

# OUR LAND, THEIR FUTURE

MARCH 2018

## Report



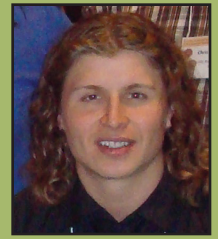
### **LAND USE PLANNING**

**Ontionhóntsa, Ohén:ton la'tetewaká:nerak  
Our Land, Their Future**



# Message from the Land Use Planning Coordinator

Cole McComber  
Land Use Planning Coordinator



Before I applied to be the Land Use Planning Coordinator, I heard of “Land Use Planning” a few times in my travels. My major in university was environmental studies and I remember the term came up in lectures and appeared in the glossaries of a few text books here and there. I took an urban planning class one winter and I remember the professor saying it many times. The Professional Land Management Certification Program offered by the National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association includes the subject in their course curriculum.

After 20 months on the job, anything I may have picked up during my education feels like a drop in the bucket compared to how deep and far reaching the field of land use planning can go. There are several working definitions of land use planning but the important thing to remember is there are no two identical land use plans. Each indigenous community or outside municipality is different and what matters is that the land use plan reflects the people’s goals, needs, values and priorities for the immediate and the long term. Land use planning is the process to determine the most appropriate use and allocation of land areas for different types of development or use while simultaneously identifying which of those land areas to protect, maintain or develop. A land use plan would also describe a community’s policies on how lands and

***The stories people have shared with me, whether they were about their hopes or their struggles, have all been really eye opening and reaffirming at the same time.***

resources should be used to ensure a sustainable future. Those are just a few of the key points, but really they’re just the tip of the iceberg. There are vast amounts of literature on land use planning and land use planning in first nation territories has become a deep field of study in its own right.

My work on the project has been educational and challenging, but also rewarding. I’ve met and had conversations with people that I otherwise never would have. Usually those conversations are based around

land and the different views and situations each person has had in their lives. I’d be sitting at the post office trying to get people to take surveys, and next thing I know it’s 15 minutes later and I’m still talking to the same person

about land. The stories people have shared with me, whether they were about their hopes or their struggles, have all been really eye opening and reaffirming at the same time. Eye opening because I thought I heard it all and I had all the answers and then someone comes along with their story or their question and catches me



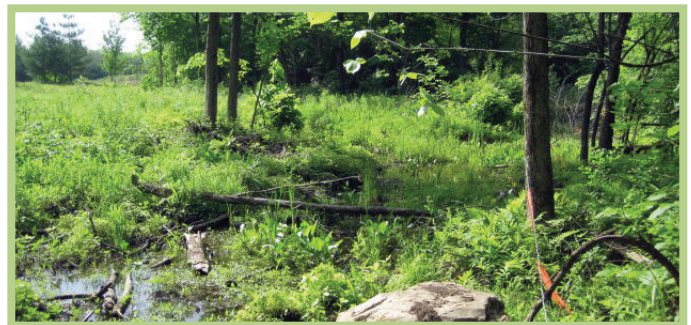




***The reaffirming part is that most Kahnawa'kehró:non are incredibly passionate when it comes to land.***

totally off-guard. Sometimes it's hard to believe that's how their particular land history unfolded; or I can't rightfully explain why the system is the way it is and how certain things are allowed to happen.

The reaffirming part is that most Kahnawa'kehró:non are incredibly passionate when it comes to land. Whether they have 100 acres or 0 acres, most everyone I've come across has something to say about the land here; it's very rare a person will have nothing to say. This community has a wide range of views, hopes and concerns when it comes to land. Each of us and our unique histories and experiences with land give the community at large a broad and diverse voice. These Land Use Plan Frameworks are designed exclusively on community feedback and it pleases me to report there has been no shortage of that. When you add the Lands Conference and the Tioweró:ton Conference to the equation, we will have more than enough input and raw data to produce Land Use Plan Frameworks that accurately represent the direction of the people and every voice we have heard. I'm very optimistic about the future of Kahnawà:ke lands.





# What are the next steps for Land Use Planning?

Melanie Gilbert  
Director of Lands



The Land Use Planning Framework process began in January of 2016 and is concluding on March 29, 2018. During that time, the information provided to our Lands Team has been invaluable and crucial when considering the future of Land Use Planning in Kahnawà:ke.

The community has guided the process from the start when we asked what the most important issues were in relation to land use. Those answers served as the starting point for our education process and further discussion on what the answers meant to individual Kahnawà'kehrónon. Overwhelming concerns for planning areas for residential development have stood out the most for me because in my opinion, securing that future is a fundamental characteristic of a strong community. When we can provide safe, accessible lands for families to inhabit and cultivate for their own uses, it positively contributes to society as a whole by providing a foundation upon which we raise our families and live out our lives. Unlike communities outside of Kahnawà:ke, most of us are born and raised here; we have deep ties to the land.

