

KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION | REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The Kitikmeot at a Turning Point

Inuit priorities, regional opportunities and the next chapter of Arctic development

Reflections from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association 2026 Annual General Meeting · Cambridge Bay · October 2026

INTRODUCTION

A region of growing national importance

As the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA) approaches its 50th anniversary, the region is entering a period of unusual opportunity and consequential choices. Gold production and exploration, the prospect of new transport corridors, expanding interest in critical minerals, and renewed attention to Arctic defence and sovereignty are placing the Kitikmeot more prominently in national discussions.



Delegates, Elders, board members and presenters meet in Cambridge Bay for the 2026 AGM, October 6–8.

Cambridge Bay sits at the centre of that shift. The Department of National Defence has confirmed it as a Northern Operational Support Node, one of the forward sites in the network of northern hubs that anchors Canada's new Arctic defence posture. It is also home to the Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS), operated by Polar Knowledge Canada, which makes the community a focal point for Arctic science. Few communities of its size carry so much of the country's northern ambition.

That attention rests on a fact too often left unsaid: Canada's sovereignty in the Kitikmeot is exercised, day to day, by Inuit. It is Inuit who live in these communities year-round, travel and harvest across the land and sea ice, and carry the knowledge of this region from one generation to the next. Runways, ports and mines can reinforce that presence. They cannot replace it.

The October 6–8 AGM in Cambridge Bay also made clear that this growing importance has not yet translated into the everyday security and opportunity Inuit expect.

Delegates described persistent pressures in housing, health care, air travel, food costs, language, community safety and services for young people and Elders. These are not separate from the region's economic future. They are among the conditions that will determine whether development creates lasting regional prosperity.

> **THE CENTRAL QUESTION**
>
> The central question emerging from the AGM is therefore not whether the Kitikmeot will attract attention and investment. It is how Inuit will shape that development, participate in its benefits and build the capacity to sustain them long after individual projects are complete. Sovereignty built around Inuit communities, rather than with them, is not a durable foundation.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

1 Turning strategic interest into lasting Inuit benefit

The region's project landscape is changing. B2Gold described its plans to increase Goose Mine production and continue exploration across the Back River Gold District. On October 8, during the AGM in Cambridge Bay, KIA and Agnico Eagle signed renewed Inuit Agreements for Hope Bay, establishing a framework for redevelopment, Inuit participation, training, business opportunities and stewardship. The proposed Grays Bay Road and Port remains a major potential link between regional access, supply chains and future development.



KIA's board and executive hear presentation during the AGM.

Together, these developments create an opportunity to consider regional benefits across projects rather than negotiate every opportunity in isolation. Inuit employment, contracting, skills development, ownership opportunities and environmental oversight are related elements of the same long-term economic proposition.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The next measure of success should go beyond the number of jobs or dollars committed at the outset of a project. It should include the quality and progression of Inuit employment, the capacity of Inuit businesses to win and retain contracts, and the extent to which new infrastructure and skills remain useful to communities over time.

SPOTLIGHT · SIGNED OCTOBER 8, 2026

The Hope Bay Inuit Agreements with Agnico Eagle

Agnico Eagle, which acquired Hope Bay in 2021, expects the project to become one of Canada's most important new mines within the next five years. The renewed agreements, signed in Cambridge Bay during the AGM, set the framework for its redevelopment. The package includes:

- **Surface access to Inuit Owned Lands** at Hope Bay
- **An Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA)**
- **A Net Smelter Royalty Agreement**
- **A Water and Wildlife Compensation Agreement**

Together they address Inuit participation, employment, training, business opportunities and environmental stewardship. Their specific terms remain confidential to the parties.

> *"This relationship ensures that agreements are based on providing economic benefits to Kitikmeot Inuit and take into account environmental issues and the long-term benefit of Kitikmeot Inuit."*
>
> **David Nivingalok, Acting President, Kitikmeot Inuit Association**

The structure of the agreements matters as much as their existence. Hope Bay sits on Inuit Owned Lands. Surface access, royalties and compensation flow from that ownership, which makes Kitikmeot Inuit landowners and rights-holders at the table, not stakeholders consulted after the fact. That is the model the region should expect of every major project, and of every Arctic investment justified in the name of sovereignty.



