



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026



**March 2022**

**Prepared by Northern Governance Institute (nGI)**

## The strategic planning process

### Why having a Strategic Plan is important for Taku River Tlingit First Nation

You won't know when you've arrived if you don't know where you're going

A strategic plan identifies the place that Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) is trying to get to and acts as a shared vision for the future. It guides the work of the Clan Directors Council (CDC) and TRTFN Administration by providing a roadmap on how to get to where the First Nation wants to be. It is the base for all our other plans and is an important act of self-determination.

Developing a strategic plan is an important process involving the whole community: Citizens, administration staff and interest groups. It incorporates and builds on other planning activities and documents that have been developed by the community over the last few years.

It aligns our priorities and helps guide day-to-day decisions and actions that shape and define for TRTFN what needs to be done and how to do it with a focus on the future. It articulates not only where we are going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how we will know if it is successful.



## Project and Process

### Original Engagement Plan

The development of this 5-year strategic plan started in fall of 2021 when the team from Northern Governance Institute (nGI) was asked to undertake this important work. An engagement plan was prepared that included the nGI team spending two weeks based in the community to meet with groups and with individuals. There was an option, for those who preferred, of a visit to a person's home to conduct conversations, which had worked well in previous engagement on projects and was felt to be important for the comfort and security of elders.

As work on the project began and initial in-person meetings were held in Atlin, COVID-19 became an issue in the region with public health restrictions being introduced across Yukon and BC. In consultation with TRTFN leadership it was decided to re-design the community engagement process and move to online platforms.

## **Amended Engagement Process**

The amended engagement process was designed to reach as many TRTFN Citizens as possible through different online platforms. This included a survey distributed to Citizens and posted online, online meetings with individuals, and an online community engagement session using Google Meet open to all Citizens.

### In-person and virtual meetings

The Strategic Planning team held in-person (prior to COVID-19 restrictions) or online meetings with the following groups (or representatives of them) and individuals:

CDC

Matriarchs

Children of the Taku Society

Taku River Conservancy

Tlingit Homeland Energy LP

TRTFN Administration Department Managers:

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Governance and Justice

Lands & Resources

Health & Social

Health & Safety/Emergency Preparedness

Education

Capital Infrastructure, Housing and Public Works

Senior Government to Government (G2G) Negotiator

Finance

### Online Citizen Engagement Session

An invite to join an online virtual two-hour engagement session on November 16, 2021, at 6pm was sent to 55 email addresses of TRTFN Citizens. This was done at relatively short notice due to the necessary change in the plan.

This session was moderated by Judy Gingell, an elder from Kwanlin Dün First Nation, with technical support provided by Cherish Clarke, a TRTFN Citizen. In total there were seven TRTFN Citizens who joined the session. During the meeting, attendees made clear that a virtual online format, and especially one organized at short notice was not a suitable platform to ensure maximum engagement from Citizens, especially Elders. There is a lack of reliable internet service in Atlin, and many Elders do not have access to a computer or have an email address. The Citizen email contact list captures only a small percentage of Citizens and is therefore also limited in reach.

Given the feedback received during the meeting the decision was made, in consultation with TRTFN leadership, not to go forward with further online meetings and instead to rely on a survey, and a review of the valuable planning documents previously developed in consultation with Citizens.

## Survey

A survey was developed to capture the thoughts of Citizens. It was mentioned at the online engagement session on November 16 and printed copies were available to participants at Tutan Hit and the Administration building basement during the Joint Clan Meeting on December 4, 2021. It was also distributed by TRTFN Administration on December 9, 2021, to all 45 Citizens on the current email distribution list. Information about the survey and a link to it was posted on the TRTFN website on January 4, 2022, and on the Facebook page on January 13, 2022, with a second post there on January 19, 2022. Responses were requested to be submitted by January 21, 2022.

