

Winter 2026 community engagement

*Tioweró:ton Policy*  
and  
*Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure*

**Education Package**

Enníska/February 2026

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## A few facts about Tioweró:ton, Kahnawà:ke's second home

- A Territory shared with Kanehsatà:ke since 1853 for hunting, fishing, gathering medicines and picking berries
- Common land, collectively held by members of both communities
- Located near the town of Ste. Agathe, in the Laurentian Mountains, its name means “Air that begins as a slight breeze then whirls into a wind”
- Forms the head of the Tioweró:ton River hydrographic basin and covers 19,137 acres (77 km<sup>2</sup>)
- Home to many ecosystems, including of forest and wetland habitats and about 69 lakes and ponds of varying sizes that support local populations of brook trout and wildlife such as moose and white tailed deer
- An increasing number of community members wish to spend time and enjoy the Territory, ranging from up to 400 visitors on winter weekends to as many as 1500 visitors in the summer
- Over the past three decades, there has been a significant increase in circulation, cabins and road construction and certain recreational activities on the Territory:
  - the number of cabins had increased from 125 to more than 400, in addition to out-buildings
  - the total deforested areas surrounding cabins has more than tripled
  - ATV usage and incidents have been increasing with the population growth.
- Human activity has created pressures on the natural ecosystems of Tioweró:ton, including deforestation, soil erosion and damage to fish spawning grounds and wildlife habitats
- *A Tioweró:ton Policy*, jointly created with Kanehsatà:ke, was developed in 2004 to establish frameworks, guidelines and rules to protect the Territory and the collective rights and interests of future generations of community members
- *A Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure* was developed by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke's Lands Unit and was adopted in 2019 to address issues arising from rapidly growing cabin development, yet implementation has been a challenge
- Past community consultations have confirmed the importance of Tioweró:ton and the need to preserve natural areas, hunting and fishing areas, as well as berry and medicine gathering areas
- Through collaboration and land use planning and management, we can protect Tioweró:ton, ensure the continuity of traditional activities and honour the original intent of the territory. Working together to protect, enhance or restore them for the future generations.

## What is the *Tioweró:ton Policy* (“Policy”)?

- A tool to protect *Tioweró:ton* and the collective rights and interests of Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke community members by establishing standards, guidelines and rules of conduct for the benefit of current and future generations
- Jointly developed in 2004 by Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke
- Grounded in Kaianere’kó:wa principles, the *Policy*’s goal, spirit and intent is to:
  - Protect the territory in the context of an increase of visitors
  - Preserve *Tioweró:ton*’s natural environment and atmosphere
  - Establish rules of conduct to achieve these goals
- What the *Policy* does:
  - It sets out duties, responsibilities and rules of conduct
  - It identifies enforcement roles and outlines a basic process
  - It establishes responsibilities, recommendations, rules and procedures in relation to:
    - ✓ Usage and visitation
    - ✓ Cabin construction (eligibility, designated areas, application procedure, construction rules and requirements)
    - ✓ Hunting, fishing
    - ✓ Driving of vehicles
    - ✓ Environmental and natural resource protection (waste disposal and recycling, tree cutting)
    - ✓ Commercial activities (prohibited)
    - ✓ Sale of cabins or improvements
- Community consultations were carried out in Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke in 2015 to update the *Policy* and attached *Procedures*, but the *Policy* was ultimately never amended.

## What is the *Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure* (“*Procedure*”)?

- Developed in 2019 by the MCK Lands Unit, the ***Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure*** is a tool to address aspects of the *Tioweró:ton Policy* that relate to development, cabin ownership and cabin construction.
- The *Procedure* was submitted to a 30-day community review process in 2019
- The *Procedure*’s purpose and goal is to:
  - Establish an orderly process for the development and use of the Territory while protecting and respecting the environment
  - Establish a process to obtain a Cabin site in the *Tioweró:ton Territory*, including the transfer or sale of a Cabin interest.
- Applies to all current and prospective Cabin owners in the *Tioweró:ton Territory*
- What the *Procedure* does:
  - Defines roles and responsibilities (*Tioweró:ton Committee*, *Tioweró:ton Manager*, *Caretakers*, *Applicants* and *Cabin Owners*)
  - Defines rules applicable to:
    - ✓ New road construction and area development
    - ✓ Environmental conservation measures (trees, wetlands and bodies of water)
    - ✓ Cabin site allotment process, including:
      - Eligibility criteria and limitations
      - Proof of eligibility
      - Rules to object to a cabin allotment
    - ✓ Cabin construction standards
    - ✓ Sale & transfer of cabins
    - ✓ Disposal of waste and construction debris
    - ✓ Landfilling
    - ✓ Hazardous structures
    - ✓ Prohibition on commercial ventures
- Establishes an appeal process
- Outlines authority to enforce the *Procedure*
- Establishes a process for amending the *Procedure*

## **Cabin site allotment : A 7-step process**

(Section 7 of the *Procedure*)