Planning for residential development is not new. This practice has always existed, as our original settlement was alongside the river, then centered in the vicinity of the church. As our population grew, it extended beyond what is known as “the village”. Our process was to learn more about the issues in current residential areas and how Lands can assist in planning for new areas to open up to the community. After the framework is complete, it’s time to have more discussion on what is important to our community in considering new areas for development. Will the size of allotments change? How important are considerations such as parks and recreation? Can we have

better relationships within our neighborhoods? Will business be welcome in residential areas? What types of business? Who will have the final say?

The Land Use Planning process is not one that will be completed quickly. There may be a need to create Laws and Policies to ensure the community wishes are written and enforceable, or considerations for consulting your neighbors on what is acceptable in your neighborhood may become a standard.

Moving into the future (whatever may happen), this process is an inclusive one, one that considers the needs and wants of our community, and one that needs your participation to be successful.

***Lands can assist in planning for new areas to open up to the community.***  
***Will the size of allotments change?***  
***Will business be welcome in residential areas?***





# Kahnawà:ke Land Use Plan Framework Steering Committee

Cole McComber, Land Use Planning Coordinator



**Current Members:** Tracey Snow , Eva Johnson, Ross Montour, and Holly McComber

**Former Member:** Melvin Diabo

As the Land Use Planning Coordinator, one of my responsibilities was to put together a steering committee made up of community members to oversee progress in the Land Use Planning Project. This was no easy task; putting together the terms of reference for the steering committee took some time and so did the application and recruitment periods.

## The following is an excerpt from the Steering Committee Terms of Reference:

It is the mandate of the Kahnawà:ke Land Use Plan Framework Steering Committee to monitor on a global level the development of land use plan frameworks for Kahnawà:ke and Tioweró:ton. These frameworks will cover all Kahnawà:ke and Tioweró:ton lands in accordance with the policies, guidelines and laws of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke applicable to both territories. The steering committee will achieve this in conjunction with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Lands Unit while respecting the direction and will of the people. For land related matters pertaining to the Tioweró:ton Territory, Kanehsatà:ke must be included in the consultation process.



We had some applicants, but not enough to fill the five (5) seats; so I had to approach individuals directly. On average, the committee meets once a month and I update them on all project happenings since our previous meeting. I deliver consultation data (survey results, etc.) and I let them know what's coming up in the schedule, such as events they may be able to help out with or tell other community members about; things like new surveys, focus groups, radio appearances, etc.

Fundamentally, the steering committee is there to let me know if the project is taking the right steps and to give me insight, guidance and consider things I may not have without them. They give up time every month to come and meet and they have been an invaluable resource to the Land Use Planning Project. If the land use plan frameworks are deemed successful, the committee will have played a major part in that; and their unique backgrounds and foresight will have contributed greatly towards the future of Kahnawà:ke lands. They have my thanks and hopefully one day, the rest of Kahnawà:ke will know of the contributions they made in the name of community service, as well.



# Interview: Cole McComber, Land Use Planning Coordinator

and Eva Johnson, Kahnawà:ke Land Use Plan Framework Steering Committee member and founding member of the Kahnawà:ke Environment Protection Office



**CM: How would Kahnawà:ke benefit from a land use plan?**

EJ: I believe we would give more thought to how the land is used. More planning because presently even though we have some areas that are protected and considered park land and green space; at the whim of a chief or a department, that land gets used for something else than other what it was prescribed. So better planning I think would be better use of the land.

**CM: In your opinion, what would be beneficial to include in the Tioweró:ton framework as well?**

EJ: Well, all the concerns of the people because you've done surveys. Concerns of the people, concerns of the environment, the Lands, Public Works... all the different entities that it takes to oversee Tioweró:ton. It's multi-use so we have to make sure that everybody can use it in an efficient way.

**CM: What would you consider to be the most pressing land related issue in Kahnawà:ke today?**

EJ: Protection of sensitive areas and unlocking landlocked parcels.

**CM: How can Kahnawà:ke best manage its remaining common lands?**

EJ: To have a diversified committee with talent from within the community and the MCK. To face all the issues that surround land development, not just economic development, not just economics. Because the economics seem to be taking over everything; although I love money - there's got to be some planning.

**CM: What does our land mean to you?**

EJ: Our land is our home and native land - our home on native land. It's part of our heritage; our ancestors fought and died for this land and I think it's up to us to

protect it and ensure that it's always here for the future generations. Not just for us, but for the faces yet to come.