The survey included questions that looked at all areas of TRTFN, including the experience of dealing with TRTFN Administration, support for the Community Longhouse, interest in employment with TRTFN, and housing in Atlin. Also included was a list of items that had been identified by the strategic planning team as priorities based on previous community plans, and initial conversations with TRTFN staff and group representatives. These were listed with a request for each respondent to indicate how they would weigh them on a scale on 1 (rated lowest) to 5 (rated highest). The identified priorities in order of importance as determined through the survey were:

- Increased and affordable citizen housing
- Culture, heritage, and language training
- Home care and elder support
- Increased involvement of Citizens in Whitehorse and elsewhere
- Update of the 1993 Constitution
- Opportunities for land management and long-term healing
- Improvement of employment opportunities for TRTFN Citizens
- First Nation curriculum and teaching facilities
- Improved and competitive wage and benefit structure for TRTFN employees
- Recruitment of TRTFN vacant staffing positions
- Modern Treaty Negotiation and Land Claim finalized
- Increased and Affordable staff housing
- High Speed Internet access

In total 10 responses were received to the survey.

## Review of previous documents

Over the years the TRTFN has prepared many important documents. This plan drew on the work previously done by the community to lay out their priorities, concerns and plans for the future of their land, language, infrastructure and governance and to create a path forward that works in harmony with, and builds on, the existing and previous plans.

The strategic planning team was given access to a large number of documents:

- Constitution, 1993 (amended 2005, 2006)
- Framework Agreement, shared decision making on Land Use and Wildlife Management (2008)
- Wooshtin Yan Too.aat Land and Resource Management and Shared Decision-Making Agreement (G2G) (2011)

- Wooshtin wudidaa Atlin Taku LUP (2011)
- Leadership Code of Conduct (2012)
- 5-year Physical Dev't Plan, 2014-19 (2013)
- Matriarchs Terms of Reference (2019)
- Comprehensive Community Plan (2020)
- First Nations Labour and Employment Development Survey (FNLED) (2021)
- Memorandum Of Understanding on Government-to-Government Relationship with BC (2021)
- Dahk Ka Nation Rebuilding Project Terms of Reference (CTFN, TTC) (2021)
- Governance Departmental Work Plan (2021)
- Lands & Resources Departmental Plan (2021)
- TRTFN Employee Handbook and New Employee Orientation (2021)

A review of these documents made clear that over the years various priorities and themes have remained constant. Those were echoed in the engagement carried out by the strategic planning team and include:

- the need for a Longhouse and more member and TRTFN staff housing in Atlin
- the support for continued negotiations around self-government and land topics
- the strengthening of Tlingit culture and identity including language, traditional values and land stewardship
- increasing programs for all Citizens to ensure a safe, healthy environment which includes on the land healing and care within the community for elders and those at risk
- strong leadership and financial management and accountability with strengthened communication from leadership

From these activities this final 5-year plan was produced which reflects the importance of our Tlingit way of life and the need to strengthen all aspects of it in the years to come.

## **The Strategic Planning Document**

This document was prepared for the TRTFN by the Northern Governance Institute (nGI) based in Whitehorse and serving northern British Columbia and the three territories.

nGI thanks TRTFN for the invitation to work with the community to prepare this strategic plan.

This process was conducted during the challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic when public health measures limited in-person contact. The strategic planning team wishes to thank all of those who found the time, under these difficult circumstances, to engage and provide input and support in this process.



## A message from your Clan Directors Council

This 5-year Strategic Plan for our Nation represents the wish of the Clan Directors Council (CDC) to lay the foundation for a healthy, safe and stable future for all, a future in which we have control over our lands, honor our Tlingit culture and identity, and provide the programs, opportunities and support that our Citizens want and deserve. It will help us align our efforts toward common goals and shared interests, and provide a road map centered around our pursuit of

spiritual, emotional, physical and mental health of all Citizens. It is about our social, cultural and economic development.

Over the years the Tlingit people have come together to develop and produce many valuable documents to guide our First Nation including much recent consultation on a number of important projects. Citizen involvement in these processes has been, and remains, a priority for CDC and TRTFN leadership. As a newly elected Council we wanted to undertake this strategic planning process to ensure that we were following the path and focusing on the priorities of the whole community. In developing this plan we were faced with the challenge of COVID-19. Public health restrictions and related physical and emotional impacts restricted our ability to get this done the normal way with extensive Citizen involvement, but we succeeded.

