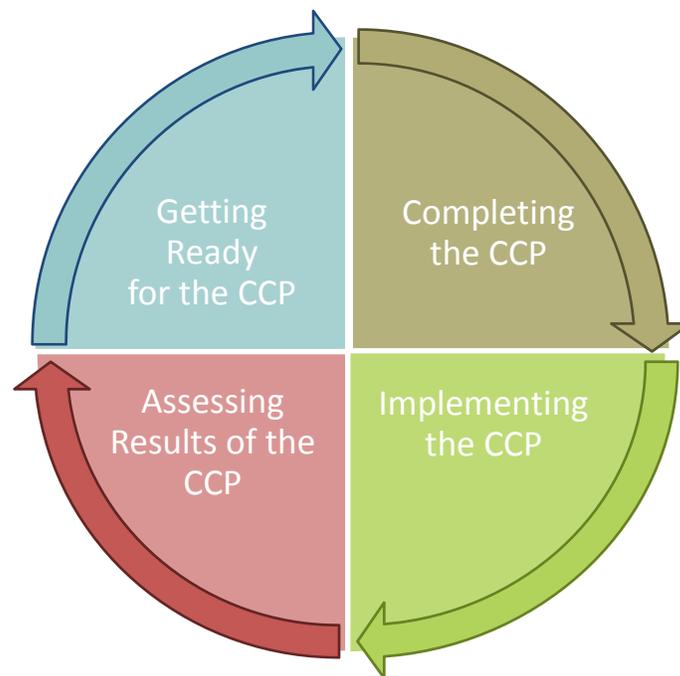


Gaining Momentum: Sharing 50 Best Practices of First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning



Beringia
community planning inc.

Jeff Cook, MAP

August 31, 2009

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Executive Summary

In 2008, the New Relationship Trust (NRT), an independent non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening First Nations through capacity building, launched a research initiative to document First Nations best practices (BPs) in the five areas of: comprehensive community planning (CCP), governance, land use planning, consultation, and environmental management. This report profiles 50 BPs gathered by Beringia Community Planning from a range of experienced planners and practitioners, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who have supported, completed or are currently undertaking a CCP process with First Nations across Canada.

Drawing on this research and experience, a comprehensive community plan (CCP) is the result of a participatory, community-driven process that articulates a vision and clear way forward. This path is based on the Nation deciding on a set of strategic actions guided by local values, priorities and preferences to bring about desired change. These actions integrate all aspects of a community: culture, economy, governance, leadership, infrastructure, health, education, natural resources and land use.

An effective CCP is broadly supported and understood by members, has the commitment of leadership, and can be implemented over time. When implemented, a CCP helps to strengthen governance, improve health, build social relations, integrate culture, increase capacity, and promote economic self-reliance with respect for the environment and the long-term consideration of all.

The CCP BPs are organized under four categories that reflect the main stages of planning and illustrated in Figure 1. These include: 1) Getting Ready for the CCP; 2) Completing the CCP; 3) Implementing the CCP; and 4) Assessing Results of the CCP. Within each of the four planning categories, the 50 BPs are organized under 11 sub-categories as follows:

1. Launching the CCP
2. Building Capacity to Plan
3. Hiring External Planning Support
4. Building the Process
5. Engaging the Community
6. Creating the Vision
7. Connecting the Parts
8. Documenting & Communicating Results
9. Getting Approval
10. Getting to Action
11. Keeping the Plan Alive

The BPs are intended to support and guide First Nations' efforts in CCP. The BPs can be used in the following ways: 1) by Chief & Council to guide and motivate community efforts in undertaking CCP; 2) to support planners and practitioners who are active in CCP; 3) to expand knowledge, learning and planning skills throughout the community; 4) to inspire conversation on supporting First Nations planning practice; and 5) to help planners and practitioners reflect on their own planning practice.

As communities, planners and practitioners consider using the BPs, it is important to remember that they may not be relevant to all communities. The BPs need to be adapted, modified or revised as needed, and made to fit each community's unique and diverse set of cultural customs and circumstances.

As First Nations CCP continues to gain momentum throughout British Columbia and Canada, there is a tremendous opportunity to share a wealth of knowledge and learning. While no two CCP processes are the same, these best practices can help guide and celebrate the planning efforts of First Nations.

1. Getting Ready for the CCP involves getting leadership support for the CCP process, having the community understand and define what CCP is, and how it can benefit the community. Defining CCP can clarify the community's expectations and help guide a community-based CCP experience. Building capacity, hiring a planning champion, organizing people and resources, and creating an engagement and communications strategy are necessary steps in ensuring community members stay involved, informed and committed throughout the CCP process.

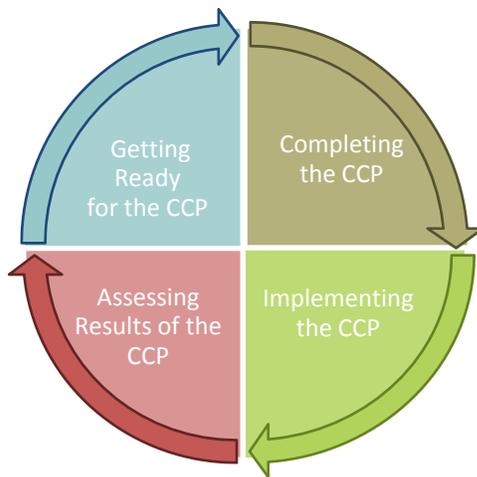


Figure 1: CCP Categories *see note

2. Completing the CCP involves gathering and integrating the best information (technical data, local knowledge and what is important to the community) in order to create a clear path forward for generations to come. This includes engaging the community to ensure a high level of participation and involvement throughout the CCP process. It requires undertaking a series of steps, from understanding the local situation to establishing a clear vision for the future, creating goals, objectives and alternatives based on the values, preferences and needs of the community. The vision is the basis for an action framework that outlines where the community wants to go and how it will get there. This includes making sure all other community plans connect together and that work plans are in place. Documenting and communicating the results of community planning sessions helps maintain community momentum, control and ownership of the CCP.

3. Implementing the CCP involves taking the goals, objectives and action priorities identified in the Completing the CCP stage and making them happen. Preparing for action requires that people, resources and tools be organized to carry out policies, programs or projects. This stage of the CCP process is often the most challenging.

4. Assessing Results of the CCP involves analyzing the results of the initiatives taken to realize the community's expressed goals, objectives, and action priorities. This stage is an opportunity to track and assess the impacts of decisions and to celebrate community results. Ongoing adjustments to the CCP at this stage help to keep it active, useful and relevant.

*Note: This diagram simplifies a typical four stage CCP process. It is used in this report to illustrate how the four broad categories of the CCP best practices are organized, rather than for understanding the relationships among and within the four stages. Its simplicity has its limitations. In practice, the CCP is not a linear process, where each stage happens systematically or sequentially. In reality, undertaking a CCP involves a continuous process of these four stages interacting within each stage as well as a stand-alone stage. For example, Getting Ready for the CCP also implies getting ready to implement the CCP and getting ready to assess the results of the CCP. Further, the Completing the CCP stage also implies completing the implementation of the CCP, and completing an assessment of the results of the CCP, and so on. In effect, all four stages are embedded within each of the four stages, at various levels.

Introduction

In 2008, the New Relationship Trust (NRT), an independent non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening First Nations through capacity building, launched a research initiative to document First Nations best practices (BPs) in the five areas of: comprehensive community planning (CCP), governance, land use planning, consultation, and environmental management. The research project is designed to support the governance, planning and capacity efforts of First Nations. Beringia Community Planning Inc. was hired by NRT to research and document CCP BPs.

First Nations across Canada are increasingly asserting and assuming control of their communities and building on their extensive and long tradition of community planning by engaging citizens of all ages in an approach referred to as CCP.

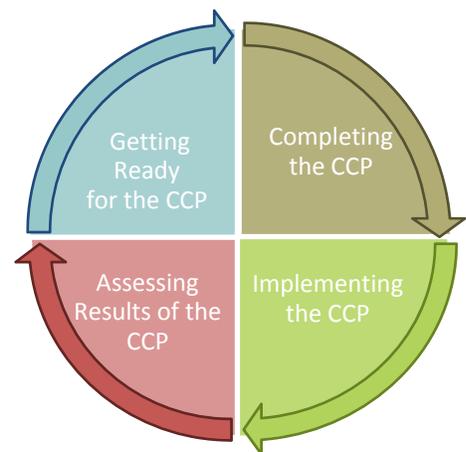
Drawing on this research and experience, a comprehensive community plan (CCP) is the result of a participatory, community-driven process that articulates a vision and clear way forward. This path is based on the Nation deciding on a set of strategic actions guided by local values, priorities and preferences to bring about desired change. These actions integrate all aspects of a community: culture, economy, governance, leadership, infrastructure, health, education, natural resources and land use.

An effective CCP is broadly supported and understood by members, has the commitment of leadership, and can be implemented over time. When implemented, a CCP helps to strengthen governance, improve health, build social relations, integrate culture, increase capacity, and promote economic self-reliance with respect for the environment and the long-term consideration of all.

A CCP is considered the overall plan of the community to guide all other lower level plans, such as sector or department plans (e.g. an economic development or heritage plan), program plans (e.g. health or youth recreation program plans), project level plans (e.g. community gardens or a micro-energy project plans), or overall policies (e.g. land use or housing policies).

CCP entails a continuous process of community engagement that involves getting ready, planning, implementing, and assessing the results of decisions made by the community over time. Creating a long-term vision in an inclusive way helps to create a framework for action and change. CCP is a tool that can: 1) support ongoing decision-making; 2) communicate values, priorities and preferences; and 3) record the past, present and future story of First Nations.

A total of 50 CCP BPs in this report were gathered from a range of experienced planners and individuals with education, training or experience in First Nations CCP¹. A BP is defined by NRT as: “methodologies, strategies, procedures, practices, techniques and/or processes that consistently produce successful results.” Research methods used to complete this report included a literature review, key informant interviews, conversations and group discussions, observing First Nations CCP panel discussions at planning conferences across Canada, and the author’s planning experience. The 50 BPs are organized under four main categories illustrated in Figure 1.



¹ See an additional 47 CCP Best Practices in a second, more comprehensive summary titled: *Gaining Momentum: Sharing 97 Best Practices of First Nations Comprehensive Community Planning*.

Within each of the four planning categories, the 50 BPs are organized under 11 sub-categories as described in Table 1:

Table 1: CCP Sub-Categories

Planning Category	Planning Sub-Category	Description
Getting Ready for the CCP	1. Launching the CCP	Getting leadership support for the CCP process, understanding what CCP means, clarifying expectations, and talking about how planning has worked in the past can shape the vision and outcomes of the process. Learning what it takes to get ready to do a CCP and how to build a strong process are important launching steps.
	2. Building Capacity to Plan	Organizing champion(s) to drive the CCP process is critical. It involves understanding the need to create a core planning support group, and identifying what skills, roles and responsibilities are required to carry out a CCP. Setting work plans, identifying training needs, and building an information base are important leading practices to consider.
Completing the CCP	3. Hiring External Planning Support	Making sure that external planning support, if required, meets the planning needs and values of the community is important. Selecting culturally appropriate planners based on existing capacity is essential, as is defining planners' roles with ongoing feedback and evaluation of their performance. Planning relationships should change or stop if needed.
	4. Building the Process	Organizing and following a set of steps to complete a CCP should be based on the cultural customs, preferences, capacity and pace of the community. An effective process includes continuous adjustments and a diverse set of methods and tools to involve members in decision-making.
	5. Engaging the Community	Securing high levels of community participation and involvement are fundamental to long-term implementation success. This is possible by creating an engagement and communications strategy targeting how best to involve everyone in decision-making.
	6. Creating the Vision	Determining goals and action priorities by defining values and objectives, building on strengths, addressing root causes of issues, identifying opportunities, and communicating results is at the heart of the CCP. A framework for decision-making and an overall plan of action that articulates and sequences priorities is needed to turn the vision into a reality.
	7. Connecting the Parts	Having the CCP guide and link all other plans (e.g. from higher level sector, department, land use plans to the project plan level) to maximize the best use of community resources in generating change is essential.
	8. Documenting & Communicating Results	Recording and sharing the results of the CCP process, and how the results are packaged into final CCP products, can impact the connection to the CCP and expand the ways the CCP is used by the community.
	9. Getting Approval	Finalizing and approving the CCP validates and celebrates the community's effort. It also helps to bring closure to the planning stage and symbolizes an important transition in the planning cycle.

Implementing the CCP	10. Getting to Action	Launching the CCP process implies getting ready to carry out the actions (e.g. policies, programs and projects), and making the CCP happen. The transition from ‘planning’ to ‘doing’ is a critical point in the CCP process. This is where the momentum shifts from community to management. Communities need to assess how to get the most out of the CCP and to make sure it is documented in user-friendly ways. Key to implementation success is building strategic partnerships and collaboration.
Assessing the Results of the CCP	11. Keeping the Plan Alive	Completing actions and realizing the benefits creates an opportunity to track and assess results. Making changes and adapting the CCP so it stays useful, active and current are critical. Communities need to determine if the vision is creating the expected change or results.

