Learning Gathering on inclusive social infrastructures and embedding the principles and actions of Truth & Reconciliation

7GenCities: Participant Pack

Learning Gathering on inclusive social infrastructures and embedding the principles and actions of Truth & Reconciliation
This document has been put together by the 7GenCities team as a pre-read to the Learning Gathering in Toronto on October 16-17, 2023.

Co-hosts of the gathering include: Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Dark Matter Labs, Community Foundations Canada and Evergreen.

Additional partners: 7GenCities is supported also in part by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, WES Mariam Assefa Fund, McConnell Foundation, and the Future of Canada Project at McMaster University.

Reconciliation
A Poem by Ogimaa
(Chief) Stacey Laforme

I sit here crying
I don’t know why
I didn’t know the children
I didn’t know the parents
But I knew their spirit
I knew their love
I know their loss
I know their potential
And I am overwhelmed
By the pain and the hurt
The pain of the families and friends
The pain of an entire people
Unable to protect them, to help them
To comfort them, to love them
I did not know them
But the pain is so real, so personal
I feel it in my core, my heart, my spirit
I sit here crying and I am not ashamed
Give me that
And i’ll grant you reconciliation

Ill cry for the what could have been
Then I will calm myself, smudge myself, offer prayers
And know they are no longer in pain
No longer do they hurt, they are at peace
In time I will tell their story, I will educate society
So their memory is not lost to this world
And when I am asked
what does reconciliation mean to me
I will say I want their lives back
I want them to live, to soar
I want to hear their laughter
See their smiles

I will cry for them, and the many others like them
I will cry for you, I will cry for me
Invitation

The 7GenCities team and key partners – the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Dark Matter Labs, Community Foundations Canada and Evergreen – are delighted that you’ll be joining us for The Evergreen Conference: Making the Case for Place and 7GenCities: Learning Gathering on October 16 and 17.

This is the second gathering of 7GenCities and the first to focus on deepening learning about social infrastructure planned or underway in multiple cities, and which is being developed with peers committed to embedding Truth & Reconciliation in the work. Together with Indigenous, municipal, academic, and community leaders, as well as other civic imagineers, we will imagine, explore and engage in reciprocal and immersive learning and networking of city-based visions and initiatives.

This gathering is part of a larger effort to help co-build inclusive social infrastructure that embeds Truth & Reconciliation. The invitation is to form a learning community to support this work moving forward. As participants, you’ll be invited to take an active part in co-creating the conversation, exploring into the boundaries of what is possible for the future of cities, and shaping plans for what we might want to do, learn and build together post-gathering.

DID YOU MISS THE 7GENCITIES: #CIFI GATHERING ON SOCIAL FINANCE?

Held in July 2023, the first 7GenCities gathering focused on field building of new financing mechanisms. The Learning Report for the financing gathering is here.
Questions for Reflection

What does it mean and what becomes possible if social infrastructure is constructed to be radically inclusive, fit for the long term, and to embed Truth and Reconciliation?

Some questions that will frame our discussions:

1. **What is the next generation of social infrastructure?**
   - Why and how does social infrastructure need to be different to be more deeply inclusive and future-fit?

2. **How might we strengthen social infrastructure and its potential outcomes through reciprocal learning?**
   - How can social infrastructure be constructed and maintained in ways that strengthen community cohesion and resilience for everyday life and holistic long-term outcomes?
   - What value and multiple benefits does social infrastructure create and what difference can it make across time horizons?
   - What, how and with whom do we need to learn about this?

3. **What becomes possible if we decolonize how we build cities?**
   - What do we mean in this context by decoloniality?
   - What does it mean and make possible to embed Truth & Reconciliation in social infrastructure?
   - How could it be more co-creative and locally-empowering in orientation to give communities agency and freedom to explore, prototype, iterate, and build for the long term, including with different understandings of value, property, ownership, and civic economies?

