

Akwesasne Comprehensive Community Development Plan

“Helping Build a Better Tomorrow”

*“Ska'nikónra Aietewátste Aietéwariwaseróni ne Tsinénwe
Nentewaierá:te”*

**St. Regis Mohawk Tribe – Office of
Economic Development**

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INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Department of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe initiated a community participatory project called “Akwesasne Comprehensive Community Development Plan” that formally started in April 2008. The primary intent for this project was to engage community members to participate in the community development planning process by completing a community questionnaire and discussing their future vision for Akwesasne. The goals of the participatory approach were to reinforce the community’s collective spirit; enhance community members’ voice; identify community development vision, priorities, goals and objectives; and to establish guidelines and plans for community development, growth, education, health, sustainability, and overall well-being.

Key factors stressed in the process included an elaboration of community members’ ideas, hopes, aspirations, and values in establishing a future vision for Akwesasne. Comprehensive community input established identification of priorities for future development in all areas of community life – social, cultural, economic, and governance.

The priorities voiced by Akwesasró:non in the survey responses provides a sound basis and direction for community leadership to utilize this very important tool to plan strategically in enhancing existing institutions/programs/services and creating new institutions/programs/services where required. Utilization of the identified development priorities in planning and implementation would truly validate and respect the results of the participatory process. This would also send a message that participation in consultative surveys is worthwhile and this should motivate community members to actively participate in future consultations.

This report has been formulated as a Framework that will facilitate the development of a Comprehensive Community Development Plan. It is organized to provide the community and its leadership with guidelines for future development to help establish a strategic direction that will help define and shape where and how the community should grow.

The Vision Statement for each section can be considered the guiding principles representative of frequently recurring themes in the findings about future community development. The Summary Findings present an analysis of the data. The

Framework Goals serve to identify community priorities that leadership should focus on for future development. Framework Recommendations have been formulated to assist in identifying actions and policies to be carried out and supported by leadership when making decisions about public investment and community development. Overall, the Framework Report will facilitate the establishment of a community driven strategic direction that will provide leadership with direction from Akwesasró:non about their priorities for the future development of Akwesasne.

Key developmental priorities, issues, and vision statements were identified and assessed from quantitative and qualitative information as tabulated and interpreted from the results of the "People's Survey", "Youth Survey", community group gatherings, interviews, and discussions with individual community members. The summary findings sections present the analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative information obtained through the participatory process. The data analysis findings can be found in the appendix section of the Report.

Since we used a non-probability sampling procedure in the selection of our respondents, the extent to which our sample represents the entire population cannot be known. A review of the overall demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the final sample shows that they are roughly comparable to what we know about our community's population profile.

Efforts, however, were made to be as inclusive as possible when soliciting community participation. Specifically, individuals, community groups and organizations, gatherings, and family groups were invited to participate in completing the survey. The participatory process was extensively advertised on radio and newspaper to ensure that all segments of our community had a chance to complete the questionnaires.

Two-hundred and fifty-four (255) adults participated in completed the survey entitled "A People's Survey" consisted of 67 questions comprised of multiple choice and write-in open ended questions. Participants not having completed the survey(s) however contributing input by oral participation numbered almost one-hundred. The "Youth Survey" participants total was ninety-one (91) youth ages twelve to nineteen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Community Development Plan Framework was developed to facilitate the establishment of a community driven strategic direction that will provide leadership with direction to help define and shape where and how the community should grow.

A participatory process was initiated to obtain community members' views, ideas, hopes, aspirations, and ideal vision for future development of Akwesasne. A community questionnaire, entitled "A People's Survey" was utilized for this purpose and complemented by the added means of a "Youth Survey", discussions, interviews, and consultation with individuals, community groups, family groups, business owners, employees, youth groups, elder groups, and personnel of community government managers and administration.

This Framework Report defines the community's ideal vision for the future development of Akwesasne in all areas of community life. The defined vision for each area – social, economic, cultural, and governance - can be considered the guiding principles of the community for future development. The goals serve to define community priorities that leadership should focus on for future development. Recommendations have been formulated to assist in identifying actions and policies to be carried out and supported by leadership when making decisions about public investment and development.

The overall outcomes realized by this process provided the following themes that were identified as most important community priorities for future development of Akwesasne:

Education - Results from our surveys show that 95 percent of our youth respondents plan to go to college. We must take active measures to ensure that they all achieve their educational goals, as 70 percent of adult respondents said their education was curtailed by financial and/or family constraints. Increased community oversight of educational programs was identified as most important community priority for education planning with emphasis on increasing culture and language integration in schools.

Housing – Almost two-thirds of our respondents said that they would like to see "much more" energy efficient housing while just under half said they would like to see "much more" single family housing. Regarding future housing initiatives, about 67 percent saw access to community revenues to develop environmentally friendly housing, planned residential areas, and access to loans for home building in the community as high priorities.

Employment – Quality, well-paying jobs accessible to all Akwesasró:non who want to live and work in the community was the highest priority. About half of our adult respondents were not satisfied with employment opportunities on the reservation. One third of our respondents had annual incomes of \$20,000 or less. One in four workers did not have health insurance. Development of funding sources for education and access to increased vocational training within Akwesasne is needed. Enhanced native preference policies, programs and services to facilitate employment access, and business development are considered very important to support employment development in Akwesasne.

Language/Culture – With only seven percent of adult respondents identifying themselves as fluent in Mohawk, over 90 percent said “keeping Mohawk language alive” was a high priority. Similarly, the large majority (about 85 percent) identified maintaining Mohawk traditions and practices alive and teaching Mohawk language and culture in schools as high priorities. Increased language and culture in schools as well as increasing learning opportunities for all members are considered very important priorities to maintain our Kanien’kéha:ka identity.

Health and Social Services – The majority of adult respondents saw their physician (68%), dentist (56%), optometrist (71%) and pharmacist in Akwesasne. Participants prioritized development of a universal Akwesasne healthcare and social services system to provide quality services. Traditional and alternative medicines and healing approaches, as well as services designed to strengthen families and youth at risk are also considered very important priorities.

Governance – With regard to leadership issues, three out of four said that governments working together on many issues was a high priority. Two out of three wanted leaders to focus on land claims and ensure community consultation on any agreement with outside entities. The highest priorities with respect to governance planning included initiatives that brings about governance unity, transparency and accountability, moving land claims forward, and enhancing community participation.

Justice – Participants would like to see the Akwesasne Justice System and court to provide same services, hear all issues, and look like non-native courts, however high importance was placed on incorporating traditional elements within the Justice system, as well as strengthening enforcement.

Economy - The large majority of respondents gave high priority to economic initiatives focused on image improvement (73%), research and development of alternative energy sources (70%),

passing fuel/gas tax savings onto the community (67%) and creating a community utility company (65.1%). Respondents also prioritized increased access to business loans, mortgage loans and other banking services. Development strategies should focus on alternative energy based initiatives, alternative lower cost energy sources, cultural tourism, small independent business development and a diversified economy.

Land Use and Environment – The large majority of respondents identified litter along roadside (74%) and unsightly junk in yards (66.0%) and deteriorating roads (69%) as big problems. Consistent with Mohawk support for environmental sustainability, a large majority of respondents give high priority to land use initiatives such as alternative energy development (78%), recycling (72%), enforcing pollution controls (69%), and the preservation of wetlands and woodlands (61%). The majority also gave high priority to land use planning and land use regulations for different types of functions.

