

MI'KMAQ NATION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



2023-2028

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Table of Contents

Part I: INTRODUCTION	5
Tribal Background & History	5
.....	6
The CEDS Plan	7
How to Use This Report	7
Public Involvement.....	8
Part II: Summary Background	9
Tribal & Regional Conditions.....	9
Tribal Economy.....	9
Tribal Demographics	12
Trust Land	13
Tribal Business Enterprises	15
Workforce & Economic Development Survey	17
Regional Economy: Aroostook County	18
Part III: Economic & Tribal Resilience	22
Sovereignty	22
Equity.....	25
Culture.....	26
Part IV:	28
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats	28
Strengths	29
Weaknesses	30
Opportunities	31
Threats	32
Interviews with Tribal Directors	33
Part V – Strategic Direction	34
Mission & Vision	34
Action Plan	35
Evaluation Framework	40

Tribal Resources.....42

***Appendix*..... 44**

Exhibit A: Senior Elders Survey Summary.....45

Exhibit B: SWOT Summary.....46

Exhibit C: Community Tribal Programs.....48

Exhibit D: Legislative Efforts50

Part I: INTRODUCTION

Tribal Background & History

The Mi'kmaq of Mi'gma'gi, the Northeastern woodlands, were the first people to greet European visitors to the coasts of what is now Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Gaspè Peninsula and eastern New Brunswick. In 1534, Jacques Cartier explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the name of the King of France meeting a group of Mi'kmaq. Tribal member skills as trappers allowed them to trade for goods not traditionally made by the Mi'kmaq including firearms, knives and flour.

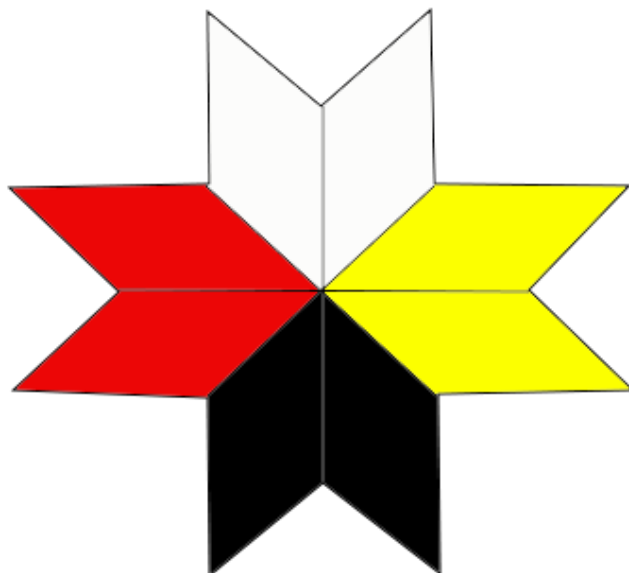
The word Mi'kmaq translates into English meaning “the people.”¹ The Mi'kmaq are a First Nations people, indigenous to Maine, Atlantic Canada and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec with a culture that dates back 9,000 years. With the recent recognition of the Qalipu First Nation of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mi'kmaq Nation comprises 30 Bands with a total population of 65,000 members. The current population of Mi'kmaq Nation in Maine with administrative offices in Presque Isle is 1,633 people.



While fishing and hunting for sustenance remained, the increased colonization of Mi'kmaq territories gradually altered their economy to forestry, construction, authentic Native American handicrafts and fishing. Nonetheless, villages remained poor, and many tribal members had to leave to find work. Trading, trapping and their semi-nomadic seasonal migration from coast to inland territory eventually led them south across New England. Their intimate knowledge of the landscape provided them with income as guides for explorers and sportsmen. Seasonal jobs, such as raking blueberries, became a known trade for the Mi'kmaq people and still continues to bring tribal members into Maine for work.

Today, Mi'kmaq Nation is a federally recognized tribe by the United States government, a critically important status achieved in 1991. As part of this step, the Tribe's name was officially changed from the Aroostook Band of Micmacs to Mi'kmaq Nation. Federal recognition enables the Tribe to receive funding and benefits from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). These resources have helped to create support services, housing, infrastructure and a medical clinic. To further benefit their community, Mi'kmaq tribal leaders continuously seek to create a more vibrant economy sensitive to cultural traditions and norms on a path to obtaining sovereignty.

¹ Four Directions Development Corporation



The Mi'kmaq Star symbolizes unity for the Mi'kmaq people and celebration of the sun, which is a powerful figure in traditional spiritual life. This Mi'kmaq Star represents the four directions with white representing the north, *"the land of ice and snow, where even the animals are white"*. Yellow represents the east, *"the land of the rising sun; Mi'kmaq are the 'people of the dawn' "*. Red represents the South, *"the further you travel in North America the warmer it becomes"*. Finally, black represents the west, *"which is where the sun must travel to give us night."*

It is believed that the first eight-point star petroglyph, which was found carved into a rock in Bedford, NS, is over 500 years old. The eight-point Mi'kmaq star is used today, both as a cultural symbol and also a design emblem. Many Mi'kmaq artists use the star to decorate their blankets, baskets, drums, moccasins and pretty much anything else you can decorate.

The number four also has great significance throughout Mi'kmaq culture. The points show the four directions and emphasize balance within oneself and with mother earth. Doubled to eight points, the design implies that there is always something more than meets the eye.²

² Aboutourland.ca

The CEDS Plan

The *Mi'kmaq Nation Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)* is a five-year guide to economic development, infrastructure, community growth and workforce development for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Maine. During the past 12 months, a CEDS Committee consisting of the Mi'kmaq Tribal Council and senior members of Tribal Administration have led the initiative to complete the new 2023-2028 CEDS. The Committee has brought together individuals with valuable institutional knowledge and tribal vision along with representatives from regional economic resources. This CEDS has been developed using public outreach, stakeholder engagement, data-driven research and community insights.

A cornerstone of the CEDS is an Action Plan based on community-wide input using a SWOT analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The Action Plan focuses on six primary goals to advance economic development for Mi'kmaq Nation. Strategies have been developed to achieve each goal with clear, actionable items.

The CEDS Plan seeks to identify assets, create opportunities, leverage resources, while diminishing barriers in order to stimulate economic growth for the Tribe. This is a result of collaborative efforts among Mi'kmaq Nation stakeholders including individuals, tribal administration, businesses and regional partners.

How to Use This Report

The Mi'kmaq Nation CEDS provides an Action Plan for achieving specific economic goals during the next five years and beyond. Tribal leadership and communities will follow the Action Plan to help ensure achievement of the CEDS Strategies and Goals. As part of the CEDS process, participants identified tribal and regional assets, priority areas of improvement, opportunities for economic development, and barriers to growth. Their input is used to shape the vision, goals and strategies for the CEDS Action Plan.

The CEDS document is a living document, also known as an evergreen document or dynamic document. The plan will be referred to and refreshed on a continuing basis by Tribal leaders and those engaged in tribal economic development. The CEDS may be updated to remain sustainable and relevant to tribal needs and priorities.



Public Involvement

76
Tribal leaders,
administration
and citizens
participated in
CEDS plan
development



The engagement of the community and tribal leaders is key to the CEDS process. Between February 2022 and March 2023, Mi'kmaq Nation held two public meetings to collect input from tribal members and members of the community-at-large. The meetings were well attended with robust agendas that included discussions on: (i) economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; (ii) community resilience; (iii) climate change and (iv) goals and strategies. Seventy-six individuals participated in forming a Vision Statement and identifying the CEDS Goals and Strategies.

In the spring of 2022, Mi'kmaq Nation collaborated with Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) to conduct a community survey on workforce needs and economic development. The information was gathered to assess workforce concerns, tribal assets, regional resources, economic barriers and housing. The survey obtained input on the advantages and disadvantages to conducting business in the Mi'kmaq Nation region.



Part II: Summary

Background

Tribal & Regional Conditions

Mi'kmaq Nation became a federally recognized tribe on November 26, 1991. The majority of its members live in northern Maine, near the communities of Presque Isle, Houlton and Madawaska. While the Tribe has no reservation lands, it owns 3,294 acres of fee and trust land primarily located in this region. The Aroostook Band is governed by a Chief, Vice Chief and a 9 member Tribal Council.

The 1991 federal recognition allowed the Tribe to establish and administer services for tribal members residing in Aroostook County and purchase trust land. Mi'kmaq Nation is relatively new compared to the 566 federally recognized tribes across the U.S. and the only such tribe for Mi'kmaq people. Today, the Tribe manages over 600 contracts and awards that provide services to benefit tribal members. Tribal leaders are focused on advancing economic development initiatives that increase tribal revenues so as to reduce its reliance on federal grants to support administration and services.

While the Tribe has developed an administration and infrastructure since becoming federally recognized, there are many challenges and barriers to prosperity still to be addressed. Located in northern rural Maine, the Tribe is in an area of lower income, higher poverty and chronic

unemployment as compared to other regions in the state. By contrast, economic opportunities exist for the Tribe including valuable trust lands which it owns and the Eltueg Corporation, also tribally owned, which may purchase and start businesses. Unleashing the potential behind these assets can help to overcome the many economic challenges which have constrained the Tribe for years.

Tribal Economy

Over the years, employment has shifted from natural resources employment to service sector and tribal government jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 54.9% of the employment for Mi'kmaq Nation tribal members living on trust lands is in service sector jobs, with 34.1% in public administration at the tribal level. Traditional occupations in natural resources industries, such as, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining, represent only 1.1% of employment. This is a significant decline from past years when natural resources were the major source of jobs.

In January 2021, Tract Advisors³ assessed U.S. tribal census data for Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC) a Maine-based Native CDFI that provides loans and technical assistance (TA) to the Wabanaki Tribes. The Tract Advisors report found that tribal communities in Maine were much more economically distressed than the surrounding counties and census-referenced areas.

³ Feasibility Study Caribou, Maine March 2022, Four Directions Development Corp.

Low income, declining trends and prevalent poverty rates were observed for all Maine tribes, including the Mi'kmaq:



Median family income for residents of Mi'kmaq Trust Land was \$49,935, 32.3% lower than Maine (\$73,756), and 35.4% lower than the U.S. (\$77,263).



From 2010 to 2019, Mi'kmaq Nation experienced a 13.1% decline in median family income, the largest drop among the Maine tribes, while income levels in many areas of the state increased, some as high as 20%.



The poverty rate was 18.6% for Nation residents, much higher than Maine (11.8%) and the U.S. (13.4%).

Interviews were conducted with tribal leaders during the CEDS assessment. These sessions identified several constraints to increasing income levels and economic growth:

- The tribal population is aging creating challenges for senior Elder care along with a shrinking number of tribal leaders to govern.
- The local economy is unable to support a growth in businesses and service providers without improvements in transportation, communication and high-speed internet.
- Increased rail and bus infrastructure is needed to Millinocket and south along with a rail connection to the Port of Eastport.
- High energy costs are a burden to consumers and businesses.
- Climate change and its long-term impact is a growing concern for the Tribe creating opportunity to develop alternative energies such as solar and wind.
- Tourism is an opportunity to build on the 7% tourist visits to Aroostook County. The Tribe needs a strategic plan to increase tourist visitors.



