

# **The Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE): A Step Along the Long Road of Reconciliation**

**Date:** September 20, 2021

**To:** Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee

**From:** Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, City Manager's Office and Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

**Wards:** All

## **SUMMARY**

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This report acknowledges that the land we call Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

This report updates City Council on the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's ("ICIE") purpose, construction, funding, program model, and proposed Indigenous governance and accountability framework.

The planned 22,000 sq. ft. ICIE facility will be situated in a commercial space located at 200 Dundas Street East. The first of its kind in Ontario, when it opens in 2023 the ICIE will become one of only a handful of incubators in Canada dedicated to Indigenous economic empowerment and business development. As such, the ICIE presents a significant opportunity to support and connect First Nations, Inuit and Métis entrepreneurs across Toronto, Ontario and Canada to critical resources and each other.

After many years of planning, collaboration and conversation with and among Indigenous communities in Toronto and beyond, the ICIE is now moving from planning to implementation. This project is a central pillar of the City of Toronto's collective reconciliation commitments and strategies, including the Reconciliation Action Plan, and concretely addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92 which states: "Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects."

A Leadership Advisory Circle (LAC) of Indigenous leaders, entrepreneurs, Elders and community members has guided the planning and implementation of the ICIE since April 2019. The LAC's advice informs this report's core recommendations that (i) Council direct City staff to use an open, transparent, competitive process to select an Indigenous-led organization or consortium to serve as the operator of the ICIE, and that (ii) agreements between the City of Toronto and the operator of the ICIE be inspired by the Two Row Wampum's notion of equitable, peaceful, respectful co-existence between different nations.

A preliminary ICIE program model has been developed through conversations with the Indigenous community and based on the "Nothing About Us Without Us" principle of self-determination. Grounded in needs and objectives defined by the Indigenous community, the ICIE will aim to provide culturally safe spaces, connections, and resources for Indigenous business and social entrepreneurs.

To date, the ICIE project and facility has been funded through a combination of Council approved Section 37 funds, reallocations within Economic Development and Culture's (EDC's) approved operating budget, and a grant from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).

Looking ahead, the City's portion of the ICIE project's forecast operating costs for 2022 through Q1 2024, totaling \$3,304,729, are currently unfunded. There is also a need and opportunity for the City to confirm a longer-term funding contribution to support annual ICIE operating expenses in a manner which strengthens the centre's ability to attract third party funding, advances Toronto's economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19, and represents a generational investment in Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity.

Accordingly, this report proposes that adequate and appropriate funding to cover the City's portion of ICIE start-up costs and to provide an annual contribution for the ICIE's annual operating expenses be recommended for Council's consideration as part of the 2022 budget process.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office recommend that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, to select an Indigenous-led organization or consortium to operate the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE) through an open competitive solicitation process in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Code Chapter 71 and 195, City policies and procedures.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, and when appropriate, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to negotiate, enter into

and execute on behalf of the City an operating, contribution/funding or any related ICIE program agreements on such terms deemed necessary and appropriate by the City and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, with the designated operator of the ICIE or other parties wishing to financially support the ICIE, provided that required City funding is approved through the City's budget process. All such agreements, which may have a term of up to 10 years, shall be based upon respect, consultation and co-operation with the ICIE operator and draw inspiration from the Two Row Wampum that upholds Indigenous autonomy.

3. City Council endorse the key goals and elements of the ICIE program model, as detailed in this report, which include: to provide a culturally safe space, connections, supports, programming and resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs and innovators; and to be an entrepreneurial resource centre by and for the Indigenous community.

4. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to recommend for City Council's consideration, as part of the 2022 budget process, adequate and appropriate funding for (a) the City's portion of ICIE start-up costs between 2022 and Q1 2024 and (b) a reasonable share of the ICIE's annual operating expenses for a period of not less than 10 years.

5. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office to report back to Council on the status of the ICIE in Q4 2022.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Scheduled to open in 2023, the ICIE will be situated in a City commercial space located at 200 Dundas Street East.

