkegowuk in a more proactive manner with training and employment initiatives designed specifically for their community as opposed to attending general training/forums.

The newly hired Economic Development Officer has the potential to obtain their certification through the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. Mentoring with other Economic Development Officers, government business project officers, corporate Canada, consultants, and possibly the Town of Chapleau Economic Development Dept. are also an option

4.2.1.2. Reviewing Potential for an Economic Development Corporation and Additional Staff

In reviewing the needs of the community as well as the potential for business development within the region, the potential for an economic development corporation and additional business management staff became a visible opportunity for increased operational capacity.

CCFN's physical location leaves its customer base in a very small focused area, together with an expanse of sparse population en route to Timmins or Wawa. To meet the necessary marketing requirements, management services and business enhancement needs for the existing Chapleau Cree First Nation offerings, as well as effectively implement and manage any new projects, the potential exists to have a separate incorporated entity with a full-time staff to improve current service requirements.

4.2.1.3 *Enhanced Management and Operations of Existing Business Entities, With Increasing New Business Development Activities*

Not specific to any one individual business, it has been identified that the capacity to improve is required, be it in terms of additional product or service mix, additional staff or re-delegating time/duties to strengthen the very necessary business processes.

The requirement exists due to the fact that ineffective management and operations can steadily erode a business' income base quickly, if allowed to continue. As well, a reputation of not consistently following-up or working with proper business management procedures can precede an organization, and cripple it's services before they can produce genuine effective results.

4.2.2 *Enhancing Advocacy*

An initiative of equal importance in the economic development strategic plan is that of advocacy. Getting the word out in Chapleau Cree First Nation's catchment area that community-owned businesses exist and that the community is open to partner or joint venture will only benefit the community. It serves to influence mainstream financial institution concepts around areas of high-risk lending, what capacities presently exist in the First Nation's arena for business development and growth, and how to partner in a manner that benefits local economies.

4.2.2.1 *Establishing a Core Chapleau Cree First Nation Business Marketing Plan*

In enhancing advocacy, a plan needs to be formed on how to properly produce effective results. Determine what human and financial resources can be applied to a potential marketing plan, and sort out the most effective means of accomplishing the desired result – improved and increased First Nation and local entrepreneur-owned business.

From this plan, take the most effective events/opportunities and target them towards mainstream markets – thereby involving stakeholders, potential partners, and newcomers to such services. The end-result is improved knowledge-base and uptake, leading to a stronger organization.

4.2.3 *Improving Regional Networking*

There presently exists the opportunity to address a weakness at the regional level whereby stakeholders associated with Chapleau Cree First Nation require improved communications. Developing effectual networking strategies is a key next step. Such strategies should identify:

- a) Who is the target audience?
- b) What are their information requirements?
- c) How do we distribute this information most effectively? (I.e. design or improve web site, distribute newsletters, host workshops, etc)

4.2.3.1 *Establishing a Strong Networking Capacity with Regional Counterparts and Stakeholders*

Playing a lead-support role, the Nation can supplement partnerships, joint ventures and larger-scale project development and capacity via a strong network of information-sharing and involvement with regional stakeholders.

Improved communications through the very same ‘marketing/advocacy plan’ identified above can serve to assist in enhanced project viability when more than one information or business development service provider can become involved.

4.2.4 *Continuing a High Level of Service Standard*

Consistent professional operating and service standards increase the capacity of Chapleau Cree First Nation as a highly capable and professional organization. The EDO’s, as well as Chief & Council’s strong focus on attention to detail where these service standards are concerned is reflected in all of its initiatives.

4.2.4.1 *Maintaining Continued Best Practices for:*

- a) Chapleau Cree Auto Repair
- b) Chip Stand
- c) Pimii Kamik Gas Bar
- d) Small Engine Repair

Chapleau Cree First Nation can take advantage of its own best practices by continuing to implement the vision/mission statements incorporated into this plan. They succinctly identify and certify operational best practices which are currently being employed within the organization. With each entity that is currently in operation, however, the business practices need to be consistent in order for parity across all operations. Where this is not the case, the entity in questions will suffer due to displacement or lack of focus, indecisiveness and poor direction.

