



TTC Indigenous Wayfinding

Queen Station Pilot Project
Cameron Stewart

Background Information


The background is a collage of colorful geometric shapes (triangles and quadrilaterals) in shades of teal, yellow, orange, and purple. Overlaid on these shapes are several stylized animal silhouettes: a bear in the top left, a wolf in the top right, a turtle in the middle right, a bird in the bottom left, and a bison in the bottom center. A large white circle is positioned behind the text.

Background

- In October 2025, The TTC Board adopted a new Wayfinding Strategy
- As part of that Wayfinding Strategy the TTC Board also adopted the Signage and Wayfinding Standards document
- TTC recognizes that “wayfinding is about removing barriers to movement – whether cognitive, physical, linguistic or emotional, and enhancing the overall transit experience for everyone, regardless of familiarity with the system or the city.”

Background

- The strategy intends to:
 - “transform the TTC’s wayfinding from a static signage approach into a dynamic, multi-sensory, and integrated experience.”
 - “be rooted in customer-centric design.”
 - “eliminate barriers to navigation, ensuring that every rider, regardless of familiarity or ability, can travel with confidence and ease.”



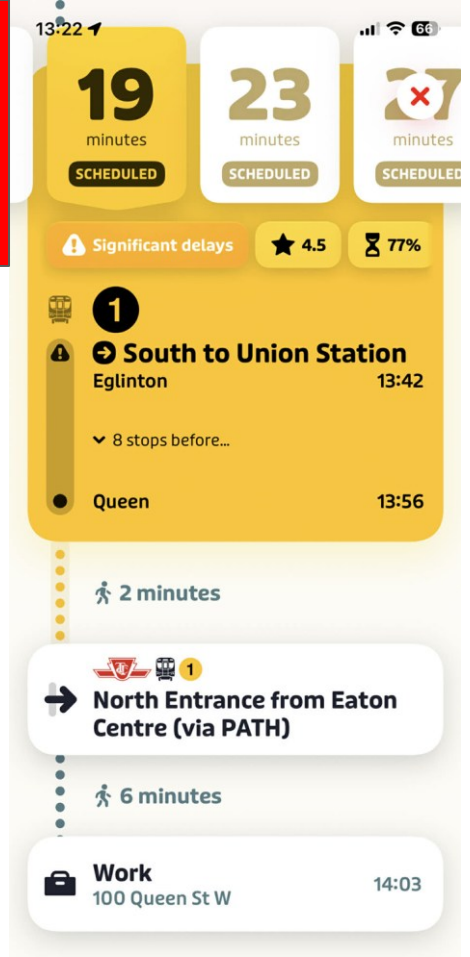
Problem & Analysis

Problem

When navigating our system, one of the biggest problems our riders have is finding the correct exit once they reach their destination station

Problem

- Navigation apps recommend that customers take the “North entrance” which is neither identified this way in existing signage and is not immediately visible when exiting a subway vehicle
- Most stations have more than 1 exit, which causes customer confusion about which precise exit leads them to their destination point



Comparative Analysis

- Systems around the world, like the MRT in Singapore (pictured here):
 - a. Use numbers to identify exits
 - b. Use acronyms to identify different lines
 - i. TE = Thomson-East Coast Line



Comparative Analysis

- Other systems, like the DMRC in New Delhi, use colour-coded footprints in transfer stations that guide passengers to their desired lines.



Comparative Analysis

- The TTC has opted to use a combination of:
 - a. numbers and colours to represent information about lines to customers
 - b. numbers and letters to identify routes and direction



G-02-A001
Line 1



G-02-A002
Line 2



G-02-A003
Line 3



G-02-A004
Line 4



G-02-A005
Line 5



G-02-A006
Line 6



G-02-A007
Line 7



G-08-A101
Route Regular North



G-08-A102
Route Regular South



G-08-A103
Route Regular East



G-08-A104
Route Regular West

Gap

The Wayfinding Strategy and The Signage and Wayfinding Standards document is silent on how to improve wayfinding for exits and does not provide any standards for the design of exit signage



What Are Our Primary Objectives?

1. Improve customer wayfinding experience
1. Reduce rider confusion through **stress reduction**, which is achieved by improved **cognitive mapping** methodologies
1. Decolonize how people orient themselves
 - Show Indigenous knowledge as **infrastructure, not ornament**

Our Solution



What Can We Learn From Indigenous Wayfinding?

Indigenous navigation historically relied on:

1. Landmarks
 - Which are more intuitive for people navigating an unfamiliar system than abstract place names or numbers
2. Stories, relationships and meaning, not abstract grids
 - A navigation system with a deeper meaning builds a more welcoming, **human-centered** environment
 - Reducing stress thereby enhancing the brain's cognitive capacity to navigate effectively

Indigenous Place-making as Wayfinding

1. Each major exit will be assigned a **unique animal icon** used consistently across signs, wall markings, and architectural elements
1. Animals function as **primary landmarks**
1. The animal icons are inspired by the **Seven Grandfather Teachings**

What Are the Seven Grandfather Teachings?

