



# Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs

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## 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan

Prepared by MNP LLP

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# Introduction

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## The Scope of the Plan

Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs (“BATC”) was formed in 2007 to unite the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Moosomin First Nation, Red Pheasant Cree Nation, Sweetgrass First Nation, and Stoney Knoll First Nation in addressing common issues and needed services that each member Nation faced. Saulteaux First Nation joined in 2009 and Mosquito Grizzly Bear’s Head Lean Man First Nation joined in 2014. BATC provides services and support on- and off-reserve to the more than twelve thousand citizens of the member Nations. Services in the areas of housing development support, economic development, band governance, financial management, justice, sports and recreation, social development, employment training, industry relations, urban services, and emergency shelter are provided by BATC.

The Executive Council has mandated BATC to meet the objective of reducing dependency within the Nations and their members. BATC has a strong senior management team who deliver quality services for the sustainability, self-sufficiency, and autonomy of its First Nations’ membership. In partnership with its member Nations, BATC has formed an investment entity to develop wealth and create job opportunities.

BATC wants to ensure it utilizes its resources in the most effective manner. Therefore, the Executive Director and senior management team have prepared the following strategic plan to ensure the limited resources received are used in a prioritized and efficient manner.

## The Value of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan was developed to achieve the following:

- **Plan the future state of BATC** by building on current strengths and momentum, and addressing the challenges faced by the organization and its members Nations.
- **Communicate with members** and ensure that BATC’s future direction aligns with member values and priorities.
- **Engage staff** and ensure that the BATC’s future direction aligns with the expectations of staff and their operation plans.
- **Align the efforts of the Executive Council and senior management** toward common goals, priorities, strategies, and initiatives.
- **Direct planning and growth** within BATC.
- **Guide the day-to-day decision making** of BATC’s leadership and staff.
- **Empower the leadership** to more efficiently and purposefully oversee and guide the governance and operation of the organization.
- **Communicate to stakeholders** the benefits of the strategic goals, and how they can support BATC in achieving its mission and vision.

# Key Steps in the Development of the Plan

The development of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan included:

- A review of the summary of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.
- A review of the 2018-2019 Business Plan and related Fundamentals Management MAP.
- A two day strategic planning session with senior management to review the 'current state' as it relates to operations, initiatives, concerns, and opportunities for each program. Strategic goals for 2022-2025 were established and strategies and performance measures related to implementation were identified.
- As a recent and effective strategic plan, the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan document has been used as the basis for this report, with the information from the recent strategic planning session being used to update the various sections.
- Final approval of the Strategic Plan including its implementation plan, key indicators, and proposed timelines by senior management.

## BATC – Where We Are Today

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### Mission

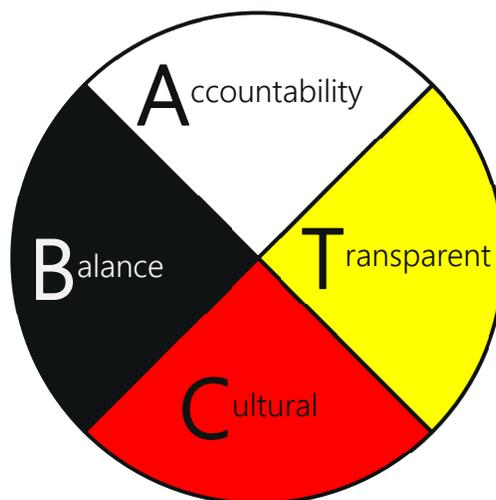
*BATC creates opportunities for our members as expert resources while following our culture and values.*

### Vision Statements

*Helping member Nations succeed in all areas of operations and supporting urban services in the Battlefords region while following the spirit and intent of the Treaties.*

*"A partner in building our communities' success"*

### Values



## Recent Environmental Factors and Changes

Over the last two years, the following significant events or changes have impacted the operations and strategic direction of BATC and its member Nations:

- Global pandemic of COVID-19 impacting how and when work is completed, what is done, and who is available to do it.
- Due to pandemic and other impacts, increasing effects of mental health challenges and the related service and individual concerns.
- Expansion of programming, specific to urban services, health, and expanded economic development operations.
- Transition of services from BATC to the Nations, specifically for social development and employment and training.