Despite economic challenges and concerns, Mi'kmaq Nation has developed several, successful tribally owned business enterprises that create jobs and generate revenue for the Tribe. One such operation is Mi'kmaq Farms in Caribou that produces fresh produce on 28 acres of farmland. The harvest provides food for tribal members and a portion is sold to the general public. The farm is one way for the Tribe to give back and support Aroostook County.

Mi'kmaq Farms, Caribou, Maine



In 2015, the Tribe started Mi'kmaq Farms and Fish Hatchery in Presque Isle. This is an environmentally sustainable recirculating brook trout facility that provides healthy food for the Tribe, promotes the conservation of wild brook trout stocks, harvests fish sold to restaurants and creates jobs for tribal members. The Hatchery is highly successful with demand far exceeding supply. Following a feasibility study completed by Ocean Outcomes (a globally recognized seafood consultant), the Tribe is moving forward with plans for a \$3.8M expansion to increase production capacity from 12K pounds/year to 60K pounds/year. EDA funding has been approved with a construction timeline to begin in 2023 and complete within 12-24 months.

A 90-acre Christmas tree farm in Littleton was purchased by Mi'kmaq Nation in December 2020. The 80+ year old owner was retiring creating an opportunity for the Tribe. The 42-year-old operation was nearly turn-key with harvestable trees, a trained Maliseet workforce and established clientele. The Tribe developed an 8-year tree growth and harvesting plan to scale up from 500 trees/year (declined due to the prior owner's age) to prior peak harvests of 7,000 trees/year. The trees are sold to businesses for retail resale primarily in southern Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Running successful, sustainable businesses that are mission-focused is a priority for tribal leadership. The members have gained critical business, management and marketing experience by owning and developing the agricultural farm, trout hatchery and tree farm. The farm and fish hatchery support the Tribe's vision for sovereignty - including food sovereignty - along with quality of life, culture and economic growth. Together with the tree farm, these businesses are creating jobs and providing revenue for the Tribe.

Going forward, tribal leaders will explore similar opportunities. To be successful, readiness to evaluate and accept reasonable business risks that bring economic growth to the community will lead to opportunities. Leaders desire more entrepreneurial training to assess business plans when considering new ventures. Additionally, there is interest in improving access to Canadian markets in order to widen economic growth.

Tribal Demographics

Mi'kmaq Nation has a current population of 1,633 tribal members living in Maine. Of that, approximately 250 members live on trust lands owned by the Nation. Statistics from the Tribe provide a snapshot of its residents:

- Population by gender
 - 851 (52%) are women
 - 782 (48%) are men
- Population by age
 - 397 (24%) are <18 years old
 - 805 (49%) are 18 to 49.9 years old
 - 421 (26%) are >50 years old and the oldest living person is currently 90 years old
 - 10 (0.6%) age not disclosed

The Native American population across Aroostook County is 1.9%, higher than 0.7% statewide. Mi'kmaq Nation is located in the County along with the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, a tribe of similar size. The tribal governments are based in Presque Isle and Houlton.

Like the State of Maine, Mi'kmaq Nation has an aging population which was a top economic concern identified during interviews with tribal leaders. Within the community, senior Elders are highly valued, recognized and sought for their experience and wisdom. Their health, security and wellness are a primary economic and social responsibility for tribal members. Independent living is a goal for many; however, this presents challenges for the Tribe. In a recent National Resource Center

on Native American Aging (NRCNAA) survey of Mi'kmaq Elders, 45% indicated they live

alone with many requiring outside services or care from relatives. The survey further identified several health concerns including: (i) 42% smoke cigarettes daily compared to the national average of 19.9%, (ii) 62% reported feelings of downheartedness, (iii) 35.3% experienced some level of depression and (iv) 45.1% do not participate in cultural practices such as traditional food, music and customs (see Exhibit A).

Although the population is aging, there is one segment that shows growth. The Tribe is experiencing an increase in the number of young adults ages 25 to 45 years. This portion of the population has grown from 30% to 35%.⁴ Notably, the increase is at a level just above the 30% threshold cited by economists as necessary for companies to recruit and hire the workers needed to operate and expand.⁵ The five percent increase in younger adults is a positive indicator for developing the necessary workforce among employers based in northern Maine to sustain and grow businesses.

⁴ ACS 5-year estimates: 2021 represents average characteristics, 2017-2021

⁵ Census.gov/tribal

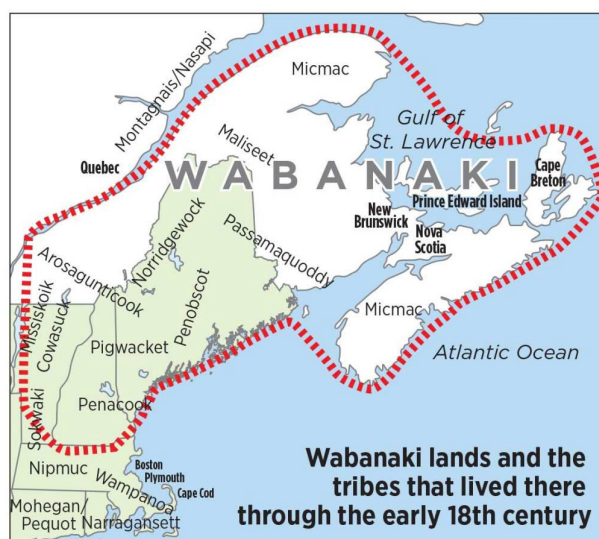
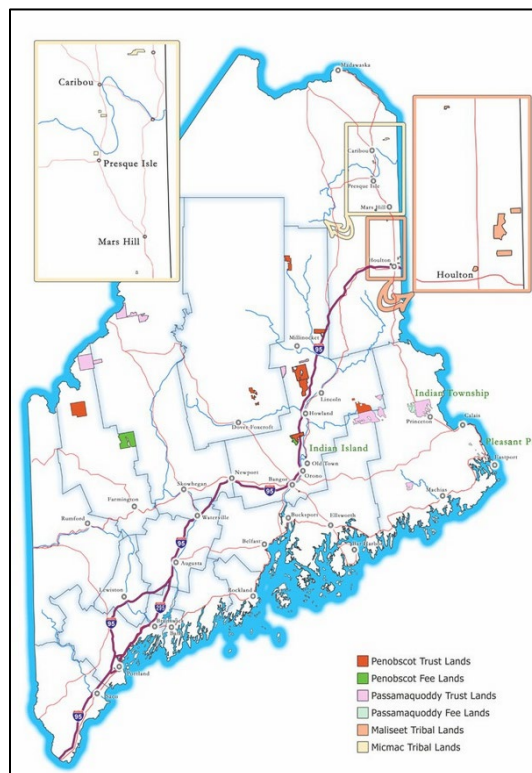
Trust Land

The federal government holds title to 1,930 acres of trust land on behalf of the Tribe. Additionally, the Tribe has private ownership of 1,364 acres of fee (also known as fee simple) property for a total of 3,294 acres. The Tribal landholdings consist of agricultural, forested and residential properties. These assets represent capital that is potentially beneficial to the economic growth of the Tribe and may be used to help develop tribally owned businesses (see section, Tribal Business Enterprises).

Current tribal land holdings in northern Maine total approximately 2,920 acres that include a mixture of trust and fee properties:

- 73 housing units and 24 acres of land in Presque Isle
- 8 housing units and 533 acres of land in Caribou
- 15 housing units and 4 acres of land in the unorganized township of Connor
- 11 housing units and 104 acres of land in Littleton
- 18 acres of land in Bridgewater
- 658 acres of land at the former Loring Air Force Base in Limestone
- 1,200 forested acres in Winterville Plantation
- 160 forested acres in Island Fall
- 220 forested acres in Garfield Plantation

The following two diagrams show the historical, traditionally owned lands of the Mi'kmaq people across Maine and Canada as compared to today's significantly smaller ownership:



STAFF GRAPHIC | MICHAEL FISHER

Below are two charts providing a partial list of tribal property.

The properties highlighted in bold are also on the prior list of real estate located in northern Maine

Trust Property		
Property	Acres	Land Use
Blackstone	202	Agricultural/Potato Storage Building
Bon Aire	24.61	Residential and administrative offices
Bridgewater	18.63	13.63 forested; 5 condemned residential
Connor	4.25	Residential with 15 housing units
Garfield	225	Forest
Inoo'a gati	181 +/-	133 forested; 48 residential
Island Falls	160	Forest
Littleton	104.02	44 forested; 60.02 residential
Loring	658	593 forested; 65 vacant buildings, storage tanks, roads, etc.
Powers Michaud	188.58	170.58 forested; 18 Agricultural/Powerline
Snowman Farm	83 +/-	Agricultural
Spruce Haven	80.56	52.56 forested; 28 community buildings, cultural structures and areas
Total Trust Acres	1,930	
Fee Property		
Caribou	5	Agricultural
Littleton Ext.	38	Forest
Littleton Tree Farm	90+/-	Agricultural
Mt. Vernon	10.4	Forest
120 Edgemont	2.63	Forest
Total Fee Acres	146.03	
Pending Property		
LaBobe	5.3	Residential
Winterville	1213	Forest
Total Pending Acres	1218.3	
Total Tribal Acres	3,294	

A group of salmon swimming in clear blue water. The fish are seen from above, swimming in various directions. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the fish are a silvery, metallic color. The background is a light blue, possibly a sky or a wall, with some reflections and light patterns.

Tribal Business Enterprises

Tribal businesses are formed through a U.S. federal charter under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). A Section 17 corporation may be chartered under either tribally enacted laws, the state's incorporation laws or as a limited liability company (LLC) organized under tribal code or state law. The corporation is wholly owned by the Tribe and is a distinct, separate legal entity from the tribal government. If the corporation defaults on repayment of borrowed funds, only its property and assets are at risk (source: www.bia.gov). With a corporate charter, the entity has the same privileges and immunity as the tribal government, including tribal sovereign immunity, and is not subject to federal income tax. Additionally, a corporate charter allows for 25-year leasing authority for tribal reservation lands which eliminates the requirement of Section 81 approval by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.



Eltueg Corporation is a Section 17 corporation owned by Mi’kmaq Nation and, although currently inactive, the entity is a potential catalyst for economic development. Eltueg first needs to have a Board of Directors appointed to oversee governance, strategic planning and funding. The Mi’kmaq Nation Chief is an ex-officio non-voting member of the Board.



Next, a professional, reputable source for technical assistance (TA) should be found to help Eltueg properly assess new business ventures for potential investment. This expertise is particularly important for considering investment into higher risk startup, high growth or expanding businesses. TA will help Eltueg with evaluation, assessment, due diligence, organizational management, financial projections and research.

