



## **MCK Council of Chiefs Political Priority Setting & Planning 2015-2018**

### **FINAL REPORT**

#### **Executive Summary**

In 2016, the Council of Chiefs of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) undertook a Political Priorities and Planning process to set the political agenda for the 2015-2018 electoral term. The establishment of a political agenda for the MCK provides the community with a clear indication of the priority and plans of the Council of Chiefs. Further, it serves as a guide for both the Council of Chiefs, and the political and operational administrations in their work.

As a result of unforeseen circumstances, the Political Priorities & Planning process experienced a delayed start, and was carried out in phases that took a period of several months. However, the process has resulted in the establishment of a concrete Political Agenda for 2015-2018.

The political agenda of the Council of Chiefs for 2015-2018, includes seven key priority areas, and accompanying goals and objectives to set direction for advancing these priorities. Key priorities include:

- MCK Governance
- Membership & Residency
- Kahnawà:ke's Economy
- Kahnawà:ke's Justice & Legislative Systems
- Political Relationships
- Health & Social Affairs
- Community Engagement

In addition to the political agenda, the Political Priorities & Planning process also resulted in the production of key Political Principles confirmed by the Council of Chiefs to guide decision-making and planning of the MCK. The political principles serve as a guide to the MCK, to align decisions and planning with the general political principles that are based upon cultural values of the community.

While the political agenda established by the Council of Chiefs strives to provide a general focus on political priorities, it is understood to be a guide and may be affected by evolving political situations. Also, while this report sets out general political direction for MCK, the MCK also undertakes organizational strategic planning that is complimentary to the political agenda set by the Council of Chiefs.

This Final Report and Political Agenda are open documents that the Council of Chiefs make available to the community. Questions or concerns regarding the report may be directed to the MCK Office of the Council of Chiefs.



## Approach

In general, the approach for establishing political priorities was a fluid and evolving process undertaken by the Council of Chiefs, with assistance from the Office of the Council of Chiefs, Executive, and Senior Management of the MCK.

The political priority setting process began with an open discussion forum for the Council of Chiefs. The Council of Chiefs used the forum to hold discussions focused on identifying their priorities individually as Chiefs, as collectively as a Council. Following this session, the notes were used to identify key themes and that arose from the discussions and reported to Council. The Council of Chiefs confirmed the key themes as the political priorities of the Council for their term and mandated the development of goal statements and political principles to guide the planning process that followed the priority setting.

Once the Council of Chiefs confirmed the political priorities, corresponding goals, and political principles to guide the planning process, the process moved on to planning. A Political Priorities & Planning forum was held to facilitate discussions amongst the Council of Chiefs, Executive, and Senior Management of the MCK. Guided by the goals, political principles and results from the 2015 Organizational Summit, the forum focused on collecting input to inform the development of activities and resources that support the advancement of the political priorities. Following the forum, the input was used to support the development of the Council of Chiefs Political Agenda for the corresponding term. The Political Agenda sets concrete goals and objectives for the MCK to work towards for the 2015-2018 term. To close the priority setting and planning process, the Final Report and Political Agenda reviewed and confirmed by the Council of Chiefs.

The Final Report and Political Agenda are open and public documents that the Council of Chiefs make available to the community. They shall be used to guide the direction of the Council of Chiefs, and serve as a guide to both the political and operational administrations of the MCK.



## Political Principles

To ensure that the development of a Political Agenda for the MCK considers the political values of the community, the Council of Chiefs established a set of political principles to guide the priority setting process, and future decision-making and planning of the Council of Chiefs and MCK. These political principles are intended to serve as a guide to the MCK, by aligning decisions and planning with the general cultural values of the community.

The Political Principles adopted by the Council of Chiefs are:

◆ **SELF-DETERMINATION AND JURISDICTION**

As the original people of this land, collectively, Kahnawa'kehró:non maintain and assert the authority and responsibility to govern all affairs that occur within our territory.

◆ **LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

Language and culture is integral to maintain our identity as Kanien'kehá:ka people. Promotion and preservation are of the utmost importance; cultural values must be considered when moving forward.

◆ **UNIFICATION**

Our community is most powerful when we are of one mind and we will continue to strive for unifying Kahnawà:ke. Single arrows can only hold so much strength but a bundle of arrows will not be broken; unity is strength.

◆ **SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

Fostering an economy that will establish individual and collective self-sufficiency and prosperity; breaking the cycle of fiscal dependency.

◆ **HOLISTIC SUPPORTS AND WELLBEING**

Ensuring that we have all areas of support available to our community members to support and foster their emotional, physical, spiritual, mental health and wellbeing.

◆ **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

We have a responsibility as indigenous people to protect and preserve Mother Earth to the best of our abilities to ensure that we have a clean and healthy environment for all future generations.

