



WESTBANK
FIRST NATION

Economic Development Commission

Strategic Plan

2020 - 2023



*Building an economically self-sufficient,
healthy, proud, and business
oriented community.*

Community. Leadership. Pride.

Message from the EDC Chairperson

The 2020-2023 Westbank First Nation (WFN) Economic Development Commission (EDC) Strategic Plan was made possible through the commitment of the EDC Commissioners who contributed to the planning process. Without their involvement, the 2020-2023 EDC Strategic Plan would not have been possible. *lim læmt*, thank you, to all who contributed to the plan.

Material influencers to its development include the WFN Government Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Community Plan and all other associated WFN strategic plans. These documents, and this plan, are intended to represent the expressions, aspirations and priorities of the WFN Government and Community.

Our community has experienced tremendous growth over the last 15 years since becoming a self-governing Nation (when the original EDC Strategic Plan was adopted). In this updated plan, we continue to address issues most important to our people in order to provide for sustainable economic growth. Business retention, facilitation and attraction have been identified as strategic priorities over the 2020-2023 EDC term, accompanied by specific objectives and guiding principles including:

1. Providing a competitive business environment for existing businesses to be sustainable
2. Engaging in activities & strategies and providing materials to support economic growth
3. Attracting new business through increased awareness and visibility

During the writing of this strategic plan, our community and the world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, of which the repercussions will have significant impacts for the foreseeable future. The EDC considered these impacts in the creation of its strategy.

The Strategic Plan will provide the guiding vision for the Economic Development Commission over the next three years. It will be a tool we can reflect upon on a regular basis, update annually, and serve as an effective means of evaluation towards our economic development progress. We look forward to having a significant and positive impact on our community, government and businesses in the years ahead.

Steve Fosbery
Chairperson, WFN Economic Development Commission

2020 WFN EDC STRATEGIC PLAN
Economic Development Commission (EDC)
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I. OVERVIEW:

The Westbank First Nation (WFN) Economic Development Commission (EDC) is the first Indigenous Economic Development Commission in Canada and has been supporting the exponential development and urbanization occurring on Westbank Lands through a variety of initiatives.

When WFN became self-governing, April 1, 2005, economic activity on Westbank Lands began expanding at a rapid pace. During this period the EDC focused on attracting businesses to Westbank Lands, while serving the needs of the existing economic community.

Despite global economic highs and lows, the region has continued to expand and is one of the fastest growing regions in Canada. It is within this dynamic economic environment that the WFN EDC has its strategic plan in place to support the current needs of business and future opportunities as well.

The EDC operates pursuant to the WFN Economic Development Commission Charter. Commissioners are appointed by WFN Council following a process administered by an EDC Selection Committee who are tasked to invite and receive applications. The Selection Committee then forwards recommendations to Chief and Council for approval.

The Commission is comprised of three WFN Member seats, one Elder seat, one Youth seat and two non-Members seats from the economic development community-at-large. All selections are based on business and community involvement, plus knowledge of WFN lands and governance structures. As well, one non-voting Council Member is appointed to the EDC.

The EDC meets six times per year to conduct its business, including once per year to review its strategic plan and highlight its priorities to the WFN Membership for the past and coming year.

As outlined in its charter, the WFN EDC is established to;

- Assist Council and the *stqá?tkw4niwt sqilxw*/Westbank First Nation economic community in creating a healthy, environmentally sustainable, and dynamic economy on Westbank Lands based on the value of economic self-reliance;
- Contribute to the development of strategies and materials that present a positive image of WFN;
- Provide support to existing businesses on Westbank Lands to help them remain competitive; and
- Increase awareness and knowledge of WFN and the Economic Development and investment opportunities on Westbank Lands in order to encourage new businesses to locate on Westbank Lands.

During the preparation of this strategic document, the Covid-19 pandemic caused unprecedented global havoc. The repercussions of the virus will have a significant impact on the business community for the foreseeable future. The EDC has considered the impact on the businesses within Westbank Lands in the creation of this strategy.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles, including a vision, mission and values, provide a foundation for strategic planning and are reflective of the diverse and complex economic needs of the WFN community and business community. In carrying out its mandate, the Commission strives to honour the values of WFN Members and the growing economic community.

Vision Statement

To be a healthy, proud, and business oriented community that is economically self-sufficient.

Mission Statement

The Commission is to assist and facilitate WFN Council and the WFN economic community in creating a healthy, environmentally sustainable and dynamic economy on Westbank Lands, based on the value of economic self-reliance. The Commission will show respect for the heritage and cultural values of the Okanagan syilx people.