Eltueg’s purpose and goals are more completely described in the chart (see below) that highlights key elements of the operating structure:

1. Engage in any type of lawful business, enterprise or venture;
2. Provide for the efficient and effective utilization of the resources of the Tribe in a manner which protects the long-term interests of the Tribe;
3. Promote the economic development of the Tribe and its members;
4. Endeavor at all times to manage and operate the Corporation efficiently with the objective of maximizing benefit to the Tribe;
5. Accomplish the segregation of tribal governmental assets and liabilities from Tribal business assets and liabilities; and
6. Earn sufficient revenue to:
 - Pay their own operating expenses and capital obligations (including any owed to the Tribe);
 - Accumulate reasonable financial reserves; and
 - allocate Surplus Funds for dividends and distributions to the Tribe.

LAW GOVERNING FORMATION	SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY	LEGAL LIABILITY	FEDERAL TAX TREATMENT	FINANCING
Federal charter issued under the Indian Reorganization Act.	Corporate charter can confer the same privileges and immunity as tribe; waivers of sovereign immunity pursuant to the "sue and be sue clause" in the corporate charter should be limited to a waiver of only the corporation's sovereign immunity and such waiver should be restricted in scope to transactions of the corporation and limited to claims against the assets of the corporation and not the tribe itself.	Assets and liabilities of the corporation are segregated from tribal government assets; Tribal government can pledge assets or property to the corporation; tribal government is not liable for debts or obligations of the corporation.	Not subject to federal income tax regardless of location of business activities.	Section 17 Corporation can pledge assets and property of the corporation; is eligible for government guaranteed loans; can issue tax exempt bonds for "essential governmental services" and can issue clean renewable energy bonds; joint ventures or equity partnerships possible through a LLC subsidiary chartered under a Section 17 corporation.

Workforce & Economic Development Survey

A workforce and economic development strategy survey was conducted with assistance from EMDC to assess community needs and obtain input during the CEDS outreach meetings. Approximately 50 surveys were completed by tribal members.

Of those responding to the survey, 34.1% are employed full-time, 29.5% are employed part-time and 25% are unemployed. The remainder are retired students or homemakers. The top three areas of employment include:

- 25% education
- 25% public/community/social
- 6.8% arts/handcrafts/design/media/sports.
- For the remainder, 18.2% retired/unable to work/or a student and 9.1% homemaking.



Those surveyed were asked about their access to broadband and phone service. The following responses were: 70.5% have reliable internet service at home, 56.8% have a need for access to the internet at work or school and 88.6% have reliable phone service.

Respondents were asked to identify any existing barriers to employment: 31.8% indicated there are no barriers, 22.7% responded that the question does not apply, 15.9% responded cycle of poverty or financial instability, 13.6% cited health issues (including mental and addiction) and 9.1% (each) indicated housing or lack of well-paying job options.

When asked if there are any barriers to expanding business and industry for the tribal community: 38.6% cited cost of transportation/fuel/supplies, 34.1% said the Tribe's remote location and 29.5% indicated low population/not enough workforce.

Questions were asked about what is needed to assist the workforce and grow the economy:

- For what tribal leadership could do to support members with employment
 - More training, education, better transportation and increased job opportunities.
- For what the Tribe needs to strengthen economically -

- Better business practices, higher pay, job fairs with immediate training, financial options for full-time students, more land/housing and regular mandatory drug testing with follow-through.
- Other important needs cited -
 - Technical assistance to help members start their own businesses
 - Training for disabled members to be employed
 - Open communications between tribal leaders and community
 - Unity and engagement across the community.

Regional Economy: Aroostook County

Aroostook County is important to Mi'kmaq Nation as the regional economic center for northern Maine and is a major transitory route to and from the Canadian Reserves and U.S. urban areas. Aroostook has a county-wide population of 71,900 comprising less than 5% of Maine's total yet its size of 6,453 square miles comprises 21% of Maine's total land area. Aroostook is Maine's largest and northernmost county, bordered by Canada on three sides.

Aroostook County is less prosperous than the southern parts of the state. The county's poverty rate of 15.3% is five percentage points over the state average. The median household income is 30% below Maine's statewide average of \$41,123. According to the 2018-2023 Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (AWEDD CEDS), the major economic challenges for the area include the following:

- Energy costs
- Broadband availability/access to high-speed internet
- Outmigration/declining workforce
- Opiate substance disorder
- Lower than state average wages
- Inability to capture more tourism visitors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Aroostook County received \$13 million in ARPA funds to help offset and counter negative economic impacts. The funds were deployed in communities across the County. The main objectives were to enhance the public health response, increase pay for essential workers and improve the existing infrastructure for delivering services.

Opportunity Zones: The major economic strength in the region stems from the Economic Development Districts (EDD) Opportunity Zones. ⁶Within the EDD, the towns of Washburn, Limestone and Madawaska are experiencing the most economic growth. Washburn has an industry mix consisting of agriculture and food processing. A new potato processing facility is under construction which will employ more than 80 people.

Limestone's most substantial asset is the former Loring Air Force Base, now the Loring Commerce Centre. With over 3,800 acres of developed area, Loring has the capacity to support new business

⁶ Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District

development with existing modern structures, practical buildings and developable sites. The Loring Commerce Centre is supported by high-capacity municipal utility infrastructure and a newly constructed dark fiber network.

In the Fall of 2022 DG Fuels, LLC executed a long-term lease with Loring Development Authority for 1,240 acres of contiguous land to locate its second Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) facility and future industrial development. The project breaks ground in 2024, creating 2,300 jobs during construction and 650 permanent jobs to operate the facility. The project is expected to be completed in 2027.⁷

Limestone is also home to the Limestone Job Corps center. Part of the US Department of Labor National system, the residential center provides life-changing education and training for youth ages 16 through 24, who are able to earn a GED or high school diploma, career technical training, and provide support for students transitioning into the working world.

Madawaska is home to Twin Rivers Paper Company which employs nearly 400 people and produces innovative packing products and specialty paper. The larger towns of Presque Isle and Houlton are situated just outside of the Economic Development District.

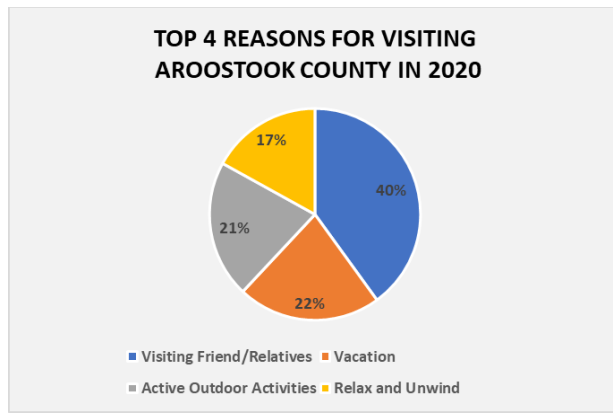
Transportation & Aeronautics: Presque Isle is a transportation center for ground and air travel. The City is designated by the Maine Department of Transportation as an Urban Compact Area which includes major arterials and collector roadways with US Route 1 traveling across the city's Main Street. The Presque Isle International Airport (PQI), the only international airport in the County, is owned by the City. Currently, United Airlines offers twice daily service to Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) with connections worldwide.

In the Fall 2022, the airport received a \$4.5 million Economic Development grant to design a new aerospace research center known as VALT Enterprises, Inc. located in one of the PQI airport hangars. With 13 people currently employed, projections are to increase the workforce to 126 people once a new facility is constructed in 2023. The company is developing high-speed or hypersonic propulsion rockets to be tested west of Ashland away from populated areas. The rural nature of Aroostook County is an ideal place for industries that need remote places for this type of testing⁸.

⁷ DGfuels.com and Bangor Daily News

⁸ The County/Aroostook Republican

Tourism: According to the Maine Office of Tourism 2020 Economic Impact Report, over 216,000 people visited Aroostook County. This had a positive impact on over 1,400 jobs. The top four reasons given for visiting the County are to: (i) visit friends/relatives, (ii) take a vacation, (iii) engage in outdoor activities and (iv) relax and unwind. While few visitors to Aroostook County are traveling to Maine for the first time, 3 in 10 visitors to Aroostook County have previously been to Maine more than ten times. The study found that 98% of visitors would recommend Aroostook County as a place to visit or vacation.



Employment: Presque Isle is Aroostook County’s largest city and home to Mi’kmaq Nation’s administrative offices. The City is the retail and service center for the surrounding communities and portions of Canada.⁹ Some of its larger employers include: Army National Guard, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, McCain Foods, and Houlton Regional Hospital. By comparison, Mi’kmaq Nation employed 74 people in 2022 per public data and currently is reported by tribal administration to employ 119 workers.

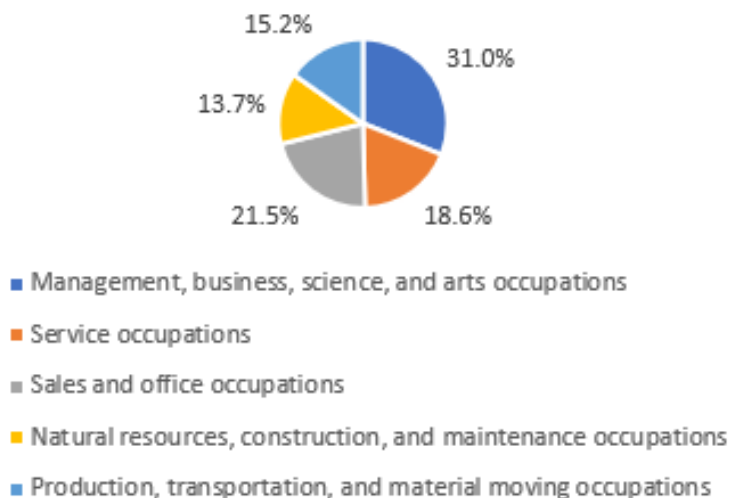
Top Employers in Aroostook County		
rank	entity	# employees
1	Army National Guard	7,000
2	Northern Light AR Gould Hosp	895
3	Mccain Foods USA Inc	800
4	Cary Medical Ctr	434
5	Houlton Regional Hospital	348
6	University Of Me-Presque Isle	270
7	Maine Mutual Fire Insurance Co	260
8	Twin Rivers Paper Co LLC	230
9	Army National Guard	200
10	Madigan Estates Nursing Home	200
11	Northern Maine General	200
12	Aroostook County Action PRGRM	180
13	Overhead Door	178
14	Katahdin Bankshares Corp	178
15	LP Houlton OSB	175
16	Smith & Wesson Corp	160
17	Irving Forest Products	160
18	Walmart	156
19	Northern ME Cmnty Cig Bkstr	150
20	Presque Isle Rehab & Nursing	145
21	Lowe's Home Improvement	140
22	Caribou Rehab & Nursing Ctr	140
23	Irving Woodlands LLC	140
24	MMG Insurance Co	135
:		
42	Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians	93
43	Aroostook Band of Micmacs	74

(Data Axle, 2022)

The natural resource sectors of agriculture and forestry (including construction and maintenance) employ half of the workers in the region with 29,000 jobs. The second largest sector employing 9K people is management/business/science/arts. Although the job market in Aroostook County has decreased over the last year, future job growth over the next ten years is predicted to be at 24.1% (source: Bestplaces.net). The following chart depicts employment by occupation:

⁹ City of Presque Isle 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Aroostook County Employed Population By Industry 16 years and Over



Higher Education:

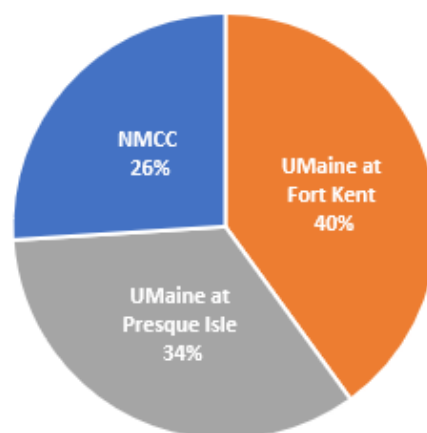
The three largest public post-secondary schools in Aroostook County:

- University of Maine at Fort Kent: 1500 students with 246 degrees awarded in 2020
- University of Maine at Presque Isle: 1590 students with 210 degrees awarded in 2020
- Northern Maine Community College: 775 students with 162 degrees awarded in 2020

The top three Bachelor's degrees awarded were in:

- Nursing (45.3%)
- General Business/General Business Administration & Management (17.2%)
- Liberal Arts & Sciences and General Psychology each at 5.63%.

