This is our future; this is our way.
The overall theme of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in 2020-2025 strategic plan is:

“This is our future; this is our way”

This plan is a forward-looking strategy focusing on establishing a deep awareness and pride in our traditional land, our ancient beliefs and our traditions while building a future community in which Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in citizens choose to live, work and thrive.

This document was prepared for the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in by the Northern Governance Institute (nGI) of Whitehorse.

nGI thanks Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in for the invitation into the community to do this important work.
Our Vision

Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in traditional lands and values will be a guiding force and source of pride for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in citizens.

Our Mission

To celebrate and promote our community as the community of choice for our Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in citizens by embracing our heritage and focusing on a vibrant future.

“The land is part of our culture. People connect themselves to place. Place is very critical for us. In the past, we had no maps but there were lots of sacred areas – and landmarks that always provided for us. The land is who we are.”

Heritage Act – what the Elders say – place and identity
The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’ìn 2020 Strategic Plan has been developed around core themes that were identified through extensive engagement activities.

All of our efforts merge with the theme “Foster holistic well-being” especially our efforts to live our heritage, Hän language and our culture.

This Strategic Plan identifies key objectives that relate to these core themes. It then identifies goals that connect to the objective and to one or more of the core values. We have nestled the objectives and goals with the most relevant core theme.
Foster holistic well-being

STATEMENT: All of our efforts merge with this theme, especially our efforts to live our heritage, Hän language and our culture. Our ultimate mission for all our citizens whether they live in our Traditional Territory or elsewhere, is to bring all that we can to help each person on their journey for holistic well-being. This can be through supportive programs and services, or individual efforts to hold up those around us, helping them on their healthy path. Sometimes we fail; sometimes we need help, and this is where our Government, our society and each of us individually can play a part.

Help citizens build self-esteem

Ongoing

Create home ownership opportunities
Model positive behavior to counter negativity, gossip and residential school impacts
Foster holistic well-being cont.

*Develop and support self-reliance and independence*

- **Ongoing**
  - Invest in self-determination through good education of citizens; review cost of living support to remove barriers to education
  - Target maximum youth employment and mentor youth for success
  - Create space to teach life skills

- **2021**
  - Review Elders support
  - Examine all available Yukon education programming to determine where to build success among students from Early Childhood Education through to post-secondary education

- **2022**
  - Create policy and legislation around:
    - Social Assistance
    - Home & community support
    - Elders Support
    - Alcohol & drug and after-care support
    - Youth services & support
    - Child welfare
Foster holistic well-being cont.

Set in-place support, prevention programming and services and citizen capacity development

- Ongoing

- Create policy and legislation supporting development, implementation and evaluation of Family Wellness Program
- Expand family assistance programs to cover more families focused on assessment of a family’s specific needs
- Establish comprehensive addictions prevention program including Safer Communities and Neighborhoods protection and harm reduction
- Create prevention, treatment and aftercare supports for Citizens
- Promote healthy living and land-based holistic well-being; part of empowerment
Foster holistic well-being cont.

Set in-place support, prevention programming and services and citizen capacity development

2022

- Negotiate administration of Justice agreement and set up Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Department of Justice
- Comprehensive housing program review to consider additional programs, including those that support Citizens not in Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in housing
- Develop report for Program and Service Transfer Agreement negotiations that demonstrates in dollars how costly it is to not deal with holistic well-being

2024

- Provide suitable infrastructure for programs (i.e. treatment centres)
- Analyze the potential for providing support to citizens living outside of the Traditional Territory
Foster holistic well-being cont.

Promote traditional harvesting, agricultural production and the practice of sharing and increase number of Citizens involved.

Additional support for K-12 to reduce drop-out rates and improve academic success for our students to transition into post-secondary education.

Improve essential life skills in all citizens through thorough review of social assistance programs.

Review programming to assess and support those among us with disabilities.

Eliminate poverty

Ongoing

2022

2023
Foster holistic well-being cont.

Set realistic targets for determining success in achieving holistic well-being

Create a “pride of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in”

2023
Create monitoring and tracking mechanisms to understand community needs

Underway
Build the new heritage complex that reflects the traditional culture and heritage
Build a new community hall that reflects traditional values
Ensure respect for, defend and implement Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in rights

**STATEMENT:** Our Land Claim is a Modern Treaty that recognizes Rights that are protected by the Constitution of Canada, the highest law of the land. Our Self-government Agreement and Constitution reflect our inherent right to govern ourselves, our lands and our people. These are powerful documents that must be embraced by all of us, and given life not just to ourselves but to all those in this Treaty relationship.
Ensure respect for, defend and implement Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in rights cont.