The ICIE capital project and improvements, with projected costs of \$7.9 million, are fully funded by Section 37 community benefits and are included in EDC's 10 Year Capital Budget and Plan under CSE015-01.

Operational expenses associated with the ICIE project during its start-up phase are partially funded through a five-year (April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2024) Contribution Agreement, valued at up to \$5.0 million, with the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). For the duration of the Agreement (eligible and supported) operating costs for the ICIE project are shared by the City (49.33 percent) and FedDev Ontario (50.67 percent).

Table 1: ICIE Contribution Agreement with FedDev Ontario – City's Portion of Operating Costs Incurred to Date and Forecast

Year	Eligible and Supported Costs	City Portion (49.33 percent)
2019*	\$921,357	\$454,506
2020*	\$696,981	\$343,821
2021*	\$983,860	\$485,338
2022	\$2,441,214	\$1,204,251
2023	\$3,375,567	\$1,665,167
2024 - Q1	\$882,447	\$435,311
Total	\$9,301,427	\$4,588,394

\*Represents actual costs incurred related to staffing, business planning, program and project management, consultation, etc.

The City's portion of the ICIE project's 2021 operating costs, forecast to be \$485,338, will be absorbed within the 2021 Council Approved Operating Budget for Economic Development and Culture.

The City's portion of the ICIE project's forecast operating costs for 2022 through to Q1 2024, totaling \$3,304,729, is currently unfunded. Expenses during this period will be incurred for project management; facility development and fit-out; ICIE operator selection and capacity building; creating and implementing a branding, marketing and communication strategy; recruiting and hiring ICIE staff; programming development; and other start-up needs.

Unlike in 2019 through 2021, EDC does not expect to be able to cover the City's share of these costs through an internal reallocation of its approved (base) divisional operating budget, both because (a) community demand and business need for EDC programs and services are anticipated to be higher than normal to support a full, sustainable and equitable economic recovery from the impact of COVID-19, and (b) start-up costs for the ICIE in this period will higher than in 2019 through 2021, with a new operator for the facility anticipated to be selected in 2022 and the facility itself set to open for its first year of operations sometime in 2023.

For 2024 and beyond, providing stable City funding for a reasonable portion of the ICIE's annual operating expenses – complementing revenue from user fees, events, sponsorships, grants and other sources – would enable the ICIE operator to offer needed services for Indigenous entrepreneurs and innovators, undertake mid-range planning and program development, and secure further investment from other governments and partners.

Accordingly, per Recommendation 4 of this report, through the 2022 budget process, EDC will include a new request for adequate and appropriate funding for the City's portion of ICIE start-up costs from 2022 through Q1 2024 and for a predictable City contribution to the ICIE's annual operating expenses for a period of not less than 10 years, subject to terms and conditions as agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been advised of the financial impact associated with this program to be considered along with other priorities in the 2022 Budget process.

## **RECONCILIATION AND EQUITY IMPACT**

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With COVID-19 having a disproportionate negative impact on Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents and communities across Toronto, it is critical that the City's recovery and rebuild investments, programs and policies prioritize Reconciliation and equity.

The Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship ("ICIE") has been analyzed for its anticipated impacts on Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents. The overall Reconciliation and equity impact is highly positive. Through the ICIE, access to information, space and economic development opportunities, including training and self-employment, along with a sense of identity, belonging, safety and security in Toronto will be positively impacted for Indigenous Peoples.

The ICIE will provide Indigenous residents and business owners with a safe, supportive space and resources to further develop entrepreneurial skills, nurture and grow successful Indigenous-led business ventures, and celebrate Indigenous innovation, culture and community. Supporting the growth of Indigenous businesses in Toronto can increase prosperity, help to address Indigenous unemployment, under-employment and precarious employment, and foster a sense of belonging.

Establishing the ICIE as an Indigenous-led and governed entity, and confirming a long-term City funding contribution for it, can serve as a concrete demonstration of the City of Toronto's commitment to the Reconciliation Action Plan, including bolstering Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity and showing a willingness to decolonize the City's relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

An intersectional analysis, informed by the history of trauma and economic marginalization detailed in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), highlights the truth that Indigenous women face long-standing and contemporary economic disempowerment.<sup>1</sup> The ICIE has the potential to support Indigenous women and contribute to the City's response to the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice. The City's Reconciliation Action Plan also calls for long-term and adequate funding and supports for Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQQA) persons.

