



# Strengthening Nationhood

## Transition – Update April 30, 2018

### We Are Listening

As we continue along our path of governance transition and recognizing that it cannot be rushed, the 11 Chiefs voted unanimously to continue with the transition process with a renewed emphasis on strengthening our Nations governance on the foundations of our culture and language.

The process underway is meant to enhance the Member First Nations' autonomy and self-determination, as FHQTC is not a rights holder.

These areas of strength were brought forward through our consultations as we were told many good things, given a lot of direction, and listened to the many present and future concerns. Governance has always been a part of this transition. However, of the many discussion points, the two that stood out with paramount importance that support governance are:

- Culture and language: involvement of our cultures and languages in everything that we do is fundamental to any of our governance activities, as it is at the root of our Inherent and Treaty rights, and is the foundation of our identities that make up our Nations. Our task is to engage our Knowledge and Language Keepers to inform the Transition Process on the Traditional governing structures and protocols so that we can build the bridges to our contemporary responsibilities; and
- Youth and Citizen Engagement: our youth are important and should be a focus going forward, as they are our future and the reason we are strengthening our Nations. There is also a need for more involvement of all our people, both on- and off-reserve. FHQTC exists for the best interests of our grassroots citizens and we need our grassroots citizens involved if we are to succeed moving forward.

With the renewed mandate, the transition process continues to progress.



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## What Lies Ahead

As we begin a new year, the FHQTC Transition Team has come together to finalize plans and logistics to engage in public discussions and forums. The discussions and forums are an opportunity for all of our citizens to discuss the way forward as we make our way through the governance transition process.

The public discussions and forums will include, but are not limited to:

- Urban citizens
- Nehiyaw Nations
- Nakoda Nations
- Nakawe Nations
- Dakota Nations
- Lakota Nations
- Post-Secondary Institutions
- FHQTC Staff and Managers
- FHQTC Leadership

We have received engagement requests from a few groups so far, and have been advised to engage in a culturally respectful way. As it has been throughout this process, we, the Transition Team, adhere to protocols and respectful traditions put forward by our guiding Knowledge Keepers. In fact, throughout this process, we identified the need to formalize a council of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Language Experts. This council not only aids and guides us in our governance journey, but takes on the role of having culture and language be more prominent and central in FHQTC. This will help ensure the continuation of our unique and special languages and cultures, and will also help us strengthen the path to nationhood.

Since the summer of 2017, our Transition Team has been hard at work re-visioning our path toward strengthening nationhood. Through our setbacks, and successes, we are learning that the path will change from time-to-time. This required a renewed strategic planning session that included our goals, milestones, lessons learned, and re-visioning. We met with Drs. Manley Begay and Pam Palmater to provide us with analysis of our work to date, and with recommendations, as well as with other consultants that help us plan this path.

The work we are doing is unique, as there is no manual or example we can work from, and this is literally a new path that we are blazing. Separating the program and service delivery to stay within an incorporated entity while taking the advocacy and rights activities of our leadership into a contemporary governance model that respects and preserves our Indigenous values, worldviews and rights is not an easy undertaking. A few nations and collectives have attempted and achieved something similar, but is not specific to our unique circumstance and cultural and linguistic make-up. We look forward to the year ahead with excitement and energy. We look forward to the challenges ahead because in the end, we will have strong Nations and even stronger citizens with a greater sense of identity.

As a people, we have experienced great damages to our beautiful languages and cultures, but they are not lost. We have experienced the darkest part of Canada's failed policies and have emerged more resilient. We are a strong people from strong Nations, our diversity and our unity is our strength. It will take the efforts of each and every one of us to champion our Nation Building. We look forward to walking this path with all of you.



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## Why the Change

The relationship with Canada and Saskatchewan is changing as we develop independence and self-sufficiency. Our rights are being recognized through a nation-to-nation relationship and we are getting in front of those changing relationships.

The need to change and evolve with the current and future climate of Indigenous governance is as fundamental as our need was to adapt to a changing way of life. Our young people, leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and communities are becoming ever more aware of our Inherent and Treaty rights – what those rights mean and how we need to respond, implement and enforce; and advocate on behalf of our rights and responsibilities as Indigenous Nations.

As a tribal council, we recognize the need to adapt and have begun to take steps to evolve. In doing so, this transition will exponentially empower us to pursue our Inherent and Treaty rights and interests much more efficiently and effectively, engage our communities better, and continue to build and strengthen our capacity on the road to full implementation and enforcement of our Inherent and Treaty rights.

## Benefits of Re-Organizing

Decisions about programs and services will be made more efficiently. The FHQTC will be able to take advantage of additional funding when the organization is able to take advantage of opportunities for development in all areas. Longer-term strategic planning will be more effective and there will be improvement in services to the communities. High management standards, cultural sensitivity and accountability to the communities will continue to be a focus for the FHQTC, Inc.

Our political leadership will be able to react quickly and forcefully to protect and implement the Inherent and Treaty rights of our people. They will be supported by the advice and participation of our Elders, women and youth. The traditions, culture and language of our five Nations will be in the forefront of our nation re-building and advocacy efforts with other nations and governments, as we move forward to re-establish jurisdiction and self-government.

## Timeline of Progress

- June of 2015: after several years of governance review, a resolution passed that mandated FHQTC to undergo fundamental changes to the governance structure to enhance the way in which the tribal council serves our Nations and citizens.
- February 2016: re-structural planning and logistics commence.



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- October 2016: the Transition Team begins extensive consultations with all 11 First Nations. The consultations included Elders, Chiefs, Councillors, Band Staff, Council of Life Speakers, FHQTC Youth Leadership Development Team, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, FHQTC Women's Council, and FHQTC Staff.
- March 2017: born out of the consultations, the Great Plains Culture & Language Gathering begins planning and preparations with a large group of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Language Experts.
- August 2017: entities, Boards and Committees undertake a policy and/or Term of Reference review to reflect the current changes. Transition Team Strategic Planning Commences.
- September 2017: FHQTC hosts its inaugural Great Plains Culture & Language Gathering. Transition Team Strategic Planning with Consultant Experts continues.
- December 2017: the GPCLG Planning Committee, comprised of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Language Experts, formalizes into a council that will act as a guide for the Transition Project and continue along the path of language & culture continuation, revitalization, and preservation.
- January 2018: logistics are commence to deliver extensive public discussions and forums.