KIA and Agnico Eagle representatives at the signing of the renewed Hope Bay Inuit Agreements, Cambridge Bay, October 8, 2026. Photo: Agnico Eagle and KIA joint media bulletin.

INFRASTRUCTURE

2 A regional infrastructure agenda, not a series of isolated projects

At the AGM, aviation concerns were immediate: high fares, delayed cargo, difficult intercommunity connections and airport facilities that do not meet current or anticipated needs. Canadian North reported increased scheduled capacity, while delegates highlighted the difference between additional flights on paper and dependable, affordable access in practice. Kitikmeot MLAs also discussed runway capacity in Cambridge Bay and the implications of its potential role in future defence infrastructure.



A Canadian North flight on the apron in Cambridge Bay. Dependable, affordable air access was among the most pressing concerns raised.



Homes and sea containers along the Cambridge Bay shoreline.

These discussions point to a broader opportunity. Airports, ports, roads, housing, energy and communications should be assessed as a connected system serving communities, public services and economic activity. Infrastructure justified partly by national security or resource development can also be designed to improve medical travel, food supply, emergency response and local business access.

WHAT THIS MEANS

A coherent Kitikmeot infrastructure narrative would help governments and project proponents see community needs as core project outcomes, rather than additional benefits to be considered later. It would also strengthen the case for coordinated planning and investment across jurisdictions. If the Cambridge Bay runway is upgraded for defence, it should also be upgraded for the medevac, the cargo flight and the family travelling south for care. National security and community security are the same project.

SOVEREIGNTY AND WELLBEING

3 Sovereignty begins in the community

Sovereignty is not exercised from Ottawa, or from a runway. It is exercised every day by Inuit who live, harvest, travel and raise families across the Kitikmeot. When homes are overcrowded, flights are out of reach and young people lack the supports to stay and thrive, that is not only a social policy failure. It weakens the very presence on which Canada's Arctic claim depends.



Youth resolutions take shape on the flipchart.



Elder Jeannie Evalik of Cambridge Bay addresses the AGM.

The Elders, Youth and Women's reports brought the human dimensions of regional development into sharp focus. Delegates called for reliable mental health and healing services, safer gathering places, childcare, language programs, transportation for Elders and stronger opportunities for cultural learning. Housing shortages, substance use, food insecurity and uneven access to care emerged repeatedly.

Youth asked when their priorities would be taken seriously. That question deserves more than another statement of concern. It speaks to whether the next generation sees a place for itself in the Kitikmeot's future. Similarly, the need for Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut learning, intergenerational teaching and Inuit-led healing is inseparable from the strength of the region's institutions and communities.

> **WHAT THIS MEANS**
> Community wellbeing should be treated as a foundation of development, not a competing priority. A region cannot fully benefit from major new investments if families lack adequate housing, workers cannot access training or childcare, and young people do not have the supports to participate. Investment in Arctic defence that does not also invest in the communities whose presence underwrites Canadian sovereignty is incomplete.

ACCOUNTABILITY

4 From commitments to measurable progress

Many priorities raised in 2026 echoed not only the 2025 AGM, but resolutions carried in 2024 and community concerns reported as early as 2019. This repetition is itself an important finding. KIA reported that it has begun tracking follow-up on earlier resolutions. The resolutions passed in 2026 commit to a renewed ten-year strategic vision, a consolidated action plan based on Elders', Youth and Women's priorities, stronger Article 23 Inuit employment measures, and coordinated action on illicit drugs and airport security.

The emerging direction is significant: move from recurring calls for action to clearer responsibilities, timelines and public reporting. This would allow beneficiaries and partners to distinguish between advocacy underway, commitments secured and tangible changes in communities.

WHAT THIS MEANS

A public-facing implementation framework could identify a small number of regional outcomes, name the organizations responsible for each, and provide regular updates. It would turn the AGM into an annual checkpoint for progress rather than an annual reset of longstanding concerns.

Same priorities, year after year

Every priority below was raised again in 2026. Each was also carried in AGM resolutions in both 2024 and 2025, and most were reported as community concerns in 2019. Communities have been clear and consistent about what they need. The gap is not in knowing the priorities; it is in acting on them.

