

Wood Buffalo Community Foundation



Strategic Plan 2023-2026
September 2022

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1 Introduction

The Wood Buffalo Community Foundation is a relatively new organization, inaugurated in 2017. Now in its fifth year, the organization has reached \$5 million in assets with a granting capability of approximately \$250,000 per year to community organizations. This has been a very successful start-up for a Community Foundation in Canada, and reflects the positive nature of the community, the volunteer leadership through the earlier years, and the significant contributions made by ordinary citizens, small businesses, and major corporations.

In 2018, the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation undertook its first Strategic Plan, and has been working diligently in its implementation since that period. In the spring of 2022, the Board of Directors, along with the Executive Director, identified the need to undertake the next generation Strategic Plan as the basis to guide the organization's key strategic directions, priorities, and decision-making over 2023 to 2026. The initial Strategic Plan was undertaken and implemented by the Board of Directors as there was no staff capacity at that time. Now the organization has an Executive Director who will be responsible, in partnership with the Board for moving the next generation Strategic Plan forward over the next three years.

2 Vision

A Vision is like a horizon, identifying a point in the future on which all the stakeholders of an organization can find common value and purpose and move towards in unison. But like a horizon, as one moves towards it, the vision can move to reflect the continuation of change occurring in the operating environment.

This Vision was affirmed at the planning session.

Healthy and vibrant communities, enabled by long-term social investment.

The following points provide some further detail and understanding of the Vision for Wood Buffalo Community Foundation.

Healthy and Vibrant Communities	Represents the key outcome, benefit and focus of the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation in all that it does. It contributes to and works collectively with donors, volunteers, other social profit organizations and the community at large to achieve a community that is healthy and prosperous, vibrant, and innovative in all its dimensions, and is inclusive of all its citizens.
Enabled by Long-Term Social Investment	Identifies the importance of focusing on long-term funding strategies that facilitate ongoing, valued social investments that continually improve, grow, and contribute meaningfully to a healthy and vibrant community

3 Mission

A Mission informs the reader of the fundamentals and focus of the organization. In application terms, all Wood Buffalo Community Foundation decisions, whether strategic or operational, need to align with and be supportive to the achievement of the Mission. If a decision is being considered that is not aligned or is supportive, the organization needs to consider why it would undertake such a decision or whether it is time to review the Mission.

The following Mission Statement was affirmed for Wood Buffalo Community Foundation.

To enhance the quality of life in our region through grants and partnerships that improve the capacity and sustainability of our communities.

We achieve this Mission by:

- Connecting people, families and companies with causes that inspire them.
- Working with others to better understand our communities, and to enhance our impacts, through pooling of resources and use of knowledge, expertise and data.
- Working alongside donors to help them realize their philanthropic goals by matching their interests with community needs and finding innovative ways to ensure every donation contributes to strengthening the social fabric and quality of life in Wood Buffalo.
- Demonstrating our commitment to achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core value for our community.
- Commitment to the TRC Calls to Action, active learning, and reconciliation efforts within Treaty 8 Territory.
- Providing professional and reliable fund management with the flexibility to respond to changing needs and priorities.

- Funding local initiatives in a wide variety of areas, including health, education, arts, culture, social services, sports and recreation, the environment or emerging community needs.
- Collaborating with others in the community to prioritize issues and find solutions; and
- Taking a long-term view of our communities and organizations to address complex issues now and for generations to come.

The following material provides additional perspectives on the key themes within the Mission:

<p>To Enhance the Quality of Life in Our Region</p>	<p>This phrase identifies the key purpose that drives all the work of the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation. Our work focuses on continually striving, through funding and donor support for community initiatives, to continually improve the quality of life for all residents in the region.</p>
<p>Grants And Partnerships</p>	<p>Identifies the two primary approaches that drive the work of the Foundation in realizing its goals. This involves first, the issuing of grants to social profit organizations that contribute to and enhance the quality of life in our region. The second approach involves working through collaborative initiatives and partnerships that leverage and integrate all the resources of the community to achieve a greater good.</p>
<p>That Improve the Capacity and Sustainability of Our Community</p>	<p>Identifies the key outcomes that the funding and partnerships undertaken by Wood Buffalo Community Foundation target / focus on, being the capacity and the sustainability of the community as it moves forward. By building capacity and supporting sustainability, the community can then actively enhance the quality of life for all its residents.</p>

A second dimension of the Mission identifies how Wood Buffalo Community Foundation will achieve the outcomes and the impacts that it identifies within its Mission. Three strategies are identified that describe the basis by which the Foundation will operate, interact, and achieve its Mission.



4 Principles and Values

Principles and Values have three roles within a Strategic Plan. First, they can be utilized to further describe and support key themes within the Mission. Second, they identify how the organization will interact and work with people and organizations. Third, they can identify key areas of accountability for the Foundation.

The following Principles and Values have been identified for the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation.

We believe in...

