



VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION

Chief & Council

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March 19, 2009

The Hon. Archie Lang,
Minister of Community Services, CM-5
Government of Yukon,
Box 2703,
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

RE: Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)

I am writing to ask you to help expedite the review and approval of our First Nation's community sustainability plan. Attached is a hard copy of the ICSP and an electronic copy on CD for your departmental records.

As you know, our Vuntut Gwitchin – Yukon Intergovernmental Relations Accord provides the framework for our government to government relationship, including operational priorities – both capital infrastructure and programs delivered by our governments in our traditional territory. In the implementation of our Accord there has been recognition of our unique circumstances in Old Crow as being the sole local government for our traditional territory and community; and, the isolated nature of community without all-weather road access involving unique planning and operational considerations and challenges. Further, our location results in significantly higher capital infrastructure and O&M operational costs than faced by other Yukon communities. The need for cost efficient and effective delivery of local government services and infrastructure emphasizes the requirement for close cooperation between our two governments.

By integrating our updated Physical Development Plan and a new 10 Year Capital Plan forecast of our needs into the overall ICSP, we now have a single reference document that our respective governments can use for infrastructure planning purposes and logistical project coordination. I have arranged for our senior intergovernmental representatives to meet with your officials March 30th to begin discussions on common project priorities that can move forward through Build Canada and other emerging infrastructure funding programs. We have identified "shovel ready" projects for those discussions with particular attention to initiatives where we intend to utilize our gas tax funds currently held in trust by Yukon on our behalf.

The Steering Committee overseeing the Gas Tax Funds may take up to 60 days to review and decide on the acceptability of our ICSP. Time is of the essence. We are asking you to help expedite that review and if accepted, to flow the requested funding for our priority projects from our trust account to us as quickly as possible.

I hope I can count on your usual collegial support and assistance in this regard.

Sincerely,



Joe Linklater
Chief



Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

ICSP Community Meeting

Date: March 10, 2009

Recommended for Approval
Executive Director

Date: March 19, 2009

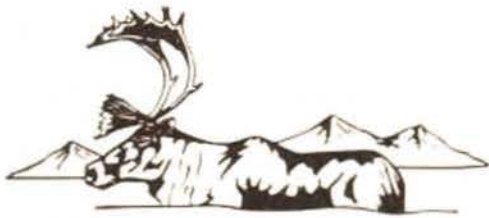
Presented to Chief & Council

Date: March 19, 2009

Approved by Chief & Council

Date: March 19, 2009

Joe Linklater, Chief
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation



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VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION COUNCIL RESOLUTION 03192009-#09 March 19, 2009

WHEREAS Canada and Yukon have entered into an agreement to transfer a portion of the federal excise tax on gasoline to the Government of Yukon to support environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure projects;

WHEREAS the Government of Yukon is responsible for administering the Gas Tax Revenue Sharing Agreement on behalf of Canada including the allocation of allotted funds to Yukon communities and First Nations.

WHEREAS a requirement for fund transfers necessitates completion and adoption of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

WHEREAS the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has completed a review and update to the Old Crow Physical Development Plan and First Nation Capital Plan and integrated these documents into the Integrated Sustainability Plan.

WHEREAS the Vuntut Gwitchin Government has consulted the community at large;


The Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation hereby resolves as follows:

1. That the Vuntut Gwitchin Government at its meeting of 19th March 2009 hereby adopts the Vuntut Gwitchin Integrated Community Sustainability Plan 2009.


THIS RESOLUTION being duly approved at a meeting of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Council duly convened and held at Old Crow, Yukon this 19th day of **March, 2009**.



Chief



Deputy Chief



Councillor



Councillor

Councillor



Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

March 2009

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
1.0 Old Crow Yesterday and Today.....	1
1.1 Population	2
1.2 Employment	3
2.0 Preparing the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).....	4
3.0 Old Crow’s Special Challenges	5
3.1 Lack of an all-season road	5
3.1 Cost of living.....	5
3.3 Environmental Risk	5
3.4 Quality and Durability of Housing	6
3.5 Evolving VGFN and Yukon Relationship.....	6
4.0 Sustainable Community Development.....	7
4.1 Our Vision for the Future	7
3.1 Community Values	7
4.3 Long Term Goals.....	8
4.4 Sustainability Principles	8
4.5 Measuring Our Success	9
5.0 Community Profile	11
5.1 Water and Sewer.....	11
5.1 Recycling and Waste Management.....	11
5.3 Community Energy Management.....	11
5.4 Community Transportation Issues	12
5.4.1 Winter Road	12
5.4.2 Roads & Drainage.....	13
5.5 Airport	13
5.6 Housing & Land Development.....	14
5.7 Economic Development	15
5.8 Heritage & Culture.....	15
5.9 Cemetery.....	15
5.11 Community Health & Recreation	16
6.0 Service Agreements.....	18
3.1 Existing Service Agreements	18
3.2 Potential Service Agreements	19
6.3 VGFN & Yukon Cooperation	19
7.0 Community Priority Setting.....	20
7.1 Sewer & Water	20
7.2 Housing & Land Development.....	20
7.3 Economic Development	21
7.4 Community Health & Recreation	21
7.5 Heritage & Culture.....	21
7.7 Tank Farm & Fuel Delivery.....	22
7.8 Fire Department.....	23
7.9 Winter Road	23

8.0	Physical Development Plan	24
8.1	Natural Site Conditions	24
8.2	Summary of Physical Planning Issues & Opportunities.....	25
8.3	General Development Principles	26
8.4	Land Use Policies	27
8.4.1	Housing & Residential Development	27
8.4.2	Commercial Services	28
8.4.3	Public Services	29
8.4.4	Industrial Development	29
8.4.5	Airport	30
8.4.6	Utilities & Communications	30
8.4.7	Community Recreation Services & Parks	31
8.4.8	Heritage Protection	31
8.4.9	Limited Development Area.....	32
8.4.10	Hinterland	32
8.4.11	Transportation.....	33
8.4.12	Tourism.....	33
8.5	Existing Land Use.....	34
8.6	Recommended Community Physical Development Plan.....	35
9.0	5 Year Capital Plan & 10 Year Forecast.....	38
9.1	Infrastructure Priorities.....	38
9.2	Capital Plan Implementation Schedule	40
	Appendices - Community Assessment Charts.....	42
	Appendix A: Capital Project Infrastructure Inventory & Assessment.....	43
	Appendix B: Social, Health, & Cultural Services Inventory and Assessment.....	45
	Appendix C: Economic Skills Inventory and Assessment	46
	Appendix D: Environmental Inventory and Assessment	48
	Appendix E: Inventory and Assessment of Other Items	49
	Appendix F: Capacity Building and Job Training Inventory and Assessment	50

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

Executive Summary

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) is eligible for \$740,265.00 under the New Deal Gas Tax Agreement over 5 years on completion and acceptance of their Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. The Gas Tax extension was extended in 2007 for another 4 years at \$296,424.00 per year. In all VGFN is eligible for \$1,924,689.00.

This ICSP includes an update to the larger Community Physical Development and Capital Plans and identifies VGFN priorities and projects that are eligible for funding under a variety of programs (Gas Tax, Build Canada, CDF etc). The plan takes a holistic community development approach integrating physical, social, environmental and economic needs with issues of governance and effective local service delivery.

It also provides a framework for intergovernmental discussion between the Vuntut Government, Canada and Yukon dealing with the unique geographic circumstances of Old Crow. Old Crow is the only Yukon community without year-round road accessibility. This has significant implications for the provision of services and infrastructure. Old Crow is almost entirely dependent on air resupply making costs considerably higher than any other part of the territory. For this reason, planning for infrastructure and service improvements requires close cooperation between the Yukon and Vuntut governments.

The Vuntut Gwitchin is a self-governing First Nation and the majority of land within community boundaries is settlement land. However as an unincorporated community the Government of Yukon retains a number of infrastructure program delivery responsibilities. Coordination and cooperation between the two governments is essential for efficient and effective service delivery.

At present, service delivery remains a shared responsibility. VGFN covers eighty percent of the cost of water delivery and sewage education. They also operate the youth centre, heritage hall, recreation facilities and a cemetery. Yukon operates and maintains the airport, solid waste disposal facility, sewage lagoon, water well and delivery system, and maintains community roads. Yukon also maintains the fire hall, fire truck and provides training support to the volunteer fire department. Yukon is also responsible for flood protection and riverbank stabilization, the school, RCMP, and the nursing station.

Both VGFN and Yukon recognize that infrastructure and service provision for a community of 300 will be limited due to its size, but should be of a comparable standard to other communities in the Yukon.

The ICSP reflects Vuntut Gwitchin values, current priorities and goals. It is also based on the principles of holistic community health, self-government empowerment and transparency as well as providing the best quality of infrastructure and services possible.

This document is an expression of where VGFN sees Old Crow going in the future. As a vision for the community it includes all aspects of the community – the economy, culture, environment, health, and government. This plan will help VGFN “create a sustainable community that provides a safe, supportive environment in which to live and work consistent with our Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic.”

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

1.0 Old Crow Yesterday and Today

Old Crow is the most northerly community of the Yukon and is located above the Arctic Circle. As an unincorporated community there is no municipal government so VGFN functions as the municipal equivalent. VGFN is the main governing body and is a self-governing First Nation with a land claim agreement in place. The Yukon Government (YUKON) and VGFN effectively share responsibility for the provision of municipal services.

The Vuntut Gwitchin is part of the Gwitch'in people and Athapaskan language group. Their traditional territory extends across northern Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. They were traditionally a nomadic people and in their traditional rounds moved freely between Fort Yukon, Johnson House, LaPierre House and Whitestone Village. In 1867 the Yukon Alaska border was defined and many Vuntut Gwitchin settled in Rampart House. By 1950 with the establishment of a permanent store and services in Old Crow the Vuntut Gwitchin moved to Old Crow.