Priority raised	2019*	2024	2025	2026
Food insecurity and the cost of food	●	●	●	●
Mental health, suicide prevention and healing	●	●	●	●
Substance use and hard drugs	●	●	●	●
Housing, overcrowding and homelessness	●	●	●	●
Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut and cultural programs	●	●	●	●
Medical travel and air service	●	●	●	●
Elders' care, safety and support	●	●	●	●
Youth centres and safe spaces	—	●	●	●
Inuit employment and training	—	●	●	●

*Sources: KIA AGM Women's, Elders' and Youth resolutions, 2024 (AGM 16/24–18/24) and 2025 (AGM 12/25–14/25), as tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut; 2026 AGM record. *2019 concerns as reported from the 2019 AGM by Nunatsiaq News (October 4, 2019). A dash means the issue was not identified in the sources reviewed, not that it was absent.*



Elders and delegates follow the discussion.



A board member speaks to the meeting.

LOOKING AHEAD

5 KIA at 50: defining the next decade

KIA's 50th anniversary is an opportunity to connect five decades of Inuit advocacy and institution-building to a new period of regional change. The challenge ahead is both protective and ambitious: safeguarding Inuit rights, language, land and harvesting while strengthening Inuit influence over projects, infrastructure and investment that will shape the region for generations.



An Elder at the 2026 AGM.



The next generation, in the room.

The AGM demonstrated that there is no shortage of regional priorities or community knowledge. The next task is to connect them into a shared vision that governments,

industry and other partners can understand and act upon, with Inuit leadership at its centre.

KIA was founded in 1976, long before the Nunavut Agreement was signed in 1993. Through Article 23, that Agreement committed governments to a public service representative of Inuit. More than three decades later, that commitment remains unmet. The 2026 AGM's call for a Kitikmeot-specific Article 23 plan is a reminder that the obligations of the Nunavut Agreement are not historical. They are current, and they are owed.

> **KIA AT 50**
> The 50th anniversary on November 17, 2026, offers an immediate opportunity to communicate this longer-term direction across all five Kitikmeot communities.

THE YEAR AHEAD

A practical agenda for the year ahead

- Articulate a Kitikmeot-wide vision that connects Inuit rights, economic participation, community wellbeing and regional infrastructure.
- Translate the Elders', Youth and Women's priorities into a visible, time-bound action framework with clear accountability.
- Establish consistent measures for Inuit hiring, advancement, training and business participation across major projects.
- Advance an integrated infrastructure case that demonstrates both community and national benefits.
- Use the 2027 AGM to report publicly on progress, outstanding gaps and the next decisions required.

GOVERNANCE

Resolutions passed at the 2026 AGM

All four resolutions brought forward on October 8 were passed. Together, they mark a shift from identifying challenges to setting a regional direction and pressing for accountable action.

Inuit follow the proceedings.

01 PASSED

Renewing KIA's Strategic Vision for the Next Decade

Calls for a renewed 10-year strategic plan addressing Inuit rights, language and culture, wellbeing, economic development and Inuit ownership, infrastructure, stewardship, and workforce training and accreditation. Elders, Youth, Women, Inuit businesses and community leaders from all five communities would help shape the plan. A plan or substantive progress report is proposed for the 2027 AGM.

02 PASSED

Kitikmeot Regional Action Plan on Elders', Youth and Women's Priorities

Calls for one coordinated action plan drawing on the 2026 community reports and outstanding resolutions from earlier AGMs, with priorities, lead organizations and timelines, for presentation at the 2027 AGM.

03 PASSED

Strengthening Article 23 Inuit Employment in the Kitikmeot

Calls on the governments of Nunavut and Canada, working with NTI and KIA, to develop a Kitikmeot-specific employment action plan with measurable hiring, retention and advancement targets, annual reporting and funded training and career pathways.

04 PASSED

Strengthening Airport Security and Preventing Illicit Drug Trafficking

Calls for coordinated action by Canada, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the RCMP and airport authorities to prevent illicit drugs entering communities by air, including through Yellowknife, alongside prevention, treatment, mental health and Inuit-led healing supports.



Elder Inuk Charlie of Taloyoak, with Mona Tiktalek of Kugluktuk.



Delegates review the AGM papers.

