

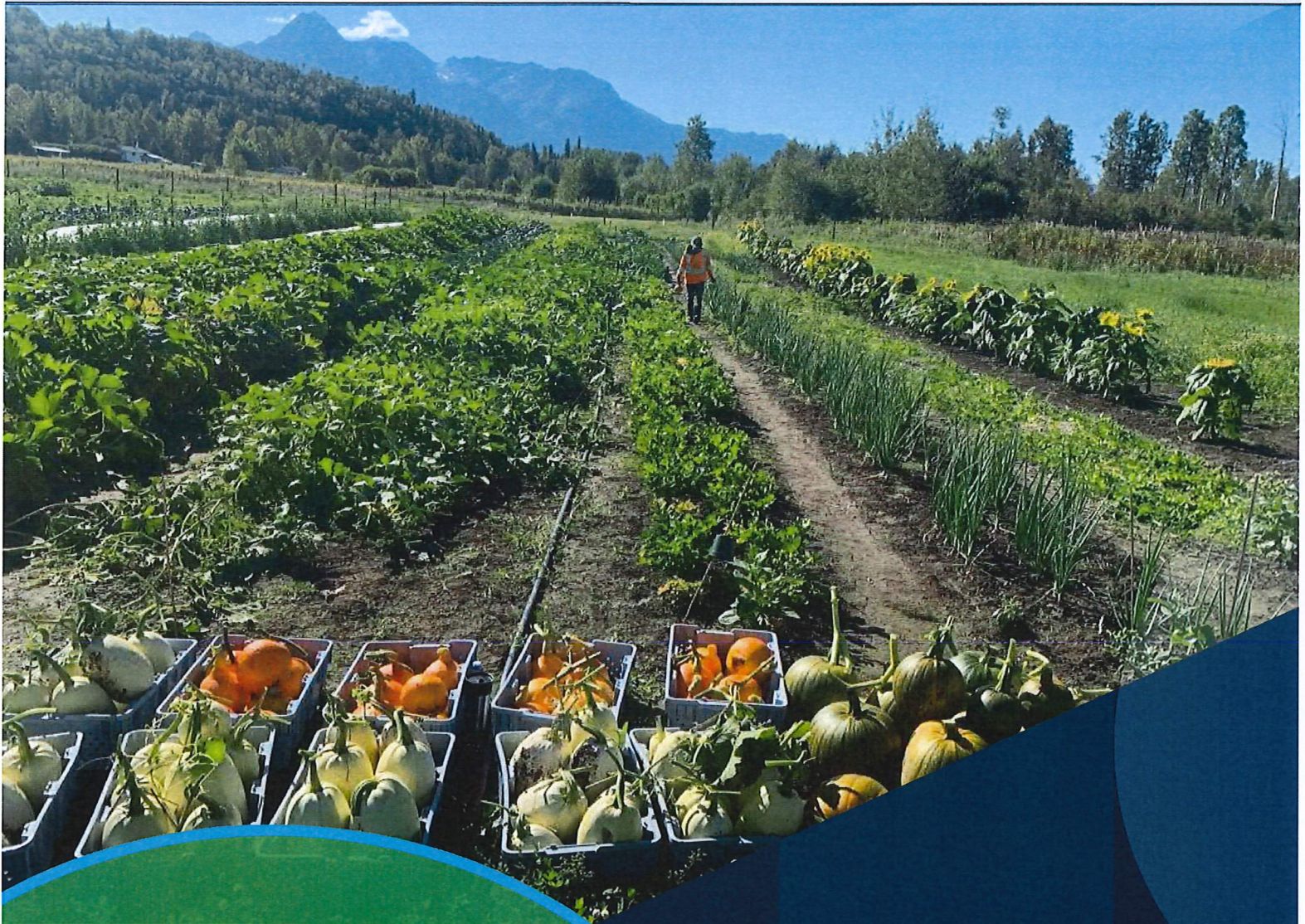
Sik-E-Dakh

2023/2024



Living Action Plan

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PREPARED FOR:

Sik-E-Dakh Chief and Council

Address: 7900 Sik-E-Dakh Road Sik-E-Dakh B.C. V0J1Y3

Tel: 250-842-5241

Fax: 250-842-5601

PREPARED BY:

Evan Van Dyk and Roman Brochu

evan.j.vandyk@gmail.com

roman-brochu@hotmail.com

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Sik-E-Dakh Living Action Plan

2023/2024

Introduction

Brief History of the Community

Located in the heart of British Columbia, Canada, the community of Sik-E-Dakh, also known as Glen Vowell Band, carries a rich and enduring history that dates back thousands of years. This First Nations community forms a vital part of the Gitksan Nation, renowned for its unique culture, ancestral traditions, and enduring connection with the land. Historically, Sik-E-Dakh has been a community that thrives on its unity, resilience, and shared values. The community's strength lies in its deep cultural roots and the unwavering spirit of its people, who continue to safeguard their heritage and drive the community's growth and development.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide a forward-looking roadmap for the community development of Sik-E-Dakh from 2023 to 2024. It serves as a guiding document that will steer community initiatives, projects, and priorities in a manner that aligns with the community's overarching goals, aspirations, and values. This plan is not just about mapping out the future; it is about nurturing and strengthening the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Sik-E-Dakh, contributing to the well-being of its members, and paving the way for a prosperous and sustainable future.

Process of Plan Development

The development of this strategic plan is a collaborative and consultative process, embracing the collective wisdom and insight of the Sik-E-Dakh community's Chief and Council, the Village Administration, and the community members themselves. It begins with a comprehensive visioning exercise, which enables the community leaders to articulate their hopes, aspirations, and goals for the community's future. After this, the Chief and Council engage in thoughtful conversations, outlining their strategic priorities and actions.

These conversations, carefully recorded and analyzed, become the foundation upon which this strategic plan is built. The information derived from these discussions allows us to map out clear, actionable tasks for each priority, along with responsibilities, timelines, and reasons for their importance. This process is iterative and flexible, allowing for adjustments and refinements as needed.

Throughout this process, there is a strong emphasis on transparency, community involvement, and regular feedback. This strategic plan is, at its core, a reflection of the community's collective will, an expression of their shared vision, and a testament to their commitment to carve out a better future for Sik-E-Dakh.

Governance Guiding Principles

The council's primary responsibilities are policy-making, setting direction, and representing public interest, providing essential guidance for the strategic planning process. Chief and Council reviewed their guiding principles of good governance listed below.

Policy-making: The council's role in policy-making goes beyond decision-making and includes ensuring the accuracy of information and monitoring policy outcomes. As we define our strategic plan, we should consider how policies align with our goals and strategies, and ensure there is a system in place for tracking the impact of our decisions.

Setting Direction: The council must set a strategic direction for the community that is informed by local and external trends and conditions. Our strategic plan should present a shared vision for our community's future and provide a detailed roadmap for turning this vision into reality. This includes identifying key objectives, devising strategies for achieving these objectives, and ensuring the allocation of resources is consistent with these strategies.

Representing Public Interest: As representatives of the community, the council's strategic plan should reflect the needs and interests of our community members. This can be achieved through consistent community engagement, responsiveness to inquiries, and transparency in our decision-making processes. Scrutiny of operations to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness in meeting community needs is essential.

Communication: The council is also responsible for communicating effectively with the community. Our strategic plan should include strategies for informing community members about policy changes, initiatives, and decisions that could affect the community's wellbeing.

The role of the Chief in presiding over meetings, facilitating idea generation, representing council decisions to the public, liaising with administrative officers, and mentoring council members is also critical to the successful execution of our strategic plan.

As we move forward in the strategic planning process, we must acknowledge the complexity of our roles, wearing 'two hats' as we both represent community interests and actively participate in policy-making. To balance these roles, our strategic plan must prioritize robust decision-making processes, open and respectful debate, ongoing communication with community members, and diligent monitoring of policy and operational impacts. By doing so, we can ensure that our strategic plan serves as a roadmap to a prosperous and equitable future for our community.

Visioning Exercise

"My Vision for Sik-e-Dakh is:"

1. Economic Development

- A self-sustainable community with expanded retail operations, a sustainable agriculture program, and the potential for hemp commercialization. The community has identified specific projects like a quarry, a small gas station, and further growth in the agriculture sector.
- Aiming for a 100% employment rate and the education of community members to support this.
- Tourism development through a mini golf course, a driving range, a campground, and cultural tourism that weaves together the rich heritage of the community and visitor experience.

