



Summary of the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly Dialogue Forum

held May 22, 2026, at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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based on summaries compiled by
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Summary of the Dialogue Forum

Presentations, Panel Discussions, Breakout Sessions and Workshops

OPENING PRAYER

John Lagimodiere, Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting. Elder Leone Neville offered an Opening Prayer.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Glen McCallum, Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN-S) President, welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation for the reset, Provincial Métis Council (PMC), staff, Elders, and families. He emphasized communications with governments, institutions, and citizens to ensure the Métis Nation's voice shapes its own narrative and highlighted the importance of the University of Saskatchewan partnership in supporting Métis-led research.

The importance of the reset was noted, along with ongoing efforts to increase transparency, including livestreaming. He stressed implementing a distinction-based system under Métis Nation authority to address gaps in areas such as education and health, emphasizing the need for Métis-led research and data to present to federal ministers to demonstrate these disparities.

Strong relationships with First Nations in economic development were underscored, along with ongoing work with tribal councils related to future land claims and the importance of collaboration among Nations in Saskatchewan. He concluded by welcoming Regional Representatives Wendy Gervais and Sherry McLennan back to the PMC and the Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA).

SELF-GOVERNMENT PRESENTATION AND PANEL DISCUSSION

John Lagimodiere, Moderator, introduced the following panellists:

- Michelle LeClair, Vice President
- Brennan Merasty, Minister of Self-Determination and Self-Government
- Gerald Morin, Governance Specialist
- Mac Hayden, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP
- Grace Wu, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

Brennan Merasty, Minister of Self-Determination and Self-Government

Brennan Merasty highlighted the progress made toward self-government and emphasized that, beyond concluding a treaty, the Nation must be prepared to exercise its authority by strengthening governance structures, advancing legislation and land claims, and building capacity to serve Métis citizens.

Mac Hayden, Legal Counsel, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

Mac Hayden reviewed a presentation on the MN-S's path toward self-government through a series of agreements with Canada, and offered additional comments on:

- The relevant agreements, including the Memorandum of Understanding, Framework Agreement, Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (MGRSA) 1.0 and 2.0, and ongoing treaty negotiations, culminating in a proposed treaty intended to recognize Métis self-determination in Saskatchewan, affirm MN-S as the government of the Métis Nation within Saskatchewan, and provide constitutional recognition and protection for the Nation's inherent right of self-government

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- The proposed treaty's core areas of jurisdiction, including citizenship, governance structures, culture and language, and child and family services, as well as MN-S's authority to make and enforce laws within those areas and the potential for future expansion of jurisdiction
 - Recognition of MN-S as the representative body for Métis in Saskatchewan on claims matters, and confirmation that entering into the treaty would not waive or release any past claims
 - The next steps in the process, including finalizing the treaty text, moving through an agreement-in-principle phase, conducting consultations with governments and citizens, obtaining the required approvals, signing the treaty, and implementing self-government through legislation.

Grace Wu, Legal Counsel, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

Grace Wu reported on fiscal matters related to MN-S self-government negotiations, and offered additional comments on:

- Fiscal matters as a key part of providing long-term certainty for MN-S, particularly as funding has remained an ongoing challenge despite MN-S being self-governing for some time
- The 2019 MGRSA 1.0, which recognized the need for a new fiscal relationship between Canada and MN-S to support self-government and adequate funding
- The 2020 Interim Fiscal Funding Arrangement (IFFA), which was established as a bridge toward a long-term fiscal arrangement and treaty, originally intended to conclude in 2023 and now extended until treaty completion
- Current work to develop a Métis-specific annex to federal fiscal policy, alongside consultations with regions, Locals, and citizens, and in coordination with other Métis governments
- The goal of establishing a long-term fiscal funding model that reflects the needs of each Métis government and is formalized through a Fiscal Framework Agreement (FFA) defining the enduring fiscal relationship with Canada.

Discussion

Participants were invited to share questions and comments (Q/C), and the presenters provided *responses (R)*, as follows:

Q/C: What is the difference between the terms "permanent" and "long-term" referenced during the presentation?

The terms are being used interchangeably, with no distinction intended between them.

Q/C: Is the composition of the negotiating team public information?

The negotiating team includes legal counsel, Minister Merasty, Gerald Morin, and designated MN-S staff.