IMPLEMENTATION

From resolutions to results: next steps

The following agenda draws on the resolutions passed and the directions recorded at the AGM. With the resolutions adopted, implementation now depends on KIA governance decisions, resourcing and collaboration with responsible partners.



Working through AGM materials.

1. **Confirm and communicate AGM decisions.** Publish the final adopted resolutions and their dispositions; share them with beneficiaries, community offices and Kitikmeot MLAs.
2. **Build a single accountability framework.** Use the existing 2025 resolution tracker to show what has advanced, what remains outstanding and which organizations are responsible for follow-up.

3 **Begin the regional planning process.** Engage Elders, Youth, Women, Inuit businesses and all five communities on a renewed 10-year vision and a practical regional action plan, with progress reported at the 2027 AGM.

4 **Advance Inuit employment and economic participation.** Pursue a Kitikmeot-specific Article 23 response and monitor Inuit hiring, training, advancement and business opportunities at Goose, Hope Bay and major infrastructure projects.

5 **Make community-serving infrastructure a shared priority.** Continue advocacy on airports, air service, cargo, medical travel and housing; link these needs to the region's broader transportation, defence and development opportunities.

6 **Coordinate community safety and wellbeing advocacy.** Seek joint action on airport security and illicit drugs while supporting culturally appropriate mental health, addictions treatment and Inuit-led healing.

7 **Report publicly in 2027.** Provide beneficiaries with an accessible account of progress, barriers and next decisions, rather than repeating the same priorities without a clear status update.



Smiles between sessions.



Recording the moment.

CONCLUSION

The opportunity ahead

The Kitikmeot is not simply a place where Canada's Arctic ambitions will unfold. Inuit communities, organizations and businesses have their own priorities, knowledge and aspirations for the region's future. The strongest development agenda will be one that begins there.

> *As national interest accelerates, the test will be whether the region gains lasting capacity, greater Inuit participation and stronger communities. That is the opportunity illuminated by the 2026 AGM, and the standard against which the next chapter should be judged.*

In the Kitikmeot, Arctic sovereignty is lived by Inuit. It should be invested in accordingly.



The shoreline at Cambridge Bay in early October snow.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report draws on presentations, discussions and community priorities shared at the Kitikmeot Inuit Association's 2026 Annual General Meeting. It offers a forward-looking interpretation of the opportunities and challenges facing the region. It is not a verbatim record of AGM proceedings. Project forecasts and commitments are attributed to presenters and remain subject to change. The four resolutions described were passed at the 2026 AGM. Other directions proposed in this report are interpretive and should not be read as KIA policy unless separately confirmed by KIA. The year-over-year comparison draws on KIA AGM resolutions tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut and on contemporary news reporting.

KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cambridge Bay, Nunavut **October 08, 2026**

Resolution #: AGM-26-10-25

Development of a Kitikmeot Regional Action Plan on Elders', Youth and Women's Priorities

Moved by: Lawrence Otokiak

Seconded by: Randy Hinanik

WHEREAS Elders, Youth and Women from the five Kitikmeot communities have identified important needs, challenges and priorities through their reports to the 2026 Annual General Meeting;

WHEREAS many of the issues identified in these reports were also raised through resolutions at the 2025 Annual General Meeting and require continued attention and follow-up;

WHEREAS recurring priorities include health care, housing, healing, community safety, language and culture, training and access to community programs;

WHEREAS coordinated planning can help identify concrete actions, responsibilities and timelines while respecting the distinct priorities of each community and group;

WHEREAS the Kitikmeot Inuit Association has an important role in advancing these priorities with relevant governments, organizations and community representatives;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association develop a consolidated Kitikmeot Regional Action Plan drawing on the 2026 Elders', Youth and Women's reports and outstanding resolutions from previous Annual General Meetings;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Action Plan identify regional and community-specific priorities, proposed follow-up actions, responsible organizations and recommended timelines for implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Elders, Youth, Women and representatives from all five Kitikmeot communities be engaged in developing the Action Plan;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association complete and present the Regional Action Plan to the membership at the 2027 Annual General Meeting.