With regard to entrepreneurship, Indigenous women are less likely to be self-employed compared to their Indigenous male counterparts, suggesting that additional outreach and supports may be necessary to reach this group. It is expected that the ICIE will

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<sup>1</sup> Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, June 2019, Volume 1a, p. 111 ([https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1a-1.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf)).

develop programs and services to redress the overlapping experiences of disadvantage faced by Indigenous women.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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City Council adopted a Member Motion at its meeting on June 8, 2021 requesting the Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, in consultation with relevant staff, to report to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee and the Executive Committee on what further actions are needed to advance truth, reconciliation and justice, how the City will hold itself accountable to community in advancing these actions, and whether additional resources and funding are required to further the City of Toronto's work on reconciliation.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.42>

City Council adopted a Member Motion at its March 10, 2021 meeting authorizing the release of Section 37 (Planning Act) funds from various developments for capital improvements to the future space of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship located at 200 Dundas Street East.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM30.3>

City Council on December 16, 17 and 18, 2020 forwarded the report from the City of Toronto's Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group entitled "Building Back Stronger" to the City Manager for review and implementation as part of Toronto's COVID-19 recovery efforts. This report recommends that Toronto co-develop programs and initiatives with Indigenous partners to support Indigenous-led businesses and pursue a program of specific community investments to promote the encouragement, scaling and sustainability of business and cultural enterprises led by Black, Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC18.15>

City Council adopted a Member Motion at its June 18 and 19, 2019 meeting requesting the Mayor, the City Manager and the Manager, Indigenous Affairs Office, in partnership with relevant staff and the Indigenous community, including the Aboriginal Affairs Committee and the broader Indigenous community, to consult on the role and responsibilities of the municipal government implementing the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM8.23>

City Council adopted a Member Motion at its July 16, 2019 meeting authorizing approval to accept federal funding for the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship located at 200 Dundas Street East.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM9.28>

City Council adopted a Member Motion at its July 23, 2018 meeting authorizing the release of Section 37 (Planning Act) funds from various developments for capital improvements to the future space for the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship located at 200 Dundas Street East.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.MM44.22>

City Council adopted a Member Motion at its July 23, 2018 meeting authorizing the release of Section 37 (Planning Act) funds from various developments to purchase additional space at the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship located at 200 Dundas Street East.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.MM44.116>

City Council, at its March 26, 2018 meeting, endorsed the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and supported the Indigenous District application for the Smart Cities Challenge.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.EX32.11>

## COMMENTS

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### Background

Over 70,000 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples call Tkaronto home. Economic success is recognized as a key plank in driving reconciliation, decolonization and self-determination for Indigenous Peoples in Toronto. Along with education, training, and the removal of systemic barriers to employment, a key component of Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity is the development of an entrepreneurship eco-system to support Indigenous-owned and operated businesses. The City of Toronto is working with the local Indigenous community to develop the ICIE to meet this need.

As noted in the Pontiac Group's 2019 study: "Indigenous entrepreneurs face unique challenges. They need greater access to capital, qualified Indigenous employees, skills training, investment, technical and business know-how and mentoring. Yet despite these challenges, Indigenous entrepreneurs are finding success and their ranks are growing. While promoting entrepreneurship alone will not solve lifting Indigenous people out of poverty, it is an important element within the toolbox. Strengthening Indigenous owned and operated businesses also strengthens Canada's economy with valuable products and services."<sup>2</sup>

### City of Toronto's Commitments to Indigenous Peoples

A central pillar of the City of Toronto's 2010 Commitments to Indigenous Peoples<sup>3</sup> as well as the City's proposed Reconciliation Action Plan, the ICIE is designed to give Indigenous communities an opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial aspirations by providing space, business programming, advisory services, mentorship supports, a community event venue and connections to business networks.

