

# Summary Report: Indigenous Advisory Circle Meeting #1

November 25, 2025, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Via Zoom





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# About the Meeting and this Report

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On Tuesday, November 25, 2025, the City of Toronto's Parks and Recreation Division hosted its first meeting with the Toronto Island Park Plan Indigenous Advisory Circle – one of three working groups created to advise on and support implementation of projects on Toronto Island Park Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- introduce Circle members to each other and the project team;
- provide a background and refresher on the Toronto Island Park Plan;
- provide an overview of the proposed engagement process, including the Circle's role and meeting schedule, and;
- answer any questions about the project or process.

9 members of the circle participated in the meeting, which was held virtually via Zoom. Tom Davidson from Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's office also attended the meeting, along with Ashleigh Scola, Indigenous Urban Fellow working in the Deputy Mayor's Office. Netami Stuart (Senior Project Manager, Toronto Island, Parks and Recreation) provided an overview presentation along with Nadia Galati (Senior Public Consultation Coordinator, Parks and Recreation). Gwen Lane from SpruceLab facilitated the meeting, with support from Ian Malczewski, Third Party Public. See Appendix A for the list of invitees and participants.

The meeting began with an opening invocation from Elder Jimmy Dick, followed by a Land Acknowledgement, African Ancestral Acknowledgement, and introductions. The City of Toronto then shared a presentation that provided an overview of the Toronto Island Park Plan and the City's overall engagement plan for the working groups. Following the presentation, participants asked questions and shared feedback about how they would like to collaborate with the City.

After the discussion, Netami and Gwen thanked everyone for their feedback, and Gwen reminded participants to provide additional feedback by December 2, saying a draft meeting summary would be shared with participants for review after the feedback deadline. Elder Jimmy Dick closed the meeting. See Appendix B for the Meeting Agenda.

SpruceLab and Third Party Public prepared this summary for participant review and shared a draft with participants for review before finalizing it. It is not intended as a verbatim transcript.

# Discussion Highlights

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The following points summarize key takeaways and themes of the feedback shared. They are meant to be read as part of the more detailed summary that follows.

**Good relationships with First Nations rights-holders are very important**, including the relationship between the City and rights-holders and the Advisory Circle and rights-holders. The Advisory Circle should not be set up in a way where its discussions would “step on anyone’s toes” or be seen as impacting on First Nations rights and sovereignty. To this end, the City should develop practices and protocols that guide the relationship and communication between rights-holders and the Advisory Circle, including what will be talked about with who and in what order.

**There should be clarity about how the different working groups will interact with each other**, including what happens if the different groups don’t agree.

**Interest in sharing input on Park Plan projects**, including the Snake Island ceremonial space, how to communicate and the significance and presence of Indigenous people on the Island, and more.

# Detailed Feedback

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This section captures feedback shared at the meeting as well as the feedback shared in writing after the meeting. Responses from the project team, where given, are *in italics*.

## Feedback about working with the City

After its presentation, the City asked participants to share their thoughts and advice on how they would like to work together with the City. Specifically, the City asked:

- What matters most to you when collaborating with the City of Toronto?
- Are there specific priorities, practices, or perspectives you believe should be included in this work? If so, what would you highlight?
- Can you share examples of positive partnerships or meaningful experiences – with the City or others – that could help guide how we work together?
- Are there any additional guidance, reflections, or advice you would like to offer as we move forward?

Responding to these questions, participants said there should be protocols and embedded practices that:

- **Connect the engagement of this group to engagement with First Nations rights-holders.** There should be protocols or practices that support a) engaging rights-holders first (or exclusively) about matters pertaining to their rights and b) communication between the Advisory Circle and rights-holders so that each are aware of what the other is saying. For example, it would be helpful for Advisory Circle members to understand the feedback and advice of rights-holders, including what they shared with the City as part of its early engagement on this engagement process.

*The City and SpruceLab said that, generally, the City does not share detailed minutes of its discussions with rights-holders as a matter of protocol, but that it can share high-level information about what was discussed and ask rights-holders in future conversations about the extent to which they would be comfortable having their discussions shared with the Advisory Circle. The City added that, broadly, rights-holders were supportive of the City's approach to composing an Indigenous Advisory Circle, wanted to be kept up to date about the work, and had shared detailed ecological recommendations (such as suggested plantings) with the City.*

- **Explain how the different working groups will interact with each other,** including what happens if the different groups don't agree.