Collective Action	Investing in the capabilities of our communities to come together collectively and use all available resources to enhance the quality of life and well-being for all residents.
Understanding Our Community	Continually working to better understand our communities as they evolve, in order to use the resources available to support our communities' quality of life, prosperity and long-term sustainability.
Integrity	Developing positive relationships with donors, partners, social profit organizations and the broader community built on trust, common goals, collaboration and acting with integrity in all that we do.
Diversity and Equity	Celebrating and building on the unique diversities of Wood Buffalo, and by ensuring equity and inclusion for all residents when pursuing donor, granting and community development initiatives.
A Culture of Innovation	Building a culture (both organizational and in the community) that fosters innovation, experimentation, goodwill, learning, continuous improvement, and the application of best practices.
Accountability	Being transparent and accountable as an organization for the decisions we make, and for the effective use of the resources and goodwill provided to us by community members and donors.

5 Strategic Directions

5.1 FUTURE PLANNING SCENARIOS

As a basis to develop the Strategic Directions and Priorities for the next three to four years, a discussion was undertaken on potential future scenarios that could evolve within the community and operating environment of Wood Buffalo Community Foundation. Four general scenarios were identified:

- A community environment that is similar to today with some pluses and minuses associated with changes in population, continuance of the current economic and community development uncertainties, the unpredictability of the oil industry and its impact on the community, continuing transitions and turnover of a population on a fairly regular basis compared to other communities, the moving out of white collared positions by the oil companies, and other current trends in realities.
- A community experiencing a profound upward movement in the oil industry that could result in a significantly enhanced economic environment, evident community population growth and enhanced vibrancy and capacities in the community well beyond the current context of Wood Buffalo.
- A community experiencing a profound downturn in the oil industry without significant economic diversification resulting in reduced population, potentially substantially less funding availability for community organizations, such as the Foundation, and other negative transitions that could impact the capacity and even possibly the relevancy of the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation.
- A community where there is a period of profound uncertainty relative to the economic, population, sustainability and relevancy of the community and the Foundation. This would involve significant uncertainties that would continue at such a level as to possibly create a very challenging environment where the Community Foundation would need to be able to adapt quickly, and potentially dramatically in order to be sustainable and relevant.

Based on the discussions of the group, it was unanimously felt that profound upward economic and population growth, and community capacity development was not a reasonable scenario upon which to undertake a Strategic Planning initiative for the next five or so years. Likewise, a profound downturn that would have a significant negative

impact on the economy, population, funds available, and even the relevancy of the Community Foundation was not seen as a likely outcome in the next five or so years.

A consensus formed that the next five to seven years would likely be similar to the experiences and evolution of the community as to its economy, population, demographics, and related perspectives compared to what has been experienced over the last eight to nine years with some plus or minus transitions and changes. The pluses and minuses impacts would likely be a result of the ability of the community to diversify its economy, the oil industry staying within a certain range of activity and importance, as well as an evident labour strategy that sees people leave the community but replaced by new residents on a relatively short-term basis who come and then leave within in a few years which is dissimilar to other communities where residents tend to have longer-term ten-year.

It was also a consensus that the fourth scenario, profound uncertainty, could be part of the operating environment and community for the next five or so years. Therefore, the organization will need to continually assess the transitions occurring within its communities and be prepared to adapt, potentially quickly if some of the significant strategic uncertainties were to emerge beyond the current perspectives that are operating within Wood Buffalo.

5.2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

For the 2023 to 2026 Strategic Planning period, three Strategic Directions and Priorities, along with aligned objectives were identified that the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation will focus on relative to the implementation of its Strategic Plan.

1. Achieving a more evident community presence and organizational value in Wood Buffalo:

- Strengthening the depth and scope of community partnerships and engagement across the Wood Buffalo community, ensuring a strong focus that aligns with the demographics of the community such as youth and younger residents, and which demonstrates a more evident value for diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core value of the organization.
- Developing a clear brand for the Foundation and enhancing community awareness and presence of the brand as a valued and vital community organization and contributor.
- Actively pursuing opportunities to undertake leadership within the community as a basis to build trust, recognition and to give evidence to the Mission and Values of the Foundation.

2. Growing the fund development capabilities of the Foundation:

- Undertaking the implementation of the Fund Development Plan that was developed for the Foundation.
- Significantly broadening the donor base of the Foundation based on using various marketing tools, such as:
 - i. Targeted marketing approaches that differentiate the multitude of interests and profiles that exist within the community associated with philanthropic activity
 - ii. Build data capabilities that support targeted marketing initiatives

- Ensuring a range of philanthropic options that support the diverse interests of potential donors.
- Undertaking a comprehensive Stewardship Development Program with existing donors to sustain their interest, through demonstrating the value of their contributions and as a basis for possible future contributions.

3. Building our organizational capacity:

- Significantly growing the Administration Fund, through donations and service fees, that creates a strong resource upon which to achieve the staffing, volunteer, and data / technology resources necessary to move the Foundation forward in realizing its Mission.
- Undertaking Governance initiatives that focus on:
 - i. Transitioning to a policy-based Board from an operating Board over time
 - ii. Undertaking succession planning for Board of Director positions and leadership, as well as finding an appropriate balance for in and out of town directors.
 - iii. Continuing to develop the Governance Model and the policies and procedures to support effective Governance of the Foundation and its ongoing evaluation.