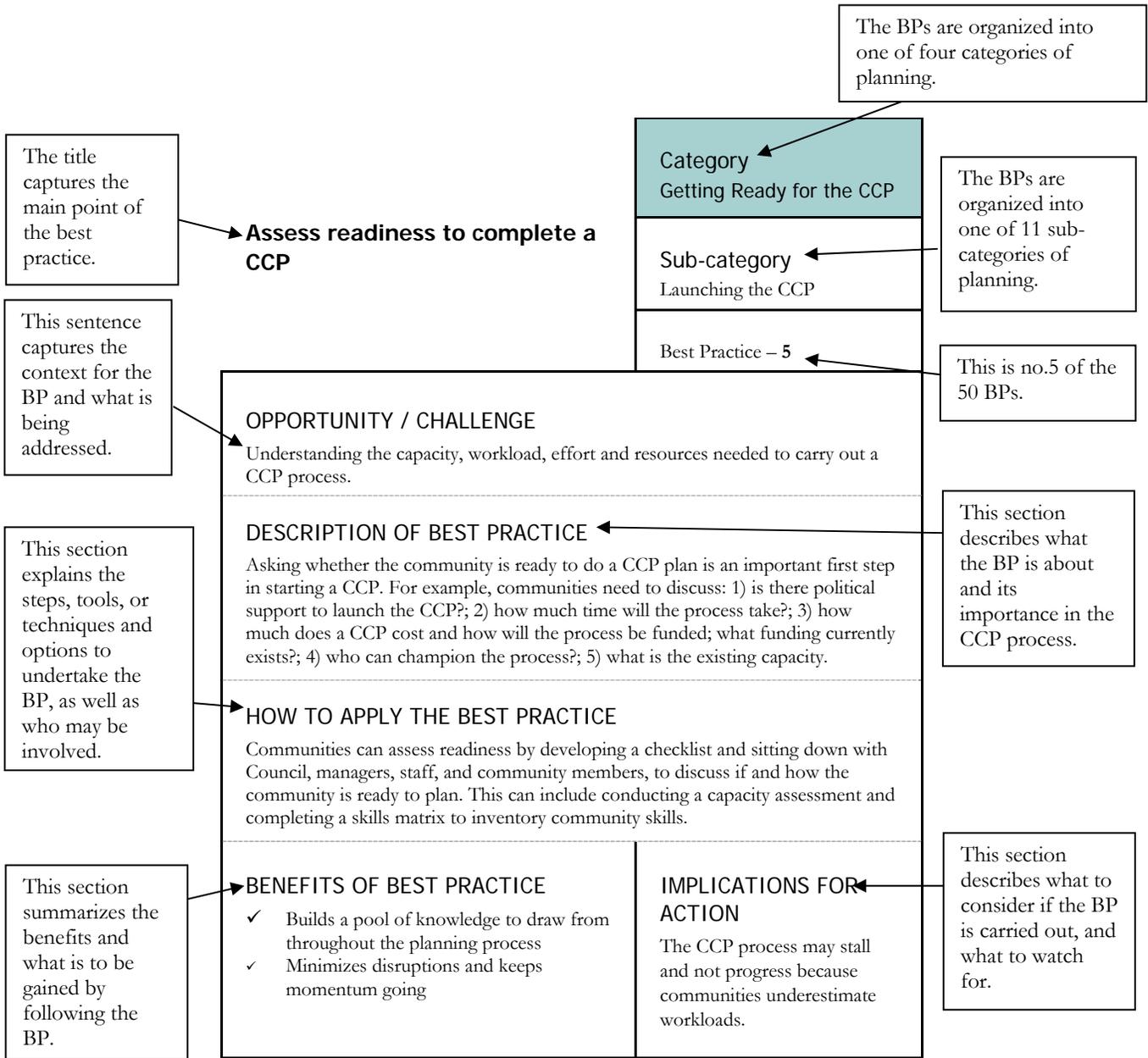
Each BP has been profiled by a title, category, sub-category, and number, followed by a sentence framing the context of the BP, a description of what it is, and an explanation of how to apply it. The last two sections address the benefits to be gained, and implications in carrying out the BP. Figure 2 on the next page illustrates how the BPs are profiled in this report.

The BPs are intended to support and guide First Nations’ efforts in CCP. The BPs can be used in the following ways: 1) by Chief & Council to guide and motivate community efforts in undertaking CCP; 2) to support planners and practitioners who are active in CCP; 3) to expand knowledge, learning and planning skills throughout the community; 4) to inspire conversation on supporting First Nations planning practice; and 5) to help planners and practitioners to reflect on their own planning practice.

As communities, planners and practitioners consider these BPs, it is important to remember that they may not be relevant to all communities. The practices need to be adapted, modified or revised as needed, and made to fit each community’s unique and diverse set of cultural customs and circumstances.

As First Nations CCP continues to gain momentum throughout British Columbia and Canada, there is a tremendous opportunity to share a wealth of knowledge and learning. While no two CCP processes are the same, these best practices can help guide and celebrate the planning efforts of First Nations.

Figure 2: BP Profile Example



Getting Ready for the CCP

“Planning is a continuous process– it never really ends.”

**“Not all communities can picture a CCP,
or how they can make use of a CCP.”**

**“Communities need effective tools to gather information.
It also helps to have a variety of people to interface
with CCP by collecting information. This interface
helps to set up plans which are not static.”**

Have leadership endorse & support CCP

Category
Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category
Launching the CCP

CCP Best Practice – 1

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Getting Chief and Council to lead the CCP process.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Chief and Council need to endorse and support the CCP process. Their role includes explaining: 1) why the community is doing a CCP; 2) what's involved and how the process is going to work; 3) why involvement and input are important, as well as the expectations of community involvement; and 4) how members' information will be used. The community needs to know when and how Chief and Council will be involved in the CCP process and what the decision points are along the way. In particular, Chief and Council needs to show their commitment to the CCP process and members need to feel confident that they will follow through on implementing the CCP.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Chief and Council can endorse a CCP process in a number of ways: 1) by passing a Band Council Resolution (BCR) and launching the CCP process (e.g. at an annual general meeting, during a Chief and Council meeting, or at an opening ceremony that includes a community supper and presentation); 2) by providing a mandate to a planning support group or planning champion; 3) by endorsing the CCP process (e.g. informally by making appearances at planning sessions or participating in planning workshops); and 4) by acknowledging and thanking members for their contributions (e.g. at social gatherings and community events, through a personal letter or by making a statement in a community newsletter).

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ A BCR helps to provide certainty and credibility of a CCP
- ✓ Demonstrates leadership commitment by walking the talk
- ✓ Helps build interest and community involvement
- ✓ Increases community pride
- ✓ Increases follow-through

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

There is no guarantee that a BCR will ensure that the CCP is carried out, but it is a symbol of good faith. Leadership endorsement can help to fuel respect for the CCP and secure commitment in carrying out the process and implementing the final CCP.

Define CCP to clarify expectations

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Launching the CCP

CCP Best Practice – 2

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Defining CCP to determine what and how to plan, required resources and desired outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The terms comprehensive, community and planning can have many meanings and may shift over time. It is important to take the time to work with the community in order to introduce and clarify the meaning of CCP and what a CCP includes before jumping into the process. For example, does the CCP mean to integrate all the parts of the community to bring about sustainable change? Will the CCP include theme areas of governance, land use, the environment, community economic development, social development, education, or physical infrastructure equally? Will the CCP include a vision, goals and determine priorities? Will the CCP include decision and management tools such as ranking tools, action plans, budget templates, implementation and funding strategies and a monitoring and evaluation plan as well? This level of detail needs to be decided, including expectations for the final planning products that summarize the results of the CCP process (e.g. final plan, brochure, or poster).

The community needs to discuss and agree on what CCP means, what CCP includes, and how CCP will affect the community, including what the physical boundaries (e.g. land base) of the CCP are. In particular, because there are so many levels to a CCP, the meaning of it should be discussed and promoted as much as possible with a variety of audiences within a community to ensure that the terms are culturally appropriate, are reflective of the community's needs and are practically doable. Chief and Council also needs to openly reveal their expectations of the CCP process with the community. It is important to reconcile these two sets of needs.

Defining CCP is important because it can: 1) determine the approach; 2) impact what is needed to carry out the process (e.g. money, time, information, and technical expertise); 3) determine the quality of community engagement (e.g. how many workshops, number of people, how the process is to be documented); 4) influence capacity support (e.g. how much training) and information needs (e.g. ecological or social data); 5) determine the products of CCP (e.g. final plan, brochure, web site, newsletters); and 6) help to clarify and manage expectations, particularly in terms of 'when' results will happen and who will benefit.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The CCP should be defined early in the process, for example through meetings, surveys and conversations. One way to help give meaning to the CCP is to identify the goals of the CCP process (e.g. to increase results, to build capacity, to promote healing, to link to Treaty) and then work backwards to say how this will be accomplished. Defining the goals of the CCP process could be facilitated during a start-up meeting where the CCP can be discussed openly with the community at large.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assists in preparing for CCP ✓ Helps to create buy-in of the CCP process ✓ Manages expectations and clarifies implementation needs ✓ Shared understanding of CCP leads to more transparency ✓ Promotes a community-based process ✓ Level of responsibility and commitment are better known 	<p>The size, breadth and depth of a CCP can result in many different types of products and outcomes. If communities do not define expectations, you receive fewer results or fewer answers. Unclear expectations can lead to poor implementation and planning outcomes.</p>

“You need to have a vision laid out, a vision statement for CCP. What is the plan for, and how will the CCP be used?”

“We have a wall full of reports about what should be done [in our community]. These [plans] are never followed through on. We want to be able to say that we did something.”

“Not all communities see the value of CCP up front. It takes time to see the value. Once visual tools are seen (e.g. community profile, survey results, website, site plan) – based on the community’s input, it demonstrates the potential of CCP...Once people see results, they understand the value of CCP and want more support [to do more planning].”

Promote awareness & value of CCP

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Launching the CCP

CCP Best Practice – 3

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Knowing the value of CCP informs why and how a community undertakes a CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Community members need to understand what CCP is and why it can help. A CCP can serve a community in many important ways such as: 1) be the foundation to guide all other plans (e.g. strategic, sectoral, theme-based, departmental and project plans); 2) guide future development (e.g. vacant lands); 3) become the foundation for a treaty process and settlement (e.g. compensation and capacity); 4) make better use of community resources (e.g. budgets, time, people, land); 5) help to respond to a crisis, issue or opportunity (e.g. housing crisis, new road, negotiating an agreement with a mining company); 6) help create a healthy and sustainable community; 7) promote community development more holistically; 8) act as a governance tool (e.g. to streamline operations, processes, proposals and reporting); 9) communicate the vision and values of a community and how everything is connected and integrated (e.g. to individuals, Councils, agencies, other government levels); 10) act a healing process and opportunity to “see truths”; 11) be a way to create community leadership at the grassroots level; 12) help deal with common issues and overcome divisions or conflict; and 13) update or replace plans that have been inadequate (e.g. unrealistic, no follow-through).

It is important that a community defines the ‘triggering event’ – the core motivation for doing a CCP. Why a community undertakes a CCP can impact expectations of what a CCP is and what it can do, as well as the approach and process to do CCP. For example, if the focus is on land use planning, obtaining local knowledge and mapping technology requirements may be greater. If the focus is on social planning and community economic development, then there will be different information needs and capacity requirements to plan for. Determining the why and value of CCP can help members to understand how long it takes to complete a CCP, the capacity needed to do a CCP, the level of external technical expertise needed, the sequencing of planning activities and when the community ‘sees’ the results, and the types of planning products that are helpful to the community (e.g. final plan document, brochure, poster, web-site).

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Helping community members to understand and build awareness of CCP needs to be an ongoing learning process throughout all stages of developing the CCP. An open house can launch the discussion around CCP and get people’s views and perspectives on CCP heard. A learning campaign to share information can then be supported by inviting speakers and networking with other First Nations or Tribal Councils. These connections can help to explain and provide examples of CCP. The message about CCP should come from a variety of sources and voices to expand the meaning of CCP and the collective confidence to do it.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clarifies expectations and approach to CCP ✓ Brings community together and rallies support for CCP ✓ Begins the foundation for integration and action ✓ Generates long-term partnership support and advocacy ✓ Builds capacity to plan ✓ Helps members to anticipate change 	<p>The CCP cannot be everything for everyone. Establishing the ‘why’ and ‘what’ influences ‘how’ to do CCP. It can serve multiple purposes but be aware of scope drift and the need to manage the process carefully. CCP can also be completed in phases over time.</p>

**“CCP is a way to bring everything together.
We need to use our land in the best way possible.
We can't wait for a land claim – we need to make wiser decisions now.”**

**“People need to see the value of CCP,
and realize that communities can make a difference.”**

**“People are intimidated by CCP. We have taken a lot of attempts of the why
to plan, what it is, and how to do it. You have to help the community to
understand CCP because it is there [sic] plan.
To be a CCP, it has to come from the community.”**

Assess readiness to complete a CCP

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Launching the CCP

CCP Best Practice – 4

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Understanding the capacity, workload, effort and resources needed to carry out a CCP process.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Asking whether the community is ready to do a CCP plan is an important first step in starting a CCP. For example, communities need to discuss: 1) is there political support to launch the CCP?; 2) how much time will the process take?; 3) how much does a CCP cost, how will it be funded and what funding currently exists?; 4) who can champion the process?; 5) what is the existing capacity, tools and skill base needed to do a CCP?; 6) what are the existing workloads of leadership and staff?; 7) what information is needed and how much information currently exists?; 8) what other events are going on in the community that could impact timelines?; 9) does the community have the mapping technology to complete the necessary maps?; 10) are members able and willing to get involved?; 11) what is the level of community burnout or planning fatigue?; and 12) what is the health and wellness level of community members?

These questions and others need to be answered in an honest assessment to effectively design and prepare a CCP process that best fits a community. Communities need to understand the level of capacity and effort needed to engage the community in a CCP process and to assess what capacity and tools exists locally before they begin a CCP. This includes identifying and overcoming planning resistance brought about by ineffective planning or a lack of results.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Communities can assess readiness by developing a checklist and sitting down with Council, managers, staff, and community members, to discuss if and how the community is ready to plan. The checklist can include conducting a capacity assessment and completing a skills matrix to inventory community skills. This will help to determine potential planning champions, as well as plan training needs. Based on the results of the readiness checklist exercise, the level of external planning support needed to support the CCP process can be determined.

Other ways to help determine readiness include: 1) assessing previous community planning experience and identifying lessons learned; 2) talking with other communities, planners or government contacts that have completed a CCP; 3) inviting speakers to share best practices and lessons learned; and 4) researching case studies and best practices.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Builds a pool of knowledge to draw from throughout the planning process ✓ Minimizes disruptions and keeps momentum going ✓ Increases the likelihood of successfully completing the CCP process ✓ Helps to build back community trust ✓ Respects and acknowledges local knowledge ✓ Saves time and prevents mistakes ✓ Ensures results by preparing ahead ✓ Gives more opportunities for members who want to build their skill set 	<p>The CCP process may stall and not progress because communities underestimate workloads, responsibilities, commitments and funding. There are barriers to assessing capacity and it is better to be critical in assessing readiness before leaping into the process.</p>

“Communities need to determine the tools and capacity to undertake a CCP, and what kind of support is needed. They have to be thinking: ‘What is the training potential throughout the CCP process?’”

“The key is to translate people’s needs into action. There is a need to overcome the mistrust of Council.”

“Ask people who want to participate on the planning committee, how they can make a difference. Ask people to self-identify what they can do, what they can contribute to the planning committee.”

Category
Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category
Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 5

Hire a process champion

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Finding a planning champion to lead the CCP process.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

A local planning champion is needed to drive the CCP process. The planning champion needs to believe in the plan, be self-motivated, lead, be neutral, keep the plan going and follow through on what they say. This champion has to be approachable, reliable, well-liked, and feel comfortable working with a diverse range of people. You need a person who faces challenges head on and always finds a way to complete the task or strategy.

