



MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

STRATEGIC PLAN

Enníska/February 1, 2016

We work together to preserve our language and culture and to incorporate it in meaningful ways to all the work we do.

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

STRATEGIC PLAN

PURPOSE

This strategic plan is designed to reflect the Council and MCA organization philosophy, vision, values and strategic goals that are required to be accomplished over the next three years.

This plan is an integrated Council-Staff plan that considers all aspects of Mohawk Council of Akwesasne operations. The purpose is to provide a clear vision and mission, as well as defined goals, objectives and priorities that are realistic, achievable and measureable. This plan recognizes all that is unique about the community of Akwesasne.

This plan illustrates how we see the future for the MCA and the community we serve. This plan serves as a framework for us to use our good minds to work internally with our departments and engage with the community to ensure a self-sustainable Akwesasne.

Our most treasured traditions and principles are what guide us. They are what will guide us into the future based on our philosophy of the Seven Generations which is the foundation of making decisions and planning our future seven generations ahead.

This plan shapes the work of our departments and programs. In our implementation plan we have established how the goals set out in this plan will be achieved at the departmental level.

An evaluation framework based on measurable indicators and outcomes will be used to monitor and evaluate long, medium and short term outcomes so that what has been set forth herein is realistic, achievable and measureable. This plan is intended to recognize everything that is unique about Akwesasne.

The Mission of the MCA is to provide consistent quality services that will enhance the quality of life for all Akwesasronon today, while protecting our rights and preserving our resources for the next seven generations.

CURRENT CONTEXT

We are family centred and we are dedicated to preserve our Akwesasronon traditions. We want to be remembered for the progressive monumental activities and achievements that have been, and will continue to be made, for the years to come. This includes self-government, health and wellbeing, sustainability, modernization, education, language and culture.

We are a strong and vibrant community. We see our quality of life as enhanced through safe environmentally sound economic development. We have strong in-house programs that increase the credibility of our administrative systems and a strong post-secondary education program that produces a more educated population for our community.

We have our own justice system and Mohawk Court and we are working to ensure our by-laws are recognized and adhered to by our community. We have a vision for a stronger community in all areas. We have IOHTEHIA NI RON (strong roots) and a collective responsibility for fostering self-sustainability and improved living standards for all Akwesasronon.

We are a large organization with an annual budget that has increased from \$6 million to \$100 million over the past two decades and we employ nearly 900 employees. The water and river is cleaner and there has been a decrease in unregulated trade. There are increased graduation rates requiring us to increase employment opportunities to reduce our unemployment rates and create jobs for our more educated population.

Our most treasured tradition is Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (giving thanks), the words that come before all else. Our Elders give us direction and pass on Akwesasronon knowledge to guide and teach us. It takes a community to raise a child. Our language, history, culture and our children are our future.

This Strategic Plan is formed by the Grand Chief, Council, senior staff and the community which was solicited through various engagement activities. The Plan is also informed by many documents which include, but are not limited to the Akwesasronon Onkwenwhentsia Shone:a Draft Land Code, MCA Economic Leakage Study, 10 year Capital Plan, Labour Market Study, Economic Recovery Strategy, 10 year Health Plan, the previous MCA Strategic Plans (2012 and 2014) and the current undertakings of the Community Comprehensive Planning scheduled to be completed March 2016.

Our community is the story of Akwesasne.

We need to preserve our land, culture and language in order to ensure our legacy for the future.

These documents, as well as the engagement results set out the broad priorities and goals for Council and administration to act upon which are set out on the following pages.

MISSION

To provide consistent quality services that will enhance the quality of life for all Akwesasronon today, while protecting our rights and preserving our resources for the next seven generations.

PRINCIPLES

Family and work is about relationships. Success in life is tied to the quality of our relationships and how much spirit we put into them. The principles of sken:nen (peace), kanikonriio (good mind) and kasestensera (strength) guide us.

Our community is the story of Akwesasne. We have to get back to the family unit, we need to know who we are, where we come from and what our evolution is. We need to preserve our land, culture and language in order to ensure our legacy for the future.

Our most treasured tradition is Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen, our Thanksgiving Address, the words that come before all else. Our Elders give us direction and pass on Akwesasneronon knowledge to guide and teach us. It takes a community to raise a child. Our language, history, culture and our children are our future.

What we want our community to be remembered for by the generations to come is our resilience, that we are Akwesasronon, and we will work together to preserve and revitalize our community for the next seven generations.

VISION

Sustaining our inherent rights, facing challenges together to build a strong and healthy future.

