EMERGENCY SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

PHASE 1: RESEARCH

RECOMMENDATIONS

MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

Submitted to the MNBC EPC: June 30th, 2021.

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URBAN SYSTEMS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes recommendations determined through a research phase as MNBC considers an emergency support framework that best supports Métis Citizens at the local level.

This project was initiated in late fall of 2020. The main purpose of the work program is to enhance systems of the MNBC governing body in their efforts to support MNBC Chartered Communities and Métis Citizens in emergency preparedness and readiness in the event of future disasters.

Several virtual meetings and workshops were held. In addition, an online survey was issued to all registered Métis Citizens. The survey was required in order to access local feedback, concerns, and experiences in a short timeframe. This survey also included additional questions specifically for individuals in senior positions that represent Métis Citizens from a provincial, regional and/or local level.

The project included an assessment and facilitation process of existing conditions, emergency response capabilities, program status and identification of challenges for Métis Citizens regarding emergency operations. This preliminary assessment is critical and will help build a framework for delivering effective emergency support for the governing Nation that supplements the existing systems - managed by the local, regional, and provincial government.

1.1 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of referring to MNBC's organizational framework for planning of emergency management operations, the titles used in this report refer to 'MNBC Emergency Preparedness Committee' (EPC) and 'MNBC Emergency Preparedness Manager'. From the MNBC Board Committee Terms of Reference, the EPC membership is the Committee of the whole, the Chairperson being selected by the committee, the Senior Director of Environmental Protection acting as the department lead, and the Covid-19 Response Manager acting as the Secretariat. The meetings are to be determined by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Senior Director of Environmental Protection.

The purpose of the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) is to better understand the local needs of each community to enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities, to recommend a regional support network to increase emergency response efficiencies throughout BC, and to recommend a structure, and set of actions, of what an emergency response plan could look like for the Métis Nation. The development of an EP framework will enable MNBC to take a proactive approach (rather than reactive) to potential future emergency situations. Emergency preparedness will not prevent the effects disasters and hazards but can drastically reduce the impacts upon people and communities. Potential emergencies may include, but are not limited to, environmental disasters (floods, fires, droughts, heat waves, etc.), human-made disasters (oil spills, train wrecks, etc.), or health emergencies (pandemics such as COVID-19). For MNBC, the challenges posed by climate change, such as more intense storms, frequent heavy precipitation, heat waves, drought, extreme flooding, and higher sea levels could significantly alter the types and magnitudes of hazards faced by communities and the emergency management professionals' teams serving them.

In addition, the following definitions have been summarized to assist in understanding project recommendations and survey language.

Champion: a local leader that is a positive activist or supporter for MNBC Chartered Communities.

Emergencies: 'acute hazards' that strike without warning and require quick response

such as wildfire, pipeline breach, landslide, flood, oil spill, tsunami, or earthquake.

Emergency Communications: communication and cooperation with supporting agencies for resources, assistance, and guidance in the context of emergency management.

Local government: the assigned government/authority responsible in an area such as regional district, municipality, or First Nation.

Preparedness Planning: activities, programs and systems developed before a major emergency that is used to support and enhance prevention, response, and recovery.

Response and Recovery: activities that address immediate and short-term effects of an incident as well as activities and programs designed to restore affected lands and property to pre-emergency condition.

Supporting agencies: emergency support services such as the RCMP, fire response teams, and ambulance providers.

Rural: location that is characteristic of the countryside rather than the town.

Urban: location that is characteristic of a city or small town.

2.0 <u>PROJECT BACKGROUND</u>

MNBC is recognized by the Provincial Government of British Columbia and the Federal Government of Canada, as the governing nation for Métis in BC. MNBC represents 38 Métis Chartered Communities across BC.

This project was funded through Natural Resources Canada and Métis populations adjacent to the TMEP pipeline infrastructure were the initial focus of this project. However, all registered Métis Citizens were considered across BC.

Many (if not all) Métis Chartered Communities have limited local administration abilities to administer services. With that, each Chartered Community have formal structures of community leadership in place. MNBC recognizes and respects that each Chartered Community functions independently from one another and have successful and independent governance systems in place. As such, MNBC's interest is to enhance what is already in place and to fill in the gaps regarding emergency support services.

An important aspect for MNBC regarding emergency operations is to understand the legal liability and due diligence requirement involved for local governments in advance of and during emergencies. The local authority assigned by the provincial government is required to act as outlined in the provincial legislation: Emergency Program Act, Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation.

MNBC is a "government in waiting" and as such are not the assigned local authority at this time. Educating that there are roles and responsibilities in emergency management for the local authority will be an important aspect during project delivery and beyond, along with outlining proposed future roles/responsibilities for MNBC, Chartered Communities and Métis Citizens.

A major priority for MNBC and representative registered members is to collectively support Métis Citizens to ensure they receive the support they need to ensure a safe and efficient response when emergencies strike.

2.1 PROJECT GOALS

The goal of this project was to provide the building blocks for future development of an organizational framework to deliver emergency support services.

Phase 1 of the project focuses on the following overarching aspects in emergency planning and response that include the following tasks:

- Research existing roles, responsibilities, and interests.
- Research and compile data and resources.
- Research local needs and activities.
- Assess regional activities and experiences.
- Involve and directly engage Métis Citizens of BC to provide direct input from local experiences.
- Educate on emergency management operations, authority, and processes.

The key deliverables of the project were:

- To provide advice and guidance in the four pillars of emergency management: preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery;
- To facilitate engagement with MNBC and Chartered Communities;
- To provide guidance that is in alignment with the provincial and federal legislation, the related emergency management Acts, and international standards;
- To collect and summarize community data, where available;
- To begin compiling key contacts for MNBC and Métis communities to build a supporting network;
- To prepare templates and/or summarize materials, as identified during the project;
- To prepare a final recommendations report for further consideration; and,
- To define next steps for MNBC to develop its own emergency support framework

Efforts will continue outside the scope of this project into Phase 2 considering the unique aspects of emergency program delivery across the governing nations and in view of the various complexities that are experienced across BC, MNBC regions and Chartered Communities.
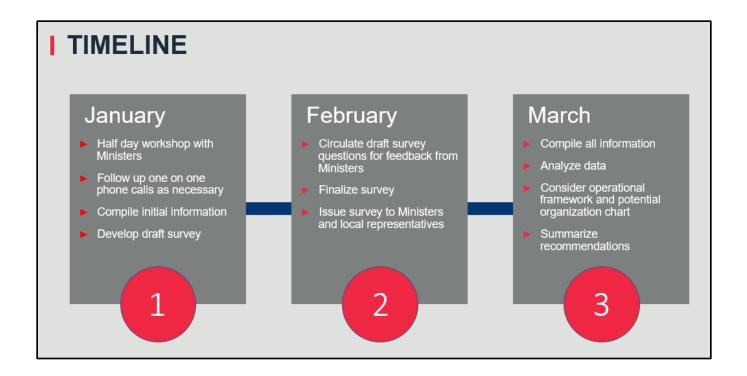
3.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

The project was initiated in December 2020 with efforts to complete Phase 1 (Research) by March 31, 2021. Figure 1 outlines Phase 1 tasks.

In this short time frame, the project team considered the most efficient methods to gather as much information as possible. All efforts and activities in Phase 1 were proposed with the intention for MNBC to continue work into Phase 2 - to prepare a formalized plan or framework for emergency support services that best compliments MNBC's existing regional model and Métis Chartered Communities. Deliverables produced in Phase 1 are not all complete and some are proposed for discussion purposes and further consideration.