Our Youth - The ideal vision of the Youth of Akwesasne is to be drug-free, sober, and free from the negative outside perceptions about our community; they want a community that they are proud to call home. Youth see it as very important to increase language and traditional cultural teaching in their schools. Our youth want more availability of recreational and sports programs and a youth oriented facility for social activities.

Our Elders – Participants emphasized prioritizing educational and employment opportunities for our youth. The majority feel that the (outside) government must maintain their fiduciary responsibility to provide healthcare. Our Elders stressed that leadership must ensure that enough land is available for our families and children to live in Akwesasne as well as affordable homes.

In summary, we heard from the people that Akwesasró:non of all ages value our Kanien'khé:ha language and culture and want to have development plans in place to ensure that they remain a strong and vibrant foundation of our community. Akwesasró:non want opportunities to pursue higher education and access training and have the ability to obtain quality, well-paying jobs so that they can live and prosper in their own community. Quality health care and effective social services are very important and their provision should be universal to all Akwesasró:non. Akwesasró:non want our distinctive governance structures to work together in a unified approach for the advancement of our collective objectives such as land claims. Akwesasró:non want an effective Justice system integrated with traditional elements. A diversified economy that promotes equitable employment opportunities for all Akwesasró:non is a high priority. Akwesasró:non are concerned

about our environment and want to see more planned development, access to lower cost energy, and protection of our resources. Our Youth are concerned about social issues and outside perceptions. We heard that our Elders want more opportunities for our Youth, and envision an expanded land base for the next generations.

There are a number of significant implications both for leadership and Akwesasró:non in seeking to implement the comprehensive community development plan. There are significant cost and resource requirements involved, but more significant is the need for community ownership of the plan to achieve the defined vision.

Once community approval is sought and received for the CCDP Framework, a formal Comprehensive Community Development Plan should be developed covering all planning areas – Natural and Cultural resources, Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Agricultural, Utilities and Community facilities, Intergovernmental cooperation, and detailed action and implementation approaches. This process will require a coordinated effort among many levels of leadership, administration, and community participants.

VISION STATEMENT

“My vision for the future of the Akwesasne community is a place where the community is well in body, mind and spirit; a place where we respect each other and all living things; a place where language and culture are a priority and integrated into everything we do; a place that shows we care for it.”¹

In 2029, Akwesasne is a prosperous and thriving community located along the St. Lawrence River. Akwesasne is known for its vibrant People whose Mohawk language and culture encompass all areas of community life. Akwesasne is a welcoming place for visitors from near and far with many cultural tourism opportunities that are renowned throughout the world.

Cooperative community governance structures work together to strengthen Akwesasne unity and promote collective advancement. Effective planning and use of Tribal enterprise profits has positively impacted all areas of community life -

Akwesasró:non enjoy a safe, secure, and clean environment with sustainable wetlands and wildlife areas harmonized with well-planned affordable and energy efficient housing and plenty of recreational areas.

Local employment opportunities abound for Akwesasró:non with a diversified - sustainable economy mixed with independent businesses and alternative energy businesses producing clean low cost energy and supplying products to a national market.

Akwesasró:non have a community-controlled education system including a high school and vocational and trades training programs. The health and wellness system ensures universal provision of quality holistic healthcare and social services.

Akwesasró:non are proud of this community and proud of maintaining our traditional lands, culture, and language – assuring a sustainable Kanien'kéha:ka way of life².

¹ Quotation from a participant of the “People’s Survey”.

² The preceding vision statement was created by an integration of frequently recurring themes identified through the community participatory process with respect to development priorities in relation to social, cultural, economic, environmental, and governance conditions.

EDUCATION

VISION

Education is a critical key to the success of our community. Akwesasró:non envision access to quality education at all levels and increased control - Kanien'kéha:ka control over Kanien'kéha:ka education. Akwesasró:non envision a proud and strong Kanien'kéha:ka identity, this achieved in part by an education system and structure that has the ability to prepare each student with the skills, the knowledge, and the capability to assume his or her roles and responsibility as productive and committed citizens or leaders of the Kanien'kéha:ka community of Akwesasne.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Education is clearly very important for the people of Akwesasne. Virtually all responses from our youth (95%) of our 91 respondents aged 12-19, said that they're either planning to go to college or were already in college. One in three youth identified Syracuse as their college of choice, considerably more than the next most popular selections: Potsdam (4%) and Canton (4%). Syracuse University's pledge to provide affordable education to the people of the Iroquois Nation is clearly having a positive effect on our youth.

The results of our Peoples Survey, however, show that there are obstacles to achieving higher learning goals. Seventy percent of our respondents identified at least one obstacle preventing their reaching their educational goals. Financial and employment constraints and familial obligation were the most frequently identified.

A number of themes emerged from both the quantitative and open ended questions when respondents were asked to consider priorities for education planning. Quality education with high standards that offers training and skills to better compete in the marketplace, one that respects and strengthens Mohawk culture and language should be the hallmark of any education initiative. Increased community oversight of educational programs and initiatives were also identified as priorities for education planning. When asked about specific future education planning, respondents placed the highest priority on the need for "our own high school" and more vocational training. There was also

an indication for a need for a community college on the within the community.

GOALS

1. Establish the Akwesasne High School by 2020. AHS will be governed by our own School Board and staffed with our own teachers and administrators.
2. Akwesasró:non have access to adequate support and financial resources for all community members and students seeking higher education.
3. Vocational and lifelong learning opportunities are available and accessible to all Akwesasró:non.
4. Achieve functional use of the Kanien'khé:ha language and culture into educational institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive education strategy addressing every aspect including, but not limited to planned jurisdictional control, resourcing, setting up appropriate bodies, identifying educational requirements for academic, vocational, adult, cultural education, and enhancing existing programs.
- Our leadership must seize the opportunity to negotiate the transfer of control and resources to achieve true jurisdictional control of education.
- Initiate an intensive Akwesasne High School community consultation in planning for the jurisdictional control of this education project.
- Assign staff to begin researching what is needed to have our own high school; begin identifying funding sources and other resources needed to make it a reality.
- Expand existing Indian Education committee to ensure diversity among the group which would spread the work load needed to make progress toward establishing our own high school and vocational programs. Committee should be made up of dedicated educational planners, employment agencies, funding agencies and interested community members to work toward making our own high school a reality by 2020.

- Existing education programs/departments provide enhanced services ensuring access to adequate financial resources for all community members seeking higher education and training.
- Prioritize reinvestment funds for educational financial assistance programs and scholarship funds to be established with a percentage of Gaming Enterprise profits, Tribal enterprise profits, and other available sources.
- Facilitate continuing education by establishing a fund for childcare allowance to assist parents with familial constraints in pursuit of higher education and vocational training.
- Begin a focused educational grant writing strategy to support and sustain the education fund programs.
- Utilize existing facilities to provide vocational programs. Minimize duplication where possible by working cooperatively with existing training and education organizations to identify specific demand for vocational training programs, identify and access required funding, and implement programs within the community.
- Harmonize services and funding to avoid duplication – support and expand existing vocational organizations. Maximize the utilization of existing institutions and infrastructure by negotiating with both the US and Canadian government to achieve harmonized delivery of services. i.e. Iohahi:io Adult Education Center infrastructure, Harmonize delivery of services so that the end user can capitalize on the acquired skill set on either side of the border.
- Increase language and culture into existing curricula in the schools that our children attend both within Akwesasne and outside the community.
- Utilize existing original Mohawk speakers effectively to prioritize Mohawk Language sustainability. Provide and finance permanent programs for Kanien'ké:ha Language Instructors succession and, ultimately, sustainability to ensure that Mohawk language teachers are available to future generations.
- Promote and support development of speakers who are gifted with teaching abilities to pursue teaching careers.
- Provide permanent programs for sustainability to ensure that Mohawk teachers are available to future generations.