Q/C: What process will be used to determine the long-term fiscal needs of communities, and what tool or framework is being used to develop a permanent budget? Virtual engagement once or twice a year is not sufficient. Meaningful engagement on community priorities is needed to ensure the process is balanced.

The process remains in the early stages. No template or funding model has been established, and engagement with Presidents and communities will be required to identify needs and priorities.

The PMC has initiated a needs assessment with Locals and Presidents. Additional engagement opportunities will be provided, and further consultation will occur once the treaty is initialled.

Q/C: How will MN-S define citizenship under the treaty? How will individual claims, including road allowance and scrip claims, be addressed? Can the IFFA and draft treaty be made available for review?

The MN-S has the authority to determine its own citizenship criteria. The treaty recognizes the MN-S as a collective comprised of descendants of the historic Métis Nation who are accepted by the contemporary Métis collective. The treaty recognizes the collective of citizens, while the definition of citizenship remains the responsibility of MN-S and may evolve over time.

Scrip claims are unique because they originated as individual claims. The Supreme Court has recognized the ability of MN-S to represent individuals in these matters. The treaty language regarding claims is intentionally broad.

As negotiations are ongoing, restrictions may exist regarding the circulation of the IFFA and treaty documents. Options for sharing information will continue to be explored.

Q/C: What work has been completed through the needs assessment process, and is per-capita funding being considered as part of FFA negotiations?

The funding model is still under development, and no approach has been finalized. Whether funding will be based on a per-capita model remains under discussion.

Q/C: How will the treaty protect the individual rights of Métis citizens and future generations? Does the treaty reference the *Constitution of the MN-S*? What approvals are required before it can be signed?

The treaty is intended to protect the rights of current and future generations. It does not contain release, surrender, or extinguishment provisions and instead affirms rights held by the Nation.

The treaty references the Constitution and recognizes MN-S authority over its governance structures and processes. Approval would be required through the MNLA and ratification by the General Assembly before the treaty could be signed.

Q/C: Does the treaty recognize that Métis rights are inherent and have always existed, including for future generations?

The treaty recognizes that Métis rights are inherent and not granted by Canada. It affirms that the MN-S has always been self-governing and that these rights exist independent of government recognition.

Q/C: What is the anticipated timeline for the treaty process, and does the timeline align with the needs of the MN-S?

The anticipated event at Batoche would involve initialling the treaty. No timeline has been established between initialling and signing, as it will depend on the outcomes of consultations conducted by both MN-S and Canada.

Transition to Discussion Sessions

At 10:35 a.m., the Forum transitioned from the plenary discussion to two separate group discussions focused on needs assessment.

DISCUSSION SESSIONS: NEEDS ASSESSMENT DIALOGUE

Two concurrent breakout discussion sessions were held to gather participant perspectives on Local governance, organizational capacity, operational needs, and opportunities to strengthen Métis government. Key discussion points from both sessions have been summarized below (detailed notes of each breakout session are attached to this report):

- Locals require greater funding, administrative capacity, and operational support to meet increasing governance responsibilities, deliver programs and services, manage reporting requirements, maintain facilities and infrastructure, and respond to growing community needs
- Locals are best positioned to identify community priorities and should play a greater role in governance and decision-making, supported by clearer roles and responsibilities, stronger communication among Locals, Regions, and MN-S, reduced duplication, and greater investment in Local capacity rather than centralized administrative structures
- Strengthening Local governance requires sustained investment in leadership development, succession planning, active and accountable Locals, meaningful grassroots engagement, and opportunities for citizen participation, including an Annual General Assembly
- Greater transparency, accountability, and action, including sharing the results of previous engagement sessions and needs assessments, are needed to reduce repetitive consultation, improve access to information, and demonstrate how community feedback informs planning, policy, and decision-making
- Self-determination should be supported through community-led planning, recognizing that Locals are best positioned to understand their own needs, priorities, and cultural realities, and should be supported in leading conversations affecting their communities.

Meal Break

The Dialogue Forum recessed at 12:00 p.m. for a meal break. Attendees reconvened in the main plenary hall, at approximately 1:30 p.m. for the next presentations.