We've faced other factors lately. In addition to multi-generational effects of residential schools on our Citizens, we now face an opioid and substance abuse crisis. We are working with the Province of British Columbia following declaring a state of emergency. This has strengthened our resolve to pursue all possible options to address these issues with the wellness goal as the place we all want to be.

With all this facing us, we have remained committed to getting this strategic plan in place with as much Citizen engagement as possible. While we acknowledge that this process has not been what our Citizens are used to, this plan has been developed with valuable input from individuals throughout TRTFN, and incorporates and builds on much of the work our community has done in the past to identify priorities and activities to move us forward.

On behalf of Council, I wish to thank everyone who contributed their time, insight and ideas to help develop this Plan. We look forward to serving you all as we move ahead with the activities and plans outlined in this strategic plan.

Gunalchéesh

**The Tlingit culture must be respected, maintained, protected and revitalized**

(from CDC Leadership Code of Conduct 2012)

## About Taku River Tlingit First Nation

### Who We Are

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation, or Taku Quan (the people of the T'akhu or Taku River), are the original people occupying the T'akhu. Our traditional territory is in the Stikine region of BC and spans approximately 40,000km<sup>2</sup> across northwest BC, southern Yukon and Alaska. Our land contains major watersheds and lakes including the Taku River. We are surrounded by scenic mountains, beautiful forests and wildlife.

The Tlingit people honor their traditional values with a long history of protecting and living in harmony with our land.



**It is the land from which we came that connects all life. Our land is our lifeblood. Our land looks after us, and we look after our land. Anything that happens to Tlingit land affects us and our culture.**

**As Tlingit, we accept that we are a part of and responsible to our land. Everything that is a part of the land has life and spirit. Thus, we respect, protect and preserve all life and land.**

Featured in CPP 2020:  
Constitution Act Governing Principles, 1993



**Each Tlingit is responsible for protecting, preserving, and promoting Tlingit land, laws, culture and spirituality.**

**Strength and balance in all relationships requires each to respect, trust, care, and share. As Tlingit, we stand together in a circle, and in this way we are connected to each other and all life.**

TRTFN Constitution 1993

## Atlin



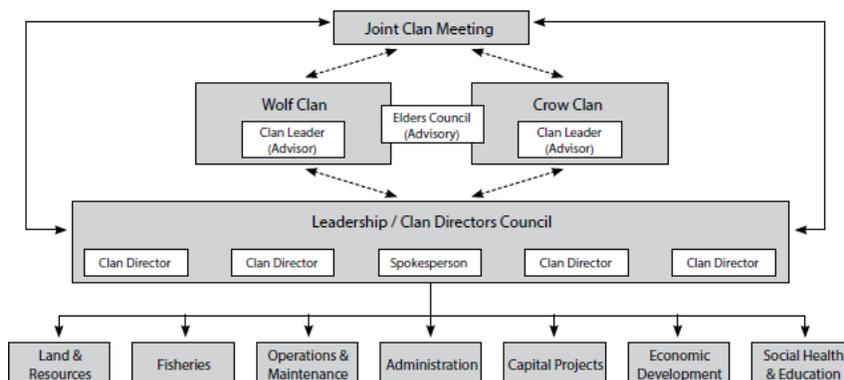
Atlin is an isolated community on the shore of British Columbia's largest natural lake, 45 kilometres south from the border of the Yukon Territory. The area became a hunting ground for the Tlingit people who came from their villages on the Taku River system some 128 kilometres south to intercept the migrating caribou and trails were developed by the Taku Tlingits to reach Tlingit villages on Teslin and Tagish Lakes. (From 1981 Official Community Plan)

In our words, we know the community of Atlin as Wenah. It is on the shore of Aa Tlein, or Atlin Lake. Our ancestral village of Wenah existed for many centuries on the shores of the lake. The Elders tell us that we lived in all areas around the entire lake. It was our way to share with visitors who came to the Wenah area seeking gold and resources. We shared our land, resources and our knowledge on how to survive in this land. (see TRTFN Employee Handbook, 2021/2022.)

Atlin is an unincorporated district with no municipal government, and it is where our administrative and governance offices are located. The community is rural, with a population of less than 500, a number which nearly doubles in the summer with the influx of tourists. Residents include TRTFN citizens, miners, bush pilots, artists, naturalists, trappers, professional and academics, all of whom enjoy a scenic backdrop of mountains along the coast of Atlin Lake.