- Formalize programs for teacher placement existing programs such as the Akwesasne Freedom School and the Skahwatsira Program of the Tsi Snaihne School to prioritize sustainability of Mohawk teachers.

HOUSING

VISION

All community members have equitable access to affordable, energy efficient, cost effective housing with planned housing development locations that minimize environmental impacts, along with attainable and fair financing options.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Most of the respondents of the Peoples Survey lived in Akwesasne (just under 90%) owned their homes (68%) and lived in single family dwellings (75%). When asked to identify the types of housing needed on the reservation, respondents saw a considerable need for energy efficient housing and single family structures, while preferring fewer mobile homes in the community. When asked to indicate their “priorities for future housing initiatives, respondents stressed access to financial resources (loans/mortgages) to build homes in Akwesasne and availability of community revenues to develop environmentally friendly housing. Respondents also stressed both in the qualitative and quantitative results the need for planned residential housing development to ensure a stable environment for both the present and future generations.

53.3% supported community revenue to be used for housing development within Akwesasne and 55.1% were in favor of using community revenue to purchase lands for housing development within Akwesasne land claims areas. Land scarcity is a basic concern that is reflected in the qualitative feedback. Support is strong for purchasing lands adjacent to Akwesasne, in land claim areas to be utilized for housing development. Community members would like to see more eco-friendly, energy efficient, affordable housing available and attainable.

GOALS

1. Develop a planned community housing development model.
2. Construction of eco-friendly and energy efficient units to become the norm.
3. Formally designate location(s) for housing development.
4. Increase awareness and access to alternative financing and housing program options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and implement a Housing and Infrastructure Environmental Strategy including guidelines, policies, and regulations for preferred development patterns.
- Determine priorities to utilize existing community owned land for housing development.
- Purchase land from community member(s), or purchase lands adjacent to Akwesasne in land claim areas.
- Identify areas and specific locations amenable to environmentally sound housing development while minimizing infrastructure costs i.e. close to existing infrastructure.
- Identify costs and set up a fund for land purchases.
- Cluster model – cluster home sites with shared road/highway access, services, and green spaces.
- Emphasize pedestrian, bicycle and outdoor recreation oriented design as keys to creating more vital and sustainable residential neighborhood(s).
- Research and implement construction options that are eco-friendly, energy efficient, and affordable.
- Increase community awareness for the Section 184 Indian Loan Program.
- Identify and correct possible barriers for access to existing loan programs including Section 184 Indian Loan Program.
- Identify options for alternative financing arrangements and guarantee programs.
- Develop a housing loan program funded by community/gaming revenues.
- Existing community housing organizations to develop and implement a communication plan to ensure that community members are aware of existing programs presently available and required criteria (i.e. income thresholds, land ownership) to access these programs.

- Existing community housing organizations to undertake research and training to develop new and innovative programs, services, and housing technologies.
- Ensure regular training and up-grading in technical skills and knowledge for all local community housing organizational staff.
- Ensure regular dissemination of information to the community for available housing programs and services, energy efficiency upgrades; maintenance training and seasonal preparations. This information may be regularly distributed to the community through use of newsletters, community website, and multi-media.

EMPLOYMENT

VISION

Employment opportunities are structured to encourage and support Akwesasró:non to obtain higher education and return to the community to work and live; local training programs for vocations and trades are consistently available as well as many programs supporting business development along with access to available capital sources.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

When respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with employment opportunities in Akwesasne for themselves and their family, the majority (53%) said no. While this opinion may seem inconsistent with the economic profile of our respondents – most were employed full time had decent annual incomes – 10 percent were unemployed and almost one third had annual income of \$20,000 or less. The call is for better jobs in the community with more resources for those who either own their own business or to start one. When asked to express their vision for the future of employment development opportunities in Akwesasne, the open ended feedback heavily weighted priorities on increased local training opportunities and strengthening Native Preference hiring practices for local businesses, government organizations, and tribal enterprises. Respondents indicated that community members want equitable wages as well as benefits and stressed the need for increased opportunities for people who have obtained higher education to return to the community to work at higher management and professional level jobs. Support was indicated for community members to obtain professional designations in engineering and health fields. More local training in the skilled trade's area was voiced as important. Areas to focus on for future development include tourism, non-cigarette manufacturing, alternative energy opportunities, and business diversification to create and increase local employment. Participants also indicated support for developing cultural tourism as an area of employment development opportunity.

GOALS

1. Employment development for Akwesasne comprises a comprehensive community-wide strategy that involves stakeholders from private and public sectors, youth, and community member representation.
2. Strategic opportunities will be developed to provide for the ultimate goal of equitable full employment for community members attained by local training development, educational support, community Native preference hiring policies, economic development and business diversification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Initiate a Community Workforce Commission creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce to meet the current and future demands of the Akwesasne economy.
- Community Workforce Commission should be a unified community approach utilizing representatives from existing training organizations (Tribal Workforce Investment, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Human Resources, Akwesasne Area Management Board, Akwesasne Economic Development Agency, Iohahi:io Adult Education), combined with economic development representatives as well as private sector business individuals, members, and youth representatives.
- Community workforce commission is tasked with the responsibility to engage in an ongoing strategic planning process to identify strategies and actions that will develop the community's workforce within targeted areas based on projected demand for skilled trades, tourism, professions, "green sector"³ jobs, and workforce needs of a diversified economy.

³ Definition – Green Sector and Green Jobs: Involve businesses and jobs associated with improving the environment including creating and/or using energy more efficiently.

- Community workforce commission examine the existence of employment barriers including where Native Preference policies are in place; devise strategies and community policies to increase Native Employment in community organizations, government, and businesses.
- Develop Youth job shadowing programs in community businesses and tribal enterprises for youth to experience a variety of positions, exploring career goals, and learning about education requirements that they can pursue to obtain quality employment in the community.
- Formulate Employment Development Policies for higher level management, administrative, and professional positions to support Native Preference. Native candidates who may fall short of required experience can be mentored in the position by the non-native based on a predetermined timeline with planned Native Preference succession.
- Gather salary/wage data to study inconsistencies on comparable jobs within and outside the community. Create uniform guidelines to support wage parity.
- Support partnerships that align career pathways with economic development goals by communicating current and projected labor market needs to students, educators and parents.
- Conduct research to determine the prospective opportunities for Economic Development and job creation via “green industries” such as eco-friendly housing and alternative energy.
- Implement a proactive approach to “Green Collar” – training that will prepare our labor force for opportunities in alternative energy industries and eco-friendly housing industries; align the training with the Economic Development Strategy initiatives. Akwesasne training organizations can partner with providers to bring training to Akwesasne for specific alternative energy and eco-business initiatives. For example, Clinton Community College is experienced in such training and has developed training programs for windmill technicians. Programs could be tailored to specific business development projects and delivered in Akwesasne.
- Encourage and assist youth to pursue higher education for professional “Green Sector” jobs such as environmental engineers, environmental technologists and technicians and conservation biologists.

- Develop Tourism – The Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Strategy is currently being finalized. Prioritize community approval and implementation.
- Economic development departments assist entrepreneurs with process and proposals to proactively seek opportunities for government procurement projects for “Green Sector” businesses, construction, technology, telecommunications, and alternative energy for existing and new business development.

