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# GRANDE SPIRIT FOUNDATION STRATEGIC PLAN

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2020-2023



# Grande Spirit Foundation Strategic Planning Report

Hosted 9:00am to 3:00pm  
Tuesday, May 22, 2019  
Al Robertson Room, Centre 2000

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## SWOT Review

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### Strengths:

- We are a strong board
  - responsive
  - can be the voice
- We come as one unit
- Stellar reputation
- Good relationship with provincial government
- Relationships & connectivity
- Open book communications
  - We can bring info, discuss, and truly talk about it.
- Strong Smooth CEO transition
- We have capacity to have conversation

### Weaknesses

- Reliance on the GOA: Risk/challenge alignment
- Identifying and prioritizing needs. Do it clearly and fairly. Housing spectrum largely fulfilled by GSF. – Where to go from here? Limited money, higher need
- We don't celebrate/assertive in what we do
  - awareness of all we do...
- Longer term history of board – succession transition
- Lack of capacity/resources in current service model

### Threats

- The focus is/was changing – different expectations
- Hiring freezes
- Changes of government, anxiety, looming cuts
- Aging facilities
- Inability to keep with the demand – large population of seniors coming with different expectations
- Changing expectations and needs
- Average age is older now possibly less turnover

### Opportunities

- Advocacy – AB seniors housing, AB Health
- Stronger voice- represent
- Innovative programming – staff/recruit, student training i.e. CNG – AHS
- Advertise – revenue not linked to rent
- Partnerships P3s – ex Devon, enmax spikes net benefits, cost savings, covered energy
- Possibly less turnover, increase in long term tenants. Lodge – 89yrs, apt -70s
- Matching needs with capacity

- New builds- cut bottom line expenses, savings up front decrease maintenance.

## Who is Grande Spirit Foundation’s Customer?

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It was concluded that there are two main Grande Spirit Foundation Customers or Clients –

- Children under 12
- Seniors

Given the increase expectations of clients, users, funders and supporters, Grande Spirit Foundation must ensure that the needs of these groups are the focus of all planning and infrastructure projects. In order to do so, it is imperative that Grande Spirit Foundation leverage its network and its influence to become the voice of affordable housing for all; this includes sharing best practices, mentoring other organizations and becoming a trusted advocate for the vulnerable.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging residents – needs assessment will show us a lot</li> <li>• Increased expectations</li> <li>• Needs: i.e. Healthcare, increased expectations/criteria at odds with provincial guidelines</li> <li>• Housing vs. healthcare<br/>-Provide service outside scope of necessity</li> <li>• Seniors with needs – affordable options</li> <li>• Homecare capacity – may deciding factor – the waitlist, vulnerability</li> <li>• Not able age our seniors in place - need to leave community at some point, smaller community</li> <li>• Scarcity model</li> <li>• Family and special purpose housing – waitlist is 450</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs: healthcare, transportation, access to services</li> <li>• Rural vs urban needs</li> <li>• Children under 12- all but 2 units have children</li> <li>• Children- lone parent- two parent- singles- seniors- families- street- seniors (housing continuum)</li> <li>• Leverage the power of municipal reps/voice</li> <li>• Define “affordable housing” – “degree” of housing, no provincial, federal, municipal definition</li> <li>• Our most vulnerable</li> <li>• City housing needs assessment – 452</li> <li>• County rural homelessness</li> <li>• Challenge: transfer for problem one municipal to another</li> </ul> |
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## Client Needs

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Given the vulnerable nature of its clients, Grande Spirit Foundation regularly takes on roles and responsibilities outside the scope of its mandate. This is especially true when it comes to provision of healthcare services. Although, it is difficult to separate the needs of its clients with the mandate of the organizations, it is essential that Grande Spirit Foundation **focus on housing society’s most vulnerable** (children and seniors) and allow the other Service Providers to do what is needed. In essence, Grande Spirit Foundation Management and Staff **become Advocates for their residents’ well being**.

It becomes essential, then to **set defined boundaries to strengthen lines of communication** and maintain the efficacy of the relationship Grande Spirit has with other providers such as Alberta Health Services. It is recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation clearly delineate its roles and responsibilities as well as its expectations of other Service Providers in the way of a clear, concise, measurable and accountable Memorandum of Understanding.