## Our Constitution

Our 1993 constitution sets the foundation of our governance system. TRTFN is a self-governing people following the traditional clan system established under traditional Tlingit law. Our Nation is governed under a Custom Electoral System following the TRTFN Election Regulations approved in 2006. We are governed by leaders from each clan, wolf and crow, as well as by our Elders Council. We have joint bi-annual clan meetings in spring and fall to help direct our governing bodies and enact our laws.



## About our Citizens and Community

According to the most recent count done in 2012 there are 378 TRTFN Citizens with 103 living in Whitehorse and 91 in Atlin. As of 2016 the population of Atlin was 477. An important piece of work for us is to get an accurate count of our Citizens. This number is old, and does not reflect our population. We need the correct number for our negotiations with governments on program and rights-based agreements. This will be an important part of our work on the Constitution and related documents.

The TRTFN Administration is based in Atlin and offers services to the whole community and to Citizens wherever they live. Under the direction of the CDC and the CAO there are departments to deal with all aspects of TRTFN life:

### Administration

Human Resources  
Information Technology  
Reception

### Finance

Accounts Payable  
Accounts Receivable

### Latséeni Daakahidi

#### (House of Strength & Wellness)

Community Health  
Family Support  
Home Care  
Youth & Elder Programs

### Education & Language

Culture  
Early Childhood Education  
K-12  
Post Secondary

### Lands

Fisheries  
Heritage  
Lands  
Mining

### Capital

Housing  
Operations & Maintenance

### Governance

Negotiations



**We serve and provide programs and services to enhance, promote, serve, and support the Tlingit way of life.**

**Driven by the Tlingit people's desire for self-government, we respect, promote, and protect the culture, language, traditions, and care for the people and the land to preserve for future generations.**

From TRTFN's New Employee orientation package

## Our Vision

For Taku River Tlingit First Nation, *ha khustiyxh* will be our guide as we strengthen the connection to our land, improve the wellness of our people, find our traditional governance way and respect the traditional values of our proud heritage in our language and culture.



## Our Mission

To build a thriving community where all our citizens gain strength through strong economy, culture and governance, and participate actively in our sharing and caring values which we've held up for centuries.



## Core Themes

Ultimately, through consultations with citizens, your government and administration, five core themes have emerged. The themes and actions in this strategic plan also build on significant earlier work in a number of areas (described in Part I). The five core themes are:

- Community & citizen wellness
- Traditional governance; the Taku River Tlingit way
- Professional administration
- Building strong intergovernmental relationships
- Relationship to the land

There are very important linkages across many of these five core themes. For instance, much of what is accomplished through negotiations with other governments (the “Building strong intergovernmental relationships” theme) directly connects with both “Professional administration” and with “Effective & Traditional governance”. Similarly, “Community & citizen wellness” can best be achieved by supporting the theme of “Relationship to the land”; it is through rekindling that relationship that all dimensions of health can be rebuilt. Keep this in mind as you read through the five themes and their specific strategic initiatives.

Most importantly is that *all* of the five themes ultimately relate to our overall objective to bring wellness to all of our people: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental health.

## Plan Timeframe

Although this is the TRTFN five-year strategic plan, it focusses in on the important “kick-off” of our new Council with emphasis on Year 1 to align with the tenure of the Council’s three-year mandate. The strategy to achieve the objectives has been separated into three time blocks:

- **Year 1**  
These are critical activities that are both urgent and of high value concern. You will find a lot of the work in this plan is front loaded starting in this first critical year. This is a reflection of your Council’s enthusiasm to get good things done for you. It also reflects that so much earlier work has not yet been implemented and that implementation can start now. The design and construction of the Long House is a good example.
- **Years 2 & 3**  
These activities are important to the First Nation but not urgent requiring their attention in the first year of this strategic plan.
- **Beyond Year 3**  
Many of the projects and initiatives started in Year 1 and in 2 & 3 are either ongoing or will take more than three years to complete. These should be refreshed by a new Council in 2024 but are reflected here as they are important to the First Nation’s five year Plan and may be considered in the one to three year planning period if opportunities arise to make them feasible. “Grab opportunities when they present!”