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<sup>2</sup> Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship – Draft Model, April 1, 2019, City of Toronto, Pontiac Group, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Commitments to Indigenous Peoples, City of Toronto, 2010, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/commitments-to-indigenous-peoples/>.

By connecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis entrepreneurs across Toronto, Ontario, and Canada to critical business development resources and one another, the ICIE concretely addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92 which states: "Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects."<sup>4</sup>

The ICIE also represents a response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), in particular, to the Inquiry's Calls for Justice Number 4.4: "We call upon all governments to provide supports and resources for educational, training, and employment opportunities for all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. These programs must be available within all Indigenous communities."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the ICIE supports a number of resolutions contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including Article 21: "Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security."<sup>6</sup>

### **"Nothing About Us Without Us": Respecting Indigenous Rights and the Principle of Self-Determination**

Indigenous perspectives, residents and entrepreneurs have been central to the process of imagining and co-developing the ICIE as a business incubator and facility to support Indigenous entrepreneurship in Toronto. The threads that tie the beads together in this initiative are respect for the principle of Indigenous self-determination, and a commitment to advancing Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity.

The idea for an Indigenous business incubator in Toronto began as a community conversation in 2012 with local Indigenous community members and the ward Councillor. A study was then commissioned by the Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto funded by a Metcalf Foundation grant to assess the feasibility of creating an Indigenous Business and Cultural District along Dundas Street East. The Aboriginal Economic Development Project held a series of consultations and interviews with Indigenous leaders and business owners in Toronto. These consultations culminated in the Indigenous community's recommendation to create a business incubator in Toronto in order to develop and support Indigenous entrepreneurs.

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<sup>4</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015, p. 10, [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – Calls for Justice, 2019, p. 182, [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\\_for\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007, [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf).



In 2018 the Indigenous-led Pontiac Group was retained to lead additional consultations with the Indigenous community in Toronto to further flesh out the model for the incubator – now called the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE). The work of the Pontiac Group was complemented by Civic Hall Toronto, which uses human-centred design approaches to support the articulation of space and user needs. Engagement with Indigenous entrepreneurs and residents on the ICIE's vision, business needs and physical layout included:

- Design-Thinking Workshops – a series of design-thinking workshops were developed and launched to engage Indigenous entrepreneurs;
- Indigenous Entrepreneur Online Survey – the development and launch of an online survey to gather input from Indigenous entrepreneurs from across Canada; and
- One-on-One Consultations – a large number of one-on-one consultations were undertaken with Indigenous entrepreneurs and professionals, as well as other Indigenous community members.

By embedding Indigenous voices into these community consultations, this process provided: key Indigenous design elements to inform the planning of the facility space; parameters for the establishment of the ICIE Leadership Advisory Circle (see Attachment 1 for members); and broad guiding principles to inform the development of the ICIE, including among others:

- Maintaining a clear focus on business incubation;
- Ensuring the incubator is Indigenous-led and operated;
- Creating a place to both celebrate and promote Indigenous innovation and culture;
- Guaranteeing transparency and accountability throughout the planning, building and implementation of the incubator; and
- Developing a sustainability model for the ICIE.

City staff from the Economic Development and Culture division and the Indigenous Affairs Office continue to work with the local Indigenous community members to co-develop the ICIE. Other divisions within the City that are involved in collaborating on the project include the Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) division, the City Manager's Office (CMO), Strategic Partnerships, and the local Councillor's office.

## **The Space**

The ICIE facility will be situated in a commercial space located at 200 Dundas Street East. Funding for the construction of the ICIE is being provided by the City of Toronto using Section 37 funds.<sup>7</sup> The section 37 funds have been allocated towards the ICIE capital project for capital improvements.

The ICIE facility will comprise over 22,000 sq. ft. of commercial space spread over three floors:

- Ground floor: Retail (4,789 sq. ft.)

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<sup>7</sup> Section 37 of the Planning Act permits the City to authorize increases in permitted height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefits, provided that there are related Official Plan policies in place (section 5.1.1 of the Official Plan as well as certain area-specific policies). For more information, see <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/section-37-benefits/>.

