

# Kebaowek First Nation Cultural Centre Project Initial Findings Report



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prepared for

***Kebaowek First Nation***

by



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## Project Background

This report represents our initial research findings for the Kebaowek First Nation (KFN) Cultural Centre Feasibility Study project, which is being undertaken as part of a larger effort to develop tourism within Kebaowek First Nation territory.

The community identified tourism as a priority during the 2017 Kebaowek First Nation Strategic Planning process. That year, the Tourism Company, with MacLeod Farley & Associates, was retained to create a Five-year Tourism Development Plan. The development planning process included identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing potential tourism sites, identifying key strengths and opportunities for Kebaowek First Nation tourism and researching tourism market requirements. Community consultations and stakeholder interviews were conducted, and a tourism strategic planning session was held at KFN in September 2017. A Draft Plan was subsequently drafted and circulated to the membership for comment. Chief and Council endorsed the final Five-Year Tourism Development Plan in January 2018.<sup>1</sup>

Within the Tourism Development Plan, three top priority projects were identified:

1. Construction of a new KFN Cultural Centre on the waterfront
2. Development of a cooperative relationship with Opémican National Park and
3. Continued trail development.

MacLeod Farley & Associates was retained in 2018 to facilitate the planning of the waterfront property. A site was selected, and an overall site plan was developed. Chief and Council allocated space for a new cultural centre on this site.<sup>2</sup> The waterfront development is scheduled to commence during the summer of 2021 with the construction of a marina and docks.

This Feasibility Study project was initiated in December 2020 to develop a feasible plan for the construction of the Cultural Centre at the waterfront location. This report summarizes our findings during the initial research phase of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> A copy of the KFN Five Year Tourism Development Plan can be obtained by contacting Justin Roy, KFN Economic Development Officer.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for site plan.

## Research Sources

The sources of information used to generate this report are listed below. Text written in italic represents community consultations. Our consulting team used this research to gain an understanding of the community member's current wishes with regards to the proposed cultural centre. *Review of 2017/18 interviews with:*

- *Chief Lance Haymond*
- *Pascale Bibeau, Director of Land Management*
- *Justin Roy, Economic Development Officer*
- *Dave McLaren, Health Director and Councillor*
- *Terry Perrier, Director of Public Works*
- *Roxanne McKenzie, Countryfest Organizer*
  
- Review of 2017/18 interviews with stakeholders:
  - James and Suzanne Mullin – Owners of Miwapanee Lodge
  - Danielle Gravelle, Director General with the Municipality of Kipawa
  - Amanda Nadon-Langlois, the Kipawa Tourism Development Officer
  
- *Review of 2018 Joint Planning Session minutes*
  
- *Review of 2018 planning meeting minutes with former KFN Cultural Coordinators Rod St. Denis and Tori Barrer*
  
- Review of 2018 meeting with Dany Gareau, Directeur, Opémican National Park
  
- *Interview with Grand Chief Verna Polson, Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council*
  
- *Interview with Kim Chevrier, Comprehensive Community Plan Coordinator, and review of initial CCP research results*
  
- Review of Kebaowek: Portrait of a People by Kermott Moore
  
- 2020 Meeting with Ambroise Lycke Directeur, Opémican National Park
  
- Market research – regional market reports and Parc D'Opemican visitor statistics
  
- *Community survey 1 results<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> A full copy of the survey results can be found in Appendix B.

