

**MÉTIS VOICES. MÉTIS CONSTITUTION.**



MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA  
**CONSTITUTION**  
COMMISSION

# WHAT WE HEARD

Citizen Engagement Report

**JULY 26, 2022**





MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA  
**CONSTITUTION**  
COMMISSION

After completing Roundtables with our MNA governing structures on a preliminary draft of our Constitution in 2021, the MNA Constitution Commission (the Commission) set out to get direction and feedback from all our Citizens. To do this, the Commission took a draft of the Constitution directly to the people, where they live. Between September 2021 and February 2022, the Commission held 19 community gatherings across all six Regions of the Nation. The Commission likewise encouraged Citizens to make written submissions and participate in hearings based on those submissions. In all, 28 Citizens, Locals, and Affiliates made written submissions, and five of those opted to have a hearing directly with the Commission.

The thoughtful and detailed feedback received during this round of Citizen Engagement was instrumental in developing a Constitution that reflects the histories and aspirations of all Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens. Continue reading for a summary of What We Heard.

Learn more about the Constitution at [albertametisgov.com/constitution](https://albertametisgov.com/constitution) or scan the following QR code to view the draft Constitution directly.





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## REFLECTIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

**M**uch has taken place since the last time we reported on our work to you, the Citizens of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA), at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) in August of 2021. Multiple waves of Covid-19 shut down our province, complicating our efforts to engage directly with Citizens. Elections took place at the federal level, which affected work with the Government of Canada to implement the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (MGRSA). And our own MNA elections, scheduled for 2022, were postponed for one year to allow the Commission to complete its vital work and move us into our new constitutional government as soon as possible.

Across this shifting and challenging landscape, we have continued to advance towards our objective of creating and ratifying the first federally-recognized Métis Constitution in Canada. We know that many of our Citizens have been anxiously awaiting this new draft of our Constitution. Some

may feel the process is taking too long, that our Nation and our people have waited long enough; others may fear we are moving too quickly, given the momentousness of the task. We understand both perspectives. As a Commission, we have tried to strike a balance between these competing



pressures and priorities, to move ahead and seize this historic opportunity in a way that honours the knowledge, wisdom, and priorities of our Citizens, while protecting the health and wellbeing of our Elders and most vulnerable populations.

Following our presentation at the 2021 AGA, we planned a series of 20 community gatherings, 3 in each Region, with two gatherings for our major urban centres, Calgary and Edmonton. Our intent was to take the draft Constitution directly to our Citizens where they live. These plans were quickly shuttered, however, by the surge of Covid-19 cases in September of 2021, which forced us to pause in-person gatherings. To keep momentum, we attempted to organize virtual community gatherings. We quickly realized, however, that virtual engagement was not an effective way to reach many of our Citizens, and particularly those in rural communities.

Despite these and other challenges, we were able to complete 19 community gatherings and conduct 5 hearings with MNA Citizens, Affiliates, and Locals over the fall and winter of 2021-2022. The Commission recognized that not all Citizens would be comfortable or able to attend in-person meetings, whether because of Covid concerns or Covid restrictions. This is why we made it possible for any Citizen to submit their input in writing and participate in a virtual hearing. Since the completion of our final hearing in February 2022, we have reviewed more than 1,000 pages of transcripts, notes, and written submissions, and have considered more than 300 specific suggestions related to the Constitution, from minor tweaks of language to overhauls of entire branches of the government. We are pleased to say this work is complete.

We return now to this pillar of our self-government, the Annual General Assembly, to present to you, the Citizens of the Métis Nation within Alberta, this revised draft of our Métis Constitution. We believe this draft represents an improvement of the draft presented at this time last year. For that, we are indebted to all those who took the time to contribute their knowledge, questions, and recommendations. We sincerely hope that you, our Citizens, will see yourselves in this Constitution. We hope that it reflects your families, your histories, your wisdom, and your dreams of a better future for all Métis people.

It has been a tremendous honour to walk this path with you. Let us come together now to finish what we began centuries ago at the Victory of Frog Plain (commonly known as the “Battle of Seven Oaks”). Let us take these final steps towards self-government, towards history, towards destiny. Let us create a Métis Constitution and a Métis Government, by us and for us. We are the Otipemisiwak, the people who rule themselves. Our ancestors are watching; our time is now.

## THE ROAD TO A MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA CONSTITUTION

The road to Métis self-government in Alberta is a long one. First formed in 1928, the MNA is one of the oldest Métis governments. In 1961, the Métis Association of Alberta (as the MNA was then known) was formally registered under provincial legislation in order to gain access to federal funding. Since then, colonial constraints have forced the MNA to exist as a not-for-profit society under Alberta’s Societies Act. For decades, our Citizens have brought forward and approved motions and resolutions at AGAs calling for true Métis self-government in Alberta. For decades, our Citizens have brought forward and approved motions and resolutions at AGAs calling for true Métis self-government in Alberta. In response to these calls, the MNA has commissioned numerous reports and studies that have recommended the MNA develop and adopt its own constitution.



## MNACC Gathering Participation



**19**

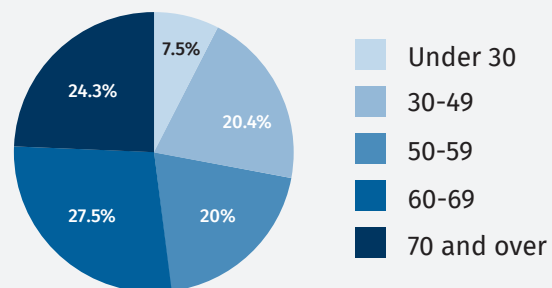
### Community gatherings\*

\*Community gatherings covered all 6 MNA Regions and included one gathering for MNA Citizens who live on Settlements and two sessions each for Edmonton and Calgary.

**589**

### Total number of attendees

### Attendees by age group



## Written Feedback & Hearings

**28**

### Written submissions

From MNA Citizens, Local Councils & Affiliates

**5**

### Hearings

With MNA Citizens, Local Councils & Affiliates

Until recently, neither Canada nor Alberta supported these efforts. The relationship between Canada and the MNA changed dramatically, however, in 2017 when Canada and the MNA signed a Memorandum of Understanding and a Framework Agreement that set the stage for the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (MGRSA) in June 2019. The MGRSA recognizes the MNA's right to self-government and lays out a process for its implementation. The Commission's work is one part of that process.

### What We Did

Between September 2021 and February 2022, the Commission held 19 community gatherings that covered all six MNA Regions. In total, 589 attendees participated in the 19 community gatherings. Each community gathering consisted of three main components: (1) a short video introduction to the history of Métis self-government in Alberta and Canada; (2) a presentation from the Commission on the draft Constitution; and (3) an open period for MNA Citizens to provide input, ask questions, and engage directly with the Commission. All community gatherings were audio recorded and transcribed, and the Commission and its staff took detailed notes.

In addition to the community gatherings, the Commission received 28 pieces of written feedback from MNA Citizens, Affiliates, Locals, and organizations. The types of written input varied widely, from short emails to extended and formal written submissions. Five of the MNA Citizens, Affiliates, and Locals who made written

submissions elected to participate in a hearing with the Commission. The hearings provided participants an opportunity to engage directly with the Commission for one hour regarding their written submission, to elaborate on their proposals, and to ask and answer questions.

The Commission has carefully reviewed thousands of pages of transcripts, notes, and written submissions. Each and every piece of input directly related to the draft Constitution was considered and discussed by the Commission. Where input from MNA Citizens related to matters beyond the Commission's mandate, such as the Transition Plan or the enabling laws that will need to be passed before the new government can take force, Commission staff compiled the input into documents that will be shared with the bodies responsible for advancing those matters. The Commission felt it was important to acknowledge and honour all the input we received from our Citizens.

