COMMUNITY WELLNESS PLAN

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1. **TEETL’IT GWICH’IN COUNCIL MISSION, VISION, VALUES**

**VISION**
The Teetl’it Gwich’in Council will support their traditional values and life style which promote the success of the Teetl’it Gwich’in and protecting their treaty and inherent aboriginal rights.

**MISSION**
Promoting a prosperous and healthy community through economic growth while encouraging successfulness of the Teetl’it Gwich’in through positive relationships and an accountable leadership.

**VALUES**
The value and beliefs are the core principles of the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council. These values are what ensure the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council guides all of its actions and its principles, as follows:
- Empowering
- Support
- Accountable
- Honesty
- Encourage
- Sharing
- Respect
- Caring

The Teetl’it Gwich’in Council (Chief and Council) works hard in preserving the Gwich’in way of life by practicing our tradition, culture and language. The Chief and Council is proactive in all areas of administration through economic beliefs, make work projects and creating employment and training opportunities for the betterment of all members, staff and the community at large. This proposal will allow the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council to ensure financial accountability and transparency to revisit the five-year community wellness plan for the community of Teetl’it Zheh (Fort McPherson, NT).

2. **INTRODUCTION**

The Teetl’it Gwich’in Council received funding from the Department of Health and Social Services, GNWT to come up with a community wellness plan.

Community input and engagement in the development of wellness programs is critical to success in addressing health and social issues in the community. The Community Wellness Plan is an opportunity for communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed based on their wellness plan.

3. **BACKGROUND**

In the past the community has been funded from the Department of Health and Social Services, GNWT for various wellness programs based on single year funding. There have been various community consultations to provide an opportunity for the communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed.
In its entirety, the Teet’it Gwich’in Council who will identify a broad direction for the community by listing actions that will support the goals, functions and objectives identified.

4. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

The SWOT analysis allows the community of Fort McPherson to focus on its strengths, minimize its weaknesses, take the greatest advantage of its opportunities and work towards minimizing its threats. The SWOT were identified through a consultation process with the community.

STRENGTH

The Teetl’it Gwich’in are proud people who take pride in their heritage, language and culture

Community support is very strong in all areas be it mental, physical, social, emotional or financial. The community is committed to helping and working together when families, youth, elders, or the community at large is in need of help.

Teetl’it Zheh is home to many aboriginal people who are talented and educated in a large variety of areas and willing to volunteer their time when help is needed.

Teetl’it Zheh’s greatest gift is their elders. The elders are positive, possess excellent values and great knowledge of the Gwich’in language, tradition and culture. The community also admires those who are role models by living a healthy lifestyle, sober and who are caring, respectful, and outspoken.

The local radio station has been run by volunteers for the past 30 years. The radio station known as CBQM is our best source of getting messages out to the community, on the land and those living in other communities.

The community residents have strong faith. The church is serviced by Gwich’in ministers and lay readers from the community which entices more people to attend church on a regular basis.

Traditional dancing is a strength in our community. The traditional dances are very well attended by all age groups, as little as 6 months old.

Traditional crafts and sewing is on the increase. This is demonstrated at various traditional events that take place throughout the year.

The Annual Midway Lake Music Festival is attended by everyone in the community. This festival is well advertised and people from all over the Northwest and Yukon Territories and Alaska all come together to enjoy this alcohol and drug free event. The youth from Teetl’it Zheh attended this event wearing their traditional clothing and dance until the wee hours of the morning. We have youth who participate as musicians and fulfill the role as callers for the square dance, carrying on the traditions.

High participation in sports activities such as skiing, snowshoeing, hockey, soccer, basketball, dene sports as well as sporting events hosted by the school. The youth also are involved in Junior Rangers, meetings, volunteering as well as youth opportunities outside of the community. The community is proud of their children for being involved and participating. The more extracurricular activities the child participates in, the lesser crime rates are within the community.
WEAKNESSES

There is a lack of communication. The public made it clear they are not given enough information in terms of what is happening in the community. There is lack of parental involvement and there is a need for parenting skills workshop. This has been identified as a need, there have been parent nights happening on Friday evenings with crafts, cooking demonstrations, guest speakers etc. There is a high interest for this event and will be ongoing. More resources will be coming together to provide extra support to parents for them to gain the knowledge on how to be a better parent to their child.

The community has identified there is a lack of traditional opportunities for the people. The community wellness program provided funding towards the Chief Julius School students to take on more traditional activities. The school hires elder’s and traditional teachers to take the kids out to check net, ice fish, set snares, traps, trips out to the school camp and listen to old time stories, traditional food preparation of cooking etc. We also provide opportunities for families to go out in the summer months to berry pick, and go out on the land as a family or as a retreat for men and women. These events are on going and is a need to keep our traditions strong in all aspects amongst all ages.

School Students are faced with daily issues which are at times, hard to comprehend. No in school tutors, lack of nutrition, no school counselor, no school bus, lack of travel opportunities, student exchanges, and college tours, bullying and peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, smoking and inhalant usage.

