WESTBANK
FIRST NATION

Westbank First Nation

Economic Development Department

Strategic Planning Report

2025-2030

Community. Leadership. Pride.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

1.0 Introduction 4

2.0 Guiding Principles 5
2.1 Vision Statement 5
2.2 Mission Statement 6
2.3 Values 6

3.0 Economic Overview 6
3.1 Regional Outlook 6
3.2 WFN Economy 7
3.2.1 Population and Growth 8
3.2.2 Labour Force and Industry Sectors 9
3.3 Economic Sectors 10

4.0 Economic Development Department (EDD) 11
4.1 Current Services 12
4.2 WFN Economic Development Entities and External Organizations 12

5.0 Proposal Routing and Oversight 14

6.0 Opportunity Assessment 15
6.1 Business Opportunity Intake Form 15
6.2 Decision-Making Criteria 26
6.3 Decision-Making Framework 17
6.4 Proponent Evaluation 20

7.0 Strategic Plan 20
7.1 Economic Development Department (EDD) 21
7.2 Marketing & Communications 25
7.3 WFN Entrepreneurs 27
7.4 Training and Employment 29
7.5 Partnerships 29

8.0 Potential Uses of AI 30

Appendices
Appendix A: Summary of Engagement 33
Appendix B: Economic Development Sector Overview 36
Appendix C: SCOT Analysis 40
Appendix D: Business Opportunity Intake Form 41
Appendix E: References 43

Executive Summary

Westbank First Nation (WFN), located in the Okanagan Valley, is uniquely positioned to capitalize on its strategic location, cultural heritage, and economic potential across key industries, including tourism, energy, construction, education, health care, and forestry. Recognizing the importance of long-term prosperity and self-reliance, WFN continues to foster entrepreneurship, attract investment, and build partnerships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. Investments in skills training and education further ensure that WFN Members have access to economic opportunities that enhance both individual success and community resilience.

The WFN Economic Development Department (EDD) Strategic Planning Report 2025-2030 provides a structured approach to guide economic growth in alignment with cultural values and sustainable development principles. This plan serves as a roadmap for strengthening the local economy, empowering entrepreneurs, and creating an environment where WFN Members thrive.

Developed collaboratively, this report reflects insights from WFN's Membership, Chief and Council, EDD, Economic Development Commission (EDC), N'tityix Development Corporation (NDC), the N'tityix (Spring Salmon) Committee, and other key stakeholders. Together these stakeholders are responsible for evaluating economic opportunities, especially on community lands, while also ensuring that new initiatives align with WFN's vision, priorities and Membership values.

Grounded in WFN's Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) and guided by the N'tityix principles, this strategy outlines:

- Foundational principles for economic development aligned with WFN's cultural and governance priorities.
- An overview of local and regional economic conditions and key industry sectors.
- The structure and role of the EDD, as well as internal and external organizations that support economic growth.
- A structured process for assessing economic development opportunities to maximize community benefits.
- Strategic initiatives for economic growth, including entrepreneurship support, consistent with the goals in the WFN Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), workforce development, and marketing strategies.
- Potential applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance decision-making and community engagement.

By balancing growth with cultural stewardship, environmental responsibility, and innovation, this plan ensures that WFN's economic development initiatives support current and future generations.

1.0 Introduction

The WFN Economic Development Department (EDD) Strategic Planning Report sets the direction for economic growth utilizing Seven Generations thinking. This approach centres syilx stewardship values, ensuring that economic strategies are guided by traditional teachings and long-term responsibility to our tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (land), community, and future generations.

The plan establishes a framework to evaluate and pursue opportunities that enhance prosperity while upholding cultural identity and values. The focus is on long-term economic self-reliance, sustainable business practices, and inclusive growth that benefits WFN Members.

The report outlines key strategies for leveraging existing assets, fostering entrepreneurship, supporting workforce development, and mitigating economic challenges. It also highlights the role of the EDD in facilitating collaboration between Membership, internal departments, external partners, and businesses.

By setting clear objectives and actionable strategies, this plan strengthens WFN's position as a leader in Indigenous economic development, ensuring that economic initiatives align with the broader goals of governance, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

WFN remains committed to economic initiatives that prioritize collective benefits and long-term principles, including Seven Generation principles, over short-term gains.

1.1 Context

WFN's economic landscape is shaped by its location in the rapidly growing Okanagan Valley, with opportunities across multiple industries. WFN prioritizes self-reliance, investment attraction, and the integration of cultural values into economic decision-making, focusing on business growth, entrepreneurship, skills training, and sustainable resource use.

This strategy supports WFN's governance goals and the N'tityix (Spring Salmon) principles, which view economic development as a path to community well-being. It builds on the Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) and reflects input from Membership, the EDD, EDC, NDC, Chief N'tityix (Spring Salmon) Committee, and WFN departments.

WFN also works closely with regional partners, including the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC). Alignment with the COEDC's 2025–2030 strategy helps strengthen regional collaboration and support shared prosperity.

By advancing a resilient, forward-looking strategy, WFN ensures Members benefit from sustainable growth that honours both tradition and innovation.

1.2 Plan Objectives

The following project objectives were identified to help guide the Strategic Plan:

1. Undertake a high-level market assessment;
2. Build out an Economic Development specific action plan to guide the economic development department's activities;
3. Align the Economic Development department (EDD) with WFN goals;
4. Develop a syilx-led decision-making framework, which aligns with WFN's CCP, to assess opportunities that meet WFN's cultural goals and the needs of future generations;
5. Explore technological opportunities to streamline decision-making and include in an application portal, the potential for AI; and
6. Create informational materials that support the development process and provide support to WFN entrepreneurs.

1.3 Engagement

A variety of engagement activities and consultations were undertaken to inform the Strategic Plan. Throughout the strategic planning process, meetings and workshops were done with several departments plus advisory bodies including the WFN Elders and Youth Council, Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Advisory Council, Spring Salmon Committee, as well as the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC). Additionally, three surveys were conducted including WFN's business community, staff and Membership.

A summary of the Membership engagement activities are shown below. Appendix A contains a fuller engagement summary.

See Appendix A for a fulsome summary of engagement and learnings.

2.0 Guiding Principles

It is important that this document and its directions align with other processes and documents that have already been vetted and adopted by WFN. As such the following guiding principles have been pulled from the WFN CCP and Government Strategic Plan.

2.1 Vision Statement

Westbank First Nation is a strong self-governing community that upholds our responsibility to our people and tmxʷúlaʔxʷ, ie. land, water, and resources. We practice our culture, rights and self-determination throughout our territory – to empower our people to be the best version of themselves, and to build a sustainable future for the generations to come.

Source: *WFN's CCP*

2.1.1 For Economic Development

To be a healthy, proud, and business oriented community that is economically self-sufficient.

Source: *WFN EDC Strategic Plan*

2.2 Mission Statement

WFN will work to promote a healthy and prosperous future to ensure its continued existence as a strong political, social and cultural community.

Source: *WFN Constitution, S 3.1*

2.3 Values

WFN's approach to economic development is grounded in the values outlined in our Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), Government Strategic Plan, and everyday practice. These include respect, integrity, responsiveness, trustworthiness, cultural sensitivity, and syilx principles including Enowkinwixw and Seven Generation thinking.

These values guide how we make decisions, build partnerships, and grow our economy in ways that reflect WFN as a people/community:

1. Respect – economic activity must honour the tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (land), people, and community
2. Reciprocity – business relationships should create mutual benefit, not just profit
3. Stewardship – decisions prioritize future generations and the health of our tmxʷúlaʔxʷ
4. Self-determination – we shape our own economic path and protect our sovereignty
5. Cultural Integrity – business must reflect traditional governance and cultural knowledge
6. Inclusivity – all Members, from Elders to youth, have a role to play
7. Sustainability – syilx principles guide long-term thinking and responsibility
8. Innovation – new growth must respect ancestral knowledge and cultural foundations
9. Collective Wealth – shared prosperity is prioritized over individual gain
10. Accountability – decisions must be transparent, ethical, and reported back to Membership

These values reflect WFN's commitment to a sustainable and community-driven economy, grounded in syilx teachings and informed by broader Indigenous economic thinking, including concepts from *Aboriginal Capitalism Is Resilience.*

3.0 Economic Overview

3.1 Regional Outlook

Westbank First Nation is located in the heart of the Central Okanagan, one of British Columbia's fastest-growing and most economically active regions. The area continues to experience steady growth in population, employment, and business activity, supported by ongoing investment in infrastructure, housing, and services.

The Central Okanagan's economy is broad-based, with strong sectors including health care, construction, education, professional services, and technology. The region's current economic strategy (2025–2030) emphasizes housing affordability, workforce development, economic resilience, climate readiness, and the importance of including Indigenous governments in long-term planning.

3.2 WFN Economy

Westbank First Nation plays a central role in the region's economy. With nearly 800 active businesses and jurisdiction over five reserve parcels, WFN is one of the most economically active Indigenous communities in Canada. Commercial activity is concentrated on Tsinstikeptum IR 9 and IR 10, where the majority of infrastructure and residential development has occurred.