4.2.5 *Introducing New Programs/Services & Initiatives*

To continue to maintain relevancy in today’s economy, Chapleau Cree First Nation will need to initiate businesses that reflect the pace at which it can establish and grow as well as keep tempo with fluctuating market-base demographics. In an effort to determine market needs together with the Nation’s capacity for growth, the following new business ideas have been derived from Chief & Council, business staff as well as administrative staff interviews.

4.2.5.1 *Work Clothes for Miners*

Integrating a requirement such as this (and/or safety equipment) into the growth plan that exists via the potential development of a Goldcorp mining operation is a very viable opportunity where

profitability and employability are concerned. It's considered a low-risk project due to physical locale in proximity to the mine location, employee residence, and the nearest major town center.

4.2.5.2 *Children's Clothing Store/Clothing Store*

In an effort to meet an existing need, Chapleau Cree First Nation could strongly benefit from developing a children's clothing store or general clothing store to support its existing customer base. Either as its own initiative or as a joint venture with a counterpart, this business could fill a need that is currently only met via long-distance travel to a major city or town center.

4.2.5.3 *Grocery Store*

Over the review period during the course of completing this economic development strategic plan, the input of various stakeholders was requested and provided. In this, it was found that several suggestions for possible new businesses were made that could not only benefit the end-user but also Chapleau Cree First Nation in the area of new revenue streams. One such example which was considered moderate risk is a grocery store. Many staff members identified that current prices and selection at the only grocery store in the nearby Town of Chapleau leave something to be desired and it was felt that a more artisanal and healthy-lifestyle-approach to a Chapleau Cree First Nation-owned grocery store would be well-shopped.

4.2.5.4 *Seniors Complex*

The demographic of the Chapleau Cree First Nation community is such that the senior citizen component will soon outnumber middle-aged and youth. With that in mind, the addition of a seniors complex to the community would be a welcomed forethought in preparation for their changing needs and service requirements. The Town of Chapleau will not be in a position to meet such needs, and community members' quality of life would benefit from being able to have their needs met from within the community.

4.2.5.5 *Larger Band Office/Office Space*

With a growing service contingent and growing business opportunities, comes the growth of staffing requirements and the capacity to house their operations. Rather than have the neighbouring Town of Chapleau benefit directly from this growth, the Nation could pre-plan to meet not only their needs but those of other local businesses by constructing new office space which could be utilized by band administration, business and business development or a mixture of both – derived from both community-owned and individual entrepreneur-owned entities.

4.2.5.6 *Restaurant*

With a lack of choice, and a lack of extra curricular activities to attend (unless the client is an outdoorsman/woman) the quality of life for a Chapleau Cree First Nation community member, or a resident of the Town of Chapleau is limited with respect to places to go, and things to do. The Nation could take advantage of this lack by meeting the needs of the individual, couple or family

that would like an alternative to the one restaurant in town, or the service at the Three Mills Motel. Offering an option for sit-down, family dining, with quality food service/choice and reasonable pricing would go a long way to improve resident's enjoyment of their area and provide an added revenue stream to the community. Be it on- or off-reserve, a restaurant with effective business management and marketing will do well in this vicinity.

4.2.5.7 *School Supply Sales*

Again in an effort to meet an existing need, the Nation could develop a business designed to sell school and office supplies. The Town of Chapleau is limited in its offerings and as its own initiative or as a joint venture with a counterpart, this business could fill a need that is again only currently being met via long-distance travel to a major city or town center.

4.2.5.8 *On-Reserve Medical Clinic/Specialists (Eye, Physio, Etc.)*

Referring back to the demographics of the existing Chapleau Cree First Nation membership, the addition of a medical clinic on-reserve would be a well-thought-out plan to meet the changing needs and service requirements. Community members have expressed a desire to have their service requirements met within their community, with the added benefit of specialist visits to round out the offering.