- How do we know we are fulfilling our clients needs? different perspectives, manage expectations...
- Housing
- Supportive services- needed, being done because they're needed
- Seniors and families of seniors, children & family of children – other customers  
-Sometimes unrealistic expectation
- Need a change in mindset  
-Step back and let other service providers do what is needed
- We're not health, we're housing
- AHS can come into facilities  
-Management and staff become advocates for the resident, for their well being, the facts of it all  
-The connector – knowledge and connection to services for clients  
-Guide and connect
- This is the messaging that needs to be shared with AHS.  
-Without our bricks and mortar there's no infrastructure for you to provide services  
-Set boundaries – deal with lack of communication  
-Level the playing field – an agreement and the efficacy of the relationship needs to be a two-way street: transparency, especially with AHS- the red tape.
- Establish our standard.
- GSF can explore providing healthcare  
-this is a possibility if this relationship isn't working - vermilion
- Advocacy- find AHS rep who has this mindset- power & influence, loud voice
- Consistency in customer care is of utmost importance
- AHS relationship seems to deteriorate as it goes down into lodges & facilities
- Sub-standard is unacceptable
- GSF policy i.e. standards of care
- Disparity rural vs. urban
- Need to demand more, GSF interests be honored and respected – accountability? Written?
- What's the ideal situation? Be careful emotion vs. logic
  - Blended model with an MOU agreeing to service standards
- Best practices: 3<sup>rd</sup> party sitting to hold parties to account
- Review current agreements- accountability: start here: consultant, review, proposed action, Measures KPI
- Do our homework- need a plan
- Put the steps in place purposefully
  - Revenue
  - Staff
  - Risk
  - Resources

## Facilities

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Grande Spirit Foundation excels as a housing provider for the region's most vulnerable populations – Children and Seniors. As such, the integrity and sustainability of its many facilities becomes essential. When the organization takes on larger capital projects, it is recommended that all new Build Plans incorporate the cost and role of a Project Manager, a stand along Grande Spirit Foundation staff position

whose sole function it is to ensure that build projects remain on time and on budget. The Project Manager represents the organization's best interest with all stakeholders involved in the builds.

- Larger projects- concern i.e. lack a project manager on an ongoing basis
- Spirit River build- ongoing oversight, ensure GSF interests are protected
- A project manager (clerk of the works) – up to daily onsite- project scope, reviews, red flags, prevent overruns
- A due diligence requirement
- Earmark money in each project – make it common practice
- No matter if province is in charge – what if they're not?
- Project Manager likely pay for itself with prevention of loss, etc.: ensure facility meets our needs
- Budget- leverage funds received- common practice for every project
- Project dollars allocated for management. Uncertain re. guideline
- Key: find the correct project manager- imperative to deal with risk assessment, change orders, implications, cost vs. benefits
- The necessary expertise to help explain the potential fall out – protect your interests

The Province requires 3 Capital Project Priorities to be outlined in Grande Spirit Foundation's Business Plan. Project Priorities to be submitted to the province include Sexsmith, Debolt and Beaverlodge builds or improvements.

- Beaverlodge Amisk court expansion
- Sexsmith Houses to sell- plans-land-build – what's safest?
- Debolt- modular

It is recommended that the Grande Spirit Foundation Board revisit these priorities after the needs assessment is complete to ensure their goals clearly delineate the needs of the region. It is further recommended that these projects plans are detailed enough to take advantage of calls for "shovel ready" projects should new government plans related to Housing create opportunities for funding.

## Long-term Capital Plan

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A Long-Term Planning priority must be to consider the age of Grande Spirit Foundation facilities and the cost of repair, maintenance, modernization and/or replacement. It is estimated that \$700,000 will be needed for repairs, upgrades and maintenance in 2020 and \$1Million in 2021. The conversation about existing facilities in some of the smaller rural areas is also needed as the vacancy rate in those facilities is quite high. The conversation will need to be focused around whether the facilities can be modernized to meet the needs of clients or if those facilities should be sold in order to invest in facilities that do so.

It is recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation contract the assistance of a Consulting firm to complete a **Building Assessment Review Plan** (full building inspections to assess facility necessary, recommended, preventative and overall lifecycle) and to do this on a bi-annual basis.

It is also recommended that the Grande Spirit Foundation share with the City's new Affordable Housing Corporation, its vision for housing, in order to identify opportunities for future collaboration on new build plans.