Degrees Awarded in 2020



The majority of Associate degrees were in the Medical field (40%), while General Business, Liberal Arts, Early Childhood Education, and Technical degrees equally made up the remaining 60% of degrees awarded.¹⁰

¹⁰ Data USA

Part III: Economic & Tribal Resilience

The Tribe has the potential to develop its land assets and tribally owned businesses. Governance is strong with leadership focused on attracting and developing new economic ventures. A more diverse business base will let the Tribe build economic resilience through higher tribal revenues that reduce reliance on federal support. Enhanced revenues will further allow the Tribe to build and support increased infrastructure and administration that will be needed to govern an increasingly diverse economy.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the Tribe demonstrated its ability to be resilient while responding to the needs of its people. Unlike other Maine tribal governments which completely shut down at the onset of the pandemic, the Mi'kmaq administration and support service offices still operated. Limited services continued to be provided throughout the pandemic indicating that the Tribe has the ability to be resilient during an emergency situation.

Even with its business potential and a proven ability to manage through crisis, the Tribe faces ongoing challenges that constrain economic growth. Key to meeting and overcoming these concerns are three essential elements for maintaining and building tribal resilience:

- Sovereignty
- Equity
- Culture

Sovereignty

Strengthening sovereignty will reduce economic dependency on federal government resources and provide more independence. In order to meet this objective, Tribal leaders are actively pursuing economic development through collaborations and leveraging resources with other tribes, business partners, communities and agencies:



“The Mi'kmaq Nation seeks to provide for our citizens what all sovereign nations and local communities provide for theirs. We seek to provide reliable community services for our citizens, to grow our local economy, and to provide jobs and positive cultural opportunities for our people.” –Mi'kmaq Nation Chief Edward Peter Paul

A recent Harvard study concludes that sovereignty helps tribes build vibrant economies and provide strong economic support within their regions. Federal policy for several decades has supported tribal sovereignty and self-government. Today, across the continental United States, hundreds of tribes provide leadership, programs and services to their people. The economic results have been extremely positive for the tribes. However, due to prior legislation, the State of Maine has not allowed tribal self-governance which has constrained growth and development for Native communities located within state borders. The Harvard study concludes:

“Subjecting the Wabanaki Nations’ capacities to the restrictions of MICSA (Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980) stifles substantial development opportunities – to the detriment of both the Wabanaki and non-Wabanaki citizens of Maine. The unrealized opportunities measure in the hundreds of millions of dollars of GDP for the state, representing support for thousands of jobs held by Mainers and tens of millions of dollars going into Maine’s tribal, state, and local treasuries. For the tribal citizens of Maine, loosening or removing MICSA’s restrictions offers few downside risks and many upside payoffs.”

Source: Impacts of Restrictions on the Applicability of Federal Indian Policies to the Wabanaki Nations in Maine, by Joseph P. Kalt¹¹, Amy Besaw Medford and Jonathan B. Taylor, Dec 2022

Legal status. The legal status of Native American tribes affects their economy, governmental relations and private-sector business relationships. Federal Public Law 93-638 passed in 1975 gives Indian tribes the authority to contract with the Federal government to meet the needs of the tribal community, support cultural programs and access minority advantages in the business sector. Federal Recognition P.L. 102-171-nov 26-1991 provides federal recognition of Mi’kmaq Nation with the ability of self-governance and self-determination.

As part of the 1991 federal tribal recognition process, Mi’kmaq Nation and the State of Maine were required to implement an Act to establish jurisdiction. The Act needed ratification by the Mi’kmaq Nation Tribal Council and/or Tribal Community, but this did not occur. Without a ratifying vote, Mi’kmaq Nation remains subject to the Maine Implementing Act giving jurisdiction over Mi’kmaq Nation to the State of Maine. The Tribe retains limited authority over internal governance and election structures. Certain rights have been either lost or gained through court rulings or negotiated legislation.

Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1980. While tribes have an inherent right to self-governance and are free of any regulation to govern their affairs, these rights remain unprotected for Mi’kmaq Nation through the 1980 Land Claims Act. Through unfavorable court case determinations and failure to complete the ratification process, Mi’kmaq Nation is left with less-recognized authority than the other tribes. Generally, tribal courts have civil jurisdiction over Indians and non-Indians who either reside or do business on federal Indian reservations. They also have criminal jurisdiction over violations of tribal laws committed by tribal members residing or doing business on the reservation.

Resolving the issue of jurisdiction continues to be a lengthy process for the Tribe.

Indian Law. Collectively, these statutes along with administrative and judicial decisions are often referred to as “Indian law” and form critical principles such as the trust relationship with the federal government, tribal sovereignty, Indian self-determination and self-governance. Historical events have disrupted or destroyed many traditional tribal economies. Today, cultural values, norms and expectations exert a strong influence on tribal business development and Indian law.

Tribal disadvantages. The lack of sovereignty holds many disadvantages for the Tribe:

- Legal disputes between tribes and states, tribal and state-chartered corporations, state residents and tribal businesses generally cannot be

adjudicated by state courts; such disputes fall under the purview of tribal or federal courts.

- Lack of access to state courts discourages some businesses from investing in Indian Country.
- Federal primacy in Indian affairs contributes to the isolation of tribal governments from some business activities.
- Non-Indian businesses tend to be less familiar with tribal government operations than state, county and local governments. This leaves outside businesses less equipped to advance and defend their interests before tribal governmental bodies which can discourage business development and private investment in Indian Country.

Maine v. the Wabanaki Nations (2016-2020 averages)

	Passamaquoddy, Indian Township	Passamaquoddy, Pleasant Point	Penobscot	Maliseet	Mi'kmaq	Maine
Population - AIAN Alone	604	574	531	239	197	
Population - All People	773	683	770	348	280	1,335,492
Per capita income - AIAN Alone	\$14,435	\$13,741	\$18,809	\$11,320	\$11,431	
Per capita income - All People						\$34,593
Child Poverty Rate - All People	40.2%	58.3%	45.7%	61.2%	76.9%	15.1%
Overcrowded Households - All People	3.3%	1.6%	2.4%	8.9%	3.7%	1.5%
College Graduates or Higher - AIAN Alone	7.1%	18.2%	21.1%	8.2%	8.5%	
College Graduates or Higher - All People						20.0%
Unemployment Rate - AIAN Alone	6.5%	8.7%	5.7%	5.8%	7.5%	
Unemployment Rate - All People						4.1%

Per capita income reported in 2021 dollars. (Census, 2019)

Equity

Maine's Tribal Areas experience far more economic distress than the surrounding communities and Maine as a whole. Current state law restricts tribal self-governance creating a situation in which the Wabanaki Tribes of Maine are not treated equitably when compared to the 566 federal tribes located in other states. As a result, local tribal economies of Mi'kmaq Nation, Houlton Maliseet, Indian Township, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot and Pleasant Point tribes show a 6% decrease in population and a 4% decrease in median family income from 2010 to 2019, while Maine shows a 0.3% increase and 27% increase, respectively. These tribal areas have a 20% poverty rate vs. 11.8% in Maine, 7% unemployment rate vs. 4% in Maine.¹²

Greater autonomy is needed for the tribal communities to create businesses and stimulate community growth as a way to reduce their economic distress. Tribal leaders are negotiating with the Maine legislature to increase self-governance. A December 2022 Harvard study (see Section III, Sovereignty) has been shared with the Maine legislature in support of sovereignty

that will lead to economic growth. Further, a legislative task force in 2019 developed recommendations that will advance the tribes towards greater independence.

Economic disparities exist across several business sectors and regions within Maine where Native Americans reside. According to the data analysis provided by Tract Advisors, the northern and eastern Maine counties of Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot and Washington have substantial forestry and logging industries with total employment 30 times the national percentage. However, tribal communities have been unable to develop their own lands to the same level. Hancock and Washington counties benefit from substantial fishing, hunting and trapping industries that are traditional Native American activities. Due to restrictive legislation, the tribal communities in these counties lack the ability to stimulate their own industries and contribute to the Maine economy. With tribal sovereignty, the potential exists for increased tribal economic development that will raise overall economic output in Maine without shifting production away from existing businesses.

¹² US Census



The Cultural Community Education Center in Presque Isle displays artifacts and art, in addition to offering Mi'kmaq language courses and classes that teach traditional skills such as snowshoe and canoe making.

Culture

In addition to self-governance, preserving Mi'kmaq culture and language is essential to the tribal community. Mi'kmaq Nation's Culture, Community Development and Historic Preservation Department engages in activities that preserve and promote Mi'kmaq culture and history. These efforts have introduced Mi'kmaq Nation to activities outside the Tribe and into local communities. The result has been an enhanced public image and greater appreciation for Native American culture among residents of Aroostook County and those across the state.

Tribal cultural history and resources exist throughout Maine in the form of Indian canoe routes, prehistoric archaeological sites, historic archaeological sites and historical structures, districts, trails and

landmarks. Several state and regional ecotourism efforts exist to promote cultural resources. Specifically, the *Natural Resources Education Center* in Greenville, the *Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance*, the *Western Maine Cultural Alliance*, the *Abbe Museum* and the *Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Initiative*.¹³

Mi'kmaq Nation in Presque Isle is located near the Canadian border allowing for active cross-cultural engagement. Mi'kmaq tribal members, in most cases, have border access through the *Jay Treaty* and Indian-recognized rights in Canada. These rights provide an opportunity for Mi'kmaq industries and businesses, including energy, wood and agriculture, to diversify and compete within an International Foreign-Trade Zone or to partner with Canadian businesses and tribes.

¹³ ABM 5 Year Economic Development Strategy, 2018



The Mawiomi of Tribes is celebrated by Mi'kmaq Nation annually in August at Spruce Haven in Caribou. Native American tribal members and the general public attend a three-day event with traditional drumming and dancing ceremonies, powwows, foods and crafts.