4. **What would we like to do and build together moving forward?**
   - What would be helpful from this shared community?
   - What are the ways that we could support one another through our journeys?
   - What actions would we like to take together over the next 12 months to learn together and contribute to field building, as part of a larger, longer-term aspiration?
Agenda & Practicalities

**Day 1: October 16**

- Welcome & Registration: 8:00 - 9:00
- Opening: 9:00 - 10:00
- Imagining 7GenCities: 10:15 - 12:00
- Lunch: 12:00 - 2:00
- Sharing Indigenous Experience in Urban Places: 2:15 - 4:00
- Immersive Site Experience & Light Dinner: 4:30 - 7:00

**Day 2: October 17**

- Traditional Welcome & Opening: 9:00 - 10:00
- Morning Session with City Cohort Journeys: 10:15 - 12:00
- Lunch: 12:00 - 12:45
- Afternoon Sessions & Breakout Groups: 12:45 - 2:20
- Building a Community & Closing: 2:35 - 4:00

Participant Pack for 7GenCities Learning Community
Work-in-progress and continuously evolving
When:

Oct 16th @ 9am - 7pm
Evergreen Conference including Imagining 7GenCities session (CRH Gallery) and site visit & dinner (meet inside entrance by Picnic Cafe)

October 17th @ 9am - 4pm
Learning Gathering (BMO Atrium)

Where:

Evergreen Brick Works, 550 Bayview Avenue, Toronto

Directions by Evergreen Shuttle Bus or Transit:

The free Evergreen Brick Works shuttle bus departs every 30–45 minutes from Chester Station and is wheelchair accessible. Departure times from Chester Station and from Evergreen Brick Works can be accessed here.

TTC service is available via the 28 Bayview South bus from Davisville subway station and costs $3.35 per ride.

Directions by Car:

From Downtown: It is easiest to access Bayview Avenue from River Street, which runs north from King Street and joins Bayview just north of Gerrard Street.

From the Don Valley Parkway: Take the exit for Bloor Street/Bayview Avenue and head north on Bayview for 300 metres until you come to Evergreen Brick Works.

From East York: The easiest way to approach Bayview Avenue from the east is via Pottery Road, which runs between Broadview Avenue (north of Bloor) and Bayview Avenue. Travel 700 metres south on Bayview until you come to Evergreen Brick Works on your right.

Contact:

If you need to reach the organising team the day of the meetings, please contact:

Jason Brown, Project Orchestrator, Dark Matter Labs
+1 778 683 5428
Introduction to 7GenCities

7GenCities is a new collaborative fostering transformative thinking and action for future cities, community building and Earth stewardship.

We are forming as an open collective where transformative thinkers, practitioners, policy makers, Knowledge Keepers and students can connect, share work and ideas, and build collaborations and demonstrations of future city and community building. We draw from multiple disciplines and sources, including those in the book *Sacred Civics: Building Seven Generation Cities* and the Civic-Indigenous Placekeeping and Partnership Building Toolkit.

In this early phase, we are focused on the following three bundles.

1. **Learning Community.** The Learning Community will be a space to support Indigenous-municipal-civic partnerships and will be designed to be adaptive and according to the needs of participants. We aim to provide a space to share experiences, learnings, tools, wise practices, and challenges from collaborative approaches to social infrastructure that embeds Truth & Reconciliation. This first gathering invites participants to deepen their knowledge and relationships by connecting to a larger ecosystem of Indigenous, municipal and civic imagineers around their respective social infrastructure initiatives, reconciliation journeys and visioning for social and systems transformation. Participants will engage with a community of like-minded and like-spirited peers who can help expand and develop one another’s thinking and practices.

WE WANT TO ADD YOUR BOLD IDEAS, QUESTIONS, CHALLENGES AND INSIGHTS TO THIS DOCUMENT!

Comments will be integrated into future iterations. Please fill in this form to provide input, receive invitations to future discussions, and/or receive more information as it becomes available.

We also invite you to tell us what you’re learning so far and what ideas you have for this work and community moving forward.
2. Social Finance for Social Infrastructure. Financing social and civic infrastructures for the long-term that embed commitments to Truth & Reconciliation is a critical challenge. It requires reformulating how we understand value creation, flow and investment in our civic economies. Value questions that arise in a 7GenCities context include:

» If we built economies to value life flourishing for all on a healthy planet for the long term, how would that translate to the civic realm and urban economic geographies?

» How could we value the care and creativity that people contribute to communities and ecosystems, and build local circular economies of care, production, and stewardship of life?

» How should we finance, organize, and govern for the great societal transition that is our generation’s work and responsibility?