2022
Create education programs to increase citizen familiarity with the Constitution to ensure its terms are met

2021
Review T&RC Report to determine which “Calls to Action” need attention and build an action plan to implement appropriate changes

Ongoing
Pursue avenues of common understanding that our rights are honored in the spirit of the Agreements

Build understanding among citizens of the Land Claim, Self-government Agreement and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Constitution

Build understanding of the issues faced by Indigenous people reflected in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (T&RC) Final Report

Uphold, defend and respect all Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in rights set out in the Land Claim and Self-government agreements
Embrace all citizens and their relationship to the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in

STATEMENT: We are people that over time have journeyed beyond the borders of our Traditional Territory. Many have fulfilled educational or economic goals. We all remain citizens of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. Some of our people feel disenfranchised by living away. We need to correct this feeling of alienation by reaching out to all of our people in ways that encourage them to take interest and active participation in their government and society whether they choose to return or remain residents of some other land.
Embrace all citizens and their relationship to Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in cont.

Build resources beyond the Traditional Territory to support citizens living elsewhere

- **Underway**
  - Establish a Whitehorse Office for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, with staff that can be champions to encourage citizen involvement in government and social activities

Encourage all citizens living away to take part in their government and society

- **2021**
  - Actively reach out to citizens living elsewhere in Yukon, Canada or beyond encouraging them to participate with web-based tools and email for:
    - Engagement on TH government policy or legislative processes
    - Involvement at General Assemblies
    - Participation on TH government committees
    - Helping, as mentors, youth/other TH citizens on their educational or economic journeys
Embrace all citizens and their relationship to Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in cont.

Support citizens who wish to return to the Traditional Territory to pursue their livelihood

Support citizens who wish to return to the Traditional Territory to pursue their livelihood

Create incentives and opportunities for citizens to return to the Traditional Territory

Create incentives and opportunities for citizens to return to the Traditional Territory

• 2021
  • Engage with all citizens to determine where there are barriers to those citizens who would like to return home (e.g. in areas like employments, housing, social supports)

• 2022
  • As part of the policy review initiative, consider tying post-secondary educational support to a return to work for the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in government when their program is completed (e.g. 2-year term)
Advance excellence in “good government”

**STATEMENT:** Our future relies on our ability to build and maintain excellence in our Government. We must attract good people to hold key Offices on Council, Elders Council and for the General Assembly. We must build the capacity of citizens who are prepared to take on roles with our key boards and committees, and create an attractive environment to build a strong professional public service where our citizens can advance their careers in our administration.

**Topic - Government Roles and Responsibilities**

- Understand roles and responsibilities of Branches of Government and Administration
- Enhance and maintain achievable and purposeful/measurable communications activities so the public is informed and citizens are able to perform their functions as knowledgeable participants in the General Assembly

**Ongoing**

- Enhance outward communication on Government activities that are important to citizens and community (move away from mail-outs and use email more; active effort to collect all citizen email)

**Ongoing**

- Conduct an organizational review every 5 years
- Implement government processes aimed at improving governance
Advance excellence in “good government” cont.

**Topic - General Assembly**

**Develop legislation robustness**
- Underway
  - Prepare and implement processes that shape how legislation is developed and its progress in the General Assembly arriving at its approval

**Topic - Council**

- **2021**
  - Open dialogue at the General Assembly as part of Constitutional review, on whether to enable Citizens from outside the Traditional Territory to run for Office

- **2021 +**
  - Update all policies to conform with the law and undertake policy review to determine where changes are needed to bring them into alignment with TH values

- **Ongoing**
  - Develop policy and procedures to ensure case planning is multi-disciplinary and culturally appropriate
  - Create crisis management policy approach within cultural awareness context
  - Ensure informed decision making
Advance excellence in “good government” cont.

Topic - Elders Council

Support efforts of the Elders Council in meeting its role as set out in the Constitution

- **2021**
  - Find a clear path by organizing an Elders Gathering

- **2021+**
  - Provide support in shaping its direction and agenda; creating one year to three-year plan; orientation of Chair and Elders Council on roles, agenda and maintaining meetings

- **Ongoing**
  - Council to actively seek the advice of Elders Council on matters relating to heritage, culture and related matters
Advance excellence in “good government” cont.