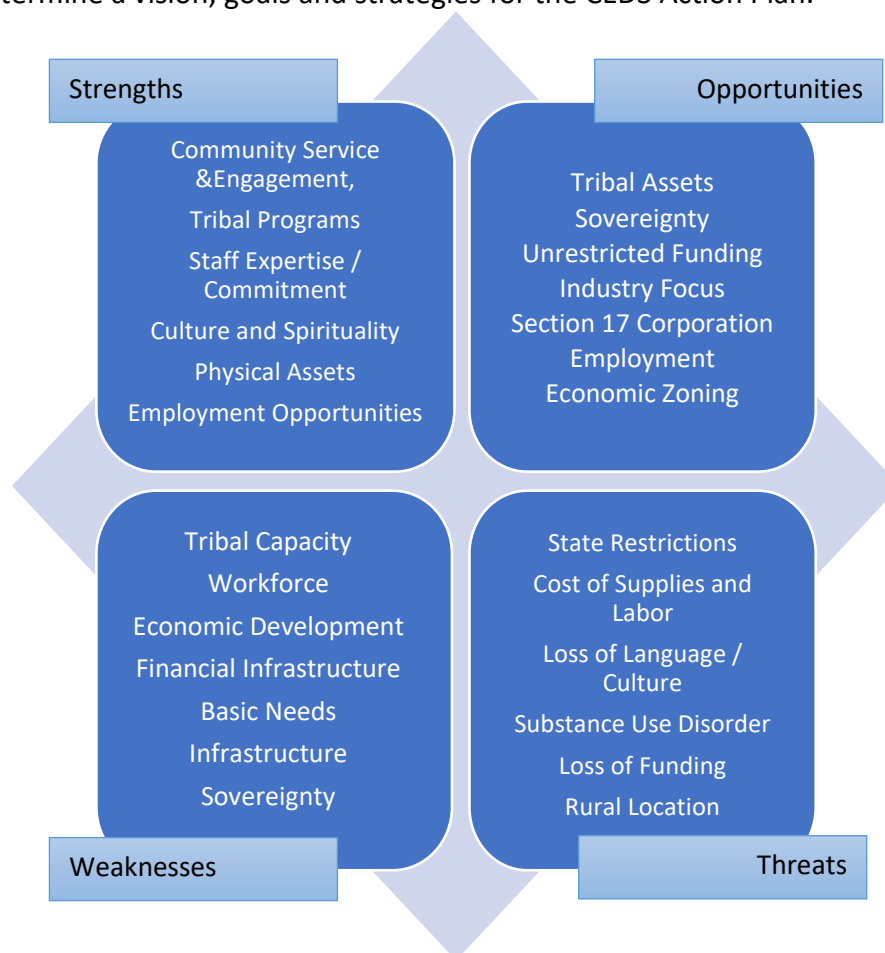


The word, Mawiomi is derived from the Mi'kmaq language meaning "Gathering." During the Mawiomi, participants can take part in a sunrise blessing ceremony, traditional drumming, dancing, and sweat lodges. Authentic Native American crafts and goods are available for purchase from local and far away Native American vendors and a traditional meal (often fish or moose) is offered to all those who attend.

Part IV:

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The CEDS planning committee met in July 2022 with Tribal Directors and citizens to conduct a SWOT analysis that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the tribal economy (see Exhibit B). *Strengths* include unique advantages to stimulate economic growth and development. *Weaknesses* are areas of concern that require improvement in order to achieve greater economic results. *Opportunities* represent areas of potential including tribal business ownership and advancing tribal sovereignty. External factors that inhibit the ability to succeed are documented as *threats*. The SWOT analysis helped to assess “Where is the Tribe now?” and determine a vision, goals and strategies for the CEDS Action Plan.



Strengths

Located in Aroostook County from time immemorial, Mi'kmaq Nation is one of the most recent federally recognized tribes, achieving this status in 1991. Since then, for over 30 years, leadership has focused on creating infrastructure, support programs and housing for the benefit of tribal members. Program longevity and the ability to address community needs across all ages are rated as one of the Tribe's greatest strengths (see Exhibit C). The Program staff is also considered a strength with their dedication, expertise, commitment and service. Staff members are advocates for tribal members and passionate about the programs and services offered. Longevity, quality reputation and a strong work ethic help to make the Mi'kmaq Program staff a tribal strength.

Culture and spirituality run deep among tribal members. Many are interested in preserving their Native language and increasing their knowledge of culture and history. Senior Elders provide valued learning around and understanding of tribal

customs and methods to be shared with younger members. An extremely important strength is the amount of tribal land owned by the Tribe. Mi'kmaq Nation is an off-reservation tribe that has several tracts of land held in trust by the federal government. Some property lies near the Canadian border, ideal for setting up a Foreign-Trade Zone or "free-trade zone." Tribal housing exists to serve the entire community with its leaders having the ability to oversee new construction and negotiate financing. One example of a key asset is Spruce Haven, a tribally owned campground that is a place for tribal unity, ceremonies and traditions. Tribal assets such as Spruce Haven have the potential to provide a foundation for future economic growth.

In 2018, the Tribe adopted a climate change adaptation plan which was updated in 2021 to address future concerns regarding the impact of climate change. The plan allows the Tribe to be proactive on this issue and to increase awareness among other tribal members and communities:

"It is the intention of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs to consider climate change adaptation in all of the planning work that is done because the impacts of climate change are far reaching and affect everything in both positive and negative ways. By specifically thinking about climate change now, we are aware that we will be planning for the future resiliency of the Tribe now, but also in the future of our children and grandchildren."

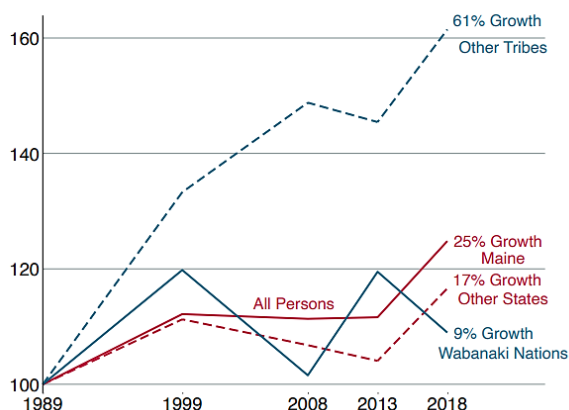
Aroostook Band of Micmacs Strategic Plan 2018-2023, Update 2021, adopted by the Tribal Council on March 17, 2021

Weaknesses

During discussions, one of the most frequently mentioned weaknesses is the inability for Mi'kmaq citizens to meet basic needs. Tribal members express concern for increased access to affordable housing, food and clothing along with improved public transportation. The inability to provide these services can cause adverse consequences ranging from chronic poverty to lack of educational attainment.

Another frequently mentioned concern is tribal administration capacity. Both tribal leadership and staff share that there is not “enough time in a day.” Tribal leaders are concerned that the limited staff may suffer from burnout and workloads for some positions need to be reassigned to be more balanced. The relatively small tribal

Figure 3: Relative Growth Since 1989



population creates an ongoing challenge to fill all available jobs. As a result, vacant positions remain open.

Resources to increase workforce development are needed that provide essential training for tribal members. More staff is needed by tribal administration, yet there are limited workforce development resources to train new employees.

Additionally, a skilled workforce will be needed in order for the Tribe to successfully invest in and grow new businesses through its Section 17 Eltueg Corporation. Increased training and education is essential for developing a skilled workforce that supports economic growth.

The Tribe lacks the necessary financial and human resources to conduct comprehensive economic development which has impaired its ability to form a cohesive vision and strategy for growth. There is a need for a dedicated Economic Development Director to coordinate and lead efforts to build infrastructure, enhance services and stimulate economic expansion. The Tribe has a Section 17 corporation that while it remains inactive, leaves missed opportunities for tribal business investments that can generate income and diversify the economy.

Increased availability of affordable, quality childcare is needed for tribal members. This is particularly important to support a larger workforce that includes parents of pre-school and school-aged children. Childcare is currently provided by one center for tribal members. The center has an experienced and knowledgeable staff. Expansion of available space is needed with childcare tuition rates affordable to the community.

The Tribe has made great advancements during its 30-year history. However, without sovereignty and jurisdiction, tribal leaders are challenged to develop sufficient economic growth to support the needs of its people. As a result, the Tribe continues to depend on federal and private grants to pay for essential programs and services, rather

than establish its own sources of stable, consistent revenues. The Tribe does not have the same economic development status as do other U.S. tribes – a situation which is another key reason for advancing sovereignty.

Opportunities

Tribal opportunities were frequently voiced during community meetings and as part of the SWOT analysis. Participants agreed that the Tribe should pursue new economic development initiatives. The CEDS planning process helps to prioritize these opportunities and form a strategy to maximize impacts and outcomes.

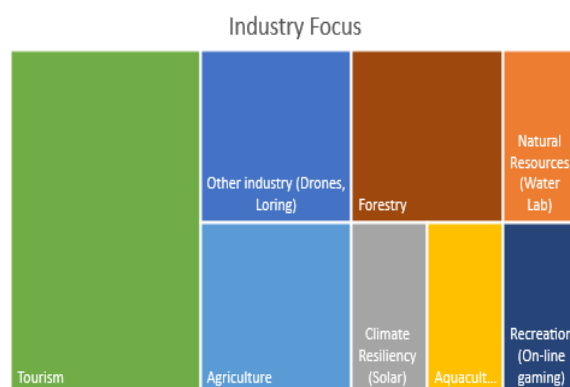
Underutilization of the Section 17 corporation was discussed as both a weakness and an opportunity. The Mi'kmaq's Section 17 Eltueg Corporation can channel tribal investments in to new businesses. These tribally owned companies may obtain Super 8(a) designation by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) allowing them to receive sole-sourced federal contracts of any value. By contrast, non-tribal 8(a) businesses have a \$3M contract size limitation.

Additional government incentives include the Native American Incentive Act (25 U.S.C.A. Sec. 1544) in which prime contractors that hire Native American subcontractors for Department of Defense contracts are eligible for a 5% cash rebate for the amount of the subcontract. In 2017, Aroostook County was designated an SBA HUBZone. The program is designed to encourage economic development and gives preference to qualified companies bidding on federal contracts.

In addition to Section 17 business investments and zoning opportunities, there is potential for sustainable, diverse development of tribal lands. The Tribe owns a 658-acres site at the former Loring AFB with usable buildings. As mentioned previously, the recently purchased tree farm in Littleton, the Spruce Haven campground and the Mi'kmaq farm and hatchery hold opportunities for further growth. The lands owned by Mi'kmaq Nation are rich in natural resources that may be developed across several industries including agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, solar and tourism.

Mi'kmaq Nation is collaborating with the four other Wabanaki Tribes of Maine to gain sovereignty from the State of Maine. Legislative efforts are underway to negotiate the ability for self-governance including the establishment of tribal courts, public safety and police.