These are big questions that require collective thought and concerted action. We began to address them in summer 2023 at a gathering on the Future of Social & Civic Infrastructure Financing (#CiFi). We are building an alliance around this work with aims to connect, multiply and eventually design new mechanisms, models and instruments for civic infrastructure financing. Read the #CiFi Learning Report here, and join the conversation.

3. Building the Field of 7GenCities. 7GenCities field building will include imagining, commoning, and demonstrating civic futures of regenerative possibility through the following sets of activities:

» Opening imagination spaces for collective futuring that expand the realm of the possible and help to raise public ambition.

» Creating a 7GenCities commons where civic imagineers, practitioners, policymakers, academics, students and others can share work and ideas and build collaborations.

» Building and connecting ‘system demonstrations’ that both show what’s possible in civic contexts and change the underlying systems that enable wide adaptation and scaling of what works.
Actioning Truth & Reconciliation and Seven Generation Teachings

Embedding Truth & Reconciliation principles and actions through our work requires much unlearning and relearning and a recognition that we are on an important relationship journey together.

It involves a commitment to act in ways that build trust, reciprocity and shared understanding with one another, and gifting one another the patience and love that this will require. Truth and Reconciliation is a lifelong journey engaged by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to reckon with the legacies and impacts of settler colonialism and colonial policies on Indigenous Peoples, most notably Indian Residential Schools established by the Canadian Government.

The Government of Canada has a responsibility to recognize Indigenous sovereignty, inherent rights and cultural heritage with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the final report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Girls and Women representing a triumvirate of Indigenous-led guidelines for governments and society to right relationships and work toward restorative justice with Indigenous Peoples. In particular, UNDRIP provides a comprehensive yet baseline set of standards for protecting the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples and is an important framework for governments, sectors and institutions to implement Truth & Reconciliation.

Reconciliation is the process of truth-telling, and repairing and rebuilding relationships with Indigenous Peoples, and with the Earth. In recognition of the systematic cultural genocide, oppression and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples and Nations by the Canadian state, reconciliation must be transformative and systemic, and operate at all levels of government and society. The process involves commitments to:

» Decolonizing all forms of settler colonialism woven into our systems, knowledge and power structures, institutions, mindsets and practices;
Recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and inherent rights including restoration of territories and land rights, economic self-sufficiency, and self-governance; and

Transforming relationships, systems and structures that enable the capabilities and flourishing of Indigenous Peoples, governments and organizations.

With the guidance of Indigenous Elders and partners we work closely with, especially in Ontario and Halifax, 7GenCities is inspired by the **Seventh Generation Principle or the Gayanashagowa (Great Law of Peace)** of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and other seven generations teachings that hold deeply spiritual and relational philosophies related to learning from the wisdom of our ancestors and the Earth, reminding us to make decisions and provision for current and future generations. The **Bemidji Statement on Seventh Generation Guardianship** was co-created at the 14th Protecting Mother Earth Conference, convened by the Indigenous Environmental Network in 2006 and expands on the ancient wisdom of the Haudenosaunee by explicitly assigning guardianship and responsibility for protecting future generations yet to be born. Important to the work of 7GenCities, the Bemidji Statement assigns the same guardianship and responsibility to the current generations to protect and restore the intricate web of life that sustains us all, for the next seven generations to come.
We see these teachings as holding and deeply engaging all of us who are working to integrate seven generations thinking and practice, and embed Indigenous wisdoms and teachings, and the learning and action pathways of Truth & Reconciliation. Our collaborative work aims to imagine and manifest what our cities would be like if were all working together – Indigenous Peoples, municipalities and civil society - to embed and uphold the principles and calls to action of Truth & Reconciliation and UNDRIP in inclusive and meaningful ways that contribute to social cohesion and wellbeing, and deep sharing, learning and connecting across diverse urban communities, ecologies and geographies.

Cities that recognize Indigenous sovereignty and restoration of Indigenous lands and rights for both Treaty-holders and urban Indigenous Peoples; and enable Indigenous and other racialized and marginalized communities to flourish. We are committed to practices and systems that are radically inclusive, decolonizing, and invite in multiple ways of being, seeing and knowing. 7GenCities recognizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and honours the natural systems that give us life – inviting us to be good relatives to our natural kin, and good ancestors in our thinking and acting for future generations.
What do we mean by social infrastructures?

Social Infrastructure is a vital conduit for people to come together and build social cohesion, wellbeing and resilience.