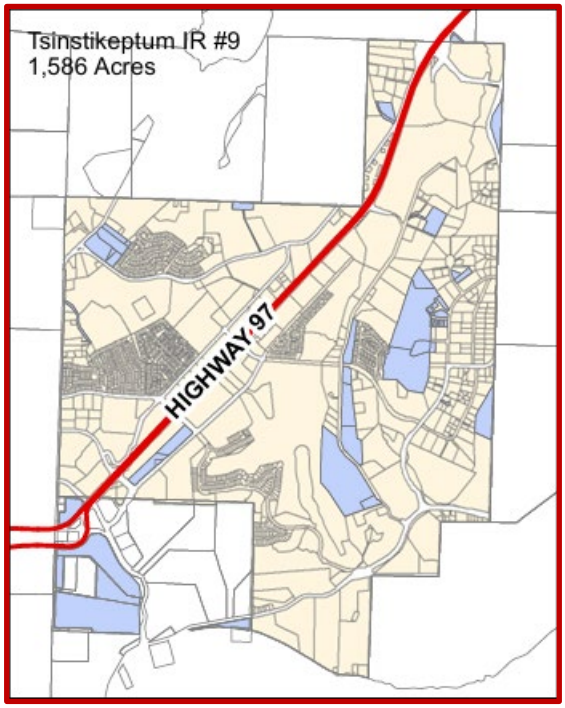


Figure 1: Tsinstikeptum IR #9 Map

Figure 2: Tsinstikeptum IR #10 Map

Approximately 40% of Westbank Lands are already developed and fully serviced. The remaining lands continue to attract strong interest for residential, commercial, and institutional projects, reflecting both WFN's development-ready framework and the region's overall growth. With each year, the scale and complexity of projects coming forward continues to increase, as does the # of businesses on WFN Lands and assessed value of those lands.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the steady and significant upward trends in both the number of active businesses operating on WFN Lands and the assessed value of those lands. These trajectories reflect not only continued investor confidence, but also the effectiveness of WFN's governance, planning, and infrastructure readiness. The pace of growth shows no indication of slowing, positioning WFN as a leading economic force in the region for years to come.

Figure 3: # of Businesses on WFN land

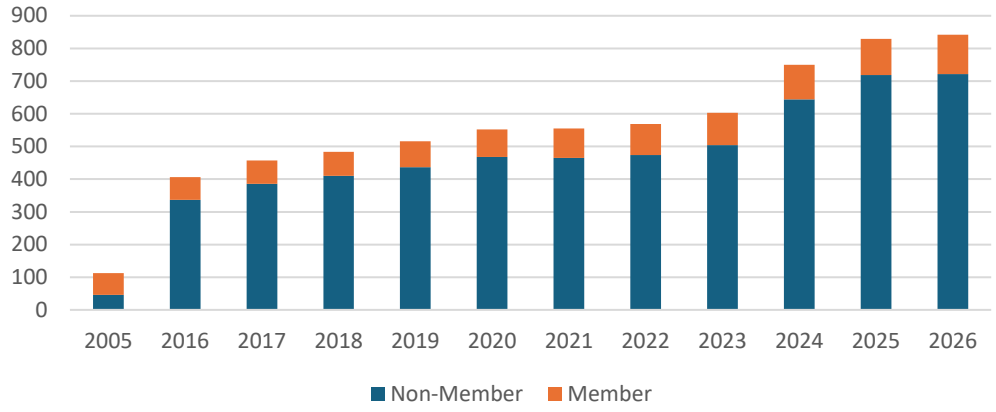
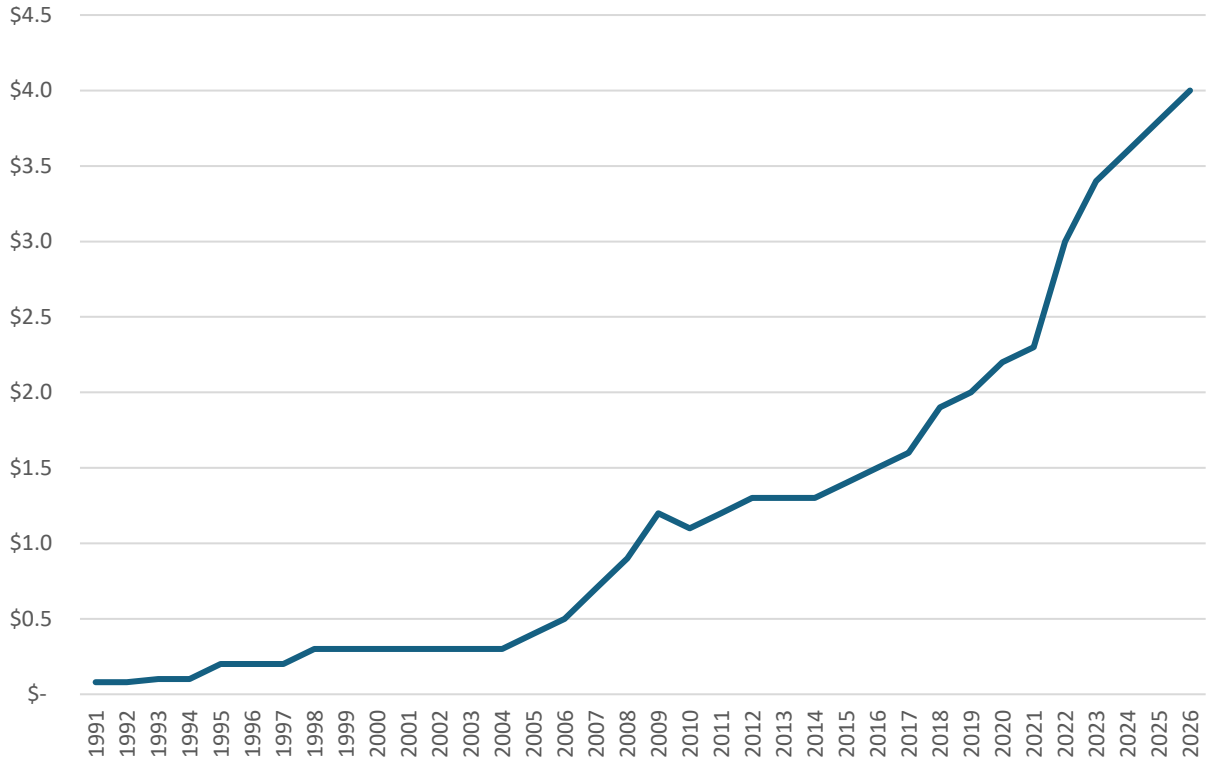


Figure 4: Assessed Value of WFN Lands (billions)



As one of the strongest self-governing Indigenous communities in Canada and the first to establish an Economic Development Commission (2005), WFN continues to support economic self-determination and long-term planning for its Members.

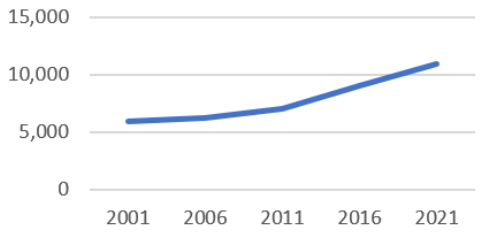
3.2.1 Population and Growth

Population growth on WFN lands has been significant. According to Statistics Canada:

- Tsinstikeptum 9 (IR 9) grew from 5,882 in 2016 to 7,141 in 2021, an increase of 21.4%
- Tsinstikeptum 10 (IR 10) grew from 3,733 in 2016 to 5,016 in 2021, an increase of 34.4%

Together, this represents a combined 25.2% increase across the two reserves over five years. These trends demonstrate the pace of change on WFN lands and underscore the growing importance of local infrastructure, planning, and services.

Figure 5: Population on WFN Lands



3.2.2 Labour Force and Industry Sectors

Employment patterns on WFN lands reflect the region's commercial base. According to the 2021 Census, the top three sectors by number of employed residents are:

Figure 6: Top 3 Industry Sectors on Tsinstikeptum 9

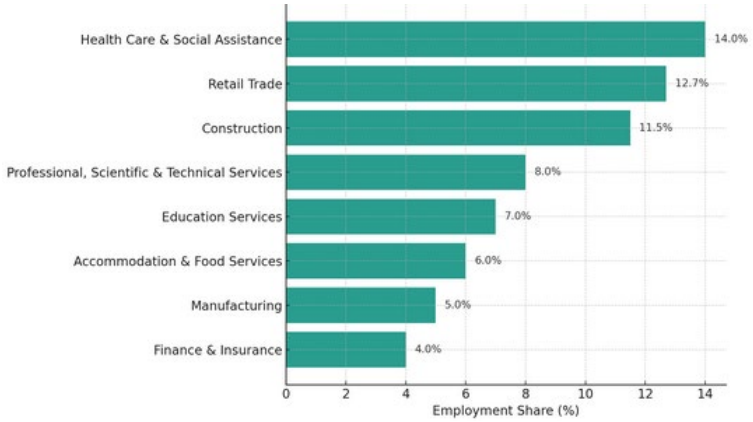
Industry	Count (#)	Percent (%)
Retail Trade	755	19.0%
Construction	460	11.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	455	11.4%

Figure 7: Top 3 Industry Sectors on Tsinstikeptum 10

Industry	Count (#)	Percent (%)
Retail Trade	175	23.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	100	14.3%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	85	9.2%

These sectors are consistent with both regional trends and the commercial mix on WFN-developed lands.