It is our duty and responsibility to protect our resources, our youth, our elders, our environment, our history, language and culture. We need to continue to build a stronger government for Akwesasne.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Self-Determination

Good governance is based on skilled employees, accountability and transparency. Through land claims settlements our community is expanding and with it our land base and governance responsibilities. We are committed to connecting with our youth, our elders and to good relations with government. Nation building, community engagement, empowerment, use of modern technology and collaboration with other First Nations ensures continuity, longevity, diversity and recognition of Akwesasne as a credible and strong nation. We need to update and amend our laws and reaffirm our governance model for the long term. Recognition and enforcement of our own laws is required to solidify our jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdiction context. Strong lobbying efforts are required to enhance funding and achieve our vision for Akwesasne.

Through transparent and concentrated engagement efforts with the community we will ensure comprehensive involvement in, and support for our Mohawk government. Engagement ensures that the MCA operates in a way that reflects its core purpose of serving the membership of Akwesasne through comprehensive communications methods and techniques.

Priority 2: Well-Being

The activities of all Akwesasronon must be holistically based on healthy eating, living and activities. Traditional and modern activities will be an integral part of daily life through traditional activities such as hunting, farming and fishing. The voice of our youth will ensure that our community is healthy and drug free. Programs and services will ensure family health, community and individual wellness. Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing will be promoted in order to create healthy families which in turn results in a healthy Akwesasne. Programs that meet community needs, that are staffed by qualified professionals and specialists are the strength of our health system. Awareness of community health needs and social development ensures a comprehensive collaborative approach to community well-being.

Community gatherings, celebrations and family are the most treasured part of Akwesasne and that is what makes us strong and resilient. We take care of our families. Our families are our history, our legacy and our link to the past, present and future. In order to preserve and revitalize our culture and traditions we must invest in our future by using our language, living our culture and reaffirming our identity as Akwesasronon. The fundamental

To be a thriving and accomplished Onkwehonwe community that serves as a model for other First Nations and sets the benchmark for our future generations.

survival of a community and a culture is education, language and our traditional world view.

Priority 3: Sustainability

A strong economy ensures community longevity. Collaboration with business in the community and with external governments will promote trade agreements, innovative and proactive economic development, opportunities for own source revenue and international commerce. Nurturing of local business will ensure economic prosperity and success for Akwesasronon. We need to encourage tourism and oversee the eventual extension of Akwesasronon lands as a result of land claim settlements which will result in increased employment and economic development.

Services that support employment outcomes and the advancement of our language and culture are required starting with daycare, primary, secondary and postsecondary education. School curriculum that is holistic and culturally based will ensure the preservation and revitalization of our Akwesasronon beliefs. Immersion programs, employee training, culture that is built into all MCA programming and increased language use in the community are our priority.

Priority 4: Modernization

Infrastructure includes housing, water, road systems and MCA government facilities. Certified inspections and experienced, certified and licensed personnel are required to ensure that operation and maintenance needs are met for the community. Affordable housing is required and the modernization of our aging infrastructure. We must ensure our facilities meet codes and safety standards. Partnerships are required with local private and local business and we need to explore expanding services. Border regulations significantly impact Akwesasne and solutions to address CBSA/USA customs challenges are required.

Technology is changing at warp speed and Akwesasne needs to stay abreast of technological changes and advances in order to enhance opportunities for the community to be engaged with surrounding communities.

MOVING FORWARD

Priority 1: Self-Determination

Good governance is based on providing quality and effective services for the community through skilled and competent employees, ensuring accountability, transparency, honesty and respect through teamwork by the organization. Recognition and enforcement of our laws is required to solidify our jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdictional context. Strong lobbying efforts are required to develop and maintain strong relationships to enhance funding and achieve our vision for Akwesasne. We will ensure comprehensive involvement in and support for our Mohawk Government through meaningful community engagement efforts.

STRATEGIES: (Mohawk Government, Justice, Police, Communications, Vital Statistics, Language and Culture)

1. Communications through MCA fact sheets that describe the Akwesasne land base, number of businesses, annual budget, employees, departments, demographics, programs and services in order to educate the community and surrounding areas about Akwesasne.
2. Develop an internal/external communications policy to facilitate trust and faith in the organization and nurture accountability and transparency.
3. Research and implementation of policies for youth, elders and Akwesasne community members to facilitate incentives that focus on good relations and to nurture opportunities to celebrate each other, our culture and our land.
4. A comprehensive educational plan based on community support, engagement and education processes as a foundation for sharing and communicating Akwesasne laws, regulations and bylaws that includes implementation of the Akwesasne Court Law.

Plan of Action

To strengthen our government through the development of specific laws, by-laws and codes which will provide the governance framework. Grand Chief, Council and staff will secure financial resources, expertise and community involvement in order to ensure achievement of the strategies described above. This includes preservation of Mohawk language and culture and the development and implementation of a community satisfaction survey that is ongoing for all programs and services to ensure consistent monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achievement of goals, priorities and activities within the community and organization.