- Second floor: Event space (10,933 sq. ft.)
- Third floor: Office/Work spaces (6,778 sq. ft.)

The ICIE facility will offer offices to tenants on short- and long-term leases, along with boardrooms and meeting rooms, kitchen facilities for catering, a knowledge house, a lounge area and event space, among other amenities.

With a planned opening in 2023, the City of Toronto is currently soliciting expressions of interest from businesses or entrepreneurs interested in co-locating at the ICIE:  
<https://s.cotsurvey.chkmkt.com/surveys/take/?e=217441&p=1&l=en&h=7803721E17FD F5C>.

The City of Toronto is also soliciting expressions of interest from aligned organizations interested in establishing partnerships with the ICIE operator:  
<https://s.cotsurvey.chkmkt.com/?e=217448&d=e&h=AE5603AE1CAF357&l=e.n>.

ICIE tenancy and partnership opportunities will, however, not be finalized until decisions on the governance and operations for the ICIE are complete and an operator for the ICIE is confirmed. Authority to enter into use and occupation agreements for the ICIE facility will be sought at that time.

## **Governance**

To ensure the ICIE reflects and is responsive to the values, priorities, and needs of a diverse Indigenous business and entrepreneur community, it will be governed and operated by an Indigenous-led organization.

A Leadership Advisory Circle (LAC) made up of local Indigenous Elders, residents, entrepreneurs and leaders was established by the City in April 2019 to provide advice and guidance on the development and governance of the ICIE. A list of the LAC members as of September 2021 can be found in Attachment 1.

In the summer of 2021, the LAC advised that the ICIE be governed by:

- An Indigenous-led entity that has the skills and experience necessary to operate the ICIE, including entrepreneurship and property management capabilities;
- An Indigenous-led entity that is able to use Indigenous way of governance and exercise independent decision-making; and
- An Indigenous-led entity chosen through a transparent selection process.

Following the advice of the LAC, an open Request for Information (RFI) process (released on August 5, 2021 and closed on September 7, 2021) was undertaken to assess the number and capacity of existing Indigenous-led organizations (or consortia) potentially interested in operating the ICIE.

City staff and the LAC reviewed the responses and determined that there is a sufficient number of Indigenous-led organizations with the requisite capacity and interest in serving as an operator of the ICIE to proceed with an open competitive solicitation process in accordance with the City's Purchasing By-laws, policies and procedures.

Among other criteria, the selection of the operator of the ICIE through an open competitive solicitation process will consider and assess proponents':

- Approach to governing, operating and programming the ICIE;
- Organizational capacity, experience and network; and
- Budget plan and model for the ICIE's financial viability.

## Accountability Framework

In order to decolonize the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the City of Toronto, it is necessary to do things differently than the City has done in the past. Rather than frame accountability for the ICIE as a subordinate reporting to a superior, the ICIE's accountability framework will be founded on mutual respect and partnership. Specifically, the ICIE Accountability Framework will draw inspiration from the principles of treaties like the Kaswentha, or "Two Row Wampum," that recognized and upheld Indigenous autonomy.