Figure 8: Central Okanagan Employment Share by Industry Sector (2021)



3.3 Economic Sectors

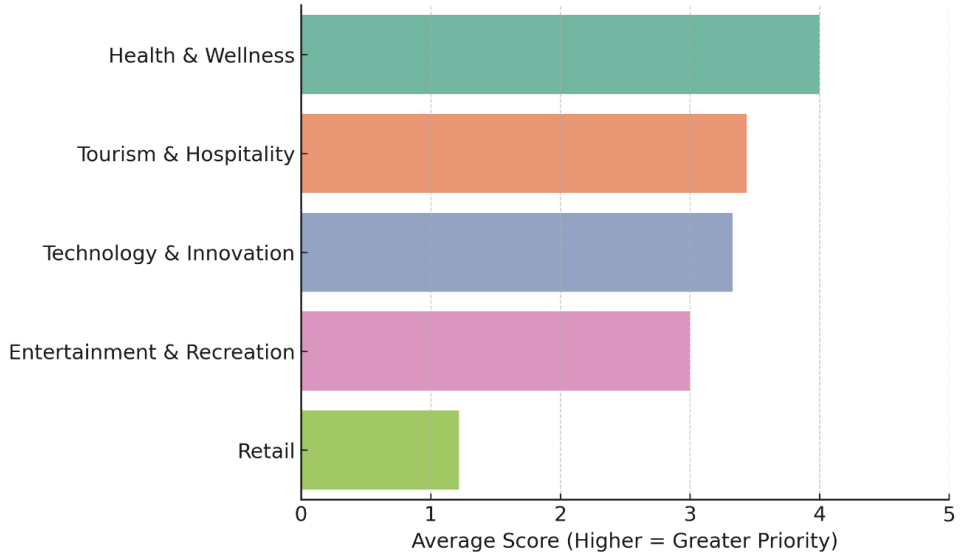
Westbank First Nation has potential opportunities in various sectors that are on an upward trend in terms of growth. Westbank First Nation's primary industries of focus include tourism, health care, education, forestry, construction, and energy. These sectors are aligned not only with broader market trends, but also with the aspirations and priorities identified through robust community engagement.

Figure 9: WFN Priority Sectors of Industry

Refer to Appendix B for an overview of each sector and their relative importance to the local and regional economies and Appendix C for a summary of the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) as they relate to WFN's position in the economic market.

Figure 10: Ec Dev Opportunities as identified through Member Engagements illustrates the range of economic development opportunities that emerged directly from consultation with Members, providing valuable insight into areas of interest and perceived potential.

Figure 11: Economic Priorities by Member Ranking further refines this perspective by highlighting how Members ranked these opportunities in terms of importance, offering a more detailed lens on community-driven priorities.



These findings underscore the importance of ensuring economic planning is grounded in the values and voices of the WFN community. Please refer to Appendix B for an overview of each sector and their relative importance to the local and regional economies, and Appendix C for a summary of the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) as they relate to WFN's position in the economic market.

4.0 Economic Development Department (EDD)

WFN's Economic Development Department (EDD) supports a balanced and holistic approach to growing the local economy, with the goal of improving the quality of life for WFN Members. This approach honours the interconnectedness of economic opportunity, community wellbeing, and environmental stewardship, and is rooted in syilx values that prioritize culture, language, and the protection of tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (lands), as well as safeguarding WFN's assets and people.

The EDD works to maximize revenue generation and benefit-sharing partnerships that strengthen self-determination and create meaningful, long-term economic benefits for the community. It explores and supports ventures that align with Member priorities and values, and foster inclusive participation.

In addition to pursuing external opportunities, the EDD actively encourages Member entrepreneurship by helping to reduce barriers, build capacity, and improve access to capital across all sectors. Inclusion, representation, and long-term prosperity are key drivers of this work.

Overall, WFN has a strong public profile due to its innovation, business acumen and entrepreneurial spirit. There are also strong connections with the broader business community, key industries and regional organizations.

4.1 Current Services

The EDD has 1.5 full-time staff including a Director at 50% (split between Communications and Economic Development Departments) and a full-time Manager. The EDD fosters a business-friendly environment in part by making and maintaining connections with businesses and economic development entities within the region. The EDD explores and assesses potential business and investment opportunities for WFN, while tracking and consolidating economic development related data to identify trends or opportunities.

Over the past many years, WFN has built a strong reputation with the business community, both on and off reserve. WFN is known as a reputable partner with efficient permitting, licensing and land registry.

The EDD works closely with many of the Departments at WFN including Planning & Development Services, Financial Services, Intergovernmental Affairs, Titles and Rights, Legal, and Community Services. The nature of collaboration varies depending on each Department's mandate and area of expertise.

The Department has also prioritized strengthening its Economic Development Commission (EDC), recognizing it as a key strategic asset. The EDC's strong business relationships help advance WFN's economic interests and foster long-term opportunities for the community.

Lastly, the EDD meets regularly with Ntityix Development Corporation (NDC) to ensure alignment on key initiatives. This helps streamline efforts, strengthen communication, and support shared economic goals.

4.2 WFN Economic Development Entities and External Organizations

There are four main organizations that support economic development both on and off Westbank Lands. These include the Economic Development Commission (EDC), Chief N'tityix (Spring Salmon) Committee, N'tityix Development Corporation (NDC), and the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission.

4.2.1 Economic Development Commission (EDC)

WFN's EDC aims to enhance economic prosperity and sustainable living standards, including higher per capita income. It also promotes access to improved education and healthcare, environmental conservation, and strong ties to WFN's cultural heritage.

Established in 2005, the EDC assists and facilitates Council and WFN's economic community in creating a healthy, environmentally sustainable and dynamic economy on Westbank Lands, based on the value of economic self-reliance.

The purpose of the Commission is to:

- Work to increase awareness of economic development and investment opportunities on Westbank Lands.
- Develop a strategy and informational materials to present a positive image of WFN.

- Provide policy advice to Council and Administration to support Economic Development.

- Provide support to existing businesses on Westbank Lands to help them remain competitive and encourage new businesses to locate on Westbank Lands.

4.2.2 N'tityix (Spring Salmon) Committee

The Spring Salmon Committee is responsible for monitoring progress and achievements for Chief N'tityix in the CCP. Further opportunities exist to connect regularly with the Committee to collectively evaluate economic development opportunities.

4.2.3 N'tityix Development Corporation (NDC)

NDC is a WFN company with a growing and sustainable portfolio of diversified strategic assets to maximize community benefits to its shareholders and Members.

NDC's diverse portfolio includes businesses and strategic assets in:

- Residential and commercial real estate;
- Forestry management;
- Construction management; and
- Professional services.

4.2.4 Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC)

The COEDC works in partnership to facilitate and encourage the development of a healthy and dynamic sustainable community by supporting existing businesses and encouraging new business investment within the Regional District of Central Okanagan including Westbank First Nation. Starting in 2025, the COEDC will be operating under the following four strategic pillars to build on past success, leverage the region's strengths, and build a strong and sustainable economy for the future:

1. Drive Economic Resilience
2. Build a Skilled Workforce
3. Promote Innovation
4. Grow Export-Focused Industries

4.2.5 Other External Partners

WFN has many partners and are active participants on many boards and other groups within the region. Some examples include:

- WFN Economic Development Commissioners include business leaders, Members, Elders, and professionals who contribute their skills and expertise, advocate for WFN's interests, and act as ambassadors at events and functions.

- **Indigenous partners** include Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) and Indigenous Tourism BC.

- **Municipal partners** include West Kelowna, Peachland, Kelowna and Lake Country.

- **Regional organizations** include Regional District of Central Okanagan (inclusive governance initiative), COEDC, and Greater Westside Board of Trade.
- **Educational institutions** including Okanagan College and UBC-Okanagan.
- **Transportation authorities** such as Kelowna Airport and Sustainable Transportation Partnership Committee.
- Various funders such as Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Four Pillars and All Nations Trust.
- Various industry groups such as the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, Urban Development Institute (UDI), realtor associations, rotary clubs, and resident advisory groups.

5.0 Proposal Routing and Oversight

Effective and transparent governance is essential to ensuring that economic opportunities align with WFN's values, priorities, and long-term vision. WFN's internal routing process helps determine which departments or entities should review and advance incoming proposals based on their nature, complexity, and intended outcomes. This process strengthens collaboration across departments, promotes clear roles and responsibilities, and ensures that all inquiries are assessed consistently and with due diligence.

Figure 12: Internal Routing Guide for Inquiries and Proposals outlines how various types of development proposals, ranging from land-based construction to revenue-sharing ventures, are assessed and routed internally within WFN. Depending on the type of proposal, key departments may include Planning & Development, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA), or N'tityix Development Corporation (NDC).

Department	Key Activities	Staff	When/Criteria
Planning & Development	Development permits, lease-based construction, approvals; member land acquisition review	Planning Dept., Engineering, Utilities	Review plans for site & civil, archaeology, environmental, traffic servicing, fees, CP land development.
Economic Development	Partnerships, joint ventures, community land or revenue-sharing proposals; non-member land acquisition inquiries	Ec Dev Staff	Community land proposals, off-reserve land purchase proposals, partnerships, equity models
IGA & Referrals	Crown land referrals, consultation, Self Government Implementation, Additions to Reserve	IGA Dept., Title & Rights, Archaeology	Crown proposals, UNDRIP duties, heritage assessments, formal referral packages

N’tityix Development Corporation/NDC (via Ec Dev referral)	For-profit development, equity partnerships, project execution on behalf of Membership	NDC Staff	Projects identified through intake process and Spring Salmon Committee, or as determined by NDC thru its review

The routing process also supports WFN’s strategic goal of self-determination by ensuring that proposals are reviewed through appropriate technical, cultural, and governance lenses before proceeding. Proposals involving community-held lands or large-scale partnerships must begin with the Economic Development Department through the Business Opportunity Intake Form process. Based on internal review and recommendations, often with input from several department, plus NDC and the Spring Salmon Committee, some proposals may be referred to NDC for potential execution or partnership development.

This structure provides a clear path for internal coordination, allowing WFN to proactively manage growth, partnerships, and economic ventures in a manner that upholds the interests of Members and the integrity of its tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (lands).