The role of the planning champion is to support the CCP process and keep the core planning support group together. The planning champion has to be given a mandate to help carry out the CCP and it should be an enshrined position. It is important that the individuals being recruited for the position are assessed for their skills, qualifications and interest before people are placed into the position. Ideally, the planning champion is a paid position.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The community needs to determine the role of the champion, including the qualities for the position, and the process to select the core planning champion. A notice and job description for the position needs to be posted in the community, along with notice about the process used to select the individual for the position.

In screening for planner positions, it is important to assess what the capacity of the potential planner is before they are hired. Developing a job description and screening criteria can help to clarify the capacity of the individual coming into the position. Understanding the skill set can help to tailor the role of the planner as well as determine the potential training opportunity. Once the capacity of the individual is assessed and an appropriate role is determined, then a work plan should be developed.

The other approach is to ask for a specific skill set and let people come forward and express their interest. Asking what has worked in the past can empower the community, giving people choices to participate and take on the role they desire.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allows the CCP process to function more smoothly ✓ Helps communities to stay ahead of the game ✓ Makes a difference in terms of keeping the process going ✓ Helps to get vested interest and increased participation ✓ Helps to build capacity 	<p>Seeking a champion that is well liked, trusted, has the right skills, is motivated and willing can dramatically impact the quality of the CCP process and outcomes. Consider what happens if this position turns over or what to do if the champion does not meet expectations early in the CCP process.</p>

**“One champion cannot do it alone.
There is so much information to bring together.
You need to build a team of champions
once you realize how much effort there is.”**

**“Communities need to consider that the process
is as important the product. The process informs
the product, and you cannot just focus on the plan.”**

**“What is the experience of communities working together
in terms of collaboration and sharing of resources?”**

Establish a core planning group

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 6

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Leading and maintaining momentum of the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

To ensure the CCP process moves forward, establishing a core planning support group (also referred to as a planning support committee, planning support team, or planning working group) can serve to help lead and guide the process. Effective planning groups should carefully consider who sits on the group, its size and how members are selected. Ideally, the selection of the planning group members should reflect a broad representation of the community or external groups involved in the CCP.

The roles and responsibilities of the core planning support group can include the following: 1) providing advice on the planning process; 2) collecting and sharing community information; 3) determining and organizing the best way to involve members and different groups in the community during the process; 4) acting as community messengers and championing the process; 5) documenting and analyzing planning results; and 6) having the authority to explore action options.

Chief and Council needs to endorse the planning support group and give it a mandate to ensure it has a legitimate function. Having a clear mandate could sustain future challenges in case the group gets questioned. The planning support group needs to have some way (mechanism) to link to Chief and Council and keep them informed. Examples could include work plan, reporting system or a participating Chief and Council member.

Potential challenges include transparency, keeping the support team motivated, interested and engaged, and accommodating turnover. One concern is that the planning group works in a vacuum and that Chief and Council or the Band Manager does not support the planning support group. The role and definition of the planning group needs to be reviewed and evolve over time.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

There are many ways to establish a core planning support group. For example, there could be an open call or notice of interest to create a planning support group. It could also include conducting a stakeholder analysis to determine key groups and individuals who should be represented on the core planning group. Another way is to recruit and appoint members to sit on the planning group. This could take place, for example, by going door to door, or by sitting down one on one with people. However, communities need to consider how the group is chosen and the politics around whom and how people are selected.

A basic outline of the CCP project and a description of roles and responsibilities are essential to attract potential

members. Initial criteria can be developed indicating the qualities and skill needs of the core group, and general expectations. While it is hoped that the planning group has the capacity to carry out its roles and responsibilities, often the necessary skills to carry out the CCP process may not be fully represented. If that is the case, a capacity assessment is needed for the entire group, along with a training strategy to expand the capacity and skills needed to carry out a CCP.

Once the planning group has been selected, the group can develop its own terms of reference or scope of work. This is important because everyone has his/her own understanding, perspective, language, expectations and interests. The participatory effort reinforces why people are involved and it helps to build working relationships.

To keep the planning support group motivated requires recognition and support. This can include financial and non-financial incentives such as honoraria, Council's acknowledgement of appreciation, certificates of appreciation and profiling in newsletters. Other incentives can include increased responsibility, training opportunities and field trips outside the community. It was noted that once a planning group is paid, there is some perception that the planning group is considered a closed group.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps the community to understand the CCP process
- ✓ Helps the community to guide the CCP process
- ✓ Enables people to learn how to work together
- ✓ Builds a better understanding of different perspectives and viewpoints to benefit the CCP process
- ✓ Helps to weave everything together with a mix of perspectives
- ✓ A mix of people brings credibility to the CCP process
- ✓ Improves cooperation between community departments and community institutions – better able to integrate and reduce silos within community departments and agencies
- ✓ A community that has a hand in shaping the CCP helps to keep it alive

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Consider who will lead the team and be prepared to accept that there may be turnover in the group. This turnover may impact continuity and consistency in the group but is a reality within CCP. In addition, consider the impacts of a paid planning group and note that a planning committee may be perceived as a 'closed' group that excludes community members.

“By creating an advisory group, we creating [sic] leadership from the community. CCP processes need to have community members take on the initiative for themselves and not rely on leadership.”

Create terms of reference

Category
Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category
Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 7

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Creating terms of reference for the CCP to ensure a quality process and outcomes.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Communities need to define the scope of the CCP project. Terms of reference (ToR) are a foundational tool to guide the scope and direction of the CCP, and various planning relationships with key individuals or groups throughout all stages of the planning cycle. The ToR may be written for the particular person, group, or external planning support involved in helping to facilitate the CCP. Terms of reference detail information regarding: 1) the purpose and objectives of the project; 2) the approach; 3) the process and methods used to make decisions and provide feedback throughout the process; 4) the role and responsibilities of various players; 5) the individuals who will be involved in the CCP process and when; 6) the expected deliverables (e.g. planning report, brochure, poster, video); 7) timelines; 8) outcomes (e.g. 50% community participation); and 9) costs to do and implement a CCP.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Creating terms of reference needs to be an open process where people can be invited to share their views and input. Ideally, the ToR are created by the community – the Administration, Chief and Council, a working group, or the community at large. However, in some instances, terms of reference are drafted or set by external planning support based on a proposal call or invitation by Chief and Council and subsequently reviewed by a team of people.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Sets the mandate for the project
- ✓ Ensures that the project is what the community needs
- ✓ Helps to keep the project on track and achieve deliverables
- ✓ Clearly identifies who does what, when and how
- ✓ Builds accountability
- ✓ Empowers community to take the lead

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Terms of reference are a tool to guide the CCP process. Communities who underestimate the importance of the tool are less likely to complete their CCP based on needs. Remember to monitor and evaluate the ToR to keep it on track.

Confirm funding to do a CCP

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 8

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Having adequate and ongoing funding to meet community planning needs and expectations.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Undertaking a CCP requires an adequate level of funding to make the plan happen. The cost of doing a CCP depends on numerous factors: 1) the priority or focus of the CCP; 2) the level of depth and scope; 3) the level of community engagement; 4) the level of analysis expected; 5) the amount of training required; 5) the level and quality of documentation; 6) the required planning deliverables and tools; 7) the number of strategic actions that require funding upon implementation; and 8) the level of planning aftercare.

There are multiple funding sources that could potentially support a CCP. However, there is no coordinated federal system of funding, or a single window to apply for funding. Securing ongoing funding requires commitment and determination.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Once the community has defined the purpose, objectives, methodology and deliverables for the CCP, a budget needs to be determined. Communities then need to research potential funding opportunities and determine which agencies will be approached. They also need to understand the processes used to complete the funding applications and who will complete and submit the proposals. It is expected that numerous funding sources are needed to carry out a CCP and that numerous funding applications are required on an ongoing basis to secure multi-year funding.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to anticipate workloads and organize timelines
- ✓ Can increase opportunities to secure funding
- ✓ Sets realistic timelines in terms of deliverables

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Securing funding to do a CCP requires time, skill and political organization. Defining what CCP involves, who is to be involved and how it will be delivered will influence the costs of doing a CCP.

Enable local capacity

Category
Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category
Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 9

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Supporting local capacity to facilitate the CCP process.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Drawing on the local capacity to carry out the CCP process is an important focus of any CCP process. CCP is an opportunity to teach and empower community members to take on active roles in the CCP process (e.g. during the getting ready to plan, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages) and an opportunity to involve members in training and mentoring opportunities, particularly when external planners are contracted to work with communities. Ideally, every opportunity is made to have members lead the CCP process and to become authors of the plan.

Training has to be carefully considered and targeted to specific individuals. It is important that there is adequate time and resources to carry out training in CCP.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

When starting a CCP, communities can ask, “What are the learning opportunities we can pass on to our members?” When external planners are first considered, communities can ask or state that planners work with members to train and mentor them. Communities must also assess the planner’s ability to train and mentor community members. Discussions can take place around what training opportunities exist and then the community can recruit and interview members to work with outside planners. A learning agreement, job description and work plan can be developed to establish the working relationship. These tools can ensure that learning objectives and activities are mutually desired and realistic.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Produces same deliverables but you get there differently
- ✓ Increases a community-driven plan
- ✓ Leaves capacity behind in the communities
- ✓ Empowers community to take more control
- ✓ Prepares people for involvement
- ✓ Encourages involvement

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Training and mentoring do not always go as planned. Extra time is needed for the planning process because tasks take longer. The key is finding a person who is committed and motivated to learn. Maintaining the commitment to training over the long term is challenging.

Build a solid base of information

Category

Getting Ready for the CCP

Sub-category

Building Capacity to Plan

CCP Best Practice – 10

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Having a solid information base of community information to inform decision-making.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

CCPs require community information in order to make good decisions. Understanding the current situation (e.g. how many kids are in school, current and future population projections, existing and available land use, housing conditions, and conditions of the local economy) is needed to create the community's long-term vision. Having a solid information base can help determine the strengths or root causes of challenges facing the community. Information can also inform what actions are needed based on the current conditions in the community. Before communities decide where they want to go in the future, they have to understand where they currently are.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

To understand where the community is today, a community needs to create a process to understand and document the current situation. If the CCP is to be comprehensive, it needs to include broad theme areas of social, economic, culture, lands, governance, and the environment.

Once community information needs are determined, communities need to complete an inventory of existing information and determine what the gaps are (e.g. gap analysis). Once information gaps are determined, a work plan can be developed to gather the required information. For example, a work plan could include: 1) an outline of what information (e.g. social statistics) is needed and why (e.g. to determine level of health care); 2) who will gather the information (e.g. planning champion or planning committee); 3) how the information will be collected (e.g. survey, door to door); 4) where the information can be found (e.g. departments or agencies); 5) how long it will take (e.g. six weeks or three months); 6) how much gathering the information will cost; and 7) and how information will be validated. Information needs will evolve over time and need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The community can gather information through a variety of ways, either internally (e.g. through a planning champion) or externally (e.g. the community may decide to bring in outside expertise to gather community information). Particularly when it comes to social statistics and current / future population needs, outside expertise can be strategic. The community profile could be documented in a variety of formats. For example, highlights of the community can be summarized in the CCP main document, and the remainder placed in an appendix. Otherwise, the community profile can be a stand-alone document and used as a promotional and communications tool for potential joint ventures, tourism, or educational purposes.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Creates a foundation for good decision making ✓ Helps to predict future service needs in the community ✓ Tells the community ‘story’ at a moment in time ✓ Good baseline data can leverage funding support ✓ Being truthful allows a community to reach its vision (naturally) ✓ Information is used to monitor and evaluate activities ✓ Planning group becomes empowered 	<p>Building a sound community profile is challenging and time consuming. Communities often underestimate this task. You need a champion to secure information for the CCP – in an open, honest and respectful manner. It is also important to note that the quality of data can delay decisions or impact the quality of decisions.</p>

“People need to choose what information is needed, then apply traditional knowledge.”

“It is important to consider resourcing behind a CCP. Doing a CCP is expensive. It is impossible to fully cost a CCP because [for one] it is difficult to cost capacity development within a CCP process.”

“If CCP is always abstract, it is at risk to stop. We have to make it real – to be able to work with real people.”

Completing the CCP

“You need people to try and realize what it is they are trying to say. You want words to capture people’s truth. You don't want to assume.

Getting to the root causes of the issues is what is wanted - to make people understand what is going on the in the community so that solutions can be created.”

“Consider how products are to be created and why for the process.”

**“The community has to want it.
The community has to be in the driver’s seat.
The CCP process has to be pushed by the membership.”**

Hire external planning support if needed

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Hiring External Planning Support

CCP Best Practice – 11

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Consider the role of external planners should they be needed.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Undertaking a CCP is no small task. Communities need to anticipate the level of work, commitment and existing capacity to complete a CCP. Communities who hire outside planners need to ask, “How could an external planner best assist our CCP process?” Once this need is decided, communities need to consider the politics, experience, qualifications, and personality of who they bring into the community. This will set the foundation of the planning relationship, including laying out the roles, responsibilities, and expected outcomes.- of hiring external planning support. Communities have to consider their consultant carefully and not be afraid to change the role of the planner or dismiss planners if needed. It is important that communities get the hired planning support they require.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Communities should understand their planning needs and available planning skills internally before they consider hiring an external planner. Once the needs are determined, names can be put forward to Chief and Council or a planning committee group, for example, based on experience of having worked with previous planners, referral from other First Nations, from the Canadian Planning Institute’s shortlist, INAC or other federal agency lists, and so on. Once a collection of names has been assembled, the community or planning group can send out a call for proposals to interested planners, asking them to submit a proposal to engage their services. Criteria are needed to evaluate the planners’ experience and proposal.

Once a short list is created, communities should invite planners to the community to make a presentation and to get to know the planner, followed by an interview process or informal meetings. It is valuable to have the planner bring examples of his or her work to help explain CCP and show what is involved. Making three reference checks with communities helps to increase the level of confidence, as do letters of reference. Once planners have been hired, a contract and work plan should be signed off to ensure a sound relationship with ongoing feedback and evaluation opportunities.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to complete a CCP
- ✓ Ensures planners are hired as needed
- ✓ Helps to controls the conditions under which planners are hired

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The risk is that external planners may not be able to facilitate a community-based process or be culturally sensitive. Communities need to assess roles and make changes to planning relationships if necessary.