Old Crow is the only community in the Yukon without year-round road access. As such, Old Crow faces unique logistical challenges in obtaining goods and services and significantly higher costs than other Yukon communities. The Vuntut Gwitchin has preserved their traditional ways and special relationship with the Porcupine Caribou Herd. The isolation means residents rely on subsistence harvesting for a significant portion of their diet.

VGFN settled their land claims in 1993 and now employ 43 permanent staff. Departments include: Finance, Human Resources, Natural Resources, Government Services, Health and Social Services, Education, Youth and Recreation and Information Systems. VGFN covers eighty percent of the costs of water delivery and sewage education. They operate the youth centre, heritage hall and recreation facilities (ball diamond, playgrounds, skateboard park,) VGFN maintains the Alice Frost Community Campus building that Yukon College offers courses in. Old Crow also has a volunteer fire department. Staff and volunteer retention and training proficiency are a challenge

Old Crow Location Map



Service provided by the Yukon Government includes the RCMP, health centre, and the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, which offers kindergarten to grade 9. Yukon also maintains and operates the water well, sewage lagoon, solid waste disposal facility, airport, fire hall and roads.

Residents of Old Crow make ample use of the surrounding natural environment for recreational and traditional activities. There is a network of cross-country ski trails with a ski lodge maintained by the Ski Society. The North Yukon contains important historical and archaeological sites such as Rampart House (co-managed between VGFN and YUKON) and Bluefish Caves. Old Crow flats, a traditionally important Vuntut Gwitchin site for trapping muskrats, has also been recognized as a RAMSAR site – a wetland of international importance.

Residents still depend on the Porcupine Caribou Herd and salmon stocks for subsistence food. The community actively takes part in exploring their history with projects such as the 2007 Diniizhoo Cultural Technology Camp which brought Elders, youth and parents out on the land to learn how the Vuntut Gwitchin traditionally made tools, played games, sewed, made caches and constructed dwellings.

1.1 Population

Old Crow’s resident population was 251 in December 2008 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics). Approximately, 90 percent of population is First Nations. Of the 509 registered members of the Vuntut Gwitchin, only 246 reside in Old Crow due to the limited economic, housing and educational opportunities. The majority of the remaining beneficiaries live in Whitehorse.

Figure 1: Old Crow Population by Age Group December 2008

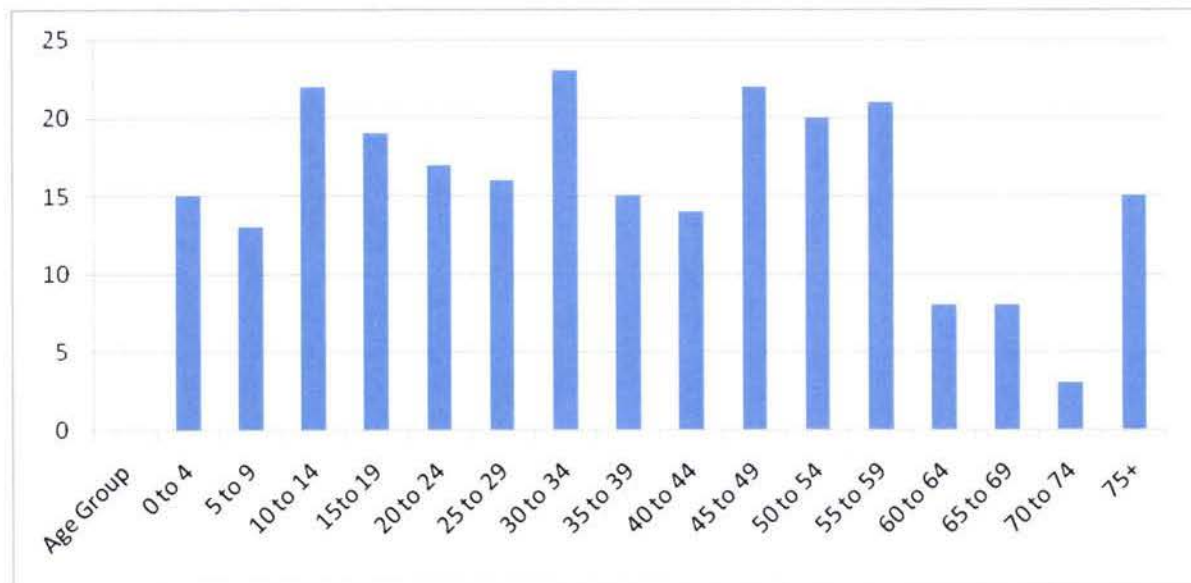


Figure 1 shows the current Old Crow population by age group (Yukon Bureau of Statistics). The data needs to be used carefully in small, isolated communities because it can easily be distorted. For example, a family of 5 moving into or out of the community can represent a 2% population swing. What the data does show is that the school has and will have substantial space for the foreseeable future. It also shows a surprising number of elders over 75 with a substantial gap in the 60-75-age cohort. However over the next decade, the 45-59-age cohort will fill this gap. It has been suggested that as long as one remains in good health, and can live at home they will live to a good age. Otherwise they must move to senior residences in Dawson City and Whitehorse where extended care is available.

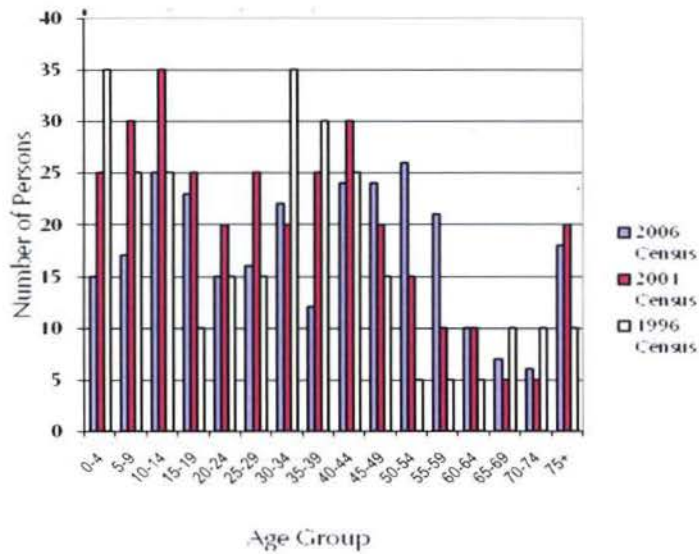


Figure 2 Old Crow Age Group Comparisons, 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census

Figure 2 above depicts the age breakdown for Old Crow for the years 1996, 2001 and 2006. The 0 to 4-age cohort has declined from a high of 35 in 1996 to a low of 15 in 2006. The lower birth rate will have a number of implications for the community over the next decade. For example, the school will be underutilized and recreation needs will change, as children and youth make more use of recreational facilities and programming than other age groups. The drop in population for the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups is most likely due to high school students leaving to finish high school and then pursuing higher education or job opportunities elsewhere. The population then starts to increase again as people choose to return to the community.

Year	Population	%Change
1991	270	
1992	285	5.3
1993	267	-6.7
1994	258	-3.5
1995	272	5.1
1996	287	5.2
1997	305	5.9
1998	292	-4.5
1999	298	2.0
2000	292	-2.1
2001	284	-2.8
2002	277	-2.5
2003	262	-5.7
2004	263	0.4
2005	259	-1.5
2006	255	-0.9
2007	256	0.4
2008	251	-1.9
Average rate of change:		0.1

Figure 3 - Old Crow Population 1991 - 2008

Old Crow has had an average population of 278 over the past 16 years (**Figure 3**). The average rate of population growth has been 0.1 percent. This will effect future service provision, facility use and housing need. It is important though to remember that population alone does not tell the full story.

1.2 Employment

With less than 300 people, Old Crow can only support a limited number of jobs and business opportunities. The community’s isolated location means economic leakage is significant and there are limited opportunities to create sustainable employment within the community. Part-time and seasonal employment is important and the subsistence economy an essential component of every day life.

Due to the isolation and limited economic opportunities in the community Old Crow has higher unemployment rates, and lower participation rates when compared to the Yukon averages. This means economic development in the community must be built one job at a time. The proper coordination of capital projects can help the community generate sufficient work to retain basic trades people and maximize local employment.

It is important that wherever possible when development is proposed in the North Yukon that the local economic benefit agreements be designed to ensure the community receives either direct employment benefits, royalties or other forms of business opportunities that provide revenue streams that can advance the ICSP goals and priorities.

The Vuntut Development Corporation is 100 percent Vuntut Gwitchin owned. The Corporation owns 49 percent of Air North and 51 percent of Porcupine Enterprises Ltd. among other investments. **Figure 4** shows the unemployment and participation rates for Old Crow according to the 2006 Census.

Figure 4 - Unemployment in Old Crow (Source: Census 2006)

Employment Rate	Age	Old Crow	Yukon
Unemployment Rate	15 - 24	40%	21.5%
Participation Rate	15 - 24	62.5%	67.7%
Unemployment Rate	25+	14.8%	9.9%
Participation Rate	25+	75%	82.4%

2.0 Preparing the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)

Completion of the ICSP is required to access funding under the Canada Yukon Gas Tax Agreement. The ICSP builds on and integrates the updated Physical Development and Capital Plans into one integrated document. The plan is intended to act as a guide to the community's needs and community development priorities over the next ten years. The community of Old Crow recognizes that community health is holistic, and the ICSP takes this approach. As such, more than just infrastructure priorities are included and it addresses alternate funding sources where applicable. As an unincorporated community service delivery is provided in conjunction with the Yukon Government and the ICSP recognizes this relationship between the territorial government and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government.

The content of the ICSP builds upon previous planning initiatives:

- *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Strategic Plan 2004-2008,*
- *Old Crow Capital Plan 2001-2006*
- *Old Crow Physical Development Plan 2000*
- *1997 Old Crow Community Development Plan*

Work began in 2007 with a series of workshops in Old Crow with department heads to determine the community's current and future needs. Staff prioritized capital projects taking into account possible funding sources including Gas Tax eligibility. Chief and Council reviewed the results in September 2007. Chief and Council then organized a public meeting to present the initial draft of the ICSP component and get feedback from the community at large. Based on the views expressed at the community meeting work was undertaken to update the Physical Development Plan and Capital Plan. The new Capital Plan includes a 10-year projection of community needs.