LANGUAGE/CULTURE

VISION:

The Kanien'khé:ha language and culture are the core of who we are as Kanien'kéha:ka People. We envision a future when all Akwesasró:non are speakers of the language. The voices we hear from the young children, the parents, the grandparents are Kanien'khé:ha voices. Everywhere we go, we hear our Mohawk voices - 'Kwa tsiknónwe enionkwátonte'ne ne Kanien'khé:ha.

Akwesasró:non envision an enduring pride in being Kanien'kéha:ka - this pride based on the language, the beliefs, the customs, the values, and daily way of life in Akwesasne. This is what culture is – the way we live and how we identify ourselves as being Kanien'kéha:ka.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The desire to maintain and promote the Mohawk culture and language on the reservation was strong among our respondents. Although only a modest number of respondents identified themselves as either moderate (14%) or fluent (7%) Mohawk speakers, 90% identified "keeping the Mohawk language alive" as a high priority. Similarly 85 percent strongly supported maintaining cultural traditions and practices. Increasing Mohawk language instruction in schools attended by Mohawk children both on and outside of the reservation and increasing opportunities for learning Mohawk language and practices at every opportunity were identified as key priorities;

GOALS

1. Achieve functional and active use of the Kanien'khé:ha language by integrating the language into all facets Akwesasne life.
2. Information and knowledge of Kanien'kéha:ka cultural traditional practices are available to Akwesasró:non in order to enable them to make choices that are appropriate to their own values as Akwesasró:non.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Kanien'khé:ha Language and Cultural strategy as a community wide effort. Ensure that multiple opportunities are available to Akwesasró:non to learn and use our language and cultural practices. This strategy to include, but not limited to all leadership, government administration, business, education and cultural institutions, and community organizations.
- Mohawk schools, teachers, and organizations (i.e. Head Start, Day Cares) working with children should regularly interact to ensure that the Kanien'khé:ha Language and Cultural Strategy is being implemented in a consistent approach.
- Parents of children in all Kanien'kéha:ka schools, programs and institutions will be encouraged to actively participate and be knowledgeable about the *Kanien'khé:ha Language and Cultural Strategy*.
- In keeping with the idea of a community wide effort, the Kanien'khé:ha Language and Cultural Strategy should be strongly promoted to be supported and implemented by the private sector.
- Implement a signage campaign throughout the community with signs written in the Kanien'khé:ha Language.
- Identify and engage committed Kanien'kéha:ka original speakers in the territory to participate in the language and cultural strategy.
- Recognize and provide incentives for fluent Kanien'khé:ha speakers employed in community governments and institutions in the course of their employment.
- Establish a regular Kanien'khé:ha Day (Mohawk Language Day) each month. The community will focus on speaking Kanien'khé:ha in all areas of life... work place, home, etc. Materials to facilitate this can be developed and provided to all Akwesasró:non and made available in the newsletter and on the website and through the radio and other available technology.
- Utilize, facilitate and support access to modern telecommunications technology for the use and promotion of the Kanien'khé:ha language and culture through radio,

website/internet, television and any other available media.

- Evaluate and support existing successful language renewal and development projects, programs and institutions.
- Develop a program to integrate speakers in the schools to create an environment where students, administrators, and staff will be exposed to practical and functional dialogue and interaction with original speakers.
- Compensate the speakers with funds allocated from community resources (Gaming Enterprise profits).
- Utilize existing original Mohawk speakers effectively to prioritize Mohawk Language and culture sustainability by integration of speakers at all levels into the government and other public sector environments.
- Provide and finance permanent programs for Kanien'khé:ha Language Instructors succession and, ultimately, sustainability to ensure that Mohawk language teachers are available to future generations.
- Formalize programs for teacher placement at successful and proven Kanien'khé:ha teaching institutions in order to promote and support sustainability of Mohawk teachers.
- Promote use of the Kanien'khé:ha language in every Kanien'kéha:ka home; Develop mechanisms and tools to be made available to families enabling them to take a proactive approach to acquire and develop Mohawk language skills and cultural practices exposing their children to our language and culture early in life.
- Ensure that traditional culture and practices are not forgotten, those that are inclined have the opportunity to carry on the traditions and practices.
- Opportunities for every Akwesasró:non to access information on Kanien'kéha:ka cultural traditions and practices are available, enabling and facilitating individual choices.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

VISION

We envision a physically, socially, and mentally and spiritually healthy Akwesasne Community that is sustained by a health and social care system that is universally accessible and provided to all Akwesasró:non. Leadership, health care institutions and professionals possess a high level of commitment to the physical, mental, spiritual health and well being of the people.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The majority of respondents receive many of their basic health care services within Akwesasne Territory. For example, two out of three used a physician or clinic within the community for basic medical needs. Most were generally satisfied with the services. Similarly, large majorities of respondents meet their eye care and pharmaceutical needs on the reservation and were generally satisfied with those services. While a majority of respondents met their dental needs within Akwesasne, 44 percent sought dental care outside the community, mostly in Cornwall. Relative to other health services, respondents were less satisfied with available dental care on the reservation.

Respondents typically had to leave Akwesasne for specialized medical care or hospitalization. Cornwall was the most identified location for specialized medical services (37%) and hospitalization (50%). Lack of access to such care on the reservation was clearly a factor in the relative lack of satisfaction with such services among respondents. Although diabetes and dialysis services are directly named as priority needs, at the same time, respondents indicate a high priority for a comprehensive universal healthcare system provided to all Akwesasró:non without cost and regardless of place of residency.

When asked to indicate their satisfaction with social services within the community, respondents were most satisfied with alcohol treatment, child care, senior, child abuse and family planning services while expressing a considerable dissatisfaction with disability, youth and gambling services. A substantial number of respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with “homeless services” a reflection perhaps of the lack of any such services in the community.

Respondents were given a list of youth social issues and asked to identify those that were of most concern. Virtually all respondents (90%) were most concerned with drug/substance abuse. Three out of four were most concerned with alcohol abuse, uninvolved parents and illegal activities, and two out of three found teen pregnancy and abusive relationships to be youth issues of most concern.

When asked what the community can do to prevent youth from becoming involved in illegal activities to make money, respondents frequently suggested that we need to assist parents more with effective programs so that they can be prepared to help to strengthen youth moral, social, and cultural values. Increased education and information about the lifelong consequences was also recommended for social programs to prioritize. Increasing availability of youth targeted programs for trades training, vocational training, education financial support is considered very important; opportunities for well-paying/quality employment accessible in the community is regarded as a priority for youth to be able to see education and training as a worthwhile goal. Many respondents also recommended that stronger enforcement of laws and stricter penalties should be imposed for youth violators and holding parents accountable.

The open ended questions listed dental services, sports medicine, traditional medicines, diabetes and pediatricians were the additional health services cited as being needed most. Prevention services were also mentioned often. Dental Services was cited most often, due to long wait in getting an appointment and limited services were viewed as the biggest issues.

GOALS

1. Quality universal health care and social services to be provided to all Akwesasró:non.
2. Our youth are our future and our goal is to ensure that each and every one has the opportunity to become successful and productive citizens of Akwesasne.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the leadership of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe will take appropriate actions to ensure that they and external government (s) continue to provide health and social services according to their fiduciary obligations.