2. Healthy Community

- Building a healthy, safe, and inclusive community that ensures the well-being of all its members in a holistic way - spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.
- Creation of a wellness center to provide comprehensive health and wellness services.
- Enhanced childcare facilities and services.

3. Housing

- Focus on improving the housing situation, ensuring quality homes for the community, and eliminating homelessness. However, it's crucial to balance housing development and population growth to prevent overcrowding.

4. Cultural Development

- Expansion of language and cultural programs, with elders and knowledge holders teaching the community to strengthen the cultural roots.
- The vision for a traditionally active community with a focus on the restoration of the creek.

5. Sports and Recreation

- Increasing sporting activities, with a focus on popular sports like hockey, basketball, and soccer.

6. Governance

- Improvement in the governance process, with a focus on more streamlined procedures and transparent communication.

7. Elders Community

- A dedicated elders' community to ensure the well-being and active involvement of elders in the community.

Through this visioning exercise, the council members have highlighted a future for Sik-E-Dakh that is economically vibrant, culturally rich, and inclusive. They envision a community that respects its elders, cares for its members' health, and maintains transparent and effective governance. This vision will serve as a guiding light as we proceed with the next steps of this strategic plan.

"Biggest Challenges for Sik-e-Dakh are:"

1. Housing

- Ensuring quality of construction, dealing with predatory contractors, and improving housing inspections.
- Addressing social issues such as addictions that lead to homelessness, the mental health challenges associated with these addictions, and the lack of services to address these issues.
- Maintaining a clean community and personal maintenance.

2. Healthy Community

- Ensuring stability in staff, securing stable funding, and maintaining continuity of services in the community's health and wellness programs.

3. Economic Development

- Overcoming challenges related to education and research for business development.
- Tackling funding issues for education and finding ways to attract educated community members back to the community.

4. Governance

- Managing change effectively within the community and its governing body.
- Improving communication across different community sectors and members.
- Developing a robust succession planning system to ensure continuity in leadership.

5. Population Funding

- Addressing the challenge of per capita funding based on the reserve's population.

These challenges underscore the complexities of managing a vibrant and evolving community like Sik-e-Dakh. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is a significant step towards creating a strategic plan that will help the community overcome these obstacles and realize their vision for a prosperous and inclusive future.

"My contribution to the success of Sik-e-Dakh is:"

1. Governance and Policy Development

- Serving on the council and being actively involved in decision-making.
- Advocating for policy-driven decision-making to create more transparency and streamline processes.
- Ensuring the renewal of the Comprehensive Community Plan which has expired.

2. Health and Wellness

- Offering mental support/check-ins, and providing training to enhance mental health services.
- Ensuring council involvement in health and wellness initiatives and programs.

3. Communication

- Improving listening skills and streamlining the communication process between the council and the community.

4. Education and Youth Development

- Using personal careers and life experiences to educate and guide community members, with a special focus on youth.
- Organizing trips for the youth and supporting the establishment of a Youth Council to give younger community members a voice.

These contributions highlight the council's commitment to Sik-e-Dakh and their readiness to leverage their skills, experience, and roles for the community's success. With active involvement in governance, a focus on health and wellness, commitment to transparent communication, and dedication to youth education and development, they demonstrate a comprehensive approach to community development.

"Professional Development or Personal Growth:"

1. Council Training and Governance

- Undertaking council training, gaining financial literacy, and learning more about governance.
- Learning about financial and administration law to further support the council's operations and decision-making.

2. Health and Wellness

- Focusing on mental health and first aid training to enhance personal well-being and potentially support the community's wellness centre.

3. Emotional Support

- Seeking emotional support to ensure the mental and emotional health of council members, which is crucial for effective leadership.

4. Cultural Activities and Practices

- Engaging in cultural activities and practices such as fish processing, harvesting practices, and community smokehouse operations. This not only contributes to personal growth but also helps preserve and propagate cultural heritage within the community.

The council's focus on both professional development and personal growth underscores their dedication to leadership excellence. Through these initiatives, they are not only improving their capabilities as community leaders but also ensuring their mental and emotional well-being and promoting cultural activities, which is essential for the holistic development of the community.

