

**2017- 2018 NEW BEGINNINGS
PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT
City of Spruce Grove – FCSS**

Project Number: N/A	Project Sponsor: City of Spruce Grove - FCSS
Title of Project: New Beginnings	
Project Manager: Beverley Barker	Project Consultants: Marnie Suito/Shelly Anderson
Project Start Date: January 25, 2017	Date of Project Completion: January 31, 2018

CONTRACT SCOPE/DELIVERABLES

The City of Spruce Grove, FCSS engaged the consulting services of In Synch Consulting Inc. (ISCI) to assist in furthering the work accomplished in Phase One of the New Beginnings Project to develop a tri-regional strategic response to the increasing number of Indigenous families and individuals seeking services from the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County area in general. The project’s overall goal is to:

- ❖ Address ways to remove barriers and strengthen relationships with the urban Aboriginal¹ people in the area,
- ❖ Enhance regional cooperation, with nearby First Nation Communities, the Government of Alberta and the Federal Government, and
- ❖ Build upon current collaborative programs and services to improve current access, service delivery and social policy initiatives while continuing to provide crisis intervention services.

It was determined very early on that the project would involve multi-stakeholders and included a number of complicating factors to be considered, namely:

- Hearing the voice of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples,
- Gaining the respect and trust of the Indigenous community,
- Support, input and guidance from the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County,
- Input from the various service organizations whose work touches the lives of the Indigenous community,
- Community awareness and engagement, and
- Developing relationships with the First Nations, Metis local and Inuit representative organizations.

It is important to note that the project encountered many other unexpected aspects that resulted in the Project’s overall outcomes:

Project Scope Change

The initial focus of the Project (Phase One) was to include all Indigenous people residing in the geographical boundaries of Parkland County, and as such, encompassed the four First Nations that are part of the land base defined as Parkland County. The scope of the work was *redefined* by the funder in June 2017 to focus specifically on the urban Indigenous population, those living off-reserve/off-settlement.

¹ The term Aboriginal is used throughout the document in that at the time of the various projects and reports this was applicable terminology. The reference has subsequently changed to Indigenous.

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Efforts shifted more towards this approach, however the relationships established with the First Nations during 2016 to date continued to be maintained, particularly considering the migratory nature of the community members, and the need for collaboration between the programs and support services relative thereto.

The relationship with Paul First Nation continues to be unique. Some FCSS clients are from that community and face unique challenges.

Resource Changes

The Project Lead within FCSS left the organization in early September and was replaced late November. Numerous initiatives and opportunities to further relationship building were delayed, and the Project continuity was disrupted. As a result, the Project completion date was extended by the province to March 31, 2018. Notwithstanding, the Project deliverables were achieved and the new position incumbent has been hired and is integrating into the role.

Project Timing

Summer vacation schedules and Indigenous events precluded the Project team from making much progress in the months of June thru August. This also contributed to the extended Project completion date.

Below is a chronological listing of the various activities that were undertaken within this phase of the New Beginnings Project.

PROJECT UPDATE MEETING

An in-depth meeting was held on April 27, 2017 with municipal stakeholders, service organizations, and Indigenous community leaders to update the group on the results of Phase One and present the work planned for Phase Two. A copy of the meeting minutes, including attendees, is attached hereto. The following excerpt identifies the key messages of the initiative.

Draft Vision

To improve program and service delivery to the Indigenous Community members accessing assistance within Parkland County.

Critical Success Factors

- Senior leadership support and endorsement from all orders of government within Parkland County.
- Cooperation and partnership with surrounding First Nations, Metis and other Indigenous organizations, groups and individuals.

Project Objectives

- To enhance the services and programs offered to Indigenous clients by broadening the awareness, understanding capacity and capability of service providers.
- To improve the access and response times for programs and services to Indigenous clients.
- To engage the service delivery providers within the region in this strategic initiative.

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- To improve the relationship between the municipal service providers and the First Nations within the County of Parkland (Enoch Cree Nation, Paul First Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation and Alexander First Nation).
- To improve the relationship between the municipal service providers and the Metis Nation/Metis locals within the County of Parkland.
- To ensure the needs of the Inuit community members are included in the strategy.

Of importance is the fact this meeting discussion took place prior to the change in project scope, therefore many of the initiatives were modified through the work plan to better align with the revised focus.

EXPANDED RESEARCH

Primary Research

Further conversation was held with key organizations and government representatives who were not present nor included in the first round of data gathering. The primary intent of these sessions was to share the key learnings and observations from the first round to better achieve the following:

- Expand the awareness and knowledge of the challenges facing the Indigenous community, as well as understand the opportunities that are present to make positive change, and
- Obtain “buy-in” and agreement to work collaboratively on the vision of program and service improvement.

Information gathering took the form of one-on-one interviews, focus groups and talking circles which included NeighborLink Parkland, Alberta Government (Human Services/Indigenous Relations), Native Friendship Centers (2), as well as several meetings with Metis community members and members from the Michel First Nation, Parkland Metis Local. The information garnered during these discussions has been integrated into the knowledge compiled during Phase One and is contained within in the What We Heard section on Page 17.

Updates were also provided to the attendees of the April 27, 2017 to advise them of the project scope change.

Secondary Research

External research during this phase consisted of best practice research, investigation of and application for synergistic funding, preliminary identification of potential collaborative partnerships for future strategic initiatives, demographic statistics specific to the Indigenous population of Parkland County, and additional recent publications pertaining to the issues facing Indigenous peoples.

Best Practice

With the consent of the Alberta Native Friendship Centers, the key findings and information from a province-wide study completed between 2015 - 2017 was utilized as the best practice research model. The study and resultant reports were conducted by In Synch Consulting Inc. (ISCI), providing them with first-hand knowledge and experience of the issues/opportunities that the Indigenous community members in these locations were facing.

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The study involved 15 smaller urban communities within Alberta², all having a Native Friendship Centre that provides services to varying degrees to the significant Indigenous population within their geographic area.

The objective of the Project was to determine the challenges, concerns and opportunities facing the Indigenous community members. As well, bringing the community together to develop a community plan that incorporated strategies that, if implemented, would improve program and service delivery and build relationships with this population base. Given the similarities in demographic and geographic scope, the research from this study was deemed to be the *most applicable* for comparative purposes.

It should be noted that the large centers within the province (Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Red Deer and Grande Prairie) also engaged in a similar study utilizing a different pool of consultants. The results of the large vs. smaller centers was undertaken at the end of the Project to ascertain variances, which were minimal. Additionally, ISCI was engaged in the portions of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre (Edmonton) plan that overlapped with the End Poverty Project of 2016; namely on Education and Employment, Housing and Child and Family Services.

The key learnings from these various reports were presented as best practice considerations and were used as a baseline of information for the strategic planning retreat held in November 2017. It is provided with the consent of the Alberta Native Friendship Association to assist with the work currently ongoing through the New Beginnings Project. Please refer to the Strategic Planning session section for further details.

Synergistic Funding/Partnerships

Funding under the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples - FCSS Spruce Grove submitted a formal request for funding on July 12, 2017 for assistance in the amount of \$100,000 over 5 years to assist with the continuation and implementation of the New Beginnings – Indigenous Engagement Improvement Strategy; a regional strategic response to the increasing need experienced by the Indigenous community members residing in Parkland County. Unfortunately, the proposal did not receive approval for funding.

Funding Resource for Aboriginal Programs & Agencies Guide - The referenced guide outlines an array of Community and Development resources that focus specifically on the Indigenous community in the areas of Community Development, Prevention and Education, Arts and Recreation, as well as Culture and Heritage. This information will be helpful with respect to individual projects and/or initiatives, particularly as strategic response projects that are targeted and developed going forward.

The Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund³ - A funding opportunity for communities that are working towards “reconciliACTION” through grassroots-community based projects. Funding, to a maximum of \$10,000, would be ideal for the costs associated with the Talking Circles Initiative.

Community Grants – Government of Alberta, Culture and Tourism - The Alberta Government has an extensive website containing information on various programs, grants, funding opportunities and synergistic resources that may apply to a number of Indigenous-focused initiatives going forward. The website link is noted below.

<https://www.culturetourism.alberta.ca/community/community-grants>

² St. Paul, Bonnyville, Lloydminster, Cold Lake, Hinton, Edson, Rocky Mountain House, Lac La Biche, Athabasca, Peace River, Slave Lake, Medicine Hat, Pincher Creek, Lethbridge, High Prairie

³ <https://www.downiewenjack.ca/reconciliations/apply-now>

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Partnerships

Opportunities to partner with like-minded organizations and/or the private sector are numerous, and many of these connections have been made throughout the New Beginnings Project; including but not limited to the following service agencies: Parkland School Division, various departments within the civic governments, Rotary Clubs, the Public Libraries, several of First Nations and the Metis Local.

Various strategic stakeholders varying from Project to Project, however through New Beginnings, the understanding and willingness to do so has been enhanced, making the connections easier to access.