In Favour: ✓	**Carried:** ✓
Against:	**Defeated:**
Abstentions:	

Dated: October 08, 2026

KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cambridge Bay, Nunavut **October 08, 2026**

Resolution #: AGM-26-10-26

Ending Seasonal Time Changes in the Kitikmeot Region

Moved by: Helen Tologanak

Seconded by: Tars Angutingunirk

WHEREAS the Northwest Territories and Alberta have ended seasonal clock changes, creating a potential time difference with the Kitikmeot Region when Nunavut changes its clocks;

WHEREAS Kitikmeot communities have longstanding healthcare, transportation, business and family connections with the Northwest Territories and Alberta;

WHEREAS maintaining consistent time with these neighbouring jurisdictions would support medical travel, scheduling, business operations and access to essential services;

WHEREAS Kitikmeot community leaders have raised concerns about the impacts of continued seasonal clock changes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association calls upon the Government of Nunavut to end seasonal clock changes in the Kitikmeot Region and maintain year-round time alignment with the Northwest Territories and Alberta;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Government of Nunavut work with Kitikmeot municipalities, Inuit organizations and elected representatives to determine and implement the necessary changes as soon as practicable.

In Favour: ✓ **Carried:** ✓

Against: **Defeated:**

Abstentions:

Dated: October 08, 2026

KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cambridge Bay, Nunavut **October 08, 2026**

Resolution #: AGM-26-10-27

Strengthening Article 23 Inuit Employment in the Kitikmeot Region

Moved by: Peter Akkikungnaq

Seconded by: Natasha Lear

WHEREAS Article 23 of the Nunavut Agreement requires the Government of Canada and the Government of Nunavut to work toward representative Inuit employment in government across occupational groups and levels;

WHEREAS Kitikmeot Inuit continue to require meaningful opportunities for government employment, professional development, promotion and leadership in their home communities;

WHEREAS Kitikmeot Inuit Association discussions have emphasized training, mentorship, knowledge sharing, succession planning and building Inuit talent from within;

WHEREAS greater accountability and region-specific employment planning are needed to connect Inuit training and recruitment efforts with lasting government employment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association calls upon the Government of Nunavut and Government of Canada, working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Kitikmeot Inuit Association, to develop a Kitikmeot-specific Article 23 employment action plan with measurable hiring, retention and advancement targets, timelines and annual reporting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the action plan include community-based employment opportunities, review of recruitment barriers, and funded pathways for Inuit training, mentorship, professional development and succession into technical, professional and leadership positions.

In Favour: ✓

Against:

Abstentions:

Carried: ✓

Defeated:

Dated: October 08, 2026

KITIKMEOT INUIT ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cambridge Bay, Nunavut **October 08, 2026**

Resolution #: AGM-26-10-28

Strengthening Airport Security and Preventing Illicit Drug Trafficking into Kitikmeot Communities

Moved by: Lawrence Otokiak

Seconded by: Helen Tologanak

WHEREAS illicit drugs, including crack cocaine and other dangerous substances, threaten the health, safety and well-being of Inuit families and communities throughout the Kitikmeot Region;

WHEREAS Kitikmeot communities depend on air transportation, including connections through Yellowknife, for passengers, essential goods and services;

WHEREAS concerns have been raised about the movement of illicit drugs through northern airports and the adequacy of existing screening, security and enforcement measures;

WHEREAS remote communities face challenges accessing addictions treatment, mental health supports, policing and emergency response services;

WHEREAS preventing drug trafficking requires coordinated action by governments, law enforcement, airport authorities and Inuit organizations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association calls upon the governments of Canada, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, together with the RCMP and relevant airport and transportation authorities, to strengthen measures to prevent illicit drugs including: drug dogs and their handlers at the Yellowknife and Cambridge Bay Airport and screening to further enhance screening at the Canada Post Shipping and Sorting Locations and Airline Cargo locations from entering Kitikmeot communities by air;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT these partners review security, screening, intelligence-sharing and enforcement practices at northern transportation hubs, particularly Yellowknife, and address identified gaps while respecting lawful travel and passenger rights;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT federal and territorial governments increase resources for drug enforcement, prevention, culturally appropriate addictions treatment, mental health services and Inuit-led healing;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT the Kitikmeot Inuit Association seek a coordinated northern action plan developed with Inuit participation, with clear responsibilities and progress reporting.

In Favour: ✓	**Carried:** ✓
Against:	**Defeated:**
Abstentions:	

Dated: October 08, 2026