PANEL ON COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED CORE GOVERNANCE NEEDS

John Lagimodiere, Moderator, introduced the following panellists:

- Beverly Fullerton, Regional Representative
- Marlene Hansen, Provincial Secretary
- Loretta King, Regional Director
- Brennan Merasty, Minister of Self-Determination and Self-Government
- Gerald Morin, Governance Specialist

Brennan Merasty, Minister of Self-Determination and Self-Government

Brennan Merasty acknowledged the frustrations expressed earlier and emphasized the importance of open, respectful dialogue. He noted that leadership and staff were present to listen to participant feedback and use it to help inform future governance improvements.

Marlene Hansen, Provincial Secretary

Marlene Hansen acknowledged the continued evolution of MN-S and the need for stronger organizational alignment and regional representation. She encouraged participants to build on previous engagement by focusing on current priorities and practical solutions to strengthen Local governance and improve equitable access to services across communities.

Loretta King, Regional Director

Loretta King encouraged participants to actively engage in the discussion and share their perspectives on the governance needs of their communities.

Beverly Fullerton, Regional Representative

Beverly Fullerton emphasized that the discussion marked the beginning of an ongoing conversation rather than its conclusion. She encouraged Locals to identify community priorities, develop wish lists and budgets, remain community-focused, strengthen relationships, continue healing, and engage with their PMC Ministers as the work moves forward.

Gerald Morin, Governance Specialist

Gerald Morin thanked participants for their contributions and acknowledged the strong call for change and renewal. He emphasized that future governance work must remain grounded in Métis history while looking ahead to treaty discussions, the North West Saskatchewan Métis Land Claim, and the continued advancement of Métis rights. He expressed optimism about the opportunities ahead.

Discussion

It was noted that the PMC's resolution-based Needs Assessment would identify Local governance, capacity, and service delivery needs, building on previous engagement and funding priorities, to support future organizational planning.

Participants were then invited to consider the question, "What core governance needs exist in your community?" Their feedback has been grouped into the following themes:

- Facilities and Infrastructure
 - Dedicated office and community spaces remain a priority to support meetings, programming, youth engagement, educational resources, file storage, archives, and public access
 - Buildings require sustainable funding for maintenance, insurance, utilities, internet access, software, records management, archives, and regulatory compliance
- Governance, Representation and Communications
 - Greater transparency, communication, and Local involvement are needed in Duty to Consult activities, governance decisions, and legal matters affecting Métis communities
 - Locals are the foundation of Métis government and should play a greater role in delivering programs and services, supported by greater investment, stronger engagement with leadership, and resource allocation that builds Local capacity
 - Clarification is needed regarding the roles of Regional Representatives, Locals, and staff, along with improved collaboration and continuity between governance bodies
 - Greater Local autonomy and recognition of Locals as independent governing bodies should be explored
 - Previous consultation outcomes should be preserved and used to guide future planning and decision-making
 - Communities have consistently identified similar priorities over time and called for continued leadership engagement, improved planning, and action to address longstanding concerns
- Local Capacity and Resourcing
 - Additional administrative capacity, including part-time staff, is needed to manage grants, reporting requirements, and increasing workloads

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- Local leadership responsibilities have grown significantly, with governance, financial oversight, consultation, and community engagement often equating to a part-time job. Greater compensation and staffing support were identified as priorities.
 - Additional support is needed for grant writing, staffing, transportation, travel, and program delivery to strengthen Local capacity and improve community participation.
 - Provincial organizations, including Les Filles de Madelaine (LFDM), have identified the need for greater operational support, travel funding, and recognition of their contributions to Métis governance and community development
 - Regional Priorities
 - Northern communities have identified the need for medical transportation services, wildfire response capacity, and greater support to engage with resource development proponents so local communities benefit from development opportunities
 - Training and Resource Sharing
 - New Local Presidents would benefit from orientation, governance training, mentorship, financial templates, and centralized resources
 - Greater collaboration among Locals, including sharing grant applications, templates, equipment, expertise, and best practices, should be encouraged
 - Stronger connections between citizenship registration and Locals are needed through formal information-sharing processes that respect privacy requirements
 - MN-S should negotiate group insurance rates and support greater resource sharing among Locals.

