

# Algonquins of Ontario Economic Development Plan OVERVIEW January, 2008

The Algonquins of Ontario (Algonquins), the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario are engaged in negotiations in an attempt to develop an Algonquin Treaty.

The Algonquin Negotiation Representatives (“ANRs”), assisted by the Technical Advisory Group (“TAG”) are currently in the process of creating an Economic Development Plan (“EDP”) which is intended to provide a substantive foundation for the negotiation of that Treaty. The EDP will set out the necessary requirements for the **survival and prosperity** of the Algonquin people and culture in Ontario.

A draft EDP, which is to be tabled to the federal and provincial negotiators during early 2008, is nearing completion.

However, before moving to the next step in the negotiation process, the ANRs require additional input from community members on the general parameters of the EDP.

The following is a summary of the current thinking of the ANRs with respect the EDP. **After reading this summary, we would encourage you to attend the next public meeting in your area and/or provide any comments, suggestions on any of the issues described below or direct any questions to your ANR.**

In its current form, the EDP is organized into the following broad categories which together set out a comprehensive plan for the cultural and economic development of the Algonquin people:

- Algonquin Governance
- Land
- Algonquin Cultural Development
- Natural Resource Management
- Algonquin Socio-Economic Development

## **Governance**

The survival of the Algonquin Nation and Algonquin Culture requires that the Algonquins have a well-defined level of control over Algonquin lands, assets, and matters which directly affect their ability to practice their traditions and maintain and enhance their cultural identity. Nevertheless, the Algonquins recognize the modern day reality is that many Algonquins live shoulder-to-shoulder with non-Algonquin people throughout the Traditional Territory and that any governance structure will necessarily have to accommodate this fact.

Currently, the ANRs expect that the Algonquins will establish an Algonquin Constitution which will, among other things, establish a federal system of Algonquin governance with

one Nation government and several local community governments. The Algonquin Constitution which will be part of the proposed Treaty will also provide for an Algonquin Tribunal which will administer Algonquin Law (such as laws relating to harvesting by Algonquins and other matters).

The Nation government will be responsible for matters generally affecting the Algonquin Nation, while Algonquin community governments will be responsible for matters relating to each of the specific Algonquin communities.

Communities will generally be free to establish their own governance structures within this constitution, but at a minimum, the principles guiding these Algonquin community governments will include that they be:

- Democratic;
- Representative;
- Transparent; and
- Just.

## **Land**

The Algonquins have an intimate connection to the land within the Traditional Territory. Their identity is strongly defined by their role as stewards of the land and the natural resources of the Traditional Territory. In addition, land is fundamental to the ability of Algonquins to engage in traditional practices and is seen as a central component in the development of economic opportunities and wealth for the Algonquin Nation.

The ANRs, in consultation with the TAG, have been working to identify specific lands as part of a comprehensive plan for the economic and cultural development of the Algonquin people.

A preliminary Nation land concept has been developed which includes land throughout the Traditional Territory with specific identified potential uses for these lands. The precise details of this concept will be made available at a later date, but generally speaking these lands have been selected with the following criteria in mind:

- To protect Mother Earth;
- To ensure the survival of the Algonquins by providing high profile and historically meaningful locations for the establishment of “signature” projects that will support and enhance the rejuvenation of Algonquin history and culture.
- To provide significant opportunities/economic engines for sustainable economic development and win-win opportunities for both Algonquin and non-native communities in the immediate and long term

Algonquin Settlement Lands will generally be inalienable and not subject to expropriation.

Algonquin Community Lands are being selected as part of individual community profiles which are being developed in consultation with the communities. Although these plans are community plans, they are being developed to be consistent with, and become an

integral part of, the EDP. Generally speaking, Community Lands will be selected with reference to the following criteria:

1. Protect Algonquin values.
2. Provide for cultural, administrative, commercial, industrial, and recreational opportunities as well as Algonquin centered residential options.
3. Enhance and support Algonquin economic development and provide Algonquin job opportunities.

As treaty negotiations progress, the ANRs, along with the TAG, will develop further details of each project including outlines of the objectives, anticipated costs, land requirements and any potential revenue opportunities.

### **Natural Resources**

Algonquin history and culture are intimately connected with the natural resources of the Traditional Territory. These resources have a deep cultural and spiritual importance to the Algonquins and are integral to the Algonquin way of life. The exercise of traditional practices related to natural resources cannot be expressed in terms of money in that there are no reasonable substitutes that can be purchased. The ability to continue to engage in these practices is a central and common concern of all Algonquins.