Figure 1 - Project Timeline

| TIMELINE

January
- ▶ Half day workshop with Ministers
- ▶ Follow up one on one phone calls as necessary
- ▶ Compile initial information
- ▶ Develop draft survey

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February
- ▶ Circulate draft survey questions for feedback from Ministers
- ▶ Finalize survey
- ▶ Issue survey to Ministers and local representatives

2

March
- ▶ Compile all information
- ▶ Analyze data
- ▶ Consider operational framework and potential organization chart
- ▶ Summarize recommendations

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3.1 WORKSHOPS

Several planning meetings were completed with MNBC project leads and two workshops were organized with the MNBC Emergency Preparedness Committee (comprised of MNBC project staff and Regional Directors). The facilitated workshops, led by Urban Systems, occurred on December 10, 2020 and January 13, 2021 that included attendance from Métis Nation BC (MNBC) staff (Leona Shaw – Senior Director of Environmental Protection and Métis Rights and Geneviève Gratton - COVID-19 Response Manager) and the MNBC Regional Directors.

MNBC's COVID-19 Response Manager joined the project upon hire in January 2021 with intentions that this position will provide future oversight of emergency support services to administer and support the Emergency Preparedness Committee.

The purpose of the workshops were to:

- Understand the current and future position of what "governing nation" means to each MNBC Regional Director;
- Begin education on the roles of the "local authority" as defined in the provincial legislation;
- Inform on emergency management best practices and answer questions on this topic as they arise;
- Hear feedback on high priority issues regarding vulnerabilities of Métis Citizens;
- Understand needs and responsibilities required for the various roles assigned in emergency management operations; and,
- Research what is working well and what is not regarding emergency preparedness and response for Métis Citizens.

3.1.1 WHAT WE HEARD IN THE WORKSHOPS

The following themes emerged as we received feedback from the MNBC Regional Directors and MNBC staff.

Theme 1: Rural Métis Citizens are most exposed to potential emergencies.

There are several locations across BC where Métis Citizens reside in extremely remote locations that presents limitations when responding to emergencies. Specific locations of all Métis Citizens living in rural areas are not clearly known by MNBC. Kelly Lake specifically was identified as having extreme poverty conditions and are high on the priority list for an ongoing call to action to support/enhance access to basic essentials and resolve the severe gap in service by the provincial government.

Key Findings

Métis Citizens living in remote locations likely experience one or more of the following challenges:
- Limited resources to essentials (e.g., food, water, heat)
- Limited road networks and access (e.g., one way in/one way out)
- Road conditions that are dirt/gravel surface and/or are unmaintained (FSR) roads
- Limited communication abilities (e.g., limited/no cell service or internet)
- Have no "local authority" assigned by the Province of BC (known-Kelly Lake)

Theme 2: Urban Métis Citizens have greater access to resources than rural residents.

Urban MNBC Chartered Communities have greater access to resources, support, and options during emergency response.

Key Findings

Métis Citizens living in urban areas likely experience greater access to:
- emergency communications
- emergency supplies (e.g., food, water, shelter)
- organized support services
- critical infrastructure (e.g., hospitals and cell towers)

Theme 3: Key to enhancing emergency support services is in relationships.

Building relationships and networking with the various local governments and agencies within each MNBC region and with provincial agencies is critical to success.

Key Findings

Various experiences from Regional Directors were noted as follows:
- Some MNBC regions have strong lines of communication already in place.
- Some regions have had mixed experiences (positive and negative).
- Agencies in one area may not be as supportive in another location in BC.
- High turnover of staff in each agency makes it difficult to maintain relationships.

Theme 4: The Métis Red River Rangers is an inspiring story to share and be proud of for Métis Citizens.

Every year since 2003, Métis candidates from all over BC compete for one of 20 positions on the elite Red River Rangers team. The Red River Rangers story and historic knowledge/stories from elders are deemed valuable to share and document.

Key Findings

What we know - from an article in from First Nations Drum Newspaper (Jan. 3, 2006):
- RRR unit crew initiated in 2003 following firestorm in interior BC
- 20-person team for wildland and interface firefighting
- Team selection is based on leadership, fitness level, safety, experience, and attitude
- BC Metis Assembly of Natural Resources (BCMANR) have been a player in coordination

Source: Firstnationsdrum.com/2006/01/natives-compete-for-metis-fire-fighter-position/

Theme 5: MNBC Governing Nation and Chartered Communities are not considered a local authority per BC's Emergency Management Act.

Métis Citizens rely on other governing authorities to access emergency operations support and assistance that includes municipalities, regional districts, and First Nations. It is important that this information is transparent to Métis Leadership (on all levels) that are part of response operations - in order to protect MNBC regarding legal liabilities.

How local authorities prepare for, and respond to, emergencies is diverse across the province which makes it difficult when sourcing information. For example, the local authority may be a First Nation however it is the Regional District that takes lead on operations; this may be the case when the First Nation resides within that region however may not have capacity to respond. Alternatively, some local authorities work very well together and have taken a regional approach to emergency management operations and have joined efforts and staff as a collective Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). Depending on the emergency this assignment may look different each time.

Key Findings

In emergency operations, local authorities:
- Have a due diligence responsibility to act and be prepared;
- Must follow the Emergency Program Act;
- Must follow Local Authority Emergency Program Management Regulations; and,
- Have certain powers and duties.

Theme 6: MNBC and Chartered Communities do not have a defined structures or frameworks that outline roles and responsibilities in emergency operations.

The MNBC Emergency Preparedness Committee expressed that a structure and framework would be beneficial to enhance emergency support services. In addition, MNBC Chartered Communities have inconsistent governance structures that may (or may not) complicate that structure or framework and would be important to reflect on.

Key Findings

MNBC Chartered Communities:
- Have varied governance structure and some structures are unknown;
- Have limited administration support and mainly operate on volunteers; and,
- Have limited funds, if any, to support Métis Citizens directly.

Theme 7: There is a strong acknowledgement of the responsibility to support Métis Citizens by Métis Citizens.

It was very clear when speaking with the Emergency Preparedness Committee that supporting Métis Citizens is an ethical and moral responsibility; and that although they are a "government in waiting", Métis Citizens continue as a collective group to push for respectful recognition and reconciliation of Métis inherent Aboriginal rights.

This acknowledgment to support Métis Citizens was also described when speaking of the numerous local volunteers that are willing to assist and get involved at a greater level to support their communities, despite the local limitations or lack of resources. The numerous examples expressed regarding efforts by Métis Citizens volunteering their time to support others was humbling.

Key Findings

This acknowledgement of unity to support and protect Métis Citizens during crisis will:
- Provide great inspiration and leadership for future generations;
- Empower Métis Citizens to stay/get involved and volunteer; and,
- Enhance MNBC capacity and provide enhance avenues for local support.

Theme 8: Ongoing flexibility in delivering and operating the overall emergency management plan or framework will be needed.

Due to the vast uniqueness presented across the province in governance and with varied support by agencies; extremely varying degrees of experiences within each MNBC Region was expressed, and this will likely be similar to the experiences within each MNBC Chartered Community - it is clear that there is "no one plan fits all" option.

Key Findings

Flexibility will need to be considered and communicated, to accommodate:
- The governance of each MNBC Chartered Community;
- Different capacity and sizes of communities; and,
- Variance in service delivery and support from agencies and local authorities.

Several other themes surfaced; however, these themes summarized were the top factors that clearly support the survey findings and considerations moving forward for MNBC.

3.1.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITES

Roles and responsibilities were discussed in the workshops for the various Métis individuals involved in emergency support services. Regional Directors and MNBC staff expressed that defined roles and responsibilities would be helpful to build capacity and avoid duplication of activities. These discussions were only preliminary and more effort to summarize and review feedback would be necessary, however basic principles do apply to initiate next steps.

It was clear that MNBC would take leadership of managing oversight of MNBC's Emergency Preparedness Program. This would include administration of the overall program with support services from Cabinet and the Emergency Preparedness Committee, along with ongoing involvement and engagement with local Métis Citizens.

Regional Directors would focus on networking within each MNBC region while staying connected with and involving each MNBC Chartered Community to best understand needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Refer to the following figures for a brief summary of potential roles and responsibilities that were brought forth during the project and require further discussion by MNBC.