2026-27 MNLA BUDGET WORKSHOP

Jeremy Denomie, Treasurer and Minister of Finance

Jeremy Denomie introduced the 2026–27 budget emphasizing that it was grounded in transparency, accountability, and stewardship, and reflected the MN-S' duty to the people it serves. He noted that the budget should align with the values and priorities of the MN-S while ensuring responsible management of resources for the benefit of citizens and communities. It was further noted that:

- Meaningful engagement with regions, Locals, citizens, Elders, youth, and families is essential to informing budget priorities before decisions are finalized
- The budget process should promote unity, healing, collaboration, financial responsibility, and long-term sustainability
- Financial literacy, oversight, and reporting support informed decision-making and protect the Nation's long-term financial health
- Investments should be evaluated based on their ability to strengthen Locals and improve outcomes in areas such as housing, health, education, youth, and community capacity
- Clear and accessible financial reporting helps citizens understand how funds are received, allocated, and used
- The MNLA plays a key role in establishing financial priorities and ensuring decisions are made in the best interests of the Nation.

Echo Qin, Director of Finance

Echo Qin reviewed the 2026–2027 Draft Budget, providing an overview of the draft budget, major funding allocations, funding reductions, and planned investments. She noted that the draft budget was developed through a transparent and collaborative process and that a detailed printed copy would be made available to citizens at the MNLA.

During the presentation, additional comments were offered on:

- The draft budget reflects a \$31 million reduction from previous years, primarily due to reduced carry-forwards, the timing of capital projects, and delays related to permits, land availability, and federal funding programs
- The 2026–2027 Consolidated Budget allocates funding for citizens, regions and Locals, education, homelessness programs, and capital expenditures, resulting in a balanced budget
- Funding designated for citizens includes post-secondary education (ISET), Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC), housing and homelessness, health, and mental health and addictions
- Funding designated for regions and Locals includes ELCC, housing and homelessness, elected leadership, language initiatives, Métis rights and justice, as well as an additional \$150,000 allocated to each region following budget preparation
- Funding also supports education, policy and self-determination initiatives, and the Reaching Home program delivered through subcontracted Locals and community partners
- An overview was provided of the programs supported under each funding stream and the anticipated outcomes for 2026–2027, including Economic Development and Tourism.

Discussion

Participants were invited to share questions and comments (Q/C), and the presenters provided responses (R), as follows:

Q/C: The current allocation of \$12,000 per Local, consisting of \$5,000 for salaries and \$7,000 for operations, is insufficient. Consideration should be given to increasing the allocation to \$40,000 per Local. As TLU funding is unrestricted, could additional funding be made available? Article 2 of the Constitution states that the MNLA determines the budget, and Presidents may wish to advocate for additional funding during budget deliberations.

R: *This decision was made by the PMC. Any concerns should be raised with the applicable Regional Representative, who may bring the matter back to the PMC. The MNLA determines the budget.*

Q/C: What is the \$122,000 in start-up funding referenced in the presentation?

R: *The \$122,000 is designated for ELCC start-up funding to help Métis citizens establish home daycares and complete retrofits required to meet provincial standards.*

Q/C: Where in the budget are the resources for Elders? It was noted that only a limited number of Elders can sit at the MNLA, resulting in some long-serving Elders being moved to the back of the room. Could Elders who have participated since the beginning be grandfathered in to remain at the front table, and could a dedicated budget for Elders be provided?

R: *Elders will be accommodated and seated appropriately.*

Q/C: What funding and supports are available through the Adaptability and Disability Program?

R: *The program is intended to support individuals with restricted mobility by improving access to their homes and supporting independent living environments.*

Q/C: There is limited funding identified for seniors, their housing, or healthcare. Additional support is needed to help seniors maintain and repair their homes, particularly in light of increasing food costs. It was also noted that Elders are not specifically acknowledged through the information booths.

R: *An Elders housing project is currently in place, and additional projects are anticipated. While the*

budget presentation may not identify healthcare funding specifically for Elders, the funding is intended to be inclusive of all citizens. Funding allocations are often dependent on federal government funding and are reflected accordingly in the budget. Existing supports include the Medical Transportation Assistance Program and other initiatives. More focused funding allocations for Elders could be considered.

Q/C: Additional support is needed to help Elders fund home repairs and upgrades that many cannot afford. Preventative healthcare supports for Elders were also identified as insufficient, and greater support for seniors was encouraged.

Q/C: What is included in the \$5 million travel allocation?