- **Demonstrate how the City is hearing the group’s thoughts and concerns**, with space created for patient discussion.

Participants also shared other suggestions for the City to consider in how it works with the group, including:

- Learn from the positive experience of the Indigenous Legacy Gathering at Nathan Phillips Square.
- Consider collaborating with or engaging the 2-Spirited Pepe of the First Nations on Hanlan’s Point Beach work.

## **Discussion about Park Plan Projects**

Part of the City’s presentation shared the Park Plan Projects that it plans to discuss with the Indigenous Advisory Circle, including advancing a ceremonial space on Snake Island. Speaking about these projects, participants said:

- It will be important to recognize that Toronto Island has been used by for many other types of Indigenous gatherings, not just ceremony.
- There should be space provided for Indigenous community members to offer teachings on the Island.
- There should be ways to communicate the significance of the land and water and indicate that Indigenous people are present and shape the place (similar to “The Ring” developed with Two Row Architect at Toronto Metropolitan University)
- There should be accessible washrooms, showers, and safe places for Indigenous people to camp to have access to the land.
- There should not be any docking fees for Indigenous people arriving to the Island on the water.
- Will there be accessible housing for Indigenous people on the island?

*The City said that the Park Plan does not include a plan to build more residential areas as park of Parks & Recreation’s work. There is an intent for there to be a co-managed ceremonial and camp space on Snake Island. Part of this Advisory Circle’s work in the next year will be to discuss what will be needed to make Snake Island a place that can be sustainably managed by Indigenous people alongside the City.*

# Appendices

# Appendix A. List of Meeting Participants

## City of Toronto

### **Parks, Forestry & Recreation**

Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager,  
Toronto Island  
Nadia Galati, Senior Public Consultation  
Coordinator

### **Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's Office**

Ashleigh Scola, Indigenous Urban  
Fellow  
Tom Davidson, Director, Waterfront  
Revitalization Initiatives

## Facilitation Team

### **Spruce Lab**

Sheila Boudreau  
Gwen Lane

### **Third Party Public**

Ian Malczewski

## Indigenous Advisory Circle

*Note that the organizations and individuals in **bold** participated in the meeting.*

### **Organizations**

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations  
Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle  
Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto  
**Aboriginal Student Services, Toronto  
Metropolitan University**  
ANDPVA/Arts Indigena  
Anduhyaun Inc  
Anishnawbe Health Toronto  
Canadian Council for Indigenous Business  
Centre for Aboriginal Student Services  
(CASS) York University  
Council Fire  
ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency  
First Nations House UofT  
First Nations House, University of Toronto  
First Peoples @ Seneca College  
Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes  
George Brown Indigenous Education and  
Services  
Indigenous Education and Engagement,  
Humber College  
Miziwe Biik

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto  
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto  
Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto  
Nishnawbe Homes  
**Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network**  
Ontario Aboriginal HIV / AIDS Strategy  
Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship  
Centres  
Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society  
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council  
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council  
**Toronto and York Region Métis Council**  
Toronto Indigenous Business Association  
Toronto Inuit Association  
Tungasuvvingat Inuit  
Urban Indigenous Education Centre – TDSB  
Wigwamen  
**York University**

## **Community Members**

Jennifer Bennet  
Susan Blight  
Brooke Holdsworth  
Raiden Laford-Scodellar  
**Julie MacFarlane**

**Judy Rheaume**  
**Tara Rudski**  
**Albert Sinclair**  
**Alana Wemigwans**

# Appendix B. Meeting Agenda

## Indigenous Advisory Circle Meeting #1

Toronto Island Park Plan Implementation

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

6:00–8:00pm

Meeting held via Zoom



### Proposed Meeting Agenda

**6:00 pm Invocation, welcome, agenda review**

Elder Jimmy Dick

Netami Stuart, City of Toronto

Gwen Lane, SpruceLab

**6:15 Island Park Plan Overview and In-Progress Updates**

**6:35 Discussion: Questions**

----- *Break – 6:50 PM* -----

**7:00 How We Work Together**

**7:10 Discussion**

**7:55 Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

**8:00 Adjourn**