Figure 2 - For Consideration – Roles and Responsibilities for MNBC Cabinet

| For Consideration – Emergency Program Roles and Responsibilities ||
Position	Roles and Responsibilities
MNBC Cabinet	• Provide directives and decisions to all activities administered by MNBC regarding emergency support services • Provide direction to the Emergency Preparedness Manager (a potential new role at MNBC to meet future needs) • Provide direction to the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) • Provide direction on MNBC policies and procedures • Provide interpretation of existing policies and procedures • Provide leadership to MNBC staff administering emergency support services • Provide direction on risk management of decisions during emergencies • Provide direction on legal matters and liabilities • Provide direction and support to ensure health and safety measures • Network with regional/provincial government elect-officials to bridge gaps in information • Network with supporting partners • Determine how to provide access 24/7 to an MNBC staff to advise on support services as needed (e.g., define who to call during and after office hours) • Provide leadership in communication to reach local Métis Citizens • Provide leadership and support to coordinate activities to bring forth a specialized interest to Chartered Communities • Leverage provincial and federal support, along with support of each of the local authorities • Leverage support and trust from Métis Citizens

Figure 3 - For Consideration – Roles and Responsibilities of Emergency Preparedness Manager

For Consideration – Emergency Program Roles and Responsibilities	
Position	**Roles and Responsibilities**
Emergency Preparedness Manager <u>With direction from:</u> Cabinet, the Emergency Preparedness Committee, and Senior Director of Environmental Protection	• Provide a single point of contact for support services • Lead operational and administration aspects of program • Coordinate the Emergency Preparedness Committee and implement strategies identified • Prepare and manage annual budgets • Prepare and lead presentations • Coordinate health and safety measures regarding emergencies • Main line of communication to speak to directives and opportunities • Network with regional/provincial government elect-officials to bridge gaps in information • Identify and network with supporting partners • Develop central hub for resources and communications • Maintain plans, list of resources and contact database • Provide access 24/7 to MNBC staff to advise on support services as needed (e.g., define who to call during and after office hours, holidays) • Communicate to Regional Directors to identify resources and appropriate distribution • Provide information on liability insurance/coverage and legal opinion on response actions • Implement, monitor, track and attend training (e.g., through local schools, colleges, Justice Institute of BC, Consultants, virtual learning, general first aid, and link youth with grad credits) • Coordinate annual assessments or mitigation measures • Gather and share stories/historic knowledge • Coordinate youth involvement – ensure transfer of knowledge • Initiate, maintain and support volunteer programs (e.g., track skillsets and interests) • Compile information for communication bulletins (e.g., consider multiple sources for distribution) • Attend EMBC coordination calls for distribution on emergency event status • Seek out and apply for funding opportunities • Coordinate activities to bring forth a specialized interest to Chartered Communities • Prioritizing actions and assist with risk management of decisions during emergencies with Cabinet's leadership/direction on policies and procedures • Report on the effectiveness of emergency support services

Figure 4 - For Consideration – Roles and Responsibilities of the MNBC Emergency Preparedness Committee

For Consideration – Emergency Program Roles and Responsibilities	
Position	**Roles and Responsibilities**
MNBC Emergency Preparedness Committee Comprised of: *Regional Directors *Senior Director of Environmental Protection *Emergency Preparedness Manager *other MNBC support staff as needed	• Attend regular meetings (e.g., quarterly) • Advise on strategies as outlined in the goals and objectives of the committee • Review policy and procedures for emergency support services • Provide input and feedback for resources and local needs • Provide input on annual planning, funding and expenditures • Identify and participate in training strategies • Involve local leadership and champions from Chartered Communities • Include and encourage local feedback on annual planning • Lobby and leverage political support • Evaluate the progress of emergency support services

Figure 5 - For Consideration – Roles and Responsibilities of the Regional Directors

For Consideration – Emergency Program Roles and Responsibilities	
Position	**Roles and Responsibilities**
Regional Directors Support as defined by each region and/or communicated through the Emergency Preparedness Committee	• Member of MNBC's Emergency Preparedness Committee • Direct support to the Emergency Preparedness Manager • Regional leadership in emergency support services • Communicate challenges and opportunities to the Cabinet • Direct line of communication to Chartered Communities • Communicate regularly with local authorities • Attend Emergency Regional Governance Council/Committees with support agencies • Network with regional and provincial government elect-officials • Create connections for Chartered Communities to local EOCs • Assist to gather feedback from Chartered Communities regarding needs assessments • Assist in supplying new contacts throughout emergency events for upload to the contacts database • Identify and attend training

Figure 6 - Roles and Responsibilities of MNBC Chartered Community and/or Local Champion

For Consideration – Emergency Program Roles and Responsibilities	
Position	**Roles and Responsibilities**
MNBC Chartered Community (Via Community Leadership and/or Local Champion) Activities are administered as defined by each Chartered Community	• Communicate with Regional Directors and local Métis Citizens • Share local contacts for MNBC's contact database • Network with MNBC's Emergency Preparedness Manager • Assist with connecting local volunteers to resources • Assist in coordinating youth involvement • Assist with transition of roles at the local level • Attend meetings to collaborate on emergencies • Assist and participate in building relationships with supporting agencies • Identify and attend training Note: This can be further defined by community leadership/board versus volunteers

3.2 SURVEY

Survey planning began with research and development of relevant questions that aligned with standard emergency management practices. Urban Systems developed the survey in collaboration with MNBC and staff feedback was incorporated to ensure the assessment was tailored to the needs of Métis Citizens at the local level.

The survey was issued to Métis Citizens. In total, respondents answered 44 questions. An additional six questions were issued to Métis Leadership that reside in assigned positions that included MNBC Cabinet, Regional Directors, employees, Chartered Community Leaders (e.g., President/Vice-president/board members).

The survey was available online for a three-week period between February 12th and March 5th, 2021. An initial e-mail invitation with the survey link was circulated followed by several reminder e-mails to encourage respondents to participate. Métis Citizens as well as MNBC Cabinet and employees were invited to respond to the survey.

3.2.1 SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

Referring to the full Survey Summary Report in **Appendix A,** the following sections give an overview of key message identified from survey respondents.

Because the majority of survey respondents live in urban areas, access to communication services and resources during emergency events is not a major concern. Although the majority of respondents indicated they had experience dealing with emergency events in the past, it was clear that personal preparedness in those situations was lacking. This indicates a need for Métis Citizens to take personal ownership of their own emergency preparedness. Upon implementation of recommendations outlined is this report, MNBC will be able to provide leadership and support to Métis Citizens to enhance personal readiness and response in emergencies. The following key messages were identified.

Preparedness Planning

- There is a need to establish local emergency response champions/leaders and Emergency Management Committees where they are not already in place and ensure Métis Citizens are aware they are in place.

- The highest risk emergency events are natural disasters such as flooding, forest fires, earthquakes, and severe storms. There was also a high degree of risk associated with personal emergencies such as missing persons, and pandemics.
- There are concerns with resource availability during emergency events due for Métis Citizens located in remote communities.
- There is a lack of awareness, but significant interest in emergency response training opportunities.
- There is a need to provide information and resources on establishing personal 72-hour emergency kits and plans.

Emergency Communications

- Most Métis Citizens have access to a phone (cell or landline) and internet services, however there is a need to establish a plan to get information and resources to remote communities in emergency events.
- There is a lack of knowledge around who to contact in emergency situations – whether it be 911, the local municipality, or other service providers.
- Clarity is also needed on how to contact local governments during emergency events and finding out where Emergency Operations Centres would be set up.
- Emergency event information is typically accessed through various sources including TV, newspaper, radio, and online.
- Muster station locations need to be identified and clearly communicated.

