



750 -331 Smith Street
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2G9
Ph: (204) 947-2227 Fax: (204) 947-2446
Toll Free: 1-888-947-6222
E mail: nacc@mb.sympatico.ca

EAST SIDE PLANNING INITIATIVE

Norway House, Manitoba

ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Consultation and Communication

Consultation has been after the fact and once decisions have been made. How much of a say will communities have even if we want to be involved? We will be left out of development when we don't know what is happening. There needs to be on-going regional representation for the East Side through a regional body with equal participation. Communities are at a disadvantage when meeting with corporations and government who have the resources to hire experts and legal advisors.

Hydro started clean up on the 8-mile channel and the 2-mile channel a year ago. Although they are doing an assessment, we have not been consulted nor have we been made aware of the process so that we can get involved. Consultation should not be through the First Nation only. There are environmental issues associated with this but, again, we haven't been consulted.

There have been more Hydro shut downs since the mid 1970s with no formal notification process developed.

Recommendation: Consultation and Communication

- Maintain NACC status on the East Side committees and the planning process. NACC should have a representative there and have it all the time.
- Adequate resources need to be provided for NACC communities to hire their own consultant to work directly on their behalf and on an on-going basis to ensure fairness by leveling the playing field.
- The government needs to be open about development plans.
- Hydro needs to develop appropriate methods and timelines for meaningful consultation with NACC communities.
- Hydro needs to involve NACC communities at the earliest stages of planning for selection of alternative corridor routes for the BiPoll III project.

Economic & Employment Development

Although there has been development in the region, employment rates haven't changed. Recently, for example, Hydro started clean up of contaminated sites and hired only First Nation members. We also want to be involved and access employment. Communities face the following barriers to access economic development, as follows:

Barriers to Economic Development

(a) Divisions Within Communities

Divisions within the communities hinder progress. Members of both communities, for example, have tried tourism, but it hasn't been successful. To make it work, we need to work together to benefit the community as a whole. These kinds of problems need to be raised and dealt with in other forums such as the Tourism Conference. There will be a meeting in May with Reg Meade, President of NACC, where these issues can be brought up.

The First Nation community is expanding due to Bill C31, which will affect access to education and schooling.

(b) Government Regulations

The ‘little guys’ are being penalized by the structure of government regulations and their enforcement. There will be increases to snow mobile regulations, for example. These regulations are more relevant for the south where snowmobiles are used mostly for recreation. For the north, snowmobiles are a means of transportation, not just recreation. Boats, operators, and their helpers all need licenses now. There is a \$200 charge to get registered and to have a safety course and \$200 for snowmobiles. Both fees impact the economic activities of fishing and trapping. Both are a form of taxation.

The main economic activities are fishing and trapping. While there may be violations happening with both activities, awareness of the affects and increased enforcement of regulations could help curb conservation and environmental violations.

(c) Jurisdictional Issues

The five groups of NACC, Metis, Bill C31, First Nations and non-aboriginal people create divisions within communities and the region. When the NACC community needs Band support for economic development projects before they are considered by government, for example, we are reliant on the good will of the Band. If the Band has similar projects or if there are personal conflicts, the project may not be supported. In some cases, priority hiring by industry is for one group at the expense of another and this causes divisions. Government and industry, by conducting their affairs in this manner are dividing people and this causes problems ---division within our communities. First/Cree Nation vs Non-Reserve

There are boundary issues. How much authority do we have and what does it mean? We need clarity in regards to the boundaries of NACC communities to give us protection and control over what development occurs within our boundaries. Clarity will provide confidence for our own future development.

(d) Hiring Practices

Larger corporations and companies are involved with the larger scale economic development activities such as logging, mining, farming and hydro development. There has been a habit by crown corporations and industry to

hire First Nation members for projects in this region as a priority. Being the minority population, NACC community members are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing employment opportunities. This situation leads to apathy and many people are discouraged from applying for economic and employment opportunities and this leads to other social problems. To be fair to the people of the region, hiring practices need to be opened up to non-status and off-reserve populations as well.

Recommendation:

Barriers to Employment and Economic Development

- A mechanism needs to be developed collaboratively with NACC, Metis, Bill C31, First Nations, non-aboriginals and government to work together for mutual benefit.
- Research other inclusive models.
- To demonstrate social responsibility, crown corporations and industry conducting business in the north that receive subsidies from either level of government should adopt and enforce employment equity measures to enable equal access and equal opportunity for local and regional employment by NACC community members.

Environmental Issues

Water Quality

What implications will development on the East Side have on Lake Winnipeg as a whole? The Muskeg River is a natural filter. All development is affecting the Lake. Changes have occurred over the years such as increases to the smelt population. There are more smelts now than ever before and they go right up to York Factory. The Whitefish eat the smelts and grow too fast which reduces the quality of the fish. Poorer fish quality along with decreased prices for fish and increased prices in gas threaten the sustainability of the fishing industry.

Protected Areas

Poplar River and Pikangikum are working together to establish a protected area. It is unclear what implications this protected area will have for development.

Maintaining Biodiversity

When regulations are complied with, the economic activities of fishing, hunting and trapping that the aboriginal people are involved with does not destroy the environment. It is the industries in the area that are responsible for extensive environment problems. The area is wetlands and functions as a natural filter. It is environmentally sensitive. What kinds of long-term impacts will occur when there are impacts to this natural filtering system? We need to know what kind of development the government is talking about, and then we can know what the impacts will be.

Environmental Regulations

Larger corporations and companies are involved with the larger scale economic development activities such as logging, mining, farming and hydro development. Accidental spills of raw sewage is hazardous to the environment. There was a recent discharge of raw sewage, for example, into Lake Winnipeg from a plant in Gimli. This poses questions as to whether environmental regulations were enforced or not. Were penalties enforced? Increased raw sewage into the environment affects the health of the people as well as the environment. If this region is opened up for development, government should enforce existing regulations to protect and sustain the environment for future generations. The regulations exist and if not, develop and enforce the necessary regulative measures to protect and sustain the environment.

Recommendation: Environmental Issues

- Corporations and companies not complying with environmental regulations should be charged to discourage environmental damage and encourage sustainable development.
- Corporations should be involved in regional discussions so they can become aware of the community's interests and environmental concerns in the region.
- Conduct studies to determine why the weeds are not growing.
- Document local knowledge; conduct surveys and land use

mapping.

- Impact assessments need to be conducted from a long-term perspective.
- Promote a clean environment.
- Communities need to comply with their operating licenses of lagoons.
- Industry needs to get directly involved in sustainable development initiatives.
- Increased enforcement by appropriate agencies should take place to discourage violations of conservation and environmental regulations and policies.

Clean Up

Local residents, commercial fishers and trappers owning and using cabins should be encouraged to dispose their garbage in appropriate landfill sites. The habit has been for people to toss their garbage out of the cabin and leave it on the ground in and around the cabin, leaving the area untidy and dirty. Garbage is also disposed along the shoreline of the waterways and lakes.

Recommendation: Clean Up

- NACC communities need to get involved in Hydro initiatives regarding environmental clean up.
- Regulations need to be enforced by the appropriate agencies to stop and control poor waste disposal habits.