Special Note: Relationships have been maintained, however progress in this area was delayed during the period of September to November 2017 in light of resourcing challenges within FCSS. With the position now being filled, efforts are underway to continue to further the initiatives and relationships that were initially established.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data with respect to the Indigenous population living in the major communities within the boundaries of Parkland County is difficult to establish given the migratory nature of the individuals, the lack of accurate data capture methods, and the reluctance of many to participate in census gathering, and/or to identify as Indigenous. The information that was gathered is summarized in the tables below. More detailed data by location is included within the PowerPoint presentation attached to this report.

**Table 1: Indigenous Population
2011/2016 Census Data by Location**

Geographic Area	Male Gender	Female Gender	Total
Parkland County	1075	1030	2100
City of Spruce Grove	1280	1340	2620
Town of Stony Plain	530	600	1130
TOTAL			5850

**Table 2: Indigenous Population
2011/2016 Census Data by Cohort**

Geographic Area	First Nation	Metis	Inuit	Other
Parkland County	645	1375	40	40
City of Spruce Grove	1005	1530	50	20
Town of Stony Plain	480	610	20	10

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The general consensus of the strategic planning participants was that given the factors noted above, the number of Indigenous community members is likely understated. For instance, in light of the recent ruling in the Daniels case⁴, many Metis people are stepping forward to reclaim their heritage and/or discover their ancestry. Additionally, members of the disenfranchised Michel First Nation⁵ reclaimed their First Nation status in 1985 and are working hard to reclaim their land base just north of Spruce Grove.

Pertinent Recent Reports

The amount of literature on socio-economic issues and Indigenous peoples is significant, however several additional reports were accessed to build out the knowledge acquired during Phase One. Those reports are detailed below, with electronic copies having been forward to FCSS Spruce Grove throughout the Project for reference and/or resource purposes.

- Canadian Housing First Toolkit
- Homes for Women Report (www.homesforwomen.ca)
- Housing First Fact Sheet
- Family Reconnect Toolkit
- Funding Resource for Aboriginal Programs & Agencies
- Exploring Effective Systems Responses to Homelessness
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2016-2017 Report on Plans and Priorities
- Reconciliation – A Work in Progress Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Mental Health and Addictions Interventions for Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Practical Strategies for Frontline Providers – Canadian Observatory for Homelessness
- Addictive Behaviors Among Aboriginal People in Canada
- Aboriginal Peoples – Fact Sheet for Canada
- Beyond Recovery_ Colonization Health and Healing for Indigenous
- Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) Community Plan 2016
- 150 Ways to Reconciliation

INDIGENOUS AWARENESS TRAINING

The training that was delivered in Phase One was once again facilitated twice to a diverse group of frontline workers on July 7, 2017 and October 24, 2017 and again to the tri-region municipal officials on January 24, 2018. All sessions were very well received and aided significantly in expanding the knowledge and understanding amongst those who participated. Copies of the participant lists are held by FCSS.

ISCI has been approached by other organizations in the region for similar awareness training and separate engagements will be entered into in this regard. In addition, a training session that provides an overview of historical trauma and its impact on client behavior is being offered through a partnership with Spruce Grove FCSS, Stony Plain FCSS and Native Counselling Services of Alberta. This session will be held on March 2, 2018 with presenter Dr. Patti LaBoucane-Benson).

⁴ Daniels v Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development) 2016 SCC 12 is a case of the Supreme Court of Canada, ruling that Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians" for the purpose of s 91 of the Constitution Act, 1867.

⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/michel-first-nation-recognition-1.4234214>

NEW BEGINNINGS

An Indigenous Engagement Improvement Strategy

Phase Two

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

November 29, 2017



Bringing together a diverse and committed group of community leaders was viewed as being critical in achieving the outcomes planned for this Project. As such, a diverse group of stakeholders convened on November 29, 2017 to review the key findings from the Project, and therefrom develop a number of specific actionable initiatives that if implemented, would improve the engagement with Indigenous community members living in Parkland County. A special thank you is extended to Elder Phillip Campiou for his wisdom and teachings throughout the day, and to all participants for their input and commitment to the process.

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Introductions and Overview

- ❑ Opening Prayer and Smudge: Elder Phillip Campiou
- ❑ Introductions – Round Table Input
 - Name and position
 - Experience with the issues at hand

Project Overview

- High level overview of New Beginnings Project
- Phase One/Phase Two
- Objectives & Outcomes
- Best Practice Research Findings
- What Did We Hear?
 - Challenges and Barriers
 - Observations, Key Learnings
- Asset Mapping
- Initiatives for Consideration

Participant Feedback and Suggestions

- Open dialogue and response to Focus Questions
- Other considerations

Initiative Development

- Identification and Selection
- Small Group Workshop
 - Action Planning
- Large Group Sharing Circle
 - Presentation of initiatives
 - Additional Input

Closing Comments

- Next Steps
- Decision Making Process
- Internal/External Communication

A full PDF copy of the session’s information via PowerPoint presentation is attached to this report, however for clarity and simplicity purposes, certain sections are included below; namely: Best Practice Research, What we Heard, Opportunities for Improvement, and Potential Go Forward Initiatives.

Best Practice Research

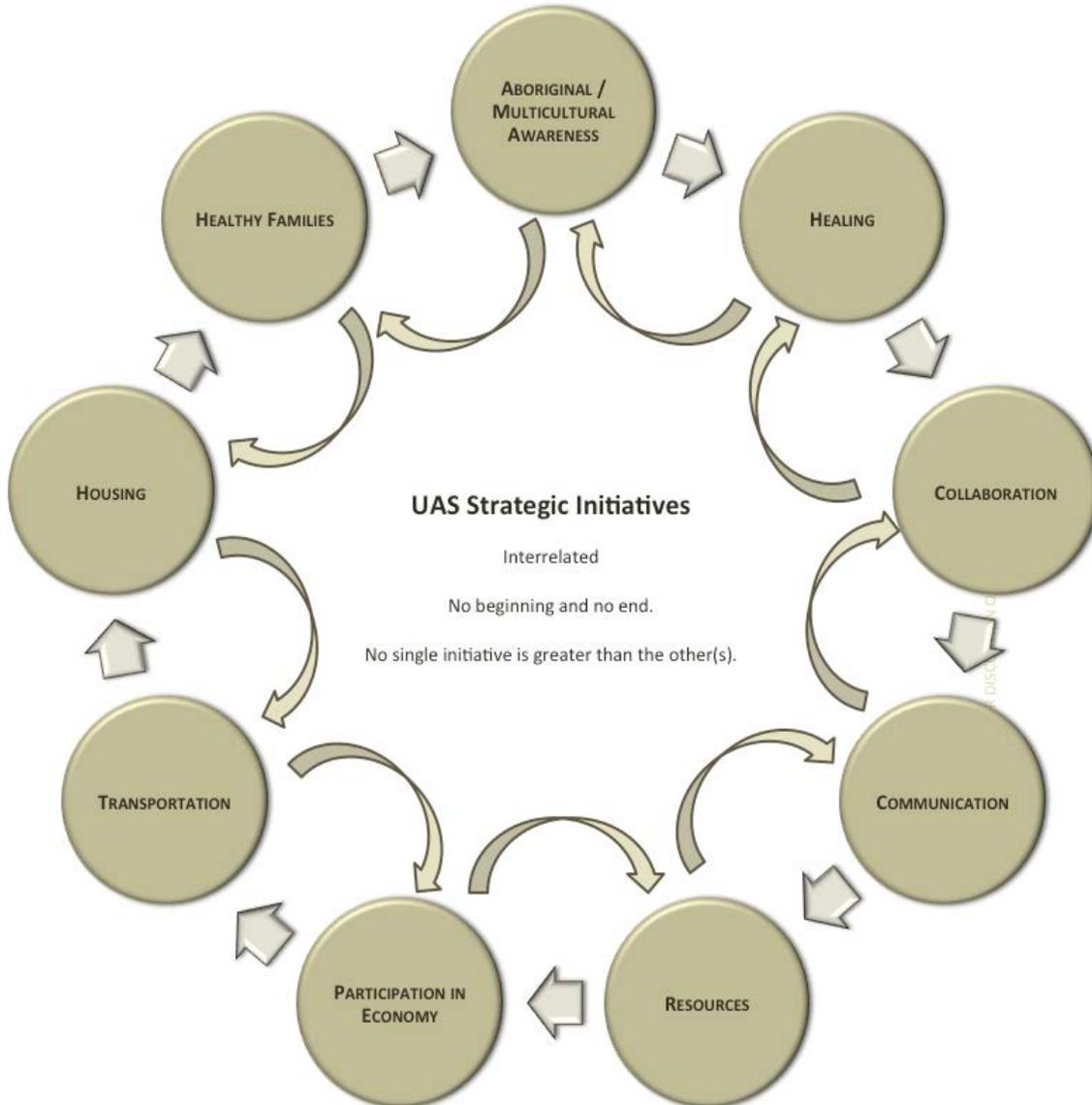
As previously mentioned, the recent work completed for the Alberta Native Friendship Centres of Alberta was utilized as the best practice baseline from which to set the context for the situational analysis and potential strategic initiatives development. The following are *excerpts* that are common to each of the Community Reports (i.e. the baseline of data that was used to formulate each of the community plans). Full reports for each community are available through www.anfca.com.