The SWOT opportunity analysis includes rich input from participants regarding the



interest in developing different industries. Over 34 inputs have several responses that focus on multiple industries. Tourism ranks as the industry with the most interest. A Wabanaki Cultural Tourism Initiative is currently underway to create a robust Wabanaki Tourism Industry by 2030. The potential to develop Mi'kmaq physical assets

couples nicely with the opportunity to increase Native tourism. Interest in strengthening the farming and fisheries industries will help to address the concern for fulfilling basic community needs by increasing the Tribe's food sovereignty. The recent exclusive, online gaming license approved by the State of Maine for the Wabanaki tribes represents another significant revenue stream opportunity. Finally, in line with the Tribe's rich natural resources of wooded land and its interest in forestry projects, opportunities exist for new businesses to capture segments of this market.

Threats

Chronic economic stagnation is a major threat to the Tribe's potential for growth. According to recent census data, the Mi'kmaq tribal community is more economically distressed than other Maine residents. Income data obtained for those living in tribal communities and on trust lands show a decrease in median family income from 2010 to 2019, while Maine experienced a 20% increase. Several additional statistics point to the economic distress of tribal communities:

- The poverty rate in tribal areas is 18.6% compared to 11.8% across Maine.
- The tribal unemployment rate of 7% far exceeds the 4% State of Maine rate.
- The availability of broadband internet access is only 57% for tribal residents, significantly lower than the 87% of those having access across Maine.

These numbers represent significant inequities which need to be remedied in order for tribal citizens to live more equitably. With a stagnant and declining tribal economy, Mi'kmaq Nation faces several economic barriers. These include state restrictions on sovereignty, inflation, limited resources and climate change.

Socially, the tribal population has a higher-than-normal rate of substance abuse and addiction. Culturally, the Tribe is challenged to preserve language and tribal customs. The result is that the Tribe is economically dependent on federal grants to provide support and services for its citizens. An increased ability to raise capital is needed to stimulate existing businesses and encourage the startup of economically viable new businesses to fuel growth and produce tribal revenues.

"Unique to Maine, the federal Maine Indians Claims Act of 19080 (MICSA) empowers the state government to block the applicability of federal Indian policy in Maine. As a result, the development of the Wabanaki Nations economies and governmental capacities have been studied. Today, all four of the tribes in Maine-Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot-are stark economic underperformers relative to the other tribes in the Lower 48 states."

The Harvard Project on America Indian Economic Development

Interviews with Tribal Directors

In addition to the community SWOT analysis, several interviews were conducted with tribal directors to identify opportunities and challenges for the Tribe:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ❖ Andrea Michaud, Transportation Director | ❖ Kandi Sock , Community Support Services Director |
| ❖ Dena Winslow, Tribal Planner | ❖ Kendyl Reis, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer |
| ❖ Bethann Basso, Little Feathers Head Start | ❖ Norma Saulis , Indian Child Welfare Act Director |
| ❖ Craig Sanborn, Director of Housing | ❖ Theresa Cochran, Director of the Health Program |
| ❖ Fred Corey, IT Director | |
| ❖ Jenny Paul, Education Director | |

The Directors were asked to describe future economic goals for the Tribe. The most frequently mentioned areas are: healthcare, education/child care, tribal culture, basic needs, green technology and transportation. Recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Increased and enhanced access to healthcare is needed. This includes having a tribal pharmacy along with increased participation in tribal substance use. Forming a substance use committee was suggested. Additional needs include access to a Behavioral Health Therapist and aftercare programs.
- Investment in education from childcare to post-secondary levels is suggested. This includes expanding the existing childcare program for the Tribe in order to improve affordability and availability. Creating a tribal school was recommended with goals to increase graduation rates and raise enrollment in post-secondary programs.
- Cultural preservation and education are recommended on many levels starting with incorporating cultural sensitivity training in local school programs and increasing language training with tribal staff and members. Establishing a museum of Mi'kmaq Nation and Aroostook County is a way to preserve culture and has the support of tribal leadership. Other ideas include increased collaboration with Elders and expanding Spruce Haven campground as a cultural center.
- Increased access to food, shelter and clothing is frequently mentioned. Additional housing is needed with appropriate legal structure. Housing affordability is important along with ensuring Section 8 rental units meet required standards.
- Initiatives to address climate change while carefully managing natural resources owned by the Tribe are important concerns for the future. Suggestions include investing in green technology and involving youth in climate resilience projects. Additional recommendations are to invest in forestry, energy and a new quasi-public certified drinking laboratory.
- Transportation investments needed for the future include maintaining and planning infrastructure for roads, sidewalks and parking lots. New transportation opportunities should be considered to provide public transit services to community members.



Part V – Strategic Direction

Mission & Vision

As part of the CEDS development process, the Mission and Vision statements have been updated by the tribal leaders. The CEDS and Action Plan focus on supporting both the Mission and Vision of the Tribe.

The Tribe's vision is to achieve economic independence and governmental sovereignty. To do so, the CEDS Plan is designed to build diversity and resilience within the tribal community using multiple economic development tools. Upon successful implementation of the Plan, the Tribe may achieve increased economic diversity that fosters greater independence.

The goals and strategies are developed to achieve economic independence, strong governance and preservation of tribal cultures and traditions. In support of its mission, the Tribe's vision focuses on sovereignty, quality of life, culture and economic growth to benefit tribal members:

Mission

To provide the Mi'kmaq people a nurturing environment where all community members live a healthy and prosperous life while at the same time preserving and maintaining the Mi'kmaq language, culture and traditions for which the Mi'kmaq community longs.

Vision

- *Continue to develop our nation's sovereignty, enhance quality of life, and preserve culture through leadership, business creation, and community development.*
- *As a sovereign nation, foster economic independence and cultural connectedness through engaged leadership, community development, and progressive business growth.*
- *To foster economic prosperity through an integrated approach to preserving culture, expanding business ventures, and stimulating community development.*

Action Plan

The Action Plan consists of goals and strategies recommended to address the economic development needs of Mi'kmaq Nation. The Plan encompasses job creation, industry diversification, business retention and expansion, increased revenue base and improved quality of life. Six major goals are included that are important to the Tribe's future economic advancement. The Action Plan sets a course for tribal self-determination including strategies to preserve culture, support nation building and ensure progress towards tribal sovereignty.



Goal 1: Build Economic Infrastructure

Strategies:

- a) **Hire a dedicated resource for Economic Development:** In order to effectively implement the Action Plan, a full-time Economic Development/Coordinator position is needed. The individual will have a primary responsibility to work with Tribal Leaders and the Tribal Council to see that strategies are implemented in order to achieve the six major goals.
- b) **Reinvigorate Eltueg:** A Board of Directors needs to be established to lead the Eltueg Corporation. Primary objectives will be to establish a five-year strategic plan and secure funding sources. Eltueg is an excellent economic development vehicle in order to promote Eltueg, a marketing plan including educational and promotional materials will be needed.
- c) **Evolve existing and develop new businesses to increase revenue stream:** The Tribe wants to increase the number of independently owned for-profit businesses. A technical assistance (TA) program offered by the Tribe and/or in partnership with another small business service provider is needed to provide educational and mentoring opportunities for new and prospective business owners. Increased access to capital is needed either from Eltueg, nonprofit business lenders, such as Four Directions Development Corporation (FDDC), a Native CDFI based in Orono, Maine, and local financial institutions.

Goal 2: Ensure Economic Resiliency

Strategies:

- a) **Ensure Connectivity:** During the CEDS meetings, participants expressed a need for greater connectivity. The Tribe will first need to assess the community's technology needs for business development and job opportunities. Partnering with outside resources, such as FDDC to plan for future broadband needs will help to accomplish this initiative.
- b) **Research Unrestricted Funding Sources:** The Tribe's finances may be strengthened with increased knowledge of unrestricted funding sources, investments and allocations. The additional funding may be directed to existing programs and new economic opportunities that create jobs.
- c) **Create Workforce Development Programs:** Collaborations with existing partners such as EMDC, University of Maine and Maine's Community College system may be used to strengthen workforce development. These programs may include training, internships, job recruitment and incentive programs towards scholarships and debt repayment programs. Participation with federal contracting opportunities will help to increase worker training and education.
- d) **Establish solar energy plan:** The Mi'kmaq Nation is addressing climate change with the Tribal Council adopting the Mi'kmaq Nation Climate Change Adaptation Plan by Dena L. Winslow, Ph.D. in February 2022. To date, a large solar farm has been built producing clean electricity for the administration buildings. Establishing additional tribally owned solar farms will generate clean energy and create revenue for the Tribe. This includes expanding solar farms to provide electricity for tribally owned housing.

- e) **Meet basic needs:** Increase access to food, shelter and clothing (see Exhibit C).
 - i) A 5-year food sovereignty action plan is needed that includes expansion of the existing fish farm, enhancing agricultural output, increasing funding for the food pantry and educating members on healthy nutrition.
 - ii) A housing needs assessment should be completed during the next 1-2 years with a primary goal to increase and improve the Tribe's housing stock. To address housing needs, an assessment is needed with an action plan for Tribal leaders.
 - iii) Funding is in place for a new public septic system. An assessment is needed to determine if additional funding is needed and to develop a plan to design and install a system within the next 1-3 years.
- f) **Develop long-term planning initiatives to avoid future supply chain shortages:** The Tribe should partner with local contractors, utilize existing storage for materials and establish a sawmill to increase availability of lumber products.

Goal 3: Invest in strategic industries

Strategies:

- a) **Build out Tourism plan, including cultural and Agri-tourism:** Spruce Haven campground is an important tribal asset that may be expanded as a cultural center attracting both tribal and non-tribal visitors. The property is adjacent to the Mi'kmaq farm so there is opportunity for agri-tourism as well. Community suggestions include to: develop as a cultural center, incorporate cultural education and designate a portion of the land for private tribal use.
- b) **Expand Aquaculture capacity:** Plans are underway to expand the tribally owned hatchery. This is a successful tribal venture which has further opportunity to grow. Financing is in place for the next phase of expansion.
- c) **Develop Forestry products:** Community members believe that development of the Tribe's natural resources has economic potential. One suggestion is to start a sawmill to create jobs as well as ensure future supply chain needs are met (see Goal 2, f).
- d) **Implement on-line gaming:** Working with tribal partners, implement an on-line gaming platform with a strategic book partner to create a revenue stream for programs and services.
- e) **Establish water testing lab services:** Existing water testing assets conducted within the Nation may be used to expand and provide water testing services to regional and local partners.

Goal 4: Collaborate to expand capacity

Strategies:

- a) **Improve communications between tribal programs:** Increasing project collaboration across tribal administration will help to build and strengthen capacity. One suggestion is to create a collaboration committee between tribal departments to facilitate the sharing of information. A second recommendation is to establish an annual strategic planning

meeting for Tribal Administration Directors to improve communication, build internal networks and leverage resources together.