This concludes the visioning session, which has provided comprehensive insights into the council's vision, the community's challenges, council members' contributions to community success, and their commitment to professional and personal growth. This forms a robust foundation for the next stages of the strategic planning process.

Budget Overview

The financial landscape of the Sik-E-Dakh (Glen Vowell Band/Community) is sound and offers considerable potential for future projects and initiatives. The budget review highlights several key points:

Funding Sources:

BC Lottery Funds: The primary funding source available for projects is the BC Lottery Funds, amounting to \$391,000. This fund offers broad parameters for use, providing flexibility for allocation towards special projects and the livable action plan.

There is an additional \$199,000 from interest funds available for special projects bringing the total available to Council to \$590,000.,

Debt Status: Sik-E-Dakh is a debt-free community, which means there are no interest or financing costs, freeing up more resources for community development.

Operations Funding: Approximately half of the operational funding comes from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), while the other half is sourced from various grants.

Financial Reporting and Auditing: In the last three years, the community has maintained a high level of transparency in financial management, backed by excellent financial reporting and audits. This has enhanced the confidence of funders and facilitated a better understanding of the financial landscape for decision-making.

As the council proceeds with the allocation of the available \$590,000 fund towards special projects and the livable action plan, it is crucial to align these decisions with the strategic priorities of the community. The council's strong financial management and the community's solid financial standing provide a firm foundation for effective budget allocation to support Sik-E-Dakh's strategic objectives.

Priority 1: Daycare Facility Development

Description: Recognizing the vital role that accessible and affordable childcare plays in community development, Sik-E-Dakh plans to establish a local daycare center. Currently, the village has minimal childcare provisions, which presents a considerable barrier to consistent employment and further education for community members. A dedicated daycare center would alleviate these challenges, providing a reliable solution for working parents, promoting early childhood education, and creating local employment opportunities. The Council plans to use a portion of its budget to leverage additional funding through grants.

Budget: \$200,000 (leveraging additional grants to reach a total project cost of \$500,000)

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Determining location within the community	Council	Summer 2023	A suitable location is the first step towards the establishment of the daycare center
Researching and applying for grants	Village Administration	Summer 2023	Grants will provide additional funding needed for the project
Designing and costing a building	Village Administration	Summer 2023	Detailed building plans and cost estimates are necessary for budgeting and grant applications
Project plans for construction	Village Administration	Fall 2023	Detailed construction plans are crucial for smooth project implementation

Priority 2: Develop a Focus for the Sik-E-Dakh Development Corporation

Description: The Sik-E-Dakh Development Corporation is the economic arm of the community with a vision to expand its operations in both food processing and heavy equipment operations. One of its primary projects is the establishment of a smoking and canning house, which would serve dual purposes. Firstly, it would provide the community with access to equipment for their personal use, enhancing local food security and self-sufficiency. Secondly, it presents an opportunity for commercial operations by smoking, vacuum-sealing, and selling salmon to retailers. The smoked fish could also enhance local tourism. In addition, the corporation plans to explore opportunities to operate a quarry and rent out heavy equipment to other companies within the region.

Budget: \$0 - The activities in this action plan are largely planning, coordination, and application efforts, which will be handled by existing staff. The costs associated with executing these plans (e.g., purchasing equipment, building infrastructure) will be covered by grant funding.

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Establish relationships with local fishermen for commercial use of fish	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To ensure a consistent supply of fish for the smoking/canning house
Plan for receiving, gutting, cleaning, filleting, vacuum sealing, and storing fish	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To ensure efficient and hygienic handling and processing of fish
Identify products needed for canning and smoking; determine layout and location for the operations	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To plan the operational infrastructure
Research the cost and specifications of necessary equipment for smoking, canning, and quarry operations	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To budget for and procure the necessary equipment
Create a comprehensive business plan for quarry operations for grant applications	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To secure funding and ensure the financial viability of the quarry operations
Write and submit grant applications for the necessary equipment	Village Administration	July 2023 - January 2024	To secure funding for the required equipment

Priority 3: Outdoor Recreation Improvements

Description: Improving outdoor recreation facilities is a priority for Sik-E-Dakh. The primary focus is upgrading the existing soccer fields to competitive levels, which will include adding a gravel track around the field. The village also plans to add a baseball diamond to the recreation center. The goal of these improvements is to revitalize youth sports and host regional soccer tournaments, thereby fostering community spirit through sports.