◆ **RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING**

When decision making on ALL matters, both internal and external, that affect Kahnawà:ke, the Leadership is responsible to take into account how decision could affect the next seven generations.



## **Advancing a Political Agenda – Moving Forward with Priorities & Goals**

The Political Priorities and their respective goals outline the general approach of the Council of Chiefs in seven key areas. The results of the Priorities & Planning Session were used to inform the development of objectives for each of the political goals. Together, these set the general direction for the MCK's prioritization of focus and resources over the course of 2015-2018.

It is important to note that as a collection, the political priorities and their corresponding goals and objectives often cannot exist in isolation, but rather strongly inter-relate with each other. It is expected that progress in each area will be shaped and affected by developments in another key area.

It should be further noted that significant content from the Priorities & Planning Session expanded into identifying activities and considerations that pertain to MCK operations. There has been a distinct effort put into the analysis of the input to ensure that the focus remained on political planning and objectives. At the time of the analysis, the MCK was undertaking a Strategic Planning process that aligned with the Political Priorities and Planning process. As a result, to ensure the input was used in an appropriate manner, the notes from the Priorities & Planning Session were forwarded to the firm responsible for conducting the MCK Strategic Planning to assist in development of the strategic plan.

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: MCK GOVERNANCE**

**Goal:** To strengthen the governance system of the MCK Council of Chiefs.

The Council of Chiefs has established that there is a need to establish and strengthen the system that guides the operations of the Council of Chiefs, and of Chiefs individually. The goal aims to improve the governance of the MCK by strengthening the political functioning and accountability of the MCK and the Council of Chiefs through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Develop and implement governance policy for the MCK Council of Chiefs that defines and directs roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountability between the Council of Chiefs and the community.
- **Objective:** Develop and implement operational policy for the MCK Council of Chiefs that defines and regulates: the operations of the Council of Chiefs; roles and responsibilities of Council Chiefs; and, relations between the Council of Chiefs and the political and operational administrations.

#### **Key Considerations:**

Several underlying themes related to the key objectives were raised at the Priorities & Planning Session with respect to Governance. It was noted that the following should be taken into consideration when undertaking activities to advance the objectives:



- Policy development should be participatory; it should include engaging with community members, staff, Chiefs, etc. to collect input
- The community must inform the development of both the individual role of Chiefs, and the role of the Council of Chiefs as a collective
- The approach for developing policies should be piecemeal; starting with a few select policies and then adding until there is a complete set
- In addition to clarifying and regulating how Council functions, there is also a need for the Council to establish clear plans and maintain consistency in following plans and direction
- There is a need to clarify and strengthen the relations between the Council of Chiefs and the technical supports/tools/resources
- The structure of the daily business and scheduling of the Council of Chiefs and the OCC should be reviewed and revised to better manage workloads

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: MEMBERSHIP & RESIDENCY**

**Goal:** To resolve membership and residency issues according to Mohawk Law.

The Council of Chief acknowledges the long-standing issue of membership and residency in the community of Kahnawà:ke. The Council of Chiefs main goal is to resolve outstanding matters that are related to establishment, application and adherence to Mohawk Law and jurisdiction on matters related to membership and residency. Working toward achieving this goal will require advancement of the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Establish recognition of Kahnawà:ke's right to govern matters related to membership and residency; continue to engage the Kahnawà:ke-Canada Relations table to find solutions to address differing membership registries
- **Objective:** Improve community understanding of matters related to membership and residency; work toward fostering internal agreement on Mohawk Law
- **Objective:** Develop and implement a strategy to address matters resulting from enforcement limitations and non-compliance
- **Objective:** Identify and address inconsistencies/gaps in other laws and policies that are correlated to membership and residency matters (ie: land policy, residency)

#### **Key Considerations:**

A number of key considerations were identified by participants in the Priorities and Planning Session. Advancing on the objectives should consider the following points:

- There is a need to establish and follow through with strategies and plans for addressing non-compliance and enforcement limitations
- There is internal variance on positions related to the approach of the MCK on enforcement and non-compliance; this matter should be addressed in the development of strategies and plans



- A critical step in advancing toward recognition of Mohawk Law by external governments, is to get the federal government to stop unilaterally 'making' Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke; mechanisms such as an Order-in-Council should be sought to exempt Kahnawà:ke from certain sections of the Indian Act (concerning membership) as a longer term remedy
- There is concern with determining community acceptability of the law undergoing review in the Community Decision Making Process (CDMP); a strategy should be developed to determine how to measure community acceptability
- There is a need to improve public education around membership/residency and the impacts on land, programs, etc.