- b) **Hire to fill open positions:** Tribal Administration has several unfilled positions. In order to attract and retain talent, hiring practices should consider allowing more contract work, offering flexible work hours and expanding workforce housing. Other solutions include hosting career fairs, immediate training for jobs once hired and increasing enrollment in workforce programs (see Goal 2, c).
- c) **Increase Financial Literacy:** Increased financial training is needed, particularly, among younger tribal members. Suggestions are to provide financial literacy education for young people such as increasing access to the Money Matters Program. Other financial literacy programs offered by CDFIs, banks and nonprofit organizations are available - often, without cost to the Tribe or participant.
- d) **Implement Mentoring/Education:** Community members recommend several initiatives for the Tribe, school administration, and tribal members to work together to improve learning for young people: (i) expand existing mentoring and apprentice programs, (ii) increase educational attainment, and (iii) reassess the school schedule.

Goal 5: Increase community investment

Strategies:

- a) **Develop Tribal Housing Plan:** The Tribe currently needs 25 houses for residents. An assessment of current and future housing needs should be completed. Several concerns were expressed during the CEDS meetings and interviews. These include establishing a lending code and judicial court to facilitate mortgage lending. There is a need to distinguish between elder housing needs and workforce-related housing needed for young families and workers. Increased housing will help to keep people within the tribal community which ultimately stimulates growth and economic development.
- b) **Increase childcare affordability and availability:** Increased affordable childcare is needed for working parents and families. Parenting classes could be offered to help young parents learn to balance home, work and family time with children.
- c) **Create programs for Substance Use Programs:** Increased focus is needed on the health and wellness of tribal members. Community members express interest in forming a substance use committee to create and improve services. Suggestions are to: (i) promote telehealth services, (ii) create a specialized program for substance use and addiction, and (iii) develop incentives for increased program involvement.
- d) **Implement a pharmacy:** In a survey of senior needs, 35% indicated they need access to a pharmacy. Community members in CEDS meetings expressed interest in a pharmacy to serve the Tribe and create jobs. A pharmacy will improve patient care and provide a "one stop shop" for tribal members.
- e) **Promote Cultural Events:** Cultural events help to foster learning about Mi'kmaq traditions, living and history. An outreach plan is needed to promote cultural events.

Further suggestions include: (i) Incorporate cultural sensitivity training in local schools, (ii) host language learning events, and (iii) expand the Tribe's language program. Cultural events should try to attract and retain young people in the community. Finally, cultural activity should tie to economic development.

- f) **Increase collaboration with Elders:** The Tribe needs to host community events that promote learning from the Elders. This is to increase engagement with tribal seniors who reported in the Elder Survey that 45% were not involved with cultural activities.

Goal 6: Exercise sovereignty and jurisdictional authority

Strategies:

- a) **Establish a Tribal Court solution:** A Mi'kmaq Tribal Court is an important part of gaining sovereignty. There is community interest in creating programs centered on restorative justice. A social work focused arm of the Child Welfare Department should be established. Negotiations with the State of Maine will need to continue in order for the Tribe to reach a jurisdictional agreement.
- b) **Enhance Tribal Public Safety:** A police department needs to be created for the Tribe to support and enforce jurisdictional authority.
- c) **Implement lending code:** A lending code will increase the ability to manage the land within tribal authority rather than depend on federal action through the BIA.
- d) **Establish transportation plans for community and business:** A transportation feasibility study and needs assessment needs to be conducted. Community members participating in CEDS meetings supported continued funding for the tribal transit community van. Interest was expressed in expanding tribal transportation by the Tribe becoming a transit contractor with Maine DOT.

Evaluation Framework

The Evaluation Framework is to be used to measure progress, monitor results and ensure goals and actions are successfully accomplished. Several actions are in progress already while many will start over the next several quarters. The framework identifies all actions, progress and expected timeframes for the work to be done and completed. The evaluation framework requires other supporting work to be done to ensure success:

1. *Planning*: Who participates and who owns the action?
2. *Implementation progress and issues*: What needs to be addressed to ensure progress, where will the plan be tracked?
3. *Assessing the results*: Did the action achieve its expected objectives?
4. *Impacts*: What kind of difference has been achieved for the Tribe and the community?

As part of the CEDS planning process, who will drive the actions is as important as who participates. Determining the leaders and forum for progress review is important to ensuring ongoing management and completion of the assigned goals. When issues arise, the leaders should assist action owners with support to resolve any issues. For assessing objective achievement and impacts, appropriate measures should be in place (e.g., if the number of jobs created is a metric, then a vehicle to track results is established and correlated to unemployment number impacts). Surveys can be used to obtain community on impacts and outcomes.

Evaluation Framework	Goal	Actions	In progress	Projected Start Date (calendar year)	Timeframe	Completed	
	Build Economic Infrastructure						
		Hire a dedicated resource for Economic Development		3Q23	6/1/23-12/31/23		
		Reinvigorate Eltueg		3Q23	6/1/23-3/31/24		
		Evolve existing and develop new businesses for revenue stream	X		In process-6/30/28		
	Ensure Economic Resiliency						
		Ensure Connectivity	X		In process-6/30/26		
		Research Unrestricted Funding sources			6/1/23-6/30/28		
		Create Workforce Development Programs		1Q24	1/1/24-6/30/28		
		Establish solar energy plan		3Q23	6/30/2028		
	Meet Basic Needs	X		In process-6/30/28			
	i.Establish a food sovereignty plan		3Q23	6/30/2028			
	ii.Conduct a housing needs assessment		4Q23	3/31/2024			
	iii.Implement a new public septic system		4Q23	12/31/2025			
	Improve supply chain Processes	X		In process-6/30/28			
Invest in strategic industries							
	Build out Tourism plan, include agritourism	X		In process-6/30/26			
	Expand Aquaculture capacity	X		in process-6/30/26			
	Develop Forestry products		1Q24	12/31/2024			
	Implement on-line gaming	X		in process - 6/30/28			
	Establish water testing lab services		1Q24	12/31/2024			
Collaborate to expand capacity							
	Improve communications between programs		3Q23	6/1/23-6/30/28			
	Hire to fill open positions		3Q23	6/1/23-3/31/24			
	Increase Financial Literacy		3Q23	6/1/23-6/30/28			
	Implement Mentoring/Education		1Q24	1/1/24-6/30/28			
Increase community investment to meet basic needs and preserve culture							
	Develop Housing Plan		3Q24	6/1/24-6/30/28			
	Implement Child Care		3Q23	6/1/23-6/30/26			
	Create programs for Substance Use disorder		3Q23	6/1/23-6/30/28			
	Implement a pharmacy		3Q24	6/1/24-6/30/28			
	Promote Cultural Events	X		In process-6/30/28			
	Increase Elder Engagement		1Q24	1/1/24-6/30/28			
Exercise sovereignty and jurisdictional authority							
	Establish a Tribal Court solution		3Q24	6/1/24-6/30/28			
	Enhance Public Safety program		3Q24	6/1/24-6/30/28			
	Implement Lending Code		3Q23	6/1/23-3/31/24			
	Establish transportation plans for community and business		3Q24	6/1/24-6/30/28			

Tribal Resources

¹⁴Resources available specifically to Mi'kmaq Nation as a federally recognized tribe include:

- [United South and Eastern Tribes \(USET\)](#)—a non-profit, intertribal organization that collectively represents its member Tribal Nations at the regional and national level with committees (among others) in culture, economic development, health, housing, tribal justice and natural resources.
- [American Indian Science and Engineering Society \(AISES\)](#)— a national, nonprofit organization focused on substantially increasing the representation of American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, First Nations and other Indigenous peoples of North America in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies and careers.
- [National Congress of American Indians \(NCAI\)](#)—advocates on behalf of tribal governments, calling for fulfillment of U.S. commitments to tribes and promoting a better understanding of American Indian governments and rights.
- [Native American Contractors Association \(NACA\)](#)—a trade association that advocates on behalf of tribes on issues relevant to federal contracting, preserving a strong presence in the marketplace as both prime and subcontractors providing goods and services to the federal government.
- [Regional Tribal Operations Committee \(RTOC\) for Region 9](#)—a working committee of the Environmental Protection Agency co-chaired with a tribal representative.
- United Tribes Power, LLC (UTP)—a newly created Tribal Energy Resource Development Organization, which ABM is a member and shareholder.
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) [Rural Business-Cooperative Service](#)—offers programs to support business development and job training opportunities.
- [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)(USDA)—provides conservation programs and technical services to tribal governments with the [Intertribal Agricultural Council](#)(IAC) and the [Indian Nations Conservation Alliance](#)(INCA).
- [Maine Aquaculture Association](#)—provides technical, educational, political and marketing support to Maine aquaculturists.
- [Maine International Trade Center](#)—helps Maine businesses enter and expand global markets for their products and services, offering consulting, research, trade show participation, connections around the world, grants, marketing assistance.
- [Four Directions Development Corporation](#)—provides, either directly, or in partnership with other Maine agencies, specially designed programs to ensure access and use of capital resources effectively and efficiently for Maine tribes and tribal members.
- [Northern Maine Development Commission](#)(NMDC)—provides federal and state services, regional community planning and economic development. Planning and development activities have also taken place between the ABM and local municipalities throughout the county, as well as with the Aroostook County government. NMDC provides management and support for [Aroostook County Tourism](#)(ACT), Aroostook Municipal Association(association of city and town managers) and Aroostook Partnership.

¹⁴ ABM 5 Year Economic Development Strategy - 2018

- [Aroostook Partnership](#)—non-profit organization promoting the region as a destination for business relocation and expansion. Aroostook Partnership will research and assemble data on communities for business planning, conduct a custom ROI Analysis and Incentive Valuation to include incentives, utility discounts, labor cost differentials, etc., provide contact with business leaders, and assist in cross-border trade with Canada.
- [The University of Maine Cooperative Extension](#)—provide practical, locally-based solutions for farmers, small business owners and consumers with educational efforts focused on the Maine Food System and Positive Youth Development through 4-H programs using STEM disciplines.

Mi'kmaq Nation has a close, collaborative relationship with the area colleges. The [University of Maine in Presque Isle](#) (UMPI) and [Northern Maine Community College](#) (NMCC) compliment Indian education efforts through the BIA and provide job training opportunities. Additionally, NMCC extends use of its facilities to the preschool program for the Tribe.

With ownership of land holdings at the former Loring Air Force Base, the Tribe has an established relationship with the [Loring Commerce Centre and Loring Development Authority](#) (LDA) which has evolved into a busy commercial, industrial and aviation park. Loring Development works with potential businesses to identify the precise buildings or other real estate assets that are uniquely suited to facilitate future business plans and needs. The LDA brings together interaction with other state and regional economic development entities to assure maximum advantage of available programs and incentives. They will also assist in gaining any regulatory approvals needed to conduct business.