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation held a community meeting March 10, 2009 in Old Crow with 35 persons attending. Participants affirmed their support for the ICSP and the identified priorities.

Chief and Council adopted this ICSP by resolution at its meeting of March 19, 2009.

3.0 Old Crow's Special Challenges

3.1 Lack of an all-season road

Old Crow is the only community in the Yukon above the Arctic Circle without all-season road access. Almost all materials and goods required for community life are delivered by air, such as, heating fuel, building materials, food, and government service support. Each year, Air North delivers mail, food supplies and building materials into the community and approximately 1.1 M. litres of fuel.

In the past a winter road has been constructed connecting Old Crow to Eagle Plains on the Dempster Highway. Due to the high cost of the road, it has only been built under special circumstances such as when construction materials were brought in for the school and the new airport terminal. Permanent roads are prohibitively expensive and even an ice road, open for only a few weeks can now cost more than 1M dollars to build and maintain. It is possible that due to climate change even the ice road option may no longer be possible in the next 25 years.

3.1 Cost of living

The cost of living in Old Crow is related to the lack of an all season road. The community relies on air service for basic necessities. Therefore, the cost of living is much higher than in any other Yukon community. No accurate long-term record of the cost differential of living in Old Crow has been

In January 2009 the Old Crow cost differential from Whitehorse prices was 219%.

calculated but is generally believed to exceed 100% of Whitehorse prices. Recently, the Bureau of Statistics has started to collect such data.

The Federal Government does have an isolated post allowance that illustrates the cost differential relating to Whitehorse and similar northern communities. To offset the extra costs a federal government employee living in Old Crow would receive an isolated post allowance of \$18,260.00 and in Whitehorse they would receive \$4,069.00. This allowance is made up of an environment allowance, living cost differential and fuel and utilities differential. It is expected to "facilitate the recruitment and retention of staff delivering government programs in isolated locations" (Treasury Board website, 2007). Under this scheme the living cost differential for Old Crow makes up close to half of the amount (\$9,725.00). In Whitehorse there are no funds for living cost differential, as the cost of food and other goods and services is not considered abnormally high.

3.3 Environmental Risk

Due to the location along the Porcupine River portions of Old Crow are susceptible to seasonal flooding during break-up. This leads to increased maintenance costs and reduced building life. Riverbank erosion is a related issue due to ice scouring during spring break-up. Riprap facing of the riverbank has been completed along approximately 75% of the riverbank leaving two main areas still to be done. The first area is in the vicinity of the former landfill along the Porcupine River at the west end of the community while the second area of concern is along the back channel at the east end of the airport runway.

Global warming poses a threat to the community due to its location on a floodplain and on permafrost. There is substantial scientific evidence emerging that suggests the effects of global warming on northern Canada will occur sooner and have a longer impact than on more southerly latitudes. The Vuntut Gwitchin has made a commitment to the preservation of the Porcupine Caribou herd, and salmon stocks.

The Vuntut Gwitchin people are dedicated to protecting these resources from future development that may harm their survival. They are also committed to sustainable harvesting methods, as caribou and salmon are an important part of the Gwitchin diet, culture and the community's way of life.

Yukon has experimented with garbage incineration at the landfill over the past several years to extend landfill life and reduce litter. Yukon recently submitted an application to YESAA to re-license a number of community landfills. The YESAA review recommended against a continued burning program, which will reduce landfill life significantly. As a consequence planning for a new landfill site will need to begin within the next decade.

3.4 Quality and Durability of Housing

A significant portion of homes are substandard and don't meet basic health and safety requirements. Many have a limited lifespan before replacement will be required. Housing issues fall into variety of broad categories including:

- Design, construction and maintenance (durability, ease of repair)
- Administration (housing policy, rent collection)
- Affordability, and housing suitability (high cost of materials and repairs in an isolated community, changing family structures)
- Capacity of First Nation to maintain existing housing stock and meet future demands

Housing quality issues range from the suitability of present designs to local climate conditions, the functional layout of the houses themselves and their appropriateness for occupant needs. Poor initial construction methods coupled with lack of personal ownership and repair responsibility leads to replacement or major renovations much sooner than should occur with an average Yukon home. Housing costs make up a significant portion of the infrastructure budget. It is a basic need and affordability is also an issue. Rental income is insufficient to cover routine maintenance, refurbishment and replacement costs. A lack of housing is a factor in staff turnover and recruitment. It also makes it hard for beneficiaries to return home to take up jobs locally.

3.5 Evolving VGFN and Yukon Relationship

There is no elected municipal government structure in Old Crow. Services such as the water well solid waste disposal facility, sewage lagoon, road and airport maintenance are provided by Yukon. Water delivery and sewage education is funded by both Yukon and VGFN. VGFN has expressed interest in taking on more responsibilities for municipal service delivery, as their capacity as a self-governing First Nation evolves, provided that infrastructure is brought up to a standard equivalent to that found in other Yukon communities and there is appropriate Yukon government support for the capital and O&M funding cost differential between Whitehorse and Old Crow.

It is important that VGFN and YUKON maintain a forum for discussion regarding capital planning needs, inter-governmental project coordination, and scheduling. Negotiations for program transfer have to recognize the cost differential of an isolated community, the present infrastructure condition, current and future liabilities and the fact that VGFN would be functioning as an equivalent municipal government and funded accordingly

4.0 Sustainable Community Development

4.1 Our Vision for the Future

Our vision is one that reflects our traditional values, sustainability principles and long-term goals as a self-governing First Nation in the Yukon and Canada. Our vision is:

“...To create a sustainable community that provides a safe, supportive environment in which to live and work consistent with our Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic.”

Our vision promotes a sustainable community within the context of the Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic. We want the same services and amenities as other Yukon communities have, in so far as our unique location can support them. We want to see Old Crow as a healthy community with the resources to meet current and future needs without compromising the environment and our children’s future.

3.1 Community Values

VGFN have sustained their traditional values for thousands of years and will continue to do so in the future. Our community values are a reflection of our Gwitchin culture, relationship to the natural environment, desire to develop and prosper both outside and inside the local economy, increase our local governance capacity and have a happy, healthy community.

- **We value the empowerment of our people to contribute to a strong and healthy Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.**

VGFN recognizes that our people are our greatest capital. As such, we want to educate and empower our members to actively contribute to Old Crow’s economic development and create a healthy community.

- **We value all that is living, and strive to create a balance in our interactions with them.**

The Gwitchin people have maintained sustainable harvests of their natural resources for thousands of years, and will continue to do so. It is in the best interest of the community as well as the environment to make conscientious, sustainable infrastructure and land use choices.

- **We value children and youth, and are committed to a safe and healthy environment within our traditional ways.**

Our children and youth are our leaders of tomorrow. VGFN wants to provide a safe environment where our children and youth can learn and play to become confident, healthy leaders that continue to direct VGFN and Old Crow towards achieving our long-term goals.

- **We value our traditional language, culture, spirituality, and the oral teachings of our elders.**

Our traditional ways are the backbone of our community. Elders provide an essential link to our past, and help us maintain our strong Gwitchin heritage. VGFN endeavours to promote programs that enhance traditional knowledge in the community such as language training, hunting, fishing, traditional crafts and oral history.

- **We value accountable and transparent governance.**

As a self-governing First Nation VGFN understands that accountability and transparency are essential to building trust with its members. An open, accountable government encourages participation by its membership and allows citizens to understand how decisions are made.

It also allows them to question how and why decisions were made and promotes dialogue between government and the public.

4.3 Long Term Goals

The following four goals reflect our Vuntut Gwitchin values and long-term development objectives:

- To provide residents and beneficiaries desiring to return to the community with the opportunity to live and work in their community by encouraging a healthy, stable and sustainable economy;
- To enhance the physical and social character of Old Crow by ensuring future development occurs in a timely and orderly manner reflecting the quality of life desired by residents and respect for the local environment;
- To encourage sustainable development through the adoption of appropriate technology and environmental procedures that promote energy conservation, recycling, heritage protection and environmental stewardship consistent with Gwitchin culture; and
- To make Old Crow a better place to live by providing a range of educational, employment, housing and recreational opportunities consistent with the changing demographics of the community.

4.4 Sustainability Principles

Sustainable development requires meeting the needs of the community today without compromising the ability to meet future needs. This concept is very similar to the VGFN land ethic and can be applied to all aspects of community life. Old Crow as a community will not be sustainable without a diverse economy, healthy environment, and good governance. The community's small size and isolation are a major sustainability challenge. Unique solutions are required.

Old Crow's sustainability principles reflect the community's desire to be sustainable in all areas to the greatest extent possible. They also reflect the Vuntut Gwitchin culture and heritage that underlie the plan:

- **To develop a self-sufficient First Nation Government that can support sustainable infrastructure.**

Good governance is essential to making long-term sustainable decisions. As the primary governing body in Old Crow VGFN recognizes that they have to be the initiator of sustainability initiatives.

- **To manage the lands and resources in and around Old Crow in a sustainable manner.**

Residents of Old Crow make use of the natural resources in and around Old Crow on a daily basis as part of their traditional lifestyle. Resources have to be managed in such a way that there is a balance between what is taken and what remains. In the context of Old Crow, this means taking into account the location of Old Crow on a floodplain, understanding permafrost change, forest fires susceptibility and how climate change will affect the environment. All of these have to be monitored so that what residents of Old Crow do to the land remains in check with what the environment can support.

- **Reduce Old Crow's dependence on resources obtained outside the community.**

Old Crow's isolated location and small size affects re-supply cost and limits the type of businesses and services that can be provided locally.