R: *The allocation represents the total estimated travel costs for MN-S operations, including staff travel, MNLA meetings, conferences, and workshops.*

Q/C: Could travel expenditures be reduced and redirected to support Saskatchewan communities and local businesses rather than hosting meetings outside the province?

Q/C: The budget identifies funding for regions and locals, and funds designated directly to citizens. Consider directing those resources through regions and locals for delivery to citizens.

Q/C: Why does the budget identify \$2.5 million for the Riel Scouts Program when approximately \$1.8 million is expected to be carried forward into the next fiscal year?

R: *The first phase of the Riel Scouts Program is being implemented as a pilot involving 16 Locals, although the final number of troops has not yet been determined. Unless significant adaptations are required, the program is expected to expand across the province following the pilot phase.*

Q/C: The budget does not clearly identify restricted, discretionary, carried-forward, invested, interest-earned, or centralized funds, nor what resources reach women, youth, and citizen-facing government structures. Greater transparency regarding discretionary funding would assist in evaluating funding priorities for the MN-S.

R: *Additional details are provided in the budget booklet and ministry key outcomes sections, including information on carry-forwards. Funding carried forward from federal or provincial governments remains subject to specific funding agreements. The negative amount shown under administration costs represents unrestricted discretionary funding. Interest income is not currently included in the budget, although this could be considered in future budget planning.*

Q/C: More detailed budget information is needed. Citizens should be able to distinguish between restricted and discretionary funding, particularly as the MN-S continues its reset. Could future budget and audit materials clearly identify these amounts, especially those related to governance? As the foundation of government is the Locals, a breakdown of PMC and Local funding allocations would help inform future budget decisions.

Q/C: A more decentralized approach to governance would be more effective. With approximately \$12 million allocated to core governance, is any funding available to strengthen the MNLA, legislative branches, or judicial council? Implementing the *Constitution* more effectively will require both a change in mindset and a financial commitment to support the work of these bodies.

R: Resolutions on these matters are being brought forward at the MNLA. A treasury board composed of MNLA members could provide organizational oversight, and legal services could report to both the PMC and MNLA. A Resolution Committee has been established to provide policy and legal support. Greater autonomy for the MNLA remains the long-term goal.

Q/C: As the Treasurer approaches one year in the role, and as the first elected Treasurer to also serve as Minister of Finance, could Locals deliver programs such as the Backpack Program? Is there a way to view all contribution agreements that fund the MN-S? It would also be helpful to understand the basic operating cost of the MN-S, including the PMC, MNLA, staffing, and essential operations.

R: Opportunities to expand Local delivery of programs will continue to be explored where capacity exists, with additional engagement to help determine which programs and services are best delivered through Locals. Contribution agreements remain subject to the terms established by funding partners, although opportunities to provide additional information, where appropriate, will continue to be explored. Greater transparency regarding the operating costs of the MN-S was also acknowledged as an important consideration.

Q/C: Under the Citizens section, does the reference to ambulance services relate to the program that citizens apply to access?

R: The Ambulance Program reimburses ambulance-related costs for citizens. The Medical Transportation Assistance Contribution Program covers mileage, food vouchers, and accommodations associated with attending medical appointments.

Q/C: A treaty is expected to be initialled at Batoche. With the current accord expiring in March 2027, what will happen during the transition period, given that implementing a treaty will take time?

R: Discussions with Canada are ongoing. Several accords conclude at different times, and the expectation is that existing accords will be bridged into the treaty. Planning has taken place to ensure continuity during the transition.

Q/C: It is encouraging to hear that Locals will be receiving \$1,000 for LFDM. Could Regional Representatives also receive \$1,000 for LFDM, and where is LFDM reflected within the budget?

R: Regional Representatives are receiving \$12,000 this year. Funding options to further support LFDM will continue to be explored.

CONCLUSION

The May 22, 2026, Dialogue Forum concluded at 4:35 p.m. Elder Dennis Falcon offered a Closing Prayer.