Substance abuse, addictions, lateral violence, gambling, gossiping and bootlegging and drug dealing is still the cause of a lot of problems in our community.

Low attendance from the public at meetings is a big problem.

Lack of communication between all organizations within the community.

Insufficient evening activities and programs to keep all age groups busy.

OPPORTUNITIES

The local radio station provides opportunities to the various groups and individuals to provide information on lateral violence, bullying, suicide information, elder abuse, residential school impacts, workshops, being held in the community, deliver Gwich’in language classes on air, send message to community residents and people out on the land as well as recognition of people who make contributions to their families and the community. The radio station provides opportunities for people to learn the skills to operate a radio station. CBQM celebrates its birthday in November of every year and is streamed live over the internet, the radio station brings a little bit of home to those living outside of the community. CBQM is one of the most positive initiatives in Fort McPherson and has been used for over 30 years.

Economic Development funding is available for residents to engage in economic opportunities such as restaurants, taxi services, eco-tourism, harvest and to make traditional medicine which can be sold in a traditional medicine store; Craftspeople and artisans can set up crafts area where tourists can view and purchase traditional crafts.

The past couple of years the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council was successful in securing funding to run the tourism project within the community. All organizations partnered where all contributed in many
different ways and held daily cultural programming and this project was coordinated by the summer students. This project provided opportunities to the community and had very positive feedback from our incoming visitors.

Many opportunities exist to educate and promote the youth to participate in leadership. This training will prepare the youth to take on leadership roles in the future.

Community organizations support the development of a community wellness plan that will assist community residents to live healthy lifestyles. The community is provided with an opportunity to become fully involved in community wellness to develop a community wellness plan that will be owned and implemented by the community, for the community.

THREATS

There is lack of funds to hold and implement workshops and programs.

There is a high unemployment rate in the community and lack of job opportunities.

People don’t have the necessary safety tickets to gain employment and the Teet’l’it Gwich’in Council will build partnership with other organizations to ensure we see training opportunities within the community.

Funding cuts are affecting the ongoing management of present programs.

Due to the high volume of child apprehensions. The Teet’l’it Gwich’in Council recognizes this community concern and is willing to provide workshops to parents to help with mental issues and challenges, parenting skills, grieving etc.

Loss of language and culture resulting from people not taking opportunities to learn and practice speaking the Gwich’in language. The Teet’l’it Gwich’in Council is willing to recruit and work with other organizations on ideas that can bring back the use of our language.

5. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN THE FUTURE?

The community members brainstormed their ideas and their hopes for the future is as follows;

Maintain all extracurricular activities through recreation, the school and through the Justice program. They would like to continue sports programs for all ages, more travel opportunities, positive messages through email/mail, support groups for parents, More information shared on CBQM, more involvement with the elders, more excessive information on resources in the community, more workshops on the land, adopt a kid or adopt a elder, learn to prepare traditional foods, traditional medicine workshops, find extra funds to hold snowshoe making workshops, utilize our young musicians and look at marketing ideas (cds) suicide prevention training, more volunteers, intervention with parents, burning bridges – letting go of bad habits, educate the younger generation, mentorship programming, more partnerships between organizations, more involvement from leadership, and more positive approaches amongst the community.
Increase communication within all organizations to ensure the residents of Fort McPherson have full service and are fully aware of all new programs implemented.

We shall enter into discussions with the Government of the Northwest Territories and other agencies to have a student career counselor and a Youth and Family Counselor worker.

Increase access and opportunities for on the land training programs between the elders and youth and families where all groups are mentored by an elder and have an opportunity to learn about traditional and cultural skills.

To continue discussions with the Education, Culture and Employment to start a day care home in the community. This has been requested numerous of times over the years and would like to bring back these services.

Increase active living opportunities for youth, families and elders to participate in drug/alcohol free activities where community residents have access to information on other programs they can participate in.

Build partnerships with the Recreation Department to expand the existing recreational options for more family activities, and for men and women.

The need to establish a crisis line for community members dealing with elder abuse, family violence, suicide, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, how to be addiction free and gambling.

Engage the community in on going discussions on wellness to keep this issue at the top of every organizations agenda.

6. HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Since all the priorities need funding to be fully implemented the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council will:

Be open to organizations, support their ideas and have them apply for funding to assist with delivering wellness programs within the community.

Continue to incorporate community strategies into the Teetl’it Gwich’in Council work plan.

Continue to work in partnership with community agencies to raise funds for specific programs and seek program sponsorship from businesses in and around the community.

Over the past five years, the Community Wellness funding supported Fort McPherson, the community has been able to actively address many of these outlined issues head to, with lasting impacts, but going forward, we believe that we can further benefit from continuation of support funding so we may proactively continue addressing these recurring and prevalent issues, to the benefit of the community and all the members.

It is the hope and desire of Teetl’it Zheh to continue receiving this Wellness funding support in order for us to carry forward, constructively, collaboratively, and positively as a whole community. Many of the issues and situations outlined need constant attention, some more than others, but we have the determination, and will work collectively to achieve good, successful and positive results, for the betterment of our community and all the members residing here and call Teetl’it Zheh home.