- Institute a health reform which creates a health care system in which the health of the mind and body are no longer treated as separate, in which a patient can receive the benefits of holistic care. We need a reform in which high quality, accessible health care is considered a basic right again, and need to ensure that the federal government is meeting its fiduciary responsibility is met.
- A comprehensive and in depth review of health/social services in the community. Dialogue with northern part of the community with a view to potential partnerships in access and the delivery of services to all Akwesasró:non.
- Strategically plan for implementation of a full range of health services both physical and mental available in the community.
- Strategically plan for the implementation of a universal health care program for all Akwesasró:non. Work toward ensuring that all fees for health care needs to be covered for all Akwesasró:non.
- Build on the family values of “kawatsire” as a predominant means in dealing with social service issues. In any social situation it is important to make best efforts to keep family and extended family units intact before proceeding with alternative options.
- Ensure that traditional values of Kawatsire are predominant and incorporated in service design, implementation and delivery for both health and social services.
- Prioritize increasing development of youth and family programs and support services targeted at reducing and eliminating youth at risk to becoming involved in illegal activities.
- Review existing dental services and community need to implement enhanced services and improve capacities to effectively manage everyday community needs as well as emergency dental needs.
- Explore the feasibility/viability of a hospital. An example of a community hospital is the Kateri Hospital in Kahnawake which has a similar population to Akwesasne.
- Financially support education for young Akwesasró:non to become doctors, nurses, and healthcare specialists; ensure they are given priority to return and work in the community healthcare system with comparable pay to the outside.

- Recruit and engage qualified Native American health and social services employees.
- Compensation for health care and social service professionals needs to be competitive and on par with national rates. This is important to ensure that our people are motivated to pursue careers in these fields and further, enabling us to recruit quality professionals to staff our institutions.
- Designate resources to invest in traditional and alternative methods of healing mind, body and spirit.
- Reduce dependency on pharmaceuticals; develop and incorporate holistic, traditional and alternative medicines and treatment approaches into mainstream health services.
- Prioritize prevention to reduce the risk of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, liver disease, substance abuse etc.
- Health and social services providers should be sensitive and responsive to cultural differences and special needs.
- Ensure the availability of both female and male health care givers.
- Ensure the availability of transportation to medical appointments for elders and people in need.
- Provide translation services for our elders and overall increased services for elders.
- Empower employees to provide quality service with respect, trust, harmony, and confidentiality.
- Increase communication strategy to ensure all Akwesasró:non are aware of the various programs available to obtain optimum health. (i.e. the health benefits of walking, healthy eating).
- Increase usage of tribal website by incorporating more content on health and social services programs and services and maintain current, relevant information.
- Incorporate traditional principles when providing social services including more involvement and support of the extended family.
- Allocate adequate community revenues to support health care and social services in the community where funding gaps exist.

GOVERNANCE

VISION

Our leadership is responsible and accountable to the people. Our leadership is trusted by the people. Our leadership within unique governance systems strives to unify our Nation by respecting our traditional values, and working together to build a strong, viable, independent Nation.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Although virtually all respondents identified “active participation” in governance as either important (17%) or very important (77%), about 60% said that they never or rarely attended council meetings.

Respondents were asked to prioritize select leadership initiatives. Respondents gave the highest priority to initiatives that bring together the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs on as many community issues as possible. Also, the desire for more transparency in governance was evident in the high priority given to community consultation on any partnership agreements with outside entities and the use of the referendum process when making financial decisions involving a certain amount of community money.

Respondents also placed a high priority on government initiatives focusing on land claims and land use regulations. The theme of unity was predominant in responses and feedback concerning the vision for the future of governance in Akwesasne. Integrating improved accountability and transparency by governments was also given high priority.

Initiatives focusing on consolidating government services were also given high priority, but not as high as those mentioned above. Many expressed support for a one government system while the notion of existing governance structures working together to strive for a better future for the community was also frequently suggested and considered very important.

Open ended question results from the survey suggest that although people feel that it is very important for community members to actively participate and provide direction to leadership, they also believe that leadership doesn't respect the input that members contribute. A high priority was expressed on the need for more people to participate to provide direction, feedback, and input on community issues. Participants believe

it to be very important to receive communication, be consulted, and be afforded the opportunity to provide feedback on significant issues affecting the whole community and for any major financial decisions.

Basing our governance systems more in line with traditional governance or making the Mohawk Nation Council the main governing body with SRMT and MCA as administrators was also favorable.

GOALS

1. Create a Community Governance Protocol for the existing governing bodies defining a cooperative approach to strengthen the sense of unity as one Nation working toward common goals.
2. Prioritize land claims and consistently communicate progress.
3. Akwesasró:non demonstrate consistent and growing community participation by providing feedback and direction to leadership through a range of practical and effective means.
4. Leadership and administration institute systematic approach to build confidence and trust of Akwesasró:non in governance accountability and transparency

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Initiate a tri-council protocol for collaboration on important community issues. Make it an Akwesasró:non initiative by involving the community in the Protocol development.
- Build the tri-council protocol on current initiatives of tri-council issues i.e. border issues, land claims, cultural tourism strategy.
- Provide information on the status of the land claims and plan strategically to move the land claim agenda forward with frequent community updates.
- Communicate and consult with community for support on the land claims strategic plan.
- Consistently communicate efforts and positive steps achieved on land claims.
- Develop short 2-3 question monthly or quarterly surveys posted on the website (member access only) key issues to

elicit community feedback. Those without web access can participate in paper format; questions can be included in monthly newsletter.

- Develop a report card of how members rate the effectiveness of leadership and membership input on key performance areas; this could also be made available to member access only on the website.
- Change the 'advisory only' approach for community meetings in order to provide validation of community input into issues brought forth to the community.
- Leadership should attend community gatherings on a regular basis to get out and promote input from membership.
- Leadership consistently attends at public meetings hosted at various community locations and/or hosted by various community groups and organizations – promoting input from membership and providing current information.
- Implement live broadcast of regular and special tribal meetings. An example of this approach is with the Pine Ridge Tribe who regularly broadcast not only community meetings but regular Council meeting through KILI-FM their local radio station; this could be implemented expeditiously on CKON-FM.
- Departments communicate strategic plan, annual work-plans and reports, financial reports and accomplishments; summarized reports can be included in newsletters and on the website.
- Formulate policies/regulations for spending community dollars – define parameters for threshold amounts and purposes that require community consultation prior to finalizing contracts or agreements.
- Provide summaries of agreements in principle and final agreements in plain language to make things easier for people to understand.

JUSTICE

VISION

Our Justice system to be for our people and by our people. A court that provides all services and adjudicates all issues built upon Mohawk traditional values and culture with elder and clan mother councils, restorative and circle justice elements integrated. Our own community laws are developed, supported by the community, and adjudicated by the court. Enforcement of the law is strong.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The common theme that emerged was for the court to provide the same services, hear all issues, and resembles other courts outside the community but also stressed the importance to incorporate traditional elements. Support was indicated that the court should be staffed by Mohawk people including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and Native interpreters. Development of community laws concerning civil, land, and family issues is also considered very important for the Tribal/Mohawk court to adjudicate. Support was indicated to institute justice councils for alternative dispute resolution including traditional practices with elder/clan mother community members' involvement. Also supported is the provision of information, workshops, counseling services, and rehabilitation to assist community members to understand their options and/or to prevent situations (such as youth offences) from worsening. Strengthening enforcement of laws and penalties was also considered by respondents to be very important.

GOALS

1. Ensure integration of Mohawk traditional values and cultural principles within the justice system.
2. Family court and civil court systems developed and implemented.
3. Prioritize development, enactment and implementation of tribal laws and ordinances.
4. Ensure strong and consistent enforcement standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A review and analysis of progress made in the justice system as it is today.

- A review and analysis of best practices of the Akwesasne Mohawk Court and justice systems as well as other Native justice systems could be used as a model.
- A long-term strategic plan be developed including a determination short, medium and long term requirements for the formal development and implementation of an Akwesasne tailored justice system.
- A cross section of community members from various sectors including political, social, and individuals to be involved and represented in the development process of the justice system. Regular reporting to the community in respect of progress of the development of our justice system.
- Ensure that Mohawk traditional values and cultural principles are key features in all aspects of our justice system.