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Excerpt # 1: How Do We Get There - UAS⁶ Community Strategic Initiatives

The diagram below depicts eight overarching strategic initiatives. The initiatives are depicted in a circle and the arrows connecting them go in multiple directions to portray that there is no beginning and no end, additionally that no initiative is greater than the other(s).

Figure 1: UAS Community Strategic Initiatives



In performing the qualitative analysis of community data for the 15 communities, each set of community data was laid out individually and analyzed. Qualitative Data Analysis has the following elements:

- ❖ Iterative and Progressive: It is a cycle that keeps repeating. For example, when you are thinking about things you also start noticing new things in the data. You then collect and think about these new things. In principle the process is an infinite spiral.

⁶ UAS: Urban Aboriginal Strategy

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- ❖ Recursive: One part can call you back to a previous part. For example, while you are busy collecting things you might simultaneously start noticing new things to collect.
- ❖ Holographic: Each step in the process contains the entire process. For example, when you first notice things you are already mentally collecting and thinking about those things.

Within the analysis of this community plan's data clusters of common themes emerged. The qualitative analysis for this community demonstrated clustered focal areas (i.e. healing needs, affordable and safe housing needs, transportation barriers, barriers of cross cultural relationships, etc.).

Excerpt # 2: A Descriptor of each Initiative

The identified initiatives are explained in more detail below. Each is intended to act as a guide to improving community stakeholder cohesiveness; an essential element in moving the communities forward. It should be noted that a number of the descriptors also provide tactical suggestions for improvement/mitigation, and will be useful to the New Beginnings Project moving forward.

Strategic Initiative - Aboriginal and Multicultural Awareness

When individuals from differing cultural backgrounds interact, there is often miscommunication, misunderstanding, and frustration. These lead to unfortunate circumstances that result in racism, stereotyping, and animosity. These obstacles can be overcome by making all parties more culturally sensitive. It is important for people to recognize how cultural backgrounds affect individual perceptions and actions; and how cultural awareness can improve the relationship between people from differing cultural backgrounds.

- Aboriginal awareness for mainstream Canadians should include at a minimum:
 - Definition(s) of the Culture and why it is important to appreciate and recognize Canada's First Peoples and their distinct cultures,
 - Historical Aboriginal Non-Aboriginal Relations (non-westernized version), and
 - Contemporary overview of Aboriginal people.
- Expanded Aboriginal and Multicultural Awareness for schools is necessary and must include local/regional volunteers and stakeholder agency participation.
- More local/regional events to showcase positive contributions of the Aboriginal people in Canada and more importantly at a community level.
- Recapture of traditional language and customs.

Strategic Initiative – Healing

Healing is a dynamic and empowering process that evolves through learning (what to do and what not to do). Regardless of the healing process chosen by a community, the goal of healing is to restore a sense of balance and wellness within community at both an individual level and at a holistic level. Community healing processes become an exploration of relationships and of the underlying causes that led to harm and trauma experiences (historically and currently). Underlying issues in the Aboriginal community include the essential desire to heal oneself and one's community in the following focal areas:

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- | | |
|--|---|
| ❖ Addiction, | ❖ Loss of culture/cultural identity |
| ❖ Indian Residential School Experience | ❖ Aftermath of colonization |
| ❖ Overrepresentation in Justice System/Jails/Gangs | ❖ Breach of trust |
| ❖ Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women | ❖ Fragmented self-determination |
| ❖ Institutionalized traumas | ❖ Depression |
| ❖ Family and domestic dynamic | ❖ Lack of Self-esteem |
| ❖ Grief and Loss | ❖ Poverty |
| ❖ Mental illness | ❖ Suicide |
| ❖ Lack of capacity | ❖ Abuse/Violence and related trauma (sexual, verbal, mental, physical, lateral) |

The list presented is not collectively exhaustive as recognizing the need for healing evolves, so too shall the list of focused healing areas require attention.

Strategic Initiative – Collaboration

Collaboration (i.e. coalitions, task forces, commissions, etc.) is a powerful alternative to conventional means for effecting change, conventional groups and organizations tend to be structured vertically (decisions are made at the top authority is disbursed from within the hierarchy). Collaborative groups, by contrast, are structured horizontally. Leadership, to the extent that it exists at all, is broadly distributed. Job titles and professional affiliations fade into the background and people derive their influence from having their ears to the ground, from being well-connected in the community, and from being engaged in a variety of diverse projects.

Collaborative efforts tend to be loosely structured, highly adaptive, and inherently creative. By creating spaces where connections are made, ideas are cross-fertilized, and collective knowledge is developed, collaborative teams generate rich opportunities for innovation. When the right people are brought together in constructive ways and with the appropriate information, they are able to create powerful visions and robust strategies for change.

Collaborative endeavors take many forms including (but not limited to):

- Public-private partnerships;
- Ad hoc alliances between otherwise independent organizations that span both the public and the private sectors;
- Citizen and community leaders analyze trends, develop alternative scenarios of the future, and establish recommendations and goals for the community;
- interagency collaborations aimed at improving services to children, families, and other members of a community;
- Digital networks designed to link various civic, educational, business, and governmental agencies;
- School-community partnerships designed to foster greater collaboration between secondary schools and key community institutions;
- Aboriginal focused interagency meetings;
- Networks events and coalitions; and,
- Regional collaborative efforts, where local governments and/or other stakeholders work together to promote economic development and service delivery.

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Strategic Initiative – Communication

An effective communication plan is an important component of this initiative as it provides the framework for ensuring information is shared with appropriate audiences on a timely basis and in the most effective manner. Internal knowledge transfer, public awareness of programs and services and their respective providers, participation in activities, media campaigns, launches and advertising promotions are all important elements of an overall communication plan.

Communication planning should never be considered an afterthought; rather developed in conjunction with an overall plan for all initiatives, programs, and activities going forward. Effective communication with external stakeholders will help in attracting potential funding, which in turn will assist in the delivery of the initiatives necessary to better the urban Aboriginal population and the communities as a whole. Furthermore, open and candid internal communication will build goodwill amongst the stakeholders and aid in meeting the requirements of accountability and transparency.

A detailed communications plan should be developed to include the following:

- Agency Literacy - understanding the differences in acronyms and terminology to ensure the appreciation of the existing services,
- Aboriginal Program and Service-focused attention on interagency communication,
- Promotion of two-way communication between and amongst:
 - various agencies and service providers, program and services recipients, community groups, government bodies, First Nations and Metis organizations, various, advisory boards and committees, and the community at large.
 - potential external stakeholders (municipal, provincial, federal governments, industry, and special interest groups).
- A tracking system designed for community compliments and complaints to ensure such matters are being addressed on a regular basis.
- A variety of communication avenues (press releases, newsletters, advertisements, etc.) and targeted messages to accommodate the various projects/initiatives.
- An annual community open house session to ensure that stakeholders have an opportunity to learn of on-going and planned projects and are given the option to provide feedback and/or input.
- The appointment of a skilled spokesperson (public relations training required) to be responsible for designing and conveying all forms of external communiqué particularly those pertaining to government, special interest groups, industry and/or media.

Strategic Initiative – Resourcing

Many initiatives fail to achieve full potential due in part to inadequate planning or an under estimation of the resources required to fulfill the requirements of the plan. Ensuring that the various types of necessary resources are in place to deliver on each of the strategic initiatives is critical to the successful outcome of each. Such Resources include, but are not limited to:

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- **Human Capital:** acquiring the collective skills, knowledge, or other intangible assets of individuals (voluntarily or through financial means) that can assist with the effective development and implementation of certain elements of a strategic initiative. Examples would include Elders/Aboriginal Resource People, Youth, professionals and/or subject matter experts, existing staff members, practicum students etc. Identifying the appropriate needs will greatly enhance the selection process.
- **Infrastructure:** identifying the *appropriate* physical space is a fundamental underpinning to the successful delivery of certain programs and services. There are opportunities to partner with other agencies and organizations to make effective use of facilities, reach those in need and foster community collaboration. Ensuring that Aboriginal culture and protocol is incorporated into these venues is critical. In some instances, where physical space is not necessarily required or available; the use of computer technology can be the mechanism for interface. Understanding the best type of infrastructure for each initiative will greatly improve successful implementation.
- **Technology:** the use of technology enables organizations to interact with all of its stakeholders in a consistent and cost-effective manner. It has become the portal for information sharing and storage, making access to learning and knowledge transfer available to many that would not otherwise be able to attain such. Determining what technology and how best it can be used to disseminate information can greatly advance the progress of certain initiatives.

Ways and means in which technology can be used are:

- Computers, computer portals and labs for eLearning/simulation,
 - Computer programs and platforms for data capture and storage,
 - Social media sites for outreach/recipient contact,
 - Email (individual and share lists),
 - Video conferencing for internal meetings and external events,
 - Websites for information sharing, event planning etc., and
 - Training on the usage of technology and the need for safety strategies.
- **Financial:** before embarking on any initiative it will be incumbent on the planning team to ensure an adequate amount of funding has been secured and set aside to enable implementation. Understanding the elements noted above is a key component to this exercise. In addition to conventional government funding, there are other options of securing financial resources that should be explored, such as:
 - Specific and collective fund-raising events,
 - Corporate/individual sponsorship,
 - Volunteer participation,
 - Work experience/practicum programs,
 - Inter-agency collaboration, and
 - At a smaller urban community level there are challenges to getting fundraising efforts done where only a few large players (business/industry) exist to assist in donating funds.