Below is a summary of the major themes and issues that emerged from the community gatherings, written feedback, and hearings, as well as explanations of the Commission's reasoning for some of the more significant decisions. Because this document is intended to be an accessible resource to inform and support all Citizens in the next steps of our process, it is not an exhaustive list of each and every piece of input received. It is the Commission's hope, however, that every Citizen who contributed feedback will see their input reflected in this report or in the Constitution itself.

## What We Heard

The Commission received an enormous amount of thoughtful, constructive, and valuable input from Citizens over the past year. We have summarized this feedback into the following major themes: History, Language, and Culture in the Constitution; Citizenship, the Métis Nation within Alberta, and the Métis Nation; Territorial and District Boundaries; Métis Rights; Purpose and Responsibilities of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government; Branches of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government; Representation and Division of Powers; Offices and Institutions; Métis Lands and Modern Day Treaties; Amending the Constitution; Metis Settlements; and Non-Constitutional Matters. Each major theme is in turn divided into a small number of sub-themes.



## HISTORY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE IN THE CONSTITUTION

A constitution is not simply the foundation of a political system; it is a declaration of Nationhood to the world. A Constitution should reflect the history and culture of a people and project its values and aspirations. Not surprisingly, then, the Commission received a lot of feedback from Citizens regarding the place of Métis history and culture in the Constitution, and the types and tones of language it uses. These are categorized into two sub-themes: History, Clarity, and Tone; and Indigenous Terms and Official Languages.

### History, Clarity, and Tone

Feedback on the inclusion of Métis history in the Constitution was generally positive. Several participants suggested adding more historical references into the Constitution, whether to historical figures such as Cuthbert Grant, or more references to the diversity of Alberta Métis history, including the importance of European ancestry, the key roles played by women, and the distinctive histories of each region. The logical place to do this would be the Declaration. The Commission was wary, however, of making the Declaration longer than it is, and felt the Constitution did touch upon many of these themes already. It was decided that the plain-language constitution, which will be released as part of the ratification process, would be the best place to expand upon these important and vital aspects of our history.

For many, it was important that the Constitution project a sense of strength, as it will be the foundation of our new Métis government. Other Citizens pointed out opportunities to reword, modify, or reorder sections of the Constitution to make the language and priorities stronger and clearer. While all these suggestions cannot

be listed here, Citizens will notice there have been numerous changes to the organization and language of the Constitution that reflect many of these suggestions.



## Indigenous Terms and Official Languages

Many participants approved of the Cree terms used in the previous version of the Constitution. There were several calls, however, for the inclusion of more Indigenous words, and particularly for the incorporation of Michif. In a small number of instances, participants suggested particular Cree and Michif words, generally for specific roles and branches of the government. While the Commission heard these calls, there were serious concerns about differing interpretations of some of the terms suggested, as well as the appropriateness of those terms for the roles they are meant to describe.

Several participants likewise proposed an expansion of the official languages recognized by the Constitution. The draft circulated last year recognized Michif, Cree, English, and French as the official languages of the new government. Suggestions included that the Constitution recognize “Canadian Indigenous Languages” to reflect the diversity of languages spoken by the Métis. Given the clear predominance of the four official languages, the Commission decided against adding others.



## CITIZENSHIP, THE MÉTIS NATION WITHIN ALBERTA, AND THE MÉTIS NATION

**A** Constitution describes the political community of a Nation and defines who belongs to that community, i.e., who is a citizen. The Commission received many comments and questions related to citizenship under the new Constitution, many of which in turn connected to the relationship between the MNA and its Citizens, on the one hand, and the wider Métis Nation and its constituent governments, on the other. These issues have been organized into two sub-themes: Citizenship and Mobility; and the Métis Nation within Alberta

### Citizenship and Mobility

While the Constitution defines citizenship according to the National Definition of Métis and Acceptance Process, which was adopted by the Métis National Council General Assembly in 2002, many of the citizenship questions related to mobility and access to programs and services in other parts of the Métis Nation. Several participants spoke of how funding and services are often tied to borders that did not exist historically, potentially leading to the loss of access to programs and services when moving between different provinces for school or work.

The question of access to specific programs and services is beyond the scope of a constitution, and the MGRSA prohibits MNA Citizens from holding citizenship in more than one federally-recognized Métis government. To address the very serious matter of service gaps for Métis people across provincial borders, however, the Commission added Section 13.2(n) that instructs the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to collaborate with other Métis governments to coordinate the delivery of programs and services.

Others expressed concern that harvesting rights are restricted to those who can trace their ancestry to the northern portions of Alberta and can be further limited by a range of regulations of external governments. To push back against provincial limitations on harvesting rights, Section 6.1(e) of the Constitution asserts the right to harvest resources across the Métis Nation Homeland in keeping with the customs, practices, and traditions of the Nation.





## Métis Nation within Alberta and the Métis Nation

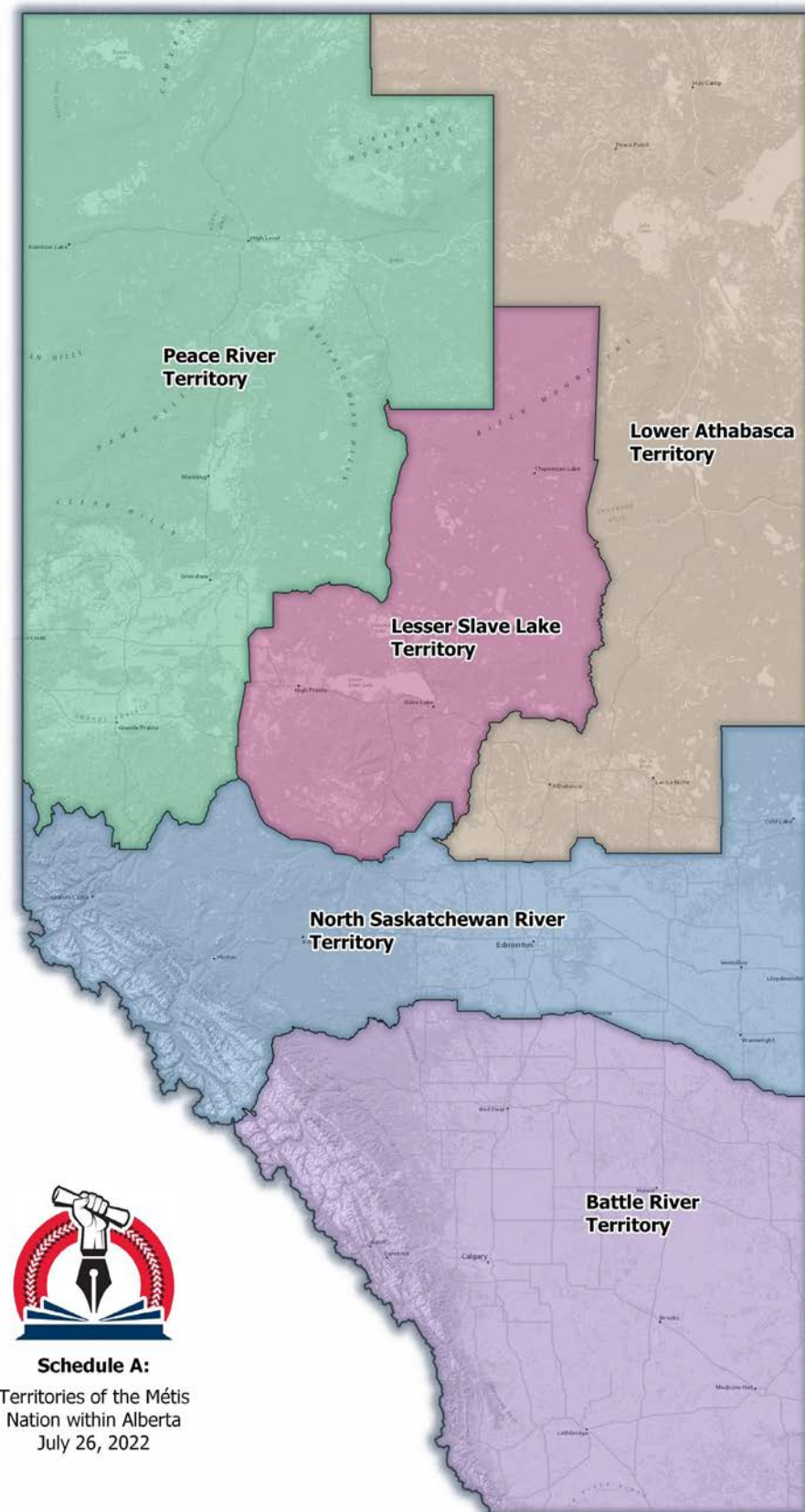
At one of the community gatherings, there was a sustained discussion and debate over the term 'Métis Nation within Alberta,' which replaced 'Métis Nation of Alberta.' While many members preferred the term 'Métis Nation within Alberta,' others thought it implied that you are only a citizen while you are physically in Alberta. Participants made several suggestions, from going back to the original "Métis Nation of Alberta" to more direct alternatives, such as "Alberta Métis Nation". After considerable discussion, the Commission opted to leave the name as "Métis Nation within Alberta". The Commission felt this name best captures two central points: (1) that the Alberta Métis form one part of the wider Métis Nation; and (2) that while only Citizens will be able to participate in the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, the new government will represent the rights and interests of all Métis who live within Alberta.