Our review of documents and interviews from the 2017/18 Tourism Development Planning project indicates that your KFN citizens have desired a cultural centre for some time. Consistent concepts regarding the proposed centre, which emerged during our research in 2017-2018, included the following:

- Anishinaabe cultural and territorial preservation is a priority for Chief and Council and for the citizens of KFN.
- Your members would like to revitalize traditional Anishinaabek language and culture.
- A multipurpose cultural centre is seen as necessary and the ideal place to revitalize language and culture.
- The cultural centre should be designed to be able to host community events, powwows, traditional ceremonies and activities and traditional skills workshops such as drumming, dancing, regalia making, snowshoe making, traditional medicines, preparation of traditional foods and birch bark craft making.
- There should be a place for community artists and crafters to sell their items and become trained to produce for the tourism industry.
- Cultural artifacts and belongings should be stored at the cultural centre.
- There should be an inclusion of elder knowledge and experiences – e.g., storytelling and mentoring.
- Natural medicines are highly valued and should be used for teachings for awareness, collection, and purpose.
- The cultural centre could be used as a place to host weddings, funerals, and other life events.
- People need to feel safe through design. It should be a place for people to get a sense of their identity and to gather strength.

The citizens of KFN were also interested in using the cultural centre for tourism and economic development purposes.

- The KFN community is accustomed to tourism. Many members worked as hunting and fishing guides until the early 1980s and given that the community welcomes 2,000 – 3,000 visitors a year during their Countryfest music festival.
- Tourism development is seen as having the potential to, once again, provide citizens with meaningful employment.
- Chief and Council would like to expose youth to the employment opportunities tourism represents.

- Community members would like to use the cultural centre as a place tell their own stories to the world. This includes traditional ways of living and information about difficult times such as the residential school experiences of members.
- The development of Parc D 'Opemican, in the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, represents an important opportunity for KFN and for Wolf Lake First Nation.

When the Cultural Centre Feasibility Study was launched at the end of 2020, we decided to conduct a survey to determine whether the concepts and themes identified in 2017/18 were still relevant to the community. We tested our understanding of the community's desires through a short survey, which was available online and in hard copy between December 15, 2020, and January 15, 2021. The survey results confirmed that the community's vision for the cultural centre has not changed.

## Results of Community Survey #1

86 people completed the first project survey. For the most part, the survey results are consistent with the information provided in the early stages of the tourism development project and in recent meetings and interviews.

A full version of the survey results can be found in Appendix B.

### Demographics

The survey reached a reasonably broad representation of the KFN citizen population.

- 65 completed the online version
- 21 completed the paper copy, which was available from the KFN Band Office
- 65% of respondents were female
- 33% were male.

There was representation from youth, adults, and elders in the survey results.

- 33% age 18 -34
- 20% age 35 – 64
- 8% 65+

There were also representative responses from community members who live both on and off Kebaowek First Nation reserve.

- 52% live in the community
- 33% live in the region
- 5% live outside of the region

### **Q1. What's Important?**

The first survey question asked people to indicate which elements of the cultural centre were important to them. The options included the elements which had been suggested by community members interviewed during the research phase of the project. The top five results were:

#1 – Exhibits about culture and history (94%)

#2 – A place for ceremony (92%)

#3 – A place for language learning (90%)

#4 – A place to store cultural objects (87%)

#5 – A workshop or craft space (86%)

### **Q2. Please prioritize your responses to Q1.**

Many of the respondents who used the paper survey did not answer this question in a manner consistent with the on-line survey, so it was removed from the results.

### **Q3. What Kind of Events Would you Like to Attend or Host?**

When asked what kinds of events people would like to attend or host at the Cultural Centre, the top two results were;

#1 – Powwows, other big events (94%)

#2 – Feast and banquets (85%)

Community meetings, concerts or performances, weddings, and family events were also important to over 50% of respondents. Other ideas expressed in the Comments section included;

*“Life celebrations -wedding ceremonies, funerals, memorials, wakes, achievements.”*

*"Land claim (title) info meetings."*

#### **Q4. What Kinds of Programs?**

A list of potential programs, which could take place at the cultural centre were listed, and respondents were asked to check off those in which they would like to participate. The programs mentioned in the list were those which had been identified during our research. The top three programs selected were:

#1 – Craft/building workshops (92%)

#2 – Medicine walks and workshops (88%)

#3 – Language workshops (85%)

Regalia making and Indigenous Games were important to over 60% of respondents. Other ideas expressed in the comment section were:

*"Trapping n fishing."*

*"All the stuff our elders did."*

*"Sweat lodge outside would be a bonus."*

*"Medicine workshop."*

*"Cultural teachings/storytelling."*

*"Elder seminar history speaker."*

*"How to cook traditional foods."*

#### **Q5. What Should Visitors Learn?**

When asked what visitors to the Cultural Centre should leave knowing, the top three answers were;

#1 - Our relationship with lakes/rivers (86%)

#2 - Traditional knowledge about seasons, plants, animals (86%)

#3 – Our community & culture today (83%)

Over 80% of respondents also said the following topics were important:



#4 – Treaty, territory & rights (81%)

#5 – Traditional skills/crafts (81%)

#6 – Our language (80%)

#7 – Our medicines (80%)

73% felt that difficult stories, such as residential school stories, should be presented, and 71% said that visitors should be taught about Anishinaabe spiritual life.

#### **Q6. What other things should be at the Cultural Centre?**

There were numerous other ideas expressed about what should be at the Cultural Centre. The following ideas were expressed multiple times.

- Local artisans and Indigenous artwork on display
- A gift shop to sell crafts and art made by the members, smudge kits, dreamcatchers, books on culture
- Medicine teachings
- Honour our veterans
- Genealogy
- Mini library

#### **Survey Conclusions**

The findings indicate that community desires regarding the Cultural Centre are consistent with what was expressed during the 2017/18 Five Year Tourism Development Plan process.

Community members are looking forward to having a cultural centre in the community as a safe space to honour and share Anishinaabe history, culture, and values.

*“I feel that it is important to have a Cultural Centre in the community, where all of the Algonquin ways are practiced. Whether it be ceremonies, gatherings, medicine picking, teachings, feasts, sweats or powwows.”*

## Parc D'Opemican

In 2017, the Director of Parc D'Opemican indicated that SEPAQ was interested in working collaboratively and that their goal is to have Algonquin history and culture offered at the Parc. SEPAQ had set aside \$1.M to be shared jointly between KFN and Wolfe Lake First Nation to achieve this goal. The Director stated that these funds could be used to create exhibits about Algonquin culture either within the Parc or in the KFN community. He expressed a willingness to work in partnership with and take direction from KFN and Wolf Lake First Nation regarding any exhibits or programming about Algonquin history and culture taking place within the Parc.

A more recent interview in December 2020 with the current Director, Ambroise Lycke, of Parc D'Opemican, confirmed that SEPAQ remains committed to continuing in this direction. They have consulted with KFN leadership during archeological investigations in the Parc. During the construction of their Welcome Centre, they found an ancient Anishinaabe axe head which they are holding on to at present. They also consulted with KFN leadership regarding the construction of an Inukshuk in the Parc. The Director provided copies of all archeological reports.

The Parc is focusing on developing modern, multi-dimensional exhibits to attract visitors. They have begun to develop history exhibits at the Parc, based upon the broad theme of settler involvement in the local forestry industry, and they have left space for an Algonquin exhibit in one of their buildings and have provided copies of their interpretive exhibit plans.

Director Lycke also shared information about the Parc's marketing plan and visitor statistics. The Parc had almost 35,000 visitors in 2020. They are currently marketing in Quebec; however, they plan to begin marketing in Ontario in 2021. They continue to express interest in cross-marketing the proposed KFN Cultural Centre with Parc D'Opemican.

Since 2018, we learned that KFN has decided to focus on developing the cultural centre, exhibits and programming within the community rather than at Parc D'Opemican. KFN has utilized a portion of the \$1M funds to hire Don Enright, a professional Interpretive Planner, to

begin developing an interpretive plan for the proposed KFN Cultural Centre. The interpretive plan will be designed to complement and enhance the visitor experience found at the Parc.

# Appendix A

## KFN Waterfront Site Plan as of September 30, 2019



## Appendix B

### Survey #1 Results