Strategic Initiative - Effective Participation in the Economy

A number of studies over the past few years have shown that Aboriginal equality in Alberta's economy is "smart economics." Aboriginal economic participation promotes business development at the micro, small, and medium enterprise levels, as well as enhances personal and community well-being.

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In addition to boosting economic growth, investing in Aboriginal development produces a multiplier effect as this cohort would subsequently reinvest a large portion of their income in their families and communities. Unfortunately, these benefits have not fully translated into full economic participation as many continue to face obstacles when trying to obtain the necessary skills to enter the workforce or establish new business.

Participation in the economy means that Aboriginal Peoples have the skills, knowledge and training to secure, maintain and excel in a strong Canadian economy. It is generally accepted that increased participation in the economy is achieved by individuals having a suitable education, a skill set, life skills, self-advocacy skills and can access and utilize services/supports that reduce small challenges that create barriers, such as transportation and childcare. Among the biggest hurdles are educational/experience requirements, regulations and business conditions, as well as a lack of access to property rights, finance, training, technology, markets, mentors, and networks.

A collaborative effort is required to advance this economic opportunity through:

- **Financial Inclusion:** Support efforts to increase access to quality financial services, such as financial literacy, credit consulting, financing options.
- **Volunteerism:** Determining best ways to ensure motivation and participation and the various benefits derived from volunteering and working with others without financial strings and/or gains attached to the outcomes. Learning or developing skills, being part of the community, a sense of achievement, boost to career options, developing new interests and hobbies, meeting and working with diverse people, etc.
- **Awareness:** Highlight this population’s vital role in advancing economic development and encourage policy and programmatic support for businesses owned by Aboriginal people. Support NGOs, industry associations, and corporations advocating for policy and programmatic solutions that enable Aboriginal economic participation, including inheritance rights.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide capacity building, training, and mentoring programs to Aboriginal people of all ages, and equipping them with market information, entrepreneurship opportunities, and the necessary skills to attain economic independence. Liaise with various levels of the education system to provide curriculum equality, in-school educational liaisons, and work experience opportunities. Create partnerships with the corporate community to develop job-shadowing, mentoring programs, and other on-the-job work experience programs.
- **Focus on Youth:** Ensure that all efforts (as noted above) are tailored to attract the Aboriginal youth. They are the future.

Strategic Initiative - Healthy Families

It is recognized that the key to improving the economic status and overall well-being of Aboriginal people is to focus on cultivating a healthy home life and home environment. This is the foundation of a healthy, happy life. Unfortunately, the origins for the plight of many Aboriginal people are inherent in the myriad of events that occurred in past generations, much of the intergenerational effects remain today.

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Many social agencies are working in this area to rectify the situation, however with the issues being so deeply entrenched in past behavior, progress is slow. Moreover, the issues are intertwined with each other and therefore difficult to deal with as one-off solutions. Ensuring a collective approach to these issues is taken will yield a better result.

The following are suggestions for advancing this critical initiative.

- Honoring one’s heritage through cultural awareness and practice. Incorporating the teachings of Elders/Aboriginal Resource people into daily living.
- Providing awareness and promotion of ways to decrease gadget screen time.
- Providing awareness and self-care programs for basic physical and mental health conditions.
- Ensuring families are aware of the programs and service provider’s offerings.
- Healthy eating and active living.
- Participation in cultural activities, and traditional practices.
- Improving the access to addictions support and early intervention programs, utilizing traditional methods of healing.
- Ensuring access to affordable housing, transitional supports, and childcare.
- Public education about the “historical issues” that plague Aboriginal communities.
- Traditional Parenting Courses.

Strategic Initiative - Accessible Transportation

Transportation is an integral component of individual success in any society. It is the means integral to one’s ability to attend to the wide variety of appointments and tasks associated with basic living. Public and affordable transportation in the urban centres of Alberta, where the Aboriginal population tends to frequent, is inadequately attended to. Some programming and financial assistance can be obtained, depending on circumstances and financial resources, however the effort to obtain assistance for transportation is often insurmountable and leads to failures in numerous other basic life areas.

For example, one without access to affordable transportation cannot go to work, school, appointments; therefore, fail to meet other basic needs such as employment income, increased capacity, health requirements being attended to, etc. Furthermore, access to affordable and/or public transportation supports the social inclusion of low income, isolated, and those with mobility impairments. The costs associated with public transportation in less populated (smaller than cities) areas often outweigh a community’s ability to consider such efforts. However, alternatives may include:

- The use of volunteer drivers within community transport programs, which also creates opportunities for community engagement through volunteering (i.e. compensation for mileage but not for time);
- Coordination between/amongst stakeholders who do have resources to assist (find ways to overcome restrictive guidelines);
- Loaning of vehicles to community agencies;
- Community fundraising events to support transportation initiatives;
- Donations from passengers who can afford to pay;
- Sponsorship from industry/commercial/business; and
- Programs that foster car-pooling.

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Strategic Initiative – Housing

Adequately meeting the essentials of Urban Aboriginal housing needs requires a flexible, responsive and inclusive service delivery system. Improved quality of life for the Urban Aboriginal population will only be achieved through a commitment to acknowledge and honour the unique perspectives of Aboriginal community members and the stakeholders who assist them.

One of the major factors for moving to an urban centre is the lack of housing in a home community; however, the availability of secure, affordable housing in urban centres is not much better and can be riddled with additional barriers. Focused efforts must be made to move Aboriginal clients from a chronic state of crisis to a stable and independent position through providing safe and affordable living alternatives. Securing adequate housing to meet the family and cultural needs is one of the most significant barriers that Aboriginal community members face.

Targeted partnership efforts must be made in order to improve housing and housing supports that are required to enhance daily living. The following (while not an exhaustive list) provides numerous focal points to support this initiative (parts of the list are adapted from the Perspectives on the Housing First Program with Indigenous Participants June 2011 Research Project).

- Mentorship and/or a welcoming program to aid with adjustment;
- Life Skills Training that includes not only household budgeting and basic household maintenance/care requirements;
- Having a ‘team’ of stakeholders working with individuals who face multiple barriers;
- Providing supports that include access to Elders/Aboriginal Resource people for clients who want to incorporate that into their home lifestyle;
- In-home and informal stakeholder support visits;
- Ensure mental wellbeing is monitored (not just for those with mental illness and/or addictions, also to ensure loneliness and cross-culture shock is considered as part of the supports available);
- Offer housing supports for people without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance;
- Stakeholders offer robust support services to those who are recently housed or in transitional housing (these services are predicated by community member engagement, not coercion);
- Housing units targeted to ensure disabled and vulnerable homeless members of the community are well supported;
- Partnership and stakeholder arrangements ought to be implemented as either a project-based or scattered site model.
- Seek to transition those who are successful at rental housing to supporting them in obtaining homeownership. Ensure lessons learned from Métis Urban Housing and/or Treaty 7 Housing have been considered, both have had successes/failures in this venue.

ASSET MAPPING

Attempts were made to gather details on the communities within Parkland County, as well as the various programs and services available to the residents. While some information was collected via brochures and pamphlets it became apparent that this exercise would require a concerted effort at the tri-region level, and the New Beginnings Project’s budget simply did not permit for this to take place.

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For instance, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County utilize different methods to share information about their municipality (website, community profile and annual report).

Many of the service agencies expressed frustration in not knowing where to locate information and/or the lack of up-to-date data.

WHAT WE HEARD

The following is a culmination of the input gathered during the primary research phases of the Project. All view points were captured, albeit in many instances common view points were shared, and as such, are noted as a collective comment. Note the similarity between the information gathered for this Project and that compiled as part of the best practice research component.

This feedback was reviewed and discussed at the Strategic Planning Retreat, as a basis for understanding *the needs specific to the Indigenous residents of Parkland County*. The following pages contain the comments presented (and are also included in the PowerPoint presentation).

Challenges, Barriers, Observations, Key Learnings

- Indigenous community members still not aware of programs and services available in the community.
- Not aware of the referral service between service providers and the First Nations.
- Mainstream is ignorant to the cultural and spiritual components of Indigenous peoples.
- Relationships with Indigenous peoples need to be built within the community in order facilitate meaningful partnerships.
- Little knowledge sharing between Indigenous and mainstream to create understanding.
- Diverse cultural backgrounds. Need to be understood and respected.
- Transportation within the community and from one community to another. Not able to reliably get to essential services. Hard to find drivers.
- Trust – very important for those who fear judgment from community service agents. This goes both ways.
- Length of time to build a trust relationship can take 3 years minimum.
- Racism, stereotyping, prejudice, biases.
- Dealing with isolation. Not feeling welcome, transportation issues, rural environment, weather conditions.
- Lack of Indigenous front-line workers – no recruitment strategy.
- Lack of affordable housing – issues with landlords.
- Lack of youth workers available and not enough role models.
- Jurisdictional Issues, biases in Government funding/policy - a disconnect between municipal, provincial and federal funding/criteria.
- Perception and stigma – goes both ways, (non) Indigenous stigmas.
- Community is focused on business and economic (not social) betterment.
- Funding for programs is short term – need long term commitments.
- Complacency - people/corporations working on these programs lose motivation – get tired of the bureaucracy. Becomes a coping mechanism.
- Generational issues – younger generations are disconnected – many have lost their culture, language and identity.