## Core Theme 1: Community and citizen wellness

**What we believe:** A key TRTFN priority is to ensure that the community is healthy, supportive, and welcoming for as many citizens who wish to build their lives, study and work on the traditional territory. TRTFN currently provides many great programs to the community and those should be strengthened and expanded to meet the needs of the TRTFN population. There are opportunities to improve and strengthen the experiences of our citizens throughout their lives from education support (life-long support) to at-home care for our elders, and supports for those suffering with substance abuse or mental health struggles. Building a healthy community will build healthy members who respect and preserve the TRTFN values and traditions.

### Our Wellness

This is the ultimate purpose of our government. It is the greatest pursuit for all of our Citizens for themselves and for all of us.



### Year 1

*1 Increase home care and elder support, including supported living in seniors' housing*

1 We will explore possibilities to build on existing home care and elder support working with our government partners. Giving those among us with physical and psychological challenges supports to enjoy their life at home is the ultimate expression of our value of sharing. It also recognizes and honours the contributions of our elders.

*2 Create opportunities for on-the-land programs*

2 The "land" (connection to water, air and animals) is where we came from and is why we have thrived in our way for millennia. It will be our work to reconnect to this base of who we are and our efforts to restore natural balance that will sustain the Tlingit of today and many generations going forward. We will look to secure funding and program design and implementation for formal and informal land-based healing programs.

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*3 Pursue language preservation & expansion*

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3 The Tlingit language is at the heart of our heritage and culture. We must build on current efforts to preserve the language and to return to Tlingit as the common language in use among the citizens of our First Nation. We must fund all citizens who wish to learn; we must find ways to make training accessible no matter where our citizens live; we must be flexible so that our citizens who work for the First Nation have the opportunity to learn our language.

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*4 Long House design work for future fund raising and construction*

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4 The opportunities exist now to secure funding support for the design and construction of what TRT has wanted for many years, a Long House in Atlin. This initiative ties in to our work in core theme three to pursue effective, stable and Traditional governance for our people. Our Long House will be the centre of our spiritual, cultural and governance presence in our Traditional territory.

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*5 Hydro investment opportunity*

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5 A unique opportunity is in front of us where we can generate additional electricity to sell to the Yukon. Tlingit Homeland Economic Ltd. Partnership is engaged with the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Government on this project. This will build long term and consistent returns on investment for the Partnership and therefore for TRT citizens, as the company's owner. The government will work closely with the Partnership to ensure that citizen concerns and interests are reflected in agreements reached with the Yukon Energy Corporation.

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*6 Community safe shelter*

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6 Housing needs are a major challenge faced by the community, and shortage in one area has a bad ripple effect. Current supply is taken up by long term tenants leaving the community without a safe shelter for others in critical time-sensitive need. Pursuing options for immediate remedy of this shortfall is a top priority for the strategy. A coordinated effort is needed to provide support services.

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*7 Community justice &  
combatting illegal drug  
activities*

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7 We are facing huge challenges with illegal drug use in our community fed by an illegal drug trade that is damaging our people. This requires careful attention with our partners to bring this to an end, so our people can be healthy. In addition to the Province of British Columbia declaring a state of emergency with us, we are working closely with our Tlingit partners in Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council to move forward on finding ways to solve this crisis!

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*8 Authority for Child and  
Family Services*

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8 Our children and our families are at the very heart of who we are in our First Nation. We now have the opportunity to take control of critical services that have been delivered for decades by governments that do not understand who we are as a people. It is time for us to develop our laws to take over and design the programs and services that will hold us up and give us health.

## Year 2 & 3

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*9 Focus on the Comprehensive  
Community Plan*

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9 Considerable effort has been put in over the years to think through our vision for the future of our community and our traditional territory. There are two related work plans that have been developed and both need our efforts to finalize them and to implement the directions that we have captured through these planning documents. They are: Lands & Resources Work Plan and Governance Work Plan.