4.2.5.9 *Co-op Store*

Another opportunity for new business with the potential to joint-venture is that of a co-op store in the Town of Chapleau. A low-risk business opportunity on the Chapleau Cree First Nation Opportunity Matrix, this venture consists of product provision, together with a working model of multiple owners benefitting from effective management.

4.2.5.10 *Tim Horton's*

Noted as a very popular request in staff and Council interviews, a First Nation-owned Tim Horton's franchise is not out of the realm of possibility but requires more effective financing and business planning. A specific market number is required by the head corporation prior to issuing a franchise, for which a thorough due diligence and market review will be necessary.

4.2.5.11 *Businesses in Support of the Mine (I.e. House Cleaning, Food Service, Administration)*

In anticipation of the potential for Goldcorp and similar such entities doing business in the vicinity of the Chapleau Cree First Nation, the band as well as individual entrepreneurs would benefit from some pre-planning initiatives involving service provision to the increased population as well as the business entities themselves. Interviews with Chapleau Cree First Nation staff identified a number of such opportunities, the most popular of which were house cleaning, catering and financial administration services.

4.2.5.12 Trades (Plumbers, Electricians, Etc.)

With an eye for existing need, coupled with the potential for population growth with future mining operations, a plan to train and employ tradespeople, or train for individual entrepreneurship is not a high risk possibility. Chapleau Cree First Nation would benefit from a high-quality level of service standard and the community and surrounding market would also benefit from lessened wait times for service and reduced costs from no longer requiring a tradesperson from Timmins or Wawa.

5 Next Steps

This segment illustrates the direction in which economic development opportunities (identified via interviews with Chief & Council, business staff and administrative staff) should be planned for and implemented.

With respect to the method through which next steps should be approached, the consulting team gave weight to those concepts and comments that spoke to a common thread among the governance, business and administrative staff of the Chapleau Cree First Nation. Second, a process of time-mapping for effective collaboration and a combined, positive effect without unnecessary strain on existing staff and community management processes was also taken into account. The following is subsequently a prioritization of the appropriate next steps as gleaned from community input and feedback:

1. Headhunt for effective business management staff and incorporate/amalgamate all business entities owned and operated by the Chapleau Cree First Nation under an economic development corporation.
2. In concert with the processes taking place in task number 1, Chief & Council need to look at providing the management of the Pimii Kamik store/gas bar with financial training (basics on producing and/or reading financial statements such as a balance sheet, P&L and cash flow statement) and enlist the management to complete the following under supervision of the Economic Development Officer:
 - Establish more marketing components: billboards, corporate sales calls (Goldcorp, police, etc.), diesel expansion, add a premium fuel pump, do cross promotions with other businesses
 - Try to maintain pricing more in line with competition
 - Look at a new mix of merchandise focusing less on arts/crafts and more on c-store items
3. Similarly, simultaneous to items 1 and 2, focus on the CCFN Small Engine Repair business for the following changes:
 - Marketing initiatives need to be established, maintained and regularly monitored
4. With respect to the CCFN Auto Repair business, consideration should be given to doing a layoff for existing staff and closing the business until the fall of 2016. The business reflects a consistent loss of cash and without a full-time mechanic on-site, will continue to do so. Pricing, ordering processes and invoicing out to the customer also need to be reviewed. During the layoff period (April 1, 2016 through early-fall)

- the Economic Development Officer should re-examine the opportunity for possible restructuring, including the hiring of another qualified full-time mechanic, cost analysis for staff and parts, and potential income generation as compared to existing competition. Their analysis should provide Chief & Council with direction for a decision and support one of either option: re-opening the business or remaining closed permanently.
5. The Chi Bannoch chip stand requires the following challenges to be examined and implemented by the Economic Development Officer:
 - Review the existing menu to see what is selling well, and what could be removed/added
 - Review existing labour costs. Consider hiring direct for the chip stand as opposed to pulling staff from the gas bar
 - More marketing and cross promotion needs to take place
 6. During the course of community/governance interviews, 44 business ideas were put forward for potential and review with Chief & Council. Of these, prioritization will be required from Chief & Council with respect to the opportunities they feel are in the best interests of the community to move forward with. The following is the full listing:
 - Bookkeeping (BOB)
 - Woodworking
 - Catering
 - SBC (Small Business Centre)
 - Tim Horton's/Coffee Shop/M&M Meats
 - Condo/Hotel
 - Subdivision – Goldcorp
 - Cement Truck/Mix
 - Bingo/Bowling/Poker
 - Retail: Stationery Store
 - Mining/Exploration/CPY
 - Aquaculture (Sturgeon)
 - Greenhouse
 - Beams – Sawmill