Finally, the Commission received numerous comments and questions regarding the Métis Nation and the Métis National Council, and its relationship to the Métis Nation within Alberta and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government. Ultimately, the Commission decided not to include an explicit reference to Métis National Council, opting instead to include references in Chapters 2 and 13 that make it clear that the Métis Nation within Alberta is an integral component of the wider Métis Nation, and that direct our new government to build collaborative relationships with other Métis governments across the Métis Nation Homeland.

## TERRITORIAL AND DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

**T**erritories and Districts comprise the core geographical units of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, and there are several key differences with the old system of Regions and Locals under the Societies Act. The first is that while there were six Regions, there will be five Territories. This change was made so that the boundaries more accurately reflect the five historic, regional rights-bearing communities. The second difference is that Regional and Local Councils will be replaced by District Councils. While all MNA Citizens belonged to Regions and could vote for regional leadership under the old system, only a small minority belonged to Local Councils. This meant in practice that the Regional Council was the closest level of government for the majority of MNA Citizens. Under the new system, all Citizens will belong to much smaller Districts and can elect a District Council. This change will bring our new Métis government closer to its Citizens and support better and more equitable representation.





**Schedule A:**  
Territories of the Métis  
Nation within Alberta  
July 26, 2022

## Territories

Many Citizens were pleased to see the Constitution foreground our constitutionally-protected rights through the shift from Regions to Territories. Several participants asked, however, why the boundaries of the Territories do not overlap, if the boundaries of the five historic, rights-bearing regional communities did. The reason is simple: because the Territories are sub-divided into Districts, their boundaries cannot overlap. Otherwise, you would have Citizens who belong simultaneously to more than one District and could vote for more than one District Council. To clarify the question of rights, Section 3.3 of the Constitution was amended to state explicitly that in relation to the exercise of rights, including the exercise of harvesting rights, the boundaries of the Territories can and do overlap.

## District Boundaries

The Commission received many thoughtful and considered suggestions regarding District boundaries, both of a general and a specific nature. At the general level, it was suggested that each Territory should have the same number of Districts, and that the District boundaries should be included in the Constitution, like the Territorial boundaries are. The Commission felt that giving each Territory the same number of Districts would simply maintain the current imbalance between urban and rural representation and would swell the size of the government. Similarly, to include District boundaries in the Constitution would make it too difficult to change boundaries in the future and adapt the government to changes to the population and needs of Citizens. The result would be to lock-in a less representative, less responsive, and less effective government.

The Commission similarly received numerous specific suggestions to revise District boundaries, including 10 maps submitted by MNA Citizens with proposed changes. In general, the Commission attempted to balance a variety of considerations when reviewing proposed changes to the District boundaries, including population, connections between communities, geography and remoteness, and the presence of a Métis Local, as well as responding to direction to limit the size of the government (at both the provincial and District levels). The result was three new District and the modification of District boundaries in the Peace River, Lower Athabasca, North Saskatchewan River, and the Battle River Territories.



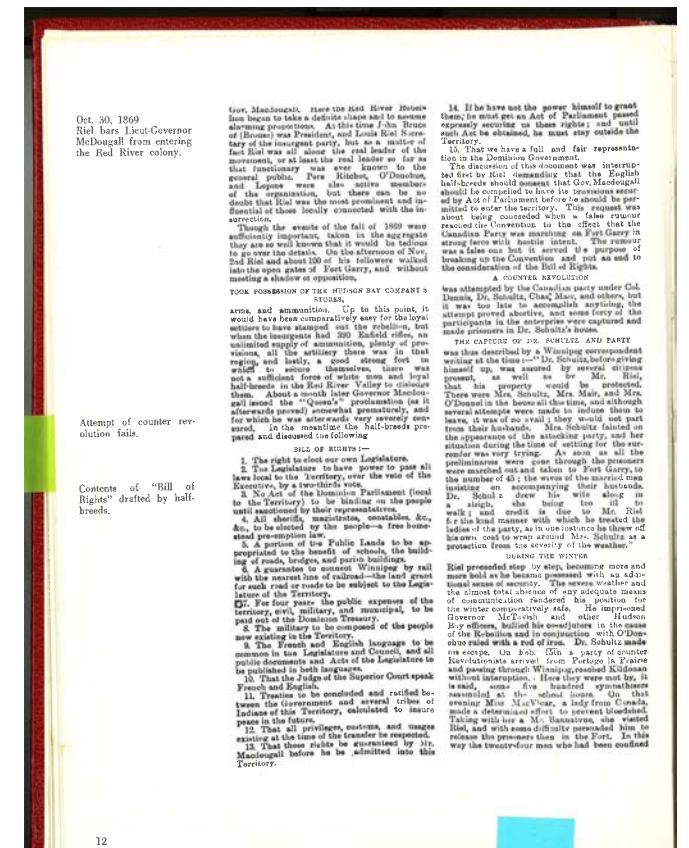
# MÉTIS RIGHTS

The Constitution describes two kinds of rights: (1) the collective rights held by the Métis Nation within Alberta in relation to other governments and peoples (i.e., self-government); and (2) the individual rights that our Citizens will have in relation to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government (i.e., voting rights). Some collective rights, such as harvesting and mobility rights, are held by the Nation and exercised by individuals. It is important to be clear, moreover, that all Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens will continue to enjoy all their individual and collective rights as Canadian Citizens.

## Bill of Rights

Participants suggested numerous revisions to Part II, the “Bill of Rights”, many of which were incorporated into the new draft of the Constitution. One participant proposed adding the right to spiritual beliefs and practices [which was added to Section 6.1(i)], while several others spoke to the importance of protections for child welfare and the importance of access to culturally appropriate family and child services. Calls for greater protections for Métis children initiated a discussion about the importance of protections for Métis families, including children. To address and broaden protections for children, the Commission added Section 6.1(n), which enshrines the right to family integrity consistent with Métis culture and the best interests of Métis children.

Several participants highlighted the importance of recognizing the right to access information about Métis peoples, as well as the right to exercise rights and access services free from discrimination. Some MNA Citizens noted that information and records about Métis individuals and families are often held by other institutions and can be difficult to access, and that the Métis Nation within Alberta should have ownership over information from archives



and churches about matters such as people's residential school experiences. Others noted the importance of protections against discriminatory treatment within the wider Canadian society, with the example of the discrimination faced by Métis people in the provincial health care system as an example. The Commission concurred with both of these suggestions and added rights in Section 6.1(j) and (q).

