

With respect to the section entitled “Research Needs”, a list of information, reports, data bases and maps with existing environmental, biological diversity, social, economic, resource, land use, tenure, government commitments, biophysical, heritage, etc., is being compiled . This information has been made available to the ESRT and FNC as it has been collected for their deliberations and included in the public registry. While most components have been incorporated into the status report, the development of the Broad Area Plan remains a work-in-progress. The land use zone map, and procedures to address the regular review and amendment of the approved plan, will be components of the final plan.

### 4.3 Public Participation Process

In launching the East Side Planning Initiative, the government committed to a public participation process to gather the views of residents of the east side of Lake Winnipeg, stakeholders and all Manitobans. Encapsulating the conceptual approach, then Minister of Conservation, the Honourable Oscar Lathlin, stated that the government’s objective *“has been to establish a process, in collaboration with the public, local communities, industry and First Nations, that ensures comprehensive public involvement in the wide area planning process, ...as we work to develop a consensus among these interests with a common vision for land and resource use now and in the future.”*

A common theme throughout this status report is how the planning area, comprising approximately one-eighth of the land mass of the province, is remarkably rich in cultural and natural resources – resources that have sustained the inhabitants of the area for thousands of years. It is also part of one of the world’s largest remaining boreal forest environments. The future of this important and delicate ecosystem will be determined by the principles of wise stewardship and sustainable resource management that are established within the Broad Area Plan. It is why the government called for comprehensive public engagement in charting a future for this resource-rich and ecologically significant environment.

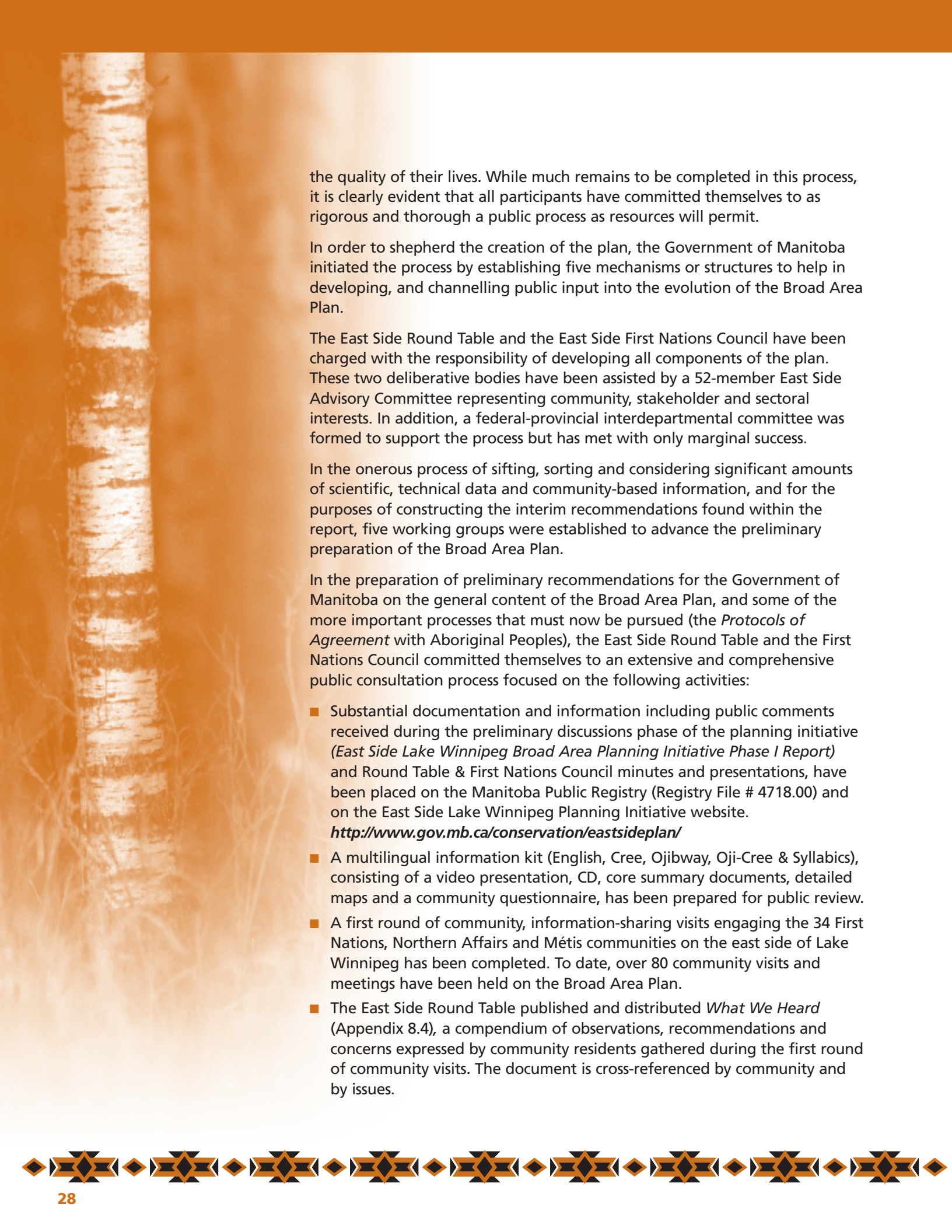
Building a public participation process with limited resources and a tight time frame has been no easy task. Just as one cannot push a river, neither can we place hurried and artificial deadlines on a process that is both organic and ongoing. Should the time not be available to do it right, it will certainly not be available to do it over. Considering the legal challenges that have been successfully argued before the highest courts in the land, it is incumbent on the Government of Manitoba, and in the best interests of all of its citizens, to ensure that public, transparent, factual and accountable processes of information sharing and consultation be conducted as part of the process of defining a Broad Area Plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