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- Elders are not respected for their wisdom and historical knowledge.
- Red tape - hurdles/hoops to jump through. Hard to work through the system.
- Need more affordable and accessible childcare. Need babysitters for parents receiving medical treatments or travelling for specialist appointments.
- Unemployed/underemployed or uneducated and not sure where to start. Not given a chance to prove ourselves.
- Wait times for services - Family doctors, therapist etc.
- Lack of specialists in the community.
- Change in family dynamics – single parenting, family separation, transient population.
- Complex needs - family violence, sexual abuse, medical, physical impairment, and mental health issues. Literacy and life skills are needed.
- Agencies are overburdened and lack capacity. Unable to spend the appropriate amount of time with the clients.
- Additional Indigenous awareness training is needed.
- Working relationships between service agencies needs to be improved.
- Agencies need to better understand what each other do and how they can work together for the betterment of the client.
- Lack of communication and collaboration between service providers.
- There is some duplication of service however the need is such that the services are required. The duplication is in the cost of the program administrative burden.
- No true case management approach. No time or mandate for follow-up to track behavioral changes.
- Inadequate funding – unable to meet the fundamental essentials of all clients.
- Skepticism/Perceived tokenism:
 - Leadership commitment at the First Nations and municipal levels.
 - Front line workers wondering - will things actually change?
- Systemic issues/constraints – many beyond our control.
- Lack of political will at all levels of government (Federal, Provincial, Civic, First Nation).
- Relationship with/knowledge of the Metis and Inuit peoples is severely lacking.
- Lack of statistical data.
- Homelessness is a problem that needs serious focus.

Opportunities for Improvement

As part of the data gathering process, participants were asked to provide suggestions for improvements and/or ideas that would move the initiative of building relationship and improving programs and services forward. The following are the ideas that came from this exercise and have been loosely clustered into areas of commonality in an effort to create over-arching themes. It should be noted that no assessment as to the validity of the concepts was undertaken at this stage as the objective was to merely gather the suggestions for further consideration.



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Time constraints did not permit the working group the opportunity to determine a name or title to the theme, and as such they are identified by color coding. Workshop participants reviewed the information and added to the ideas based on their background knowledge as well as from the information presented during the session. These additional ideas are titled “Add-ons” and appear at the end of each cluster.

Initiatives for Consideration - Theme Yellow

- Early intervention with our clientele
- Lower the caseloads so worker can dig into the root cases
- Hire more workers –justified based on the increased demand
- Indigenous hiring practices staff/advocates
- More culturally appropriate programming (all cultures) (8)
- More programs and services for youth and seniors
- More focus on the best interest of the child/children
- Gather Elders and leaders from each community to help develop programs (8)
- Involve Elders in teachings in various community programs (8)
- Lived experience workshops
- Mentorship programs with past recipients (1)
- Include a “cultural” and community -social development focus in all that is done
- We should look at setting up mobile offices (3)
- We need to develop a program to assist with transitioning from/to Reserve (3)
- Introduce a “cultural” component to all activities or programs
- Having an Indigenous liaison at the municipal level would be very beneficial (8)
- Implementation of a Client Management system (Critical Connections)

Add-ons from Session

- Protocol on how to approach the Elders and Leadership at the First Nations
- 811 Health Link should have a nurse that specializes in the Indigenous population
- Something for pregnant homelessness
- A resource list specific to First Nations, Metis and Inuit (i.e. mental health, supports, residential school experiences 60s scoop, crisis line)
- Family Resource Centre trained to deliver culturally-appropriate home visits (Health for Two programs)
- Acknowledge the Indigenous leaders and groups that have contributed to the history of the area (2)

Initiatives for Consideration - Theme Green

- Additional Cultural sensitivity training (2)
- Further professional development (i.e. interviewing skills, recommended reading)
- Educate those living on-reserves to who we are and what we do (2)
- Engage in a broad cultural sensitivity program – not just geared to specific culture
- Understand tribal differences – don’t group all Indigenous people together
- Reduce the skepticism from the Indigenous community of outside assistance (1)
- Education on the true history of Canada and the local area (4)
- Indigenous awareness training at City Council and management levels (8)
- Greater understanding of Tribal/Metis funding arrangements

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Add-ons from Session

- Monthly or bi-monthly circles focused on training, lunch and learns, story telling for workers in the tri-region as well as open community members
- Indigenous resource leader
- City needs to include Indigenous celebrations on the events calendar

Initiatives for Consideration - *Theme Purple*

- Link better with Child and Family Services to improve our relationship with the First Nations communities
- Develop a relationship and working knowledge of the programs and services of Metis Nation of Alberta
- Ensure the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) are weaved into the work we do
- The Indigenous voice should be considered as part of the decision-making process (6)
- Recognition of Treaty 6 lands First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples at all meetings (4)
- Knowledge sharing with and amongst service agencies (1)
- A listing of Indigenous programs & services on all websites
- More effective communication and collaboration amongst service providers/partners (1)
- Improve relationships with all cultural groups – focus first on those that are receptive
- Create and implement an effective communication strategy
- Ensure the voice of the Indigenous community members is heard (5)
- Build collaboration amongst service providers and all Indigenous groups/governments (4)
- “It is not the place of mainstream service agencies to develop these programs, but to support them (partnerships) in the implementation”

Initiatives for Consideration - *Theme Blue*

- More descriptive data on each community and their local programs
- Determine and assess what is already available
- Knowledge of available resources and agencies
- Expand/implement a “Navigators Program”
- Greater use of mobile/portable services
- Demographic tracking
- Benchmarking and on-going client tracking

Initiatives for Consideration - *Theme Red*

- Multi-purpose Cultural Gathering Place (11)
- Food Bank project/mobile unit (7)
- Greater opportunity with the Libraries (1)
- Accessible affordable transportation (6)
- Expanded work with the School Boards (1)
- Elder/Youth program
- Talking Circles with all sectors of the community (5)
- Housing of all types is a serious problem - look at (expand) the Housing First initiative (8)

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- Healing Garden (Indigenous plants) (3)
- Display the Treaty Six and Metis Nation flags (5)
- Celebration of Metis Week

Add-ons from Session

- Ensure initiatives are strength-based (3)
- On-going talking circles (need to be consistent and accessible)
- Daycare
- Classrooms need to be more inclusive
- Indigenous cemetery
- Big Bus - book mobile
- Opportunities with the Museum
- Rename Highway 16 (2)
- Name a park or various locations in the county using Cree words – involve the Indigenous communities in doing so (1)
- Celebrate local Indigenous artists (1)

Initiatives for Consideration - Theme Gray

- Campaign against community apathy
- STOP TALKING and START DOING! (2)
- No more studies - money should be spent providing services

Initiatives for Consideration - Theme Gold

- Greater level of transparency on the use of funds (4)
- Revamp Federal/Provincial/Municipal funding models – needs based funding (1)
- Greater understanding of Tribal funding arrangements
- Shared resources amongst agencies for back office duties
- Partnering with other “like-minded” agencies on funding proposals
- “Given the complexity and severity of the need the Federal and Provincial governments need to step in. If reserves are unsafe, Aboriginal people should be able to leave and not be denied benefits.” (2)

Potential Go-Forward Initiatives

Taking into consideration all the information and key learnings from the day, the participants were asked to select 8 of the initiatives that resonated most with them in terms of being *meaningful*, *achievable* and if acted on, would demonstrate *measurable accomplishment*. Using a facilitation method known as Dotmocracy⁷, each participant was given 8 dots to identify the ideas that met the above criteria, and from their perspective, were high in priority. One dot per participant/idea was placed on the initiatives of most significance.

⁷ Dotmocracy: an established facilitation method used to describe voting with dot stickers. Participants vote on their chosen options using a limited number of stickers. This sticker voting approach is a form of cumulative voting that leverages the collective wisdom of the team, provides an equal way for all the voices to be heard and have accountability in prioritizing key issues.

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The numbers that follow the concepts listed in the Initiatives for Consideration section represent the number of times the idea received a dot. From this, 8 potential initiatives emerged as being of priority.

- 
-  **Community Indigenous Awareness training**
 -  **Cultural Gathering Place**
 -  **Food Security Mobile Unit**
 -  **Wholistic Housing**
 -  **Indigenous Voice in Decision Making**
 -  **Knowledge-keeper/Elder Involvement**
 -  **Talking Circles**
 -  **Accessible Transportation**

This by no means is meant to suggest that the remaining initiatives are not important or worthy of pursuit, but rather the collective viewpoint that the top 8 were of priority to terms of the noted criteria. Several of the concepts are currently underway (i.e. initial Indigenous Awareness training, School Board and Library partnerships, and historical educational curriculum) and others can be incorporated into the strategies identified above. Moreover, there are a couple that simply are beyond the scope of this Project (i.e. Federal/Provincial/Municipal funding models and Demographic tracking).