**CM: What does Tioweró:ton mean to you?**

EJ: Well the same in Tioweró:ton; people fought for that land, they stayed there harsh winters to make sure nobody else was coming there and taking the land; squatting on it and taking the land away from us. Tioweró:ton originally was supposed to help us as a hunting area; hunting and trapping. It was originally to the natives of Kahnawà:ke and the Indians of Two Mountains, which was Kanehsatà:ke. To make sure that it's preserved in its natural state as much as possible. Otherwise just stay in Kahnawà:ke and finish developing Kahnawà:ke, don't bring Kahnawà:ke up there with all that's happening right now. There's not enough planning going into the development - some people have big giant ranches, giant garages. It just seems like if people have money they're allowed basically to use as much land as they want to; which isn't fair to everyone else if we're all supposed to be equal.

**CM: What is your future vision for Kahnawà:ke lands?**

EJ: Lands that are used to their maximum capacity including protection of lands; in order for us to keep the air clean. Comprehensive planning, when we had a land management committee when I was at environment; we had a good land management committee that brought in all diversified thoughts and experience to the table. I think that's what is needed is to have a good planning team that takes everybody's concerns and interests at heart. Not just a certain group or if you have money all of a sudden you can take a big chunk of green space and put something there because you have the money to do it and no planning went into it. How did they get the land? So there's stuff happening right now that I don't think is fair to the everyday person that would like to do something; but if they don't have the money to do it,

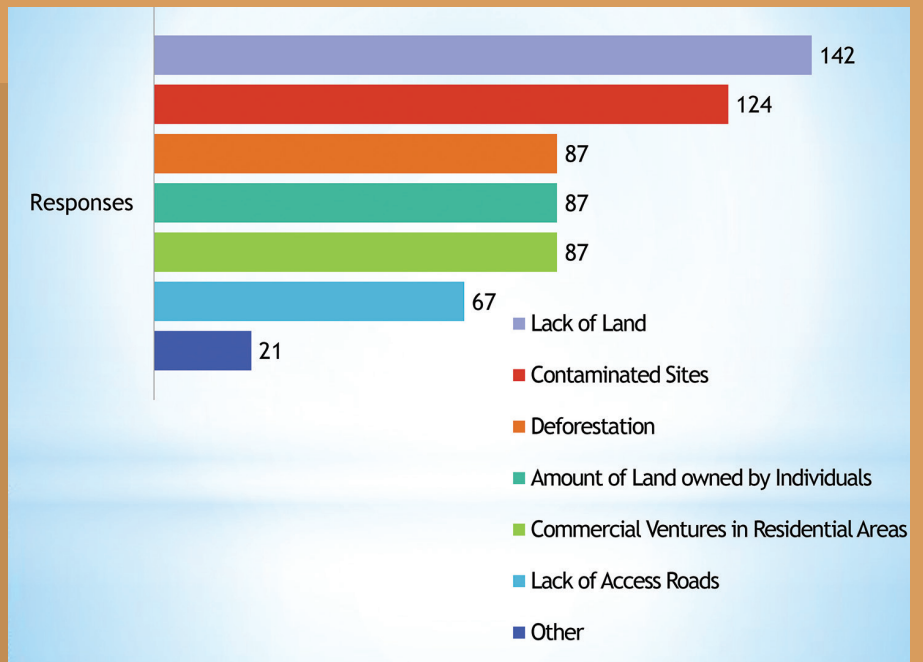


they don't get the support. People are happy that there's a basketball court and there's a little splash pad. But what about the recreation bay area? and the Johnson's beach restoration? Where is the money for that? A couple of hundred grand could've been thrown at that project; to get people swimming at the only place we have access to right now without having to go over the

bridge. Recreation bay remediation I thought would be much further ahead than where it is right now. Maybe because it's not a man that's pushing it; or it's not somebody with money that's pushing it. Lands always used to say, "Environment has to have a champion." and I used to say, "Well, aren't we all supposed to be champions? We all live here, right?"