Evaluate the planning support you get

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Hiring External Planning Support

CCP Best Practice – 12

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Making sure external planning support is effective and valuable to the community.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Many First Nations that hire external planning support need to make sure that the support is meeting their needs. Once external planners have been hired and the relationship is established, communities need to have an evaluation and communication process in place to assess the role and relationship. This should be defined in the terms of reference, or scope of work and contract. Evaluating the planning support you get can help assess whether the skills and capacity are appropriate for the planning task at hand. It also allows the role and scope of the external planning support to be modified based on the needs of the community.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Agreement should be made in terms of the purpose of the evaluation, what will be evaluated, how and when. The evaluation could be informal such as meeting over a coffee, or formal by way of a survey evaluation. The evaluation form could contain open ended questions such as, “How has the planner been able to meet your community planning needs?” or some sort of ranking question such as, “From a scale of one to five, how well has the planner met your planning needs?” Further, the timing and frequency of evaluation needs to be considered (e.g. once a month, at the end of every planning phase, or at the middle and end of the contract). The results of the evaluation should be recorded, and feedback incorporated back into terms of reference or scope of work and contract. The evaluation process and tools should be mutually prepared by the community and planner.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Creates planning value and better results
- ✓ Makes sure planners meet the needs of the community
- ✓ Ensures strong working relationships
- ✓ Keeps the planning relationship alive and effective
- ✓ Improves planning standards and practice

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Make sure there are open lines of communication and an adjustment process in place to revise the planning relationship on an as needed basis to ensure the needs of the community are met. Changes to the planning relationship need to be documented and approved so that confusion and potential conflict can be avoided.

How to be an effective planner

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Hiring External Planning Support

CCP Best Practice – 13

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Gaining respect and legitimacy when working with First Nations on their CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Planners who enter a community are closely watched and quickly evaluated. Planners must have an open mind, be able to open up, and have the ability to build strong relationships with all community members. Planners cannot give up when the situation gets tough. Planners have to be easy to work with and people have to like the planner’s style. Planners also have to think about the tone they use, the attitude they convey, how they approach the community, what language they use, and whether they make the time to get to know people. Planners must not be seen to be aligned with any one group such as Chief and Council or one family.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Planners need to: 1) present themselves to the community in a non-threatening, neutral and non-judgemental way; 2) ask the community what appropriate community engagement processes are ; 3) ask members to explain the planners’ roles; 4) have members identify ways in which planners can be helpful; 5) use laughter and humour, and make planning processes fun to overcome social tension; 6) let community members know who the planner is on a personal level; 7) be clear on their intentions; 8) not use complicated language and vocabulary; and 9) be seen to treat everyone fairly and equally.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Builds strong working relationships
- ✓ Gets more members involved
- ✓ Establishes necessary trust for members to open up
- ✓ Helps to endorse the CCP process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Identifying the characteristics and qualities of planners before they are hired is ideal to establish a strong working relationship. There needs to be a process in place to screen planners who enter a community.

“A good consultant has his or her place.”

Planners need to be culturally appropriate

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Hiring External Planning Support

CCP Best Practice – 14

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Ensuring culturally sensitive planning practice.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Working with First Nations requires cultural awareness and understanding to ensure sound planning relationships and outcomes. Cultural awareness and understanding need to be reflected in the planning proposal, built into the engagement process, considered when making decisions, especially when working with traditional knowledge, families and Elders, and during social and cultural activities that surround a CCP process. For example, planners have to know how to actively listen, to not interrupt Elders, work with story-telling, understand consensus decision-making, minimize planning jargon, and visually display planning results in creative ways.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Planners acquire this knowledge through hands-on-learning, taking the time to get to know communities, and by getting to know the local customs of communities. It is important that planners work closely with informal and formal leaders, respected Elders, as well as with main families and clans to identify the important customs that need to be incorporated into the planning process. When planners first enter and meet the community, they need to ask about the important cultural customs that are to be respected during the CCP process, or consider surveying community members to better understand the cultural customs of the community.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Respects local culture and traditional knowledge
- ✓ Increases legitimacy of the CCP and validates process
- ✓ Builds long term relationships
- ✓ Promotes cross-cultural learning
- ✓ Honours local protocols

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

It is difficult to assess the extent to which planning is culturally appropriate, and how this can be demonstrated. Communities should develop a set of guidelines for planners to ensure that they are being culturally appropriate.

“Our hope is that our CCP reads like a story – to show that our community is evolving. So people can identify with the plan.”

Define & document the process

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Building the Process

CCP Best Practice – 15

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Ensuring the CCP process has continuity and consistency.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Defining and documenting the CCP process is an important step early in the process. Once the key contacts and participants have been identified to help deliver the CCP process, it is highly possible that there will be turnover in any number of positions. There may be a turnover in staff, members of the planning group, or even the lead planning champion. This turnover may result in a change in capacity, different preferences towards the process, or a change in availability. As a result, a document or contract needs to be in place to explain what was agreed upon during the beginning of the CCP process. Defining and documenting the process in a contract can reduce the level of disruption or potential conflict during a turnover or transition.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Designing and agreeing to a planning process can be accomplished through a Chief and Council or a planning group, conducting a community survey, or undertaking key informant interviews. The results of the decisions should be incorporated into terms of reference and a supporting contract document signed off by Chief and Council.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Brings continuity and certainty to the process
- ✓ Reduces the level of disruption or conflict
- ✓ Increases comfort when people see process
- ✓ Demonstrates legitimacy and transparency
- ✓ Atmosphere for CCP is determined

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

While documenting the process is essential, there has to be a mechanism in place to change the process at some future point in time to take into account changes that may occur due to turnover.

**“Anyone needs to pick up a document and understand it
– the CCP cannot be too technical.
CCPs need to be accessible. We are a visual culture.”**

Create a holistic process

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Building the Process

CCP Best Practice – 16

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Building a holistic process for the CCP strategy.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

There are numerous types of models and planning processes that can be used to help guide a community to complete its CCP project. Models can be based on working with existing planning models that have been used by other planners, institutions or communities, or communities can create their own models through a bottom up, organic process. Both have advantages and disadvantages. While communities may present a model, for example, to a funding agency to guide them through a process, it is important that communities be able to adapt the model and process as they need to.

Creating a holistic process is a necessary part of building an effective CCP strategy. A holistic process involves having high levels of community engagement, being open and flexible, ensuring numerous opportunities for members to engage throughout the process, providing a range of methods, and ensuring various age groups. The voices of men and women also need to be included. A holistic process also involves allowing numerous points of entry into the planning cycle (e.g. during the getting ready to plan stage, brainstorming and review sessions, ranking or survey exercises or during social and cultural activities and so on), having the opportunity to compile, review and modify results, and sharing decision-making opportunities. Combined, these efforts help to secure community buy-in of the process.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Launching a CCP process requires some type of structure and organization to carry it out. Communities can look to their own cultural planning models, undertake research, or have external planners present an organizing framework to consider in their CCP process.

Basic process guidelines can be developed by the planning support group and by community members themselves. The guidelines should evolve over time, and could include: 1) if the community does not come to you, then you should go to the community; 2) integrate visioning with social and recreation activities; 3) work with all family groups; and 4) ensure all sectors of population take ownership of the vision. A holistic process also involves having multiple opportunities to go through the process, starting once from a general level and doing the process again, reaching into deeper levels of detail over time, right down to project level planning.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Helps to get people on side ✓ Builds integrity into the plan ✓ Helps to make comprehensive decisions ✓ Creates long lasting results 	<p>A holistic process requires time and resources and people. It is important to record the process and to demonstrate the effort. Sustaining a holistic process extends the time and can disrupt momentum.</p>

“The quality and content within a range of CCP products allows people to see various applications. Once the applications of plans are proven effective, then you get more community buy-in.”

“There has to be an openness to plan, a willingness to accept solutions and commitment to implement.”

“If we want to guide community affairs, it has to be integrative.”

“People need to see how things interact with one another, and how poorly designed communities affect health.”

Incorporate culture into the process

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Building the Process

CCP Best Practice – 17

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Building culture into the CCP process to build unity and pride.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

CCP is an opportunity to acknowledge, promote and incorporate First Nations culture on several levels. For example, hereditary structures (e.g. family based governance), cultural knowledge (e.g. migration routes of caribou), values (e.g. land first), traditions (e.g. working with Elders), and symbols (e.g. circle) can be used throughout the planning process. Bringing culture into the planning process is helpful to get people excited and involved in the process, but you need to show people where you are going with culture and explain how culture is being used throughout the planning process. This helps create a strong foundation for a culturally relevant plan to create long lasting results.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

During the ‘getting ready to plan’ stage, the planning support group could have a focus group session or open the theme of culture to the community seeking ideas and suggestions on the role of culture and CCP, particularly from Elders and community artists. This is an important step in acknowledging the importance of culture in the CCP process and the role it will play in the community.

Members could: 1) identify symbols and language to create a framework for the plan such as a spindle whorl, canoe journey, medicine wheel, clan crests, or totems, songs and legends; 2) present and organize information in ways that community members can relate to easily such as the Four Directions; 3) use cultural ceremonies such as drumming and singing, traditional feasts and storytelling, tribal journeys, sponsoring artists’ events, beadwork, sewing circles, making cedar bark hats - these are ways to get people together and taking part in conversations and dialogue about culture and CCP; 6) incorporate culture into the CCP process by having a naming ceremony at the beginning or end of the CCP process; and 7) base the CCP process on the family system of engagement.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Increases Elder involvement in the process
- ✓ Brings people together to learn values and skills
- ✓ Has an uplifting and positive influence on the process
- ✓ Provides an opportunity to showcase culture

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Culture can be a positive celebration that fuels the CCP process. Take the time to ground the CCP process into the local culture in ways that it is respected. Be aware that not everyone values the role of culture in community planning.

Brand the CCP process

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Building the Process

CCP Best Practice – 18

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Creating an identity through the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

There is a great opportunity to localise the CCP, through naming, logo development, and using cultural symbols, language, legends, pictures, stories and so on. For example, using the turtle, eagle, medicine wheel, feathers, drum, totem pole, clan symbols and the canoe are noted ways to capture the CCP process. Branding the plan presents an opportunity to promote and celebrate cultural identity, increase the connection to the plan, create ownership and association to the plan, and can be a fun way to bring artists into the CCP process.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Creating a logo and name for the CCP can happen at the front, during and back end of the CCP process. One way to create a logo and plan for the CCP process is to post it as a community wide contest. The proposal could be posted around the community, launched on a community website or advertised by word of mouth and on the radio. You need to allow enough time for people to respond to the proposal, and offering a prize incentive can generally increase the turnout. Be sure to have a fair process to evaluate the entries. The winner could be announced in a community planning newsletter as part of the CCP launch or closure. Profiling the winner is an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of the community member.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps people to identify with the plan
- ✓ Gets artists into the process – attracts people
- ✓ Helps to promote a community-driven process
- ✓ Creates planning memory
- ✓ Honours local culture

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Each community has its own unique experience and identity. Branding the CCP project represents an excellent opportunity to secure broad community involvement in a creative way.

“Creating a logo can help show the unity of everything – how decisions in one area are going to effect [sic] another. The turtle symbol is used to pull all aspects of our community together.”

Adjust the process as you go

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Building the Process

CCP Best Practice – 19

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Adapting the CCP process to circumstances.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Communities who prepare for the CCP process quickly learn that all sorts of things will arise once the process begins. For example, collecting community profile information may take longer than anticipated because the survey response rate was not as high as anticipated, so the community decides to deliver the survey a second time. Or, because the planned workshops did not generate the level of expected turnout, a planning group decides to have family house visits to target direct involvement.

Other situations that require adjustments to the plan could be because of a family tragedy, a leadership election, turnover of staff, an unsuccessful funding proposal, and so on. These types of situations, and numerous others, can result in adjustments such as: scheduling changes, modifying participation tools such as community surveys, changing a location of an open house, repeating a presentation or adjusting the budget because a geological technical analysis was not anticipated.

While it is important to accept adjustments to the process, more important is to determine how adjustments to the planning process will be made, by whom, when, and how they are to be tracked and communicated. There also has to be the willingness and ability to adopt and change the planning process quickly, and on an as needed basis.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The authority and procedures to change the CCP should be determined up front in the CCP process. Changes may be made during the initial process, or during the implementation of the CCP. Creating a work plan to guide process not only helps to guide the process, but makes it easier to decide and track changes as the process moves along. Planning schedules based on weekly or monthly tasks and activities are helpful. Ideally, work plans can be created in an Excel spreadsheet so revisions can be made frequently and can be easily printed or circulated electronically.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Fits the community better
- ✓ Improves decision making results and outcomes
- ✓ Reduces negative consequences or outcomes
- ✓ Validates commitment and value to CCP

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Some adjustments to the process may be more important than others. Chief and Council may need to be informed depending on the types of adjustments being made to the CCP. Mandates and job descriptions help to clarify decision-making authority. Key is how quick communities respond to adjustments.

Create an engagement & communications strategy

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 20

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Securing community involvement to create a community-based strategy.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Community engagement and communication are essential to any good CCP. Communities need to consider how they are going to include and involve people in the CCP process, and how best to communicate the results. Community engagement should be diversified to inspire a high level of community involvement and decision-making.

There are active and passive types of engagement, with varying degrees of meaningful involvement and decision-making authority. In some cases, an open house or newsletter may be appropriate tools for sharing information; in others, members may be actively engaged in a ranking workshop, coffee table chat, or roundtable discussion deciding the top and final action priorities. The same applies to communication tools which can range in scope depending in the purpose and audience. Communications tools used to share planning results can consist of verbal, audio, visual and written tools such as storytelling, radio, posters and planning newsletters or brochures.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

A planning support group can brainstorm and analyze engagement and communications options. People who bring experience to the planning group can reflect on what planning methods have worked in the past and apply local lessons learned. The planning group could also, for example, conduct a community engagement survey and ask people for their ideas and preferences on involvement, information sharing and learning. Posters and notices can be circulated to solicit feedback and ideas. Once preferences and options have been assessed, the engagement and communications strategies need to be budgeted and organized into a work plan. When final strategies are endorsed by the community, they should be documented, summarized and circulated in a newsletter or protocol.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Overcomes history of poor community involvement
- ✓ Secures ownership of the plan and lasting results
- ✓ Builds accountability of the process, legitimizes CCP
- ✓ Mitigates potential obstacles to involvement
- ✓ Allows people to know what they are getting out of the process
- ✓ Clarifies expectations
- ✓ Gets people talking, whether or not you get responses
- ✓ Helps to inform, gather information, increase participation

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Investing in a communications and engagement strategy can impact the process dramatically. Consider the cost, human resource requirements, and skill base required to deliver the engagement and communications strategy and make this strategy as creative as possible.