Building a healthy community, rich in culture and identity, that enhances sustainability through responsible use of resources.

Indicators

- The number of communications and fact sheets that describe Akwesasne, the community and surrounding areas.
- Policies developed and implemented pertaining to Justice, Communications, Mohawk Government, language and culture.
- Passage of the Akwesasne Court law and comprehensive educational plan to facilitate sharing and communicating Akwesasne laws and regulations.
- Incentives that promote commitment to becoming a Mohawk language speaker e.g. paid leave to attend classes.
- Organizational wide designation of at least one hour daily during work time for Mohawk language instruction.
- Requirement of all new employees to participate in cultural sensitivity training to reinforce the knowledge and uniqueness of Akwesasne, and to celebrate and respect our culture, our language and our land.
- Increased number of Mohawk language speakers within Council and staff.
- Implementation of policies to facilitate incentives that focus on good relations and celebrate each other, our culture and our land.
- Quarterly and annual evaluative surveys to assess the needs of the community over time and make adjustments as required.

Priority 2: Well-Being

The activities of all Akwesasronon must be holistically based on healthy eating, living and activities. Programs and services will ensure family health, community and individual wellness, including social services and community development. The fundamental survival of a community and a culture is education, language and our traditional world view. Our youth are our future. Community gatherings, celebrations and family are the most treasured part of Akwesasne and that is what makes us strong and resilient.

STRATEGIES: (Health and Community and Social Services, Justice, Language and Culture)

Strategies (Health, Social, Justice, Language, Culture)

1. Develop activities that are designed to remove stigma in the community from the effects of colonization and the impacts of residential schools through education, increased awareness and healing efforts.
2. Promote cultural sensitivity training and awareness through community based sharing of information on Mohawk history, culture and traditional values while utilizing contemporary/modern perspectives in order to increase opportunities to learn and practice Mohawk culture and traditions in modern daily life.

3. Conduct community wide coordination of collective community recreation activities for all Akwesasronon to ensure access and appeal for all ages, abilities and interests.
4. Promote Akwesasronon reconciliation through increased partnerships with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, the Mohawk Council and external governments in order to nurture family and community reconciliation, community awareness, unity and collaboration based on strong understandings of Treaty, inherent and Akwesasronon rights.
5. Address special needs issues within the community in order to ensure vulnerable Akwesasronon community members are supported and nurtured as contributing and celebrated members of the community.
6. Enforce an employment initiative strategy based on mentorships, internships and job shadowing opportunities in order to develop a employable Akwesasronon work force to meet current and future Akwesasne labour market needs.
7. Review and embrace the diabetes strategy, ensure community food security, enhanced access to health and community services and encourage healthy, happy Akwesasronon families.

Plan of Action

To embrace cultural sensitivity training within the community and the MCA organization through promotion of education and awareness of Akwesasne history, language, culture, traditional principles and values in contemporary time while addressing the health and social needs of the community.

Outcome indicators

- Cultural sensitivity training strategy and increased awareness and healing from the impacts of residential school trauma in the community.
- The number of community engagements both internally and externally.
- The number of Akwesasronon who engage in the Employment Strategy including increased representation of Akwesasronon in the work force.
- The number of statements of service and job satisfaction through surveys and evaluative efforts.
- The number of planned retirements/successors and related outcomes.
- The number of community wide joint recreational activities and outcomes.
- Increased partnerships with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and Mohawk Council, as well as external governments.

- Increased representation of vulnerable Akwesasronon who are supported and celebrated members of the community.
- Increased opportunities for mentorships, internships and job shadowing opportunities to enhance employability and employment of Akwesasronon in the work force.
- The number of diabetes clients reduced through promotion and education activities related to the Diabetes Strategy, as well as Akwesasronon with chronic diseases and/or addictions.

Priority 3: Sustainability

A strong economy ensures community longevity. Collaboration with business in the community and with external governments will promote trade agreements, innovative and proactive economic development, opportunities for own source revenue and international commerce. Services that support education and employment outcomes are required starting with daycare, primary, secondary, adult and postsecondary education.

STRATEGIES: (Economic Development, Education, Justice, Mohawk Government, Lands and Resources)

1. To sustain, revitalize, protect and preserve our unique Akwesasronon identity through the visibility and celebration of Mohawk language, culture and tradition which embraces education, training and promotion in all aspects of work and daily life.
2. Maintaining and expanding our land base, monitoring and protecting the environment and sound management of Akwesasronon lands and resources.
3. Protecting, exercising and asserting Aboriginal rights, title and jurisdiction within the territory of Akwesasne.
4. Responsibly utilizing our resources that include human, land and finances by developing activities and strategies that enhance the economic viability of Akwesasne, nurtures economic opportunities and embraces community development.
5. Governing through community engagement and nurturing open communication, accountability and transparency which encompasses the building and promotion of healthy relationships.