6.0 Opportunity Assessment

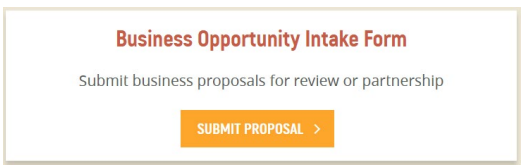
Assessing economic development opportunities is essential for identifying viable paths to stimulate growth, improve employment, and foster an economically sustainable community. A well-structured assessment process provides insights into economic strengths, challenges, and untapped potential. The following syilx-led decision-making framework, which aligns with WFN’s CCP, provides an approach to managing and assessing economic opportunities for WFN.

6.1 Business Opportunity Intake Form

The EDD receives opportunities through multiple channels, including:

- Chief and Council
- EDC Commissioners
- WFN Reception
- Development Services
- Intergovernmental Affairs
- N’tityix Development Corporation
- WFN Members and entrepreneurs
- External proponents and private sector developers
- Referrals from partner organizations

Managing and tracking these diverse inquiries can be complex. To streamline and standardize the intake process, all opportunities are now directed through the EDD using a centralized, web-based Business Opportunity Intake Form (see Appendix D). This form is housed on the WFNConnect.com platform, which is also used for WFN Referrals, and accessible at wfn.ca.



The form serves multiple purposes, including ensuring consistent data collection, allowing secure file sharing and storage (more secure than email), and providing a transparent entry point for proponents. It also prompts applicants to clearly articulate key project details, such as partnership type, ownership structure, timelines, and alignment with WFN priorities. This helps advance serious proposals and filters out those that are not ready or not a fit. While some may perceive the form as a barrier, in practice it ensures due diligence and saves time for all parties.

6.2 Decision Making Criteria

All economic development inquiries should begin with submission through the Business Opportunity Intake Form. This process allows the EDD to proactively manage incoming proposals, clarify its role in supporting local business and entrepreneurship, and set consistent criteria for success.

When assessing opportunities, the EDD prioritizes those that deliver clear benefits to the WFN Government and Membership. Proposals are evaluated based on:

- Alignment with Member values
- Credibility of the proponent
- Strategic fit with WFN's long-term goals
- Overall community and economic impact

These criteria, developed from the Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP) and stakeholder engagement, form the basis of a scoring grid used to assess external proposals and ensure transparency in decision-making.

6.2.1 Economic Criteria

1. We will grow a strong thriving Westbank First Nation economy
2. We will support and promote Westbank First Nation-owned businesses and entrepreneurs
3. We will create more job opportunities for Members on Westbank Lands
4. Our community will benefit from development on our lands
5. Economic development will be balanced with our responsibility to our tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (land), environment, community and culture.

6.2.2 Cultural Criteria

1. Our language and teachings will be represented within our community, the region and our broader territory.
2. We will uphold our culture, language and teachings in our laws and policies.

6.2.3 Seven Generations Principle

1. We will manage our tmxʷúlaʔxʷ, our lands, water and resources, according to our teachings.
2. We will be part of the solution to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

6.2.4 Traditional Values Criteria

WFN's approach to economic development is rooted in syilx traditions and guided by the values affirmed in the Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), the Government Strategic Plan, and WFN's 10-Point Value System (see Section 2.3). The values, including stewardship, self-determination, and collective wealth, are not separate from business decision-making; rather they are central to how WFN evaluates opportunities.

All projects must demonstrate respect for tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (land, water, and resources), uphold cultural integrity, and contribute to the long-term well-being of the community. This includes alignment with traditional governance practices, space for cultural representation, and meaningful involvement of Members at all stages of planning and implementation.

Projects are expected to support well-being in a balanced and holistic way, reflecting syilx values and WFN's commitment to long-term community health. Proposals that prioritize short-term profit, over long-term and balanced benefits, will not be supported.

The integration of traditional knowledge, including particularly the guidance of Elders and knowledge keepers, is a key part of WFN's decision-making process. Development initiatives should show evidence of thoughtful engagement, cultural relevance, and the ability to generate lasting benefits that are broadly distributed across the Membership.

All initiatives will be assessed not only for financial viability and regulatory fit, but also for their ability to uphold WFN's responsibilities to past, present, and future generations.

6.3 Decision-Making Framework

The following outlines WFN's structured process for evaluating economic development opportunities. All proposals are assessed using WFN's 10-Point Value System (see Section 2.3), ensuring alignment with values such as respect, stewardship, accountability, and collective prosperity.

The Business Opportunity Intake Form, accessible through WFN.ca and WFNConnect.com, is the required entry point for all proposals. It ensures consistent data collection and enables the Economic Development Department (EDD) to assess completeness, strategic fit, and alignment with WFN's financial, legal, cultural, and land use priorities.

Proposals are reviewed internally by EDD in coordination with relevant departments such as Finance, Planning & Development, IGA/Referrals, N'titýix Development Corp (NDC), Community Services, and Legal. Based on this review, EDD brings forward a recommendation to either:

- Advance – proposal is suitable for further due diligence, discussion, or negotiation.
- Defer – proposal does not align with current priorities, policies, or capacity, but may be reconsidered in the future.

All proposals are retained on file. Where possible, summaries are shared with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Membership to support transparency and awareness. Only proposals recommended for advancement are brought forward for Council decision; however, all submissions are included in Spring Salmon Council Committee reports for reference.

Phase 1: Intake & Internal Review

Submission Received

- Business Opportunity Intake Form submitted via WFNConnect
- *Estimated review timeframe: 1–2 weeks*

EDD Initial Review

- Screened for completeness and alignment with WFN's priorities, investment capacity, and land use direction
- If not viable, marked as Defer and retained on file
- If potentially viable, circulated for internal input

Internal Cross-Departmental Reviews

- EDD coordinates input from Finance, Planning, Referrals, Community Services, Ntityix Development Corp (NDC), Legal, and others as needed
- Input informs recommendation

Phase 2: Due Diligence & Committee Review

Due Diligence

- Lead department (typically EDD) conducts further review
- May include financial analysis, legal input, policy review, or assessment of cultural/environmental impacts
- Vendor or revenue-sharing opportunities may follow separate pathways

Standing EDC Review

- All active proposals are reviewed as a standing item at EDC meetings
- Supports transparency, Member awareness, and feedback

Spring Salmon (Council) Committee Review

- EDD presents recommendation to Advance or Defer
- Committee confirms next steps
- Applicant is notified of Committee decision

Phase 3: Community Engagement & Council Decision

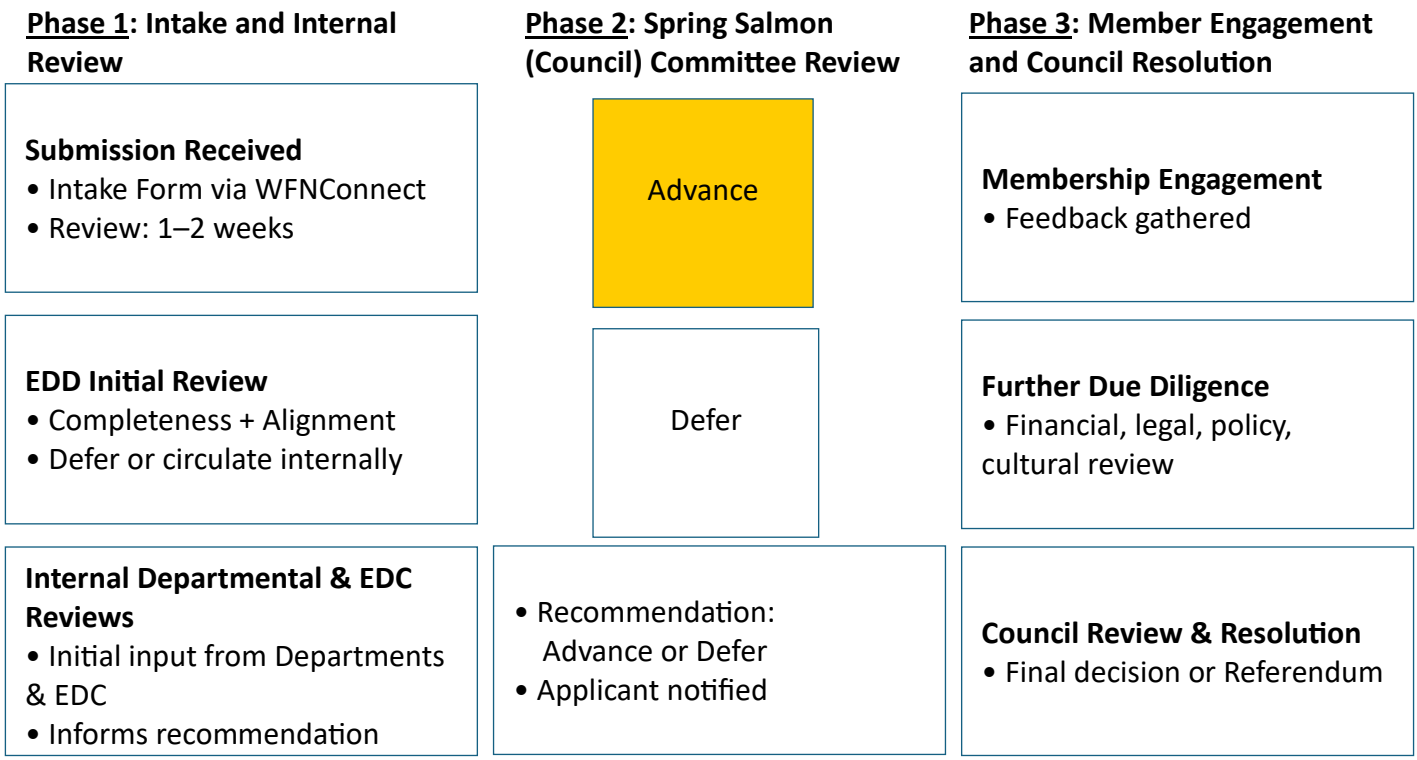
Membership Engagement & Final EDC Input

- Where applicable, Member engagement is carried out
- Additional feedback from EDC may be gathered
- *Estimated timeframe: 4–8 weeks depending on scope*