Action Planning

Workshop participants self-selected two initiatives that held significant importance to them, or to which they had specific knowledge of. Smaller working groups (four - five individuals) were formed to further analyze the opportunities, using a guided action planning format. Again, time restrictions and participant fatigue allowed for a cursory assessment only, and in some cases the group was unable to work through all of the questions.

Notwithstanding, the exercise was sufficient to create a framework from which to further develop the concepts. In any case each idea is deserving of and will require a comprehensive assessment and business case prior to moving forward. Each of the initiatives are detailed on the pages following.



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Initiative: Community Indigenous Awareness Training “CIAT”

Possible Slogan or Image:

The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:	The Limitations associated with this initiative are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from community leadership and people in the community • Resources are now available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex issues hard to narrow down, prioritize • Preconceived notions “stigma” • Actual negative experiences within the community i.e. business/individuals
The Benefits of addressing this issue are:	The Dangers of Inaction will result in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community understanding • Best practices • Increased compassion • Indigenous community may feel more valued • Better service delivery i.e. essential services • Having information for all age groups and levels of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthentic presentation • “Watered” down version
Possible Accomplishments	Measurable Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To present 3 training opportunities to 3 major target audiences / topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking all the above into consideration, we are committed to the following measurable accomplishment by April 1st – March 31st – 3 presentations with 1 focus area within FCSS and/or audiences/topic • Is having the actual training delivered September 2018 first training of three
Specific Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the Awareness Training • Work out logistics i.e. time/place/ with no cost or low cost • Creating marketing strategy and who is the target markets • Find funding • Train the trainer workshop • Create a financial forecast (budget) <p>Decide on viable (actual) person(s) that is going to be a part of the Awareness training (train the trainer)</p>	

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Initiative: Community Indigenous Awareness Training “CIAT”

Implementing Team:		Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCSS offices • Indigenous communities 	Q1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create content/training/have conversations • Create an Request for Proposals • Research/call to action for development of project/training • Create a budget 	
	Q2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery of awareness training 	
	Q3:		
	Q4:		
	2018/19:		
	2019/20:		
Resources Required:		Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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Initiative: Cultural Gathering Place

Possible Slogan or Image:

<p>The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community • Communication • Connectedness • Family connection center • TLC • Community Halls • Libraries • FCSS 	<p>The Limitations associated with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Facility / Amenities • Accessibility / Transportation • Limits of smudging. There is still no knowledge of smudging in public places – we need to create awareness
<p>The Benefits of addressing this issue are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion • Connectedness • Communication • Acknowledgement of original peoples of the lands i.e. through having a healing garden • Cultural experiences create a sense of belonging 	<p>The Dangers of Inaction will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if nobody comes (lack of buy-in) • Cultural cliques i.e. Sense of control • Negative community feedback
<p>Possible Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space / where? • Healing Garden • Gathering places • Building? • A cultural center • This gathering place doesn't have to be in one location – it can be spread out throughout the tri-communities • Ceremonial grounds i.e. a place for sweats/sundances. If aboriginal people do so choose – It's okay if they choose not to – accessibility for those living off reserve 	<p>Measurable Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Specific Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space – How big should it be? Multiple locations? • Community engagement (what do people think of the idea?) • Different sectors of communities (aboriginal people x Cree, Mohawk Cree, Stony, Nakoda Sioux) other cultural people – aboriginal farming community • Regional - Parkland, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain • Michel Band • Mobile Center • Healing garden in honour of residential school survivors • Building for tea and bannock, beading, storytelling, circles • Town center type • Multicultural centre? 	

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Initiative: Cultural Gathering Place

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting Committee • Municipalities, Dignitaries • Elders and Representatives 	Q1:	Meeting for the idea of a gathering place (Notice of meeting / community input 1) Stony Plain, 2) Spruce Grove, 3) Parkland, 4) Aboriginal Communities
	Q2:	
	Q3:	Develop the group / committee who will start the planning processes
	Q4:	Look at possibility of locations of the cultural gathering place – do some research Develop Logo / Banner Defining a Philosophy, the values/mandate purpose Activities (preliminary) and experiences (i.e. smudging experience, not necessarily an activity, teachings)
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	
Money - \$1,000,000 Time 5 Years		

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Initiative: Accessing Food Security

Possible Slogan or Image:

<p>The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have food bank • Giving weekly food • Serve other community food bank programs i.e. schools • Having community kitchens in Spruce Grove and Stony Plain 	<p>The Limitations associated with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No community gardens in Spruce Grove, Wabamun • Hard to get a mobile unit across all of parkland county that keeps food safe. • High amount of resources volunteers / time/ space / vehicle • Anonymity for clients – can’t have food bank truck show up at their house
<p>The Benefits of addressing this issue are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security provided to families (more access) 	<p>The Dangers of Inaction will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition • People continue to go hungry • Increased crime • Greater disparity
<p>Possible Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help Paul Band create their own food bank service • Involving the Metis community to offset transportation barrier • Have a partnership with all bands/first nation community to share costs of transportation – to offset barriers with food access. • Build a “Healing Garden” program for Metis community. • Having land donating for “Garden” project 	<p>Measurable Results</p>
<p>Specific Actions</p>	

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Initiative: Accessing Food Security

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
	Q1:	
	Q2:	
	Q3:	
	Q4:	
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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Initiative: Housing

Possible Slogan or Image: Building a Home 20/20

<p>The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:</p>	<p>The Limitations associated with this initiative are:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized need • Relationship w Homeward Trust/YMCA • Representation of stakeholders • Indigenous Homelessness Report • Federal government backing for housing initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstanding regarding affordable housing • No transitional or permanent supportive housing in the community • Lack of funding • Cross jurisdictional service providers
<p>The Benefits of addressing this issue are:</p>	<p>The Dangers of Inaction will result in:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have safe, secure affordable housing • Social determinants of health are met • Healthier families • More engaged, productive, contributing residents • Stay in community – linked to family/natural supports • More cross-cultural and neighbourly understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we don't get it right, could be more tension • Maintaining the housing – education around this creating pride/ownership • Community buy in addresses NIMBY • Awareness of the definition of Indigenous homelessness
<p>Possible Accomplishments</p>	<p>Measurable Results</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building with the social development workers / health front line staff • Ensuring support system is in place i.e. mental health / addiction supports / lifeskills • Interim Indigenous Awareness Training for Landlords, Realtors – build relationships • Link to cultural Friendship Center • Community focused housing designs • Community economic opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking all the above into consideration, we are committed to the following measurable accomplishment by November 2020: Hold focus groups to get an authentic perspective regarding what is needed. • Create a vision and concrete plan.
<p>Specific Actions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Business Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compile data ○ Funding ○ Employment & training opportunities ○ Context/content experts ○ Environmental design ○ Land use bylaws • Identify off-reserve / on reserve band members to attend focus groups • Hold focus groups to gather information regarding what is needed i.e. type of building, ideal location, supports needed • Create a vision for a permanent supportive housing building. 	

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Initiative: Housing

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
	Q1:	
	Q2:	
	Q3:	
	Q4:	
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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Initiative: Knowledge keeper and Elder Involvement with Cultural Programming

Possible Slogan or Image:

<p>The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the right time – readiness • Strong interest and demand from many levels • Elders and knowledge keepers are willing to participate and share knowledge 	<p>The Limitations associated with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not aware of protocol of what to ask, the need to be specific in request • Not aware of what knowledge keeper and elders can offer to the community
<p>The Benefits of addressing this issue are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of knowledge • Preservation and practice of culture 	<p>The Dangers of Inaction will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger of Offending • Danger of being afraid to offend – and not do anything!
<p>Possible Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal days (cultural celebrations) • Bringing community together • Are there Elders on the Aboriginal Days Planning committee for the Tri-Region? • Change to Alberta Education Curriculum 	<p>Measurable Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking all the above into consideration, we are committed to the following measurable accomplishment by 2019: Elder in Residence Program
<p>Specific Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Elder in Residence Program at (Spruce Grove) Library (expand to other tri-region libraries?) • Honour diversity. We are all people of God. Share and celebrate all cultures as a framework (underlying values of all of our efforts) • Offer teaching about treaty rights 	

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Initiative: Knowledge keeper and Elder Involvement with Cultural Programming

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britney Robinson – Spruce Grove Public Library • Phillip Campiou – Elder 	Q1:	Develop Proposal / Project Plan Define program – audience, frequency, age group, budget, plan Develop as a template so program can be easily shared. Partner with Elder – is there an elder interested? Determine space Get Board approval, municipal approval Implement program Utilize momentum of Aboriginal Days in June to promote/gain support
	Q2:	
	Q3:	
	Q4:	
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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Initiative: Talking Circle