In several instances, the Commission rejected recommendations for additional rights to be included. Several MNA Citizens proposed including a right to bear arms and a right to medical freedom (in the context of bodily freedom against vaccination). In both instances, the Commission declined to add the suggested rights because they exceeded the jurisdiction of our government and would be effectively unenforceable.

### Harvesting Rights

By far the right most frequently raised in community gatherings was the right to harvest. In particular, MNA Citizens expressed a variety of concerns regarding existing and potential-future restrictions on the ability of Métis individuals to exercise their right to harvest. Numerous participants, particularly in Region 3, spoke passionately against the lack of recognized harvesting rights in southern Alberta. Others expressed frustration about the requirements of Government of Alberta's Métis harvesting rights policy that MNA Citizens trace their ancestry to specific parts of the province before a specific time period.



The Commission heard these concerns. While the Constitution cannot control or change the position of the Government of Alberta with respect to Métis harvesting rights, it does clearly assert that all Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens have the right to harvest resources, and that they have the right to do so anywhere within the Métis Nation Homeland, including southern Alberta. To further bolster harvesting rights against future infringement, moreover, the Commission strengthened Section 6.1(e) to extend harvesting rights to include the right to harvest in a manner consistent with Métis customs, practices, and traditions.

Finally, there was considerable confusion about how the new Territories and Districts might affect harvesting rights. The short answer is that they won't. As for Crown consultation in relation to harvesting rights, that will be managed by District Councils, who will represent the harvesting rights of all Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens who reside in their District. Where the Citizens of a District opt not to have a District Council, Section 15.9 authorizes the Citizens' Council to manage Crown consultation and other District Council responsibilities of behalf of the Citizens of that District.

## PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OTIPEMISIWAK MÉTIS GOVERNMENT

Chapter 13 of the Constitution lists the goals and responsibilities of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government. These goals and responsibilities do not represent an exhaustive list, and the new government may pursue initiatives not explicitly mentioned in these sections. Because this list will serve to orient future governments and identify the issues and priorities of Citizens, moreover, it is important that its clauses be written broadly to cast as wide a net as possible. Feedback from Citizens are grouped into two sub-themes: Goals and Responsibilities, and Self-Sustaining vs. Sustainability.

### Goals and Responsibilities

The Commission received many suggested revisions to this chapter, which is not surprising given its role as a guidepost for future governments. In total, eight subsections were either modified or added

in response to feedback from MNA Citizens. One grouping of comments related to Métis history and knowledge. Several participants identified the protection of Métis cultural artifacts and traditional knowledge as an important goal of



the new government. Several others identified the provision of support for ancestral research related to Citizenship applications as a potential responsibility. The Commission sought to address the protection and promotion of Métis cultural artifacts and knowledge through the modification of Section 13.2(b) and the addition of Section 13.2(c). The Commission opted not to include support for ancestral research, since Section 13.2(e) already identifies the research of Métis families as a responsibility of the new government.

Several participants identified service provisions in the areas of policing and justice as key gaps in the previous draft of the Constitution. The barriers faced by the Métis in accessing these services in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner, moreover, made addressing these gaps all the more urgent. To reflect these concerns, the Commission modified Section 13.2(j) to include public safety and justice.

The last major grouping of recommendations touched upon relations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments. Numerous participants commented on the importance of pursuing and developing more collaborative relationships with other Métis, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous governments. To address these comments, the Commission added Sections 13.2(n) and (p), which direct the new government to work collaboratively with other Métis governments and to build strong relationships with non-Indigenous governments in the spirit, pursuit, and advancement of reconciliation. All intergovernmental relations, however, will inevitably face challenges and disagreements. To respond to these, the Commission added Section 13.2(l), which instructs the new government to develop mechanisms for dispute resolution to restore productive relations with other governments where relations become strained.

### **Self-Sustaining vs. Sustainability**

Finally, several participants raised questions about Section 12.2(f) of the previous draft of the Constitution, which directed the new government “to develop, build, and maintain mechanisms, structures, and Institutions to enable the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to remain independent and self-sustaining.” In particular, several questioned whether the requirement to pursue a government that is “self-sustaining” implied that the Government of Canada would stop providing financial support or that the Otipemisiwak Métis Government would need to tax Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens at some point in the future. Another participant raised the question of fiscal responsibility, and what safeguards exist to ensure the new government will spend resources wisely.

The Commission felt these two comments (self-sustaining and fiscally responsible) were connected and pointed to a broader issue: should the government aim to be self-sustaining or sustainable? A self-sustaining government would be one that does not rely upon transfers from any other level of government. The Commission thought such a framing could be interpreted as letting the Government of Canada off the hook for its constitutional responsibilities to the Métis. Sustainability, on the other hand, indicates a government that operates efficiently, effectively, and within its means. To reflect this switch from self-sustaining to sustainable, the Commission replaced the term “self-sustaining” in Section 13.2(g) with “self-determining” and added Section 13.2(h), which requires the new government to operate in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner.

## **BRANCHES OF THE OTIPEMISIWAK MÉTIS GOVERNMENT**

**M**ost constitutions identify multiple branches of the government that are each assigned one or more of the core functions and responsibilities of governments in general, such as passing and implementing laws, resolving conflicts, and enforcing the rule of law. The previous draft of our Constitution identified four branches: the Citizens’ Gathering, the People’s Council, the Legislative Assembly, and the District Councils. In response to the many thoughtful and insightful comments we received from community gatherings, hearings, and written submissions, the Commission made several significant changes to the proposed branches of our government.

First, we combined the People’s Council and the Legislative Assembly, and changed the name to the Citizens’ Council. We hope this change will result in a smoother and more efficient governance structure and reduce power struggles between elected officials and branches representing the same District, while addressing concerns about the size of our government. Second, we made what was previously called the “Justice Sector” a branch of the government, renaming it the “Judicial Branch”. We hope this will ensure our judicial bodies are sufficiently independent and empowered to enforce our laws. Third, we more explicitly built out the District Councils. We hope these changes will produce more robust and autonomous local governments that can more effectively respond to the distinctive challenges and needs of Citizens in each District.

### **Citizens’ Gathering**

The Citizens’ Gathering represents an attempt to integrate the long history of social, cultural, and political gatherings of the Métis in Alberta into our new Constitution and governance structure. In Alberta, the most visible symbol of this history is the Annual General Assembly (AGA). Indeed,



one participant recommended we rename the Citizens’ Gathering the “Annual General Assembly”. The Commission felt, however, that because of the differences between being a constitutional government and being a not-for-profit society under the Societies Act, this new annual gathering will be sufficiently distinct to warrant a new name.

In general, feedback on the Citizens’ Gathering was very positive. Of the four branches in the last draft of the Constitution, the Citizens’ Gathering received by far the fewest recommended changes. There was, however, one major suggested revision

to the structure of the new government: that the Otipemisiwak Métis Government should be bound to the decisions of the Citizen's Gathering in the same way as the Provincial Council is now to the AGA. The Commission chose not to implement this change for a simple reason: given our large geography and constraints on people's time, our AGAs attract well under 5% of our Citizens. While there is an important role for the Citizen's Gathering, in the Commission's view giving a small percentage of our Citizens the ability to overrule representatives elected across the entire province is not in the interests of the rights of all our Citizens to be equally represented.

On a related note, several participants recommended implementing a system of recall for elected officials. The Commission gave this recommendation serious consideration. The Commission decided, however, not to constitutionalize a recall system for two reasons. The first is that in other jurisdictions, recall of elected officials tends to be driven by partisanship or personal grievance, not performance. The second is that leaders often have to make difficult decisions that will upset significant numbers of their Citizens, regardless of what they choose. A system of recall thus encourages politicians to avoid making tough decisions, which can result in important and urgent issues being left unaddressed. Both reasons ultimately lead to less stable and less effective government. There is nothing in the Constitution, moreover, that would prevent laws from being developed to remove officials who commit crimes or other offences, or to implement a system of recall in the future, should Citizens so decide.