Council Review, Resolution or Referendum (if required)

- Advancing proposals are presented to Council, including community and EDC input
- Final decision by Council via formal resolution
- *Estimated timeframe: 2-4 weeks*
- If a referendum is required, process may extend by 6–12 months

Figure 13: Business Opportunity Intake Process



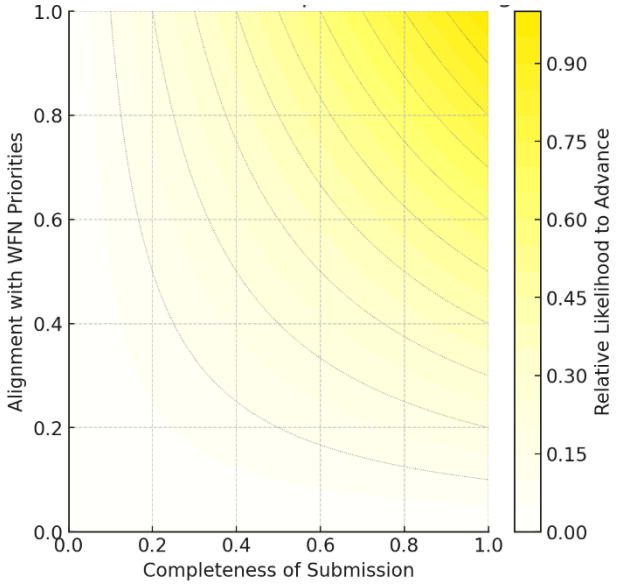
**** Overall Estimated Timeline:*** *Min: ~3–4 months* ***Avg:*** *~6–8 months* ***Max:*** *12+ months (depending on engagement, legal review, or Referendum)*

6.4 Proponent Evaluation: Completeness, Alignment

The Economic Development Department uses a values-based lens to assess all proposals received through the Business Opportunity Intake Form. While all submissions are reviewed individually, proposals are more likely to move forward if they demonstrate both:

- Completeness – clear and sufficient information (e.g., project scope, business model, financial backing, timelines), and
- Alignment – strong fit with WFN's values, governance priorities, land use direction, financial capacity, and strategic timing.

Figure 14: Proposal Assessment: Completeness vs Alignment



The graphic on the right illustrates this relationship. Proposals in the upper right quadrant are those that are well-developed and strategically aligned, and most likely to be advanced for further review. Submissions with significant gaps in detail or misalignment with current priorities are more likely to be deferred, with all proposals retained on file for future consideration.

This internal lens is not a rigid scoring tool, but it supports consistency and transparency in the evaluation process, and helps focus time and resources on opportunities with the strongest potential benefit for WFN and its Membership.

7.0 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is based on the direction provided by the N'tityix (Spring Salmon) component of the CCP which provides the following overall directions for Economic Development:

1. We will grow a strong thriving Westbank First Nation economy
2. We will develop the next generation of skilled professionals, tradespeople and entrepreneurs
3. We will support and promote Westbank First Nation-owned businesses and entrepreneurs
4. We will create more job opportunities for Members on Westbank Lands
5. Our community will benefit from development on our Lands
6. Economic development will be balanced with our responsibility to the environment, our community and culture

The plans below identify the steps and actions necessary for WFN to pursue economic development that reflects the visions, values and principles brought together from the research conducted thus far. They are organized into the following categories:

- Economic Development Department (EDD)
- Marketing and Communications
- WFN Entrepreneurs
- Training and Employment
- Partnerships

Each category includes the following:

Goal – refers to descriptions of a desired future

Strategy – refers to projects to be undertaken.

Priority – refers to the timeframe for each project short (1-2 years), medium (3-4 years) or long term (5+ years)

Action – refers to the specific steps that need to be taken such as feasibility studies or business planning to proceed with a project in future years.

The goals and strategies have been developed based on discussions with departments, survey responses and a review of key WFN documents including from:

- Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP),
- Communications and Economic Development Workplan,
- Government Strategic Plan,
- Economic Development Commission (EDC) Strategic Plan, and
- Other key documents provided by the Economic Development Department (EDD).

The colour of the goal background reflects the Chief that the goal sits under in the CCP or other economic documents.

Chief Saskatoon Berry
Chief Spring Salmon
Chief Bitter Root
Chief Blackbear

7.1 Economic Development Department (EDD)

The intent of the goals and strategies for the WFN EDD are to create a roadmap to guide its activities, align with community needs, and maximize economic impact. Goals and strategies provide focus, set expectations, and ensure that resources are allocated to initiatives with the highest potential for sustainable growth.

As emphasized in the CCP and our 10-Point Value System (see Section 2.3), economic development goals must align with Member priorities and traditional governance.

GOAL 1: Ensure that the EDD has tools to successfully meet core objectives

Strategy	Priority (Years)	Action
1.1 **Ensure that EDD has appropriate staffing to meet their objectives.**	*2 – 5 yrs*	• Review proposed organization chart. • Refine job descriptions. • Advertise, interview, and hire.
1.2 **Ensure that EDD has appropriate IT tools to meet their workflow.**	*1 – 2 yrs*	• Explore the opportunity to use the software to better track and share economic development opportunities. • Explore opportunities for IGA, EDD, Planning, and Finance to use the software to track and provide input on economic opportunities.
1.3 **Develop metrics for assessing project opportunities, including timelines.**	*1 – 2 yrs*	• Build out timelines for each stage of project approval and monitor.
1.4 **Develop revenue opportunties to support EDD.**	*2 – 5 yrs*	• Consider implementing an application fee.
1.5 **Develop appropriate information management systems.**	*1 – 2 yrs*	• Develop a new file structure to meet the new responsibilities of and demands on the department.

GOAL 2: Maximize local training and employment opportunities.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
2.1 **Continue to build Member entrepreneurs.**	*2 – 5 yrs*	• Develop a peer mentoring program. • Develop a toolkit for Members interested in starting their own business. • Identify resources to provide start-up funds for core business activities including business planning.

		• Identify potential Membership training and employment opportunities associated with Member businesses. • Explore opportunities for micro lending to support Member business with a small amount of working capital.

GOAL 3: Strengthen relationships with other WFN Departments.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
3.1 **Identify ways to work with other WFN Departments.**	*Ongoing*	• Create a regular EDD internal newsletter to highlight EDD activities. • Host regular meetings with Working Group members, including EDD, IGA, Finance, and Planning Departments. • Request Working Group to review Opportunity Intake applications for input in advance of Spring Salmon Committee meetings.
3.2 **Work with other Departments to develop Partnerships Agreements to ensure economic benefits come back to Westbank First Nation (e.g. education, training, jobs, bursary, Impact Benefit Agreement).**	*2 – 5 yrs*	• Host monthly meetings with Working Group (Planning, IGA, EDD, and Finance) to review any partnership agreements. • Develop metrics to track success of Agreements. • Provide support to other departments, as needed.

GOAL 4: Provide support to other WFN economic development entities.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
4.1 **Provide WFN's Economic Development Commission (EDC) with up-to-date promotional materials for business after-hours events, business walks, and**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Reinstate business walks. • Host or partner to host Business After Hours events.

business site visits or to share with interested parties and strengthen existing economic development initiatives.		
4.2 **Keep the EDC well-informed on the business community and WFN initiatives.**	*Ongoing*	• Continue to provide bi-monthly updates to the Economic Development Commission on WFN business community and Government or NDC initiatives.
4.3 **Review EDC Terms of Reference**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Work with EDC to revise the Terms of Reference, EDC workplan and strategic plan, to ensure they reflect current responsibilities and meets emerging needs.
4.4 **Encourage Commissioners to attend industry conferences for networking purposes.**	*Ongoing*	• Ask Commissioners to share leads and contacts from industry conferences for follow-up.

GOAL 5: Identify potential economic sectors and opportunities for WFN to pursue.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
5.1 **Bring quality economic developments to WFN to generate revenues to support WFN self-determination and income opportunities for Members.**	*Ongoing*	• Pursue major opportunities already presented. • Pursue new opportunities through Business Attraction or Investment activities • Facilitate business expansion and supply chain investments • Ensure investment attraction includes a formal process for assessing cultural alignment with WFN values.

5.2 **Create and support an Opportunity Review Process that meets due diligence needs, including analysis and planning, along with community engagement**	*1 – 2 yrs*	• Implement decision making framework. • Develop online intake form. • Develop Detailed Assessment process. • Develop weighting scoring grid.
5.3 **Create a Tourism Plan that identifies, supports, and enhances tourism opportunities on Westbank Lands and Traditional Territory.**	*3 – 5 yrs*	• Develop Terms of Reference and RFP for the Tourism Plan. • Ensure that the Tourism Plan supports the efforts of the WFN Sncewips Museum, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Indigenous Tourism BC, Tourism Kelowna, and the Kelowna International Airport. • Identify and pursue joint tourism marketing opportunities. • Ensure the Plan and its goals are culturally aligned with WFN values and Membership goals.
5.4 **As part of the Tourism Plan, continue to create marketing materials to promote tourism attractions and Member-owned businesses on Westbank Lands and support the attraction of other businesses that could increase tourism offerings.**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Create and update the list and descriptions of current tourism offerings. • Create a weblink for "Visit WFN" that highlights accommodation, restaurants, activities, and experiences available through businesses on Westbank Lands. • Continue to encourage tourism and tourism adjacent businesses to operate on WFN Lands.