Values

Within WFN, there is a heightened responsibility to protect the rights and interests of the Members we serve to ensure a healthy and prosperous future. By applying these values to each action and decision we instill confidence in the EDC's role within the WFN government. The EDC also serves the broader economic community and, as representatives of WFN, shall portray values reflective of the honourable and cultural Okanagan syilx people. Values the EDC will apply in their roles include:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Responsiveness
- Trustworthiness
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Enowkinwixw values and principles

III. WFN GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

During 2019, WFN Council undertook a strategic planning process which identified six strategic areas of focus:

- Culture and Language
- Traditional Laws and Self-Government
- Supporting Community Members
- Economic Development
- Addressing Climate Change
- Good Governance

During the EDC strategy session participants discussed the strategic priorities of Council, and the impact these priorities have on the Commission's activities. While Council specifically identified economic development as a key area of strategic importance, it was noted that other strategic priorities also have direct impact upon the activities of the EDC. Specific focus was placed on two other strategic priorities: 1) culture and language, and 2) addressing climate change.

Culture and Language:

In the WFN Government strategy, Council stressed the need to encourage a rich and vibrant culture to maintain a healthy connection to each other and interconnectedness with the spirit of tmwxulaxw. The EDC recognizes the role of economic development in enhancing the indigenous culture in WFN through the implementation of practices, policies, and procedures within the Westbank business community. Developing the indigenous culture tourism sector would further assist in cultural preservation and revitalization.

Climate Change:

Council recognizes that syilx peoples are the stewards of the land. To this end, the EDC acknowledges its role in climate change as it relates to the economic development activities of the Commission. The EDC will support the strategic direction of Council by engaging employers and employees to assist with the education and awareness of innovative environmentally sustainable business practices and actions.

IV. EDC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Chief Black Bear: Advisory Role to WFN Council

Chief Black Bear is the "Chief for all creatures on the land." He is the elder chief with the most experience. He gives his life for the people to be; demonstrating the principle of leading by example. He represents the societal values of the Okanagan People, in which self-sacrifice, leadership and giving are a key part of healthy living. Black Bear is representative of

governance, leadership and the selflessness that accompanies these positions within a community.

The overarching mandate of the EDC - in an advisory role - is to engage in two-way dialogue with the business community and provide feedback for the consideration of Council to assist in the development of policies.

In pursuit of the identified strategic priorities of the EDC stated within this document, the Commission strives to align the activities and initiatives with the strategic direction of Council as set out in the WFN Government Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Community Plan.

The current WFN Government Strategic Plan, created by Council, has been taken in consideration by the EDC during the creation of this strategic document. In addition, the updated version of the WFN Comprehensive Community Plan will be considered by the EDC to ensure that the Commission's activities effectively reflect any new priorities.

The strategic priorities of the EDC are:

- Business Retention
- Business Facilitation
- Business Attraction

Strategic Goal 1: Business Retention (Chief Spring Salmon)

Provide a healthy business environment for existing businesses on WFN lands to remain competitive and prosperous.

Chief Spring Salmon is the "Chief for all creatures in the water." The spring salmon has a four year life cycle that is tied directly to the seasonal cycles of water. The spring salmon reminds us that we are responsible to provide the environment that necessitates the changes that are required as our people progress. Salmon demonstrates the virtues of perseverance and hard work and is a representative of economic issues in the life of a community.

Objective 1.1

Identify opportunities, obstacles, and challenges which impact businesses currently operating on Westbank Lands.

Activities:

- Identify the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses within Westbank Lands.

- Participate in the “Business Walk” to obtain feedback from the business community.
- Identify new opportunities to support businesses
- Communicate feedback obtained from the business community
- Establish channels of open communication between business owners and the EDC

Strategic Goal 2: Business Facilitation (Chief Bitterroot)

Engage in activities, support strategies, and provide materials to promote economic prosperity within the WFN business community.

Chief Bitterroot is “Chief for things under the ground,” and is representative of the land and the syilx’s historical and complex relationship with the land. The bitterroot is a beautiful yet peculiar plant that only comes out above ground once a year and can only be found in certain parts of the Okanagan. Bitterroot represents knowledge, and is always there but cannot always be seen and waits to be discovered.

Objective 2.1

Ensure Council is well-informed on the opportunities, challenges, and successes of the WFN business community.

Activities:

- Provide updates to WFN Council through Regular Council meetings. Report on the implementation of the economic development strategic plan and other items of economic interest.
- Provide timely well-researched advice on relevant issues of economic development; specifically the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the business community.
- Research reports on behalf of Council on economic development issues.
- Remain knowledgeable of current information for existing WFN businesses relating to economic development within WFN.