## District Councils

District Councils represent the local level of government in the new Constitution. District Councils will replace both Regional Councils and Local Councils and are designed to ensure that all Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens have an accessible and accountable branch of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government close to where they live. Overall, support for District Councils was very strong from participants in our Citizen engagements. There were, however, two major recommendations with respect to the structure of District Councils as spelled out in the previous draft of the Constitution (the authority of District Councils vis-a-vis the Citizens' Council will be covered below in the section on Division of Powers).

The first major recommendation was that the head of the District Council and the Citizens' Representative for the District be two different roles. Under the previous draft of the Constitution, the Citizens' Representative (then called the People's Representative) for a District was also the head of the District Council. There were two main concerns with this set up. One was that it could blur the lines of accountability. For instance, if voters in a District like the way their representative is working on the Citizen's Council, but don't like the way their District Council is being run, how do they vote? In effect, the previous draft had one person doing two jobs, which likely would have resulted in less effective governance and less accountability.

The other concern was that this arrangement would lead to a less effective Citizens' Council, because the Citizens' Representative is pulled in two directions. The head of the District Council should be focussed exclusively on the needs and priorities of the Citizens of that District. The

Citizens' Representative, on the other hand, needs to take those local needs and priorities and develop compromises that work for Citizens across the entire province. The concern was that if each Citizens' Representative was simply representing their District Council, the Citizens' Council may not focus as effectively on province-wide matters.

The second and related recommendation was that the Constitution should identify an elected leader for the District Council and more clearly spell out the composition of the District Council. In the previous draft of the Constitution, the composition of the District Council was left open, beyond consisting of the People's Representative and the Legislative Delegate (now combined into the Citizens' Representative). In response to the call for an elected leader of the District Council and a cleaner separation between the Citizens' Council and the District Council, the Commission removed the Citizens' Representative from the District Council and reintroduced the Captain as the elected leader of the District Council.

The role of the Captain, a reference to one of the earliest examples of Métis self-governance (the Laws of the Buffalo Hunt), was found in the draft of the Constitution presented to the Roundtables. Following mixed feedback regarding the name, the Commission removed the role from the second draft. In our recent round of Citizen engagement, however, numerous participants requested a return of an elected District Council leader, and several asked explicitly why the Captain was removed. In response to this feedback, as well as the general call for more references to Métis history and culture in the Constitution, the Commission re-established the position of the Captain as the elected leader of the District Council.

The recommendation that the Constitution more clearly spell out the composition of the District

Councils triggered an in-depth discussion on the pace of the transition, the learning curve for communities, and the size of the government. Out of this discussion, the Commission made two key decisions: (1) to modify Section 15.3 to allow the Citizens of each District to decide whether they wish to have a District Council; and (2) to leave the number of councillors in the District Council open beyond an elected Captain.

The Commission was concerned about the uneven history of community-level political development across the province. In some communities with strong histories of Métis Local and Regional Councils, District Councils will surely be established immediately, and communities will hit the ground running. In other places, however, where there is little to no history and experience with community-level politics, more time may be required to prepare for operating District Councils. As for the size of District Councils, the Commission felt it was best to leave that matter for Districts to decide, subject to an Otipemisiwak Métis Government law, based upon the size of their communities and the scale of the operations of their District Councils.

## The Citizens' Council (People's Council/Legislative Assembly)

The Commission received several key recommendations related to what were called the People's Council and the Otipemisiwak Legislative Assembly in the previous draft of the Constitution. The main concern was whether it made sense to have two elected bodies at the provincial level. On the one hand, several Citizens raised concerns that having two bodies at the provincial level would lead to an unnecessarily large and costly government. On the other hand, several Citizens expressed concerns that creating two separate and overlapping executive and legislative bodies could create power struggles and gridlock.

In addition to questions about the separation of the executive and legislative branches, the Commission received several requests that the Constitution create an appointed Senate, or a body similar in function to the Canadian Senate. There were several rationales provided for a Senate. Several participants suggested that having a Senate would result in better laws, as its appointed members would in theory have greater experience and expertise, particularly in the case of an Elders' Senate. Others thought a Senate that provided equal representation for each District would allow the Citizens' Council to be based on population, thus balancing urban and rural interests.

The Commission debated these proposed changes to the executive and legislative branches in great detail. On the first point, the Commission agreed with the proposals to merge the People's Council and the Legislative Assembly into one body. Given

the unease expressed by several participants about the name "People's Council", moreover, the Commission named this merged body the Citizens' Council, following a recommendation from a Citizen at the 2021 AGA. On the second point, the Commission decided against the creation of a Senate. The Commission had misgivings about creating an appointed body, whose cost would likely exceed its value. Commissioners did, however, like the idea of a body of Elders that could help guide elected officials. Accordingly, the Commission added Section 16.12, which directs the Citizens' Council to appoint a Council of Elders or Knowledge Keepers to advise and support elected officials.

The Commission received several questions and recommendations regarding the role of the President and the role of the Chair. Some participants questioned whether the President

should be the Chief Negotiator, while others suggested that the Chair should be elected and should participate in every vote, rather than just voting in case of a tie. The Commission concurred with the first suggestion and removed Chief Negotiator from the roles of the President. The recommendations regarding the Chair, on the other hand, initiated an extended discussion of the position itself.

In previous versions of the Constitution, the Chair was neutral (voting only in the case of a tie) and selected from among the Legislative Delegates, so that no District would lose the vote of its People's Representative (now Citizens' Representative). With the combination of the People's Council and the Legislative Assembly into the Citizens' Council, however, it would be near impossible for the Chair to be selected from the Citizens' Council without a District losing its vote. To address this challenge, while also retaining a tie breaking vote, the Commission made the Chair an Officer of the Government (Chapter 21). The Chair will now be an officer of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, selected by the Citizens' Council from a list of MNA Citizens nominated by a Committee. The Chair will remain neutral and will not vote. To address potential tie votes, the President will now only vote to break a tie. This resolution allowed the Constitution to retain the role of the Chair and avoid ties in Citizens' Council votes, without any District losing its vote on the Council.

### Judicial Branch

The Judiciary of any constitutional government is charged, first and foremost, with enforcing the rule of law. There are two main components of this. The first is that all laws, regulations, and policies of the government must be consistent with the constitution, which is the foundation of a nation's laws. The second is that no individual or group,

from the President and the Citizens' Council to each and every Citizen of the nation, is above the law.

There were two main focal points for feedback on what was called the Justice Sector. The first was that Justice Sector should be an equal branch of the government, so that it is fully empowered to hold each and every other branch accountable. The Commission agreed with this recommendation and made the Justice Sector a branch of the government, renamed the Judicial Branch. We hope this change will provide our Judicial Branch the autonomy and authority required to hold the other branches of our government accountable to its Citizens and to the rule of law.

The second focal point was that the Judicial Branch required more detail. The challenge here was the unique nature of our government: we will be the first, federally-recognized Métis government in Canada (and indeed the world), with a population and geography far different from most First Nations' governments in Canada. As such, it is difficult to draw parallels from other governments and experiences or anticipate the kinds of judicial bodies we will need. After considerable debate and review of other constitutions, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, the Commission decided to leave the bodies that will make up the Judicial Branch open, so that future governments can build out our judicial system based on the needs of our government and Citizens, without having their hands tied by the Constitution.