Support & encourage involvement

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 21

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Knowing the full extent and importance of doing a CCP to encourage participation.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Members may not know the full extent of why they are doing a CCP, how best to contribute, or they may lack support such as daycare or transportation to attend community planning sessions. The planning process has to come from everyone in the community. People have to feel that they have had a chance to participate and make decisions, and that these opportunities have been legitimate. Factors such as politics and relations, poor social capital, issues of trust or planning cynicism, and a lack of confidence can impact people's ability, willingness and confidence to get involved.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Community members can be encouraged to get involved by explaining what is involved in doing a CCP. This message needs to be repeated and can come from a range of people such as Chief and Council, external planning support, Elders, family heads and respected people in the community. People can be encouraged to participate through capacity building, sharing knowledge, and supporting people as they go. Giving people responsibility such as researching an issue, arranging a meeting, presenting information or making a newsletter can build connection, appreciation and confidence. Creating safe speaking environments, thanking people, acknowledging people's contribution, and establishing trust by getting to know one another are other examples to encourage involvement. Finally, including a budget to provide daycare services and transportation to and from planning sessions, for example, can dramatically improve community turnout.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Builds confidence and willingness to get involved
- ✓ Expands decision-making quality
- ✓ Creates unity and pride
- ✓ Inspires community leadership

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

You can never anticipate the many complex reasons why people may choose not to participate. It is important to open up multiple doors for community involvement over time and make people feel comfortable. Remember to document involvement and acknowledge participation at all times.

Involve everyone in the process

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 22

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Building inclusion during the CCP process is fundamental to success.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The planning process has to come from everyone in the community. People have to feel that they have had a chance to participate and make decisions, and that these opportunities have been legitimate. The getting ready to plan stage is an opportunity to strategize on how best to engage community members. It requires that communities identify in particular, how formal and informal leaders, the major family groups, Elders and Youth, adults, management and staff are to be included in the process. Essentially, all age groups, roles, community functions, and gender need to be considered maintained. Real inclusion also considers how both on and off-reserve members will be included in the process.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

To ensure full involvement of the community, a mapping technique can be used to show where everyone comes from and to make sure all the major families identified are involved with adequate representation. Once individuals and groups are identified, it is important to ask: 1) why their involvement is important; 2) what level of involvement is needed and when; and 3) what are the preferences for getting various people or groups involved. Tracking attendance at all planning sessions, posting participation at all stages of the process, and making sure names are included in the final planning documentation can help to ensure transparency and recognition.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps build ownership
- ✓ Helps to identify exclusion and action
- ✓ Builds awareness on the importance of community involvement
- ✓ Increases levels of community involvement
- ✓ Builds the commitment to plan
- ✓ Input helps reflect change

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Need to consider the costs of engaging the community and the tradeoffs between representation, time, geography, and gathering input from on and off reserve population. Less community involvement is more subject to political cycles.

Expand choices & demonstrate involvement

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 23

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Knowing that people have different preferences for involvement and the need to respond with diverse methods.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

To ensure that the CCP process is community-based, it is essential that people not only have multiple choices of when and how they can participate in the CCP process, but that this effort be documented and communicated over time given the political nature of communities (this sensitivity varies in each community given the history of community planning and involvement). This is particularly meaningful where grassroots members have been excluded, and feel their voice is under-represented, or where the levels of favouritism and nepotism in the community are high.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Preferences for community involvement can be identified during the getting ready to plan stage. Whatever the agreed to participation methodology is (e.g. meeting, open house, survey, conversation, large group workshop, world cafe, roundtable session, camp fire chat, and so on), it is important that numerous options be available, at a diverse range of times, located in various venues and locations, be ongoing, and well advertised through written, audio and verbal means. You need to quantify the opportunities of community involvement and identify who participated and when. Circulating sign in sheets, recording or filming planning sessions, or taking pictures of participants can demonstrate who was involved during the CCP process.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Brings legitimacy to the CCP process
- ✓ Validates effort at community involvement
- ✓ Promotes a community-driven process
- ✓ Avoids questions on decision outcomes
- ✓ Reduces the potential for sabotage

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Planning processes are constantly scrutinized for the ‘who’ and how people have been included in the process. It is important to show that everyone has had an opportunity to have a say in the process, and that the process has not been dominated by any one group.

Show & validate people's knowledge & ideas

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 24

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Making sure the 'voice' of the community is incorporated into the final report.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

A truly community-based CCP is able to demonstrate and validate that ideas, views, opinions and preferences of community members have been incorporated into the plan – that the voices of community members matter and are well-documented. It is important to demonstrate that the voices of all participants are well-documented throughout all stages of the CCP process and in the final documentation of the CCP. Showing the contributions of people by linking issues and policy (CCP) helps to ensure legitimacy of the CCP process. In addition, incorporating knowledge and ideas empowers members to feel like they can make a difference.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Bringing people together in a positive way and documenting the contributions of community members throughout the process requires an ongoing effort. Documenting knowledge, views and ideas of members can include: 1) audio or video recordings of community planning sessions; 2) live illustrations of search conferences or vision sessions; 3) taking flipchart notes during planning sessions; 4) asking members to submit their own views and opinions in a variety of ways (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, comment cards, etc); and 5) taking photos to show members are active in the engagement process. Key messages and quotes should be included in the final text as other ways to demonstrate inclusion of voice into the CCP text.

Validating what was said is also part of engagement process. Members have to be given multiple opportunities to review and validate what was documented preferably in an interactive way. Ideally community members can interpret and analyze the results from their planning sessions. Sharing results through various communications tools, allowing enough time, and reviewing and validating results in public forums together are often helpful. Members should be given multiple opportunities to review and modify their input as much as possible.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Validates a community-driven process
- ✓ Gets away from the need to be prescriptive
- ✓ Empowers people to make a difference
- ✓ Connects people to the plan
- ✓ Expands community buy-in
- ✓ Builds transparency and accountability of process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

CCP documents that do not 'speak' from the community risk not being supported and used. Documenting the voice empowers the process and establishes a base level of expectations that requires follow-through.

Build continuous feedback loops

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 25

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Validating and confirming community input through ongoing feedback.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The CCP process cannot be a single event or activity where community members have limited opportunities to be engaged in their CCP. CCP is very much a process of discovery, where people open up their thoughts and feelings about a great number of matters that affect their current and future situation over time. Time and suitable methods are needed to create windows for people to share issues, ideas and opportunities they may have. People need ways to come together, tools to help have the right conversations and dialogues, and to document what matters most now, and in the future. Knowledge, information and decisions that result from community processes need to be absorbed and reflected upon continuously so new decisions can be made.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The community should define how continuous feedback and involvement opportunities are to be built into the CCP process, how often and when, and how information and results from community sessions will be communicated to members. There needs to be a wide choice for members to share their visions, thoughts and ideas, and to be able to have ways to communicate or revise other knowledge, information, opinions and perspectives. Methods can include open forums, house visits, surveys, large and small groups meetings, or a committee system. They can also include various communications tools (e.g. summary, survey, brochure, pictures, diagrams, etc.) where people are given the opportunity to think about the choices and questions they may have.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Creates a feeling of control
- ✓ Promotes wise solutions
- ✓ Increases community buy-in and support for the process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Consider the process support needed to build continuous involvement and feedback loops and tell people in advance when these will happen.

“CCP becomes more effective when priorities are addressed to channel intervention.”

Provide participation incentives

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging the Community

CCP Best Practice – 26

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Overcoming attitudes and apathy towards community involvement.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Securing community involvement or participation throughout the planning process is no easy task. People may choose not to participate for all types of reasons. For example, people may not understand what is required of them to contribute to the CCP process; they may undervalue what their contribution can include; services do not exist, such as daycare or transportation services, so adults can attend planning sessions; or some people simply require financial (e.g. honoraria) or non-financial recognition (e.g. door prizes, participation certificates, verbal and written acknowledgements) for their involvement. The planning process is too important for people not to show up. Providing incentives to participate can help to increase community input and therefore help inspire a common vision to move the community to where it wants to go.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Surveying community members about their attitudes and preferences towards community involvement can help to determine the types of incentives to offer. It is also important to consider the history of community involvement, drawing on important lessons learned and identifying what support, such as daycare or transportation services, is needed to get people out to the planning session. The core planning support group could develop an engagement strategy and determine incentive options based in part on cost. Incentives may include: potluck dialogues, family Olympics, door prizes, food, games, and name recognition.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Increases levels of participation and involvement
- ✓ Inspires a common vision
- ✓ Builds pride and inspires people to stay involved
- ✓ Brings fun to the process
- ✓ Brings citizens recognition to the CCP process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Not all CCP processes include participation incentives. Mobilizing community involvement is one of the single greatest challenges in carrying out a CCP process. Consider the costs of financial incentives and the precedent it might create.

Ensure constant information sharing

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Engaging Community

CCP Best Practice – 27

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Keeping members informed and creating learning opportunities for informed decision-making.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Having an adequate base of information to make decisions is an ongoing demand of CCP. Getting complete or up-to-date information is one of the single greatest challenges in completing a CCP as expressed previously. It is important to identify what information is needed, noting existing and missing information, as well as creating an information system to manage and communicate information flow throughout the entire process, not just when it starts. The flow of information is important to empower community members during the planning process so that informed decisions can be made.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Creating a constant flow of information is first considered at the getting ready to plan stage, where the planning support team creates an information and communications strategy to define the what, who, why, when and how information and how it will flow and be communicated during the planning process. Information needs to be tracked and updated on an ongoing basis, and be presented in a format that is accessible to all community members. Information can flow out of ongoing research activities, results from community engagement sessions, or through means of on-line surveys, blogs and Facebook where Youth actively participate on an ongoing basis. Information can be reported through briefing summaries, reports, newsletters, word of mouth and so on.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Increases level and quality of community involvement
- ✓ Helps communities to make informed decisions
- ✓ Keeps the process alive
- ✓ Documents the history of the community

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Creating a solid and continuous base of information requires significant capacity and effort to launch and maintain. Communities often underestimate the quality of available information and the time and difficulties collecting and sharing information.

“Less community engagement is more subject to political cycles.”

Focus on community strengths

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Creating the Vision

CCP Best Practice – 28

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Targeting community strengths to lay a foundation for the CCP strategy.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Communities are often confronted with numerous challenges and issues and have several needs they want to see addressed in the CCP process. In general, there is too much negativity and not enough celebration and recognition. Starting the process with what the community can celebrate or what they are proud of (strengths) helps to shift the reference point for the discussion. This approach sometimes startles members and is typically not an easy exercise when first introduced. Acknowledging the strengths of the community up front in the CCP process can generate pride and help motivate people to get involved in the process. The approach can be inspiring and refreshing, and encourage people to move beyond the negativity.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Starting and focusing on community strengths can be structured by creating an overall approach known as appreciative inquiry. Planners can create a set of guiding questions to pose during a series of workshop sessions. For example, “What can we celebrate in your community today?”, “What’s working well in your community?”, “What are you proud of?”, or “What are the strengths that will sustain your community for future generations?”

Workshop sessions could also be arranged so that themes of the community are celebrated: cultural, governance, people, Youth, lands and resources, and so on. Another practice is to have a celebration feast to launch the process and to honour people and the many accomplishments in a given community. An important consideration when acknowledging strengths or assets is to record and document the history and key milestones of a community. Producing various communications tools such as posters, a newsletter, timeline chart, or a photo album and recordings of stories to celebrate strengths are examples of effective tools.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Focuses on strengths of the plan to bring pride and passion back into the process – it helps people get to people
- ✓ Helps to recognize what has been done in an integrative way
- ✓ Inspires motivation
- ✓ Tracks important history

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Starting the process by talking about the strengths of the community can be an inspiring and refreshing approach. However, communities typically struggle with identifying strengths and it takes a series of sessions to recognize these.

Create a vision statement

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Creating the Vision

CCP Best Practice – 29

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Establishing a lead statement as the foundation to guide long-term action and change.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

A vision statement is the back bone of the CCP process and strategy. Vision statements reflect guiding values and sometimes include principles that direct the CCP. They help to decide priorities (goals) and how (objectives) actions (policies, programs, projects) will be carried out and whether the vision stays true to the community. A vision statement sets the foundation for the activities of the CCP to bring about desired change. This is sometimes called an action framework. Vision statements describe a future story at a later point in time. They describe what has not yet happened, but are based on what the community wants to become. The vision timeline can vary typically from 5-50 years, or longer.

Vision statements help to show gaps in terms of delivering programs and services to people. People have to decide what they want for themselves. Vision statements force people to cooperate, share resources and change the way the individuals, groups and departments work together, and they can assist to generate linkages and connections among the parts of the community. They also prepare people for what is going to happen and generate a common focus.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

It is important to create opportunities to develop a vision statement. Vision statements are best created by engaging people as much as possible. Typically started with the community at large, eventually a small group can be tasked to refine vision themes and words to come up with a succinct statement through a variety of ways or methods. For example, the Youth can define the community’s vision and then the adults can be brought in to validate the vision.

Vision statements consist of a process of collecting and building information. These can include large (e.g. open house, future search conferences, design charettes, workshop, or special events such as a sports day) and small (e.g. focus groups such as mother and babies session) group formats, or they can be developed more personally by one-on-one house visits, or coffee table chats.

Visions can also be created through written, audio and visual means such as a community survey, recording or filming people’s voices, or though mental and collage mapping tools as a way for people to identify and relate to their future needs. It helps to use a big blackboard or clusters on the wall to capture the vision, and to show different connections between the parts. Guiding questions such as, “What do you want the future to be like for your children?” can be used to begin the process for people to think about describing a future world.

Once draft statements are created, it is important that community members have input (e.g. through a mail out, presentation, workshop, questionnaire) into these draft statements to feel ownership. In essence, vision statements need to be “shopped around” for as much as a year and half. Vision statements need to be orchestrated as long as it takes to get a common goal (vision). It is helpful if community members see the results of the evolving vision statement to validate that their voices have been heard. Vision statements should be written in the present tense, be descriptive and link directly to goals and objectives.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Reveals what is important
- ✓ Forces people to cooperate
- ✓ Increases probability of results
- ✓ Gives a mandate to sectors – helps to structure goals
- ✓ Informs government restructuring
- ✓ Builds foundation for priorities, actions and spending
- ✓ Gets everyone on the same page – brings departments together
- ✓ Demonstrates that voices have been listened too
- ✓ Helps funding agencies allocate spending
- ✓ Promotes comprehensiveness and connection
- ✓ Gives everyone parameters to work with
- ✓ Helps communities make adjustments to potential projects versus killing projects
- ✓ Tells you what has happened, what will happen, and what you are going to need
- ✓ Helps people to get geared up for what is going to be needed – this helps people to get ready

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Vision statements have a broad interpretation and can be time consuming. All actions should serve the vision statement. Be aware that it is difficult to dream and vision at times because of limited financial capacity and levels of cynicism. If you don’t have the opportunity to vision you won’t get the buy-in. Remember that Youth have a lot more at stake in defining the future than adults.

“Vision statements need to be an inspirational message. They need to imagine the positive.”