In addition, the economy of the Traditional Territory continues to be dominated by natural resource industries, and access to natural resources is, and will continue to be after a Treaty is signed, a vital component of the Algonquin economy.

Although Algonquins have regained limited influence over natural resource development through the consultation process, this process has been inadequate to protect Algonquin interests. This lack of meaningful Algonquin influence and control over the management of these resources is a threat to the very survival of the Algonquin culture.

Two significant components to the successful reconciliation of the Algonquin Nation with other Canadians are (i) the establishment of mechanisms that provide for real Algonquin influence over the management of, and access to, natural resources in the Traditional Territory; and (ii) an equitable share for Algonquins in the economic benefits derived from the extraction and exploitation of the natural resources from the Traditional Territory.

The EDP provides for specific Algonquin requirements in respect of the management and exploitation of natural resources in the Traditional Territory, including:

- Forestry;
- Harvesting of flora and fauna;
- Mining and extraction activities;
- Water resources;
- Power generation and nuclear facilities; and

- Management of Algonquin Park and other parks and protected lands within the Traditional Territory.

## **Cultural Development**

One of the core objectives of the EDP is not only the survival, but the resurgence of the Algonquin culture. Algonquin culture is synonymous with the Algonquin way of life and includes language, values, beliefs, and traditional practices and teachings.

The Algonquins have been dispersed throughout and beyond the Traditional Territory, are disadvantaged economically and have lost control and influence over environmental and heritage resources that are central to the Algonquin culture. As a result, the Algonquins see many threats to the very survival of their culture, including the loss of the Algonquin language, alienation of traditional lands and access to water, the erosion of the inventory of heritage resources, the emigration of Algonquins from the Traditional Territory, and the development of division and divisiveness amongst and between the Algonquin communities.

One of the principal objectives of this EDP is to identify the mechanisms, resources and opportunities that will enable the Algonquins to confront and overcome these threats. The ANRs have identified a need for, and have developed preliminary concepts for cultural development initiatives and programs falling into the following categories:

- “Nation building” efforts to bring the Algonquin people closer together as one Nation;
- Programs and developments to ensure the protection and respectful treatment of Algonquin heritage resources; and
- Improved access to cultural education and training for Algonquins (e.g., language, history, archaeology).

## **Socio-Economic Development**

A key element in the process of reconciliation of the Algonquins with other Canadians, and for ensuring the survival and prosperity of the Algonquin culture, is a solid foundation upon which the economic well-being of Algonquins can be improved.

The ANRs have identified Algonquin socio-economic development initiatives that fall into four major categories:

1. Workforce Development
2. Market Development
3. Business Development
4. Government Procurement

Workforce Development involves a system of education and training that prepares people for highly skilled jobs and ensures employers’ access to a skilled flexible workforce in the future. A comprehensive program would be designed to improve the

productivity level of workers and allow companies to grow in the future.

Algonquin workforce development is specifically focused on increasing Algonquin human capital in the Traditional Territory, over and above any other workforce development initiatives that apply more generally. This will require programs in areas such as:

- Education, training, skill and entrepreneurial development and capacity building that are critical in enabling Algonquins to participate effectively in the modern economy;
- Health; and
- Other social programs designed to help enable working-age individuals to participate in the workforce, and to make the Traditional Territory an attractive place for Algonquins to reside.

Market Development requires the co-ordination of many efforts to provide an environment in which economic opportunities can be generated. Larger scale efforts that can potentially benefit large groups of people often require concerted, centralized effort to aid the development of markets in which businesses can be successful. Non-Algonquin market development efforts are already in place within the Traditional Territory and the Algonquins will generally benefit from these. However, the EDP sets out certain Algonquin-specific market development initiatives to increase opportunities for Algonquin goods and services and the Algonquin Nation is expected to engage in discussions regarding non-Algonquin efforts to ensure Algonquin interests are properly taken into account.

The EDP will also include certain business development programs to facilitate the development of, and investment in, Algonquin small businesses in the Traditional Territory.

Finally, the EDP contemplates the provision of some special considerations for Algonquin people with respect to government procurement to enable Algonquins to enhance opportunities for Algonquin businesses in the Traditional Territory.

We thank you for your active interest in the Treaty Negotiation process and thank you for your ongoing support/assistance in that endeavour.

“Robert J. Potts”  
Principal Negotiator

“Algonquin Negotiation Representatives”