Response and Recovery

- There is a need to specifically plan for evacuation measures and resources for remote communities where access in and out of may be difficult or impossible during an emergency event.
- There is a lack of knowledge of where to go or how to register for Emergency Support services.
- Overall, emergency preparedness has not been something that Métis Citizens rely on for support from MNBC, but the support, information, and resources provided by MNBC during the COVID-19 pandemic have been appreciated.
- Few respondents have had any experience working with MNBC Cabinet, administration staff, or regional leadership through emergency events, however those that have, had positive experiences, especially with how information is shared with Métis Citizens and how support was provided through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Few Métis Citizens have had any experience working with their local or provincial government through emergency events, however those that have had positive experiences. There are however concerns with emergency support from the Federal government in regards to financial support and access to vaccinations during the pandemic and lack of support during major natural disasters in the past.
- There is a definite appetite for additional emergency response information to be shared through the MNBC website and newsletters and interest in signing up for automatic email updates from MNBC.
- There is a need and interest for emergency preparedness and response training opportunities.
- MNBC could provide support to Métis Citizens in creating preparedness kits.
- There should be a central list of resources and phone numbers to support Métis Citizens in being prepared for emergency events.

- In terms of evacuation measures during emergency events, there is a need for personal preparedness, but also improved communication before, during, and after and evacuation and measures to be able to release finances to support responses quicker in these instances are needed.
- As a result of emergency evacuations there has been some loss of connection to the land and access to traditional foods. Especially in forest fire events, hunting areas and places with a significant supply of important plants and medicines have been destroyed.

Some of the more interesting figures presented in the Survey Summary Report in **Appendix A** are highlighted below in the following figures.
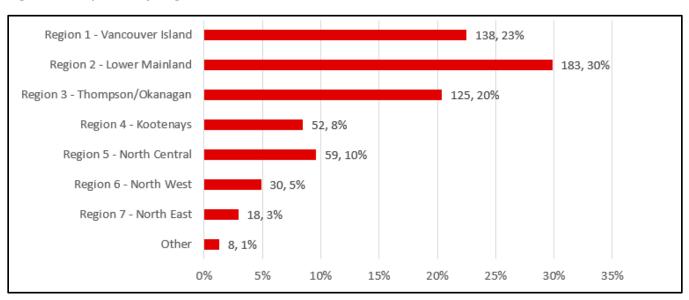
Figure 7 - Responses by Region
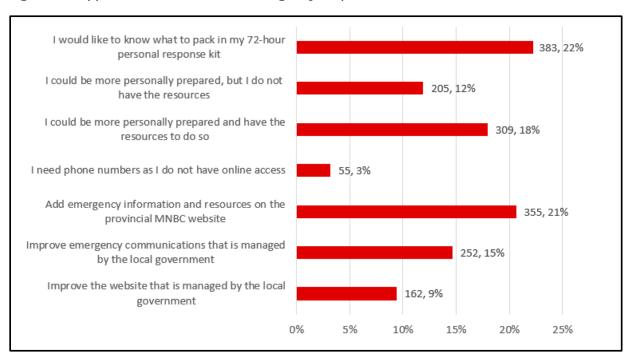

Figure 8 - Support Needs for Personal Emergency Preparedness

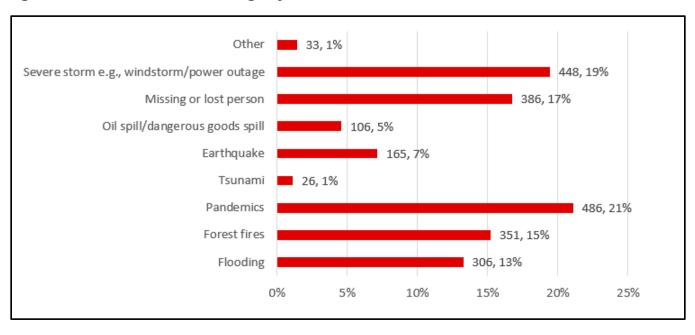**Figure 9 - Historic Occurrence of Emergency Events**

Category	Value
Other	33, 1%
Severe storm e.g., windstorm/power outage	448, 19%
Missing or lost person	386, 17%
Oil spill/dangerous goods spill	106, 5%
Earthquake	165, 7%
Tsunami	26, 1%
Pandemics	486, 21%
Forest fires	351, 15%
Flooding	306, 13%

Figure 10 - Improvements to Implement to Assist in Future Emergency Events

Category	Value
Unsure	82, 5%
I could sign up to automated email for updates available from the local government	202, 13%
The website that is managed by the local government could be improved	77, 5%
I could prepare an Emergency Preparedness kit	358, 23%
I could sign up to automated email for updates that are available from MNBC	201, 13%
I want more information available on the MNBC website and newsletters	193, 12%
I could be personally more prepared and informed to respond	445, 29%

Figure 11 - Role of MNBC in Enhancing Emergency Support Services

Category	Value
Other	1, 1%
Participating in training	13, 12%
Access to funding	16, 14%
Providing emergency preparedness information	15, 13%
Regional participation/leadership to Chartered Communities	14, 13%
Coordinating/linking training opportunities	15, 13%
Regional Coordination and support for Ministers	12, 11%
General coordination across Province	12, 11%
Enhanced MNBC communications/website to include emergency preparedness information	14, 13%

Figure 12 - Role of Cabinet Members in Enhancing Emergency Support Services

Category	Value
Other	1, 1%
Participating in training	15, 19%
Awareness around funding opportunities	15, 19%
Coordinating/linking training opportunities	12, 15%
Regional participation/leadership to Chartered Communities	13, 16%
Regional coordination	13, 16%
Networking and linking support services/agencies	12, 15%

3.3 MAPPING

As the project proceeded, it was discussed that an interactive map would be useful to help identify vulnerable geographic areas and define local authorities across BC. The goal was to create a light weight, self deployable environment for MNBC who does not have existing web mapping software.

There are advanced ways to set up a much more robust web GIS (geographic information system) infrastructure; however, that involves licensing that MNBC currently does not have. The advantage of a GIS license would allow MNBC to set up web maps (both editable and public facing), dashboards, mobile applications for data collection, or further integration with additional data.

The mapping platform designed was created to allow for some similar functionality of more complex platforms but does have less customization and responsiveness due to not being able to access a GIS license. Regardless, the resulting mapping product is a vast improvement from the previous MNBC map, and we have the ability to support MNBC to expand the map in future using the existing framework/data to build from.

Refer to **Appendix B** for instructions on how to access and view the proposed interactive map. A zip file document has been provided in the email that this recommendations report was submitted on. Please do not hesitate to contact us, we are here to help MNBC representatives walk through opening and testing the mapping platform.

You will note that local authority boundaries for municipalities, regional districts and First Nations can be viewed. Local contact information for each Métis Chartered Community pops up when you hover over each icon on the map. In the bottom right corner of the map there is also access to the ortho map view which provides an aerial photograph of the area. This will allow additional viewing of the variations in geographic features across the land that will assist to identify hazards, access points or issues from a desktop.

The following snapshots have been inserted below to provide an overview of key elements.