The origins of this approach lie in the fundamental conviction that people have an inherent right to be engaged in decision-making processes that affect

*“That sustainable development processes recognize the importance of the culture, knowledge, traditions, cultural and spiritual values of Aboriginal peoples.”*

(Recommendation: Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation – 1999)





the quality of their lives. While much remains to be completed in this process, it is clearly evident that all participants have committed themselves to as rigorous and thorough a public process as resources will permit.

In order to shepherd the creation of the plan, the Government of Manitoba initiated the process by establishing five mechanisms or structures to help in developing, and channelling public input into the evolution of the Broad Area Plan.

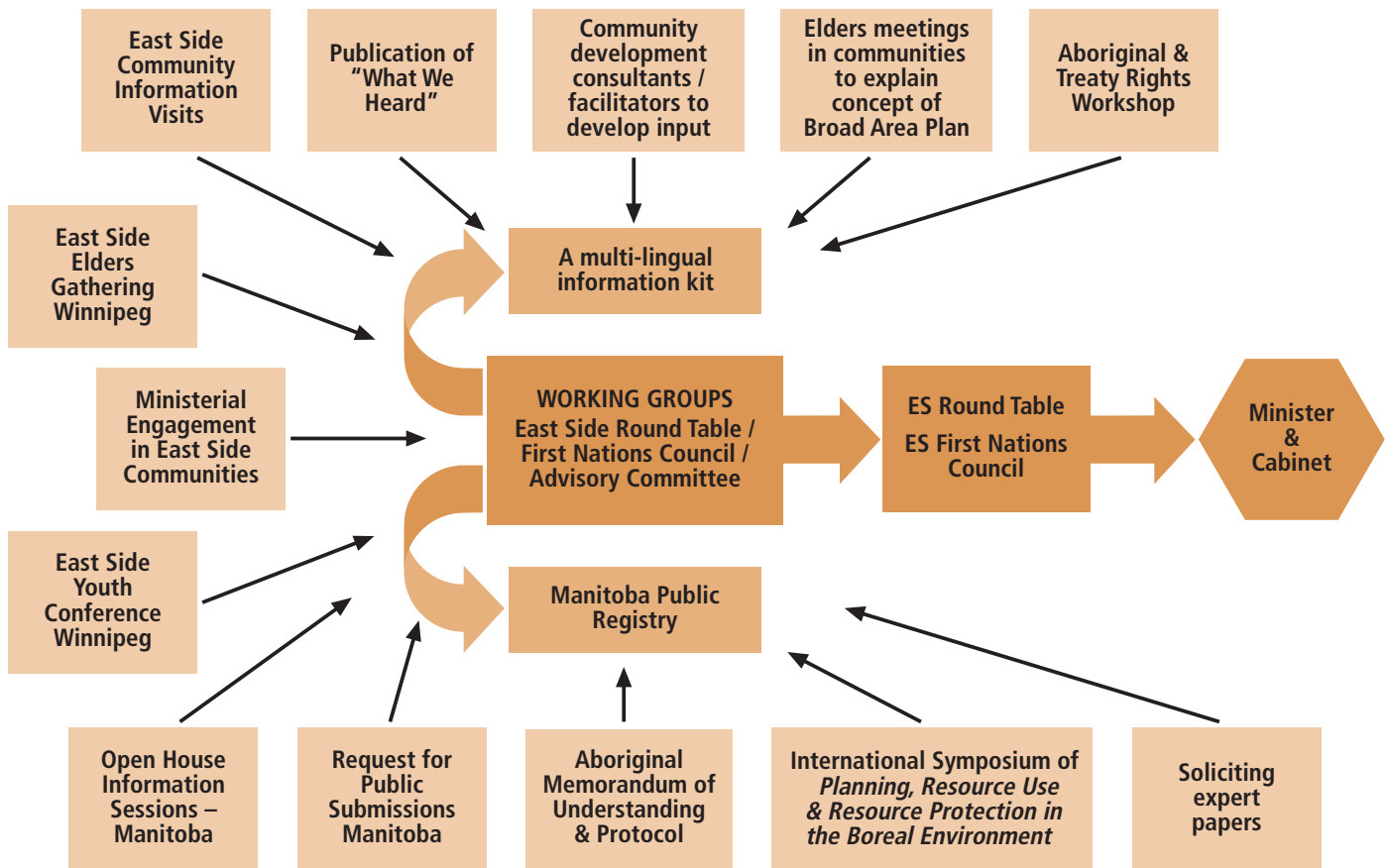
The East Side Round Table and the East Side First Nations Council have been charged with the responsibility of developing all components of the plan. These two deliberative bodies have been assisted by a 52-member East Side Advisory Committee representing community, stakeholder and sectoral interests. In addition, a federal-provincial interdepartmental committee was formed to support the process but has met with only marginal success.