## REPRESENTATION AND DIVISION OF POWERS

**T**wo of the central issues raised by participants during Citizen engagements were how the Constitution would represent the diversity of our citizenry, and how power and authority would be divided between the branches of the government. Recommendations related to representation touched upon the levels at which Citizens are represented (should there be representation at the Territorial level) and how different groups within the Nation should be represented (urban and rural, women and youth). Recommendations related to division of powers focussed on the division of powers between the provincial and District levels of government, with calls for more power and autonomy for the District level, and a clearer division of powers and responsibilities between the levels of government in the Constitution.

### Representation at the Territorial Level

There were a couple of recommendations regarding representation at the Territorial level. Several participants proposed that there be elected representatives at the Territorial level, including a call for one elected leader at the Territorial level, to provide a more robust representation of regional, rights-bearing communities. One of the written submissions called for creating a coordinating body at the Territorial level that would allow District Councils to coordinate their activities across a variety of issues, including consultation, environmental monitoring, housing, and land management.

The Commission rejected the suggestion that there be elected representatives at the Territorial level for several reasons. The first was that it would have set up a structure very similar to our present structure under the Societies Act, and lock in power struggles between the levels of government. The second was that a Territorial-level of government would simply add more elected officials and bureaucracy, and the Commission heard quite

clearly from Citizens that they did not want their new government to be too large. The Commission likewise rejected the proposal for a stronger coordinating body at the Territorial level, given that feedback from Locals and Citizens quite strongly supported the autonomy of District Councils. There is nothing in the Constitution, moreover, that would prevent District Councils within a Territory from coordinating on a wide range of issues under their jurisdiction, should they so choose.





## Balance of Power Between Urban and Rural Voters

One of the most frequently raised issues was the balance between urban and rural voters. A core principle of democratic governments is the equality of votes, which means that the vote of every citizen is worth the same. The ideal of equality of votes, however, is often challenging to make happen in real life. One of the most common obstacles is the distribution of populations between densely-populated urban centres, like Edmonton and Calgary, and less-populated rural areas, such as those found in MNA Regions 1 and 6, which generally results in rural voters being overrepresented. For example, if the most-populated urban District and the least-population rural District each elected one Citizens' Representative, then more than 6,000 MNA Citizens would potentially get the same number representation as 100 MNA Citizens in the least-populated District.

The Commission heard strongly from rural areas that each District should elect the same number of representatives, so that the urban populations do not control the government. However, the Commission similarly heard from Citizens in urban areas that there should be some representation by population, which means that Districts with larger populations would elect more representatives to the Citizens' Council. Another factor that complicates this balancing act is the need to keep the size of the government at an acceptable level. In a strict representation by population scenario, if the least-populated rural District elected one Citizens' Representative, then the most-populated urban District would be entitled to approximately 60 Citizens' Representatives.

The compromise solution decided by the Commission is as follows: that each District would elect one Citizens' Representative, but that urban centres of Edmonton and Calgary would be divided

into two Districts. This would give Edmonton and Calgary two representatives while avoiding having multiple representatives in any one District. The Citizens' Council, moreover, will have three members (the President, the Women's Representative, and the Youth Representative) who will be elected by all Citizens. As such, these three representatives will require strong support from urban voters.

The Commission believes this compromise position is reasonable. On the one hand, there are legitimate concerns that urban voters would control the government in a representation-by-population scenario. In addition, there are compelling reasons to have some rural overrepresentation. For example, urban MNA Citizens have access to public services and amenities that many of our rural Citizens do not. It is reasonable, therefore, that our new government should work to help address these imbalances. On the other hand, the Commission did hear the concerns of our urban Citizens about our present structure, where all MNA Regions have the same representation. We have thus attempted to provide additional representation for urban Citizens in a way that protects our rural populations and ensures our new government stays at a manageable size.

## Advisory Councils

Another important aspect of representation in the previous draft of our Constitution was Advisory Councils. Section 15.13 mandated the People's Council (now Citizens' Council) to appoint Advisory Councils. During our engagements with MNA Citizens, we received considerable feedback on this clause. Several participants wanted specific Advisory Councils, such as the Women's Council and the Elder's Council, to be explicitly required by the Constitution. Others felt that Advisory Councils were not adequate to ensure representation for key groups within our Nation. Our Women's and Youth organizations, for example, called for

elected Women's and Youth representations on the Citizens' Council, to ensure these groups have votes, not just voices

To address these concerns and recommendations, the Commission added Section 16.2(c) and (d) that establish Women's and Youth representatives on the Citizens' Council. These positions would be elected by all MNA Citizens and would be charged with representing the rights and interests of women and youth in our new government. The Commission similarly added Section 16.12, which requires the Citizen's Council to appoint a Council of Elders or Knowledge Keepers to support its work. The Constitution explicitly makes this council a non-political body. The Commission felt it was important that our Elders or Knowledge Keepers feel comfortable to share their knowledge and wisdom without becoming entangled in partisan politics.

## Division of Powers and Responsibilities

One of the central functions of a Constitution is to assign power and authority to the different branches of the government. A clear division of powers and responsibilities is key to the smooth functioning of any government. Where the division of powers between different branches is not adequately defined, a government runs the risk of persistent power struggles and gridlock. However, the opposite is also true: where the division of powers is too rigidly defined, it can handcuff governments and prevent different branches or levels of government from providing support to their Citizens.

The Commission received numerous comments and suggestions related to the division of powers, particularly between the Citizens' Council and the District Councils. These recommendations were both general and specific. At the general level, there were objections to clause 16.6 of the

previous draft, which required the People's Council (now Citizens' Council) to pass a law delegating authority to the District Council regarding certain matters. Several Locals expressed the concern that this language would allow the provincial level to encroach upon the operations and jurisdiction of District Councils. The Commission revised the Constitution so that it now directly authorizes District Councils to manage and pass policies to govern the matters within their jurisdiction, subject only to the general laws of the Citizens' Council.

Specific issues related to the division of powers revolved around the authority to pursue, own and manage lands, on the one hand, and design and delivery of programs and services, on the other, including environmental monitoring. Several Locals questioned why the previous draft of the Constitution only authorized District Councils to "manage" lands, which they felt could preclude District Councils from acquiring and owning lands. In response, the Commission revised Section 15.7 (e) to authorize District Councils to acquire and own lands. With regards to programs and services, the Commission took a nuanced position. Some programs and services, such as environmental monitoring, should clearly be managed at the District level, by the Citizens who live and exercise their rights in the areas being monitored. For others, however, it was not clear which level should or would deliver programs in the future. Some programs might be best delivered at the provincial level, while others should be done at the District level. To avoid handcuffing future governments from being able to provide programs and services in the most effective way, the Constitution now authorizes both the Citizens' Council and the District Councils to provide programs and services. In the future, then, it will be up to the Citizens' Council and the District Councils to determine which programs and services should be designed and delivered at which level.



## OFFICES AND INSTITUTIONS

**C**itizens were largely supportive of the sections of the Constitution that created the offices and institutions of the government. Offices (and officers) refer to the holder of a public office, such as the Chair, the Ombudsman, and the Auditor General, in the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, as well as those staffers that are required to maintain and support the office. Institutions, on the other hand, refer to any organization or body created, owned, or controlled by the Citizens' Council or a District Council that implements a law, policy, program, or service of the government. Chapter 24 is necessarily open-ended to allow the Citizens' and District Councils the authority to transform existing organizations into Institutions, as well as create new Institutions to best meet the current and future needs.

### **Ombudsman and Auditor General**

While participants in Citizen engagements were generally positive on the role of the Ombudsman and the Auditor General, there were two concerns raised. The first was with the name "Ombudsman", which several participants noted was both used by other levels of government in Canada and unclear as to the responsibilities of the office, with alternatives such as "Advocate" or "Arbitrator" suggested. After considerable discussion and debate, the Commission opted to leave the title "Ombudsman", for lack of a better alternative. The Commission felt the position should be impartial and titles like 'Advocate' do not adequately capture the full range of responsibilities of the office.