Figure 13 - Map: Provincial Overview Showing MNBC Regions and Chartered Communities

Figure 14 - Map: Métis Chartered Community Contact Information (hover on icon/window pop up)

Figure 15 - Map: General View Showing Local Authority Boundaries (Zoomed Out)
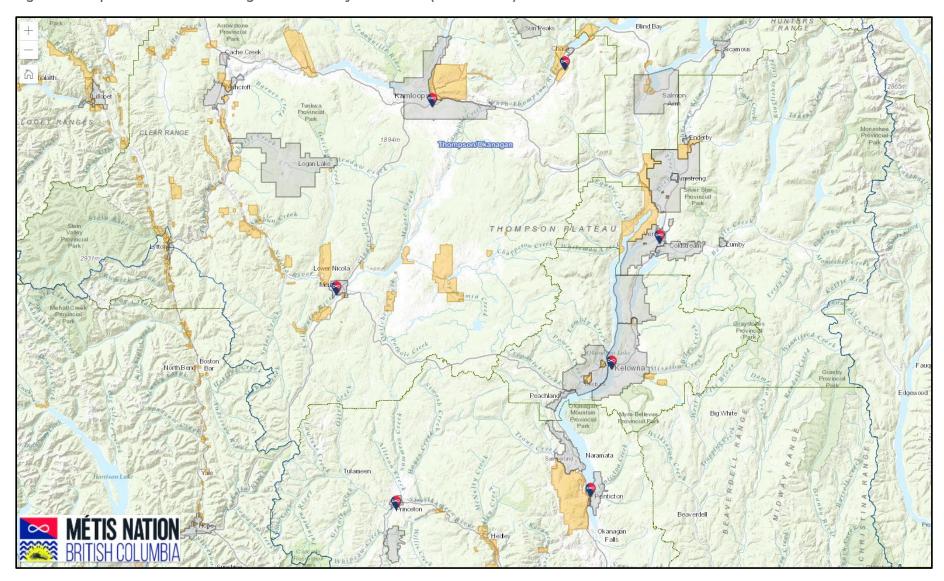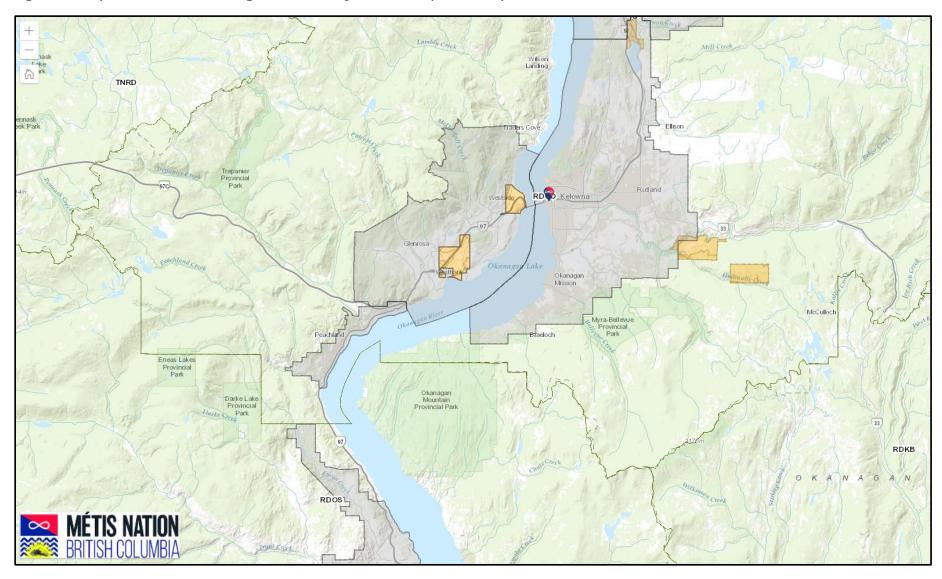
Figure 16 - Map: General View Showing Local Authority Boundaries (Zoomed In)

3.4 CONTACT DATABASE

Building regional networks and compiling contacts for local authorities and support agencies was discussed as an important part of emergency support services that MNBC can provide.

Database of Local Authority Websites

To begin, we initiated the following proposed format. This template is under construction and has been prepared to open discussion regarding critical data and help define next steps or needs regarding this resource. The project team focused on Region 1 as a sample and as a first step to demonstrate the vision.

From feedback we received from Regional Directors it was important to know the contact information for all local authorities and where emergency communications would be housed online. The project team focused first on websites that are regularly maintained by government bodies and in addition provide direct links to their emergency information webpages if present. Local authorities are moving towards virtual information systems to notify residents and keep them informed as information is released. However, not all communities have emergency specific information present on an ongoing basis with exception of when emergencies strike.

Refer to **Appendix C** for the proposed initial format/excel template to access local authority's websites. An email version of the excel spreadsheet has also been provided to test the websites, in the email provided with this report.

3.5 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Regarding development of an organizational framework, the following figure proposes the first step that describes the flow of communication and organization for emergency support services to Métis Chartered Communities.

What is important to show in this chart is that the local authority (or at times provincial body) is responsible to deliver emergency operations along with other responding agencies, and Métis Citizens would rely on that government for emergencies response and communications.
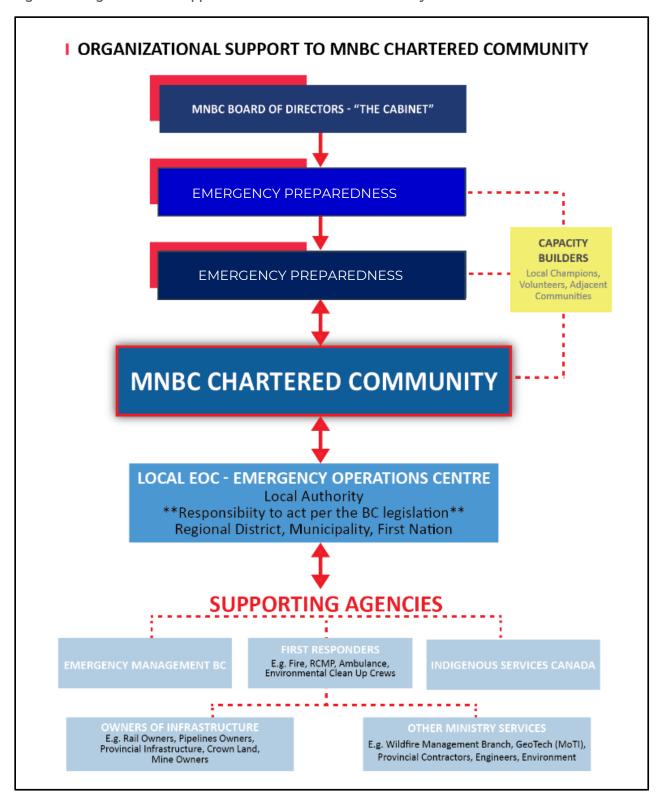
This system would be enhanced with utilization of MNBC and volunteers to fill in the service gaps as identified by the Métis Chartered Community or as defined by needs assessments at the local level.

It is also important to note it is intended for this framework to respect autonomy for those Métis Chartered Communities that operate from a more independent position from MNBC. MNBC needs to consider how best to support Métis Chartered Communities to build local capacity and resiliency at arms length.

Other organizational charts can be prepared depending on the interest and level of detail required.

Figure 17 - Organizational Support to MNBC Chartered Community

Figure 17 - Organizational Support to MNBC Chartered Community

4.0 NEXT STEP RECOMMENDATIONS

The critical goal of the project was to enhance emergency support services for Métis Citizens and to develop an organizational framework to assist those processes. Building community capacity is integral to this goal and can be provided from several different support systems.

A few suggestions for consideration for the next phase of the project are as follows.

4.1 ONGOING NETWORKING, COMMUNICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The core foundation of success for MNBC emergency support services will be through regular communications and building relationships. Keeping lines of communications open and connecting regularly throughout the year with various individuals is important. When people have relationships established in front of emergencies, emergency response is much more efficient, effective and collaborative.

This includes annual planning and implementing regular (quarterly/seasonal) activities/meetings and engaging in ongoing conversations - with the topic of preparedness in the forefront.

Driven by the Emergency Preparedness Manager, some of these activities may include:

- Communicating on all levels at the federal, provincial, regional and local levels;
- Scheduling quarterly meetings with the core team;
- Issuing information bulletins regularly to Métis Citizens;
- Annual maintenance of contacts, resources and procedural documents;
- Regular review of procedural documents to keep actions foremost in one's thoughts;
- Regular review and update of roles and responsibilities;
- Regularly involving or contacting local Métis Citizens; or
- Regularly planning annual events or implementing activities around Emergency Preparedness Week (always the first week of May).