Possible Slogan or Image: Circle of Hope

The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:	The Limitations associated with this initiative are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already started • Information sharing • Personal processes • Builds bridges • Community building • Relationship building • Solves problems • Resolves with respect • Uses empathy and tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community participation • Vulnerability • Don't want to be open • Bad perceptions • Information not private • Not properly trained • Not properly conducted
The Benefits of addressing this issue are:	The Dangers of Inaction will result in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solves / resolves issues • Shares perspective • You are heard • You are understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not properly conducted or respected • Not confidential • Power imbalances • Lack of trust
Possible Accomplishments	Measurable Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-year period • Expanding circles (Schools, criminal matters, spousal and family issues) • Incorporate restorative justice model in community • Ongoing training to conduct circles • Identify community members to lead them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking all the above into consideration, we are committed to the following measurable accomplishment by 2018, incorporate circles – getting proper people trained, getting circles started •
Specific Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing leadership in the community • Capacity for leadership • Training and support of programs • Proper resources (curriculum/Elders/stories) e.g. “gently whispering the circle back” • Financial backing/partners/facilities • Transportation • Facilitation costs/expenses 	

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Initiative: Talking Circle

Implementing Team:		Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members (Paul First Nation) • RCMP Community Policing section • Family services • Restorative justice Representatives • Band Council/Health Centre (INAC) 	Q1:	Start time in as little as 3 months	
	Q2:		
	Q3:		
	Q4:		
	2018/19:		
	2019/20:		
Resources Required:		Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown – depends on location community • Time 3 Month – 3 Years 			

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Initiative: Transportation

Possible Slogan or Image:

<p>The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional transit plan underway • Access food bank/services, jobs, schools • Have volunteer drivers in community (i.e. NeighbourLink Parkland) • Examples of initiatives - Winnipeg, murdered and missing Indigenous women, Facebook influence, Safe Rider for Everyone 	<p>The Limitations associated with this initiative are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs could be prohibitive • Timing to help people access services faster (where is Paul First Nation at the Transit Plan Table?) • Scheduling • Need to get buy-in with doctors, other service providers- scheduling flexibility is needed
<p>The Benefits of addressing this issue are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People connect to community services, work (economic benefits), relocate if they choose • Engage youth • Partnership between bands and community therefore shows need 	<p>The Dangers of Inaction will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to operate • Cost to pay the ticket • Not used • Not understanding who wins, who loses. Most vulnerable are lost
<p>Possible Accomplishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really needs resolving: road conditions on Paul First Nation. Fix them! • School buses to be used? • Van services from PFN to regular transit system. • A community bus (social enterprise to fund it; rent to teams i.e. minor hockey with logo! • Have a bus or some form of transportation connecting Spruce Grove and Stony Plain 	<p>Measurable Results</p>
<p>Specific Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what is happening with regional transit plan? Timing and inclusion of local First Nations in are to get to Edmonton, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. • What is school district’s view of using their buses? • Are there team buses? • What is reasonable cost? (for bus pass) • Communities to declare/accept that transportation is an essential service? Human right? (to access services). • Find out how money allocated to municipalities can be spent e.g. goes to clear driveways? can it go elsewhere too? May need more money. • Manage expectations - pick a starting point. Will not meet everyone’s needs. Find a middle ground. • Research “what wheels” might be available for different times of day, different days e.g. Handibuses, team buses, school team vans, Spruce Grove Saints bus. 	

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Initiative: Transportation

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from agencies; Primary Care Network (re: medical appointments). • Community lobby group to move along faster 	Q1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find out regional transit strategy. ○ What do councils think and what will they do? ○ Lobby and apply pressure. ○ Timing are there other solutions? ○ Team bus.
	Q2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talk with First Nations about what they need and their priorities? ○ Is there symmetry between chief and council and membership? ○ Are there specialized services needed / available i.e. youth, a late bus, car and driver system to help kids to play sports?
	Q3:	
	Q4:	
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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Initiative: Indigenous Voice in Decision Making

Possible Slogan or Image:

The Advantages to dealing with this initiative are:		The Limitations associated with this initiative are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve decision making in cultural aspects within Treaty 6 and elsewhere in Alberta • Honour all members of the community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of getting Elders involved (dealing with trust issues) • Gaining “buy in” from the elected officials 	
The Benefits of addressing this issue are:		The Dangers of Inaction will result in:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community having a broader understanding of Indigenous culture • Build trust • Outline benefits to community 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks of broken promises – past and future • Ensure right levels start the conversation Chiefs & Mayor 	
Possible Accomplishments		Measurable Results	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a declaration (policy) (Agreement) similar to Edmonton • Embed an Indigenous perspective into decision-making • Active consultation through partnership 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking all the above into consideration, we are committed to the following measurable accomplishment – Declaration (or other policy-based direction) • Declaration / Policy exists and is followed 	
Specific Actions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Edmonton’s declaration with Tri-Municipalities, the surrounding First Nations, Metis Local and Indigenous community members • Get buy-in • Reflect tri-region, Enoch and Cree nation and Paul Band Stony language • Encourage Councils and Administration to adopt a declaration or policy embedding Indigenous perspective in decision-making 			

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Initiative: Indigenous Voice in Decision Making

Implementing Team:	Timeline:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tri Region Municipal Staff/Mayors and Chiefs • Elders • Traditional Knowledge Holders 	Q1:	Design similar declaration to what Edmonton has done with all First Nations community surrounding Parkland County (include Spruce Grove, Stony Plain municipalities).
	Q2:	Seek municipal councils and first nations leadership support. Develop implementation plan.
	Q3:	
	Q4:	
	2018/19:	
	2019/20:	
Resources Required:	Alignment with Interrelated Priorities:	

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CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

In order for the New Beginnings Project to achieve and fully capitalize on the suggestions provided, the opportunities and initiatives identified throughout the process, including the various factors critical to the successful implementation, need be recognized and properly managed. These factors address many of the challenges, sensitivities, and barriers identified throughout the research and planning phases of this Project.

While not an exhaustive list, the following recommendations, based on secondary research in working with Indigenous Communities, will prove important elements of the ongoing process:

- **Culture Matters:** Culturally-ideal strategies include an emphasis on spirituality and a long-term perspective that focuses on the good of the community. As part of the communication strategy, and part of the garnering of support for the plan, culture must be intertwined within everything that is carried out. Cultural emphasis deepens the development process. Revitalizing a community’s identity, symbols, arts, festivals, history, traditions and environment – it’s culture- is the key to both economic and social wellbeing.
- **Acceptance of the Strategic Objectives:** The various action plans and conceptual ideas require acceptance, both at a political level (municipal and Indigenous governments) as well as at the community level. Open two-way communication between elected officials, organizational leaders, department heads, and community members is required.
- **Continued Relationship Building with the Surrounding First Nations:** Notwithstanding the change in Project scope to an urban focus, it will be paramount to continue to establish a greater understanding of each of the surrounding First Nations in an effort to develop a good working relationship. The Indigenous population is very nomadic, shifting from reserve to urban centres and back again, necessitating a collaborative approach to programs and services.
- **Seek Community Support:** Considering that the input was provided and developed “*by the people, for the people,*” further plan development and implementation will require acceptance by the community prior to incorporating and implementing the strategies and initiatives contained within.
- **Funding:** Each and every initiative will require an element of funding, some more so than others. Ensuring a funding source (i.e. grants, sponsorship, budget allocation, in-kind contributions) is essential. There is significant risk in moving forward with the strategy if in fact full commitment is not place.
- **Skepticism:** Due to past experiences, Indigenous people have become skeptical of initiatives that promise improvement but for varied and sundry reasons (often funding related) are abolished or fizzle out before results can be tracked and managed.
- **Further Due Diligence:** The plans created thus far create a solid framework from which to develop more detailed plans. Depending on the complexity of the initiative, further analysis will be required to determine the viability and most effective next steps associated with moving the concept forward to implementation.
- **Remain Well-Informed:** Numerous and sizeable changes are continuously occurring within region. There is a need to conduct an organizational study to determine the most efficient use of resources, including human capital and the opportunity for shared services, equipment and the like.

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- **Independence and Accountability:** Ensuring that the projects and activities of the stakeholders are kept at-arms-length from personal and/or political agendas is of paramount importance.
- **Realistic Expectations:** Setting realistic expectations and success metrics that can be easily applied, monitored and reported on.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Winning and maintaining the support, cooperation, and confidence of existing and potential external stakeholders/partners.
- **Celebrate Success:** As part of a project kick-off campaign, and as the plans unfold, it will be important to relay positive messages as goals become realized and/or achievements surpass expectations.
- **Ownership and Accountability:** Individual and collective acceptance and agreement to change the status-quo, and to support each other through the change is required. Furthermore, holding self and others accountable to make a positive contribution will result in significant incremental advancements.

NEXT STEPS

The following is a list of several additional steps that require action to effectively implement the key components of the New Beginnings Project. The list is not inclusive, but has been provided to assist in guiding the actions and initiatives the collective community will need to consider as next steps. A prolific discussion on these items will require further commitment to planning as well as community stakeholder participation.

Find the Collaborative gain: There is little rationale in creating a plan if the plan is not going to be utilized to its fullest extent or potential. The most challenging component of planning alignment is to remain strategic. It is also arguably the most important as it involves the community, voluntary sector, public sector, federal and provincial government departments and local government all aiming to put forth their particular assessments of needs, and views on priorities and solutions.

Community planning is not intended to replace or override the legal duties of municipal councils or stakeholder agencies, rather it is to add value in the development of integrated planning and the delivery of complementary initiatives when and where there are clear benefits in doing so.

