

Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project

Presentation to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee
June 18, 2021



Purpose

- To introduce, and receive feedback on, the Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project, a Co-Development initiative.

Background: Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project

- Identified as a need through City-wide Heritage Survey Feasibility Study, informed by discussions with Indigenous Affairs Office
- Concept of Indigenous engagement effort proposed in City-wide Heritage Survey Feasibility Study report (July 2019) [Agenda Item History - 2019.PH7.11 \(toronto.ca\)](#)
- Expanded to include Toronto History Museums



City of Toronto Programs Requiring Engagement

Toronto Heritage Survey

A proactive, systematic approach to identifying cultural heritage resources throughout the City of Toronto.

City Planning is seeking to understand the properties and areas within the City of Toronto that Indigenous communities consider to have heritage value, to inform the evaluation process.

Toronto History Museums

Toronto History Museums is seeking information relevant to co-presenting Indigenous stories in a future City of Toronto Museum, and relevant to programming and exhibitions at the City of Toronto's 10 existing historic site museums.

Co-Development Process

A Co-Development Dialogue was launched in December 2019 to determine:

- If the City's goals could find support from Indigenous communities.
- How a heritage engagement project could also serve Indigenous communities.
- How the City could work with Indigenous communities to develop and deliver an Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project.
- How best to engage Indigenous organizations and communities in a good way.



Co-Development Dialogue Group

Two Co-Development Dialogue meetings were held on December 5, 2019 and June 22, 2020. They were facilitated by Nibissing Consulting and included the following participants:

Pauline Shirt, Elder
Mississaugas of the Credit
Six Nations of the Grand River
Toronto and York Region Métis Council
Toronto Inuit Association
Aboriginal Curatorial Collective
Anishnawbe Health Toronto
Mocassin Identifier Project
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
Youth Life Promotion, Tungasuvvingat Inuit

**Indigenous Programming Advisory Group- Aanji bimaadiziwin
(Museums and Heritage Services)**

J'net Ayayqwayaksheelh, Royal Ontario Museum

Virginia Barter, Métis Historian and Writer

Lorrie Gallant, Woodland Cultural Centre

Sarena Johnson, Ryerson University

Audrey Rochette, Indigenous Relations Consultant

Kim Wheatley, Indigenous Cultural Consultant

***The Huron-Wendat Nation** was engaged outside of the Dialogue meetings given availability constraints.

Recommendations from Co-Development Dialogue 1 (December 5, 2019)

- There is significant value in an engagement project that would be Indigenous led, and which would help to gather the stories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the City of Toronto, in an authentic voice.
- Capacity support funding may be required to support participation.
- Engagement must be broad, and reflect the diversity of Indigenous people in Toronto.
- Timeframes must be flexible and meet the needs of Indigenous peoples.



City of Toronto
Heritage Planning Services &
Museums and Heritage Services
December 3, 2019



Recommendations from Co-Development Dialogue 1 (December 5, 2019)

Regarding Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders

- Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders must be central to the project.
- Involve First Nation, Métis and Inuit individuals who have skills as historians, storytellers and as Indigenous knowledge keepers.

Regarding Steering Committee

- Develop a governance-level Heritage Engagement Steering Group of appointed representatives from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations to guide the development of an engagement process.
- Consider providing a modest honorarium and travel expenses to recognize participants' contributions and ongoing participation.
- Facilitation of the Heritage Engagement Steering Group by a knowledgeable facilitator that can provide advice to the Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project.

Recommendations from Co-Development Dialogue 2 (June 22, 2020)

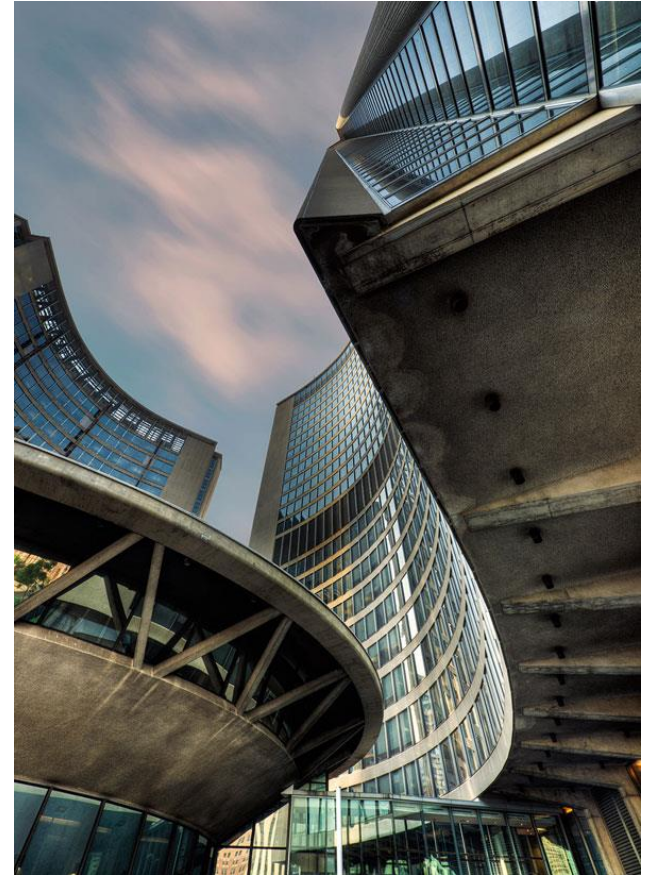
- Form an Indigenous Heritage Engagement Steering Circle, of up to thirteen (13) representatives, to inform the engagement strategy and process.
- Form a Knowledge Keepers Circle, of up to seven (7) representatives, to advise on understandings and appropriate uses of Indigenous history and traditional knowledge.
- Recruit an Indigenous Historian to coordinate research with Indigenous communities.
- A Project Facilitator must be affiliated with and respected among the Indigenous community especially within the arts, culture and heritage community.
- That in addition to capacity funding, the City of Toronto include gift-giving throughout the course of the engagement to express gratitude to all participants in the Steering Circle, Knowledge Keepers Circle and key informants.

Updates

- Developed and approved budget for Phase 2, shared by City Planning and Economic Development and Culture divisions.
- Joined the Indigenous Youth Research Associate program to hire Samantha Giguere on a one year contract to inform and help coordinate the Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project.
- Continued discussions with IAO and other City projects to ensure coordination, where possible, with other Indigenous engagement efforts.

Next Steps:

- Procure an Indigenous Engagement Specialist to: (Q3 2021)
 - Organize and facilitate Steering Circle and Knowledge Keepers Circle
 - Inform the approach to conducting historical research with Indigenous communities
 - Develop and deliver an engagement strategy to gather Indigenous knowledge
- Launch Public Engagement Program (Q1 2022).





Thank you!

For more information, contact:

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