Keeping in mind, the Emergency Preparedness Manager relies on the support system of all parties involved to implement activities and is not the sole individual to complete activities.

The backbone to building community capacity in emergency planning is in establishing regional support systems. This means connecting all regional resources (e.g., government services, support agencies and resources) and linking them to each community. Then by bringing regional communities together (e.g., MNBC Chartered Communities with adjacent communities) this will build support capacity and a greater knowledge base.

4.2 CONSIDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Defining roles and responsibilities of MNBC, leadership (provincial, regional and local levels), the various support staff and volunteers would be helpful to establish. As part of Phase 1, research has been started to initiate a framework.

Referring back to Section 3.1.1, potential MNBC roles and responsibilities were brainstormed through the workshops with further information added. These roles and responsibilities can be reviewed by MNBC for further consideration, and additional roles can be added in Phase 2.

For example, MNBC should define roles and responsibilities, when it pertains to Emergencies, for:

- Cabinet members and the EPC ;
- Regional Directors;
- Senior Director of Environmental Protection;
- Emergency Preparedness Manager;
- Other MNBC support staff, if applicable;
- Chartered Communities - general roles (mayors, presidents, board of directors etc.);
- Volunteers; and,
- Local Métis residents (personal readiness and responsibilities).

In addition, the following roles and responsibilities would help if they were understood and outlined:

- Emergency Operations Centre roles – focusing on overarching principles
- Provincial and federal government roles and other supporting agencies
- Local authority roles per the provincial legislation – to understand what they should be doing

Regarding Education on the Role of the Local Authority

Understanding the role of the local authority will enable MNBC to provide resources in the right location at the right time. The following figure provides some basic detail that is outlined in the provincial legislation.

Figure 18 - Local Authority Requirements during An Emergency

Regarding on the Ground Response

We heard from Regional Directors that supporting on the ground response can be difficult for MNBC due to proximity to each and every emergency. Therefore, emergency support by MNBC would

primarily be delivered remotely. MNBC will mainly need to rely on local authorities, first responders and supporting agencies for direct response.

MNBC could consider a provincial volunteer pool that lists individuals interested to relocate to provide emergency support services. This would be for basic services such as sandbagging during high-water warnings or support in providing resources during an evacuation.

Mental Health Monitoring

During emergencies it is important to be aware of the mental health impacts for Métis Citizens directly affected and for those individuals providing support services. Daily or weekly check-ins (depending on the emergency) are a great way to help and offer support or direct individuals to resources. Identifying individuals to support this type of monitoring is helpful.

4.3 REVIEW SURVEY FEEDBACK

Referring back to Section 3.2, key highlights of the survey was summarized with a full report attached in **Appendix A.**

It would be important that MNBC review all survey documentation to determine what additional information resonated for MNBC. We can discuss further together as any questions arise.

For example, food sovereignty and security surfaced as an important topic to many individuals, and it has been noted that this issue is already being discussed and assessed within MNBC.

4.4 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERACTIVE MAP

A new interactive map was prepared as part of this project - with current needs in mind. We had heard that it is difficult to understand local vulnerabilities during emergencies or quickly understand which local authority jurisdiction is responsible to act. Therefore, having access to geographic information is of value to support individuals to quickly find the information they need.

Refer to **Appendix B** to see instructions on how to open and view the map. Our GIS specialist at Urban Systems is available to support if needed.

Additional opportunities can be considered as this resource is developed that includes the following considerations. In addition, as MNBC expands their registry platform there may be value in linking member information to geographic locations, while respecting privacy.

Purchase Licensing for a GIS Software that includes a Web Environment.

Urban Systems recommends the industry standard, which is built by ESRI. ESRI's desktop GIS application is ArcGIS Pro and their web environment is ArcGIS Online: https://www.esri.com/en-ca/store/arcgis-online.

If needed, Urban Systems experienced GIS team can assist with:
- Navigating licensing options and gathering quotes;
- Software installation;
- Database design and file structure;
- Initial setup of web GIS infrastructure; and,

- Development of various web GIS tools (maps, dashboards, and field data collection apps).

Assess Internal Capacity

MNBC should assess capacity for internal staff to manage GIS or whether it should be done by an outside consultant, or a mix of both. Depending on the answer, MNBC should pursue the appropriate training or GIS consultant support. As an Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) approved organization for GIS training, we are happy to provide training support or point staff to the most suitable institution for formal training.

Building and Hosting Datasets

Consider building internal datasets and hosting datasets that can be utilized in "dashboards", mobile applications, and web maps to support the organization. ESRI Canada provides some prebuilt solutions that are relatively easy to deploy: https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-solutions/overview (scroll to "Industries" on this page to view examples).

If needed, the Urban Systems team can assist with additional tasks such as:
- Gathering and creating key datasets (e.g., property info for registered members – with privacy considerations); and
- Development of various web mapping tools (e.g., data editing, field data collection, dashboards, reporting).

Urban Systems has extensive experience setting up desktop and web GIS infrastructure (for both private sector and local government) and can help MNBC navigate some of these complex decisions.

4.5 FURTHER DEVELOP THE EMERGENCY CONTACT DATABASE

Section 3.4 and **Appendix C** refers to the spreadsheet that summarizes local authority websites per region and where possible links to the governments emergency management page was provided as well. This resource will expedite the process of finding information, resources, contacts, and status updates during emergencies.

Local authorities have the responsibility to prepare communication bulletins and advise where to go to find information; and MNBC can use this resource to help vet information rather than prepare new messages. Where possible MNBC will want to direct Métis Citizens directly to the source of information.

In addition to compiling local authority websites, prepare a separate database of Regional Directors local contacts and resources. These lists will be unique to each region and therefore, it would be best to keep this information separate from the local government spreadsheet. We suggest summarizing each Regional Director's data on a separate word document for ease of updating and maintenance in the long term.

4.6 REVIEW AND FURTHER DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Referring to Section 3.5, an initial organizational chart regarding the flow of communication was provided to initiate discussions. The provided chart can be developed further once feedback is received from MNBC. This chart will initiate the backbone of the MNBC's support services.

It maybe of value to develop organizational charts for each MNBC Chartered Community if the information was available and of interest to compile. This will help enhance lines of communication and understanding of the local structure and available individuals to contact.

As MNBC considers their approach in offering support services (e.g., who, when, why, where, what); consider the following emergency support activation considerations as to when to act and how fast during an emergency. Refer to Figure 19 below. Organizational charts that define benchmarks as to when to act, or to determine what services should be deployed and how; or decision flow charts can be created to help decision making. Again, all dependent on what level of detail is needed.

Figure 19 - Emergency Support Activation Considerations

4.7 BUILD COMMUNICATION PLATFORM – ONE STOP SHOP

A new website platform is already under development through another MNBC project. A webpage on emergency related information can be developed to house status updates and provide resource information, plans, contacts, and resources.

Accessing information virtually has become so critical, especially during the pandemic and communities that are during an evacuation will also value access to virtual resources.

This webpage could centralize information specific for:

- Support services;
- Resources;
- Contacts;
- Maps;
- Emergency information and bulletins;
- Training available;
- Defined roles and responsibilities; and,
- Suggested local/personal preparedness.

This will help enhance sharing of information and open up lines of communication.

The Metis National Council (MNC) has done some preliminary work to build a Métis Nation Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness site. This site is intended to provide access and to information on public safety and emergency preparedness including federal legislation and policy; key reports; program opportunities and links to provincial emergency measures. A range of webinars and videos on safety and emergency and evacuation planning, fire and flooding are accessible as well as practical emergency preparedness tools for families and communities. https://publicsafety.metisportals.ca/index.php

4.8 REVIEW RISK AND LIABILITY

We heard through the workshops that MNBC has basic liability insurance/coverage in place, and in addition Métis Chartered Communities likely have local insurance in place as well (however details are unknown). It would be important to understand what MNBC and any representatives of MNBC or Chartered Community are capable of providing for support services within the insurance framework. Perhaps research and added education may be of value to share to help set boundaries for support services.