## SWOT Analysis

**Strengths and Weaknesses** are internal and require the attention of the Executive Council and management. Good organizations capitalize upon their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Executive Council and the management team must constantly evaluate how each decision will impact the strengths and weaknesses of BATC.

**Opportunities and Threats** are external and beyond the control of BATC. Recognizing and capitalizing on opportunities or taking action to reduce exposure to threats are signs of a tuned-in, responsive leadership team.

### Strengths

Through innovative service delivery and a strong, consistent focus on reducing dependency, BATC provides many benefits to its member Nations and can leverage those strengths over the next three years. The strategically important internal strengths of BATC are:

- **Strong, strategic leadership** – BATC has a dedicated team that is solution oriented and work well together. Many of the senior team have been with the organization for many years which provides stability and experience. They also continue to be creative and innovative and open to changes. The leadership team works within the governance framework and support the policies and procedures which are important to a stable and effective organization. Business plans, strategic planning, and risk management are regular processes undertaken by the team to maintain the focus on the member's needs.

- **Reputation for 'delivering'** – BATC provides a high level of service quality. Users of the services, specifically in employment and training constantly provide positive feedback and continue to use additional or complementary services. Relationships with funders are also positive as BATC has demonstrated it can implement and properly report on the activities funded which has led to innovative funding models and access to new programming dollars. Recent additional programs being added to the service delivery options exemplify positive reputation. Many of the teams within BATC work well under pressure and adapt quickly to change to ensure successful delivery of programs. Services provided to the member Nations are typically customized to each individual Nation to ensure unique needs are properly met.
- **Governance system** – BATC has prepared and implemented strong governance practices which are routinely followed, assessed, and adjusted as necessary. Executive Council, advisory boards, and senior management are aware of and understand their roles within the organization. There is strong participation by the member Nations, and they have begun to implement the best practices role modeled by BATC in their communities.
- **Adaptability** – As the organization is relatively new with significant growth, the team is adept and comfortable with change. BATC can adapt quickly and handle complex tasks with limited notice while working together effectively to meet project objectives. Executive Council has been effective in performing its duties even with changes in Nation leadership from community elections. BATC is also willing to seek and use advice and assistance when necessary. BATC manages these changes without losing focus on traditions and culture and ensuring active participation by the communities. BATC has a motivated team which embraces innovation and creative solutions.

## Weaknesses

BATC is a relatively new organization just beginning to mature into the desired expert resource for its member Nations. The following strategically important internal challenges were identified:

- **Communication issues** – Internally there are instances of ineffective communication between departments. As a result, there can be missed opportunities or duplication of effort/services. Staff have indicated there are times where expectations were not clear which led to an expectation gap for performance. Inconsistent 'email etiquette' results in too many emails, information shared with the wrong team, or not provided to the right team members. Externally, information provided to users of the services is not consistently provided and may not be provided in the appropriate medium, be fully understood by the users what is available or what they should be expecting, and what BATC is doing for them as a community. Social media and website presence requires an update and improvement.
- **Location** – Due to the decentralized nature of the service delivery and the large geographic area the services are provided within, employee morale, mentoring, and evaluation can be negatively affected. As well, service delivery by program or location may not be consistent. Certain facilities are not sufficient for the current or future need, as BATC has either outgrown the facility or selected the facility out of necessity due to lack of other choices. There is a lack of urban on-reserve office and programming space.