Objective 2.2

Engage with WFN’s business community to ensure two-way communication of WFN initiatives, and identify the needs of the business community.

Activities:

- Identify the impact of Covid-19 on the businesses community and present findings to WFN Council.
- Co-host an annual Business After Hours event.
- Participate or co-host a Conference/ workshop.

Objective 2.3

Keep the Commission well-informed on the business community and Council initiatives.

Activities:

- Monitor the development of the Comprehensive Community Plan, and liaise with the WFN business community, WFN staff, and Council to ensure open lines of communications during this process.
- Attend relevant economic development related conferences and events.
- Conduct a survey of the EDC business community.
- Support and contribute to business retention strategies on Westbank Lands.

Objective 2.4

Ensure that WFN remains inclusive and consistent to all sectors of the business community

Activities:

- Remain mindful of up-and-coming industries, embrace change and the benefits of economic diversification
- Ensure collaboration with all types of businesses including associations such as Accelerate Okanagan and Okanagan Young Professionals

Objective 2.5

Liaise with various groups in the community at large relating to economic development.

Activities:

- Liaise with stakeholders such as the Regional District of Central Okanagan EDC (COEDC), Greater Westside Board of Trade, and local business agencies to discuss economic development opportunities.
- Identify how other business jurisdictions are adjusting to the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategic Goal 3:

Business Attraction (Chief Saskatoon Berry)

Enhance WFN's continued prosperity by attracting new businesses to WFN through increased awareness and visibility of WFN as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.

Chief Saskatoon Berry is "Chief for things growing on land." The nature of the saskatoon bush is rooted in patience and perseverance. Each bush is constructed of hundreds of individual shoots that are the result of years of growth. The saskatoon berry represents the spirit and nature of the community and the notion of strength that results from being in one place

for extended generations. The saskatoon berry also represents the cooperation that is needed between people and the environment.

Objective 3.1

Proactively attract businesses to Westbank Lands.

Activities:

- Provide feedback to staff and Council to assist in identifying gaps in existing businesses and possible new businesses or industries to attract to WFN
- Provide feedback to staff and Council to ensure alignment of planning considerations to meet the needs of new and existing businesses.
- Ensure awareness and knowledge of current promotional materials, as well as provide input or suggested content for WFN's Tourism or Ec Dev Xpress e-business newsletters.
- Support strategies for marketing and promotion of economic opportunities on Westbank Lands.

Objective 3.2

Promote Westbank Lands as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.

Activities:

- Champion the ongoing economic successes which occur on Westbank Lands.
- Identify methods that the Economic Development Commission can address negative stereotypes and perceptions regarding leased lands.

Objective 3.3

Build relationships which support employment opportunities for the WFN community and membership.

Activities:

- Identify and communicate with internal and external WFN stakeholders.
- Support and liaise with WFN's Employment Coordinator

Objective 3.4

Identify, support, and enhance tourism opportunities on Westbank Lands and within the WFN Traditional Territory.

Activities:

- Support the efforts of the WFN Sncəwips Museum, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), Indigenous Tourism BC (iTBC), Tourism Kelowna, and the Kelowna International Airport (YLW).
- Promote tourism attractions on Westbank Lands and support the attraction of other businesses that could increase tourism offerings.

Mandate

(Chief Black Bear): Advisory Role to WFN Council

The overarching mandate of WFN-EDC - in an advisory role - is to engage in two-way dialogue with the business community and provide feedback for the consideration of Council to assist in the development of policies.

Business Facilitation

(Chief Bitterroot)

Engage in activities, strategies, and provide materials to support economic prosperity within the WFN business community.

- Ensure that WFN Council is well-informed on the opportunities, challenges, and successes of the WFN business community; specifically as it relates to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Keep the Commission well-informed on the business community and Council initiatives
- Engage with the WFN business community to ensure two-way communication of policies of WFN, and identify the needs of the business community.
- Ensure that WFN remains inclusive and consistent to all sectors of the business community
- Liaise with various groups in the community at large relating to economic development and the impact of Covid-19 on the business community.

Business Retention

(Chief Spring Salmon)

Provide a competitive business environment for existing businesses in WFN to be competitive and prosperous.

- Identify opportunities, obstacles, and challenges which impact businesses currently operating on Westbank Lands.

Business Attraction

(Chief Saskatoon Berry)

Enhance WFN's continued prosperity by attracting new businesses to WFN through increased awareness and visibility of WFN as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.

- Proactively attract businesses to WFN lands.
- Promote WFN lands as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.
- Build relationships which support employment opportunities for the WFN community and membership.
- Identify, support, and enhance tourism opportunities on WFN Lands and within the WFN Traditional Territory.