

**Appendix B –
Indigenous Communities Consultation Summary**

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Indigenous Community members were invited to participate in a focus group style session held on September 26, 2017 as part of the EDC Divisional Strategy consultations. The purpose of the session was to encourage broad participation, seek feedback to inform the development of the EDC Divisional Strategy, and to ensure the ensuing EDC Divisional Strategy reflects the needs of the City's Indigenous Communities.

The focus group date, time and location is provided below:

- Tuesday September 26, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
CSI Regent Park, 585 Dundas Street East

The session format incorporated an elder blessing and smudging as well as facilitated discussions in a conversation circle. Following a round of introductions and brief overview of the EDC Divisional Strategy goals, a conversation commenced among the participants that incorporated the following themes.

Communications & Consultation

- Recurring comments revealed the need to address the following issues pertaining to communication and consultation:
 - Feedback provided by artists of Indigenous background through previous consultation efforts has not been translated into action (i.e., increase support from the City or other levels of government). There is a need to demonstrate how feedback will be used and to act on the advice provided through the EDC consultations. In relation to this, it was suggested that the EDC Division should hold additional meetings and continue the dialogue after the Strategy is finalised; and
 - Broader outreach and consultation tactics should be used to ensure participation from key individuals representing Indigenous communities. Offering an honorarium was suggested to encourage and enable broader participation (i.e., reduce barriers associated with time and travel).

Resources & Investment

Key comments related to resources and investment included:

- Artists do work that adds to the vitality of the City. The value of this work should be recognized and rewarded.

- The Indigenous arts community is struggling to keep up due to the lack of skilled workers in the fields of technology, set design and audio-visual design. This is in part, due to a lack of resources; organizations do not have the resources to mentor and train those in need. Investment and training programs are required to help support Indigenous arts workers.
- Indigenous arts organizations do not have the funds or resources to be participate in the arts industry and this impacts their ability to be competitive and retain talent.
- The community needs a longer-term investment model as opposed to one-time funding opportunities.
- An Indigenous “hub”, where Indigenous peoples can access leadership training, information as well as house archival and historical documents is needed in Toronto. The hub can also offer affordable work space, where groups can share resources and knowledge.
 - imagineNATIVE created a hub with other organizations at 401 Richmond Street. They shared resources and created a multi-purpose space that is functional for different organizations.
- The City should consider creating an Indigenous Office.

Creating Opportunities for Indigenous Youth

Key comments related to opportunities for youth included:

- Currently, there is a one-year cycle for youth opportunities; however there are limited resources to help youth transition to the next year. The suggestion was to provide more support for youth training and mentorship programs.
- There is a gap in mid-level job opportunities for youth, with limited stable forms of work. Consider the need for City-led programs and supports geared to Indigenous youth, including educational and training programs in the arts.

Meaningful Engagement & Capacity Building

Key comments related to meaningful engagement and capacity building included:

- There is a need to ensure consultation organizers and participants come to consultation events prepared for a fulsome discussion on how to work towards mutual benefits (i.e., informed about who they are engaging).
- There is a need to provide evidence that larger institutions are giving back to the community, not just benefitting from local cultures. In relation to this institutions must be prepared to continue the dialogue; one conversation does not equal meaningful engagement.
- Partnerships must be mutually beneficial:
 - The nature and relationship of partnerships is unclear. An equal playing field builds trust and ensures that partners support the work of the Indigenous organization.

Corporate Relationships

Key comments about corporate relationships included:

- Corporate relationships observed by participants require improvement. There is uncertainty about how to access and engage with corporations; the City could play a role in connecting Indigenous groups with corporations.
- Corporate funding can be a challenging and controversial topic; as stewards of the land, there are conflicts around accepting funds from corporations from various sectors.

Final Thoughts

Concluding thoughts provided by participants included:

- Engage Indigenous Community members who have not had the opportunity to participate in consultations.
- The StreetARToronto program has been a very successful program with great examples of integration of Indigenous identity.
- There is a need to follow-up to communicate how feedback from consultation activities was used.