**Topic - Youth Council**

*Support efforts of the Council in meeting its role as set out in the Constitution*

**Ongoing**
- Facilitate /encourage participation
- Formalize communications process between Youth Council and Council including mentoring of Youth Councillors
- Ensure all youth are contacted about Council meetings and events and assist in setting relevant agendas

**2021**
- Revitalize how the Youth Council can contribute to governance including orientation for new Council members
- Provide leadership training and support to the Youth Council

**2021 +**
- Pursue partnership with Yukon Education on how to encourage more youth involvement in civic activities for the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in community and its government
Advance excellence in “good government” cont.

Topic - Committees

Refresh the committees to make them effective

2021
- Formalize taking of committee decisions and place on Council Agendas for information
- Thorough review of all committees to improve function and performance including roles and responsibilities, terms of reference and structure
- Actively promote involvement on Committees and provide training on their importance and their roles
Advance excellence in “good government” cont.

**Achieve sustainable growth through becoming an employer of choice**

- **Ongoing**
  - Provide a positive working environment
  - Increase growth by ensuring services provided by the Administration are in line with citizens needs

- **2022**
  - Expand maintenance shop space for safety and efficient access to equipment

**Support capacity development through becoming an employer of choice**

- **Ongoing**
  - Prioritize citizen hiring policy
  - Improve orientation to build confidence among staff to represent THFN from a place of culture

**Build an environment attractive to potential employees**

- **Ongoing**
  - Create positions that are permanent and attractive to top talent
  - Retain employees through a bonus structure

**Establish solid Emergency Measures program**

- **Ongoing**
  - Implement new Act, along with policies and practices

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**Topic – Administration**
Strengthen intergovernmental relations

**STATEMENT:** We are part of a larger community with whom we can work to help us achieve our rights and interests as self-governing Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in citizens. Our work building these relationships will deliver good things today and lay a solid foundation for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in children of the future.

**Ensure that Yukon government legislation supports Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in interests**

**Ongoing**
Press for modernization of all territorial legislation to ensure it is consistent with the implementation of the Final Agreement, Self-government Agreement and parts of the Devolution Transfer Agreement.
Strengthen intergovernmental Relations cont.

Develop a robust intergovernmental strategy on dealing with all levels of government: territorial, federal, municipal, First Nations and NGOs.

Ongoing

- Establish and continue to contribute to bilateral tables on specific issues to advocate and advance our key priorities, building our Nation to Nation relationship.
- Establish and maintain strict protocols on external communications both political and administration.
- Negotiate enhanced Financial Transfer Agreements to cover all programs under control of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, and incorporate infrastructure construction costs into these agreements.
- Create a negotiating strategy on take down of remaining programs and services based on our earlier successes and in line with existing understandings like the Final Agreement Implementation Plan.
- Council and administration adopt strategic approach to all external negotiations and pursue cross-table effectiveness in messaging; with other governments, insist on Nation to Nation decision making in all intergovernmental matters and press other parties for clear mandates.
Develop a robust intergovernmental strategy on dealing with all levels of government: territorial, federal, municipal, First Nations and NGOs

Pursue funding direct from sources instead of through intermediate governments

Review take-down of programs and services and the appropriate sequencing of when negotiation of each of these will start
Recognize the power of and engage our youth

**STATEMENT:** We are the keepers of our land and our rights, and we protect these for the youth of today and future generations. All that we do as a self-governing Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in should hold up those who will follow us into governing our society. This is what we have always done, and we must now rebuild the strength of our youth to move us forward through decades to come.

- **Build awareness among our youth of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, its culture, heritage, laws, customs, and government**
- **Develop youth leadership and involvement in government**
- **Ongoing** Build partnerships with all Yukon education providers to develop curriculum and materials for all stages that provide this awareness
- Increase engagement between youth and Elders in youth-based programs
- **Ongoing** Leadership mentoring of youth involvement in Youth Council and on Council
Live our vital heritage, language and culture

STATEMENT: Our very foundation as a people is our heritage, our language and our cultural values. These have come to us from our ancestors, from thousands of years of our time on this land. We have regained knowledge of our history, language and culture, but we have not returned to living our heritage. Few of us speak our language. There is much we can do.

“Our culture is our inheritance. When we live our culture we are keeping it alive, we are sustaining it. You don’t know traditional knowledge, you have to live it. You have to be a First Nations person to understand – the way we grow up, the way we hunt, the way we live on the land. The land is our university and our church. We went to school out on the land. That’s our university.”

Heritage Act – what the Elders say - Living Heritage
Live our vital heritage, language and culture cont.

Empower citizens to live their culture everyday

- Enhance and acknowledge our heritage through traditional laws and values being reflected by the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in government
- Revitalize and celebrate cultural traditions and ceremonial values
- Support citizens’ maintaining a legacy of traditional beliefs and principles
- Create dialogue among key departments to develop an effective Hän language immersion program for Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in
- Review of language management programs for preservation through a whole of government review
- Increase and encourage Hän naming policy
- Increase use of Hän in all Government communications
- Support and enable communal harvest and related programs
Live our vital heritage, language and culture cont.