### **The current process:**

#### **Phase 1: Application for a Cabin Site & Time Limits for Construction**

- Submission of Appendices “A” and “B” (*Acknowledgement Form* and *Application for a Tioweró:ton Cabin Site*)

#### **Phase 2: Verification of the eligibility criteria and limitations by the Tioweró:ton Manager**

#### **Phase 3: Public Notice of the application and thirty (30) day period**

- If there are no objections, the application is approved on a preliminary basis

#### **Phase 4: Prepared to Build a Cabin Attestation and Selection of Cabin Site**

- Selection of Cabin Site by Applicant from a designated area (possible exception may apply upon authorization to build on a site adjacent to a family-owned cabin)
- Submission of the *Prepared to Build a Cabin Attestation* (Appendix “C”)

#### **Phase 5: Cabin Site Construction Checklist**

- Visit of Cabin Site with Caretaker, explanation of standards by the Caretaker and completion of a *Cabin Site Construction Checklist* (Appendix “D”)
- Verification of the information by the Tioweró:ton Manager

#### **Phase 6: Cabin Site Registration**

- New Cabin Owner(s) name(s) and Cabin Site location information are entered in the Cabin Registry

#### **Phase 7: Approval for Cabin Construction**

- Submission and review of all required documentation (Appendices)
- Letter of Tioweró:ton Manager confirming approval and confirming construction may start

### **Some considerations informing this approach:**

- Environmental protection: ensuring cabin construction is done in designated areas and according to standards that prevent ecological damage
- Safety: Ensuring cabins are safe and built according to approved construction standards

## Eligibility criteria

(sections 9 and 10 of the *Procedure*)

### What are eligibility criteria?

Eligibility criteria are the requirements or conditions that must be met by an Applicant or Co-Applicant to obtain a cabin site in Tioweró:ton.

### Under the current rules, an Applicant or Co-Applicant (spouse) must:

- a) be at least 18 years old
- b) be a member (if Co-Applicants, at least one)
- c) not already possess a cabin interest (ownership or part ownership of a cabin located in the Tioweró:ton Territory)
- d) not have previously sold a cabin interest for an amount exceeding \$1.00, with exceptions for the context of divorce, separation, inheritance or other reasonable circumstances
- e) have resided in Kahnawà:ke or Kanehsatà:ke for a period of one (1) year or more prior to applying (some exceptions to recognize circumstances such as housing shortages, schooling, employment opportunities)
- f) not build on the cabin site for a purpose other than the construction or placement of a cabin.

### Some considerations informing the current set of criteria:

- Ensuring Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke and their families are able to access and enjoy the Tioweró:ton Territory, which is common land, collectively held by community members
- Fairness and equity: 1 family = 1 cabin
- A member who is of age (18 years old) is not bound by the 1 family = 1 cabin rule
- Reflecting real life family situations (divorce, common law situations, inheritances, etc.)
- Preserving the nature and original purpose of the Territory for hunting, fishing, gathering, medicine and berry picking and family activities
- Ensuring Tioweró:ton is not used for commercial activities or ventures, for instance through community members accumulating and / or selling cabins on the Territory.

## **Proof of eligibility**

(section 11 of the *Procedure*)

### **The current rules:**

- Applicants and Co-Applicants are responsible for demonstrating they meet all the relevant eligibility criteria with supporting documents.
- The procedure does not provide a list of supporting documents
- Applicants and Co-Applicants must fill out / provide:
  - *Application for a Tioweró:ton Cabin Site* (Appendix “A”)
  - *Attestation of readiness to build a cabin / “Prepared to Build a Cabin Attestation”* (Appendix “C”)
  - *Cabin construction checklist* (Appendix “E”)
  - *Cabin owner information form* (Appendix “H”)
  - If applicable: *Renouncement of Cabin Interest in Tioweró:ton Territory* (Appendix “F”)

### **Some considerations informing the current rules:**

- Ensuring Applicants and Co-Applicants fulfill the requirements to obtain a cabin site
- Ensuring policy goals (equity and fairness, protecting the environment, preserving the character, nature and intent of the Territory, preventing commercialism, etc.) are achieved

## **2-year time limit for cabin construction**

(Section 7 D, E, F and H of the *Procedure*)

### **The current rules:**

- Cabin construction must be completed within two (2) years from the date indicated in the letter of approval provided by the Tioweró:ton Manager.
- The Tioweró:ton Manager must be satisfied that cabin construction complies with the standards set in the *Procedure*
- Failure to complete cabin construction within two (2) years may result in the Tioweró:ton Manager rescinding the Cabin owner's registration from the Cabin Registry and registering a new Cabin owner for the Cabin Site
- The Applicant must forfeit the Cabin Site and must either
  - Sell the unfinished structure to another interested and approved Applicant; or
  - Remove the unfinished structure at his or her own expense
- The Applicant may reapply for a Cabin Site twelve (12) months after the two-year deadline to construct and may be required to restart all or part of the process.