7.2 Marketing & Communications

Marketing and communications goals and strategies are essential components of an effective economic development program. Their purpose is to raise awareness, attract investment, and foster a positive image of the community, making it a desirable location for businesses, residents, and visitors. Through targeted messaging, branding, and outreach, marketing and communications initiatives help to drive engagement, build partnerships, and support long-term economic growth.

GOAL 6: Engage Membership in economic development activities

Strategy	Priority (Years)	Action
6.1 **Regular communication with Membership about economic development.**	*1 – 2 yrs*	• Develop a quarterly newsletter which highlights what projects EDD is currently working on as well as opportunities for Membership to be involved and to receive support.
6.2 Integrate Membership engagement throughout the economic opportunity process.	*1 – 5 yrs*	• Ensure that there are regular engagement sessions from the beginning of a project inquiry, through to project completion to ensure that Membership are connected and have say in project development and approval.

GOAL 7: Support and continue to strengthen WFN's economic profile

Strategy	Priority (Years)	Action
7.1 **Create marketing materials to proactively attract businesses and promote Westbank Lands as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Make economic development more prominent on the WFN webpage – easier to find. • Develop brochures which highlight advantages of doing business on WFN Lands.

GOAL 8: Enhance WFN's continued prosperity by attracting new businesses to WFN through increased awareness and visibility of WFN as a viable and prosperous commercial sector.

Strategy	Priority (Years)	Action
8.1 **Proactively attract businesses to Westbank Lands.**	*3 – 5 yrs*	• Develop a Marketing Strategy with updated branding such as Buy WFN or Open for Business. • Develop marketing materials including brochures which are available at reception and other public venues. • Consider leasing billboard space at the Kelowna International Airport to market WFN opportunities.
8.2 **Promote Westbank Lands as a viable and**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Post the decision-making process so that interested proponents have a clear path to EDD.

prosperous commercial sector.		• Ensure that business successes are profiled on the webpage and updated regularly.

7.3 WFN Entrepreneurs

The intent of the goals and strategies to support local WFN entrepreneurs is to foster an environment where small businesses and startups can thrive. This support is essential for creating a dynamic local economy, as entrepreneurs contribute to job creation, innovation, and community identity. Through targeted initiatives, the EDD aims to reduce barriers to entry, provide resources, and establish a nurturing ecosystem that encourages sustainable growth for local businesses, including especially its Indigenous businesses. Indigenous knowledge-sharing is to be prioritized as part of WFN's entrepreneurship program.

GOAL 9: Engage in activities, support strategies, and provide materials to promote economic prosperity within the WFN business community.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
9.1 **Ensure Council is well-informed on the opportunities, challenges, and successes of the WFN business community.**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Provide regular reports to Council. • Meet regularly with Council Committees, including Spring Salmon.
9.2 **Ensure that WFN remains inclusive and consistent to all sectors of the business community.**	*2 – 4 yrs*	• Ask the WFN business community for regular feedback to ensure that they are receiving the services they need from the EDD. • Identify and address areas where support is not seen as being equitably available.
9.3 **Liaise with various groups in the community at large relating to economic development.**	*2 – 4 yrs*	• Develop a communications plan for sharing information about economic development with other departments and community groups to highlight successes and opportunities.
9.4 **Identify opportunities, obstacles, and challenges which impact businesses**	*2 – 5 yrs*	• Conduct regular business surveys and work hard to obtain responses. • Prepare summaries of key issues and develop action plans to address them.

GOAL 10: Support the Growth of a Sustainable, Growing Local Economy.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
10.1 **Publicly Profile WFN's innovation, business acumen, and entrepreneurial spirit.**	*3 – 5 yrs*	• Develop an External Communication Strategy to generate the interest of potential partners. • Develop a relationship building campaign for Council and staff with the external business community. • Develop slogan/branding for WFN Economic Development.
10.2 **Membership entrepreneurship is encouraged, supported, and celebrated**	*1 – 3 yrs*	• Create a distinct platform to promote Member-owned businesses, e.g. 'Shop Local' campaigns

GOAL 11: Support and promote WFN-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
11.1 **Advertise Member-owned home-based businesses in promotional material.**	*1 – 4 yrs*	• Advertise Member-owned businesses through 'Shop Local' campaigns, including addresses, phone numbers, and business descriptions (with permission).
11.2 Engage with WFN's business community to ensure two-way communication of WFN initiatives and identify the needs of the business community.	*Ongoing*	• Build a database of email addresses of WFN businesses and update annually. • Share the Ec Dev Express newsletter with the local business community.

7.4 Training and Employment

WFN training and employment goals are critical components of economic development, aimed at creating a skilled workforce, reducing unemployment, and improving the overall quality of life for our Membership and community. These goals address current workforce needs while preparing the community for future economic demands, making the local economy more resilient and adaptable.

GOAL 12: Develop the next generation of skilled professionals, trades people, and entrepreneurs.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
12.1 **Host economic and business group workshops to provide learning and skill enhancement opportunities for Members (e.g. women in business)**	*1 – 5 yrs*	• Build a program to support Member entrepreneurship and business development, including in the Indigenous Tourism sector. • Develop a series of workshops for entrepreneurs that are offered annually. • Build a peer-to-peer network for existing entrepreneurs to support emerging entrepreneurs.

GOAL 13: Create more job opportunities for Members on Westbank Lands.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
13.1 **Build relationships which support employment opportunities for the WFN community and its Membership**	*3 – 5 yrs*	• Work with existing businesses on WFN lands to assess employment needs and identify opportunities to train and hire WFN Members. • Develop a training plan for WFN Members that leads to employment. • Work with existing WFN and external sources to implement the plan.

7.5 Partnerships

The goals and strategies aimed at building partnerships are essential to WFN economic development, as they foster collaboration across sectors, pool resources, and leverage expertise to drive sustainable growth. Partnerships with government agencies, private businesses, educational institutions, and community

organizations amplify the impact of economic initiatives and create a more resilient and diversified economy.

GOAL 14: Identify strategic partnerships that benefit the community.		
Strategy	**Priority** (Years)	**Action**
14.1 **Continue to engage with the Central Okanagan Development Commission, Regional District Transportation Group and others to strengthen economic partnerships and to ensure developments benefit Members**	*Ongoing*	• Attend regular meetings with various organizations to ensure WFN's voice is represented and opportunities brought forward. • Align WFN's goals with the wider region (and vice versa), current and future, so each can benefit from the other.

8.0 Potential Uses of AI

Advancements in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have presented new opportunities for WFN to support and innovate within its EDD. According to recent research, five core economic development areas stand out as highly beneficial for AI integration:

8.1 Benefits of AI for the WFN EDD

EDD's can utilize AI in several powerful ways to improve efficiency, decision-making, and community engagement. Here are some key applications:

8.1.1 Data-Driven Decision Making

AI can analyze large datasets to identify economic trends, predict growth areas, and recommend policies based on historical data.

- **Predictive analytics**: Forecasting job growth, industry trends, and economic shifts.
- **Real-time economic monitoring**: Tracking business activity, employment rates, and market trends.
- **GIS & location analysis**: Identifying the best areas for business investment using AI-driven geospatial data.

8.1.2 Business Attraction & Retention

AI can help identify potential investors, target businesses, and provide insights on industries that align with the region's strengths.

- **Smart matchmaking**: Connecting businesses with incentives, grants, and available properties.
- **Automated site selection**: Using AI to recommend locations based on workforce, logistics, and market potential.
- **Chatbots & virtual assistants**: Providing 24/7 support for business inquiries and permit processes.

8.1.3 Workforce Development & Training

AI can match workforce skills with employer needs, helping EDD's address labour market gaps.

- **AI-driven job matching**: Recommending job opportunities based on skill profiles.
- **Training recommendations**: Identifying skills gaps and suggesting courses or certifications.
- **Economic mobility tracking**: Using AI to analyze career growth trends in a region.

8.1.4 Entrepreneur & Small Business Support

AI-powered tools can assist startups and small businesses by offering data-driven insights and resources.

- **AI business advisors**: Virtual assistants that guide entrepreneurs through licensing, funding, and growth strategies.
- **Market analysis**: AI tools that provide demand forecasts, competitor analysis, and pricing suggestions.
- **Grant & funding assistance**: AI-driven platforms that match businesses with local, provincial, and federal funding opportunities.

8.1.5 Community Engagement & Sentiment Analysis

AI can analyze public sentiment from social media, surveys, and local news to understand community needs.

- **Sentiment analysis**: Tracking Member perception of policies and economic initiatives.
- **Automated community feedback**: AI-powered surveys that analyze responses and highlight concerns.
- **Virtual town halls**: AI tools that summarize public discussions and key topics.

8.2 Key Considerations for AI Integration

- **Data Integrity**: Ensuring that AI data collection and usage align with WFN's rights to govern its data autonomously.
- **Data Security**: Implementing robust security protocols to protect sensitive economic and demographic data.
- **Cultural Lens**: Developing AI applications that are culturally sensitive and reflect the values and unique needs of the community.
- **Environmental Impact**: Data Centres used for AI have been known to have high energy and water consumption, so WFN will need to consider sustainable solutions to minimize these impacts.

This section was created using issues identified by WFN during this project, reference material, including Economic Disruptions by Deloitte prepared for the COEDC, “The Uneven Distribution of AI’s Environmental Impacts” by Shaolei Ren and Adam Wierman, Harvard Business review and ChatGPT AI.