ECONOMY

VISION

Create a balanced, planned, and sustainable economy on our terms respecting our traditional and cultural values. A variety of economic opportunities exist in Akwesasne providing all Akwesasró:non with the means to support themselves and thrive within our community. Our community is economically empowered and independent with the means to provide its members with quality services including housing, healthcare, and education.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The survey found that Akwesasró:non meet their shopping and service needs across a wide variety of locations. While respondents typically identified multiple locations to meet each of their shopping and service needs, they tended to favor Akwesasne for their gasoline, home heating fuel, plumbing and electrical services, art, car repair as well as their insurance, accounting and legal services.

They were more inclined to shop for their major appliances, office supplies, house wares, gifts and music in Massena. They were also more likely to do their banking, get their hair styled and buy their food including both organic and fast food in Massena as well. It is clear that the Massena economy is significantly dependent on Mohawk consumers. Furniture purchases and night at the movies however were most likely to be done in Cornwall. Although cars and trucks were typically purchased in either Massena or Cornwall, a significant number of respondents listed more distant locations for such purchases. Respondents also identified larger selections and more stores as the reasons for shopping outside of Akwesasne. These results indicate that the people of Akwesasne make significant economic contributions to surrounding communities by purchasing a large part of goods and services outside of Akwesasne.

Respondents were also asked to prioritize initiatives that have been identified by community members to improve the Akwesasne economy. Although there was support for virtually all the initiatives, respondents gave the highest to improving Akwesasne image and energy based initiatives. For example, respondents were strongly supportive of research and development of alternative energy sources, a community utility company and passing fuel/gas tax savings onto the community. Respondents also prioritized increased access to financial services such as business loans, mortgage loans and other

banking services. Security initiatives, Infrastructure improvements and improving the overall cleanliness of the area were also highly prioritized.

Consistent with early observations, when respondents were asked to rate the appropriateness of select future business and commercial development strategies, they identified attracting health industries, developing arts and cultural tourism and independently owned businesses are most appropriate. Conversely, attracting national franchises, large retailers and expanding gaming enterprises were more likely to be rated as not appropriate.

Feedback from written responses and discussions with members indicated that local employment development with higher quality, well paying jobs is considered a high priority. Diversification of the economy and self-sufficiency was stressed as a priority. Less reliance on cigarette industry, smuggling, and casino is desirable. Alternative energy and tourism sectors were indicated as favorable for economic and business development.

A wider variety of retail store selection and comparable prices, a bank, and recreational type businesses are considered very important to reduce the need for shopping and services outside of Akwesasne. Respondents prioritized maintaining the uniqueness of Akwesasne by prohibiting large scale commercial businesses in favor of supporting more family oriented businesses, recreational businesses such as Movie Theater and bowling alley, smaller retail stores and marketplaces that satisfy community members' needs. A centralized commercial location with businesses in general located along route 37 instead of near residences was considered favorable.

Strong views were also expressed that tribal enterprises should not compete with privately owned businesses and new business opportunities should be made available to privately owned enterprise and entrepreneurs first before decisions made and implemented for the business to become a tribal enterprise.

Recreation facility initiatives that were given the highest priority by respondents included parks, athletic fields and bicycle paths. Outdoor activities such as fishing and hiking trails were given high priority. Little to no priority was given to expensive ventures such as water parks, theme parks, golf courses and tennis courts.

GOALS

1. Develop and implement an Economic Strategy building on community priorities, sustainability, and long term economic well-being of Akwesasró:non.
2. Minimize economic leakage.
3. Achieve independence from outside governments and funding by economic diversification and creation of a strong economic base.
4. Develop cultural and recreational tourism.
5. Create opportunities for commercial/business development to increase quality jobs for Akwesasró:non.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a community Economic Strategy aligned with community priorities for increasing quality job creation; economic diversification; alternative energy industry (low cost production and possibly manufacturing), and cultural/recreational tourism.
- Plan for balance, private enterprise/tribal enterprise, independent business, mixed with some franchise opportunities.
- Develop and implement buy-local campaign and communication strategy; focus on increasing purchasing from existing businesses.
- Identify specific businesses that can be started to minimize economic leakage as potential private entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Improve pricing competitiveness of the IGA to increase community spending for food needs in the community.
- Examine the potential to implement a sustainable community food model⁴ integrated with IGA to purchase and re-sell locally produced meat and produce. This model incorporates community grown foods, food preparation, food preservation, farmers' market, and garden center with the community food store as its hub - to provide a lower cost, higher nutrition quality supply of locally grown food to the community.

⁴ 2009, Food Security and Sustainability for Akwesasne Model

- Economic development departments work with local organizations (Kanenhi:io Ionkwaienthonhákie, Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment Inc., and/or others) to develop cooperative/business agricultural initiatives.
- Examine the potential to reconfigure the existing IGA building to efficiently utilize the space (i.e. Eliminate unprofitable areas, incorporate other types retail stores that could lease space and provide other needed goods for the community and surrounding areas).
- Designate and develop commercial area(s) along route 37; the IGA property is recommended as a concentrated area for commercial development. Mixed use for commercial and residential use of IGA property is considered favorable if residential can be segregated adequately on the property.
- Formulate detailed plan for multi-function use of IGA property integrating sustainable development including planned housing development and retail commercial area surrounding IGA building; Prioritize land into trust for tax exempt status.
- Develop and implement civil and commercial laws to sustain business development and economic diversification.
- Leadership should never allow outside governments to impose taxation on Mohawk businesses.
- Improve the physical image of Akwesasne; clean and beautify, set guidelines for attractiveness of commercial buildings and signage; strongly encourage homeowners along route 37 to eliminate trash and junk and to maintain clean properties (institute regulations if necessary).
- Improve outsider perceptions of Akwesasne by promoting all that is positive about our people and our community.
- Implement the Cultural Tourism Strategy.
- Create culturally significant identifying landmarks with attractive landscaping to identify “gateway” upon entering the Territory.
- Support development of a non-government organization (NGO) community development financial institution providing commercial financing.

- Ensure that private business/entrepreneurs are provided access to opportunities that are feasible for private business prior to being taken on as tribal enterprise.
- Develop youth entrepreneur programs, youth entrepreneur annual contest, incentive awards for best youth entrepreneur of Akwesasne – to spark entrepreneurial creativity and potential business successes for the future.
- Pursue partnership to initiate a community financial institution (Bank branch or credit union) for consumer and business banking.
- Research and study the feasibility of various retail operations that could provide needed/wanted goods to community members as well as attract neighboring people to shop in Akwesasne – potential opportunities can be implemented by individuals and or partnerships.
- Develop and adopt policies and regulations to prioritize development of alternative green energy industry, and of alternative lower cost energy for the community;
- Leadership should focus on land claims and assert jurisdiction over resources available for energy production including the St. Lawrence River and New York Power Authority site.
- Research and study the feasibility of various alternative energy and industries that use new technologies or recycled materials to increase sustainable employment. Possibilities for private business, tribal enterprise, and private/tribal partnerships.
- Study the feasibility of acquiring the General Motors site and manufacturing facility [provided it is environmentally cleaned prior] for development of a manufacturing operation to produce clean energy and energy efficiency components or end products such as wind turbine components.
- Plan development of an incubator commercial center for Akwesasne entrepreneurs. Provide commercial space with reasonable rents, shared overhead costs, copiers/fax, and reception services.
- Integrate Kanien'ké:ha signage in commercial areas and promote use of our language in business/public areas.