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: KAHNAWÀ:KE'S ECONOMY**

**Goal:** To support development of a prosperous and sustainable economy for Kahnawà:ke.

The Council of Chiefs has recognized the necessity of building and supporting the development of a Kahnawà:ke economy that supports a healthy range of economic activities, that benefit the community, and provide opportunity for business to succeed in Kahnawà:ke. The goal of establishing and supporting a prosperous and sustainable economy will be sought through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Clarify the relationship between, and respective responsibilities of, Tawatohnhi'saktha and the MCK in economic development; address resulting gaps (revenue generation to support collective/community)
- **Objective:** Establish political accords/agreements with external governments to address the economic, political and legal barriers that result from cross-jurisdictional issues
- **Objective:** Establish and maintain agreements with third parties (ex: Hydro, CPR, etc.) that provide benefit to the community without compromising jurisdiction
- **Objective:** Establish legislation and regulation for economic and commercial industries in Kahnawà:ke; to support and encourage local revenue generation and business development that benefits, and respects/protects the collective rights of, the community
- **Objective:** Improve community engagement on matters related to economic development, to build awareness and strong support for the fostering of Kahnawà:ke's economy



## Key Considerations:

Several themes that apply to the goal and objectives of advancing Kahnawà:ke's economy were identified by the participants in the Priorities and Planning Session. These factors should be strongly considered in the advancement of the objectives:

- Economic development should respect and support the community's cultural values and principles; economic opportunities should not come at the expense of disregarding cultural values (ie: environmental stewardship)
- Existing tables (ie: QKR, KCR) should be used to advance on the establishment of political agreements that address taxation, legislation, etc.
- Kahnawà:ke's public reputation amongst neighbouring communities is a major factor in economic development; efforts should be made to improve public relations and image and relationships
- There is a need for the community to take a coordinated approach to community wellness and economic development; the strong links between social, educational and employability factors and outcomes requires investments to be made in strengthening all of these in coordination
- Comprehensive capacity building that is widely supported is required to ensure suitable workforce development to support Kahnawà:ke's economy
- Availability of land for economic purposes and land use planning are critical for sustainable economic development
- There is a need to screen and consider options for business models and partnerships (ie: between MCK and local partners/investors) for revenue generation initiatives that could support the community/collective
- Diversification of economic activity should be considered as a means to sustain economic stability
- There is a need to develop sufficient right-of-use agreements with internal and external entities that utilize Kahnawà:ke's land base (ie: Hydro, Transport, Kanawaki, etc.)

## **POLITICAL PRIORITY: KAHNAWÀ:KE'S JUSTICE & LEGISLATIVE SYSTEMS**

**Goal:** To develop government to government arrangements and internal processes to allow for implementation and enforcement of Kahnawà:ke's Justice and Legislative systems.

The establishment and implementation of Kahnawà:ke's Justice and Legislative systems is a priority that the Council of Chiefs has maintained across several electoral terms. It is recognized that there are several challenges with the development of the systems, and that processes are evolving as law building progresses. The Council of Chiefs supports working toward the goal of recognition of jurisdiction and implementation and enforcement of the Justice and Legislative systems through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Assert jurisdiction over justice by establishing agreements with external governments to institute means by which each respective justice systems shall co-exist; clarify responsibilities in implementation



- **Objective:** Conduct evaluation of the law building and amendment process (CDMP) in the community to determine efficiency, effectiveness and any required improvements and modifications

### Key Considerations:

Several considerations were raised by participants in the Priorities and Planning Session with respect to both the Justice and Legislative systems and the CDMP process. Significant content was raised on the CDMP process. Advancing the objectives should take into respect the following key considerations:

- Existing parallel judicial systems can serve as a starting point for jurisdictional discussions with external governments (ie: Sharia Law)
- Co-existing justice systems will create ample opportunities for challenges in enforcement; any agreements will require strong enforcement protocols (ie: enforcing external warrants, housing of prisoners, etc.)
- The CDMP review should provide recommendations for system or process changes that address concerns with low participation, lengthy timelines for law building and amendments, and stacking participation
- There was a large variance in perspectives regarding who should be responsible for enacting and amending legislation in Kahnawà:ke (the people via CDMP, KLCC, Council of Chiefs, etc.)
- To ensure full accountability and good governance, any revisions to the law building process should adhere to concepts of balance of power between executive-legislature-judicial entities
- The original structure of the CDMP provided for culturally-based decision making; significant changes since raise questions regarding how far any further revisions can go before it no longer reflects a culturally-based approach

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Goal:** To build and strengthen relationships within and external to the Community that produces long lasting positive results.