The community is dependent on daily Air North flights bringing in basic necessities. Of these, fuel is a large portion, and Old Crow would like to reduce this dependence on diesel generation if possible. As part of developing a self-sufficient, sustainable community VGFN would also like to reduce the dependence on outside contractors, and educate VGFN members to provide such services. A Community of 300 can only support so many trades-people. Cross training, job shadowing, and other initiatives that result in a stable local labour force are key initiatives.

- **To pass on our traditional Vuntut Gwitchin land ethic and stewardship principles to future generations.**

Vuntut Gwitchin means “people of the lakes”. The name demonstrates the close bond that VGFN people have with their surrounding environment, as well as the land ethic and stewardship that they must maintain in order to live off the land. This bond is maintained by passing down the oral history and stories from generation to generation. To continue with the traditional lifestyle VGFN relies on community elders to teach community youth. Adapting classroom curriculum, holding culture camps and recording elders’ history are priorities the teachings of the Elders in the community, have instituted programs in the school and hold community events that reinforce these ethics.

4.5 Measuring Our Success

Figure 5 – Measuring Success

Values	Priorities	Measures of Success
“We value the empowerment of our people to contribute to a strong and healthy Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.”	<p>To provide a range of education and employment opportunities.</p> <p>To provide a similar quality and quantity of services and infrastructure as other Yukon communities.</p> <p>To provide a range of health, social and recreational services and opportunities that meet the present and future needs of the community.</p>	<p>Reduction in drug and alcohol abuse.</p> <p>Reduction in crime rates.</p> <p>Healthier food choices offered by the Northern Store as desired by the community.</p> <p>VGFN citizens choosing to return to Old Crow after successfully pursuing higher education.</p>
“We value all that is living, and strive to create a balance in our interactions with them.”	<p>Use technologies and environmental procedures that promote energy conservation, recycling, heritage protection and environmental stewardship.</p>	<p>Increase in use of the recycling centre.</p> <p>Reduce landfill waste and extend life</p> <p>Concentrate industrial activities in one location.</p> <p>Identify and implement an alternative to diesel generators.</p>

Figure 5 - Measuring Success Continued

<p>"We value children and youth, and are committed to a safe and healthy environment within our traditional ways.</p>	<p>Provide children with opportunities to experience traditional Gwitchin culture such as experiential programs on the land.</p> <p>Continue with the Health & Fitness Program and integrate it with further recreation and healthy living programming.</p> <p>Enhance cultural programming in new Vuntut Visitor centre. Increase visitor understanding of Vuntut culture</p>	<p>Continue with land-based programs in the school.</p> <p>Parents take an active interest in the well-being and health of their children.</p> <p>Programming that provides healthy alternatives for children and youth.</p> <p>New recreation centre built</p> <p>Participation rates in recreation programs offered meet needs of all age groups.</p>
<p>"We value our traditional language, culture, spirituality, and the oral teachings of our Elders."</p>	<p>Upgrade administration building entry/reception improvements to reflect Old Crow's heritage.</p> <p>Assisted living and social housing for Elders.</p> <p>Programs to provide land based cultural leadership skills.</p>	<p>Visible evidence of pride in our art, culture and language.</p> <p>Greater range and quality of services available to Elders.</p> <p>Elders participation rate in the community.</p> <p>Increase in participation in land based cultural activities.</p>
<p>"We value accountable and transparent governance."</p>	<p>A healthy, stable economy.</p> <p>Increase self-governing capacity.</p> <p>Provide a range educational and employment opportunities to meet the needs of Old Crow without having to go outside the community.</p>	<p>Fill key vacant positions with VGFN citizens.</p> <p>Decrease in staff turnover.</p> <p>Less need for outside contractors. Community can support a minimum of one journeyman level person per trade</p> <p>Increase in participation rate by community at meetings, elections and community events.</p>

5.0 Community Profile

5.1 Water and Sewer

The community relies on a single sub-permafrost artesian well constructed in 1982 with a flow rate of 80 GPM at 2°celcius. The low temperature discourages bacterial growth. Complete chemical analysis is done on a yearly basis and bacteriological testing is done monthly. Recently the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines lowered the acceptable levels of arsenic and Old Crow needs to update its water treatment system to comply. Due to the similarities in water quality between Old Crow and Ross River an ion exchange system is being tested in Ross River. If it proves successful a similar approach will be used in Old Crow. According to Yukon, the new system will be too large to fit in the current pump house and will be located in the government garage.

The sewage lagoon is meeting the current and projected population's needs. The proximity of the lagoon to the Porcupine River has been a concern for the community. Yukon has tested the land surrounding the lagoon for 4 years. The tests confirm there is no leakage and the lagoon is working properly. As such, Yukon feels that it does not pose a health or environmental hazard.

In the past there have been problems with cross-contamination of the water. This is largely due to the close location of the hook-ups for water and sewer education at individual homes. In many of the newer homes this has been rectified with the sewer and water hook ups placed farther apart. Colour coding intake and discharge caps would also help.

5.1 Recycling and Waste Management

Old Crow initiated a recycling program in 2005 and currently has the facilities for gathering and sorting recyclable materials. There is community pickup of recyclables monthly. When facilities reach their capacity the recyclables are flown to the Whitehorse Raven Recycling Centre. Community interest in the recycling program has been limited, but VGFN continues to support the recycling program as part of enhancing community stewardship and their commitment to the Global Action Against Climate Change.

The handling and air transport cost is the main logistical and financial challenge. This is acerbated by falling value of recycled materials in recent years.

A burn vessel and electric fence was installed in the summer of 2006 to help extend the life of the landfill, reduce general litter, and keep out bears. The electric fence complies with new Yukon Department of Environment regulations. The fence has been vandalized several times and subsequently repaired by Yukon employees. This is a community education issue.

The landfill is big enough for current community needs. However a new site will be required within the next decade especially if a no burning policy is adopted as recommended recently by YESAB. The challenge will be to identify a suitable alternate site and determine a potential future use for the existing site after closure and remediation.

5.3 Community Energy Management

Old Crow relies on diesel generators for electricity. Due to the rising cost of fossil fuels VGFN is looking at alternative energy sources (e.g. wind) and the potential for district heat. Improving energy efficiency and reducing fossil fuel consumption is the goal.

Studies commissioned to date¹ have examined the feasibility of installing wind turbines on Crow Mountain, utilizing waste heat from the diesel generators, and explored the general potential for district heating. VGFN is working with the Yukon Energy Solutions Centre to produce a Demand Side Management Plan to reduce electrical consumption in the community. With the addition of the new visitor's centre and the new residential subdivision planned for Crow Mountain, there will be load capacity issues with the current generators making alternative energy sources a timely issue. There may also be possibilities to use various ground heat options but these have not been studied to date.

A related safety consideration is the location of the present diesel plant and its proximity to the tank farm and Northwestel infrastructure. In the event of a fire or explosion, especially during the winter, it would be possible to put all three facilities out of service at the same time with catastrophic implications. It is also important to note that the volunteer fire department has neither the training or necessary equipment to deal with such an event. This is a risk management and emergency measures planning issue for Yukon and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government.

5.4 Community Transportation Issues

There are only 12 private vehicles in Old Crow due to the difficulty of getting vehicles into the community. The primary modes of transportation are ATV and snowmobile as well as active transportation methods such as cycling and walking.

As the population ages and the community becomes more spread out, mobility for the elderly will be an emerging concern. This highlights the community's use of the school bus for community events as a form of public transportation. The bus is a 2001 model and can carry 21 passengers. If the Crow Mountain subdivision is built as planned to link back to the Ski Chalet Road, a natural bus loop road would exist making a dial-a-bus transit service a possible future consideration. It should be considered a mode of public transportation given the location, size and demographics of the community.



Community Bus

The limited access of the community means all levels of government need to work together on logistical coordination and planning. Getting equipment and materials into the community requires careful planning and scheduling to minimize costs and make the most effective use of aircraft, the ice road or cat train. For example, if the ice road is planned on a 3 year cycle both Yukon and VGFN need to consider this cycle in planning capital project logistics. By improving joint planning, costs should be kept to a minimum, duplication of efforts eliminated and economies of scale met.

5.4.1 Winter Road

When undertaking major capital projects in Old Crow such as the new airport terminal in 2004 and the school in 1998 there are limited logistical options. Oversized equipment may need to be hauled in on a cat-train or a winter road if the volume justifies the cost.

¹ NWT Power Corporation. *Heat Recovery and Distribution in Old Crow, Yukon*. August 2003
The Pembina Institute. *Old Crow District Heating System*. October 2001
Kattner/FVB District Energy Inc. *District Heating Feasibility for Old Crow, Yukon*. August 2001
The Pembina Institute. *Old Crow Clean Energy and Energy Conservation Opportunities*. January 2000

The route starts in Eagle Plains on the Dempster Highway and costs between \$750,000 and \$1.2 million in 2008 dollars depending on the length of the season of operation and the weather conditions.

With climate change it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict winter weather conditions with any certainty, and it is possible that within 25 years this option will no longer be available.

5.4.2 Roads & Drainage

None of the roads have been built to any type of standard and vary substantially in width, surface quality and condition. In spring when the ground is frozen surface water cannot drain properly, and where it does, it usually floods an adjacent property. During the summer road dust becomes a problem. The community has identified upgrading the roads and drainage in the community as a key priority. With the exception of Crow Mountain road, the Yukon Government is responsible for road upgrades and on-going maintenance.

A Northern Strategy Trust application was approved in 2008 to determine the cost and extent of upgrades required. Timing has become a key concern as the necessary engineering work has already been delayed one year. In the interim the necessary aerial photography has been compiled and topographic mapping completed required for proper design. It is important that the engineering consultants required for this work be in place prior to the spring melt so they can see the full extent of the drainage problems on the ground. A second reason to expedite the work is that it is not clear whether there is a sufficient stockpile of gravel at the quarry to accommodate community needs for the next 3–5 years. If more material has to be crushed it will need to be done this summer while the necessary heavy equipment and crusher are still in the community. Porcupine Enterprises plans to remove that equipment on the proposed winter road for 2009-10.