- **Recruiting and retaining** – For certain entry level positions, BATC has been unsuccessful in recruiting and retaining the appropriate staffing levels. Uncertainty on the terms of project funding results in employee uncertainty from short-term contracts which decreases the ability for BATC to retain trained employees who are looking for more stability in employment options. Recruitment can be impacted by political influence which impacts the trust in the process and potentially results in loss of qualified candidates. New team member orientation is not consistent, and the experience does not always provide the desired results for both the new member and management.
- **Information technology support** – Contracting external support for IT managed services is currently sufficient for BATC internal needs, however as the organization grows and to be able to provide that support to member Nations the current system is not optimal. Certain systems are also required to be reviewed, upgraded, or purchased which include a housing data management system, alternative financial management system, etc.
- **Key processes not yet developed or implemented** – Certain key processes have not been developed or implemented to help manage risk which include sufficient HR documentation to support discipline and potential termination; succession planning for key managers; and, business continuity plans including disaster recovery plans, fire safety plans, OHS committee meetings, etc.

## Opportunities

The following strategically important external opportunities were identified during the strategic planning process:

- **New funding sources** – The Federal government has implemented a ‘new fiscal relationship’ which provides the opportunity for new funding and programs, as well as changes to funding models. In addition, the CHRT ruling has provided opportunities for prevention funding to support First Nation youth. Recent Covid relief and recovery funding has been provided. Economic development opportunities created through the success of past ventures and new grants or financing options.
- **Expanded service offerings** – Additional service needs will be required by the member Nations including programs such as Elder support, justice initiatives, and increased urban services and cultural support. Changes in technology will also provide new opportunities for new services or methods of delivery of the services especially in training.
- **Regional changes** – Changing economics will provide opportunities within the region, with opportunities outside of the resource sector and expanded agri-business options. The current relationship with the City provides significant opportunity for improvement with strategic partnerships, urban reserve locations, new facilities, etc.
- **The changing political environment** – Changes in laws, government priorities, and public opinion are resulting in additional funding opportunities or projects.

## Threats

BATC is faced with a changing environment and political landscape. The following strategically important external threats were identified:

- **Access to qualified employees** – Given the competition for high quality and qualified employees, there could be difficulty in recruitment; also, there is a constant threat of loss of key employees to other opportunities, especially related organizations or by employees running for political office.
- **Political forces** – Various influences on funding, governance, and operations are related to federal, provincial, municipal, First Nation, and member political influence. The changing of terms or loss of funding would have a significant impact on the operations and ability to provide the desired level of programming. Elections, policy compliance, effective committee or Board appointments, etc. can influence effective operations by those in governance. The relationship with the local municipality is also currently not supportive of meeting BATC’s goals. Social media negativity can significantly impact reputation and the ability to recruit staff or deliver programs. The loss of Nation members would also significantly impact BATC.
- **Strategic partnerships** – Access to appropriate partnerships for placement, co-delivery of programming, etc. is required – BATC reputation, ability to maintain terms of agreements, and leveraging networks important to access and keep those partnerships; other entities which could be partners may become competitors which could hinder BATCs ability to provide key programming such as training.
- **Infrastructure threats** – Access to key assets is important to operations of BATC – therefore the loss of buildings, IT infrastructure, and IT data is imperative.

# Strategic Goals

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The BATC management determined the following significant areas of priority for BATC.

1. **Communication** – increase communication between departments; formalize external communication policies and processes (considering both member Nations and strategic partners); use of social media, website, newsletter, annual reports, etc.; etc.
2. **Housing Services** – Expand current services to reduce reliance on external service providers; support member Nations with housing and tenancy policy enforcement, training provided for basic maintenance and repairs, and housing development plans; housing data management system.
3. **Recruitment of Staff** – find trained, well-qualified people to fill key roles; succession planning for key roles including mentoring and training; administration support for all departments; review term projects to create more job security for employees in those areas.
4. **New Program Offerings** – Development and implementation of new program services to member Nations which may include justice/policing, IT managed services, financial management, urban Elder care and housing authority, policy development support, etc.; identification process for new or upcoming changes affecting Nations (general advisory service)
5. **Governance** – Reviewing current structures/policies/terms of reference to ensure effectiveness and consistency, supporting increased communication and continuity of leadership; revising organization chart to include expected areas of future growth.
6. **Strategic Partnerships** – evaluate current partnerships to assess alignment with strategic plan and effectiveness; identify missing key partnerships and create plan to initiate discussions and agreements; identify plan for dealing with City issues; facilitate aggregation of partners services to be more effective in deliver to member Nations; etc.
7. **Infrastructure** – Review on-reserve and off-reserve office locations for staff safety/morale and options; support member Nations development of urban reserve locations; planning for central office and training center on urban reserve; capital asset plan to support expected growth; identify opportunity for increased cultural support facilities in urban locations.
8. **Risk Management** – continue implementation of the use of long-term plans for IT and capital assets; policy compliance; insurance reviews; disaster recovery and business interruption plans created; OH&S committee; HR expertise and policy/processes followed to support performance reviews and potential terminations; financial projections and funder diversification and/or long-term commitments; etc.