Budget: \$300,000 - Funds from both the previous year (\$150,000) and the current year (\$150,000) have been allocated for these improvements.

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Demolition of old fencing and buildings	Village Administration and contracted companies	Immediate	To make way for the upgraded facilities
Resurfacing field area	Village Administration and contracted companies	Summer 2023	To create a suitable surface for the upgraded soccer field and the baseball diamond
Building necessary infrastructure including dugouts, fencing, irrigation, bleachers, etc.	Village Administration and contracted companies	Summer 2023	To provide the necessary facilities for competitive sports events
Planting of grass and ongoing maintenance	Village Administration and contracted companies	Post-Summer 2023	To ensure a high-quality field that meets the requirements for hosting competitive sports events

Priority 4: Design and Deliver a Glen Vowell Based Gitxsan Language and Culture Program

Description: Preserving and promoting the Gitxsan language and culture is a strategic priority for Sik-E-Dakh. Recognizing the language as endangered, the village is committed to its revitalization through various initiatives including digital tools like apps and QR codes. The program also aims to encourage youth involvement through interactions with elders and regular cultural activities such as drumming, dancing, hunting, and fishing. The ultimate goal is to support and regrow the Gitxsan culture, contributing to a happy and healthy community.

Budget: \$0 - Funding will be sought through grant applications.

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Identify available grants and develop programming based on grant requirements	Village Administration	Ongoing	To secure funding for the program
Incorporate Gitxsan language on all signs with English underneath	Village Administration	Within next 1-2 years	To ensure visibility and everyday use of the language
Develop weekly programming	Village Administration	Within next 1-2 years	To provide regular opportunities for learning and practicing the language and culture
Engage youth, possibly through a youth council, to learn from elders	Village Administration	Within next 1-2 years	To transfer knowledge to the younger generation and ensure the continuity of the culture
Organize regular cultural activities including drumming, dancing, hunting, fishing	Village Administration	Within next 1-2 years	To offer practical and interactive ways to learn and preserve the culture

Priority 5: Support Post-Secondary Education with a New Policy

Description: The Council of Sik-E-Dakh recognizes the importance of higher education and is committed to financially supporting its community members who wish to pursue post-secondary education. This strategic priority involves implementing a new policy that increases the financial support provided to students. The current educational support is delivered through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and additional grants are available for academic and vocational learning. The goal of the program is to maintain a reasonable surplus annually to ensure no students are turned away in years with a high number of potential students.

Budget: \$50,000

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Draft and pass a board motion to create a new policy	Village Administration	Immediately	This is the foundational step to increasing financial support for post-secondary education
Increase the high-rent subsidy top-up to \$600 per month	Village Administration	Post policy approval	To alleviate the financial burden of high living costs for students
Increase the parent subsidy top-up by an additional \$500 per month per child	Village Administration	Post policy approval	To provide additional support for student parents, recognizing their additional responsibilities
Increase the travel subsidy top-up to a maximum of \$3000 per year	Village Administration	Post policy approval	To reduce the financial barrier of travel costs associated with post-secondary education

Priority 6: Storage Sheds and Fencing for New Home Builds

Description: The Council of Sik-E-Dakh recognizes the need for adequate storage in community-owned rental properties. The absence of proper storage facilities has led to unattractive visual clutter around homes. To address this, the Council plans to construct storage sheds for each rental unit, enhancing the living environment for residents. Additionally, if the budget permits, the Council aims to provide fencing around properties for better animal control and general property improvement.