The benefits can range from better understanding and targeting of needs and/or issues, to improved efficiencies through shared facilities, resources and staffing. In summary, the community engagement process must continue to evolve for the betterment of all stakeholders.

Review of Existing Business, Community and Regional Projects: To ensure that the pursuit of existing business and community projects align with the strategies and initiatives of the New Beginnings Project, a review should be undertaken to ensure the initiatives are congruent, duplication of effort and resources are mitigated, and opportunities for co-ordination and streamlining are realized.

Creation or Identification of a Development Oversight Committee: Notwithstanding each initiative will require its own implementation team, it is important that oversight of the overall plan is in place. Those responsible should:

- Have (or have been granted) the authority to make decisions related to the projects/initiatives,
- Possess the knowledge, expertise, availability, and desire to take the role,
- Bring diversity of perspective (i.e. include, youth, Elders, women), and

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- Ensure the projects are viewed by the community/region as having their best interest in mind.

Prioritization of Action Initiatives: To identify which projects/initiatives the community/region intends to pursue, and the order in which it plans to implement, the Oversight Committee will need to establish a set of assessment criteria to include such items as:

- Level of identified need⁸
- Funding sources and cost sharing opportunities
- Resource allocation (time, money, effort)
- Site selection and design (if applicable)
- Project timing and duration
- Level of internal/external expertise required
- Number of jobs created
- Timing and project duration

Choose an Implementation Team Lead (Champion): The New Beginnings strategy identifies a need to ensure the full support of all stakeholders. This full support should include the identification of a program and service delivery leader who will step forward to act as an agent to its success, creating a persistent method to effectively open doors and spearhead progress. The Team Lead should be a resourced individual with a sustainable funding source.

Continued Involvement of the Community Members: The New Beginnings strategy identifies important components of involving grassroots citizens/membership. While full implementation may be a timely process, the involvement of a diverse group of community representatives is important in a move toward maturity (i.e. including, youth, Elders, women and regional First Nation and Métis Stakeholders).

Understanding the Stakeholder's Goals in Strategic Plans: Each of the participant stakeholders' must assess individual strategic planning processes and where and/or how the New Beginnings Project might be incorporated within or in conjunction to those plans.

These should be supported by their respective leadership and/or governmental regimes, governing bodies, and business entities, and then communicated to citizens of the community/region. A detailed listing, of existing owned and operated businesses, should be created, so corporate and other economic entities can step-up and work closely with health/social agencies for the betterment of all.

Advocate for Action against Unresolved Racial issues and Healing requirements: Throughout the Project, there was a consistent concern for improving the Indigenous historical message, resolving racism concerns, as well as the need to create enriched and holistic healing as a result of the various historical trauma (i.e. Indian Residential Schools, 60's Scoop, and the overall poor systemic treatment of Aboriginal people in Canada).

⁸ Determining assessment criteria will allow the Committee to short-list those opportunities that it plans to focus on in an objective manner.

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Although the process of creating healthy communities includes the need for better employment, health and social services, etc., there is a need for citizens of all ethnicities to stand up and renounce the unhealthy practices that plaque the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous community as well as the lateral inequities amongst various Indigenous communities (whether perceived or literally experienced).

Conduct Feasibility Studies and Prepare Business Case: Many of the initiatives are preliminary in thought and action, and will require additional research and input before implementation. Therefore, it will be incumbent on the Implementation Lead and the Oversight Committee to conduct the necessary feasibility studies and/or business cases for each in order to assure itself of its actions, and to obtain the appropriate level of political, community, and traditional and non-traditional financial support.

Creation of an Effective Communications Plan: Although each initiative has an element of communication planning, the overall plan will require a focused and consistent message in order to gain community/region awareness and momentum. Such a plan will provide the framework for ensuring that information is shared with appropriate audiences on a timely basis in the most effective manner. Internal knowledge transfer, public awareness and participation in activities, media campaigns, launches and advertising promotions are all important elements of an overall communication plan.

Effective communication with external stakeholders will help in attracting potential investment, and partnerships, which in turn will result in improved economic benefit for the community/region as a whole. Additionally, open and candid internal communication will build goodwill amongst the stakeholders and aid in meeting the requirements of accountability and transparency. A detailed communications plan should be developed to include the following:

- Promotion of two-way communication between and amongst:
 - the various agencies and service providers, committees, and funding partners;
 - Current and potential external stakeholders (municipal, provincial, federal governments, industry, and special interest groups)
- A tracking system designed for community compliments and complaints to ensure they are being addressed on a regular basis;
- A variety of communication avenues (press releases, newsletters, advertisements, etc.) and targeted messages to accommodate the various projects/initiatives;
- A semi-annual community open house session to ensure that community members have an opportunity to learn of on-going and planned projects and are given the option to provide feedback and/or input.
- The appointment of a skilled spokesperson (public relations training required) to be responsible for designing and conveying all forms of external communiqué particularly those pertaining to government, special interest groups, industry and/or media.

CONCLUSION

By creating this strategic framework, the tri-regional stakeholders have demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively to address and improve programs and services, as well as the relationship with its Indigenous community members. The challenge now is to keep that momentum going and remaining committed to each other while remaining flexible in its efforts.

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This plan should be viewed as one of many initiatives that are underway in the region, and should be used to enhance and/or supplement current projects. The development of a formal system to allow for systematic, periodic review of the plan in conjunction with concurrent initiatives will be necessary to ensure continued effective and responsible management of time, financial and human resources.

Concurrent Initiatives

Throughout the project, aside from the programs and services delivered by the service agencies in the region, numerous initiatives came to light, signifying that many have recognized the need/opportunity for improvement. While not an exhaustive list, below are a number that have been identified:

Connecting with Our Indigenous Neighbors Committee: A group of like-minded Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members from diverse backgrounds meeting on a regular basis to create awareness/understanding and share information on Indigenous issues. The organization's Terms of Reference is attached to further information.

Aboriginal Days Celebration: A tri-regional event that is held annually in June in Stony Plain to recognize and celebrate Aboriginal Days. The event is growing in awareness, attendance and participation.

Community Building Listening Circles: An initiative focused on deepening the mutual understanding across socio-cultural boundaries with respect to Truth and Reconciliation and to increase meaningful community relationships. Many are being organized as a grass-roots movement, bringing residents together in private homes as well as in public spaces.

Social Sustainability Plan: Poverty reduction has been identified in the Spruce Grove Social Sustainability Plan as one of the common themes within the recommendations for the key areas for action which are outlined below:

- Develop a program of support for the homeless population.
- Reduce the levels of domestic violence.
- Increase social wellness through appropriate and affordable public transportation.
- Develop a continuum of housing in Spruce Grove.
- Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports.
- Create sustainability through community engagement.
- Create and sustain Spruce Grove as an inclusive city.
- Modify City governance and administrative practices to ensure that the Social Sustainability Plan is incorporated into ongoing business practices and procedures.

Stony Plain and Parkland County are working on similar initiatives within their go-forward planning processes.

Public Libraries Initiatives: The Spruce Grove library has been working with the Stony Plain and Parkland County libraries on a number of initiatives to further relationship and improve education:

- Providing on reserve programming at Paul First Nation, including a story time at the day care, school library programming, a summer reading program and a small free library.
- Specifically working to remove barriers by providing free library cards and doing whatever possible to make it easier for all patrons to obtain library cards.
- Providing sensitivity and cultural awareness training to numerous staff members and work towards create a comfortable physical and virtual space at the library and on the website.

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Parkland School Division: A number of initiatives, focused on community building and capacity in education are underway through the Parkland School Division. A draft report on these concepts is expected to be made available to Spruce Grove FCSS in the near future.

Tri-Regional Leadership Initiative: Recent preliminary meetings have recently been held between Mayor Houston (Spruce Grove) Mayor Choy (Stony Plain) and Mayor Shaigec (Parkland County) and Chief Morin (Enoch Cree Nation) and Chief Rain (Paul First Nation) with a focus on relationship building and opportunities for collaboration.

Modernized Municipal Government Act: Incorporated into the recent changes to Modernized Municipal Government Act are a number of directives that speak directly to the relationship with Indigenous peoples. As such, initiatives are now being included in the various municipal plans and strategies, many specific to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. This is not to say that improvements would not have otherwise occurred; rather that the legislation lends additional support and focus to the need to do so.

Spruce Grove Cultural Master Plan: There is growing recognition on the part of municipalities of the powerful role played by cultural resources in building prosperous and diversified local economies and enhancing quality of life in communities. Recognizing its importance, the City of Spruce Grove has integrated cultural development issues and opportunities into a range of plans and policies aimed at advancing economic and broader community development agendas in the City. There is a recognition of the important role cultural resources play in social planning and development issues in municipalities and an opportunity to identify connections and synergies between the Cultural Master Plan and the Social Sustainability Plan.

Strategy to Reduce Homelessness: The City of Spruce Grove is working on developing a comprehensive plan to address homelessness. This plan will be based on a local perspective within a regional context and will inventory current resources and partnerships, determine gaps, identify potential resource opportunities, and provide and implement recommendations based on established best practice.