For example, from the perspective of volunteers, if MNBC coordinates a provincial pool of volunteers to assist locally what limitations of services should they provide to be covered under MNBC's policy, or the local Chartered Communities policy, or perhaps a joint policy. Which ever process works best would be important to consider.

Where possible, consider enhancement to the current policy to cover off higher risk situations that tend to arise during emergency situations – or outline limitations of service for consistent communication. Also consider that local authorities will only permit attendance of MNBC volunteers in supporting roles if reasonable proof of insurance coverage can be provided.

4.9 PREPARE BASIC ACTION RESPONSE CHECKLISTS

Focusing on the top ten potential emergencies that can occur, it would be helpful to understand key steps to act within the first 72 hours. Quick reference checklists would aid in decision making and provide an understanding of what activities the local authority should be implementing from onset.

In addition, as MNBC defines their emergency support framework other planning templates may be of value such as developing communication bulletins, status updates or preparing decision notes.

4.10 IMPLEMENT TRAINING

As MNBC determines what support services would be most beneficial to provide, this will help define the direction on training. Table 1 outlines some potential training opportunities to consider.

Table 1 - Potential Training Opportunities

Training Opportunity	Resources

Emergency Management 101	MNBC to develop specific training modules to address unique needs
Emergency Operations Training	For those planning to work in organized EOCs
Basic First Aid Courses	
Emergency Support Services (ESS) Training	This covers response specific to evacuations and providing resources such as food, accommodation, clothing etc. Provided by EMBC and through some Regional Districts, see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/volunteers/emergency-support-services/training
FireSmartBC Training	To build wildfire resiliency, see: https://firesmartbc.ca/events/category/course
Emergency Management Webinars	Various topics are covered here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-management-bc/emergency-management-training-and-exercises/em-training-program/emergency-management-webinars
Radio License Course	For the use of handheld radios, see: https://www.norac.bc.ca/index.php/radio-license-courses

4.11 OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPROCAL AGREEMENTS

No reciprocal agreements have been established in BC between MNBC and local governments or supporting agencies that enhance support services or define relationships. Although typically reciprocal agreements are viewed as government-to-government arrangements – fewer formal arrangements as partners would be the goal.

Such as an offer to provide support services, or essential contributions, or an agreement to open lines of communication to support common goals can be defined. In addition, agreements can be non-binding mutual/cultural agreements with other Indigenous Communities.

These agreements can also be set up as mutual beneficial agreements where MNBC staff or local champions or Métis volunteer body provides support to local governments in the event of emergencies. Local governments always struggle with internal capacity to respond and recover. This approach is a great way to get involved, access training and build individual experience/skills, and develop partnering relationships with local authorities. With the appropriate liability insurance in place to protect attending volunteers – these types of opportunities and agreements can be reached.

4.12 SHARE STORIES

It was expressed during workshops that it was important to compile historic records and information that relate to experiences of Métis Peoples. As such, MNBC can lead and educate on emergency support services with inspiration from Métis Citizens, Métis organizations (Red River Rangers) and sharing past stories and experiences from Elders on emergency related topics. These stories can be posted on MNBCs future emergency management website with visual images to help link the topics or prepare and post podcasts/videos of interviews with elders.

4.13 FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Being prepared to know where to access funding is important and having capacity for a timely/professional response in preparing the fund proposal. In the past, MNBC staff seek out and write

their own grant proposals. The recent addition of a dedicated grant/proposal writer will ensure we take a more streamlined approach to administer this service considering that MNBC is a non-profit organization and generally relies solely on grants for operations.

This grants may be used to fund various support services, resources, training, equipment, technology, or community needs assessments. Also, consider opportunities for capturing historic Métis stories and Indigenous culture/language. Funding for food sovereignty and security has been made available in the past as well.

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has a variety of programs available in emergency preparedness/response, business information/technology, GIS licensing and much more, that may be able to be accessed over and above the core funding model that MNBC falls under. ISC provided the emergency funds that MNBC used to support community members through the COVID-19 pandemic.
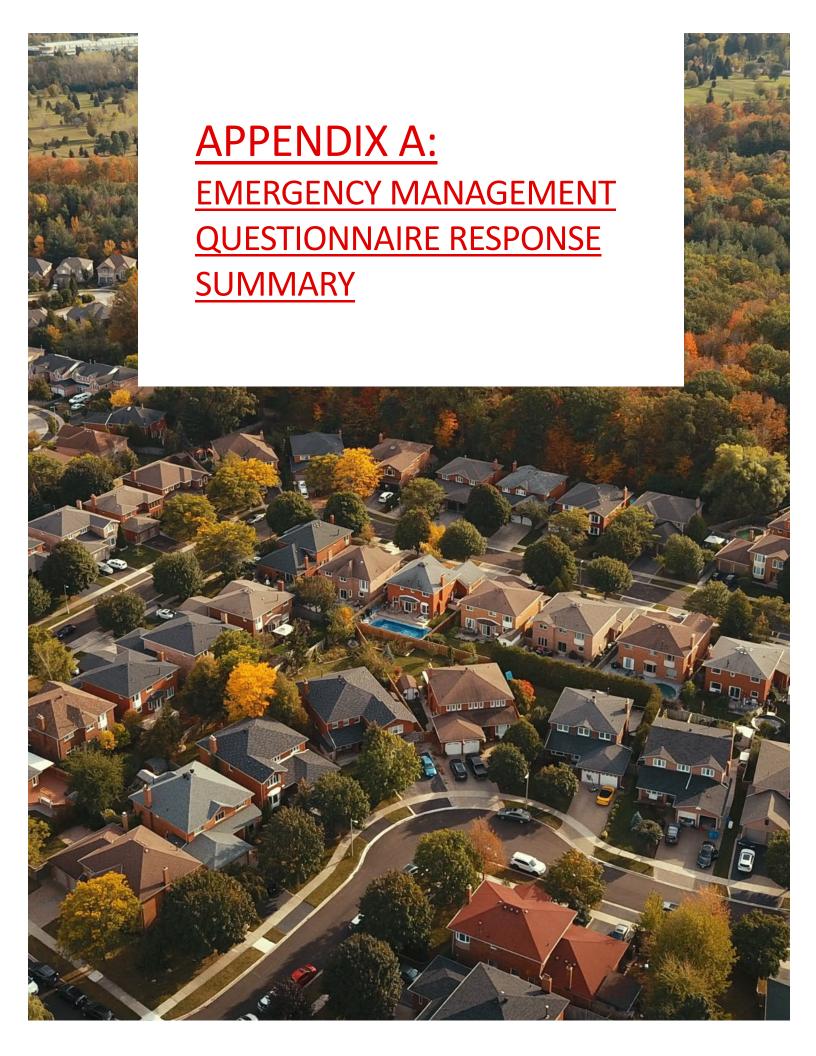
5.0 CLOSING

Developing an emergency support framework to enhance the existing service model to Métis Citizens across BC is no doubt an important initiative for MNBC. With even just a few steps of actions following the enclosed recommendations will enable MNBC to improve readiness and the effectiveness of support services in emergencies.