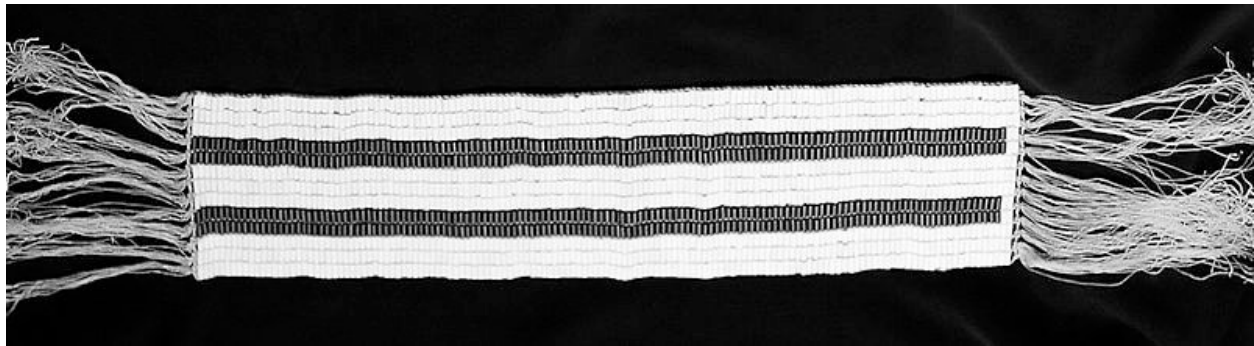


Figure 1: Two Row Wampum, 1613

"The Two Row Wampum is commonly believed to have been created in 1613 to enshrine the agreement between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee to live in mutual peace, friendship, and respect on Turtle Island."<sup>8</sup> According to the Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows, "One row symbolizes the Haudenosaunee people with their law and customs, while the other row symbolizes European laws and customs. As nations move together side-by-side on the River of Life, they are to avoid overlapping or interfering with one another."<sup>9</sup>

It is therefore recommended that the Accountability Framework for the ICIE would be set out in an agreement between the ICIE operator and the City of Toronto. Similar to the Governing Principles enshrined in section 1 of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, this agreement could affirm that it is in the best interest of both the Indigenous-led ICIE operator and the City of Toronto to "work together in a partnership based on respect, consultation and co-operation."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Our Stories: First Peoples in Canada (<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies>), by Centennial College, <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/chapter/wampum-belts/>, CC BY 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

<sup>9</sup> John Borrows, cited in "Peace, friendship and respect: The meaning of the Two Row Wampum" by Karine Duhamel, Canadian Museum of Human Rights (<https://humanrights.ca/story/peace-friendship-and-respect>).

<sup>10</sup> City of Toronto Act, 2006, Preamble and Part 1 - S. 1(2) (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/06c11>).

## The ICIE Program Model

The purpose of the ICIE is to provide culturally safe spaces, connections, supports, and resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs. The goal is to offer a suite of supports, space, and programming that will be relevant and useful for Indigenous entrepreneurs, whether they are at the pre-incubation or complete build-out stage of their business or social enterprise journey. The ICIE is meant to be an entrepreneurial resource centre by and for the Indigenous community, providing a focused set of programs, advisors and funding pathways for Indigenous ventures in an engaging culturally-supportive space.

The following are some of the key elements that consultations with Indigenous communities and business leaders have identified as desired components of the ICIE; however, in the spirit of self-determination, these elements will be reviewed, built upon and refined by the Indigenous-led operator once it assumes responsibility for the facility and its programming:

- Support Indigenous entrepreneurs in Toronto, Ontario and beyond through coaches and mentors, spaces for work, and collaboration and special events that align with Indigenous values and cultures.
- Be a leading centre of accessible on-line learning supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs regardless of their stage of growth or venture type (for-profit, not-for-profit, social venture, etc.).
- Provide a space that facilitates and encourages cross-community and cross-market-sector (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) engagement focusing on economic empowerment that leads to a better understanding of Indigenous culture and increased economic opportunities.
- Provide youth with an opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial aspirations through learning programs, coaching and mentorships.
- Help navigate funding sources and build financial skills to manage a business.
- Combat experiences of isolation by creating a place that fosters a sense of community for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Where possible and culturally appropriate, the ICIE will leverage programming from the existing incubator ecosystem while ensuring the incorporation of Indigenous-specific supports.

Finally, the inclusion of the term "innovation" in the name of the incubator is deliberate. In addition to catalyzing Indigenous entrepreneurship, it is expected that the ICIE will encourage, celebrate, showcase and commercialize Indigenous innovation. Indigeneity – understood as distinct ways of being in the world, shaped by many factors, including a relationship to the land; connection to community; spirituality; creativity; and imagination – is conducive to the development of innovative approaches to issues, problems and opportunities.

This recognition provides the underlying value proposition for the ICIE – not only does it serve Indigenous Peoples, but it has the potential to leverage strengths and assets shared by very few, if any, other publicly funded institutions in Toronto or Ontario. By centring and bringing together these three elements – Indigeneity, Entrepreneurship

and Innovation – the ICIE promises to advance Indigenous economic prosperity and cultures.