**Empower citizens to live their culture everyday**

- **2021**
  - Incorporate Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in values into all policy and legislation undertakings and introduce Dënezhu values into the workplace and service mechanisms for citizens

- **2022**
  - Negotiate funding from federal government to support heritage events and renaming policy
Honor and respect land through stewardship

**STATEMENT:** Land is not just what we walk on in our life journey. It is who we are. We are a part of the land, water and sky that gives us life and nourishment. Our stewardship of the land is what we must do to maintain the foundation needed for life. It is our physical connection, but it is also our spiritual and cultural well-being that will sustain and build holistic health.

“The land ensures our survival. You have to look after the land, you have to look after the animals. The land is our heritage: because we use it, because it is everything, everything comes from the land. Keep your land clean, keep your animals, they are your friends. You look after them, they look after you. You look after your water, land, trees, you look after the land, you respect it. That's our spirituality.”

_Heritage Act – Elder comment on responsibility and survival_
Honor and respect land through stewardship cont.

Maintain the reciprocal relationship with the land in accordance with Dënezhu

Ongoing

- Create programs and tools to enable citizen access to land and strengthen cultural ties to the land
- Ensure careful stewardship of the land, water and air, and resources to ensure sustainability
- Manage the work calendar to maximize ability to be on the land in relation to the traditional calendar
Underway

Build a range of residential options on the traditional territory

Draft Climate Change Plan

Develop policy to create the foundation for a Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in mining act

Review policy of giving rights to special management areas, and consider far-reaching novel approaches to treating land and our waters as a “living person”

Create interdepartmental systems to implement a broad approach to land stewardship and its use

Create a forum to engage on land stewardship matters of all kinds

Develop an interdepartmental team to address land issues, and consider use of new technology for monitoring of Traditional Territory

Maintain the reciprocal relationship with the land in accordance with Dënezhu

Honor and respect land through stewardship cont.
Honor and respect land through stewardship cont.

Set appropriate *Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in* legislation and policy

“The land is part of our culture. People connect themselves to place. Place is very critical for us. In the past, we had no maps but there were lots of sacred areas – and landmarks that always provided for us. The land is who we are.”

*Heritage Act – what the Elders say – place and identity*

Underway

Continue to work on or work towards policies on lands and resources and fish and wildlife

Continue work on or work towards associated legislation to implement policies
Pursue choices that are environmentally friendly for generations to come.

Honor and respect land through stewardship cont.

- **Underway**
  - Explore opportunities to use traditional horticulture for mining reclamation ensuring return to its original state.
  - Final Agreement Rights cover our use of traditional plants for medicines and other traditional uses.
  - Enhance citizen involvement in local agricultural involving school, daycare and Youth Centre.

- **2023**
  - Reduce or eliminate environmental incidences tying into land resources policy and legislation.

- **2024**
  - Shift to less reliance on fossil fuels.

- **2025**
  - Evolve current camps and establish new self-sustaining ones through off-grid renewable energy.
  - Enhance citizen involvement in local agricultural involving school, daycare and Youth Centre.
Build citizen-driven economic opportunities

**STATEMENT:** Ultimately strength of the person comes from his or her ability to be self-reliant and in this world that comes to a great degree from pursuing career opportunities whether in the wage or the traditional economy. Our Government and our institutions can provide opportunities that can build self-reliance and pride in accomplishment.
Support Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in business and citizens (including youth) who wish to take part in business activities

Build citizen-driven economic opportunities cont.

Underway

- Support establishment of the Community Development Corporation
- Explore community led renewable energy projects

Ongoing

- Engage with federal and Yukon government to support economic opportunities (Chapter 22)
- Improve the procurement policy to increase the level of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in involvement by citizens
- Outsource work that can be done by Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Private Sector

2023

- Assist businesses in finding ways to access capital such as for land-based tourism
- Support land-based business operations by citizens
Build citizen-driven economic opportunities cont.

_Fully engage as a Nation with opportunities in the traditional territory and that includes resources development, infrastructure projects, other sectors_

2023

- Update the regional economic development plan
- Enhance citizen ability to take part in the traditional economy
Ensure citizens have economic opportunities that connect to their goals and dreams and to the opportunities available to them.

Ongoing

Advocate for, and remove barriers to, citizens securing jobs

Increase government use of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in business by using their services to benefit whole community