8.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that the EDD explore opportunities such as using Co-Pilot to train a WFN AI tool. This means that data entered in searches will remain within WFN, while the model benefits from learning happening externally. This will enable the EDD to explore the relevant capabilities of AI without having to be concerned about data security.

Appendix A Summary of Engagement

A variety of engagement activities and consultations were undertaken to inform the Strategic Plan. Throughout the strategic planning process, meetings and workshops were done with different departments at WFN, the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC). Additionally, two surveys were conducted. A summary of the different engagement activities is below:

1. Presentation to EDD (June 2024)
2. COEDC Strategic Planning Meeting (Sept 2024)
3. Meeting with Ec. Dev. Commission (Sept 2024)
4. Departmental Survey (June 2024)
5. Presentation to Advisory (July 2024)
6. Business Survey (July 2024)
7. Department Workshops (July 2024)
8. Spring Salmon Committee (February 2025)
9. Quarterly Membership Meeting open house (March 2025)
10. EDC Meetings (February, April and June 2025)
11. Membership Survey (June & July 2025)
12. Elders Meetings (June 2025)
13. Spring Salmon Committee (August 2025)

Summary of Learnings

During the summer of 2025, a survey was sent to WFN Members to identify priorities for economic development, as well as how they could collaborate with Economic Development and the priorities for vetting opportunities. 14 Members completed the survey. Priorities for Economic Development are listed below in priority order.

Business Types Desired on WFN Lands (as determined by WFN Members)

From the open-ended survey responses, several recurring themes emerged:

Top Requested Businesses:

- Family Entertainment: Water slides, go-karts, arcades, and laser tag.
- Retail & Specialty Stores: Moccasin manufacturing, clothing stores, tool outlets, exotic pet supplies.
- Cultural & Community-Oriented Spaces: Cultural centre run by members, elder care.
- Recreational & Lifestyle: Casinos, wellness centres, restaurants.
- Sustainable Alternatives: Environmentally friendly products, healthcare facilities.

Industries Considered Important for WFN's Future

Members emphasized sustainability, cultural relevance, and economic self-determination.

Key Sectors Identified:

- Sustainable Energy & Green Construction – Future energy sources, green roofs.
- Indigenous Tourism – Cultural centres, eco-tourism (e.g., nature photography trips).
- Healthcare & Mental Health – Youth programs, elder care.
- Entrepreneurship & Retail – Member-owned ventures and clothing retail.
- Cannabis & Casinos – Mixed views, but frequently raised.

Quantitative Ranking of Economic Priorities

(From 2025-06-25 feedback, 9 respondents)

Ranked by Priority/Impact:

1. Health & Wellness – Highest priority (Score: 4.00)
2. Tourism & Hospitality (3.44)

3. **Technology & Innovation** (3.33)
4. **Entertainment & Recreation** (3.00)
5. **Retail** – Lowest priority (1.22)

Perceived Barriers to Business Development

Community members shared a variety of barriers:

Commonly Cited Challenges:

- **Land Availability & Infrastructure** – Limited space, water access, lack of utilities.
- **Regulatory & Legal Issues** – Cannabis laws, gaming restrictions, rent costs.
- **Interest & Capacity** – Limited member interest or resources for starting businesses.

Elders' Meeting Themes

To embed traditional leadership and long-term thinking, consider incorporating the following themes directly into the strategic narrative:

Strategic Themes to Highlight:

- **Economic Alignment**: Businesses must reflect Council values and benefit members directly.
- **Cultural Preservation**: Language (e.g., "Welcome to the Territory" at YLW), no marinas or mobile home parks.
- **Development Control**: Prioritize WFN needs over developers; caution against rapid growth.
- **Employment Transparency**: Track Indigenous hiring on reserve.
- **Greenspaces & Services**: More parks, explore raising DCCs (Development Cost Charges) to support expanded services.
- **Tax Awareness**: Increase Member knowledge around status card exemptions.

In June 2024, a survey was sent to WFN employees to identify priorities for economic development, as well as how they could collaborate with Economic Development and the priorities for vetting opportunities. 57 employees completed the survey. Priorities for Economic Development are listed below in priority order.

Table 6

Priority Sectors for Economic Development (as determined by WFN Employees)

Industry Sectors	Percent (%)
Cultural and Recreational Facilities	53.49%
Workforce Development and Education	53.49%
Job Creation and Employment Opportunities	46.51%
Support for Small Businesses and Startups	32.56%
Sustainable Development and Green Initiatives	27.91%
Technology and Innovation	25.58%
Attracting New Businesses and Investments	23.26%

Tourism Promotion and Development	18.60%
Other	16.28%

Employees were also asked to comment on how they could collaborate with Economic Development and the priorities for vetting opportunities.

The key themes that emerged from the employee survey include:

1. Desire for interdepartmental collaboration
2. Initiatives must be aligned with WFN CCP and strategic goals
3. Uncertainty regarding current processes for facilitating interdepartmental collaboration
4. Programs to support WFN youth and entrepreneurs

In July 2024 several workshops were held with different departments in WFN including:

- Finance
- Taxation
- Planning
- Intergovernmental Affairs
- Communications
- Procurements
- Education and Training

The goal of these workshops was to determine priorities for the Economic Development Department, as well as current interdepartmental collaboration, and how this collaboration can be improved upon.

The key themes that emerged from the department workshops include:

1. The need to further define the role of the Economic Development Department
2. Streamline processes for opportunities and referrals
3. Initiatives must be aligned with the CCP
4. Desire for more interdepartmental communication and collaboration

In July 2024, a survey was sent out to businesses operating on WFN Lands to identify the main challenges their business faces and how the Economic Development Department can best support them to achieve their businesses goals. 16 businesses completed the survey. The main challenges businesses are facing are listed below in order.

Table 7

Challenges Facing WFN Businesses

Challenges	Percent (%)
Access to Labour	58.33%
Market Access	41.67%
Other	25.00%
Regulatory Environment	16.67%

Infrastructure	16.67%
Access to Financing	8.33%

The key themes for how the Economic Development Department can support the businesses include:

1. Advertise opportunities
2. Business social groups
3. Collaboration
4. Communication

Appendix B Economic Development Sector Overview

Tourism

Tourism has been a powerful industry in the Central Okanagan region. For WFN this represents opportunities for diverse types of businesses related to Tourism. Food and beverage, and hospitality (short-term lodging) make up a large portion of this sector. Currently, business have reported that there has been a significant decrease in summertime event planning, likely due to wildfires (or fear thereof). WFN is committed to supporting businesses that can offer year-round tourism opportunities (four seasons of service) and promote shoulder season visitors and events. Indigenous Tourism particularly presents opportunities for both cultural and educational goals set out in the CCP. Trends in tourism in BC also show that there is an increasing demand for cultural tourism experiences. BC has some of the most diverse and best developed operators of Indigenous cultural tourism in the world[1].

Tourism was identified as one of the five main economic drivers on Westbank Lands within the Community perspectives section of the CCP.

Sector Highlights

- Tourism in British Columbia is a continuously growing industry with the number of international travellers in 2023 rising by 50.4% compared to 2022, bringing the numbers closer to pre-pandemic levels[2].
- Tourism is one of the biggest economic drivers in British Columbia, generating over $18 billion in revenue in 2022, and contributing $7.2 billion to the provinces GDP[3]. The Kelowna area alone makes up $2.4 billion of this[4].
- Kelowna is home to the Kelowna International Airport (YLW), making the area highly accessible for visitors.

[1] Tourism in BC, Spring 2024, Destination BC.
[2] Province of British Columbia, 2024 Financial and Economic Review.
[3] BC Government News, B.C.'s tourism industry a resilient economic driver 2024.
[4] Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.

- In 2023, sightseeing (27%), winery touring (26%), family vacation (25%), and outdoor or water-based activities (20%) were named the top 4 reasons why tourists visited the Central Okanagan[5].

Construction

The high demand for residential housing in the area and across BC has boosted the construction industry. On Tsinstikeptum 9, it is the number one industry according to COEDC research, and on Tsinstikeptum 10, it is second. The area of West Kelowna continues to experience record-breaking growth. According to Statistics Canada, its population grew at a rate of 10.5% between 2016 and 2021[6]. With WFN in proximity, there are good opportunities to provide construction services in the area as demand is still growing. Building-equipment contractors are also showing continued growth in BC and could be another area of opportunity for WFN businesses[7].

Construction was identified as one of the five main economic drivers on Westbank Lands within the Community perspectives section of the CCP.

Sector Highlights

- In 2023, construction accounted for 10% of British Columbia's GDP, with a 1.4% increase since 2018[8].
- One of the fastest growing construction activities in British Columbia is home construction, with construction starting on 50,490 units in 2023, up 8.1% compared to 2022[9].
- Construction is one of the top 3 industry sectors in the Central Okanagan, making up 11.5% of employment[10].
- In 2022, the construction industry had the second highest number of businesses operating in the Central Okanagan[11].

Forestry

With the growth in construction, lumber manufacturing is an important part of the sector. WFN has a timber license that allows for an annual cut of 100,000 cubic metres across 150,000 acres of WFN's traditional territory, creating skills, training and job opportunities for Members. Management of WFN's forest and the extraction of materials can be considered as an opportunity, however, a high element of sustainable resource extraction will be needed.

This priority sector was determined throughout the engagement process including within the sn̓qâʔqʷalqs (Community) perspectives.

[5] ibid.
[6] Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.
[7] Province of British Columbia, Global Opportunities in B.C.'s Key Industry Sectors.
[8] Province of British Columbia, Financial and Economic Review 2024.
[9] ibid.
[10] Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.
[11] ibid.