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*10 Building and distributing  
wealth through our Tlingit  
Homeland Economic Ltd.  
Partnership*

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10 Through sustained leadership, our development arm has successfully built wealth for our people. This progress must continue, and can be expanded by a strong relationship between the goals of the First Nation government and the Partnership. Aligning our government's goals with those of the company will benefit all of our citizens, whether through expanded job and business opportunities, training or distribution of the wealth created through business success.

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*11 Recreational infrastructure;  
a new skating rink*

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11 Active living is a key part of wellness, and in winter it is important to have ways to play. A new skating rink for the use of our Citizens and especially our youth, is being planned. Work to plan for its construction will start right away but most likely will be finished in year two or three.

### Beyond Year 3

There are a number of other projects that may be useful to consider within the timeframe of this Strategic Plan. However, with the anticipated work load from Year 1 and 2 & 3 is considerable. The following list provides insight into other possible projects that might find room in this planning period, but more likely following its three year horizon when considered by the next Council in office:

- New skating rink
- Space management study for government facilities
- Funding options & plans for water lines upgrades; timed with other community infrastructure upgrades

## Core Theme 2: Traditional governance; the Taku River Tlingit way

**What we believe:** In order to support TRTFN and its members, it is vital that our government functions effectively. Our Constitution and related membership code and citizenship registry are at the foundation of both the effectiveness of our government and the ability for us to see our traditional ways reflected in the governance structures and approaches. There are foundations of effective government that are also at the center of good government, and these must be given urgent attention so that our ability to govern ourselves is not impaired. Strong government also means transparency and accountability strong values respected by our leadership.

### Our Wellness

This is the ultimate purpose of our government. It is the greatest pursuit for all of our Citizens for themselves and for all of us. Our traditional governance will contribute in many ways.



Of particular priority is implementing effective financial reporting policies and procedures to ensure that the First Nation can continue to provide members with valuable programs while moving ahead with vital negotiations to secure the self-governing future of TRTFN.

### Year 1

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*1 Prepare a five-year Strategic Plan*

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1 There is so much for us to do for our First Nation. We must set the right course and identify our priorities so that we do not get distracted in pursuing our goal of wellness for our people, and strong relevant programs and services to support their journey. You see the product of our efforts here, a clear and strong path forward for all of us!

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*2 Commence multi-year  
Constitutional review process*

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2 The Constitution is our highest law and reflects how we see ourselves and how we govern our citizens and land. It is at the core of our governance, and must be accurate in how it sets out how we wish to run our affairs. Our Constitution goes back to 1993 and it is now time for it to be aligned with how we see ourselves today and into the future. Driven by the leadership of Clan Leaders and the Clan Directors Council, this process will begin as soon as funding is secured and with major citizen involvement.

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*3 Critical government  
accountability*

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3 Good accountability practices are at the heart of effective government, and to ensure this, it is a priority to meet critical requirements of our funding agencies: audits for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. In addition, there are outstanding reports required if we wish to hold on to funding that has been granted. Financial standing is critical to maintaining our government.

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*4 Secure multi-year financial  
arrangements with  
governments*

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4 Opportunities exist to secure multi-year base funding that will reduce the vulnerability of the government on relying on single-year agreements negotiated as “one off” understandings with Canada and British Columbia. The Administration is now of a size that a multi-year base funding source should be granted by funding agencies, and this will be pursued by Council.

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*5 Accountability and  
transparency of our external  
partners*

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5 The Taku River First Nation Government has set up a number of external bodies to look after our various interests: Taku River Group of Companies, TRTFN Land Holdings Society and the T'akhu Â Tlèn Conservancy. We are responsible for the oversight of these bodies. It is important for us to create formal and regular reporting protocols so that they are in a good place to give citizens a thorough picture of their good work. This is important for accountability, and so that the Clans and the Council can take an active part in setting general direction.

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*6 Plan and fund raise for  
second access to 5-Mile*

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6 The safety of our Citizens is critical. We have plans to continue building on our traditional lands at 5-Mile. Without a second access road we are vulnerable to wildfires. This must be addressed as soon as possible.

**Years 2 & 3**

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*7 Work to support the  
Constitution*

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7 Updates to the election guidelines, membership code and citizenship registry are important to ensuring all aspects of the TRT Constitution are updated. Elections, membership and who is considered a citizen are for most First Nations considered core aspects of the larger First Nation constitutional framework, and therefore their updates need to be parallel to the work on the Constitution by citizens.