The responsibilities of Yukon and VGFN on this matter need to be clarified so a cohesive strategy towards upgrading community roads and drainage and future maintenance can be devised that is satisfactory to both governments.

5.5 Airport

Old Crow is the only community that relies on year-round air service and the airport therefore plays a significant role in the life of the community. The air terminal building is the “gateway” to the community and the visitor’s first impression. Space is available in the building to showcase Gwitchin art and culture.

The new airport terminal has been completed and the runway has been upgraded, resurfaced and fenced, along with an expanded airport apron. These projects were all recommended in the last Capital Plan and are good examples of what can be accomplished when Yukon and VGFN cooperate. The importance of the completion of these projects is highlighted by the fact that they were dependent on finding a new gravel source. The new Crow Mountain Quarry provided the materials to complete the runway upgrades, put in riprap along the river and provide gravel for housing pads and foundation upgrades.

The length of the airport runway is sufficient to bring in a Hercules aircraft. A Hercules is chartered to bring in larger bulk materials and specialized equipment when a winter road is not feasible or the freight will not fit on Air North’s available aircraft. The typical charter Hercules aircraft rate was approximately \$44,000 per flight in 2008 dollars. The cost of chartering such an aircraft reinforces the need for proper capital planning and careful logistical planning between all levels of government.

Air North is the main service provider for passenger and cargo traffic. Alkan Air provides medevac service and small group charters into the community. The present runway is sufficient for Air North's HS-748 aircraft that are flown in all passenger, cargo or combi configurations. The airline purchased a B737-200C aircraft in 2008 and hopes to employ this combi-configured aircraft on that route in late 2009.

Transport Canada's airport runway operational standards continue to evolve reflecting changes in aircraft type, safety requirements etc. Aviation Branch has been advised that to accommodate B737-200C operations additional runway improvements will be required including turn around buttons at each runway end, a modest runway extension at the west end and a larger clearway. The introduction of jet aircraft also has implications for noise levels, as there are a number of houses located in close proximity to the runway. Typically, noise contours are developed for airports in these circumstances to avoid noise complaints and provide guidance for insulation in new building design or building retrofits.

This means the access road around the west end of the runway will need to be closed and a new road built along the north side of the airfield. Given local ground conditions this will be an expensive but necessary undertaking as part of the airport improvements. It will have the added benefit of opening up the possibility for a new industrial area with separate apron that would support relocation of the tank farm.

The remaining airport challenge is whether or not to pave the runway. The costs of paving would be dependent on there being a winter road because much of the equipment would have to be brought in from outside the community. A paved runway requires dedicated maintenance staff and specialized equipment and cannot yet be justified given present traffic volumes.

Airport improvement costs are the responsibility of the Yukon government.

5.6 Housing & Land Development

Of the 143 houses in Old Crow, VGFN owns and maintains 120 units. Nineteen homes were built through VGFN's sweat equity program while 29 were built with CMHC assistance. Until the sweat equity program was initiated, only 5 homes were privately owned.

The 2000 Physical Development Plan noted that 60% of existing housing was substandard. The situation has not improved. Poor original construction, deferred maintenance and inadequate O&M budgets are contributing to shorter building life. Insufficient rent is being collected to cover operating expenses and there is no reserve fund for eventual building replacement.

The provision of adequate, affordable and sustainable housing is an ongoing challenge that needs to be resolved. Availability of housing limits the ability of the 50% of beneficiaries living away from Old Crow to return to the community to take up local jobs.

The lack of rental accommodation is an additional concern, as is the issue of providing different types of housing units to accommodate different needs. For example, of the 30-35 applications for housing received each year, singles, couples and young families make up for majority of the applicants. Housing once allocated can also end up vacant for extended periods of time with some who have moved away using the home only on a seasonal basis.

Vuntut residents have identified the need for a new residential subdivision and a site has been identified on the lower slope of Crow Mountain. Almost all infill development opportunities have now been realized, there is a desire to improve spacing between housing units.

There is also a desire to investigate the feasibility of building a small assisted living complex for seniors. Those elders requiring such support must move to Dawson City or Whitehorse. Elders play a key role in community life in passing on Gwitchin culture to youth.

5.7 Economic Development

Old Crow's small population and isolation limit the community's economic opportunities. The Development Corporation has been successful at creating jobs and revenue through ventures such as Air North and Porcupine Enterprises. VGFN and Yukon are the main employers in the community. The small community size also means that part-time, seasonal and individual job creation needs to be a priority. The North Yukon offers unique opportunities for the development of specialized tourism product such as the Bear Cave Mountain Eco-Adventures business in Fishing Branch Ni'iinlii Njik Park.

Coordinated capital planning can create employment-training opportunities as can a properly planned housing construction program. In particular, VGFN continues to pursue opportunities to coordinate infrastructure investment and logistics planning with Yukon to optimize local employment and training possibilities.

5.8 Heritage & Culture

The VGFN have made a concerted effort to keep their cultural and traditional practices part of everyday life in Old Crow. Traditions are taught through special programs run by the VGFN as well as in the Chief Zzeh Gittlit School. All students spend time on the land. For primary aged students this may constitute a day trip. Intermediate students may camp out, assist in trapping muskrat, and learn how to make camp. The senior class spends a week on the land each year at Crow flats where they participate in trapping, camping activities, and learning about their culture.

VGFN runs such heritage programs as oral history documentation, culture camps, traditional route mapping, language training, language documentation and film documenting to mention a few. In July of 2001 an agreement was signed between VGFN and Yukon to co-manage Rampart House, a site of historic significance to the Vuntut Gwitchin. VGFN members have been active in preservation and upkeep of the site.

The community has a limited number of heritage buildings. The most notable include the vacant Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church built in 1926, St. Luke's Mission House constructed in 1935 and St Luke's Anglican Church erected in 1959. These log buildings are all in need of repair and maintenance to maintain their heritage value. The need for a heritage building condition assessment was raised during the March 10th, 2009 community meeting. It would be the first step in determining the extent of repairs needed.

5.9 Cemetery

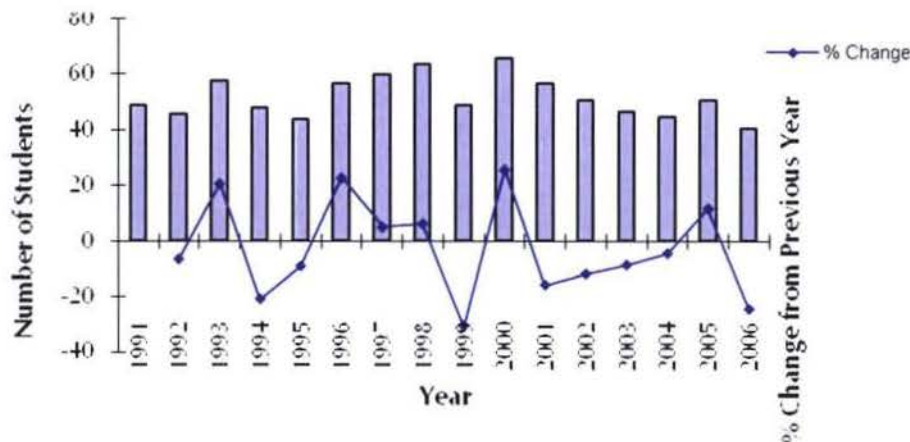
The cemetery is located on several small hummocks of land across from the school. The water table is very high and a drainage ditch has been constructed part way around the site. Space is at a premium, as families prefer to be buried close together. There are 2 options available. The first option is to start a new cemetery on higher ground closer to Crow Mountain. The second option is to improve site drainage and bring in clean fill to make the cemetery bigger by filling the depressions and raising the ground level above the water table. The disturbed land would be used for landscaping using local vegetation.

Residents have expressed a preference to expand the existing cemetery. A simple cemetery plan to accommodate community needs for expansion 25+ years is required. The burial site registry also needs to be updated. Portable ground penetrating radar can be used to identify unmarked sites and the locations compared with church records. These sites can then be remarked as part of the cemetery upgrade.

5.10 Education

The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School provides kindergarten to grade 9 in Old Crow. After grade 9 students leave the community and generally attend grades 10 to 12 in Whitehorse while staying in residence. There are currently 8 students attending grade 12 outside of Old Crow and another 9 in grade 11.

Figure 6 - Old Crow School Enrolment 1991 - 2006



As shown above depicts the number of youth attending school in Old Crow has been declining at a rate of 2.5 percent a year over the last 15 years. The decline in student enrolment means the school is not being used to full capacity. In a small community such as Old Crow many public buildings often serve multiple purposes. Using the gymnasium as a public gathering space or for community recreation events are examples of what could be done to ensure the school building is meeting the community's changing needs. Existing community buildings such as the school need to be used to their full capacity on a year round basis.

VGFN currently supports 25 members pursuing higher education outside of Old Crow. VGFN needs to identify those career opportunities, which are going to be needed in the next 5, 10, and 15 years and encourage students to explore those opportunities. Incentives to encourage students to return to the community after completing their education also need to be considered.

5.11 Community Health & Recreation

Old Crow is doing well compared to other First Nations in Canada according to the Community Well-Being Index. The Government of Canada Community Well-Being Index is similar to the Human Development Index done by the United Nations and ranks communities based on education, income, labour force and housing in conjunction with the census for First Nations communities.

In 2001 VGFN was ranked above average at .77 out of 1, whereas the average score for First Nations communities across Canada were .66. VGFN would like to continue making positive strides towards community wellness and have integrated health and wellness into community planning.

VGFN recognizes that community health is everyone's responsibility not just the health and social department, and community nurses. It takes all aspects of the community working together to make the community healthy as **Figure 7** below illustrates. For this reason, VGFN feels that it is important to recognize that community health is a holistic issue that affects every aspect of community life.