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LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

The following items are attached for information:

- Detailed notes of Discussion Session A on: [Needs Assessment](#)
- Detailed notes of Discussion Session B on: [Needs Assessment](#)

Detailed Notes on “Needs Assessment” (Session A)

Facilitation lead: Jessica Big Eagle, Acting Director, Planning and Priorities, Policy and Self-Determination
Notes compiled by: Carrie Peacock, Recording Secretary

Jessica Big Eagle reviewed a presentation titled "Needs Assessment Dialogue Forum Session", which provided an overview of the Needs Assessment process, objectives, and timelines. During the presentation, additional comments were offered on:

- Gathering perspectives from Local Presidents and delegates to inform a Métis-distinct governance model, including clarifying the respective governance and operational roles of the MNLA, PMC, Regions, and Locals
- Holding Local interviews after the MNLA, with engagement continuing through summer 2026 with Locals, Elders, Youth, Women, and PMC members
- Using information gathered through the Needs Assessment process to develop summary reports and recommendations that will inform future legislative and constitutional reform
- Building on previous engagement findings, including work that informed the Locals Unit and Distinctions-Based Focus Plan, while sharing previous consultation information and engagement summaries to support ongoing dialogue and future planning
- Using a strengths-based asset-mapping approach to identify governance and operational strengths across all levels of Métis government and opportunities to strengthen Local governance.

Discussion

During the discussion, participants offered comments on the following themes:

- Accessibility and Delivery of Community Services
 - o Limited capacity to communicate with Dene-speaking members due to a lack of Dene-speaking staff
 - o Service delivery that better reflects the linguistic and cultural diversity of northern communities.
- Accountability, Action, and Organizational Direction
 - o Repeated identification of the same issues with limited visible progress despite ongoing requests for additional information from Locals
 - o Repeated references to organizational "resets", when tangible actions and demonstrated outcomes are needed
 - o Concerns regarding organizational overreach and the future role of Locals
 - o Consultation without visible implementation, which reduces confidence in future engagement
- Administrative Requirements and Support Needs
 - o Templates, reporting tools, and standardized administrative supports to assist Locals in meeting funding, reporting, and program delivery requirements
 - o Substantial effort required to complete funding deliverables and reporting requirements, including uncertainty regarding available support and responsibility for providing that support
 - o Anticipated receipt-tracking requirements for grant expenditures and the resulting administrative burden on volunteer Treasurers
 - o Additional support required for reporting, administrative, financial management, and report-writing functions
- Community Knowledge, Ownership, and Self-Determination
 - o Economic reconciliation and employment opportunities within communities
 - o Recognizing Locals as best positioned to understand community needs, priorities, and realities

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- Community ownership and control of intellectual property, knowledge, information, and community-generated data
 - Local leadership in conversations affecting community priorities rather than relying on intermediary administrative structures
 - Engagement Approaches and Meaningful Participation
 - Engagement approaches that reflect the evolving needs of individual Locals
 - Recognition that some Locals may still be identifying their governance and operational needs
 - Listening-based engagement that prioritizes Local perspectives and community priorities
 - Direct participation by Locals in discussions with stakeholders rather than having information communicated on their behalf
 - Relationship-building to establish trust and support effective dialogue with Locals
 - Inclusion of grassroots community members in engagement activities and decision-making processes
 - Funding, Capacity, and Volunteer Burden
 - Limited funding and organizational capacity to achieve community priorities and objectives
 - Significant workloads carried by Presidents and volunteer leaders despite insufficient funding
 - Extensive volunteer time required to deliver programs and services
 - Ongoing capacity challenges across financial resources, infrastructure, administration, and communications
 - Assistance being offered without corresponding funding, including examples where funding commitments took several years to materialize
 - Funding appearing to be available for other priorities, while longstanding requests from Locals remained unresolved
 - Significant operational demands despite limited financial resources, infrastructure, administrative capacity, and communications support
 - Direct investment in Local capacity to support program and service delivery rather than expanding centralized administrative structures
 - Information Sharing, Transparency, and Access to Existing Knowledge
 - Previous engagement findings, reports, and feedback collected from Locals not being shared back with participating communities despite the significant time invested
 - Providing access to previous consultation information before scheduling new interviews
 - Repetitive engagement activities without sharing previously collected data, reports, and findings, which limited opportunities to build on earlier efforts
 - Access to sufficient background information to establish a common starting point for discussions and reduce duplication
 - Organizational Efficiency and Resource Allocation
 - Organizational efficiency and effective use of limited Local resources
 - More efficient approaches needed to information gathering and engagement activities
 - Directing resources to new administrative positions rather than strengthening Local capacity
 - Resource allocation that prioritizes Local capacity over additional administrative structures
 - Information passing through multiple administrative layers before action is taken despite Locals already understanding their own community needs
 - Roles, Responsibilities, and Governance
 - Clarity needed on the respective roles of the Locals Unit, Regional Representatives, and Locals
 - Concerns that some functions undertaken by the Locals Unit may duplicate existing responsibilities of Regional Representatives
 - Governance and engagement processes that strengthen, rather than replace, the role of Locals
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- Recognition of Locals as the foundation of Mv@tis government and the need to support them accordingly.