## **City Funding for the ICIE**

This report recommends that adequate and appropriate funding for (a) the City's portion of ICIE start-up costs between 2022 and Q1 2024, forecast to be approximately \$3.304 million in total, and (b) a reasonable share of the ICIE's annual operating expenses for a period of not less than 10 years be included in the Economic Development and Culture division's 2022 Operating Budget Submission for consideration.

The City has learned that incubators often require long-term financial support – even at modest levels – if they are to offer an adequate and reliable level of service to participating businesses and become a catalyzing fixture around which a viable economic (niche) eco-system of entrepreneurs, firms, funders, partners, workers / professionals and suppliers can form. Critical network, business and sector development benefits, in other words, need support through an on-going “program” as opposed to short-term project-based funding.

In keeping with the City's commitments to advancing Reconciliation and in recognition of the additional barriers to economic success which Indigenous business ventures and entrepreneurs face (that is, racism, challenges accessing financing / capital, need to attract and retain skilled employees, access to mentoring and business advisory services, etc.), the ICIE offers a unique opportunity for the City of Toronto to make a generational investment in Indigenous economic empowerment and prosperity.

Providing stable City funding for a reasonable portion of the ICIE's annual operating expenses for at least 10 years – complementing revenue from user fees, events, sponsorships, grants and other sources – will enable the ICIE operator to offer needed services for Indigenous entrepreneurs and innovators, undertake mid-range planning and program development, and secure further investment from other governments and partners.

## **Next Steps**

After years of planning, collaboration and conversation with and among Indigenous communities in Toronto and beyond, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is now moving from dream to reality. The beads on the string are finally starting to reveal an integrated pattern, a coherent design. Next steps include:

- Continue meaningful Indigenous community direction and engagement (on-going)
- Tender and award construction contract (Q4 2021 or Q1 2022)
- Recommend City funding for the balance of the ICIE start-up period (2022 through Q1 2024) and core operations (Q2 2024 and beyond) through the 2022 operating budget process
- Facilitate the identification and selection of an existing Indigenous-led operator for the ICIE, through an open, transparent and competitive process (Q4 2021)
- Finalize an operating agreement between the City of Toronto and the ICIE operator (Q1 2022)

- Enter into an occupancy agreement between the ICIE operator and the City of Toronto for use of the ICIE facility (Q2 2022)
- Open the ICIE to serve Indigenous entrepreneurs (2023)

With the active engagement, direction and stewardship of the Indigenous community, ongoing secretariat support from the City of Toronto, and funding from the City, the federal government and other partners, the various threads of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship are coming together to co-design a place and a space that Indigenous entrepreneurs can call their own.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Selina Young  
Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, City Manager's Office

Cheryl Blackman  
Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: ICIE Leadership Advisory Circle (LAC) Members (as of September 2021)

## **Attachment 1: ICIE Leadership Advisory Circle (LAC) Members (as of September 2021)**

- Andrea Chrisjohn, Toronto Council Fire (Association)
- Angus Palmer, Wigwamen (Non-Profit Housing)
- Duke Redbird, Toronto District School Board (Elder)
- Jarret Leaman, Troon Technology (Entrepreneur/Association/Two-Spirit community)
- Jonathon Araujo Redbird, Pontiac Group (Entrepreneurship)
- Krystal Abotossaway, Aboriginal Professionals Associations of Canada (Association/Banking)
- Libby Garg, Freshii (Business Entrepreneur/Tech)
- Michael Polak, RBC (Business)
- Paul-Emile McNab, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (Association)
- Peggy Pitawanakwat, Coordinator, First Peoples @ Seneca College (Educational Association)
- Sarah Midanik, Downie Wenjack Fund (Non-Profit)
- Shak Gobert, Toronto Indigenous Business Association (Association)
- Shelley Charles, Independent (Elder)
- Stephanie Pangowish, Independent (Entrepreneur/Artist)

### **Ex-officio Members**

#### **City Council:**

- Kristyn Wong-Tam, City Councillor, Ward 13 – Toronto Centre