Figure 7 - Holistic Community Wellness

Proper nutrition is essential for leading a healthier life as well as improving the life expectancy. Old Crow's remote location and reliance on air resupply means the cost of living and imported food in particular, is 70-100% higher than Whitehorse. This may be contributing to community members making poor nutrition choices and VGFN would like to see community members making healthier food choices. An integrated nutrition program is needed in the community to encourage healthy choices. *Hyperlipidemia* (elevated fat in the blood stream) is currently the largest health problem seen by the community nurse and in many cases could be addressed with proper eating and recreation habits.

Children that are taught healthy lifestyle choices early are more inclined to keep those habits throughout their lives. The Health and Fitness Program has been targeting the 7 to 9 year age group to instill healthy lifestyle habits. More resources are needed to address the needs of other age groups including adults.

The community store has been constructed recently and provides more display and storage space as well as improved the refrigeration and other facilities.

Recreation is a major part of a healthy lifestyle. Recreation facilities in Old Crow are underutilized and, in some instances poorly maintained. An integrated plan needs to be designed to help get Old Crow motivated to establish healthy lifestyle habits with measurable targets for individuals and as a community.

A range of recreation needs have been identified including:

- Replacement of existing, out of date and broken playground equipment to address liability issues;
- Lighting of the cross country ski trails; and
- Replacement of the former Sprung shelter² with a new community services centre.

Two site options for the community services centre have been identified option A would be near the nursing station while option B would be the former and current school site. Since energy costs are a substantial portion of on-going O&M costs, the possibility of capturing waste heat from the diesel generators would play an important role in selection of the site for the community services centre. Preliminary site selection and design for the new building is underway and subject to available funding, construction would begin in 2010 or 2011.

6.0 Service Agreements

As an isolated community, there are limited opportunities and capacity issues related to development of service agreements. There are also a range of financial, insurance and liability issues that limit the nature of the business opportunities possible.

3.1 Existing Service Agreements

Service Provided via Agreement	Service Provider	Current End Date	Cost of Service	Rate Service (Good, fair or poor)	Will it be renewed?
Garbage Removal	Choo Denjik Enterprises	March 31, 2009			
Water and sewer operating agreement	YG (Community Services)	Ongoing			
Snow Removal	Peter Frost	As Needed			
Roads	YG (Highway & Public Works)	On going			
Power	Yukon Energy				
Communications & Cable TV	Northwestel				

² The proposal would see the shelter reused for material storage and indoor prefabrication of housing and other building projects.

3.2 Potential Service Agreements

Potential Service	Potential Service Provider	Expected Cost of Service	Is the Service Provided?	Is the service provider interested? Have they been contacted?
Solid Waste/ Recycling	VGG	Not known	Yes	
Water/sewage agreement	VGG	Not known	Yes	
Road Snow Removal	Porcupine Enterprises	Not known	Yes	
Road and Airport Runway Maintenance	Porcupine Enterprises	Not known	Yes	Yes
District Heat	Yukon Energy/ Energy Solutions Centre	Not known	No	Yes
Recreation	N/A			
Social Services	N/A			
Yukon College	N/A			

6.3 VGFN & Yukon Cooperation

VGFN and Yukon cooperate in the provision of typical municipal services such as water and sewer, solid waste disposal facility and road maintenance. The level of services that each government is willing to provide needs to be determined based on clear, mutually agreeable service standards.

For VGFN this means determining what level of services the First Nation can reasonably provide to meet the demands of their citizens and which services are best left to the Government of Yukon.

Central to this issue is the fact that Old Crow is an unincorporated community. Elsewhere in Yukon, the Yukon government has provided both capital and operating funds for a range of typical local government services. Typically this has included the provision of rural landfills, community wells, fire halls and fire trucks, and various road improvements. Funding may be provided through contribution agreements, grants and proposal driven funding programs like the Community Development Fund.

The provision of some services involves significant downstream liability. For example, standards change requiring significant system improvements beyond the operator's financial capacity. Similarly closure costs for landfills and new facility commissioning can be beyond the community's financial capacity because of a limited tax base.

7.0 Community Priority Setting

Residents of Old Crow feel there are many areas in which the quality and quantity of their infrastructure and local government services could be improved. There are specific infrastructure deficiencies including a lack of agreement with Yukon on service standards that reflect the community's remote location and unique circumstances. Over the next decade, issues beyond either governments ability to control such as climate change could have substantial impacts, not the least of which are effects on the Porcupine Caribou Herd and the potential to use winter supply roads. The community also has a number of interrelated capacity and community health issues, which the community would like to see addressed.

7.1 Sewer & Water

Old Crow uses a single well for its water needs. The well is artesian, and will provide water even if the pump equipment were to break down. The community is worried about possible water contamination issues (arsenic, manganese). Yukon has indicated that funds to address the longstanding water well issue are included in the 2009-10 budget.

The close proximity of the sewer and water hook ups in older homes has in the past caused problems of cross contamination. In future homes, and those that are renovated, hook-ups should be placed an adequate distance apart to prevent contamination. The pipe hook-ups should be colour coded. An ion exchange system is currently being tested in Ross River. If successful, the system would be used in Old Crow and located in the government garage, because the existing pump house is too small. Water would also continue to be chlorinated.

According to Pat McInroy Community Operations Supervisor for the Community Infrastructure Branch there is a second artesian well in the same location. It has been fitted with a casing and is presently capped, as the capacity of the present well is adequate for the present and projected community population. The infrastructure is already in place for the second well and it could be put in service if needed quite quickly at modest cost.

7.2 Housing & Land Development

Existing funding is not sufficient to meet the backlog of basic housing needs including documented health and safety concerns. Despite best efforts, VGFN has been unable to make much of a dent in their "catch up/keep up" requirements, let alone prepare for future needs. Sixty percent of the present housing supply is still substandard. Without significant additional funding, the goal of reducing substandard housing from 60-25% within 5 years cannot be met.

VGFN has received \$3.1M from the Northern Housing Trust. CMHC has also agreed to fund construction of 5 homes in 2008/09 and 2009/10. VGFN estimates they can complete 3 to 4 homes per year with present resources. VGFN staff also estimate 58 houses need immediate repair or renovation to extend their useful life. At an average cost of \$60,000/-per unit the cost of renovating or repair of the 58 houses would be \$3.5 M in 2008 dollars. Assuming 5 houses were renovated each year along with planned new construction, it would take 11.5 years to complete the present backlog.

There is also a need for rental housing that the Vuntut Development Corporation could explore to provide a market housing option, but the viability of such a business investment is questionable, because VGFN is already subsidizing rents.

Staff housing is an issue for incoming VGFN employees and a factor in employee turnover. It is difficult to recruit and retain new staff with substandard housing. VGFN's objective is to provide housing equivalent to that available in other Yukon communities.

Most infill housing opportunities are now used up and a new subdivision will be required in the near future. With the pending introduction of jet aircraft service the infill area south of the runway has been dropped because noise levels would most likely exceed recommended noise levels for housing construction.

The Crow Mountain site has better ground conditions and allows for development to be phased. The plan is to build a main road linking the Crow Mountain road to the Ski Chalet Road. Planning and design studies are planned for 2009/2010, with construction costs expected to be at in the \$1-2M dollar range depending on the extent of the first phase and if the ring road is completed in one step.

7.3 Economic Development

The Vuntut Gwitchin has been successful in creating economic development opportunities through the Vuntut Development Corporation. Most of these initiatives have occurred outside the community because there are limited economic development opportunities within Old Crow. Given the need for housing, a building construction company patterned on the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Han Construction could be examined. Given the community's small size, small scale and part time business ventures could be feasible. For example; a local coffee shop or restaurant would provide 1 to 2 job opportunities and be useful to tourists and visitors. Jobs that can be done on a part-time basis from individual's homes such as hairdressing are ideal for a community such as Old Crow.

With the advancement of technology Old Crow is now connected to the outside world through the Internet. The Gwitchin have a culture that is rich in artistic ability, and it is now possible to export crafts all over the world using the Internet. This would be a project to get Elders and youth involved in together. Youth generally have the expertise to use today's technology and Elders have a wealth of knowledge of traditional Gwitchin crafts creating an entrepreneurial activity that helps pass on traditional knowledge to youth and generate community pride.

7.4 Community Health & Recreation

Health and wellness needs to be a priority of the whole community. There needs to be greater integration of programs with facilities, and a coordinated approach with all community members involved in health, wellness and recreation. For example, the Health and Social Director, Health and Fitness Program (H&FP), community wellness worker, community health representative, nurse; RCMP as well as parents and teachers all need to be involved. Targets for individuals and the community need to be set to monitor progress and encourage further efforts. Setting realistic objectives and incremental targets that show visible progress helps develop momentum and keep the community motivated.

7.5 Heritage & Culture

Old Crow and VGFN have made a concerted effort to maintain and preserve their heritage and culture. Having a greater range of interpretive facilities and displays throughout the community would highlight the Gwitchin history in the area as well as the more recent history of Old Crow. Improvements to the administration building entry and reception areas as well as displays and interpretive panels highlighting important buildings and locations would emphasise the history of Old Crow to locals and tourists.

Both Parks Canada and Yukon Heritage Branch support such initiatives. VGFN has successfully partnered with these organizations to create the internal displays for the new Vuntut National Park Visitor Centre. The next project is to develop the interpretive potential of the grounds outside the new visitor centre and to complete an evaluation of the condition of the community's heritage buildings (see section 5.8).

The VGFN have successfully run a studio recording facility for use by locals, the heritage Department and others from outside Old Crow. To ensure that this program continues updating the present studio recording facilities will be needed within the next few years.

The need to expand and upgrade the existing cemetery is an immediate need and priority as identified in section 5.9.

7.6 Roads & Drainage

Community roads have not been constructed to a consistent standard. VGFN and Yukon need to establish an agreed upon road development standard appropriate to Old Crow's location and unique circumstances. During spring runoff when the ground is still frozen water pools either on the roads or on adjacent properties. In the summer dust is a problem. VGFN and Community Services have received Northern Strategy Trust funding for a feasibility study of upgrades to the community roads and drainage. Work will continue on this project through fiscal 2009/10 with implementation started in 2010.