Sometimes referred to as “soft” infrastructure, it is the connective tissue that holds us together as community and kin, and buffers against the damaging impacts in times of crises, such as rampant housing unaffordability, climate-related disasters, racism and pandemics. From the chapter on “Social Infrastructure for Our Times” in Sacred Civics: Building Seven Generation Cities, social infrastructure is described as the publicly accessible systems, amenities, physical places, spaces, platforms, services, activities, organizations, networks and movements that shape how people interact, and which can support collective life. These infrastructures have the potential to foster civic interactions and enable individuals, families, groups, and communities to meet their social and collective needs, maximize their potential for flourishing, and improve community wellbeing, vitality, and resilience, now and into the future.

Inclusive social infrastructure fit for the long term speaks to the need for transformative social infrastructures that can enable social recovery and transformation in our communities and cities, especially social infrastructure that is welcoming of all and fit for the complex, systemic and intersecting challenges and cascading impacts facing our cities.

To be future-fit, social infrastructure must be able to support both present and future generations through multi-sectoral partnerships, and long term and intergenerational visioning, organizing and structural mechanisms that embed collectively determined aspirations, principles and responsibilities linked to common-good outcomes in areas of financing, infrastructure, governance, and decision-making.

We characterize social infrastructure as radically inclusive when it is also committed to practices and systems that are deeply engaging, participatory and decolonizing –including Indigenous co-leadership in the Canadian context; and creating intercultural and epistemic bridging so we can work across diverse communities, cultures and knowledges, particularly taking care to eliminate the ongoing harm and oppression of those who are and have experienced trauma and been racialized and marginalized.
City Manifestation

Examples

The following section provides some examples of how 7GenCities can manifest through social infrastructure.

Some of these are built projects and existing initiatives, and some are still in the making. There are many more inspiring examples out there; this is but a small selection.

The Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) has a 50-year history supporting urban Indigenous peoples in Halifax and beyond. People who work at the Centre are caring and dedicated to improving people’s lives and centering Truth and Reconciliation through the provision of 55+ programs including housing, education, employment, Elders and youth.

MNFC has secured funding for the construction of a new Friendship Centre on land in the iconic location at the foot of Citadel Hill. The new Friendship Centre, ‘Wije’winen’ will provide a new platform for Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk-Halifax and 7GenCities more broadly across programs and partnerships to support Truth & Reconciliation in Halifax and beyond.
Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk-Halifax is a social infrastructure that invites residents to create, learn, and grow together. Neighbors lead projects that involve sharing their ideas, skills, and capabilities through activities like batch cooking, community meals, and sharing cultural knowledge and traditions, as well as making, crafting, building, repairing, sewing and much more. Here is one of the latest stories from Every One Every Day: Weaving Cohesion through Inclusive Social Infrastructure, and a short documentary (20 minutes) about the work and people.

FREELAND

“The land doesn’t belong to us; we belong to the land.”
- Pam Glode-Desrochers

Consistent with many traditional Indigenous legal systems, the idea of Freeland involves the creation of a legal mechanism that would recognize lands and nature as having agency and self-sovereignty. Such self-ownership of nature is on the horizon and provides a window into a different way of being in relationship with the Earth community. In partnership with 7GenCities and Dark Matter Labs, the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre is exploring this potential as a proof of possibility on the site of wije’winen.

Credit: Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre and Dark Matter Labs
The South Saskatchewan River flows through the heart of Saskatoon and has nurtured its many surrounding communities for generations. Stewardship of the river valley corridor has ensured space and amenities exist for people to experience, learn about and look after prairie grasslands, wetlands and habitat in an urban environment. The Saskatoon region’s leadership in stewarding the river valley has now been recognized, especially that of the Indigenous Nations who have long gathered on and stewarded these lands and waters. Through the new National Urban Parks program, Parks Canada is working with local partners to consider how significant urban greenspaces, like the Meewasin Valley, can enhance the conservation of nature, connect people with nature, and advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

One of Meewasin’s proudest accomplishments is the development of **Wanuskewin Heritage Park**, which comprises 360 acres of scenic natural prairie trails, interpretive sites, archeological digs, fauna, flora and herbs. Visitors can learn the stories and lifestyles of the Northern Plains Indigenous peoples who have gathered at this one meeting place for over 6,000 years. In 1983, in conjunction with its participating parties, Meewasin contributed in purchasing the land to begin development for what is now an award winning National Historic Site that depicts the history of Northern Plains Indigenous Peoples. Wanuskewin is currently undergoing a large revitalization project, and has been named to Canada’s Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
CANADA’S NATIONAL URBAN PARKS PROGRAM

Parks Canada is collaborating with local partners, including First Nation and Métis leaders and organizations, to create a network of national urban parks in Canada’s large urban centers. Together, these parks will create a network with a shared vision to conserve nature, connect residents and visitors with nature and advance Truth & Reconciliation learning and relationship-building with First Nation and Métis Peoples.