The second issue raised was with the perceived and actual independence of the offices of the Ombudsman and the Auditor General from elected officials. While the proposed process, selection by a Committee and approval by the legislative body, is standard practice for such offices, several Citizens expressed concern that such a selection process could compromise the autonomy of officers

that must potentially investigate elected officials and their decisions. Arms-length officers, such as the Ombudsman and the Auditor General, must have sufficient autonomy from the government to conduct their business without being independent from the government, which could lead to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats wielding excessive power. To make clear that these Officers are to have autonomy in decision making while remaining accountable, the Constitution explicitly makes both offices arms-length and will protect their work by law, while keeping the officers accountable to elected officials.

### **Institutions**

A cornerstone of the new government, at both the provincial and the District levels, will be Institutions. The Institutions of the new government will consist largely of incorporated entities that are owned by either the provincial or District levels of government. While all Institutions of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government will be accountable to the government and subject to its laws, the precise relationship between the Citizens' and District Councils and their Institutions will

be set by laws and will vary depending on the nature of the entity (for instance, a corporation owned by a District Council may operate at arm's length to protect its financial integrity, much in the way Crown corporations have greater autonomy from federal and provincial governments than do government departments).

A frequently raised question regarding Institutions was whether District Councils would be able to own and control not-for-profit organizations, as many of our Regional and Local Councils presently do. Regional and Local Council leaders expressed concerns about losing access to the funding available to not-for-profit organizations, an important source of funding for many current programs and services. The Commission's

understanding is that there is nothing that would stop a District Council from creating and owning a not-for-profit organization under the MGRSA and the Constitution. To make this point explicit, however, the Commission amended Section 24.1 to include not-for-profit organizations as one kind of Institution that the Citizens' Council and District Councils may establish.



## MÉTIS LANDS AND MODERN DAY TREATIES

The repatriation and management of lands and the negotiation of modern day treaties through land claims agreements or other mechanisms are among the most crucial responsibilities and goals of the new government. While the terms modern day treaty and land claims agreement are connected, the difference is this: all land claims agreements are modern day treaties; however, not all modern day treaties (for instance, ones that only cover matters related to self-government) are land claims agreements. Use of the term "Treaty" does not mean that our agreements are similar to the Numbered Treaties in Alberta signed with First Nations; rather, the term Treaty is used to ensure that agreements between Canada and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government have constitutional protection, which all "Treaties" do.



The Commission received numerous suggestions related to land and land claims. While most were more appropriate for future laws and policies of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, several related directly to the Constitution. Several Locals recommended that District Councils be empowered to acquire and manage lands on behalf of the Citizens of their District. This recommendation was accepted and is reflected in Section 15.7(e). While discussing the centrality of the protection of lands, moreover, the Commission identified the importance of working to ensure that Metis Settlement lands are protected by the Canadian constitution, rather than simply by provincial legislation. To address this matter, the Commission added Section 19.2(d), which directs the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to secure the protection of Metis Settlement lands by the Constitution of Canada.

The second set of recommendations related to the process to negotiate and approve land claims and modern day treaties. Several Locals

suggested that Districts should be authorized to negotiate such agreements with Canada. In the Commission's view, however, such an arrangement would be impractical (Canada will not negotiate with 20 District Councils) and inequitable, in the sense that comprehensive claims with Canada should be negotiated on behalf of the entire Métis Nation within Alberta, not only some of its parts. The Commission did, however, accept that District Councils should have a role in the approval of any future modern day treaties or land claims agreements. To address this, the Commission identified a process for the ratification of modern day treaties and land claims agreements in Chapter 28: that any such agreements must be presented to the Citizens' Gathering and then approved by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Citizens' Council and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of District Councils. This process will ensure that any modern day treaty or land claim agreement has robust support, including at both levels of our government and in both rural and urban areas.



## AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

**A** key component of every constitution is its amending formula, which spells out how to approve changes to the constitution's text. As the north star of our political system and a living document that must adapt with the times, our Constitution should be difficult yet not impossible to amend. If our constitution is too easy to alter, future governments could undermine the collective and individual rights of our Citizens. If our Constitution is too difficult to amend, future governments could become trapped in a system that is unable to address future challenges and meet the future needs of our Citizens.

The Commission received numerous thoughtful comments on the amending formula for the Constitution. Some felt the threshold for amendment in the previous version of the Constitution was too high; others felt that the amending formula should include the more direct participation of Citizens and ensure that the voices of our urban Citizens are adequately considered whether through the Citizens' Gathering or through a referendum for any Constitutional amendment. Several participants recommended that the Constitution prohibit any amendments for five years, to allow the Nation time to reflect upon what works well and what does not.

The Commission decided to strengthen the direct role of Citizens, including our urban populations: any amendment to the Constitution must be taken to the Citizens' Gathering for consideration and input, approved by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Citizens' Representatives, and supported by the majority of voters in a province-wide ratification open to all Citizens eligible to vote. The Commission similarly accepted the proposal to prohibit constitutional amendments for the first five years, with an exception for any amendments required to incorporate the Metis Settlements into the Otipemisiwak Métis Government.



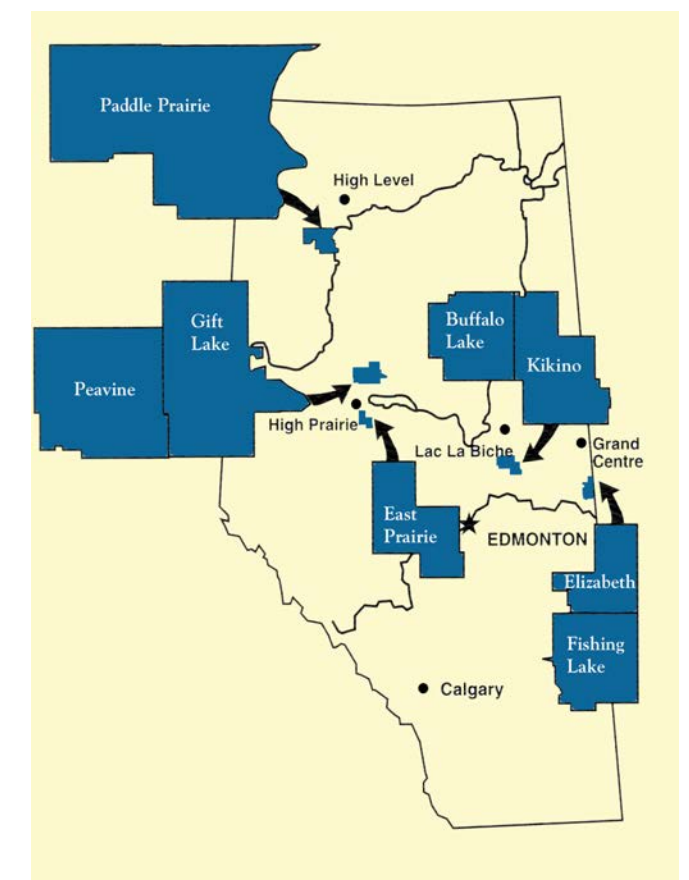


## METIS SETTLEMENTS

**T**he Metis Settlements are an integral part of the Métis Nation within Alberta, both of its history and of its future. The Commission felt it was crucial that Metis Settlements and the Métis Citizens who reside on those Settlements see a place for themselves in our new Métis Government. The Constitution must therefore establish a clear home for the Metis Settlements within our new government, and it must do so in a way that will respect the autonomy and unique place of the Metis Settlements within our Métis Nation.

The previous draft of the Constitution created the possibility that the Metis Settlements could opt to become Districts (with District Councils) within the Otipemisiwak Métis Government. In our most recent round of engagement, however, the Metis Settlements' leadership declined to meet with the Commission and many of our Citizens expressed concerns about the potential impacts of each Metis Settlement becoming a District, ranging from concerns about impacts on the size of our government to concerns over the overrepresentation of rural areas and Citizens.