Budget: \$50,000

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Determine the scope of the sheds	Village Administration	Summer 2023	Clearly defining the scope will ensure the project meets the community's storage needs
Determine how many sheds will be built and contract building	Village Administration	Fall 2023	Proper planning and preparation ensures a smooth execution of the project
Build a fence for 7plex as a case study for costing and assessing capabilities for in-house work	Village Administration	Fall 2023	Case study helps in understanding the actual cost and in-house capabilities, providing a template for the future fencing projects

Priority 7: Planning Outdoor Gathering Place

Description: The Sik-E-Dakh Council is investing in a space that will serve as the community's heartbeat - an outdoor gathering place. This initiative is directed at establishing a well-designed, functional space that offers a location for various community events and daily gatherings. It will have facilities like a fire pit, running water, sinks for food preparation, and picnic tables. To make it usable in all weather conditions, the space will include a covered area. The Council envisions the gathering place to have a strong Gitksan cultural component to facilitate traditional activities. Although the actual construction is not budgeted for this year, funds are allocated to design the space, estimate costs, and facilitate community consultation for the project.

Budget: \$10,000

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Community Consultation	Village Administration	Summer 2023	Understanding community preferences and requirements ensures the space is functional and well-received
Design and Costing of the Space	Village Administration & Hired Architect	Winter 2023	Proper planning and design are crucial to ensure the project's feasibility, functionality, and cost-effectiveness

Priority 8: Gas Bar and Small Retail Outlet Feasibility

Description: Sik-E-Dakh, at present, lacks a convenient source of gas or diesel and has limited retail facilities. This absence not only inconveniences residents but also imposes additional costs and time burdens when acquiring essential supplies or fuel. Moreover, the lack of a local fuel source results in extra expenses and a higher carbon footprint for the village government's fleet operations. In this light, the Council is considering the establishment of a gas bar and small retail outlet within the community. However, the economic feasibility and community support for this project need to be established. Hence, this year's budget will focus on conducting a feasibility study that takes into account community input and economic viability to make an informed decision about the project's future.

Budget: \$10,000

Action Plan:

Task	Who is Responsible?	Timeline	Why is it Important?
Community Consultation (Survey and Engagement Meeting)	Village Administration	Fall 2023	Gathering community perspectives ensures that the project aligns with their needs and receives their support
Feasibility Study Based on Consultation Results	Village Administration & Necessary Contractors	Winter 2023	Assessing feasibility is critical to determine if the project will be sustainable and beneficial for the community

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Sik-E-Dakh Living Action Plan for 2023/2024 represents a comprehensive and forward-looking roadmap for the development and prosperity of the Sik-E-Dakh community. This strategic plan is the result of a collaborative and consultative process that involved the collective wisdom and input of community members, Chief and Council, and the Village Administration. It reflects the community's aspirations, goals, and values, aiming to nurture and strengthen the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Sik-E-Dakh.

The strategic plan is built upon a strong foundation of governance guiding principles, emphasizing policy-making, setting direction, representing public interest, and effective communication. It acknowledges the complexity of roles and responsibilities, emphasizing transparency, community involvement, and regular feedback to ensure that decisions and actions align with the community's needs and aspirations.

The visioning section of the plan provides a clear and inspiring picture of the desired future for Sik-E-Dakh. It envisions a self-sustainable community with expanded retail operations, enhanced agriculture programs, and economic development opportunities. The plan also emphasizes the importance of a healthy and inclusive community, improved housing, cultural development, sports and recreation, effective governance, and dedicated support for elders.

Despite the numerous challenges faced by the community, such as housing issues, maintaining a healthy community, economic development barriers, governance complexities, and funding limitations, the strategic plan outlines specific actions and initiatives to address these challenges and pave the way for success. The commitment of the council members to their roles and contributions, professional and personal growth, and financial management further reinforces the community's dedication to progress and improvement.

The budget overview highlights the solid financial standing of Sik-E-Dakh, with various funding sources and a debt-free status, enabling the allocation of resources towards community development projects and initiatives. The responsible allocation of funds, aligned with the strategic priorities, will contribute to the realization of the community's vision.

In summary, the Sik-E-Dakh Living Action Plan for 2023/2024 provides a comprehensive roadmap that encompasses the community's aspirations, addresses challenges, and leverages available resources to create a prosperous and sustainable future. With a strong foundation of governance principles, a clear vision, and a commitment to collaboration and community involvement, Sik-E-Dakh is poised for growth, resilience, and the preservation of its rich cultural heritage. By implementing the strategic plan's priorities and ensuring effective budget allocation, Sik-E-Dakh can move forward with confidence, unity, and a shared sense of purpose.