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*8 Our Inherent Right to Self-government*

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8 The Government of Canada now recognizes that Indigenous people have an inherent right to self-government and have set up tables across the country to negotiate what this looks like in a treaty sense with many First Nations. We need to reflect on how we wish to have our rights treated and whether we would like a process to recognize our governance rights. Our work will need to start among ourselves.

**Beyond Year 3:**

In this area of core themes, there are a number of related matters that are very specific to the safety of the First Nation. Work has started and will continue in the area of Community emergency measures planning including:

- Overall community emergency plan
- Structural fire-fighting services in community
- TRTFN dock to ensure water access for traditional activities & emergency egress

**Core Theme 3: Professional administration**

**What we believe:** We are a government, and we need to meet all the needs and standards of our Traditional way of self-governing, while at the same time walking in a western world with its numerous expectations relating to management, finance, budgeting and labour relations and human resources. To accomplish what we want to do for our people these fundamentals must be met.

*Our Wellness*

This is the ultimate purpose of our government. It is the greatest pursuit for all of our Citizens for themselves and for all of us. Getting the basics of government in place is vital!



## Year 1

### *1 Staff Housing*

1 At this time at the senior levels of Administration and in key technical areas, fundamentals of life play a big part in whether competent qualified public servants can be successfully recruited. One of the basics is housing and with current lack of availability in Atlin, this remains a fundamental road-block for the First Nation. A Staff Housing program will be established as a high government priority.

### *2 Human Resources basics*

2 A number of professional basics are needed to ensure the First Nation is well positioned as an employer of choice, one that has the fundamentals to give confidence to staff that they are working for a professional organization that will look after the needs of its employees. This means:

- complete employee job descriptions and annual work plans for key staff;
- Establish HR Policies and Processes to implement requirements of the HR Handbook to:
  - Balance workloads
  - Ensure a healthy work environment
  - Implement change management based on traditional values
  - Develop a staff development/training program (include orientation, skills development etc.)
- Implement a salary benchmarking process including benefits to compete with gov't positions in Whitehorse.
- Embark on a strategic effort to attract and retain staff in new ways.

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*3 Key communication tools:  
High Speed & stable internet;  
community cell service*

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3 In today's world it is a significant disadvantage working without critical communications infrastructure. This includes unreliable and slow internet connectivity with the world and cell service for both our government and community. This affects all of our work as a First Nation and our ability to reach out and interact with our community. Efforts have been successful but more needs to be done to secure a virtual work context that Council and Administration can rely on to perform their duties.

#### **Years 2 & 3**

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*4 Records management system*

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4 Retain expertise to set up a physical and virtual records management system that will move records keeping for the First Nation into the new Century where more and more reliance rests with electronic means to track and store vital records in a methodical and secure way.

#### **Beyond Year 3**

The most critical step beyond the three-year mandate of this Strategic Plan is a recommendation to the next Council that they review what is here and decide what remains to be done and what new needs face the First Nation as a priority for the subsequent three year timeframe. Consistent planning is a useful yardstick for citizens to hold their government to account, and gives Councils a "touchstone" for ongoing engagement with Administration and other partners to ensure that the course moving forward is sustained and where needed that course-corrections are made to address the changing world the First Nation will always be facing.

## Core Theme 4: Building strong intergovernmental relationships

**What we believe:** This government and community functions through vital relationships with other governments and community or social organizations. There is a reliance that must be respected and engaged but one that, if managed well, brings resources and strengths to the First Nation and citizens. The range of topics is vast, from language-based relationships with Yukon University, the Council of Yukon First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council, Carcross & Tagish First Nation, etc. to co-management and land relationships with the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Yukon, Canada's CIRNAC etc. Health and wellness is particularly acute with relationships with BC Health, Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, the Whitehorse General Hospital etc. We believe concentrating effort on building on these strong relationships is important to the future success of the First Nation over the long term. Our success in this area will be through continued efforts to build our alliances with our partners in the 3 Nations Society (Kaska, Tahltan and Tlingit working together in northern BC), and with our Tlingit relations in the Dahk Ka Nation.