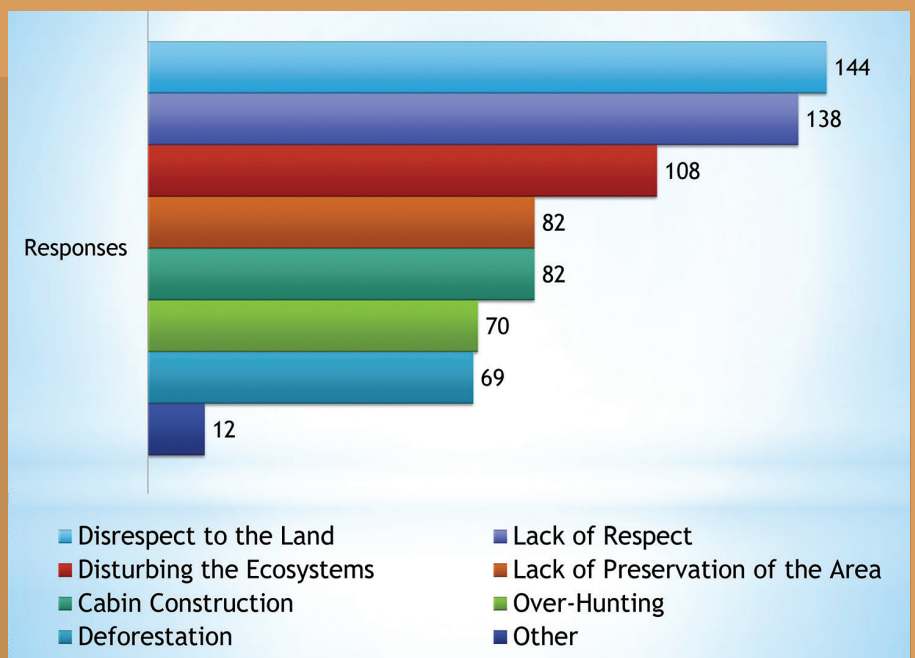
## 2016 Land Use Survey Results

**What are the most important land-related issues to you in Kahnawà:ke?**



\*based on 200 respondents

**What are the most important land-related issues to you in Tioweró:ton?**

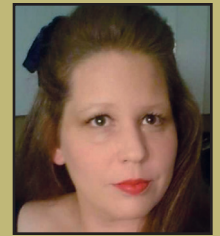


\*based on 190 respondents



# Tioweró:ton Land Use Planning

Tara McComber  
Tioweró:ton Coordinator



Over the past several months the Land Use Planning Project has been hard at work consulting Community Members on specific themes that a future land use plan can address. Amongst those themes, Tioweró:ton was one of them. However, the territory is too big and too important to only be a theme in a Community Education and Consultation Campaign. Tioweró:ton will have its own unique Land Use Plan Framework different from the Kahnawà:ke LUPF. Through community consultation, such as surveys, the Land Use Planning Project has gathered much information on what the Community would like to see for the future of Tioweró:ton. It has also identified many issues that will need to be addressed moving into the future.

In the summer of 2016, an environmental study took place in Tioweró:ton titled, “Environmental Considerations and Recommendations for a Land Use Plan for Tioweró:ton”. This study gave us an

overview of the impacts that the Territory has suffered throughout the years. It provided recommendations on how to best manage the Territory and how to improve and enhance wildlife in Tioweró:ton. It also identified areas that would best be suited for cabin construction. The results of this study were provided at a Tioweró:ton Community Meeting and were included in the Tioweró:ton Newsletters. The Tioweró:ton Newsletters and other survey results are available for viewing on [www.kahnawake.com](http://www.kahnawake.com)

As Kanehsatà:ke is an undivided interest holder of the Tioweró:ton Territory, any consultations that took place in Kahnawà:ke regarding Tioweró:ton were also transmitted to the Mohawk Council of Kanehsatà:ke in order to obtain feedback from their Community Members. In order to develop a plan that will be respected and supported by all, it is important that all interest holders participate in the development of the Tioweró:ton Land Use Plan Framework.







# Tioweró:ton, Planning for the Future

Debbie Morris

General Manager of Lands Operations, Cabin Owner



The first time I visited Tioweró:ton as a child, it was much different from what it is today. There were a handful of cabins by the falls and even less along the creek. The road had many more potholes than today and travel was quite slow. As time went on, more cabins were built. In the early 80's my husband and I built ours and spent a lot of time there; first as a young couple, then later with a young family. I have so many happy memories from this time. If we happened to be there through the week, it wasn't uncommon to be the only people there other than the Caretaker and his family. The Territory was in quite a pristine and peaceful state.

Moving forward to today, a lot has changed. The cabin count is now approximately 315 and community members enjoying the territory can easily be in the hundreds on a busy weekend. Whereas in the past, community members visited Tioweró:ton mostly during late Spring to early Fall. Today, it's busy year-round. There are road networks all through the southern portion of the territory, and yes, the potholes are still there - although not as numerous. The stressors on the environment are concerning. Throughout the years, attempts have been made to minimize the impact on the territory and have been successful in that they have been contained to the southern area. Many of the challenges we have here in Kahnawà:ke seem to have followed us up there.