Although all eight (8) strategic areas are important and need to be included in department work plans and the budgeting process, management identified three (3) of the areas to prioritize for the next three years.

The three priority strategic goals are:

1. **Communication** – Improving internal and external communication.
2. **Governance and Risk Management** – Review current structures, policies, terms of references, and procedures used for decision making, accountability, transparency, and risk management to ensure effectiveness and consistency of the operations of BATC.
3. **Human Resource Development** – Develop the support service of human resources in all areas for all operational aspects of BATC.

## Strategies and Objectives:



### Communication

- To improve the amount and quality of information shared between departments, leadership, member Nations, and other stakeholders.
- Support change management and program delivery.



### Governance and Risk Management

- To review and improve the consistent application of policies and other governance supports.
- To ensure all employees, participants, and assets are properly protected to maximize support of member Nation's and other stakeholders



### Human Resource Development

- To focus on recruitment and retention of key staff, while planning for succession.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate training and professional development
- Maintain values and culture

# Implementation Plan

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For the 2022 – 2025 plan, the approach was changed to focus on each individual department for implementation plans that focus on the overall BATC strategies and objectives. As such, each department met and created an implementation plan. These plans are presented in the following “placemat” graphics:



Administration



BATC Investments



BATC CDC



Communications



Education



Emergency Management



Employment & Training



Finance



Health



Achahos Awasisah – Star Children Project



Information Technology



Justice



Social Development



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# Review/Next Steps

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To ensure the Strategic Plan performs as designed, BATC will hold regularly scheduled formal reviews of the Strategic Plan and its implementation.

- **Performance indicators** tied to the strategic objectives will be created and incorporated into a new management compensation model;
- **Semi-annual implementation status update sessions** will be held with Program Directors and other key staff and stakeholders; and,
- **An annual report** will be prepared for Executive Council based on these sessions, to outline what has been successful and what needs to be changed to ensure the successful implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

The purpose of these sessions will be to gather information that:

- Informs Executive Council about the implementation progress of the Strategic Plan;
- Determines if the work done supports the achievement of the strategic goals, mission, and vision of BATC;
- Outlines how to address emerging challenges and build upon past successes;
- Provides ongoing guidance and feedback to employees, stakeholders, and leaders;
- Guides future activities/initiatives; and
- Contributes to accountability.

The value of this strategic plan will also be maximized by engaging in the following activities:

- **An annual review and updating of the plan and the resources that support the plan** - new priorities will emerge; lessons will be learned; progress will be made. As the world around BATC changes, the leadership and management will need to adapt and evolve.
- **Communication of the plan to all stakeholders** - so that all can align to achieving the strategic goals, and so that momentum and enthusiasm can be generated to support the plan.
- **Tracking and reporting on progress, celebrating success** – Senior management should review performance measures quarterly to see if initiatives are on track to achieving the strategic goals.
- **Support and guidance from BATC leaders** - in referring back to the plan, staying the course, keeping up the momentum, and setting high standards for accountability, transparency, and achieving results.
- **Effective management of resources** - using all resources available in an efficient and coordinated way, focused on the desired results, will require management skills in the areas of team-building, planning, and budgeting, reporting, empowering others, and holding others accountable.



Thank you!

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