### Our Wellness

This is the ultimate purpose of our government. It is the greatest pursuit for all of our Citizens for themselves and for all of us. It's all about building strong and lasting relationships.



### Year 1:

#### 1 Intergovernmental bench-strength

1 So much of the business of the First Nation relies on these complex intergovernmental relations. There are very limited resources, internal and external expertise, which can be applied to the many intergovernmental files. It is therefore important to find additional resources and apply these to both the Atlin and Whitehorse offices, both with funding for external support and additional internal staffing in Whitehorse where much of the relationship work is conducted.

#### 2 Accountability where it belongs

2 Off-loading to First Nation governments is common across Canada and usually with insufficient resources and expertise to do important complex work for the community. If Canada and BC wish to have TRT responsible for the sewage lagoon they must provide the resources and expertise to ensure this is done well and maintained properly over time. There is no incorporated government in Atlin and therefore attempts to off-load on the First Nation are inappropriate.

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*3 Year-round emergency care services*

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3 It is critical that we work with our interagency partners in bringing to Atlin year-round ambulance and emergency care services. Relying on services from Yukon and elsewhere in British Columbia is not acceptable in an era when we face many challenges, including the Opioid Crisis and COVID-19, not to mention the regular support services most people in Canada enjoy.

**Years 2 & 3**

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*4 K-12 Education Accessibility*

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4 Education is a foundation for First Nation citizen success, yet there is insufficient support to TRT students on a range of levels. Engagement with Canada and BC is required to ensure K-12 availability in community (quality education). It would also be useful to engage with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to get their guidance on moving forward with comprehensive education and education support services linked to their new Yukon First Nation School Board and federal funding through Jordan's Principle. Research will continue to ensure we move in this positive direction for our First Nation where we gain TRT managed K-12 with Tlingit immersion.

**Beyond Year 3**

All First Nations, those with and without self-government or Modern Treaties, require strong intergovernmental capacity to pursue their agendas in Canada. This is an area of competency that cannot be undervalued in a First Nation context. For this reason, work to build this capacity in this three-year cycle must continue to ensure that the First Nation is appropriately positioned to advance for its citizens. At a very practical level, this is also the doorway through which resources flow to enable the First Nation to serve its citizenry.

## Core Theme 5: Relationship to the land

**What we believe:** As with all Indigenous First Nations and organizations in Canada, the basis of their existence dates to thousands of years ago and their relationship with the lands, water, air and animals that make up what today is known as Canada. “Lands” defined as the assembly of all these parts of the environment, including people themselves, is the source of existence. There is nothing about spirit, society, governance, indeed survival that does not relate to this basic: we are part of and derive our existence from the relationship to land. We must continue our work in regaining our relationship to land in our Traditional territory, and build our health through its teachings and natural medicines which bring to us physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. This is our way to our future of success as a people.

### Our Wellness

This is the ultimate purpose of our government. It is the greatest pursuit for all of our Citizens for themselves and for all of us. Our land is our strength.



Staffing for a TRT Land Steward

Community hunts organized

On the land activities such as traditional harvests; berry picking

Continue development of the Land Holding Society for Atlin lands

Considerable work has already taken place and is in progress:

1 As part of our intergovernmental agenda, and to take control of our land stewardship, we will continue to work to gain control of Conservation Officer Powers for our Traditional Territory.

Year 1

## Years 2 & 3

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### *2 Land Plan for Yukon lands*

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2 Taku River Tlingit retain strong traditional connections to land in the Yukon, and especially in the Little Atlin Lake area. The Yukon Government is turning over lands to TRT in this area and these require the direction of citizens on their use given traditional values and practices in the area. This will be guided by the efforts of our Elders in Atlin and southern Yukon through their work on “How We Walk with the Land and Water” - Aat á x yaa has na.át. aáni ka heen (commitment to work together on an Indigenous Land Relationship Plan by the TRT, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta’an Kwäch’än Council).

## Beyond Year 3:

For time *in memorium* there has been, and for all future there will continue to be a relationship between our people and the lands of our Traditional Territory. This will always remain a foundation topic for any Strategic Plan of the Tlingit people of Taku River.