Appendix

Exhibit A: Senior Elders Survey Summary

The Elders of the Mi'kmaq Nation are highly valued as members of their families and their communities. They are held in high esteem and their health and safety is a primary responsibility for tribal members. The following indicates primary services used based on a recent Elder Survey:

Support Service	% of tribal members using support services	% of tribal members who would use services if unable to meet their own needs
Case management	9.8%	23.5%
Home Health Services	11.8%	35.3%
Transportation	9.8%	43.1%
Health Prevention and Disease Prevention	7.8%	13.7%
Physical Therapy	13.7%	35.3%
Caregiver Program	7.8%	27.5%
Emergency Response Systems	5.9%	39.2%
Government Assisted Housing	7.8%	29.4%
Pharmacy	35.5%	35.3%
Financial Planning or Counseling	5.9%	13.7%

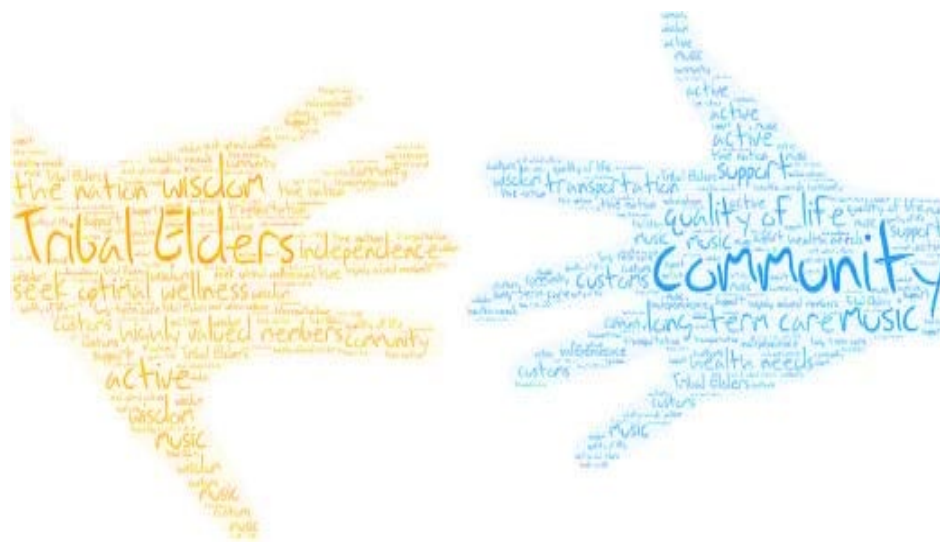


Exhibit B: SWOT Summary

Strengths

What are the strengths of the tribal programs as a whole? What are the Tribe's economic strengths?

Responses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of dedicated staff/resources for economic development ● Financial infrastructure is still developing; needs more time to solidify ● Spending ● Sovereignty ● Self sufficiency ● Jurisdiction ● Transportation ● Education ● Poverty ● Job training ● Lack of childcare ● Lack of additional office space ● Ability to store files ● Lack of unrestricted funding ● Lack of overall vision ● Lack of dedicated source of funds for certain projects ● Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities – project champions needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shortage of business opportunities ● Taxation – Limits government contracting ● Communication – between programs and with the community ● Small land base for natural resources ● Eltueg board unable to take off ● No successful for-profit businesses yet ● Growth areas need to be identified ● Small tribal population to support expansions ● Lack of infrastructure to utilize available grants and maximize current resources ● Unfilled staff positions ● Continuity of administrative staff ● Access to basic needs ● Pandemic related challenges ● Substance use/addiction recovery services

Weaknesses

What are some economic challenges the Tribe faces?

Responses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community service ● Programs address various phases of life (youth to elders) ● Program longevity ● Group cohesiveness ● Cultural backbone ● Spirituality ● Land/land area ● Housing ● Programs ● Dedicated staff ● Planning ability ● Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration between tribal programs ● COVID funding ● Activities/events ● Multifaceted areas of expertise – economic and programmatic ● Spruce Haven ● Full-time/new positions available ● Grants fulfill needs ● Setting and accomplishing goals ● Able to go after grants

Opportunities

What are some economic opportunities that would help the Tribe reach its goals?

Responses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Filling open positions ● Trout feasibility study ● Wood pellet feasibility study ● Hotel feasibility study ● Campground feasibility study ● Utilization of people (their skills, expertise, etc.) and resources ● Jurisdiction ● Tourism ● Campground at Spruce Haven ● Daycare ● Transit program ● HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) Zone ● Construction of spruce facility ● Space/building expansion ● Expansion of farm ● Expansion of tree farm ● Swimming pool and slide ● More unrestricted money ● Getting Eltueg up and running 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training for Eltueg board members ● Legislation in Maine ● Tribal court development – Obtain funding from Dept. of Justice ● Development of section 17 ● Saw mill creation ● Opportunity for tribal police force ● Construction of spruce haven – campground, swimming pool, etc. ● LDA ● Free trade zone ● New market tax credits ● Drones ● Solar farm development ● Drinking water lab ● New legislation would give opportunities for online sports betting – No need for physical infrastructure; opportunity for unrestricted funds; potential for collaboration with other tribes

Threats

What are potential barriers to achieving the Tribe's economic development goals?

Responses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State restrictions/limitations ● External policies outside of Tribe's control ● External opinions based on preconceived notions ● Tourism impacts – Maintenance of infrastructure ● Eltueg may not come to fruition/not operational ● Price of gas ● Supply chain ● Loss of funding ● Living wage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supply chain challenges ● Cost of supplies ● Climate change – A strength and threat; severe weather impacts (infrastructure, maintenance) ● Competitive salaries ● Distance from markets ● Housing youth focus ● Substance use ● Loss of grant programs ● Loss of language and culture

Exhibit C: Community Tribal Programs

Program	Program Strengths	Factors that Limit Services	Beneficial Tools/Resources	Barriers to Achieving Program Goals
Elders Program	Working with elders feeding rides, making appointments; Learning culture and language.	Lacking infrastructure; Lack of overall vision; Infrastructure – finance; Spending money we don't have	Working with other companies	Funds, restrictions
Behavioral Health Program and permanent staff	Primary care services; accessible; increased personnel to improve services; focusing on overall detection/disease prevention initiatives	Transportation; Job training (hiring/filling vacancy); Hiring youth and college students; Hiring additional behavioral health personnel; New and limited space	Pharmacy – improves patient care/"one stop shop"; Identify jobs to aid in on-the-job training; Long-term plan – assisted living, aftercare facility, drop-in centers – focus on prioritizing these and their locations	Limited staff/burnout (deployment staff for Tribal growth – balancing workload; Resources (time); Small Tribal population to support expansions
Tribal Planner	Longevity; Multi-faceted expertise; Strong work ethic	Funding; Staff; Policies	---	---
Natural Resources	Multiple opportunities for economic development; Lab; Tree farm; Forestry – land management	Understaffed programs; Lacking basic administration	Unrestricted funds; Human resources; Targeted training for Eltueg	Sovereignty
Housing	Serves the community; Construction oversight; Able to negotiate regulation/law; Planning and reporting	---	---	---
Little Feathers Head Start	Fully staffed; Longevity of staff; Thorough direction – longevity of director; Knowledgeable; Grant funded; Comprehensive Support for families	Lack infrastructure; Self-sufficiency; Lack of staff-unfilled positions; Jurisdiction; Lack of unrestricted funding	---	Increased costs
Education	Provides educational/personal growth opportunities	Lack of awareness; Funding restrictions	Unrestricted funds	Granters

Boys and Girls Club/Youth	Engaging youth in purposeful programs; Known support system; Funding leveraged to support programming	Funding limited; Capacity; Staffing	Increased promotional efforts; Transportation	Decrease in funding; Reduction in youth participation
Emergency Management	Collaboration with external partners; Advanced equipment/resources; Community involvement	Staffing multiple jobs/tasks	Additional equipment	Funding loss; Lack of training
Cultural and Historic Preservation	Working with great granters	Need for grants; Lack of qualified staff; Only one staff member; COVID-19 making in-person activities hard	Hiring staff; More communication resources	Lack of qualified and interested staff; Need for grants
Transportation Realty and Assets	Fully invested in our community	Time; Priority line list; Overuse	---	Climate policy education; Cost of living increase; State of Maine; Loss of funding/COVID-19
Administration	Committed employees; Skills	Grant funding; Open positions	---	Lack of staff
(Left blank)	Strong community investment; Strong advocates – dedicated staff; Passionate about our program; Grow programs to support needs of community	Not enough time in a day; Lack of trained staff; No dedicated funds for economic development – a group was created but not moved on; Jurisdiction	Trained staff; Building for Tribal court	State of Maine; Outside politics; COVID-19; Eltueg

Exhibit D: Legislative Efforts

- **LD 1958:** This bill provides the Mi'kmaq Nation with sales tax revenue for sales occurring on Mi'kmaq Nation territory in the same manner currently provided to the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.

To fully implement the recently passed legislation, LD 1958, An Act to Provide Mi'kmaq Nation with Sales Tax revenue Occurring on its territory.

- **LD 2004:** This bill provides that the State, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians agree and intend pursuant to United States Public Law 96-420 and the State and the Mi'kmaq Nation agree and intend pursuant to United States Public Law 102-171 that any law of this State, including, without limitation, laws of this State relating to land use or environmental matters, that is contrary to or that would be affected or preempted by the operation of or the application of any statute or regulation of the United States that accords a special status or right to or relates to a special status or right of any Indian, Indian nation, tribe or band of Indians, Indian lands, Indian reservations, Indian country, Indian territory or land held in trust for Indians does not apply, except for laws of this State applicable to certain crimes and juvenile crimes. Except for statutes and regulations of the United States that conflict with or affect or preempt the jurisdiction of this State over certain enumerated crimes and juvenile crimes and except for federal laws identified in Section 6(c) of United States Public Law 96-420, the State, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation further agree and intend pursuant to United States Public Law 96-420 and to United States Public Law 102-171, as applicable, that any statute or regulation of the United States enacted before, on or after October 10, 1980 that accords a special status or right to or relates to a special status or right of any Indian, Indian nation, tribe or band of Indians, Indian lands, Indian reservations, Indian country, Indian territory or land held in trust for Indians is applicable within this State, without regard to any effect on the jurisdiction of or the application of the laws of this State.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Mi'kmaq Nation may conduct gaming activities only in accordance with the laws of this State and may not conduct gaming activities under the authority of the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act or under any regulations promulgated under the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act by the chair of the National Indian Gaming 8 Commission or its successor organization.

The State, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians agree and intend pursuant to United States Public Law 96-420, and the State and the Mi'kmaq Nation agree and intend pursuant to United States Public Law 102- 171, that each tribe, nation or band has the power to enact laws and ordinances relating to the operation, application and implementation of any statute or regulation of the United States enacted before, on or after October 10, 1980 that accords a special status or right to or relates to a special status or right of any Indian, Indian nation, tribe or band of Indians, Indian lands, Indian reservations, Indian country, Indian territory or land held in trust for Indians.

The Stafford Act, Indian Healthcare Improvement Act and the Clean Water Act are exceptions cited in the Governor's Veto of LD 2004, which would have, in-short, expanded native nations' sovereignty. The Stafford Act Public Assistance program provides disaster assistance to States, tribes, local governments, and certain private nonprofit organization. We seek assurances that these exemptions will be honored

In the future, to work with the Congressional Delegation and the Governor to develop and support Federal legislation to ensure that applicable, appropriate laws are accessible to the Wabanaki Nation.



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