“Vision statements need to be written in the present tense so that people can connect with what happens.”

“Vision statements need to be an inspirational message, and imagine the positive.”

Determine goal priorities to drive actions

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Creating the Vision

CCP Best Practice – 30

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Identifying priorities and avoiding wish lists or non-strategic actions.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

At some point you have to stop planning and set the priorities by way of defining community goals. Goals are needed to guide and identify alternatives and tradeoffs. Determining the goals or priorities implies identifying the most important issues (strengths or challenges) that need to be addressed. Setting goals is part of the community visioning process that involves doing a situational assessment to know what is going on in the community today.

Identifying the strengths or challenges in the community, clustering and then assessing their root causes allows goals to emerge (e.g. protect culture, increase revenue, promote health and wellness) and be ranked. Ranking what is most important helps a community maximize the use of limited resources (e.g. time, money or people) and helps to differentiate between short, medium and long-term goals. Communities need to consider the capacity needed to assess and rank goals, the process to be used, and how the results of ranking will be communicated. CCPs that identify goals suggest to government that a plan is in place, providing confidence that communities are looking at activities beyond one year.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Getting a sense of priorities requires a holistic approach – starting with the individual, working up to larger groups, and other agencies and organizations within the community. There has to be an engagement process within these various levels to narrow down the options for action in a systematic way.

To determine goal priorities, the planning process needs to include equipping members with decision tools to help make decisions in a simple and systematic way. Tools such as surveys, decision matrices, and ranking systems help to determine the appetite for change – they validate or disprove values and preferences and provide guidance on what to do and how.

Assessing priorities begins by first identifying current issues. These could be positive (strengths) (e.g. what to do with a land claim cash settlement), or negative (challenges) (e.g. high Youth drop-out rate), and viewed as strengths (e.g. the community has funding to implement its CCP) or challenges (e.g. how to increase Youth enrolment).

A SWOT (looking at a communities, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, PARK (preserve, add, remove or keep in the community) analysis or an opportunity-constraint analysis can begin the issues analysis. Or, communities can brainstorm issues, write them on the wall, and then cluster them. Using a cause-effect tree or diagram can further identify what is behind the issues to help target actions that address causes versus the effects of

issues to bring about the desired change.

Once the causes of issues have been identified and agreed to by the community, these can be translated into end statements (goals— e.g. increase employment, expand financial self-reliance, revive culture). Once the end statements are created, the goals can be ranked to determine which ones are the most important and why.

Qualitative and quantitative techniques can be used to determine goal priorities. For example, people can: 1) write down pros and cons as to why certain goals or objectives are more important than others, and then discuss these until consensus is reached; 2) track how many times an issue is mentioned and quantify; 3) vote on the most pressing goals to target; 4) rank goals based on a scale of values (e.g. high- medium- low) or indicators; 5) through more sophisticated ranking, assess the consequences or impacts of desired actions against the goals, including relative and swing ranking techniques; or 6) create a budgeting process to determine goal priorities.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Reflects priorities as goal statements to drive action
- ✓ Identifying goals leads to better results
- ✓ Allows priorities to emerge through targeted analysis versus what is popular
- ✓ Helps measure goals and what is important
- ✓ Helps to ensure follow-through on a few actions
- ✓ Gives funding agencies confidence
- ✓ Explains where strengths and issues lie

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Setting goals is an important and difficult exercise. It is important that the CCP process reveals priorities – not just preferences - and that the community at large is engaged in this process to reach consensus. Goals direct the possibilities for actions. The lack of focused goals ends up generating large wish lists which do not aid following through with strategic actions.

“Communities need to get beyond preferences to priorities – prioritization reveals disagreement to focus on what can be done. CCP becomes more effective when priorities are addressed to channel intervention...”

“Instead of saying how are we going to tackle the issues, we need to focus and remember the good things. We need to highlight the good things and be proud of our culture.”

“Surveys help determine what the appetite is for change – surveys give leadership confidence and could lead to more buy-in [of the CCP and action plan].”

Determine action priorities to meet goals

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Creating the Vision

CCP Best Practice – 31

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Avoiding actions that are not prioritized or grounded in the community’s vision.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Determining what actions best support the community’s goals is an essential part of an effective CCP process. Effective community visioning involves seeking the best solutions that target the most pressing issues or strengths as identified by the community’s key goals. Communities need to ask, “What are the most strategic actions that will have the greatest impact on our community?”

Like identifying goal priorities, actions to meet the goals must also be assessed and ranked to ensure the desired change is realized. This is critical given the limited amount of community resources (e.g. funding, time, people). Communities need to consider the capacity needed to assess and rank action priorities, the process and decision tools to be used, and how the results of the assessment and ranking are to be communicated. Decision tools help prevent confrontation, give people a say, and allow a range of opportunities to emerge.

Plans that identify action priorities suggest to government that a plan is in place, providing them with confidence that communities have assessed what matters most and what is expected to have the greatest impact on the community.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Getting a sense of priorities requires a holistic approach – starting with the individual, working up to larger groups, and other agencies and organizations within the community. There has to be an engagement process within these various levels to narrow down the options for action in a systematic way. It is important that the CCP process includes a range of ways to brainstorm and document all of the ideas that members have to bring about the change they desire. Examples include: 1) facilitating small and large group brainstorm sessions that can include a charette process or collage process within or external the community; 2) conducting surveys; 3) doing research; or 4) by inviting First Nations speakers to come to the community to share their ideas for action. Once potential actions have been identified (e.g. projects, programs, policies, tools), they need to be assessed and reduced to target the most important actions expected to have the greatest impact on the community. Actions need to be based and evaluated on how well they meet the community’s goals and priorities.

To determine action priorities, the planning process needs to include equipping members with decision tools to help make decisions in a simple and systematic way. Tools such as surveys, decision matrices, and ranking systems help to determine the appetite for change – they validate or disprove values and preferences and provide guidance on what to do and how.

Qualitative and quantitative techniques can be used to determine action priorities. For example, people can: 1) write down pros and cons as to why certain actions are more important than others, and then discuss these until consensus is reached; 2) track how many times an action is mentioned and quantify; 3) vote on the most pressing actions to target; 4) rank actions based on a scale of values (e.g. high- medium- low); 5) assess the consequences of long term impacts (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, trade-off analysis, socio-economic impact analysis) of desired actions against the goals, including relative and swing ranking techniques; or 6) create a budgeting process to determine action priorities.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Brings transparency to the process
- ✓ Ensures actions are based on values and needs, not wants or politics
- ✓ Prevents confrontation
- ✓ Ensures actions emerge through targeted analysis versus what is popular
- ✓ Clarifies expectations and builds confidence
- ✓ Generates targeted, effective results
- ✓ Helps to ensure follow-through
- ✓ Gives funding agencies confidence

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Deciding strategic actions is an important and difficult exercise that should not be rushed. Allow enough time and use tools to help decide what matters most. It is important not to bypass the process where a short list of actions is determined by a small group after you have asked the community to dream. Nations can stall during the implementation stage of planning if priorities are not defined.

“Can’t do everything at once and there is a need to get this message across. It says we have decided what we are able to take on, so we can do it.”

“If you are talking about dreaming and you bring back a short list of action [without the community], the community feels left out. The intermediate step [of narrowing down the options] is important and helps to build transparency.”

“Communities need to determine what the best options are – to determine the best value [of the many actions available] through a variety of tools such as cost-benefit analysis, trade-off analysis, or a decision matrix.”

Sequence actions for easy wins

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Creating the Vision

CCP Best Practice – 32

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Demonstrating the effectiveness of the CCP through the timing and visibility of results.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Communities need to consider the sequencing of CCP actions in terms of visibility and timing. Expectations begin soon after the CCP process starts that issues will be resolved quickly. To demonstrate the effectiveness of the CCP, it is important that communities try to satisfy early expectations by making sure a few ‘quick starts’ or ‘low hanging fruit’ can be started easily (e.g. newsletter, community t-shirt, web site, hire an EDO, build a community bulletin board).

The agreed-to community actions do not need to wait for the CCP to be finished, especially if there are burning issues that need addressing. Typically, these types of projects are not capital intensive, do not require a large budget, can happen within one to six months after the CCP process begins, and are championed by a small group or an individual. In some cases, quick starts are the preconditions for other projects.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Once the community has selected its final set of actions based on an evaluation and ranking of actions (based on their impacts on community goals), other criteria can be created to help prioritize and decide the sequencing of actions – what comes first and when.

Other considerations for sequencing of projects are: 1) whether certain actions have to happen before other actions can happen (e.g. geotechnical study before housing subdivision); 2) how much an action costs and whether the action generates revenue and when; 3) if external funding is required, how much and how many funding agencies are required; 4) if there is existing or additional capacity required to implement the action; 5) whether the action requires environmental screening and approval; 6) who, how many and when will members benefit from the action; 7) how long the action takes to implement; and 8) the level of technical support required.

Sequencing and implementation criteria can be developed by the community, Chief and Council, or an implementation committee. This ranking and assessment of actions can be organized into a matrix chart and ranked by a variety of scales (e.g. medium to low ranking; a scale based on 1-10; yes or no answers; actual figures) so that by the end of the analysis sequencing can be finalized.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Builds CCP momentum ✓ Increases long terms benefits and reduces project risk ✓ Prepares communities to plan ✓ Acknowledges capacity requirements 	<p>Making sure results happen quickly can help to ensure CCP buy-in. Some projects which are easier to implement may not necessarily be the highest priorities but are strategic in other ways in promoting pride or gaining recognition.</p>

“You don't want to jeopardize involvement by personally associating information during the process. Each person who provides input has to know that their information will remain confidential.”

“Every voice counts; you need to hear from everyone, and allow people to be heard. You have to know where and when to pull the nuggets out as a facilitator.”

“CCP is a living document – it is an opportunity to get people involved who were not included. If you are not getting response right away don't give up. Your first CCP draft will not be perfect. Don't get caught up that everything has to be done. What you need to do is get people involved.”

Weave everything together

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Connecting the Parts

CCP Best Practice – 33

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Integrating all the parts of the community into an overall CCP strategy.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Bringing all the parts (e.g. social, cultural, economic, governance, physical development, environment, land use, etc) of the community together is an important step in differentiating a CCP from other plans and maximizing its true value. If CCP is to guide community affairs, it has to be integrative. People need to see visually how different things interact with one another – to understand the connections of things. Showing relationships among the parts and integrating the parts can lead to more sustainable results and outcomes. The integration helps to drive all lower ordered plans.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

There are different ways of weaving all the parts of a community together. Some of these ways include: 1) having a diverse range of representatives on the planning group to ensure a wide range of subjects, views and perspectives are considered; 2) having all departments work together to problem solve and complete a work plan; 3) forming committees or focus groups based on themes to make linkages, and breaking things down into smaller parts; 4) giving people a chance to look at things holistically and having ongoing discussions and dialogue; 5) helping to structure categories, topics and pieces so people can make sense of the need for connections; 6) using sustainability as a foundation for CCP; 7) helping people to form their own conclusions; 8) using administrative systems that are already in place; 9) linking the CCP to the land use process; 10) noting everything and making connections to show the community created the plan; 11) using communications tools to create a newsletter to show how everything is linked together; 12) using role modeling as a method for people to look outside the box – to think about different situations; and 13) training people to think differently and relate to community strengths and challenges over time.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Integration helps to drive sub plans
- ✓ Allows people to open up
- ✓ Helps to know joint issues and joint initiatives
- ✓ Helps to demonstrate the connections of things
- ✓ Helps people to see the connections and relationships among the parts

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Tools are needed for people to make connections between the parts of the community and to integrate them into an overall system. This is a significant challenge that is under-estimated. Integrating everything ensures more effective and positive change.

Link CCP with land use planning

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Connecting the Parts

CCP Best Practice – 34

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Ensuring the community vision is considered and reflected in a land use plan.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Land use planning is a central governance tool to bring all the parts (e.g. housing, waste management, water treatment, community buildings, economic development, energy, resource development, health and education facilities, etc.) of the community together so that they are integrated. A typical land use plan considers the capacity and suitability of the land – both constraints and opportunities in its current and future use - and then incorporates the community’s vision (goals and actions) by way of creating various land use options and designations (e.g. protected areas, special management areas and development areas) to control land use. Various policy tools, development guidelines and zoning bylaws (e.g. form-based or performance-based) help ensure that the land use vision is realized.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

In many communities, the land use plan may already be considered in a previous plan such as physical development, capital and infrastructure or in some cases a community economic development plan. It is important to consider the land area under consideration (e.g. reserve boundaries or a community’s complete traditional territory). The land area needs to be defined as a starting point to design the process. The land use planning process typically runs parallel to the CCP process, though it can vary in terms of timing.

An effective land use process is one where: 1) the land use process incorporates the same process as the CCP; 2) Elders govern the process; 3) traditional and technical knowledge are combined for decision-making; 4) strategic choices are made through scenario-based planning where impacts and consequences are analyzed based on the community’s goals (e.g. support financial sufficiency, protect culture, etc); 5) community members participate in evaluating preferred land use scenario(s); 6) there are clear processes to evaluate and approve development proposals; 7) local capacity is built where needed; and 8) the land use plan and process are as visual as possible.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Ensures sustainable land use based on local values
- ✓ Creates a tool to help implement the community’s vision
- ✓ Brings all of the parts of the community together

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Consider having the funding, human resources, technology and capacity to operate a local GIS system, including the information system to make good land use decisions. This stage of the CCP process typically requires external planning support.

Coordinate all levels of plans

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Connecting the Parts

CCP Best Practice – 35

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Making sure all of the different plans in the community talk and connect together.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Communities have completed many types of plans over time; typically these are more sector, or area-based plans (e.g. capital, physical development, land use, economic development, and heritage) and project plans (e.g. tourism project, salmon enhancement, community garden). These plans vary in depth, are seldom consistent, happen over time, tend not to be linked and have no overall relationship with one another for a variety of reasons. Most important is how existing plans can be used to inform the CCP, whether and how values, preferences and sector visions can link back to a larger vision, and whether and how they become the next level of detail towards implementing the CCP.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

It is important that a list of previous and current plans be compiled up front in the CCP process, and then to determine how the various plans relate to one another. This can be completed by drawing a relationship diagram to see how the plans fit together or to understand missing linkages. Representatives of the various plans (managers, staff, and committee members) can meet to discuss the relationships of existing plans, and how they impact, or will impact, the CCP, especially if they have been completed previously. Supporting tools such work plans, regular meetings, checklists, and reporting tools can help to cross-link plans.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Makes better use of community resources
- ✓ Helps to coordinate holistic results and impacts
- ✓ Saves time and money by reviewing what has already been done
- ✓ Brings people and departments together

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Once this review process takes place, communities discover many important connections but they may not necessarily be formalized or documented. In some cases, the CCP process may reveal that other plans and projects do not fit the larger CCP, and that strategies and priorities need to be changed and adapted.