### **Some considerations informing these rules:**

- Assumption that Applicants should be ready to build if they obtain a cabin site.
- Safety and prevention: preventing situations where cabins are not completed and become hazardous structures presenting safety risks
- Fairness and equity: many community members are waiting for a cabin site. The assumption is that an Applicant should not be able to “sit on” a site for an undetermined period while other community members who are ready to build are unable to access a cabin site
- Assumption that two (2) years is a reasonable period to build a cabin. Applicants who are not able to do so within that period may reapply later on.

## **Unfinished/hazardous structures**

(Section 7 F and G and section 19 of the *Procedure*)

### **The current rules:**

- An “unfinished structure” is any Cabin which is not deemed habitable or suitable for habitation based on construction standards
- The Tioweró:ton Manager contacts that Kahnawà:ke Director for Public Safety and the Kanehsatà:ke Portfolio Chief for Public Security and any other relevant authorities to disclose a suspected hazardous structure
- A potential hazardous structure may be inspected by relevant authorities at any time or without prior notice
- Unfinished structures must be sold or removed by the Applicant within six (6) months from the expiry of the two (2) year time limit to build a cabin
- Cabin owners must empty and remove or fill abandoned wells with gravel, sand or earth
- If the Applicant does not sell or remove a structure, the Tioweró:ton Manager, with approval from the Tioweró:ton Committee, may have the structure removed and demand payment from the Applicant for the cost of the removal
- If the Applicant does not pay the cost of removal, legal proceedings may be initiated to recover the cost of removal with interest.
- The *Kahnawà:ke Hazardous Structures Law* and other applicable laws or regulations are applicable to the Tioweró:ton Territory to address hazardous structures.

### **Some considerations informing these rules:**

- Safety and prevention: preventing situations where cabins are not completed and become hazardous structures presenting safety risks
- Community member responsibility: If an Applicant is not able to build their cabin within the two (2) year limit, applicants are responsible for ensuring that the cabin site is returned to a state that is safe and suitable for new owners who are ready to build.

## Enforcement

(Section 23 of the *Procedure*)

### The current enforcement structure:

- Kahnawà:ke’s laws are incorporated by reference in the *Policy* and *Procedure*
- Authorities designated to enforce the *Procedure* as well as laws and regulations applicable to the Territory are:
  - Tioweró:ton Caretakers
  - The Tioweró:ton Manager
  - The Tioweró:ton Committee
  - The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
  - The Mohawk Council of Kanehsatà:ke
- The Mohawk Councils of Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke may take judicial or extrajudicial action to address violations of the *Procedure* by a person or business and seek redress
- Three warning system established in the *Tioweró:ton Policy*:
  1. Verbal and written notice
  2. Second verbal and written notice requiring compliance with the *Policy* and stating consequences for continued breach
  3. Third verbal and written notice to comply and immediate suspension of privileges at Tioweró:ton for a set time, to be decided by the Tioweró:ton Committee.
- Peacekeepers are empowered to enforce the *Highway Safety Code* in Tioweró:ton
- Available accountability mechanisms are mostly civil, for instance through agreements signed by Cabin owners (e.g. *Acknowledgement Form* – Appendix “B”).

### Some considerations informing this structure:

- Impacts of *Procedure* breaches on safety, security, environmental protection and collective rights and interests of Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke
- Capacity limits for inspection and enforcement of the *Policy* and *Procedure* (institutional, funding, human resources)
- Reluctance to refer breaches and enforcement matters to external courts.

## About the engagement process

The MCK Lands Unit requests community members' input and collaboration to improve the *Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure* as a tool to protect the Territory, honour its original intent and ensure the continuity of traditional activities in Tioweró:ton.

### Goals of engagement:

1. To **build community members' awareness**, knowledge and understanding of:
  - Tioweró:ton and of the issues impacting the land
  - The *Tioweró:ton Policy* and the *Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure* and the purpose of these documents
2. To create **opportunities for dialogue** around the protection of Tioweró:ton
3. To **identify policy changes** that would help better manage and protect Tioweró:ton Lands, leading to amendments to the *Procedure* (short term) and *Policy* (medium term)

### Focus of engagement:

This round of engagement will focus on **specific aspects of the *Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure***:

- Eligibility criteria
- Proof of eligibility
- Two-year time limit for cabin construction
- Unfinished or hazardous structures
- Enforcement

### Engagement approach:

1. **Education and information-sharing** (February, March):
  - Education package (available online)
  - Facebook page
  - Radio show
2. **Engagement activities** (February, March)
  - 3 engagement sessions open to all (registration requested):
    - ✓ Thursday, February 26, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
    - ✓ Saturday February 28, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
    - ✓ Thursday March 12, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
  - 30-day document review (opportunity to provide written feedback)
3. **Validation of updated *Procedure***

The updated *Tioweró:ton Development and Cabin Ownership Procedure*, incorporating changes based on feedback received from the Community, will be posted for a **30-day review period**.