In the onerous process of sifting, sorting and considering significant amounts of scientific, technical data and community-based information, and for the purposes of constructing the interim recommendations found within the report, five working groups were established to advance the preliminary preparation of the Broad Area Plan.

In the preparation of preliminary recommendations for the Government of Manitoba on the general content of the Broad Area Plan, and some of the more important processes that must now be pursued (the *Protocols of Agreement* with Aboriginal Peoples), the East Side Round Table and the First Nations Council committed themselves to an extensive and comprehensive public consultation process focused on the following activities:

- Substantial documentation and information including public comments received during the preliminary discussions phase of the planning initiative (*East Side Lake Winnipeg Broad Area Planning Initiative Phase I Report*) and Round Table & First Nations Council minutes and presentations, have been placed on the Manitoba Public Registry (Registry File # 4718.00) and on the East Side Lake Winnipeg Planning Initiative website.  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eastsideplan/>
- A multilingual information kit (English, Cree, Ojibway, Oji-Cree & Syllabics), consisting of a video presentation, CD, core summary documents, detailed maps and a community questionnaire, has been prepared for public review.
- A first round of community, information-sharing visits engaging the 34 First Nations, Northern Affairs and Métis communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg has been completed. To date, over 80 community visits and meetings have been held on the Broad Area Plan.
- The East Side Round Table published and distributed *What We Heard* (Appendix 8.4), a compendium of observations, recommendations and concerns expressed by community residents gathered during the first round of community visits. The document is cross-referenced by community and by issues.

## Public Participation Process



- Resources will be made available through the engagement of community development consultants to assist the east side communities in further developing their positions and inputs to the Broad Area Plan through the second stage of community visits.
- Specific meetings have been organized with the Elders and leadership of First Nations communities to explain the purpose and function of a Broad Area Plan (Appendix 8.6).
- As 96 per cent of the population of the east side of Lake Winnipeg consists of First Nations peoples, the Round Table and the First Nations Council organized an Elders gathering to begin receiving their recommendations and concerns about the Broad Area Plan. Elders are invited to all Round Table and First Nations Council meetings.
- The Round Table and the First Nations Council have committed to organize a youth conference involving young residents between the ages of 18 & 24 resident on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The purpose of the conference is to gather the views and recommendations of youth on the future of land use on the east side.
- The Round Table and the First Nations Council organized a workshop on “Recent Case Law and Aboriginal & Treaty Rights and Entitlements” to consider the impact of such on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.
- There were three Open House Information Sessions in Manitoba where documentation was made available and the scope and intent of the Broad Area Plan was explained to interested Manitobans. Submissions, recommendations, concerns and observations were solicited through questionnaires (Appendix 8.3).
- The Round Table and the First Nations Council have recommended the organization of an international symposium on Planning, Resource Use & Resource Protection in a Boreal Forest Environment. The symposium would be organized in partnership with public institutions like the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Natural Resources Institute and the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources.
- The First Nations on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and the Government of Manitoba have signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* (Appendix 8.6), the first step in negotiating a *Protocol of Agreement* that will be incorporated into the Broad Area Plan. A similar process has been recommended to the Government of Manitoba regarding the Métis Nation resident on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

The public participation process is an integral and vital part of the development of the Broad Area Plan for the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