Sector Highlights

- British Columbia is one of the world's largest exporters of wood products, ranging from wood pellets to pulp to biofuels[12].
- In 2022, the forestry sector generated 56,120 jobs, $6.4 billion in GDP, and reported $1.9 billion in provincial government revenues in British Columbia[13].
- The forestry industry generates significant economic benefits for multiple other sectors, including transportation, food services, and building services and supplies. In 2022, this indirect economic impact provided an additional 51.1K employment opportunities[14].
- In 2022, forestry produced $3.2 billion in GDP and supported 18.2K jobs in the Thompson Okanagan region[15].

Health Care

In addition to being one of the biggest sectors for employment in WFN, healthcare provides the community with services that support their well-being and resiliency. The WFN community has great partnerships and services provided to their community and these are a large part of the CCP goals.

Healthcare was identified as one of the five main economic drivers on Westbank Lands within the Community perspectives section of the CCP.

Sector Highlights

- Health care is one of the fastest growing industries in British Columbia, with Outpatient Care Centers showing the highest employment growth from 2018-2023, followed by Nursing Care Facilities[16].
- In August 2024, the province introduced the Health Career Access Program (HCAP), which will pay for students post-secondary education and provide a weekly stipend, as a result of the growing demand for health care assistants in long-term care homes and assisted living facilities[17].
- Trends in the Central Okanagan are similar to the province, with health care being one of it's fastest growing industries with the labour force growing from 12.9% to 14% from 2016-2021[18].
- Kelowna is home to the 3rd best medical program in Canada *(University of British Columbia's Medical School Clinic Academic Campus located at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH)[19]*.

Education

WFN makes up a large portion of individuals working in the educational services sector. Some of the educational programs and initiatives available to Members include the sənsisyustən House of Learning and the Westbank Child Development Centre (WCDC). Education continues to be a priority for helping to

[12] Province of British Columbia, Sustainable Forestry.
[13] Province of British Columbia, 2022 Economic State of the B.C. Forest Sector.
[14] BC Council of Forest Industries, Economic Impact Study 2024.
[15] ibid.
[16] Province of British Columbia, Global Opportunities in B.C.'s Key Industry Sectors.
[17] Province of British Columbia, Work in the health care sector 2024.
[18] Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.
[19] ibid.

empower our Members and to build a strong way forward for our youth. The three main fields of studies for Youth being identified as Business Management and Public Administration, Architecture/Engineering and related trades, and Health related fields respectively.

Education was identified as one of the five main economic drivers on Westbank Lands within the Community perspectives section of the CCP.

Sector Highlights

- In 2023, educational services was the second main driver of employment growth in British Columbia, with the addition of 16,600 new jobs[20].
- Education services is one of the fastest growing industries in the Central Okanagan, growing from 6.1% to 7% between 2016 and 2021[21].
- The Central Okanagan is home to the 5th largest school district in British Columbia, the Central Okanagan Public School District (District No. 23) which includes the communities of Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake Country, and Peachland[22].
- There are multiple post-secondary institutions in the Central Okanagan region, including the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), Okanagan College, and the Centre for Arts and Technology.

Energy

WFN is involved through a partnership with two wind farms, one near Pennask Lake off the Coquihalla Connector towards Merritt, and another between Summerland and Peachland. Together, they create 15 megawatts of power at each station, enough to power up to 4,000 homes. With new technologies being developed in the region, WFN will continue to seek ways to expand economic development in the energy sector.

This priority sector was determined throughout the engagement process including within the Community perspectives.

Sector Highlights

- British Columbia has an abundance of natural resources that can be used for clean energy production, allowing the province to be a global leader in renewable power[23].
- British Columbia is Canada's largest producer of biomass-generated electricity as a direct result of the wood waste from the provinces forestry industry[24].
- Since 2016, the British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative has generated over 1,200 clean energy jobs and over $16 million in revenue for First Nations communities[25].

[20] Province of British Columbia, Financial and Economic Review 2024.
[21] Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.
[22] Canadian Association of Public Schools – International.
[23] Government of Canada, British Columbia: Clean electricity snapshot.
[24] ibid.
[25] ibid.

- In 2023, a new Energy Centre producing solar energy opened in the District of Summerland, showing that the energy sector is growing within the Central Okanagan region[26].

Appendix C Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities + Threats

A Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SCOT) analysis was developed to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats to economic development for WFN. Strengths and challenges relate directly to WFN, while opportunities and threats generally relate to external factors. This SCOT analysis was completed through consultation with WFN's EDD as well as discussions with the Economic Development Commission and survey responses from WFN staff.

[26] District of Summerland, Summerland Energy Centre 2023.

Appendix D Business Opportunity Intake Form

Business Opportunity Intake Form

WFN is committed to economic development opportunities that align with our values, respect our tmxʷúlaʔxʷ (land), and benefit our people. We invite potential partners to share their business ideas through this intake form. All applications will be reviewed carefully to ensure they are a good fit for our community.

What to Expect

Submissions go through a multi-stage review process, which often includes:

- Initial Intake & Evaluation
- Council Committee Review
- Staff Due Diligence
- Community and Economic Development Commission Review
- Referendum (if required)
- Final Approval & Agreement

Timelines vary by project but typically take 3-6 months, depending on the complexity of the proposal and the information provided. Incomplete applications may experience delays.

If the request involves community-held lands, a referendum is required, extending the timeline to an average of 12 months.

We appreciate your understanding and respect for our due diligence, processes, and timeframes as we work to ensure responsible and meaningful economic development.

Submit Request Cancel

SECTION 1: BUSINESS & CONTACT INFORMATION

BUSINESS NAME | BUSINESS REGISTRATION NUMBER | BUSINESS ADDRESS

CONTACT NAME | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL ADDRESS

WEBSITE

MAIN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

SECTION 2: PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP WITH WFN

WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING FROM WFN?

☐ LAND ☐ INVESTMENT

☐ INFRASTRUCTURE ☐ WORKFORCE

OTHER

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A SITE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

○ Yes, and it is on WFN Lands ○ Yes, and it is not on WFN Lands ○ No land required

IF YES, PROVIDE DETAILS

WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED INVESTMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

HOW WILL THIS PROJECT BENEFIT WFN MEMBERS AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY?

WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

SECTION 3: BUSINESS INTEGRITY & DUE DILIGENCE

LIST ALL PRINCIPAL OWNERS (WITH OWNERSHIP PERCENTAGES) AND KEY EXECUTIVES

HAS YOUR COMPANY OR ANY KEY EXECUTIVES BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY LEGAL DISPUTES, BANKRUPTCIES, OR REGULATORY VIOLATIONS IN THE PAST 5 YEARS?

Yes No

IF YES, PROVIDE DETAILS

DO YOU HAVE SECURED FUNDING FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Yes No

IF NO, EXPLAIN YOUR FUNDING PLAN

SECTION 4: BUSINESS TRACK RECORD & INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

HAS YOUR COMPANY PREVIOUSLY OPERATED ON INDIGENOUS LAND?

Yes No

IF YES, PROVIDE DETAILS, INCLUDING THE COMMUNITY NAME AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

HAS YOUR COMPANY EVER HAD A BUSINESS AGREEMENT WITH AN INDIGENOUS NATION THAT ENDED IN DISPUTE OR UNRESOLVED CONFLICT?

Yes No

IF YES, EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF THE DISPUTE AND ITS RESOLUTION

HAS YOUR COMPANY EVER HAD A PROJECT FAIL DUE TO FINANCIAL, LEGAL, OR COMMUNITY CONCERNS?

Yes No

IF YES, EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND LESSONS LEARNED

HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY PARTNERED WITH WFN ON A BUSINESS VENTURE?

Yes No

IF YES, PROVIDE DETAILS

SECTION 5: PROJECT FEASIBILITY

PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY OF YOUR PROJECT

ATTACH A PRO-FORMA OR BUDGET FOR YOUR PROJECT

Attached Not Available

IF NOT AVAILABLE, EXPLAIN WHY

SECTION 6: PROJECT LOCATION

FINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT & SUBMISSION

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Add a file

Please attach any photos, documents, or other files that will assist with your request

Appendix E References

BC Council of Forest Industries, Economic Impact Study 2024.

BC Government News, B.C.'s tourism industry a resilient economic driver 2024.

Canadian Association of Public Schools – International.

CBC News, Netflix to commit over $500M over 5 years on new Canadian Production 2023.

Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Central Okanagan Economic Profile 2023.

Creative BC, Motion Picture.

Destination BC, Indigenous Tourism.

District of Summerland, Summerland Energy Centre 2023.

Global News, Okanagan's film industry the fastest growing in B.C. 2023.

Government of Canada, British Columbia: Clean electricity snapshot.

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Strategic Recovery of Indigenous Tourism in Canada 2022-2025.

McKinsey & Company, Using AI in economic development: Challenges and opportunities 2024.

Province of British Columbia, 2022 Economic State of the B.C. Forest Sector.

Province of British Columbia, 2024 Financial and Economic Review.

Province of British Columbia, Global Opportunities in B.C.'s Key Industry Sectors.

Province of British Columbia, Sustainable Forestry.

Province of British Columbia, Work in the health care sector 2024.

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

Thompson Okanagan, Indigenous Culture.

Tourism in BC, Spring 2024, Destination BC.

Westbank First Nation, Our sn̓qâʔqʷalqs (Community); About Westbank First Nation.

Community. Leadership. Pride.

WESTBANK FIRST NATION

*201 – 515 Highway 97 South, Kelowna, BC V1Z 3J2
Tel: 250 769 4999 ▪ Fax: 250 769 4377 ▪ Toll Free: 877 388 4999
Web: wfn.ca
Follow @westbankfn on