Document results in user-friendly ways

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Documenting & Communicating Results

CCP Best Practice – 36

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Recording planning results and decisions in user-friendly ways.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Tracking the results of the planning process in user-friendly ways is needed to allow members to access, understand and use their results. As stated elsewhere, it also shows what and who is involved in completing the CCP, including what steps are involved in making decisions and how decisions are made. Documentation of results in user-friendly ways helps to create transparency, legitimize community involvement, build ownership and connection to the CCP, and validate that citizens' voices were heard.

Documenting planning results in user-friendly ways also helps to facilitate change and reinvention, resolve conflict, provide reassurance that the process is moving forward, and validate a consultant's contribution. Finally, documenting results helps to guide the process and to get community and professional closure.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

It is important to explain early on in the process the need to document results of the CCP because sometimes First Nations do not value written tools. Ideally, the community is involved in documenting the results of the CCP in user friendly ways as much as possible, versus someone else doing it for the community. However, in some cases, the role is likely shared and in others, documentation is completed by outside planning support entirely.

Delegate responsibility to someone to document the process, including the range of methods and tools used throughout the process and who participated throughout each stage of the process. It is useful to consider the budget available to document the process, the products that will be used to document results, and who the target audiences are (e.g. Elders, Youth, staff, government officials) in generating various planning products. A process map, including diagrams and pictures in a large poster format, is ideal to display on the office wall.

“You need to validate what people have said and to show the link between policy and issues to get buy-in.”

“Our previous plan was not digitized so we had to repeat work.”

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allows people to access, understand and use results ✓ Facilitates reinvention and change ✓ Legitimizes community involvement ✓ Validates community voices and demonstrates involvement ✓ Helps people to build ownership of the plan ✓ Documents planning products to help generate pride ✓ Prints documents originating from the planning process ✓ Triggers people to ask questions ✓ Shows the process is growing and moving forward 	<p>How the process is documented can impact ownership of the plan, how it is used, how it gets referred to and issues around pride and acceptance. Be aware that members who feel excluded from the process because results are not accessible, can leave the CCP process. It is important to allow enough time and resources to document the results of the CCP process, and to make sure results are backed-up and archived.</p>

“As results come forward, people want to give [more] input when they see results put into planning products that show results. Results [in turn] rationalize participation.”

“There is lots of negative stuff – once you find something encouraging [to speak about], people are encouraged. We get so caught up in the negativity – we have to look beyond negativity.”

“CCP is a land use map that reflects a multitude of layers [in the community]. CCP has to include good land use decisions. CCP needs to embrace traditional local knowledge and incorporate TK into decision-making.”

Ensure planning results are visual & public

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Documenting & Communicating Results

CCP Best Practice – 37

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Promoting the CCP visually and publicly to build ownership and implementation success.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

As part of the communications and community engagement strategy identified during the getting ready to plan stage, communities need to consider the marketing, promotion and distribution of its CCP. Sharing and communicating results visually and in public can help to legitimize the plan, and show the community how their input is used to create the CCP. Marketing and messaging the plan within the governance building, for example, creates a common reference point for people to talk about. Promoting the CCP keeps people accountable to the plan and helps to improve implementation results.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Once the CCP process is completed, the products used to document the results of the CCP process need to be targeted and distributed to various audiences such as: 1) community members (e.g. copy to each household); 2) departments and staff; 3) various governments; 4) the general public (e.g. copy in the public library); 5) various non-governmental organizations (e.g. CD copy); and 6) organizations within the private sector (e.g. executive summary brochure). How and when these audiences receive various communications tools has to be planned, as well as the venue and whether the distribution of various tools will be ceremonial (e.g. community supper). Tools used to promote and market the plan consist of vision boards, brochures, newsletters, planning briefs, and summary reports. Communities can also use technology such as the internet or community radio to launch its CCP.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ People can find out what’s going on and keep informed
- ✓ Helps to identify community involvement
- ✓ Builds ownership of the plan by getting familiar with the plan
- ✓ People connect through personal association
- ✓ Builds accountability
- ✓ Promotes local ceremony
- ✓ Raises the profile of the CCP

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Consider that different audiences require different CCP tools to identify and relate to the community’s vision. It may be that releasing the entire CCP may not be suitable for certain audiences outside of the community.

Consider the physical packaging of the CCP

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Documenting & Communicating Results

CCP Best Practice – 38

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Packaging the final planning products so they remain active and useful.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The physical packaging of planning results during and at the end of the process is an important consideration. The majority of CCP processes do not consider the packaging of planning results and what the options are for presenting the findings in a user friendly way. The results of CCP processes are typically captured in large report documents, rich in text and not always easy to reference and access. Community members, Council, as well as management and staff, would benefit from having different tools and various formats. For example, Youth and Elders might value a more simplified, visual and artistically pleasing summary, while Councils would value a coloured, graphic summary briefing noting decision or process highlights for quick reference at a political meeting. Managers and staff on the other hand need detailed, practical work plans to help manage the tasks at hand.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The community needs to talk about the purpose of the planning products and consider the tradeoffs when deciding on what types of communications tools would be useful. Preferences could be decided by the planning support group, Council, through a community survey, word of mouth, and by showing and assessing the options to document the planning process.

For example, having a three ring binder of the CCP allows sections to be updated regularly, showing that the CCP is a living document. This would save money in the long run by replacing pieces rather than a ‘bound’ document that no longer serves a purpose. Other considerations include the size of budget, producing a combination of tools (e.g. newsletter summary, brochure, poster, photo book, etc.), and uploading them to the community’s website, or summarizing results in a CCP video.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to promote the CCP results
- ✓ Increases the amount users view
- ✓ Allows easy replacements
- ✓ Shows that the CCP is a living document

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Binding a CCP may be perceived as a creating a static document. Creating a CCP binder system provides an opportunity to update the CCP on a regular basis, removing or replacing pages and sections as needed. The system can be organized in a way that makes it accessible and user friendly.

Beware that the CCP may not be endorsed by all

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting Approval

CCP Best Practice – 39

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Adopting and using the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

As much as you try to build ownership of the plan and be inclusive as possible, turnovers in Council, management and staff are inevitable. The worst case scenario is one where core staff members charged to implement the CCP has not been involved in the CCP process. This can dramatically disrupt whether and in what ways a CCP is used and supported. This stresses the importance of the need to expand the number of planning champions and to have the CCP mandated and endorsed by Council. Other factors that may influence whether a CCP is adopted and used depends on how ‘accessible’ the plan is, the level of community involvement, whether members understand the plan and existing tools to support the use of the CCP.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Ways to prevent the risk of not having the CCP adopted, supported or used is to link implementation to a team of people charged with implementing the plan (e.g. manager, staff, Chief and Council or community members). It is also important to allow time to educate and teach people not just what is in the CCP, but how it can be used to guide the activities of departments, and make daily work easier. One suggestion is to have a manual on how to use the CCP and a quick reference supporting guide. Another suggestion is to have continuous training and learning sessions to build awareness and connection to the CCP, or modify sections of planning documents or customize them as needed to make them work for multiple audiences. Effective CCP documents should be written in ways that allow them to be continuously used.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Reduces dependency on one person to champion implementation
- ✓ Extends the value of the CCP
- ✓ Allows contingency planning
- ✓ Stresses importance of ongoing feedback
- ✓ Stresses importance of planning ahead
- ✓ Builds capacity and commitment to the plan

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Efforts made during the getting ready to plan stage can anticipate these types of risks and enable contingency planning. The key is to minimize the dependency on a small number of people to reduce disruption of the CCP.

Get a firm go ahead from the community

Category
Completing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting Approval

CCP Best Practice – 40

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Keeping the community on side throughout the process.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

A community-based process is ultimately tested when community members at large support the CCP in consensus. Though not always required, depending on the custom or policy of the First Nations, CCP processes that consider how the final CCP will be approved and endorsed can be strategic for several reasons: 1) it helps to ensure high levels of community engagement and transparency during the process; 2) it keeps Leadership engaged in the process and aware of community outreach; and 3) it brings legitimacy to the CCP process because it validates the community’s contribution.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Ideally, the community gives continuous go-ahead at each stage of the process, through monitoring and evaluating the process. However, a final gathering can be organized and designed to review and approve the CCP formally through a resolution, open discussion or community survey; or, endorsement can be more informal by having a celebration and feast geared more towards recognition and acknowledgement of the CCP. The advantage of passing a resolution is that a CCP may withstand effects of a turnover in political leadership.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Endorses a community-based process
- ✓ Gives people a reason to stay involved
- ✓ Turns responsibility over to management
- ✓ Acknowledges community effort
- ✓ Legitimizes the process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

A firm go ahead from members does not guarantee results will happen, or that Chief and Council is obligated to implement the CCP. Communities need to ensure Council’s obligation to the CCP.

“Need a protocol that states how to communicate and engage with the Nation. You need to determine what is convenient versus practical versus what is culturally appropriate.”

Implementing the CCP

**“We are too small to do things alone.
You have to access as much information
and skills as possible and to take as much as you can
[from the outside] because you cannot do it alone.”**

“You have to have the CCP at your finger tips – to get refocused and remind people that we have done a plan. [To remind people] that we have looked at this and have a common goal and vision. [People have to know] that we will have a chance to speak again. The CCP is not a finished project. We need to feed it bread and water.”

Consider the transition to implementation

Category

Implementing the CCP

Sub-category

Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 41

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Shifting from planning to implementation can stall planning momentum.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

It is important to consider the process of transitioning from the planning to implementation stage. Essentially, the community is moving from ideas to action, and this entails a different type of process. This is the point where the process momentum shifts and relationships change since the process typically moves from the larger community to a smaller group who is tasked with making the plan happen. It is also the transition point where the relationship with external planning support changes or is typically no longer required.

This stage of the process is where expectations have been created after asking the community members to share their vision (having agreed to the priorities and actions to get there). Members are used to participating up to this stage and have developed a sense of ownership and connection with the plan. Moving to the implementation stage is a critical point because the roles and responsibilities change and a different group is often expected to pick up the process.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Leadership and management often lead the planning process at this stage. Together, they make decisions concerning how the plan will be implemented. These decisions can sometimes be based on advice and ideas provided by members as part of the community engagement process. The implementation team tasked with implementation is typically the First Nations manager and supporting staff but in some instances, an implementation team can be mandated by Chief and Council to see the plan through. This group, for example, could be an extension of the planning support group used to guide the planning process, or a new group made up of various representatives in the community, and or in combination with staff.

Forming a working group or implementation team with clear terms of reference outlining authority, roles and responsibilities can help channel efforts and keep the plan on track. This group can be recruited in advance of the finished planning process. One of the implementation group's first tasks is to prepare for the transition to CCP implementation by completing a work plan.

The transition from planning to implementation involves notifying and educating the community, and making sure the community has the people, time, tools and resources (e.g. information, funding and technology) to carry out the CCP. It should also involve discussing the opportunities for collaboration and risks during this transition. For example, opportunities include: partnership opportunities, bringing new people into the process, and recruiting new champions with a different skill base. Example risks include: not having the required human resources to implement projects, anticipated project funding falls through, or a new issue or opportunity comes up and the plan has to be modified.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE	IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduces risk of an inactive plan ✓ Helps to anticipate disruptions and plans for contingency ✓ Brings in fresh people to create new momentum ✓ Facilitates a smoother transition ✓ Helps to maintain community buy-in. 	<p>This is an important exercise in risk management. Setting up a transitional strategy is in essence a changing of the guard. It is important to ensure a smooth transition to minimize delays and ensure visible results materialize as soon as possible.</p>

“The idea is to make CCP an ongoing function, not a one time-program. CCP is always in transition.”

“Parts of the plan should be flexible, some aspects should be adjusted. Visions should be long lasting, but if a new opportunity comes up you have to evaluate the fit, then determine what action is needed. This should be done at the community level.”

“You have to show immediate success – to show that the plan is working and you are getting results. Community expectations have to be met and followed”

“You have to get Leadership to push the plan. Often funding stops for the planner and you lose this position. This is an important transition point where relationships change at this point.”

“Can’t let plans tie you down. Too much detail may be perceived as tying you down. You need to find a happy medium for flexibility.”

“If partnerships are given the opportunity to collaborate, and there is a good process where people can engage in discussions openly, it can move the CCP forward and bring certainty to it.”

Have an implementation plan in place

Category
Implementing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 42

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Creating a plan of action to move the CCP forward.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Integral to the planning process is who and how to execute the CCP. Not only should an implementation plan outline what actions have been decided, but it should also consider the necessary system of resources (human, funding, information, etc.) and strategy in place to make the CCP happen. This involves determining who is responsible for what action, how will actions be delivered, and when in terms of sequencing and timing. It is particularly crucial to have adequate human resources to move the CCP forward. Having an action plan demonstrates to the community, external governments and funding agencies that the community has ‘its house in order.’

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Creating an implementation strategy can take place at a committee or working group level, or at the community level, or in some combination. Ideally, you need to align champions who will take the plan on. Once priorities have been decided and appropriate sequencing is determined, decisions can be made and organized into a structured work plan that is standardized and used by everyone. Ideally this is designed in an electronic format so the work plan can be a living tool and be used and adjusted all the time. Those responsible for carrying out the plan need to participate in planning the implementation of the CCP to ensure ownership, commitment, action and results.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Demonstrates governance capability
- ✓ Implementation plans excite outside agencies
- ✓ Helps to support follow-through
- ✓ Translates into more action and results

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The transition to implementation is often where implementation can stall or fail. Having a plan in place reduces the risk of the CCP remaining idle.

“The whole community is responsible to carry out the plan.”