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT

VISION

Our land traditional land base to be reclaimed. Housing is plentiful in planned neighborhoods and people are proud of their clean community showing respect for mother earth in their daily lives. Commercial areas are located in separate areas and businesses are environmentally responsible. Our homes and businesses are largely powered by alternative clean energy produced locally. Many outdoor recreational activities are enjoyed by Akwesasró:non including fishing in clean rivers, hunting, camping, hiking, and peaceful park areas.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Respondents were given a list of land use/environmental concerns and asked to assess the magnitude of the problem. Although all of the issues were seen as problematic to some degree, community aesthetics were identified as “big problems.” For example, the majority of respondents identified “litter along roadside” “unsightly junk in yards” and “community beautification” as big problems. The condition of roadways and increasing traffic volume as well as the related issues of rapid population growth and the lack of planning for residential development were all seeing as significant* problems. [*at least 75 percent ranked it as either a “medium” or “big” problem”]

Consistent with Mohawk support for environmental sustainability, a significant majority of respondents give high land use planning priorities to alternative energy development, recycling, enforcing pollution controls, and the preservation of wetlands and woodlands. The majority also give high priority to land use planning and land use regulations for different types of functions. And, finally, when asked to identify how adequate select services for meeting community needs, the large majority of respondents (over 75%) identified road maintenance, public transportation, environmental education, recycling programs and water lines as “more needed” or “much more needed.”

Qualitative responses were overall supportive of quantitative results in placing a high priority for housing development and planned neighborhoods, land use planning with designated commercial areas, mandatory recycling, clean environmental damage, clean litter along roads and clean-up yards, protect the environment, promote community responsibility for the environment, alternative energy use, agricultural initiatives for

healthy foods, recreational availability, promote recreation and tourism, and focus on land claims. The feedback on open ended results shows more favorable preference to preserve the rural character of Akwesasne.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Prioritize land claims.
2. Implement defined commercial and residential designated areas where possible with the current land base and expand once land claim is successful.
3. Increase promotion of environmental responsibility and education programs based on traditional values of respect.
4. Research and develop a feasible option to provide an alternative energy supply for community use.
5. Promote tourism opportunities.
6. Incorporate community outdoor recreational development in land use plan; hiking trails, walking paths, and community green spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inform the community on current land claim status; Develop a Land Claim plan with community inclusion – i.e. community land claim task force with tri-council advisory participation (aligned with proposed tri-council protocol).
- Develop community land use plan that defines areas for commercial and residential development; approved by community.
- Incorporate connectedness of people with central locations for facilities and outdoor areas for people to meet informally.
- Balance property rights with community interests. Environment and community cleanliness - strengthen regulations/community laws; increase seriousness of consequences, follow through with enforcement including restitution and community service.
- Prepare landscape guidelines for new development to enhance the existing environment.
- Economic Development and Environment SRMT and MCA along with community organizations collaborate for entire community to develop a viable alternative energy option

to provide the entire community with an alternative supply for energy.

- Implement the Cultural Tourism Strategy.
- Community outdoor recreation development incorporated into land use plan, green spaces, walking paths, bicycle paths, hiking trails.
- Support local agricultural initiatives promoting organic foods and livestock for community consumption and commercial production.

OUR YOUTH

VISION

Akwesasne is a clean and healthy community with educational and economic opportunity enabling youth the freedom to choose to live and prosper in their own community. Our youth have many recreational, social, and sporting options available to maintain healthy lifestyles.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The ideal vision of the Youth of Akwesasne is to be drug-free, sober, and free from the stigma that the “smuggling trade” has brought to Akwesasne. The youth want to see a clean community to call home.

They want youth leadership and community leadership who will make a difference. Youth want to see a unified government and community.

Results from our youth surveys show that the arena is used extensively by children and youth. Three out of four youth reported using the facility at some time. School summer facilities, summer programs sport service and health fitness programs were also very popular among youth. Conversely, cultural programs including art and dance were used by about one in four youth and swimming programs and the community hall were used even less frequently. It is not clear whether these latter programs were infrequently used because of a lack of interest or a lack of availability.

Sports are important to our youth, not only to play locally but at a national level. Youth would like to see more opportunities for swimming pools, sports fields, arenas, gyms, more sports programs, etc. There are several young men who want to play in the NFL.

Education is also very important to the youth. In addition to having opportunities to learn our language outside of school, the youth want their education to include language and cultural curriculum. Education would also give them the opportunity to explore the world.

Our youth would also like to see parents be more involved in their lives, as being uninvolved leads to a variety of problems in the future.

GOALS

1. Youth have a wide variety of opportunities available to participate in learning Kanien'kéha:ka language, culture and traditions.
2. Opportunities are available quality academic and vocational education, and quality employment in diverse fields.
3. Youth are a part of positive and healthy lifestyles, live in a clean community and a healthy environment, and are proud of their community.
4. Youth have a place just for them to socialize and participate in youth oriented activities, more recreational venues and variety of programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide extensive opportunities for the realization of the academic, vocational, athletic, performing arts, employment, self-employment, and other plans and desires for our youth.
- Ensure that our youth have consistent and accessible means to participate in Kanien'kéha:ka language and traditional teaching programs, and interaction with those who have linguistic and cultural knowledge and capacities that can be shared with the youth.
- Encourage the youth to create a youth organization with a mandate to focus on and address youth specific issues; provide fiscal and mentor resources to enable the youth towards the formal creation of their youth organization; provide initial guidance in organizational structures, and governance, mission, goals and objectives but allow the youth to make final decisions.
- Develop and implement leadership role-model programs

- Provide fiscal and other resources for the development and implementation of a Youth Leadership Development Program. The program could be used as a tool to help identify and groom potential youth leadership who may, in turn take leadership control of their youth group. Leadership participants could use the program a spring board to formally enroll community youth participation in the youth organization; a formal organization will provided self-generated opportunities to identify the issues, challenges and barriers face by the youth and allowing them to develop their own strategies and solutions.
- Adults need to listen to our youth; Mohawk Youth need to realize and understand that there is value in what they have to say; change will be effected by extending youth opportunities to take leadership and organizational roles.
- Provide youth with opportunities to participate in some capacity in the governance of the community; on a regular basis Tribal leadership and Youth leadership should meet to discuss issues and needs of the youth; tribal leadership should make a sincere effort to brief youth leaders about current events that may or will have an immediate or future impact on the youth; Youth leaders will then have the opportunity to inform and consult with their peers, respond and have input on possible actions/solutions to their issues.
- Develop intergenerational opportunities to encourage more access to and sharing of traditional knowledge, language and culture. Opportunities to learn Mohawk language and culture needs to be a priority – therefore, the youth and youth organization need to be engaged in community and formal education efforts for the retention, and regeneration of Mohawk language and culture. Community based language and cultural projects should be fluid and flexible to make it fun for youth to want to learn. For further elaboration please refer to the Language and Culture section of this report.
- Implement a role model or “ratiksati:io” program to recognize outstanding youth for volunteerism, talent in sports, academia, performing arts, and leadership.

- While it has been stated that Youth Councils generally do not work or quickly lose momentum, we have to ensure that any program or project is led by dynamic individuals. By keeping youth engaged and mentored the chances for success is more than possible, it is probable. A critical success factor is in ensuring that mentors or individuals who are involved in assisting youth do not take 'control' of the process. Youth, through guidance, must take ownership of their processes.
- Our youth should have a youth oriented facility created just for them. i.e. a youth gathering place that fills the gap between the Boys and Girls Club and Recreation Centers – a place that is safe and supervised with extended hours to serve youth needs; should a facility be constructed, the youth should be involved in the whole process of conceptual design, construction, and ultimately, facility and youth program management.