- 2020 - \$700k to do needed repairs, upgrades, maintenance
  - 2021- 1M
  - Benefits, implications, etc.
  - Can be substantial planned expenses
    - Able to show the business case
    - Applying surplus to capital reserve/maintenance
  - Think about aging facilities
    - Cost of replacement
    - Starting conversation
  - Cost of reno vs. replace vs. new build
  - Roofing, air, plumbing, windows, replace furnishings, landscaping, parking, renos
  - Health and safety priorities
    - Sidewalks, cracked floors, heat for winter, windows (energy efficiency, heat/cool)
  - Need for a building assessment review plan to identify key upcoming needs, trends etc.
    - All fighting for same resources
    - The assessment process will ensure jobs are done before it's a crisis or an emergency
    - Help to create purposeful spending plans
  - What does it look like?
    - Facility review bi-annual
- Full building inspection
  - Build into 5- & 10-year capital plan
  - Access funds as made available – more ready- always on radar
  - Assess needed, necessary, recommended, preventative, lifecycle
  - ARDN- redefining role, purpose, able to pursue dollars
  - Sea can project
  - Innovative housing projects
  - Steve move forward to gather more info to see where they could collaborate or a resource
  - Access to: CMHC, National housing strategy
  - Opportunity: where land is available, what is the best way to utilize it?
  - Potential for different ways to fund
  - Challenges: city has a no sea can policy- land use bylaw. – i.e. smith could require rezoning, supersede other
    - Vision plan for areas – seniors – family row housing
    - Opportunity to align with this vision to create business case
  - City housing corps: expended arm with GSF, more borrowing leverage, good partnership, city get money to service

## Nominal Sum Disposal

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As per the above and related to Capital Planning is the review of existing properties that are harder to rent and to make decision regarding their future. Decisions may include to maintain status quo, to renovate and repurpose the facility or to sell the facility to raise seed capital for future capital builds focused on areas where trends indicate waitlists or increased demand.

As per the above recommendations, it is further recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation allocate resources to the development of a **Capital Assessment Management Plan** that will evaluate facility life expectancy and priority areas.

It is also recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation, in conjunction with the Needs Assessment, engage in a **Community Survey** to get a better understanding of the overall demand, need, shift in needs and housing trends in the market.

- Properties harder to rent, etc.
- Could be on list to sell
- Province asked for list of properties to dispose of in 2020.
- Sexsmith- sell old, replace new-market eval last year, Maintain
- Is repurposing worthwhile? Is there a market for a changed unit?
- Cost of reno, sell some, allocate dollars to repurpose
- Houses – future builds- seed money
- Can fill villas
- The implication of province deficit funding
- List from 2012- changes since then? Revenues tend to ebb & flow
- Laglace, eaglesham- no waitlist, chronic vacancy, economy change, creative in the past, not people from area, not serving
- Better way to use? Reinvent property and use
- Demand in GP – shift in the market, service centres, expectations
- Action: needed to gather more info. – community survey to see where gaps are in needs assessment
- Action: Capital Assessment management plan
  - Invaluable life expectancy
  - Start with basic, individual assessment
  - Identifies the real priority areas. Perspective, allocation of resources
  - 5 lodges: objectively evaluated, risk management, the major, the minor code
  - Allocation of inventory
  - Maintenance standards to increase life expectancy – this is part of the brand
- Develop the strategy to help guide budget and fund development plans- “the crystal ball” – be more strategic in decisions
- Trend analysis- developing reserve strategies

## Human Resources

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As with many non-profit organizations, Grande Spirit Foundation sees high turnover in its Human Resources. In 2018/19, the turnover rate was 38%. Many reasons exist for this including the overall age of staff, retention difficulties given the part time and casual nature of many of the positions and the lack of stable hours, and a comprehensive benefits plan.

In order to better assess Grande Spirit Foundation Human Resource needs and demands, it is recommend that the organization allocate resources to work with an HR Consultant to evaluate the current HR Model and to make recommendations to improve the model in the areas of Recruitment, Retention and Succession as it pertains to a **Grande Spirit Foundation HR Strategy**.

- High turnover- 38% last year. Why?
- Average age of staff? -Retirement – succession
- Retention: especially staff – review staff model, why does everyone start casual?

Does it have to be? Is there capacity for FTE vs. Casual? Start casual now

- Staff movement within organization
- Strategy: exit interviews. Reasons: wishes, benefits, stable hours guaranteed vs. on call
- Implement: PT w/hours & benefits plus option to pick up hours
- Review org. staff model for GSF in general. The whole structure.
- Our commitment to invest in...
- Another risk management strategy
- Looking at the whole model – what works best for certain positions
- Create an advancement model – places to grow
- Awareness and support – capitalize on their passions, grow our people i.e.

cook- grow into red seal, sense of pride, longevity, loyalty.

- The evolutions of the positions criteria growing skills, capacity, training up
- Provincial salary reviews available – GP econ bubble
- Complete and expand comparative analysis. Staff, salary, job description. Better understand the “competitors” for the same pool.
- Demographical shifts: change in values, motivations, etc. sustainable retention
- Competing with AHS- Reality
- Salaries workers: concept of 4-day work weeks, promote LT emp, alleviate time management, increase job satisfaction, freedom, money model, productivity.