The network of national urban parks will involve unique places across Canada, each with their own governance model. Each national urban park’s approach to governance will be determined by local circumstances, and in collaboration with partners. At this point, Parks Canada anticipates that any national urban park in the Saskatoon region would be governed under some version or evolution of the existing model used by the Meewasin Valley Authority.
The Indigenous Affairs Office at the City of Toronto has been working with Indigenous Community partners and civic partners to implement Our Common Grounds: Incorporating Indigenous placekeeping in Toronto’s parks and public realm. Civic infrastructure includes natural public spaces and ecologies in cities such as parks, trails and gathering spaces. As the original stewards and care-takers of the lands and waters of Toronto, Indigenous Peoples are key to the process of co-creating a narrative based on the shared living history of the Toronto Islands and their cultural, ecological and social significance to diverse communities and to the future of city-making.

Within the new long-term plan for City of Toronto’s TOcore planning downtown initiative, a framework has been developed for integrating Indigenous placekeeping principles and values within projects, especially related to parks and public spaces. The Indigenous placekeeping framework for downtown parklands includes an Engagement Plan with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and other Indigenous knowledge-keepers and practitioners, proposing the following key insights and opportunities to inform the strategic plan.

The Waasayishkodenayosh Parklands or Lower Don Parklands is a collaborative community project between the City of Toronto, Evergreen and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), in consultation with Indigenous Community (including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation) and has reenergized an engagement process between municipal, non-profit and Indigenous collaborators including:
Program Vision: What would happen in the Waasayishkodenayosh Parklands?

» What ceremonies, activities, education and art would we bring to this place to live out the new name?

Indigenous Placemaking Vision: What would the Waasayishkodenayosh Parklands look like?

» As part of the review of the master plan for this park, what needs to be changed or added to the plan so that the vision of the park is realized over time?

Language Circle: A Language Circle has brought Anishinaabemowin language-carriers/scholars together to clarify the name spelling and meaning of “Waasayishkodenayosh,” which will inform the identity.

Identity: How would the name take shape in visual identity, communications and outreach?

» What icons, symbols or images would be used on the web, social media, wayfinding, and so on?

Public Feedback: After these first phases of engagement, and communications about the outcomes, the process will move to public feedback on the proposed name.

RAVINE LOOP TRAIL

Toronto is home to one of the largest ravine systems in the world. Spanning more than 11,000 hectares and encompassing 17 per cent of the city, this unique topography has shaped and been shaped by the growth of Toronto. For centuries the ravine wetlands, rivers, and creeks in Tkaronto were used for substance and nourishment, ceremony and gathering, and trade and seed-sharing by a diversity of Indigenous Peoples. Traveling over, under and across the entire city, the ravines and its tributaries play a vital role in many facets of the city. The ravine system is home to almost 90% of Toronto’s wildlife, while also housing major infrastructure including roads, rail, pipelines and utility infrastructure. The majority of the city’s water infrastructure relies on the ravines to absorb and filter stormwater and play a key role in flood protection. Simultaneously, the ravines provide a natural retreat from city life to refresh, restore and enhance residents’ quality of life. In a rapidly growing city, the importance of the ravines only grows.
The Ravine Strategy and Loop Trail aims to create a continuous, 81-kilometer off-road, multi-use ring trail through this vast system, one that connects a diverse group of neighborhoods as well as linking the city’s core to Rouge Urban National Park, enabling an active transportation network mostly immersed in nature. Discussions are underway concerning the stewardship of the Loop Trail. An aspiration of the Strategy team including Evergreen and the City of Toronto’s Indigenous Affairs Office is to explore collaborative governance and stewardship approaches with Toronto urban Indigenous community, recognizing the area as culturally and historically significant to Indigenous Peoples as a viable land base to demonstrate Indigenous food cultivation (e.g. re-wilding rice), land and commons stewardship, placekeeping, storytelling, ceremonial practices, and reciprocal and regenerative land relationships.
**Debwewin Oakville Truth Project** (Anishinaabemowin for “Truth,” one of the seven sacred teachings) is a partnership between the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Oakville Community Foundation to further shared understanding of Oakville region’s Indigenous Peoples and support local engagement of the community to become part of a Truth and Reconciliation journey towards mutually respectful relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Debwewin is inspired and guided by MCFN Elder Peter Schuler with membership from leading academics, historians, legal claims experts, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders who act as the Debwewin Advisory Council. Many on the Advisory work with the National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission, universities, national museums and as advisors to many Indigenous communities across Canada. The Project is supported by Ogimaa (Chief) Laforme and the MCFN Council.