***The stressors on the environment are concerning. We're at a fork in the road as to what Tioweró:ton will be like in the future.***

One has to consider whether the Tioweró:ton I spoke of earlier can still exist or do we want something different? We're at a fork in the road as to what Tioweró:ton will be like in the future. As we move forward, we must clearly think of the future uses and not only on how they impact us today. My preference would be for Tioweró:ton to have remained as it was but also understand that times change as do land uses. Not all change is negative.

The Land Use Planning consultation process has provided us with valuable information on how the community would like to see Tioweró:ton. The Lands Unit was also able to have environmental studies conducted this past year, which will help to guide in making informed decisions. The intention is to develop a Land Use Plan Framework specific to Tioweró:ton that is inclusive of community members to ensure that all of our needs are met, including those yet to come. There will be many more opportunities for you to participate. The question for you is how do you see Tioweró:ton in the future? Is it more or less pristine? Is it developing in a manner similar to a vacation cottage community or something totally different? This is your opportunity to have input into the future of Tioweró:ton. Watch for upcoming events specific to this. I urge you to participate as together we can ensure a bright future for Tioweró:ton, one of our last remaining natural lands.



## 2017 Lands Conference



The 2017 Lands Conference was held on Tuesday, December 5th, 2017 at the Mohawk Legion Branch 219. The estimated attendance for the event was 80 community members. The topics of discussion for the day were: Contaminated Dumpsites, Lands Access, Zoning and Land Preservation. However, no land related issues were off the table - community members were able to ask any questions they wanted regarding Kahnawà:ke lands. All questions were recorded and some may have even been answered on-site by MCK Lands Unit staff to the best of their abilities.

In retrospect, the all-day event was a success. The presence of the KSS graduating class of 2018 had to be the highlight of the day. They accounted for nearly half of the overall attendance and their participation and enthusiasm was enjoyed and appreciated by all. The community mapping exercise that took place in the afternoon was an unexpected triumph and was meant to illustrate both the benefits of teamwork as well as the difficulties that may be encountered when trying to achieve consensus in community development. Some of the groups kept their maps and the rest are in storage at the MCK Lands Unit.

The feedback collected from Kahnawà:kehró:non at the 2017 Lands Conference will go towards the development of a Kahnawà:ke Land Use Plan Framework. A big niá:wen goes out to all the community members who attended the event, all MCK staff who helped in conference preparations, Simple Pleasures, Eileen's Bakery as well as the Royal Canadian Legion Mohawk Branch 219.

## 2018 Tioweró:ton Conference

The 2018 Tioweró:ton Conference was held on Saturday, February 3rd, 2018 at the Golden Age Club from 9 am to 2 pm. The event was well attended with over 50 community members participating. Although the majority of attendees were Kahnawà:kehró:non, there were some community members from Kanèsatà:ke who were able to attend the event. The day began with a continental breakfast followed by a presentation on the AECOM survey results and current issues and impacts to the Territory. Community Members were then able to participate in group discussions at stations that focused on common themes that were identified through previous surveys. A prominent theme that emerged from each group discussion was the lack of respect for one another and for the land. In the afternoon, there was a group mapping exercise where Community Members were able to map out what their ideal Territory would look like. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate how difficult land use planning can be especially

when the Territory is already partially developed. The session ended with a question and answer period. Community Members questioned the next steps and what will happen with all the feedback that was received. It was noted that the feedback will be reviewed and included in the Land Use Planning Framework. Overall, the event was very successful. We would like to thank the Community Members who took time out of their weekend to participate in this event.





# The need to protect residential areas

Jean Guimond  
Land Allotment Administrator

Land use planning is something that isn't really talked about, to a certain extent, until you are affected by not having something in place to use as guidance. In particular for me is the issue of "zoning". Many businesses have opened up in residential areas that are disturbing the peace and quiet of living. Residential areas need to be protected. How do we go about doing that?

***"I can do what I want with my land because it's mine and you are not going to tell me otherwise"***

The mentality is "I can do what I want with my land because it's mine and you are not going to tell me otherwise". This is true, but at what cost/consequence? Building a home is one of the biggest accomplishments anyone can obtain. It's supposed to be a home where you live in peace and harmony; until it's disturbed by a business that is against the law for residential areas outside the community, but not inside the community. Respect is being lost and the mighty dollar is taking precedence. What happened to helping/respecting thy neighbor?



Kahnawà:ke is 85% privately owned. That is a large number for possible activities with the mentality "it's my land, I can do what I want". Somehow, there has to be a balance. But the priority should be to protect residential areas.

***"Our Land, Their Future"***

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