## Technology/ More Innovation

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Technology is changing at a speed that is very difficult for organizations like Grande Spirit Foundation to keep up to. Many factors affect the organization’s ability to keep ahead of the technology curve and to pursue innovative solutions to organizational problems. As with most technology decisions, there is also the inherent risk in adopting new technology and systems at an early stage. Priorities for the organization are two-fold – **operational efficiency and operations expense.**

Efficiency can be recognized in simple ways via procedural changes, such as how casual employees are scheduled via electronic means, or how the organization utilizes technology such as Blockchain to share information. It is recommended that the organization seek out the long hanging fruit as it relates to organizational procedural operational efficiencies, to identify ways to apply new technologies to sharing of information, while paying close attention to risk and vulnerability while exploring new ways to management the workplace via technology and software. It is also recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation explore ways to make its facilities more energy efficient, taking advantage of government programs, when available to reduce operational costs. Many of the above recommendations as they relate to infrastructure and operations will assist in identifying ways to increase the overall efficiency of the organization, ensuring time, focus and money is spent where it has the most potential return on investment.

- Risk/vulnerability
- Backup
- FOIP, Privacy
- Cyber security- blockchain
- Software – does it do what we need?  
Learn, save time, create efficiency
- Best practices, watch what’s happening, reduce one off reports
- Powerful devices -intelligent devices
- Artificial intelligence
- Finding efficiencies
- Software management
- Innovations – controls, remote access



- Current situation- server on site, access
- Step towards ease and efficiencies, applying tech
- Wi-Fi, fibre
- Innovative Hr Management Tech: save time, send out work opportunity, schedule shifts, out to causals, confirm
- Work management/ time management applications
- Ongoing info gathering
- Rural broadband
- Rural connectivity

## Performance Metrics

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There are a variety of ways Grande Spirit Foundation gathers and shares its performance metrics. However, it is important to identify the information, both statistical and anecdotal, that has the most potential to influence future decision making as it relates to funding, capital projects and even becoming an Employer of Choice.

Evaluation of the Grande Spirit Foundation is three-fold:

1. Statistical in Nature –
  - a. number of clients housed,
  - b. numbers of clients on waitlists,
  - c. number of housing units available
  - d. number of client complaints
2. Anecdotal in Nature –
  - a. client satisfaction as it relates to facilities and services
    - i. Usually this information is gathered via client surveys
    - ii. This information is used to provide the basis for future operational strategy

It is recommended that Grande Spirit Foundation adopt a more comprehensive **Performance Measurement Strategy** that identifies not only the information that is being gathered but for what purpose and how often information is required and to where it is reported. Purposeful, pooled information gathering assists in the creation of business cases, provides the foundation to future business planning and creates opportunities for more meaningful dialogue with municipal partners to ensure that housing is going where housing is needed.

- Evaluation
- Performance expectations
- Data
- Stakeholder needs
- Waitlists. #to the board to the prov.
- Resident details to provincial housing department. -nothing to feds. Does the province report up?
- Number of complaints
- Annual resident surveys: food, housekeeping, maintenance, staff, transport. – summary to GM
- What we do with info: provide summaries (highlights) back to the board to help plan for strategic problem solving
- Province requires annual resident meeting – is both surveys and mtgs needed
- What else do we do with input from consultations? To better understand. Measure and anecdotal info
- Strong participation – can be anonymous >70% response

- Reporting for transportation for grants
- Number of housing units available- simple, basic level city- see need, trends: more governance
- Clarity around GSF vs. Prov – who’s domain
- Relates back to communication, clarity, roles and responsibilities
- The “speaking notes” clarity and definition
- For munis: show that housing is where housing needs to go show the “business case” behind decision making: the consultive process.

## Communications:

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The Grande Spirit Foundation brand is about more than the visual representation of the organization. However, it is important to note that the visual representation of the organization, the logo, does not clearly show the distinct populations the organization represents. It is recommended that the organization embark on a comprehensive **Branding Exercise** intended to show Grande Spirit Foundation’s truly comprehensive services, with the intent of developing not only a new logo but to spearhead a full **Marketing Strategy** intended to shift the overall perception of Grande Spirit Foundation as just a Seniors Lodge to one of a Comprehensive Housing Agent, serving the communities most vulnerable – an organization that is truly “Here for you Today and Tomorrow.” The Marketing Strategy should involve the development of a new visual representation of the organization, to identify and clarify its overall values and services and develop marketing tools, both hard copy, electronic and social media based, to re-launch the new “Brand.”

- Visual representation – logo revision
- Homes of choice
- We care for you
- We provide for you
- We value you
- We can help you – explain
- Answer the what ifs.
- Misperception: GSF is a senior’s lodge – general population
- We’re a huge entity
- The vehicles – agencies, partners govts. Community events – parade involvement, social media, tax line- educate the public muni requisition
- The messaging: shift the focus, the what -affordable housing, the who
- “here for you today & tomorrow”