The Commission spent considerable time debating how best to include the Metis Settlements in our Constitution. After much discussion, the Commission decided to make the Metis Settlements a standalone section of our Constitution, and to leave the nature and details of any future place for the Metis Settlements in the Otipemisiwak Métis Government open for negotiation with Metis Settlements. The Commission felt that this approach acknowledged both the centrality of Metis Settlements to the Métis Nation within Alberta, and the need for the Constitution not to predetermine any future negotiations with Metis Settlements.





## NON-CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

**W**hile much of the input received from Citizens related directly to the text of the Constitution, the Commission received a great deal of feedback from Citizens about other processes and plans that are required to set up the new government. These comments can be sorted into three main categories: the Transition Plan, Enabling laws (all the laws that must be passed so that the new government can take force, such as an elections law), and future programs and services. So as not to waste the time, energy, and contributions of Citizens that were not directly related to the Constitution, Commission Staff will compile all information related to these three areas into reports that will be passed on to the appropriate authorities (Transition Committee, Laws Committee, and Citizens' and District Councils).

### Transition Plan

The MGRSA requires the creation of a Transition Plan to manage the conversion of the MNA's current structures, institutions, and organizations to their successors in the new government. The Transition Plan was by far the most frequently asked about and commented upon non-Constitutional matter during the last round of Citizen engagement. In particular, our present Regional and Local Councils, as well as our Affiliates, had many questions and concerns on a wide range of issues, from the composition and activities of the Transition Committee responsible for designing the plan to details about the transfer of assets and agreements and funding for participation in the process. Consistent with a resolution at our 2021 AGA, Provincial Council has put together a Transition Committee made up of Provincial President and Vice-President, and two representatives from each MNA Region that will engage with MNA Regional and Local Councils, Affiliates, and Citizens to draft a Transition Plan.

### Enabling Laws

Because our new government is replacing the existing MNA structures under the Societies Act, there is a chicken-or-egg dilemma. For example, how can the new government take force without an election to choose its officials, but how can there be an election for the new government without an elections law? To address these challenges, the Constitution authorizes the Provincial Council to pass all laws as resolutions required for the new government to operate. These resolutions, in turn, will be considered laws of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government under the new Constitution. These resolutions/laws are known as enabling laws.

The MGRSA and the Constitution require enabling laws in a number of areas, including citizenship, the operations of each branch and offices of the government, including the Ombudsman and the Auditor General, access to information, District boundaries, elections, and a code of ethics, among other matters. A Laws Committee will be

established to support the Provincial Council in the drafting and approval of all the enabling laws required for the new government to take force.

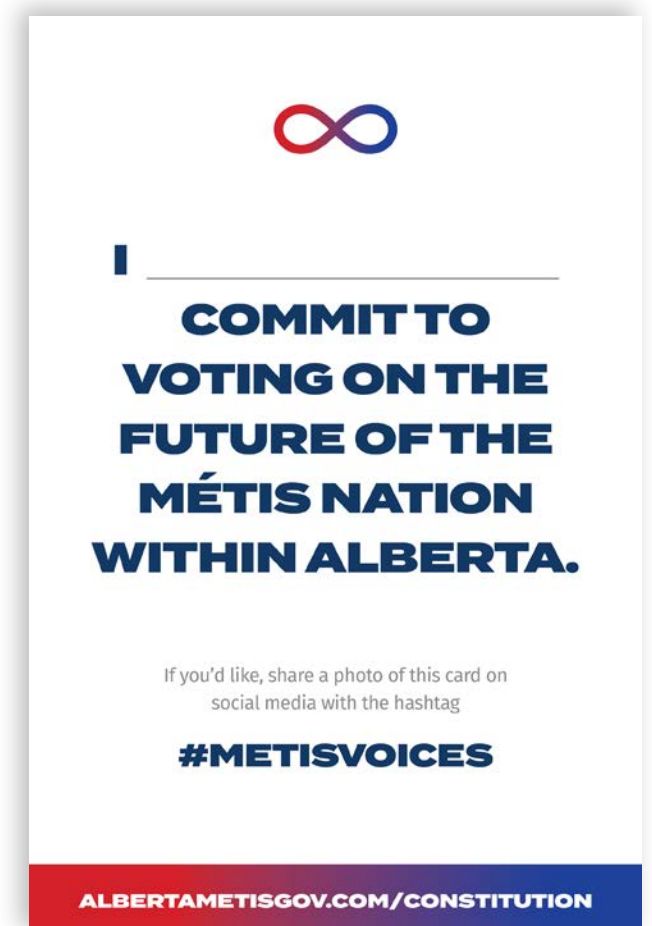
## Programs and Service

Finally, the Commission received lots of feedback on potential programs and services for the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, including suggestions on how the new government could improve on existing programs and services. For the reasons described above, the Constitution does not detail what programs and services the new government will provide, beyond assigning broad authority to the Citizens' Council and District Councils. The priorities and direction for the new government will come from the purpose, goals, and responsibilities outlined in Chapter 13 of the Constitution, as well as from Métis Nation within Alberta Citizens. The Commission staff will prepare a report on all feedback received regarding programs and services, which will be distributed to the Citizens' Council and the District Councils of the new government.

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

**O**n June 4, 2022, an MNA Special Assembly, convened in Grande Prairie, approved a special resolution to postpone the 2022 MNA elections for one year. The rationale for the postponement was so that the Métis Nation within Alberta could hold elections in 2023 for the Otipemisiwak Métis Government under our new Constitution and avoid holding two province-wide elections in one year. The Special Resolution presents the Commission with a clear direction and timeline: the Constitution should be ratified as soon as possible so that all the other pieces required for our new government to come into force (the Transition Plan, the enabling laws, the Fiscal Financing Agreement, and the Order-in-Council from Canada) can be developed and finalized in time for elections in the fall of 2023.

Consistent with this direction from the Special Assembly, we now present this revised version of our Constitution for approval by our Citizens at the 2022 AGA. If the Constitution is approved at the 2022 AGA, there will be a province-wide ratification process, which will consist of an information campaign and in which all eligible MNA Citizens will be able to vote. If our Citizens approve the Constitution in this ratification vote, the work of our Commission will come to an end. Together, we will have made history. At that point, the remaining pieces outlined in the MGRSA will need to be negotiated, drafted, and approved by the bodies authorized to conduct this work. And then, after decades of struggle, we, the Otipemisiwak, the people who rule themselves, will have created a Métis Constitution and a Métis Government, by us and for us.



# MNA Constitution Commission Process



## 1) MNA Constitution Commission Formed

Five MNA citizens who:

- ∞ Draft the constitution
- ∞ Engage with citizens on the draft
- ∞ Oversee ratification of the Constitution



## 2) Draft Constitution Prepared

Based on Métis Government Recognition & Self-Government Agreement (MGRSA), province-wide citizen consultations & MNACC research.

1

2



## 3) Citizen Engagement

- A) Roundtables with existing structures refining the draft
- ∞ Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Regions, Youth, Women, Affiliates

First *What We Heard* Report summarizing Roundtable feedback presented to 93rd AGA



3

- B) Gatherings open to all MNA Citizens across Alberta
- ∞ Revised Draft Constitution shared
  - ∞ Oral and written submissions accepted
  - ∞ Constitution revised based on feedback at Gatherings

Second *What We Heard* Report summarizing feedback from Gatherings



## Transition to Self-Government

- ∞ Fiscal Financing Agreement
- ∞ Transition Plan

## Self Government Implementation

4

5

## 4) Annual General Assembly

- ∞ Citizens vote on final version of the Constitution
- ∞ If approved, prepare for ratification of the Constitution

## 5) Ratification

MNA citizens participate in province-wide ratification vote

RED = DONE BLUE = UNDERWAY GREY = UPCOMING







MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA  
**CONSTITUTION**  
COMMISSION

