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WABOWDEN, THICKET PORTAGE, PIKWITONEI, ILFORD & WAR LAKE FIRST NATION:

Bayline Food Buying Co-op

The Bayline Food Buying Co-op was first thought of in 2012. Most communities along the Bayline (rail line) do not have year-round road access or local grocery stores. They have to travel by train, boat, or winter road to do their grocery shopping and this is very expensive. A food buying co-op will provide a regular shipment of pre-ordered foods to community members in partnership with Via Rail. It will reduce the time and money involved in grocery shopping and accessing good foods.

Since the project started there has been lots of work done, including a pre-feasibility study and many meetings. The project is spearheaded by Carol Sanoffsky as part of her role as Administrator for the Bayline Regional Round Table, but many other community leaders and members are helping with the work.

We started out in 2016 with community surveys to find out which types of food people would want to get, to learn about people's interest and understanding of the food buying program and to get suggestions on how to run the program. The community champions in Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei, Marie Brightnose and Pauline

Cordell, led the survey work and we learned a lot to help guide the program planning.

We have made partnerships with many organizations that are helping us to get the program off the ground. Just a few are the community councils of Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei and Iford, War Lake First Nation Chief and Council, VIA Rail, Frontier School Division and Dwyer's Store in Wabowden.

We talked to people from the Fort Albany Food Security Committee who help run a fresh food market in Fort Albany on the James Bay coast. They have worked through challenges and are making the market work. For awhile they had to ship food by truck, to a train and to a plane to get the food from Toronto to Fort Albany, but now they source their food from Thunder Bay which cuts down the transit time considerably. They had a lot of good insights to share with us about the logistics of running a food buying group and potential challenges we might face.

We also visited a group of Manitoba farmers who sell and package their meat or produce to sell directly to consumers. On

the trip we got some good ideas about how to organize the orders and package the food for each 'customer'.

With all the work going into getting the co-op up and running we brought on Donna Sanoffsky as the Wabowden-based coordinator to help support community champions and to coordinate the program start. Donna has done loads of work organizing even more meetings, visiting the communities to share information, getting all the paperwork sorted out for starting the program and purchasing equipment we will need when we start.

We took huge steps forward in 2016 and are almost ready to start our first shipment. Our final step before we kick-off the program is holding a training session for all the community champions in Thompson so they can get more familiar with the ordering and order checking processes.





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ORDER WEEK

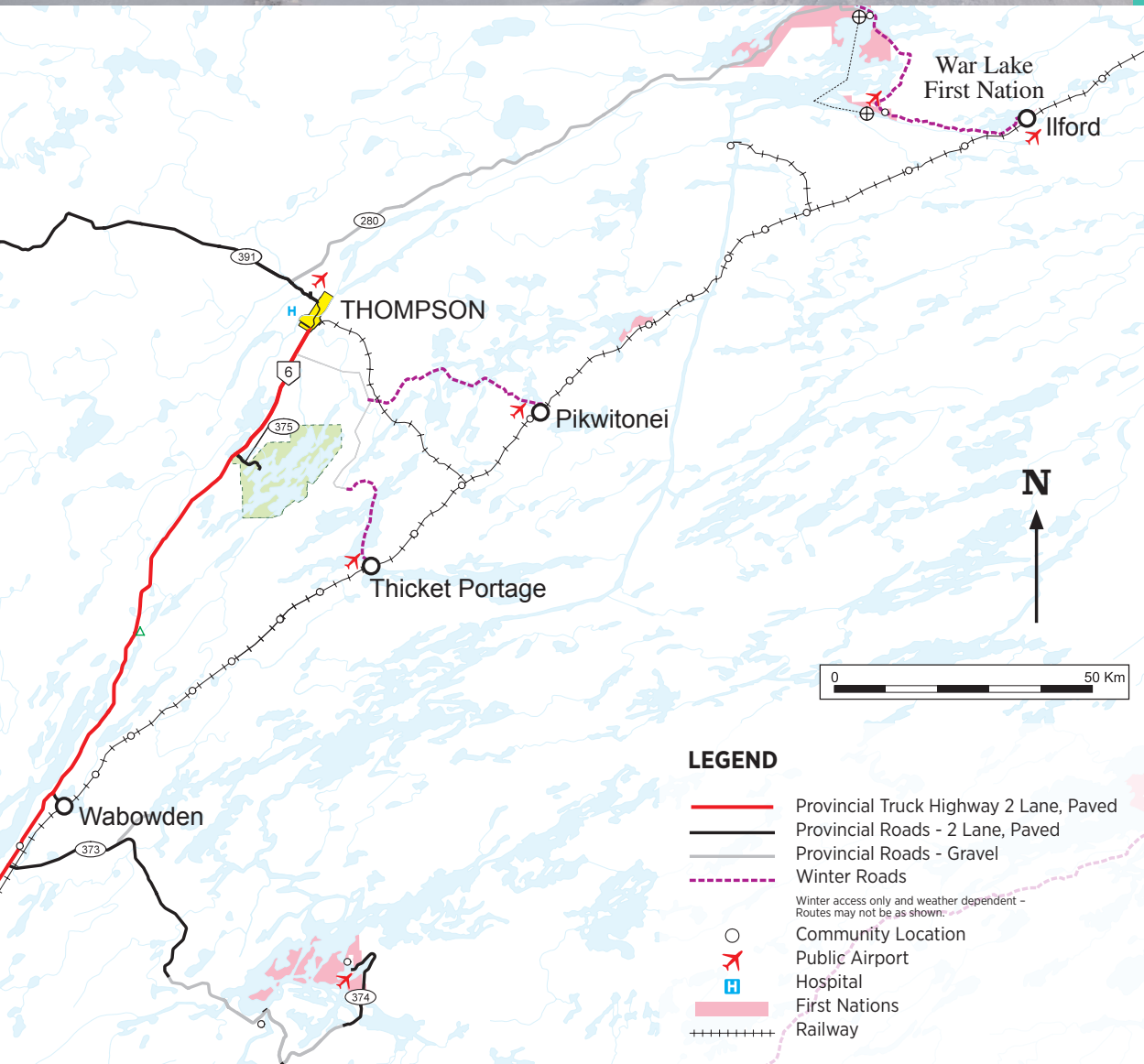


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NFMCCC funding

✓ 2015

✓ 2017



> OBJECTIVES

To increase access to healthy foods, decrease the cost of accessing food, and to make the communities stronger.

> LOCATION

The communities of Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Ilford and War Lake First Nation are located along the Hudson's Bay Railway. Wabowden is located 111 km southwest of Thompson on Highway 6. Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Ilford and War Lake First Nation are not serviced by all season roads but are connected to Thompson by the railway.

> PHOTO DETAILS

[1] Pauline, Leann, Joanne, Jennell, Marie and Carol at Social Enterprise workshop in Thompson. [2] Train Station in Ilford/War Lake First Nation. [3] Panorama of Ilford/War Lake First Nation. [4] Bayline Food Buying Co-op Banner [5] Carol, Danny and Becky on trip to Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative in Cypress River.

This will be good for our community.
- Pikwitonei Community Member

We will save a lot of money if it is started.
- Thicket Portage Community Member

This will be good, it will benefit the elders and children.
- Thicket Portage Community Member