Typical Street Spring Melt Flooding

7.7 Tank Farm & Fuel Delivery

The current fuel truck is not an appropriate method for fuel delivery (see picture below). VGFN has purchased a purpose built fuel truck to be shipped to Old Crow this spring. This will reduce the risk of fuel spills and better track the amount of fuel being distributed within the community.

When the Fire Marshall inspected the tank farm in September 2006 he noted technical modifications were necessary to meet current National Fire Code of Canada Standards. Updating the existing tank farm is an interim solution to the larger problem of whether or not to move the tank farm and consolidate it with Yukon's Department of Highways tank farm located at the airport.



Current Fuel Delivery Method

This is a priority and requires more discussion with Department of Highways & Public Works, and others (e.g. RCMP, YEC) who have bulk fuel storage requirements. The present site is less than ideal due to its proximity to the Porcupine River, the diesel plant and Northwestel communication facilities. A conceptual plan and location for a new tank farm has been completed. Some of the existing tanks would be reused. It is difficult to estimate the cost because it would also require remediation of the existing site. An alternative site on the north side of the runway in a new industrial area would require substantial fill and development of a separate aircraft apron (see Physical Development Plan Map1).

7.8 Fire Department

The fire department currently does not have a fire chief but has trained volunteers. There is equipment for 6 fire fighters and Yukon would provide equipment for up to 15 if there were enough volunteers. Equipment consists of hoses, nozzles, SCBA's (self-contained breathing apparatus), bunker gear (fire suits) and radio communication units. The community has a 1991 model fire truck. The useful life from an insurance underwriter's standpoint is 20 years. The fire truck will need to be replaced in 2011 and this needs to be reflected in the Yukon government's capital budget planning. The Fire Marshall office provides training support and a modest O&M budget.

The fire pull system is out of date and needs to be replaced. The Fire Marshall's office is trying to find a way to incorporate the current pull system with new technology because the community is used to the alarm and knows where the pulls are. Old Crow is the first on the list to receive a new system and will serve as the 'test' for other rural Yukon communities once a new system is found.

The fire department needs to be reactivated as soon as possible. The following steps need to be undertaken:

- A volunteer recruitment drive;
- Development of a training and motivation plan in conjunction with Fire Marshall's office with clear standards and training targets applicable to the community's unique circumstances;
- Agreement on realistic training targets including cross-training of other emergency service volunteers such as Wildland Fire Management's summer initial attack teams; and
- Initial visits every 1 to 2 months from the Fire Marshall to get program running and ensure continuity

7.9 Winter Road

As noted in section 5.4.1, climate change may influence whether winter roads are viable in the future. Strategically, winter road construction is only a viable transport option when there are sufficient infrastructure development requirements to support bulk movement of materials and equipment for capital construction projects that cannot be supplied by aircraft delivery. The principal aircraft transport options for the next decade are assumed to be the B737-200C and Lockheed Hercules. Both have size, weight and dimensional constraints that a winter road does not have. The new Capital Plan assumes winter road access will be constructed every 3-4 years for as long as possible.



2004 Winter Road
Construction

8.0 Physical Development Plan

8.1 Natural Site Conditions

Hughes and Pilon mapped the regional geomorphology of the Old Crow area in 1973. In 1999 Gartner Lee Ltd provided more detail including an assessment of the environmental and hydrological implications associated with continued gravel extraction from the gravel bar at the confluence of the Crow and Porcupine rivers. The upland terrace below Crow Mountain is part of a large pediment. Rock and soils from the exposed bedrock outcrops were carried by gravity down-slope through soil creep, sheet erosion, rain-wash, mudflow movement and solifluction. Thicker wedges of sediments cover the lower parts of the upper terrace as evidenced by the presence of tree cover. Permafrost is present in this organic layer and appears to be 1-3m thick overlying bedrock.

The implication for planning is that surface water is absorbed into the ground and flows downhill in "sheets" along the interface with the permafrost layer or bedrock until it reaches the terrace edge where it has eroded a series of gullies along the escarpment face. Most of the Crow Mountain drainage is intercepted by the lowland basin north of the airstrip draining southwest across the Ski Chalet and Sewage Lagoon roads into the Porcupine River below the community. The small lakes effectively act as a catch basin. When the Crow Mountain Road was constructed, the ditches were not adequate to control the natural drainage. The increased flow created by road construction and ditching resulted in several washouts at the culvert to the Tetchik subdivision.

To develop the lower slopes of the upper terrace and extend the Ski Chalet Road will require careful engineering design to intercept the natural sheet drainage and control the discharge to the lake system below.

The main portion of the community is situated on an alluvial terrace of the active floodplain 6m above the normal river level. The small lakes between the airport and escarpment are less than 3 m deep and were probably created when the glacial melt-waters flooded the valley (Mathews et al., 1987). The lakes and surrounding marshlands are maintained by the sheet drainage from the upper pediments on Crow Mountain.

The 1986 Physical Development Plan recommended against building near these areas noting the potential for environmental concerns and prohibitive construction costs. While this remains a prudent recommendation in principle, some encroachment into these areas may be necessary simply because of the absence of viable alternatives. The wetlands also have inherent natural values, not the least of which is their role in managing run-off from the upper terrace. Thus prior to considering encroaching into these areas, a biological assessment of the values present should be undertaken. This will need to be accompanied by a study of the surface drainage to determine what the consequences of developing the escarpment above would be on the lakes and wetlands below.

Bank erosion and flooding are inter-related conditions that remain an ongoing development issue. Old Crow experiences a flood risk each spring primarily due to the formation of downstream ice jams during spring break-up on the Porcupine River. The last major flood that did considerable damage occurred in 1991. When an ice jam occurs and during each spring, the back channel adjacent to the Tetchik subdivision also floods.

This is gradually eroding the road bank off the east end of the runway. The need to rip rap this area was identified in the previous plan and has become more urgent with plan to extend the west end of the runway and close that access road.

Approximately 520m of riverbank at the east end of the community are subject to continuous erosion as the main flow of the Porcupine River cuts into the bank. Since the 2000 Physical Development Plan much of the riverbank repair work has been completed. Two areas still require bank stabilization. They are the northeast end of the runway on the back channel and by the former landfill. These areas are shown on the updated Physical Development Plan

The 1986 Plan noted that past soil tests within the main portion of the community between the airport and Porcupine River confirm the presence of a 1-2m permafrost layer covered by no more than 0.5 m of moss and organic cover. "This combination of organic soil covering ice rich and sandy sub-soils creates major settlement problems. If building and road foundations are not properly designed and insulated, the permafrost ice will thaw and create a water-saturated slurry (mud) that compresses and creates surrounding wet areas. Ground disruption must always be avoided or minimized in any construction' (Stanley Associates Engineering Ltd., 1986).

The problem is further compounded by the lack of topographic variation in this portion of the community that makes it difficult to create positive drainage away from buildings and road surfaces.

The development of the Crow Mountain Quarry has allowed upgrades to the airport runway and riverbank erosion repair to move forward. Additional material was crushed in anticipation of additional projects but is unclear whether there is sufficient material at this site to meet all long-term community needs

8.2 Summary of Physical Planning Issues & Opportunities

The following is a list of the main issues and opportunities identified through a review of the background technical studies, previous Capital and Physical Development Plan and, interviews with Yukon and VGFN personnel. This summary provides the context for the land use policy recommendations and development priorities set out in the new Physical Development Plan.

- The community's isolation is a positive and negative factor. It is a constraint in terms of cost of living, construction etc but also an opportunity in terms of doing things differently and more creatively. Old Crow needs to build on its uniqueness.
- Careful, coordinated capital planning is essential to make the best use of limited resources and this will necessitate trade-offs by community residents and government (VGFN, Yukon) to find practical and affordable solutions (e.g. location of various land uses, government standards used, delivery of municipal services).
- Most issues (e.g. need for gravel; quality of existing housing stock) are interdependent. Each individual decision on any given issue may limit options for solutions to other problems.
- The infrastructure improvements required involve significant "catch-up" capital expenditures (e.g. roads, replacement of existing housing) beyond the financial capabilities, and in some cases, the responsibility of the community. They must be planned sequentially on a 3 or 5-year cycle to maximize local employment and take advantage of logistical economies of scale.

- While the community is too small to support many types of businesses, a number of opportunities that already exist are being ignored (e.g. need for restaurant/café). Others could work on a part-time, “agent-type” basis (e.g. Sears catalogue), as a home-based business (e.g. hairdresser) or as a concession as part of another building (e.g. crafts booth in new airport terminal)
- While a compact development form is more economical, residents find the core area “crowded”. There is interest in “sweat equity” homeownership, a desire for larger lots and more privacy in locations that may be expensive to service.
- Much of the existing housing stock is sub-standard and has a limited life span. The availability of housing and jobs remains a significant impediment to beneficiaries wishing to return to the community. Existing funding is not sufficient to meet the backlog of basic housing needs including documented health and safety concerns.
- There is no proper road hierarchy. While the absence of an all-weather road to the community limits vehicle usage in general, snowmobile and ATV ownership is increasing. As the community spreads out, traffic inevitably increases and the local roads will need to be upgraded. A second access road to the upper bench will be needed if this area is to be developed and it should be linked to the existing Crow Mountain road to create a loop road around the community.
- There is insufficient industrial land suitable for secure, outdoor storage of building materials and a fuel supply tank farm. The feasibility of relocating some existing uses more commonly found in industrial areas should be examined to free up land for other more suitable uses as these pieces of infrastructure reach the end of their service life (e.g. telecommunications, diesel plant, NDB beacon).
- The sewage lagoon has the capacity needed to accommodate future growth. Consideration should be given to concentrating related, compatible uses in this area such as a community dog yard or outside storage. The landfill could also be reclaimed for outside storage at the end of its useable life.
- The existing cemetery is almost full and the surrounding land is not suitable for burial unless the ground is raised. Residents appear to prefer expansion rather than the creation of a new cemetery. Elders want a buffer around the existing site.
- There is a need to free up land for future commercial use in the core area of the community.
- Only a few heritage buildings remain. They require protection, as they are an important link to the past, a key social asset and potential part of any future community tourism experience (i.e. St. Luke’s Church, Old Mission House, Archdeacon McDonald Church, Chief Peter Moses Centennial Hall).