OUR ELDERS

VISION

The vision of our elders is to have a safe, clean, community that their children and grandchildren can inherit. The quality of life and living in Akwesasne is improved with greater opportunities for life experiences. Our children and grandchildren respect their Totas, one another, their families, other community members, their community and land, and overall appreciate what the creator has provided for all of us.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Elders shared with us that the lack of education, in turn impacting on their financial situation, was, in part one of the reasons for personal growth challenges. Another significant reason cited for the lack of education was the fear of being disenfranchised. In the early 50's, as part of the government's assimilation policy, an Indian desiring to further their education or enter the military, was required to surrender (disenfranchise) their rights and status as Indians. Consequently individuals were removed from tribal/membership rolls. This policy allowed the government to systematically reduce their fiduciary obligations for Native Americans.

Our elders place a high priority on having our own high school. They stated that until that time that we have our own high school there should be a requirement of cultural sensitivity training for those non-Kanien'kéha:ka who are educating our children.

Elders feel it is important for our children to be comfortable in interacting with the outside community. (But) "This is home, always a place to come back to, but it's getting smaller and smaller". This is the sentiment of many. The land shortage is making it difficult to develop housing for community members. The elders feel that that housing development should be in the land claims areas such as Dundee or Bombay.

The housing that is developed should be well insulated and environmentally safe, affordable homes. Older homes should be renovated and maintained to ensure longevity.

Elders would like to see an improved employment opportunities in Akwesasne to include higher wages and improved hiring practices for our people once they have received additional training. Some feel educational requirements for some jobs are too high, and that life experience and skills should be considered to be of equal value.

Elders see it important to keep alive traditional skills like basket-making and making lacrosse sticks. For many of them this is the way they survived both activities were significant and important elements of our culture and traditional economy.

Many of the elders prefer traditional medicines rather than pharmaceuticals; many feel they are being over-medicated. Our elders tell us they would like health insurance or traditional medicine available and paid for in the same manner as pharmaceuticals. Elders also told us that they have a need to have a Mohawk language speaker with them when seeing a doctor to assist in communications and comprehension of diagnosis and treatment planning. Mohawk language speakers are also needed to assist elders in completing Medicare and/or other applications.

When asked whether community dollars should be used to provide health insurance to all, their response was no, because it is a treaty right which should be honored.

GOALS

1. Develop our own high school in Akwesasne.
2. Alternative and traditional medicines programs are accessible to all Akwesasró:non.
3. Mohawk speakers are employed by clinic/health facilities.
4. Traditional practices such as lacrosse stick or basket making is taught to younger generations.
5. Energy-efficient and environmentally friendly housing is developed and accessible for all Akwesasró:non.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The construction of a high school in our community. In the mean time focus on the language and culture and ensure cultural sensitivity training to non-Kanien'kéha:ka educators of our children.
- Develop and implement alternative and traditional medicines program and this available in the same manner (payment) as contemporary health programs.
- Ensure hiring practices reflect the need for Mohawk speakers being on staff at clinics or health centers to assist elders in the process of interacting with health care professionals and other administrative translation needs.
- Additional lands (in land claim area) to be secured especially for the purposes of environmentally friendly, energy efficient housing for our people.
- That increased access to affordable and eco-friendly housing is made available.
- A review of existing housing stock be conducted identifying older and possibly historic homes. That these homes be restored.
- Kanien'kéha:ka speakers and those achieving the capacity in respect of the workplace functions are recognized with suitable compensation; applying to all program areas.
- Ensure that traditional practices such as basket weaving and traditional lacrosse stick manufacturing are maintained and kept alive and are reflected in cultural and economic institutions. By example, these activities need focus and attention in the cultural and tourism strategy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In ancient times the Kanien'kéha:ka people were truly sovereign nations. We were owners of lands and had control over our territories. We maintained sustainable economies. We had our language and our culture and we had a very sophisticated system of government and governance. Simplified, these are key elements of nationhood; ones that we have successfully and tenaciously held on to and exercised over time. It is the reason for our present day ability to interact on a nation-to-nation basis with other Native American Nations, the United States of America and other nations of the world.

Traditionally, our governing structure was and continues to be people based. The words of the people was and continues to be important in giving direction to our leadership on all facets, in varying degrees, of day to day governance of our nations. The very exercise of the "People's Survey" initiative is rooted in consultation with the people; taking the vision of the people, identifying the goals, developing the recommendations and finally our government taking these directions and initiating the necessary actions to develop short, medium and long term strategies to make these directions a reality. This is true governance. It is not simple...it is complex, more so in these contemporary times.

With the election of Barrack Obama, the first black President of the United States, the country embarks on a new and historic political path. President Obama has instilled a hope for renewal and meaningful change. Akwesasne and other Native American Nations are presented with a unique opportunity. An opportunity that we must seize and act upon expeditiously, as time is a factor. In this time of World Economic Crisis – one that has not been seen since the great depression, Native Americans are beneficiaries of a portion of the United States Economic Stimulus initiatives. The Economic Crisis will stabilize – the country is in a state of economic survival, not growth. Stimulus fiscal injections will not continue and become the norm. If we do not act in an expeditiously manner, we will not find ourselves in a better long-term situation.

We have heard much about "Change" in the past year or so. Listen closely we must. President Obama's message was consistent throughout his campaign... "Change comes from the bottom up....not top down." What does this mean for Akwesasne?

It means that our government must take the vision, goals and recommendations stemming from the "People's Survey" and act upon them now. It means that the people of Akwesasne have given an important, valuable, timely and contemporary tool for our government to use. Our government, through the direction of the people in the "People's Survey" have been instructed to assert our sovereignty by taking more control of jurisdictional issues such as education and ensuring that we benefit not only from a short-term 'stimulus package', but, that we also negotiate long-term resource revenue sharing...resources that are extracted from and produced on our territories - territories that we have never surrendered to any external nation or government. Truly, Akwesasne must seize this opportunity - it is our job and our obligation to do so; our obligation to those who have yet to show their faces. President Obama offers Native Americans hope, he does not have the answers, it is up to us, and it is our duty, our responsibility.

The people of Akwesasne have been asked about their vision of a better tomorrow for Akwesasne, and they have spoken. On behalf of Akwesasne, they have given direction to their government to assert our Nation to Nation status with the United States of America and to negotiate a better tomorrow for 'Tahatikonsaketotakie' (Those who have yet to show their faces).

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to everyone involved in the Akwesasne Comprehensive Community Development Plan community participatory project.

First and foremost, a special *niawen ko:wa* to all Akwesasró:non who took the time to complete the questionnaires. We realize that completing the “People’s Survey” required a lot of your time and effort. By participating in this important process your views, ideas, priorities, and vision for the future development of our community will benefit the collective by establishing the direction to guide leadership in decisions concerning community development.

Nia:wen to our Youth who participated in completing the Youth Survey. We recognize that your opinions are very important to community development; the decisions today will affect your lives and planning must take this into account.

Nia:wen to our Elders for your patience and wisdom. Your participation is very valuable to this process, as we cannot know where we are going, until we know where we’ve been.

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APPENDIX – A

Summary of “People’s Survey” Quantitative Tabulation

APPENDIX - B

Summary of “People’s Survey” Open Ended Question Responses

APPENDIX – C

Summary of “Youth Survey”

