

OCHAPOWACE NATION

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Consultation meetings with kakisiwew-ochapowace Citizens

RE: Highlights of the changes – Constitution

tansi citizens!

This briefing is to highlight the proposed changes made to the 2015 Ochapowace Constitution. Below we will compare the differences between the proposed draft *ka-miyikowisiyahk: the powers given to us*, and the 2015 Ochapowace Constitution.

1. Name and Language Integration

- 2015 Constitution: Named "Ochapowace Nation Constitution", written primarily in English with some Cree terminology.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk: The new name "ka-miyikowisiyahk" means "the powers given to us" in the nehiyaw (Cree) language, symbolizing a stronger emphasis on cultural and language revitalization.
- Added: Cree terms are used throughout, reinforcing nehiyaw as the official language.

2. Strengthened Assertion of Sovereignty

- 2015 Constitution: Recognizes Ochapowace as a sovereign nation but makes frequent references to international law (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - UNDRIP).
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk: Takes a stronger stand on sovereignty, stating that no external government, law, or jurisdiction has authority over Ochapowace laws. It removes reliance on international law as justification for self-determination, instead grounding authority in our Inherent and Treaty Rights.

3. Inherent and Treaty Rights – More Defined

- 2015 Constitution: Includes broad references to inherent and treaty rights, emphasizing their protection.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk: Clearly defines these rights under separate sections:
 - Inherent Rights: Self-government, land and resource management, cultural preservation, and language protection.
 - Treaty Rights: Explicitly asserts Treaty 4 obligations, recognizing them as "living entities" passed down through oral traditions.

4. Governance and Decision-Making Structure

- 2015 Constitution: Governance structured around the Okimaw (Chief) and Council, with a Community Tribunal for law enforcement.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk:



- Retains the Okimaw and Council structure but places greater emphasis on citizen consultation in decision-making.
- Introduces structured legislative processes for law and by-law creation, ensuring transparency and community participation.
- Confirms the role of Elders ("kehte-ayak") in law development.

5. Law-Making Process: More Inclusive and Transparent

- 2015 Constitution: Laws required majority of majority of voters for ratification.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk:
 - Establishes a clear step-by-step process for law and by-law creation, including:
 1. Consultation with Elders
 2. Community meetings
 3. Legal review (if needed)
 4. Ratification by a minimum of 30% of eligible voters
 - Ensures laws are translated into nehiyaw and taken to ceremony before becoming official.

6. Citizenship and Rights to Participation

- 2015 Constitution: Citizenship was referenced, but not clearly defined.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk:
 - Citizenship is more explicitly defined.
 - Affirms every Citizen's right to vote regardless of residency.

7. Enforcement and Accountability – Strengthened Tribunal

- 2015 Constitution: The Community Tribunal was responsible for upholding laws and holding leadership accountable.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk:
 - Tribunal role is expanded, giving citizens a mechanism to challenge leadership violations.
 - If Council violates the Constitution, citizens have the right to procedural fairness through the Tribunal.

8. Amendments and Referendums – More Defined Process

- 2015 Constitution: Required 100 eligible voters to start the amendment process.
- 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk:
 - Requires 100 signatures from eligible voters to propose an amendment.
 - Council can make minor amendments (grammar, governance structure, name changes) without referendum.
 - All other amendments require a citizen vote.

Why These Changes Matter for Citizens

- Emphasizes cultural identity: Stronger use of nehiyaw language and traditional governance.
- Strengthens self-governance: No longer relies on international law as a basis for sovereignty.
- Improves transparency and participation: Clearer law-making, enforcement, and amendment processes.
- Protects Treaty rights: Reinforces Treaty 4 obligations in a way that cannot be overridden by external governments.

Summary comparison of 2015 Ochapowace Constitution and 2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk

Category	2015 Ochapowace Constitution	2025 ka-miyikowisiyahk
Name & Language	Named 'Ochapowace Constitution', primarily in English with some Cree terms.	Renamed 'ka-miyikowisiyahk' (Cree: 'the powers given to us'), nehiyaw is the official language.
Sovereignty Assertion	Recognized sovereignty but referenced international law (UNDRIP) for justification.	Strong assertion that no external government or law has authority over Ochapowace.
Inherent & Treaty Rights	Broad references to inherent and treaty rights without clear distinctions.	Clearly defined sections for Inherent Rights (self-gov, culture, land) & Treaty Rights.
Governance Structure	Okimaw (Chief) & Council structure with a Community Tribunal.	Retains Okimaw & Council but formalizes Elders' role & expands citizen consultation.
Law-Making Process	Laws required 'majority of majority' of voters for ratification, but process was vague.	Step-by-step process: consultation, Elder review, legal review, 30% voter ratification.
Citizenship & Participation	Citizenship not clearly defined.	Clearly states kakisiwew-ochapowace citizens hold full rights.
Enforcement & Accountability	Community Tribunal enforced laws, but leadership accountability	Stronger Tribunal role: Citizens can challenge leadership violations.

	mechanisms were weaker.	
Amendments & Referendums	100 eligible voters needed to start amendments; majority of majority required for approval.	100 eligible voters still needed to propose changes; minor governance/grammar changes by Council.

The Law Development Working group proposed these changes to set processes in place to ensure citizenship engagement was clearly defined, as well as how to pass a law. The 2015 Constitution didn't identify process. The purpose of the above material is to help our citizens understand what's different, what's improved and why it matters.

We now look to our citizens for feedback during these consultation meetings.

Written feedback can be emailed to denise.beaudin@ochapowace.ca

Respectfully,



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 Law and Justice Mandate
OCHAPOWACE NATION