Identify obstacles & roadblocks

Category

Implementing the CCP

Sub-category

Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 43

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Working through obstacles that get in the way of making the CCP happen.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Once the vision and actions have been defined and agreed upon, the next part of the planning cycle involves anticipating and preparing the work needed to start action. One step is for communities to assess what might get in the way of carrying out the plan. There are numerous possibilities: 1) there is a leadership turnover once the plan is finalized and action starts; 2) there is a lack of capacity (e.g. time, money, skills, political commitment); 3) the timing and sequencing of projects is difficult (e.g. land use plan was not finished in time before tourism strategy was completed); 4) there are tragedies in the community (e.g. death, illness, accident); 5) there are funding delays (e.g. incomplete application, funding announcement delayed), or projects are not eligible for funding; 6) a partnership agreement breaks down; or 7) there are regulatory obstacles (e.g. zoning, land use or land code) that need to be overcome. Knowing the potential obstacles and roadblocks can help to adjust processes and decision making tools, review solutions and ideas, modify resource support, change timing and sequencing of projects and so on. The end result is to increase benefits, or mitigate impacts.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Launching a workshop session or creating a working group who can meet to discuss and solve potential obstacles and roadblocks can build on ones identified throughout the community engagement sessions. It is important to track these roadblocks and obstacles, and resulting solutions, and to document corresponding changes. There needs to be a process in place to make changes to the CCP in a timely and culturally appropriate manner.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to reduce risk and adjust the process
- ✓ Promotes positive outcomes
- ✓ Tracks results and changes to the CCP
- ✓ Enables a community vision to be better realized
- ✓ Reduces negative impacts
- ✓ Increases governance responsibility

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Making an honest assessment of potential obstacles well in advance is a proactive strategy. Anticipating obstacles can help to reduce false expectations.

Confirm funding strategy

Category
Implementing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 44

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Reducing the risk that the CCP stops being active due to funding.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Creating the vision and agreeing on actions to bring about desired change is an important part of the CCP process. However, in implementing a CCP, a new set of challenges emerge. Not all actions in a CCP require funding, but most require and rely on additional funding – more funding for additional project level planning, seed money, training, research, or wages to hire a project manager. There is often a disconnection between available money to implement a CCP over and above a community’s annual funding allocation. It is essential that communities know where funding is, have the know-how and capacity to write proposals, and follow-up and secure funding. Scoping funding out in advance and throughout the CCP process can help to overcome the potential disillusionment at the end of the CCP process. Creating a funding strategy early on in the CCP process can also help to prepare and inform potential funders about the opportunity to support First Nations.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

As a first step, communities need to assess and pursue funding throughout the entire CCP process. There are several ways for communities to learn and secure funding, including: 1) conducting research on the internet or via key contacts and word of mouth; 2) compiling a list of key funding agencies, eligibility, conditions and due dates; and 3) attending as many workshops and conferences as possible to network and form relationships with potential funders. It is important to understand: 1) the funding and reporting conditions imposed on First Nations; 2) that various CCP communications tools can help secure funding for community needs; and 3) that securing funding is in part built by establishing solid working relationships with funders. Communities need to get funders involved early in the CCP process and to keep abreast of funding opportunities.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to set realistic expectations
- ✓ Eliminates pressure and surprise when the CCP process ends
- ✓ Increases potential to secure funding and realize results
- ✓ Seeds potential partnerships
- ✓ Engages Leadership to advocate the vision

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Takes time and skill to maintain an active funding database and secure funding. Communities who invest in acquiring proposal writing skills or hiring proposal writers stand to gain considerably in the implementation of their plans.

“You need to budget time for budget and implementation.”

Align services, programs & governance systems

Category
Implementing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 45

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Modifying governance structures and systems, services and programs to integrate and implement the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The CCP process will challenge old ways of doing business. Once the vision is completed, core values and action priorities can inform how government and management structures need to be realigned to support program and service changes. For example, administration structures may not have a clear separation, or need to be reduced to fewer departments. A CCP process may also require that programs be merged or redefined based on the priorities of the community. For example, in one First Nation, the CCP process resulted in the economic development and social programs positions to become a single position, and committees were formed based on a portfolio system (e.g. arts and culture, youth affairs, community health) to help implement aspects of the community vision. In other instances, more positions may be added (e.g. economic development officer and a proposal writer), or new reporting relationships and decision processes (e.g. project screening, project evaluation) are needed. Aligning the structures and system of government are needed to address issues, overcome inefficiencies, improve working relationships, or meet cultural values.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Once actions have been assessed and finalized, it is important that managers, staff, and Chief and Council collaborate in the changes needed to carry out the CCP vision. A series of facilitated working groups can be arranged with managers and staff in integrated ways to talk about changes to the organizational structure, new working relationships within departments, and annual plan reviews structured around indicators and milestones. It is important to produce a visual diagram to show organizational structure and the connections between citizens, Council, departments, and other community agencies involved in implementing the CCP.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Mobilizes effort to achieve vision
- ✓ Generates new efficiencies and increases results
- ✓ Forms new relationships and ways of working together
- ✓ Creates a more culturally relevant system
- ✓ Aligns culture and governance

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Changing the way the community does business can be disruptive and is often resisted. It is important to anticipate this in advance and provide appropriate support and flexibility. Tracking effects of the realignment can help to assess ways the community is benefiting over time.

Small communities need partnerships

Category
Implementing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 46

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Realizing the value in building strategic partnerships to make things happen.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Depending on the size and location of the community, and the availability, workload and capacity of staff, communities have to form alliances with municipalities when planning and implementing their CCP. There is simply too much work to do in carrying out CCP, and not enough resources or know-how. For those communities living near, adjacent, or within a municipality, working closely with a municipal government is the key to planning success because: 1) everyone can be on the same page, working together to make the vision happen; 2) First Nations and municipalities can share knowledge, information and resources; and 3) First Nations can access technical and resource information they do not have.

Creating supportive working relationships is necessary and valuable to bring benefits to the community. By doing things alone, communities may miss out on opportunities or benefits such as employment, training revenue, sharing agreements, cost sharing and savings, or learning.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The key to building a relationship with a municipality, for example, is taking the time and allowing the space for people to get to know one another on an informal basis. There can be a lot of past history that is not known, and there are cultural differences in how First Nations get things done that may have created conflict in the past. It is important that a process of getting to know one another begins and evolves over time. This will help to build trust and to establish a good working relationship. Arranging a lunch, setting up a meeting with the Mayor and Chief and Council that allow the First Nation to ‘rant’ and move forward, and sharing car rides together are examples that provide time to get to know one another. It is these small steps that eventually allow a community to feel comfortable and to move forward in creating a working protocol with a municipality. The protocol agreement becomes a good foundation for a strong working relationship.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Municipal governments have skills and resources that help
- ✓ The more you know and network, the better off you are
- ✓ Protocols are a good foundation to work together
- ✓ Working together allows development to be controlled – allows what you want and don’t want

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Taking small and informal steps to get to know one another is important in building trust between different groups. Protocol agreements clarify expectations, are value-based, set up standards and processes, and ensure effective working relationships. However, this process is a gradual one to slowly build up trust.

Build strategic partnerships

Category

Implementing the CCP

Sub-category

Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 47

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Knowing who the partners are and leveraging the value they may bring to the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

Knowing the players and identifying potential partnerships throughout a community's planning cycle can dramatically impact the quality of planning and outcomes for a community. Take the time to identify all of the current and potential players – government departments, industry, non-government agencies, private sector companies and organizations. This collaboration can help to: 1) share knowledge, ideas, and stories; 2) provide program and funding updates; 3) improve cross-cultural understanding; 4) improve working relationships and identify opportunities for support; and 5) help INAC align their programs and services to champion First Nations CCPs.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

One useful starting point for getting to know who the players are for a given community planning process is to create a relationship map on a large wall poster. The following tasks are helpful to identify and map the potential partnerships and roles: 1) ask managers and staff to map out all the players and partners in all of the current programming; 2) complete research on the current stakeholders (individuals and groups) that have a potential impact on the First Nation's affairs; and 3) research potential funding agencies and other topic interest areas that might identify organizations seeking collaboration.

Once all of these players are identified, the process can move towards discussing and mapping the potential relationships and alliances to determine ways to build effective working relationships. Communities need to assess the capacity of the Nation, including values and priorities to foster a good partnership. Partnerships need to be given an opportunity to collaborate. A good engagement process helps to ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is effective.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps bring people together
- ✓ Informs agencies to build support
- ✓ Generates new opportunities
- ✓ Captures increased benefits to the community
- ✓ Promotes cross-cultural understanding

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Need extra time and capacity to develop meaningful partnerships that are strategic and effective. Having a way to assess the strengths and challenges of the players and partners helps to prioritize the most important connections.

Keep the plan alive

Category
Implementing the CCP

Sub-category
Getting to Action

CCP Best Practice – 48

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Maintaining an active CCP that is widely and continuously used.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

All CCPs run the risk of being inactive or idle. CCPs need to be active from the moment the process begins. In effect, it takes the whole community and a multitude of ways to keep the plan alive. CCP should not be viewed as a one-time event, or program. Rather, it is an ongoing, continuous function.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Keeping the plan alive requires strategic focus before, during, and after the CCP process is completed. Keeping the CCP alive starts with creating a community-based process that emphasizes participation, includes a diverse range of planning methods, promotes hands-on-learning, and is fun and social.

Ways of keeping the CCP alive after the planning phase is completed include: 1) creating an implementation committee(s) or champion; 2) creating user friendly planning tools such as work plans and templates; 3) packaging the plan in a binder for example so that pages or sections can be easily replaced and updated; 4) scheduling regular departmental meetings; 5) undertaking a participatory budgeting process; 6) creating a monitoring and evaluation system; 7) creating a process to modify and adapt the CCP; 8) having Chief and Council endorse the CCP; 9) creating bylaws or policies to ensure the CCP is adhered to; 10) getting the community engaged at the project level; 11) making linkages between projects; and 12) bringing in partners and forming strategic alliances.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Maximizes long term results
- ✓ Promotes sustainable change
- ✓ Allows the full value of the CCP to be realized
- ✓ Increases awareness and understanding of CCP

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Keeping the plan alive requires extra effort once the main planning cycle is complete. A healthy CCP is one that is continuously updated, through ongoing feedback loops. Consider the resources needed to keep the plan alive throughout the life of a CCP.

“The more we use it [the plan], the more it needs to be changed.”

Assessing Results of the CCP

**“What we work on is only valid for the period we work on –
we cannot conceptualize a full set of problems.”**

“A CCP has to have a communications plans that is simple and user friendly. You have to have a performance framework to show and tell the progress of a CCP. It is hard to feel positive about the future if you don’t see change happening. Communities have a right to see what has been done, not done, or what has been done well. People need to see if their ideas were followed through on.”

Keep track & evaluate results

Category

Assessing Results of the CCP

Sub-category

Keeping the Plan Alive

CCP Best Practice – 49

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Acknowledging change by tracking and evaluating results of the CCP.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

The need for monitoring and evaluation (M & E) is often overlooked due to a lack of time and resources. It is typically an afterthought and not included in the initial round of the planning cycle. M & E tends to be viewed as complicated, misunderstood or sometimes not valued. Communities need to allow themselves to assess how well plans are doing. M & E helps to say that the communities are getting closer to increasing the acceptability of principles and values. This helps to evolve and improve the vision.

Effective CCP needs to build in M & E throughout all stages of the planning process. M & E is not a separate, end process, but rather an ongoing part of the planning process. It is important to track and evaluate results with the community to document the history and impacts of planning decisions made by the community. Are the actions decided by the community producing desired impacts and benefits (e.g. reduced poverty, more kids staying in school)? Having a monitoring and evaluation system implies having to make ongoing decisions to adapt and improve strategies. To do so requires having ongoing information available to be able to measure the effects of actions (e.g. 10 more jobs, 5 % more income, 2% increase in salmon habitat).

M & E is helpful to Council, managers and staff in assessing planning decisions that have been made, to document progress and to celebrate results. It also increases accountability, supports transparency and becomes the basis to reward community effort.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

Chief and Council has to commit to reviewing the CCP as part of its governance responsibility. The review needs to balance positive and improvement feedback and Chief and Council needs to consider the process it uses to modify the CCP.

There is a need to build in a M & E system throughout the CCP process. Typically Chief and Council, together with managers and staff, create the M & E system, or in combination with external planning support. This includes: 1) explaining and defining terms; 2) defining who is going to track and evaluate results; 3) deciding what will be measured (e.g. participation turnout, quality of planning, impacts on land, improvement in health and well-being) and how (e.g. community survey, talking circle, open house); 4) how results will be communicated (e.g. newsletter and report); and 5) how and when decisions will be made, and by whom (e.g. consensus decisions by working group). It is important to include tools that can easily track and monitor action, such as a checklist or table. Showing and explaining where evaluation has made a difference, and starting with a small pilot project, can help

build evaluation efforts.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Recognizes efforts, captures change
- ✓ Determines whether intended results are met
- ✓ Increases accountability, supports transparency
- ✓ Keeps the plan alive
- ✓ Rewards community effort, raises pride
- ✓ Validates people’s contribution

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Completing the CCP creates expectations by members for follow through and results. Setting up an M & E system exposes results to reflect history in the making. Once evaluation is seen as an important governance tool to improve decisions, it may feel less threatening. People sometimes fear evaluation out of fear at feeling judged or targeted.

“At some point you have to have a review process take over.

You need to undertake ongoing updates versus doing more planning because at some point you may feel that nothing is being accomplished.”

“Communities need to do it [M & E], but don’t. You need to justify and tell people. Tracking results tells people that they are moving ahead – that they are getting results to justify the process.”

Update the CCP

Category

Assessing Results of the CCP

Sub-category

Keeping the Plan Alive

CCP Best Practice – 50

OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE

Reviewing and updating the CCP to keep it relevant and useful.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE

CCPs are not static documents or processes. New opportunities arise, circumstances change, or new people get hired, and a CCP has to be changed. As a result, a community needs to have opportunities to rework the plan. The CCP process needs to include ways for the community to reflect, provide feedback and make changes to the CCP. Communities need to be able to check off, add or drop projects, including adapting projects as needed. This is acknowledges that change is occurring.

HOW TO APPLY THE BEST PRACTICE

The first step is to educate members on the importance of reviewing the plan and to know that making changes to the CCP is necessary and to be expected. Determining who is going to evaluate the plan, how the plan is going to be evaluated, and how often, are important decisions to establish during the early phases of the getting ready stage.

For example, the review can take place at community, family, committee, manager, staff, or Chief and Council levels, or in some combination. Talking circles and focus groups could also be arranged at annual general assemblies, or annual gatherings. Evaluations can be informal or formal and scheduled on a quarterly or semi – annually basis, or more substantial reviews every single, two and five years. A review consists of assessing action plans and whether the targets or deliverables are met. In this process, it is important to determine whether an action was carried out (compliance: yes or no), and whether the intended results were achieved – and explaining why or why not. Results can then be incorporated into a new round of planning.

BENEFITS OF BEST PRACTICE

- ✓ Helps to show that things are getting done
- ✓ Keeps the plan alive and shows that progress is being made
- ✓ CCPs are stepping stones to other proposals
- ✓ Shows that communities are keeping current
- ✓ Acknowledges what achievements have been made
- ✓ Builds on previous work of CCP process

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Reviewing and adjusting the CCP is an important activity to extend the value and usefulness of the plan. Some people are reluctant to change the plan once it is complete because it is no longer perceived as a plan.