Detailed Notes on “Needs Assessment” (Session B)

Facilitation lead: Raquel Ross, Policy and Self-Determination, Acting Manager for the Locals Unit

Notes compiled by: Diane Parsons, Recording Secretary

Raquel Ross reviewed a presentation titled "Needs Assessment Dialogue Forum Session", which provided an overview of the Needs Assessment process, objectives, and timelines. During the presentation, additional comments were offered on:

- The commitment to work collaboratively with Locals and Regions across the province
- The intention to hear Local President perspectives on how the government operates today and how a Métis-specific governance model can be developed in the self-government era
- The session as one component of a broader project to better understand the needs of Locals. Local Presidents will be contacted individually for one-on-one interviews, with additional engagement planned with PMC members and Elders
- The development of a "What We Heard" report following engagement activities, summarizing key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for next steps.

Beverly Fullerton, Regional Representative, provided additional comments on:

- A PMC resolution calling for increased capacity for Locals and the importance of identifying the supports needed for Locals to successfully deliver programs, services, and community growth
- The need for Local Presidents to be candid about operational requirements, including staffing, administration, and other capacity needs
- The importance of ensuring Locals remain at the centre of the process and that staff are accountable for supporting Local-led outcomes.

Discussion

During discussion, comments were offered on:

- Accountability, Action, and Organizational Direction
 - Identifying active and compliant Locals
 - Accountability for Local operations and governance participation
 - Governance structures that accurately reflect active and participating communities
- Administrative Requirements and Support Needs
 - Operational responsibilities associated with owning and maintaining Local buildings, including maintenance, repairs, leases, taxes, utilities, and infrastructure grants
 - Community Enhancement Grant applications that may be overly complex for some Locals
 - Restrictions on rental income from grant-funded buildings and opportunities to retain rental revenue to offset operating costs
 - Support from the Locals Unit and Regional Representatives for grant applications, reporting requirements, and administrative functions
- Community Knowledge, Ownership, and Self-Determination
 - Recognition of Locals as being best positioned to identify and communicate their own operational needs, priorities, and community realities
- Engagement Approaches and Meaningful Participation
 - Local-led identification of operational needs reflecting the unique circumstances of each community and region
 - Consultation with the MNLA prior to implementing the Needs Assessment initiative

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- Greater grassroots engagement and opportunities for citizens who are not connected to a Local to participate and be heard
 - Scheduling an Annual General Assembly for meaningful citizen engagement
 - Funding, Capacity, and Volunteer Burden
 - Local operational needs, including office space, buildings, staffing, administrative support, grant-writing capacity, and infrastructure
 - The distinction between governance funding (FFA) and project-based grant funding
 - Local capacity funding, which has not kept pace with increasing operational costs
 - Distribution of Locals Unit staff across regions rather than centralizing positions within the MN-S Secretariat to strengthen Local support
 - Information Sharing, Transparency, and Access to Existing Knowledge
 - Communication needed between the Locals Unit, Locals, and Regional Representatives, and the importance of involving Regional Representatives in communications with Locals
 - Building on rather than repeating previous engagement work completed in 2023
 - Access to information regarding Local attendance and participation at MNLA meetings through the MN-S website
 - Organizational Efficiency and Resource Allocation
 - Resource allocation that prioritizes strengthening Local capacity rather than expanding centralized administrative functions
 - Distribution of organizational resources in ways that better support regional and Local operations
 - Roles, Responsibilities, and Governance
 - The role and purpose of the Locals Unit within the governance structure
 - Recognizing the distinctions between the responsibilities of the Locals Unit and Regional Representatives
 - Communication between Locals, Regions, and MN-S, and the role of Locals within the governance structure beyond service delivery
 - Leadership development, succession planning, and preparation of future Local Presidents
 - Open and inclusive Local governance that encourages broad community participation.

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