- **Guiding Anishinaabe Principles**

- Love - Eagle
- Respect - Bison
- Bravery - Bear
- Truth - Turtle
- Honesty - Raven
- Humility - Wolf
- Wisdom - Beaver

The background is a collage of colorful geometric shapes (triangles, quadrilaterals) in shades of teal, yellow, pink, and purple. Overlaid on these shapes are several stylized illustrations of animals: a bear, a wolf, a frog, a bird, and a beaver. The text is centered over a white circular area.

**How Will This
Look In Practice?**

What will this look like in the Transit App?

- All of the animals, from the 7 Grandfather Teachings, have a unicode equivalent that is displayable in an app
- Thus the animal corresponding with each exit could be displayed to commuters when using a transit app

Wolf: U+ 1F43A

Bear: U+ 1F43B

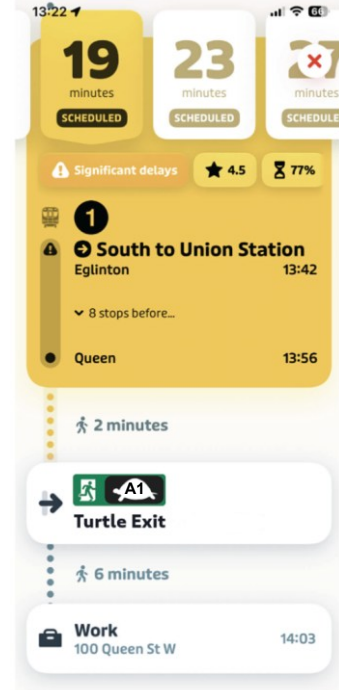
Turtle: U+ 1F422

Eagle: U+ 1F985

Bison: U+ 1F9AC

Beaver: U+ 1F9AB

Raven: U+1F426 U+200D U+2B1B



QUEEN

←  1  2  3   **Exit**
Turtle, Bear, Wolf

QUEEN

Exit
Eagle, Beaver, Bison   5  6  →



Turtle Exit
The turtle is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **truth**.
Learn more about TTC's Indigenous Wayfinding Pilot at ttc.ca/indigenouwayfinding



Bear Exit
The bear is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **courage**.
Learn more about TTC's Indigenous Wayfinding Pilot at ttc.ca/indigenouwayfinding

PATTISON 206



WE HAVE NO IDEA WHO OUR CUSTOMERS ARE. MAYBE THEY ALL LIVE IN TORONTO.



Wolf Exit
The wolf is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **humility**.
Learn more about TTC's Indigenous Wayfinding Pilot at ttc.ca/indigenouwayfinding







It's too long to read, I'm ok.
You don't have to be ok.

Same utility as OpenAI and Anthropic.
Half the cost.
Radium
Same utility. Half the cost. Switch in one line of code.
Ra

No person shall attempt to sell, purchase or receive on TIG property.





Yonge St.

milestones
GRILL + BAR™



Subway





Toronto Transit
Commission

Queen



Subway





A safe contact.
Talk to TTC staff
anytime using
this passenger
intercom.



9Y17S





Queen

1



Wolf Exit



1

BATH

QUEEN



2 QUEEN STREET EAST



2 QUEEN STREET EAST

St. Michael's Hospital via 2 Queen Street East

TTC Subway Closure Information

Welcome to Queen Station

St. Michael's Hospital via 2 Queen Street East

2 Queen Street East

2 QUEEN STREET EAST

2 QUEEN STREET EAST

 **QUEEN**  **Eagle Exit**  **1** **PATH**







QUEEN

1



Bison Exit

Notice to Public
The City of Regina
is pleased to announce
the opening of the
new BISON EXIT
at the
University of Regina
Campus



ACCESSIBILITY NOTICE



Accessible entrance
via 2 Queen Street East
Entrance Northwest
corner of Yonge Street
and Queen Street



QUEEN STREET



Beaver Exit



Additional Opportunities



QUEEN

1



*placeholder,
local artwork*

Eagle Exit

The eagle is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **love**.

Learn more about TTC's Indigenous Wayfinding Pilot at ttc.ca/indigenouswayfinding



Accessible Entrance



QUEEN

1



*placeholder,
local artwork*

Turtle Exit

The turtle is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **truth**.

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Accessible Entrance



QUEEN

1



*placeholder,
local artwork*

Bison Exit

The bison is the guiding Anishinaabe principle for **respect**.

Learn more about TTC's Indigenous Wayfinding Pilot at ttc.ca/indigenouswayfinding



This Entrance is Not Accessible
The nearest accessible entrance is the Turtle Exit.

Additional Benefits of our Proposal

- **Scalable and Consistent**
- **Non-disruptive**
- **Precedent**
- **Accessibility**
- **Low Cost**

Conclusion

Every TTC station rests on Indigenous land, using the Seven Grandfather animals together with numbers isn't a rebrand, it's a long overdue acknowledgment built into the infrastructure itself



Thank you for your time!