Once MNBC has had a chance to review all findings and recommendations, Urban Systems is available to discuss any questions or comments regarding the content enclosed. They have also offered support to help navigate next steps or prioritize activities to further develop an emergency support framework for MNBC.
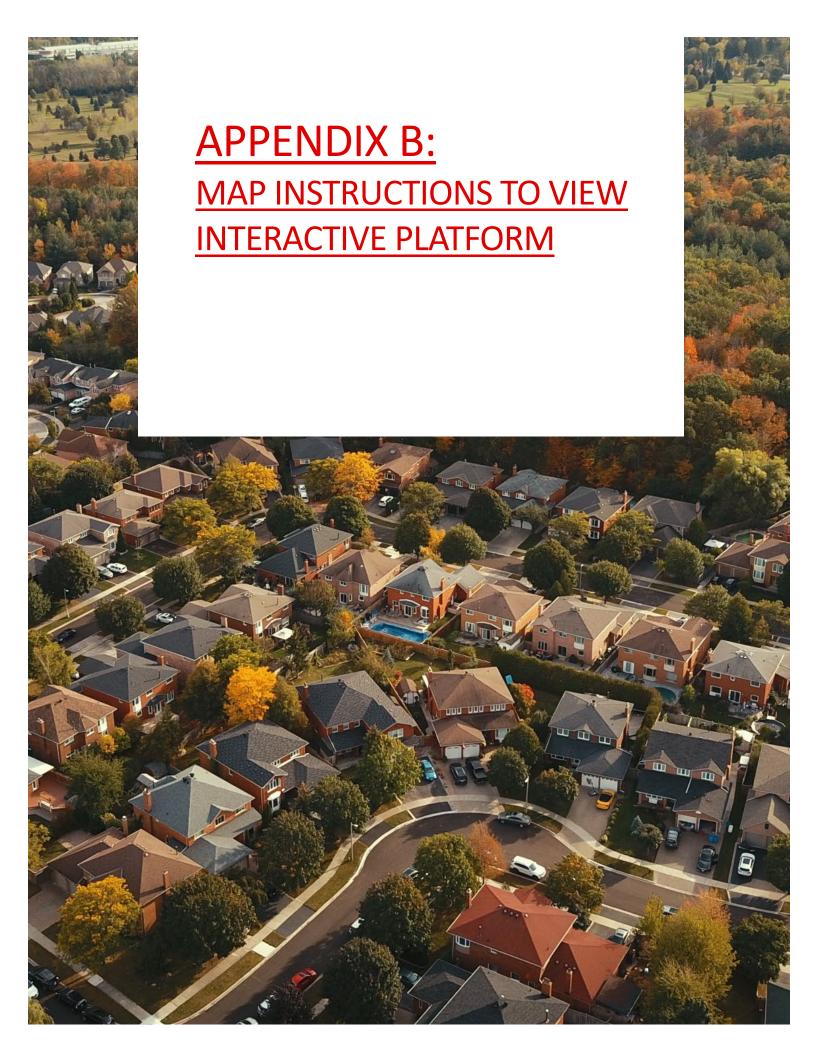
The purpose of the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) is to better understand the local needs of each community to enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities, to recommend a regional support network to increase emergency response efficiencies throughout BC, and to recommend a structure, and set of actions, of what an emergency response plan could look like for the Métis Nation. The development of an EP framework will enable MNBC to take a proactive approach (rather than reactive) to potential future emergency situations. We believe this first Phase of research will effectively guide us to reach these goals.

APPENDIX A:

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE SUMMARY

Attached as a separate report in email.
Confidential as document contains raw
data and feedback.
Large document (155 pages).

APPENDIX B:
MAP INSTRUCTIONS TO VIEW INTERACTIVE PLATFORM

March 31, 2021

c/o Leona Shaw and Geneviève Gratton
Métis Nation BC

RE: How to Access Zip File for the MNBC Web Map

This web map was built using ESRI Inc. ArcGIS Platform; more specifically, the ESRI JavaScript API. It was built to be light weight and self-deployed by Métis Nation BC.

General Note: These instructions are written with the assumption that the user has a basic background in working with Web Servers and Content Management Systems. If MNBC requires technical support to deploy this web map we are happy to discuss ways that Urban Systems can assist.

Deploying this application will depend on the current MNBC web hosting environment; however, the general steps are as follows:

1. Download the *Métis Nation BC - Website map.zip* attached in original email

2. Deploy application on Web Server:

    a. Copy zipped folder to virtual directory (ex. C:\inetpub\ ---)

    b. Unzip folder in virtual directory.

3. Deploy application on website via Content Management System:

    a. Insert iFrame block in desired website location.

    b. Add the url from step 2 to the iFrame and adjust the frame height/width, as necessary.

It is important to keep the files as received from Urban Systems. There are file dependencies; for example, with the images and MNBC logos within the application. Unique web system architecture may result in the above workflow needing to be tweaked slightly for deployment. If this is the case, the workflow can be re-evaluated at that time and we will be available to support further.

If you have any challenges or questions with accessing the map or working with the map features, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition, you are welcome to have any of the MNBC staff or Cabinet members contact me directly as any questions arise; or if they are having difficulties viewing the map.

I can be reached by email at: rperiana@urbansystems.ca , or my mobile phone at: 604-720-9748.
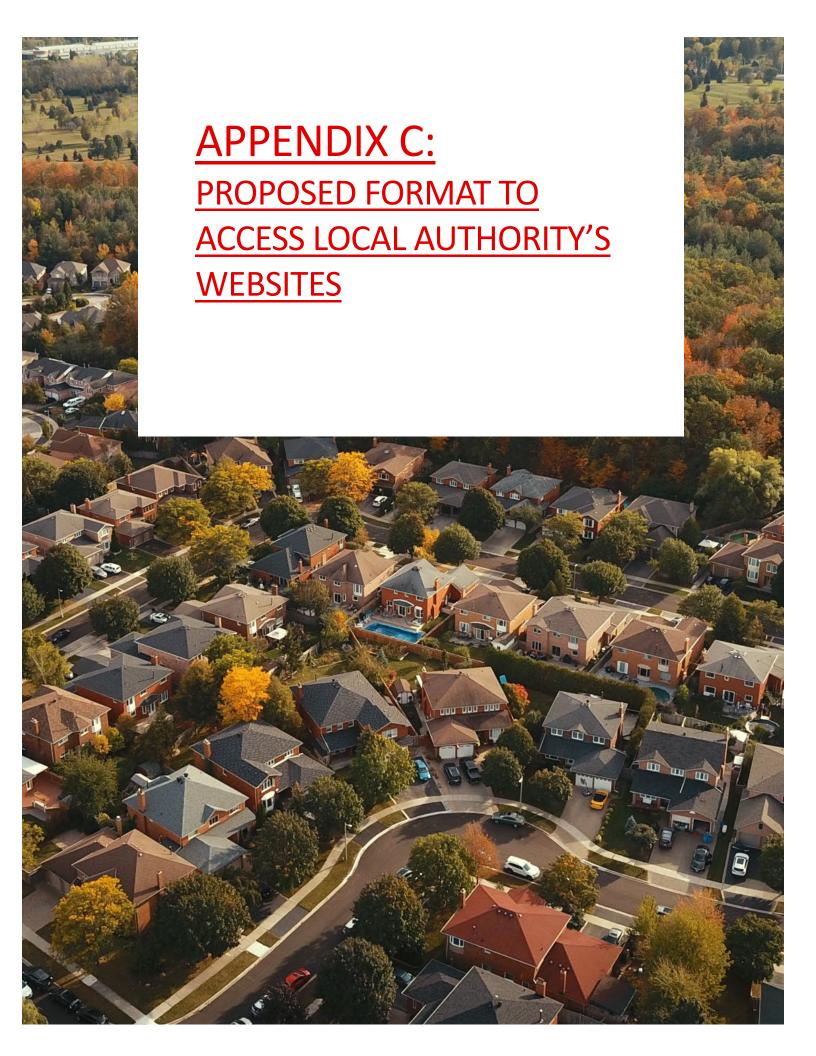

Sincerely,

URBAN SYSTEMS LTD.

Ryan Periana, BSc GISP
GIS Programmer and Application Specialist

Cc: Donalda Ritchie, Community Consultant

APPENDIX C:
PROPOSED FORMAT TO ACCESS LOCAL AUTHORITY'S WEBSITES

Attached as a separate document in email.