The Council of Chiefs has determined that there is a need to evaluate and clarify/strengthen its relationships with other entities and governments, both external to the community and internally within the community. Many of the MCK's relationships require strengthening to ensure they are effectively meeting Kahnawà:ke's needs. The MCK aims to build and strengthen relations through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Strengthen relations and accountability between the Council of Chiefs and the community through improving community engagement
- **Objective:** Strengthen relations amongst and between the Council of Chiefs and community entities/organizations by reviewing and updating mandates and relationship agreements



- **Objective:** Evaluate and clarify relationships with external governments to ensure the relationships is functioning optimally and is productive
- **Objective:** Evaluate relations with external partners and participation in external networks to ensure they are beneficial and productive

#### Key Considerations:

Participants in the Priorities and Planning Session identified several underlying themes and considerations that should apply to a variety of the objectives. Consideration should be made for the following factors in the advancement of the objectives, including:

- The MCK needs to improve the consistency of reporting and sharing information to increase transparency and accountability with the community
- The MCK needs to build and foster trust within the community and with organizations/entities as an initial step in strengthening relationships
- Developing relations with new partners/allies (ex: third parties) should be selective, advantageous, and results-based
- There is a need to act quickly and seize opportunities in strengthening relations; act quickly in fostering relations with newly elected governments
- There is a need to assess and refine how the MCK engages in external forums (such as AFN, AFNQL, Iroquois Caucus) to ensure the best use of these forums, and that participation is beneficial and productive
- There is a need to improve the internal functioning of the Council of Chiefs, as it is a strong contributing factor in the maintenance of relations, both externally and internally

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: HEALTH & SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

**Goal:** To promote a unified, collaborative and holistic approach to improving the social fabric of the community.

Supporting individual and family health and social wellbeing was recognized as one of the key priorities for the Council of Chiefs. It was recognized that there is a strong need for the community to work in a more coordinated manner to provide seamless supports for individuals and families, to improve all social, educational, fiscal and cultural outcomes. The Council of Chiefs will work toward advancing this goal through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Support and promote the work of the Collective Impact for Social Change Initiative
- **Objective:** Establish agreements to support jurisdictional control over matters currently administered across jurisdictions (ie: child and family services)

#### Key Considerations:

Some key points that should be considered in the advancement of the goals and objectives include:



- Consistent support and encouragement from the Council of Chiefs to the Collective Impact Process group and organizations across the community will serve as beneficial in promoting system-wide change
- There is a significant shift that is required in the mindset of all organizations and the community at large that the service delivery system promotes a hand-up, not hand-out
- Rebuilding families requires social change; it must be supported by not only the MCK and organizations, but all community members
- In order for real integrated service delivery to be realized, it will require adoption of a one-window approach to service delivery; this will have to be supported by resources that can be used to promote this approach

### **POLITICAL PRIORITY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Goal:** To actively engage the Community through processes and activities that will foster Communal input and direction.

The Council of Chiefs has identified that there is a strong need to improve how the MCK engages the community on matters related to political governance, strategy and direction. Better community engagement will ensure that the political approach of the MCK is most representative of the community's general needs, values and perspectives. The Council of Chiefs will work toward improving engagement with the community through the following objectives:

- **Objective:** Establish and implement a strategy for improving community engagement; including developing a variety of tools and methods for engaging with community members in a consistent manner
- **Objective:** Improve relations with distinct groups in the community; including Elders, Youth and Organizations
- **Objective:** Engage Longhouses to address matters of common interest and concern
- **Objective:** Establish and implement an annual community gathering as a means of improving direct engagement with the community to collect direction and input on political and governance matters

#### **Key Considerations:**

There are several considerations that concern the goal and objectives that were raised at the Planning and Priorities Session. These considerations are highly relevant to guiding the implementation of the objectives, and should be strongly considered in moving forward:

- Relationship building with the Traditional Bodies/Longhouses should consider clarification of roles, and consideration of integrating representation from the Longhouses in key work of the MCK (such as the Seigneurie of Sault St. Louis Negotiations)
- Improving relations with Elders and Youth in the community requires meeting with available groups (Elders & Youth Councils) on a regular basis



- Elders advising on the political matters of Council can be highly valuable
- Direct engagement between Chiefs and community members is highly valuable; potential to consider establishing a community issues portfolio
- Engaging directly with community members should be done in a variety of ways, including face to face, holding informal meetings with members in local settings (restaurants, coffee shops, etc.), kiosks, visiting neighbourhoods, etc.
- There is a need to streamline some of the political communications to avoid information overload; there is a need to improve MCK's public image
- An annual community summit should focus on revolving themes and collect input to develop broader plans (ie: comprehensive community plan) and strategies



## ANNEX A

### MCK Council of Chiefs Political Agenda 2015-2018

The MCK Political Agenda sets the general political priorities and direction for the MCK Council of Chiefs and the political and operational administrations for the 2015-2018 term. The Political Agenda has been developed under the direction of the Council of Chiefs in an effort to focus MCK political attention and resources on attaining key goals and objectives.<sup>1</sup>

#### MCK GOVERNANCE

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## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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- **Objective:** Improve relations with distinct groups in the community; including Elders, Youth, and Organizations
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