8.3 General Development Principles

Following are the general development principles that form the basis for the specific policies contained within this Plan:

Principle 1 - Sufficient serviced land should be made available to meet the community’s current and projected needs for commercial, residential and industrial development, in a manner that encourages a compact community form (i.e. looped road system, infill where possible).

Principle 2 - new developments should not negatively affect community values, amenities, services, safety of persons and property, health or environmental quality.

- Principle 3** - Community development policy should accommodate a range of lifestyle choices consistent with current and projected population demographics.
- Principle 4** - Development policy should encourage the highest and best use of land within the community and support relocation of uses no longer considered appropriate to other more suitable locations within the community.
- Principle 5** The range of community infrastructure provided should be affordable, encourage sustainability and be consistent with community resources and public needs.
- Principle 6** Where possible, infrastructure development should encourage shared use, the staging of capital projects to maximize local employment and the adoption of municipal standards that recognize the unique conditions present in the community.
- Principle 7** Environmentally sensitive lands and existing public trails should be protected where possible.
- Principle 8** Community gravel resources should be managed to maximize the potential life of all existing sources and priorities for use established that recognize the value of the limited resources available.
- Principle 9** The airport is a vital transportation link and it will be protected from adjacent land uses that might reduce operational flexibility and safety.
- Principle 10.** Climate change is a reality and climate change adaptability will be considered in all planning and design

8.4 Land Use Policies

8.4.1 *Housing & Residential Development*

Objectives

- To provide a range of affordable housing choices within the community that encourages home ownership and is consistent with current and future demographics.
- To reduce the proportion of substandard housing within the community over the next ten years with the support and financial assistance of the governments of Yukon and Canada.
- To eliminate the community's immediate health and safety housing concerns within the next five years.

Policies

- Infill housing will be encouraged where there are pockets of land suitable for development throughout the community such as along the Ski Chalet Road, within the Tetchik subdivision.
- A new housing policy will be adopted that promotes home ownership through sweat equity construction and tenant buy-outs. The housing needs of seniors will continue to have first priority on lands suitable for lot development in the core area.

- The Plan will encourage a variety of housing forms to accommodate changing needs including single family, duplex and multi-family units, and mixed use buildings. Until the backlog of housing needs is resolved, multiple housing unit proposals should have priority over single-family units where practical.
- The VGFN will work with the governments of Yukon and Canada to develop a housing repair and replacement program to reduce the inventory of existing substandard housing in an orderly and equitable manner.
- New subdivisions will be designed to minimize the cost of extending services, the retention of existing tree cover, the maintenance of trail links, and the provision of loop roads where possible.
- Services will not be extended to individual homes constructed outside the developed portion of the community until it is economical to do so.
- The VGFN will work with the Government of Yukon and private sector to encourage the provision of transient staff accommodation to meet local needs and provide opportunities for people to return to the community to live and work.
- Infill development will be encouraged while a new housing subdivision is planned for the escarpment lands between the Ski Chalet and Crow Mountain roads.
- Repair and replacement of existing substandard housing will continue to be the first priority as funding becomes available.
- A priority list for new housing will be established reflecting local needs and available funding with housing programs designed to provide training and local employment opportunities to the maximum extent possible.

8.4.2 Commercial Services

Objectives

- To reserve sufficient land within the core area of the community for the establishment of a range of complementary businesses that will meet evolving resident and visitor needs thereby reducing the amount of economic leakage out of the community.
- To provide a positive business environment that encourages the establishment of part time, seasonal and home-based businesses to meet local needs and resident capabilities.
- To encourage the development of mixed used buildings and other land use policy incentives that support new business establishment and local employment.

Policies

- New commercial development will be encouraged to locate in the area between the RCMP buildings and the new First Nation administration building as well as along Centre Street.
- Mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial and residential above will be encouraged.
- Existing housing within the core commercial area will be phased out or relocated on an as required basis, with elders provided first priority on any new lots developed, or houses constructed, in the immediate area.
- Home-based businesses may be allowed throughout the community, provided that the activity proposed, does not infringe on the safe use and enjoyment of neighboring properties.
- A compact development form in the downtown area will be encouraged to make the most efficient use of available land and leave open the opportunity to explore the use of district heating.

- Public/private partnerships and other cooperative building initiatives that share space and create opportunities for business “incubator” will be supported.

8.4.3 Public Services

Objectives

- To provide a safe, environmentally responsible, and economic water delivery and sewage education system consistent with community needs and the arctic climate in which the community is situated.
- To implement a waste reduction and recycling program to increase the utility and life of the existing landfill site.
- To determine the land use setbacks acceptable to the residents of Old Crow from the cemetery, sewage treatment and waste disposal areas.
- To prepare an updated emergency measures plan that responds to risks associated with climate change including seasonal flooding, increased wildfire risk and related concerns.

Policies

- Old Crow will continue to rely on a trucked water delivery and sewage education system due to ground conditions and the cost of building and maintaining a buried system.
- Water delivery, sewage education and garbage pick-up will be provided to only those road accessible properties within the service boundary defined by Council.
- Individual dog team yards will be discouraged and a common area provided in the vicinity of the sewage lagoons.
- A minimum setback for development shall be maintained around the cemetery, sewage lagoons and landfill site to protect the integrity of these community facilities. Buffer widths will reflect the type of land use affected, the potential for conflict, and the availability of alternative sites.
- VGFN will work on implementing the waste recycling and reduction program to extend the life of the existing landfill and reduce resident waste generation.
- VGFN will work with the Government of Yukon to define an end use for the existing decommissioned and currently used landfill sites, and to define appropriate locations for a future soil remediation and landfill site when and if required.
- VGFN will work with elders to protect and expand the existing cemetery and determine ways to extend cemetery life.
- VGFN will work with Yukon to update the community emergency measures plan to address climate change issues and improve local fire protection response capabilities.
- VGFN will work with Yukon to complete and maintain a street naming and house numbering plan and make the plan available to all local emergency services.

8.4.4 Industrial Development

Objectives

- To provide land for the safe storage of bulk building materials, fuel, gravel, machinery and equipment in a central location accessible by air and winter road.

- To provide an area for the relocation of industrial uses and activities that can be phased out over time to free up land for higher and better uses than in their present locations.

Policies

- It is the intention of Council to develop a central bulk storage facility to replace and phase out the use of individual, large fuel storage tanks within the community as they become obsolete.
- Industrial activities requiring large areas for outside storage of bulk materials, such as sand and gravel, log storage for milling etc. will be encouraged to locate in the vicinity of the sewage lagoons and reclaimed former landfill sites.
- Related industrial activities including any manufacturing facilities requiring power and indoor storage will be encouraged to locate in a new subdivision north of the runway.
- The existing Nav Canada NDB site will be reserved for future industrial purposes if and when the beacon is decommissioned.

8.4.5 Airport

Objectives

- To recognize the importance of the airport as the essential transportation link and “gateway” into and out of the community.
- To protect the airport from adjacent community land uses that may reduce operational flexibility and safety.
- To minimize the negative impacts on community development associated with the location of the airport within the community

Policies

- VGFN will work with the Yukon Airports Branch to optimize the use of lands adjacent to the airport without compromising the integrity of airport operations.
- VGFN supports airport improvements that address dust control and noise abatement as well as a runway extension to permit the operation of modern jet aircraft.

8.4.6 Utilities & Communications

Objectives

- To ensure the provision of efficient, modern utility and communication infrastructure to support community development and offset, to the degree possible, the limitations of an isolated location.
- To ensure the quality of utility and communication infrastructure including support facilities keeps pace with community needs and is consistent with service standards available in other Yukon communities.
- To examine ways to reduce the capital and operating costs associated with the provision of essential utilities and communication infrastructure through energy conservation, technological innovation, and appropriate community design.

Policies

- VGFN will work with Yukon Electrical Company and Northwestel to ensure the efficient and economic delivery of utility infrastructure and communication services.
- VGFN will work with Yukon Electrical Company to examine alternative energy use options including the use of wind turbines, waste heat and district heating and will encourage the adoption of energy conservation practices in all capital projects.
- Yukon Electrical Company and Northwestel will be encouraged to relocate their facilities to the industrial area as the existing facilities reach the end of their useful life.

8.4.7 Community Recreation Services & Parks

Objectives

- To provide a range of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community and preserve open spaces for the physical and social well being of the community.
- To protect the community trail system that connects the people of Old Crow to the land.

Policies

- VGFN will ensure a range of year round recreational opportunities are available within the community which reflect the age, gender and lifestyle interests of community residents.
- VGFN will work with the Government of Yukon towards providing a range of recreational activity spaces that provide residents of all ages with the opportunity for quiet solitude, collective participation, education and appreciation of the local culture and environment.
- VGFN will work with the Government of Yukon to provide supporting infrastructure such as sidewalks, benches, landscaping and lighting to encourage safe walking throughout the community.
- VGFN will identify and develop a communal dog yard to support dog-mushing activities.
- VGFN will ensure any adjustments to the existing cross-country trail system or relocation of the ski lodge required to facilitate development will not compromise the integrity of the trail system and strengthens the connections to the new school.
- The design of a new residential subdivision on the escarpment shall maintain a top-of bank trail and the existing ski trail link to the lands below.
- Development of a new community services building incorporating indoor recreation facilities remains a first priority. The preferred location is the former school site to take advantage of waste heat from the community's diesel generators.
- Upgrading the community playing fields at the former school site and relocating portions of the cross-country trail system are the second priority.

8.4.8 Heritage Protection

Objectives

- Heritage resources will be protected to preserve the history of the community and promote awareness of the Gwitch'in culture and language.

Policies

- Heritage resources within the community will be managed in accordance with Chapter 13 of the VGFN Final Agreement.