- Medical Services
- Internet Business - Centre
- Tamarack – Toys, Flooring, Product - WW
- Pine – IKEA Partner – WW
- Cedar – Rails, Rustic Furniture – WW
- Daycare
- Entertainment Complex
- Sporting Goods Store
- 3M Distribution – Warehouse
- Sign Company
- Energy (Co-Gen, Farms)
- Carbon Credits
- Tea Company, Mushrooms, Blueberries
- Knife Manufacturing
- Wooden Sheds
- Grocery Store – (ie “Pick of the Crop”)
- New Senior Complex
- Lodge/Tourist Camp
- Training Company
- Manufacturing Centre
- Craft Co-op
- Call Centre
- Environmental Company
- Energy (Panels)
- Government Procurement Opportunities
- Charity/Foundation
- Golden Route – (Kathy’s Kitchen)
- School Supplies

- Children's Clothing
- Work Cloths for Miners

Based on this listing, Chief & Council are strongly urged to review options, determine best fit according to anticipated community and corporate project developments, and begin with the planning component for the first 2-3 opportunities.

7. Funding and financing is the next step after planning. The sourcing of all necessary provincial and federal level funding opportunities, together with an effective mix of low-interest borrowing on the part of the community as well as an equity/community investment component will ensure the effective capitalization of the new entities going forward.
8. Once full incorporation of the Chapleau Cree First Nation economic development corporation is completed, all business management can become its concern, including financial management and reporting to Chief & Council, effectively removing this component from the administration, freeing time and money.
9. After incorporation has been complete, and all management duties of the economic development corporation are in place/functioning as required, the Economic Development Officer can work to plan for and develop remaining economic development projects to be implemented and managed under the new corporate structure.
10. A set of measurables will need to be defined on the basis of the new business priorities, and monitored consistently by the Chapleau Cree First Nation economic development corporation. To this end, the Consultant Team will work with the Economic Development Officer to develop a monitoring, review and analysis component for integration into the Chapleau Cree First Nation business operations.

6 Conclusions

Considerable progress has been made by Chapleau Cree First Nation over its operating lifetime. The growing professionalism of the band-owned businesses is reflective of Chief & Council, administration, and business staff, evident in:

- a) Improved operating standards and current capacity
- b) Level of financial performance
- c) Level of service standard and growth

Today's economic environment is less than favourable for a First Nation owned-business, and yet Chapleau Cree First Nation has managed to parley plans and proposals into fully-functioning businesses and working duty-to-consult ventures with a focus on the future.

Notwithstanding these opportunities, the Nation must continue to work and provide business services through a critical economic development path. The primary focus should currently be on maintaining the high level of service standard, while restructuring its business management under an economic development corporation, effectively removing its business management out of its administration and creating a clear division between business and politics.

The organization also needs to focus on operational capacity, made necessary by the same economic environment issues identified above. Demographics of the First Nation population as well as reduced employability in comparison to more favourably located cities/ towns, leads to the requirement of Chapleau Cree First Nation to do so. A stronger Economic Development Officer that is now in place, with continued professional development, will only enhance the capacity of not only band-owned business development but the local entrepreneur as well.

Concurrently, Chapleau Cree First Nation should review and implement business initiatives that use a stronger collaboration of counterparts and stakeholders. There will be growing demand on the human and financial resources of the organization in the coming years, which will require a concerted effort to support, maintain, and foster.