Plan of Action

Greater use of Mohawk language throughout the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and for the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education in order to protect, preserve, and promote Mohawk language and culture. Continue to pursue land claims/settlements and implement the Community Comprehensive Plan 2016 results. Increase the understanding and knowledge of the principles of Akwesasronon traditional teachings and

develop internal and external communication plans in order to promote local sustainability and community longevity.

Outcome Indicators

- Increased number of Mohawk language speakers and increased visibility and celebration of Mohawk language in the community.
- Approval and ratification of the Tsikaristisere Dundee Land Claim and additions to reserve lands.
- A plan for implementation of the Comprehensive Community Plan 2016.
- Increased education, training and promotion of Mohawk language, culture and traditional practices within the community.
- Increased number of activities that assert and confirm Aboriginal rights, title and jurisdiction within the community of Akwesasne.
- Increased efficiency and use of human, land resources and finances through increased economic opportunities and community development.
- Increased communication, accountability and promotion of healthy relationships resulting in a more informed and healthy community.

Priority 4: Modernization

Infrastructure includes housing, water and road systems and MCA government facilities. Affordable housing is required and the modernization of our aging infrastructure. Border regulations significantly impact Akwesasne and solutions to address CBSA/USA customs challenges are required. Information technology and communications are a critical element of, and a significant piece of, modernization efforts for the MCA.

STRATEGIES: (Mohawk Government, Technical Services, Housing, Water/Roads, Information Technology)

1. Partnering with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and the wider community of Akwesasne for broadband development in order to contribute to education, health, justice and communications sustainability.
2. Development of local Akwesasne community infrastructure that includes electricity, natural gas, sewer and wastewater
3. Retrofit existing infrastructure to current/future code requirements utilizing internal, external and related laws to establish minimum standards for improved efficiency and long term lifespan of buildings and facilities.
4. Modernize/digitize corporate records/memory in order to optimize information retention, security and access.

5. Increase accessibility to homes through new building and loan options, including the potential for prefabrication houses, in order to provide affordable and sustainable housing for all Akwesasronon.
6. Devise with CBSA community reporting/alternatives, changes to the provisions of the Canadian Immigration Act and Citizenship Act. Consider co-location of CBSA and related ramifications.

Plan of Action

To strengthen and enhance Akwesasronon laws, codes, governance and agreements to affirm and strengthen Akwesasne communications, infrastructure and sustainability while asserting our inherent rights and freedoms.

Outcome Indicators

- Increased partnering with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs and Mohawk Council resulting in education, health, justice and communications sustainability.
- Improved infrastructure: water, sewer, electricity, natural gas and wastewater.
- Improved infrastructure that establishes minimum standards for improved efficiency and the long term lifespan of buildings and facilities.
- Increased options for lending institutions to finance housing in Akwesasne.
- Increased digitized records and modernized information management regimes.
- Broadband infrastructure in place throughout Akwesasne.
- Design, secure funding and phased construction for housing in Akwesasne and increased accessibility to homes, new building and loan options.
- Increased housing availability and increased on-reserve population
- 24 hour operation of a Akwesasne custom base and improved reporting alternatives and changes to the Canadian Immigration Act and Citizenship Act.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Strategic Plan provides insights on the strategic direction and approaches that the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and staff have collectively identified. This plan speaks to the core issues facing the community and those issues internal to the organization that must be addressed for movement forward for the benefit of all Akwesasronon.

STRATEGIES:

1. Use the plan to document why we provide services, which is to make the community a better place.
2. Use the plan so that MCA Departments and Council can work together as a unified team and as a basis for reporting.
3. Use the plan to guide lobby strategies and advocacy efforts.
4. Host a meeting so the community can be educated about the plan and see their leaders and the faces of who serve the community of Akwesasne.
5. Post the Strategic Plan on the MCA website and in the media to enhance community confidence, trust and understanding.

PLAN OF ACTION

In order to gain the full benefit of this plan, it must be implemented in a way that will guide the actions of the Grand Chief, Council and staff. It must also remain in the minds of the people.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

- Amount of use of the Strategic Plan with MCA Departments and Council.
- Number of uses of the Strategic Plan for lobbying and advocacy.
- Number of uses of the Strategic Plan as a basis of reporting.
- Number of meetings with the community to educate and inform membership about the Strategic Plan.
- Posting of the Strategic Plan on the MCA website and visibility in the media.