Debwewin engages the municipality and residents around Oakville’s Truth such as the acknowledging what happened to local Treaty-holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and why they were displaced and rendered homeless despite Treaty 22 covering major land areas and waterways, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) have ancestral occupancy and historical roots in Oakville. Understanding the local history and presence of Indigenous People in Oakville from an Anishinaabek perspective is an important first step on the path towards Truth and Reconciliation. This project is a large, ambitious and vital step in an ongoing and committed journey by the City and residents toward Truth & Reconciliation.
RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT: MISSISSAUGAS OF THE CREDIT FIRST NATION & MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON REGION

On June 20, 2022, Halton Region and treaty-holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) signed a Relationship Agreement, formalizing the ongoing work to build a reciprocal, collaborative and mutually respectful relationship. The Relationship Agreement was signed at Halton Regional Centre by Regional Chair Gary Carr and Ogimaa R. Stacey Laforme from the MCFN. Elders from the MCFN also witnessed the process.

The Relationship Agreement will help Halton Region and MCFN in working to achieve the shared objectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report and Calls to Action, and UNDRIP. It will also be helpful in identifying areas of mutual concern and interest, as well as establishing and supporting shared understanding and ongoing conversations. MCFN has met numerous times with staff from various departments to share their history, culture and heritage. This has proven to be an important form of knowledge exchange that helps to increase cultural knowledge and understanding in the Regions’ journey of relationship building.

A relationship agreement is an intentional commitment publicly declared between one or more Indigenous communities and one or more municipalities to a long-term relationship based on friendship, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. Relationship agreements are often called a Friendship Agreement/Accord, Protocol Agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding but they can take many forms and names. Relationship Agreements embody the spirit of reconciliation because they indicate a willingness by settler governments and other non-Indigenous partners to both learn about Indigenous treaties, laws and forms of governance, and learn from and repair past missteps and biases – rebuilding the relationship on an equitable, reciprocal and respectful foundation, and committing to recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and land rights. They present a clear, long-term joint vision for a new/renewed community-to-community relationship between Indigenous Treaty-holders and the municipality or community.
Evergreen is a leader in placemaking and urban sustainability. As a national not-for-profit, it has been facilitating change in communities across Canada for over 30 years. Evergreen believes that cities can be powerful levers for change, and that public spaces within our cities can work harder for both people and our planet. Once an industrial brick factory, the Evergreen Brick Works is now an internationally renowned showcase of green design, an award-winning public space and a test site to pilot ideas that can be scaled across the country to shape our cities and public spaces for the better.

Evergreen has been working to better understand the role the organization can play in advancing a national commitment to improved Indigenous relations and actioning Truth & Reconciliation. Under the leadership and guidance of an Indigenous Elder and Artist in Residence, Indigenous staff, partners and advisors, Evergreen is bringing a more nuanced awareness and commitment to the work of righting relationships and Indigenous approaches to land regeneration, placekeeping and innovation by grounding site-based and national programming within a diversity of Indigenous and intercultural perspectives and experiences. Foundational to an Indigenous reimagining of cities and place, Evergreen is undergoing a dedicated process of learning from, naturalizing and inculcating Indigenous worldviews and working with Indigenous partners and community to re-present Indigenous wisdoms, stories, foodways, cultural structures and infrastructures, education and stewardship practices at the Brick Works and throughout the city.
**Evergreen’s Climate Ready Schools** builds on a 30-year legacy of transforming school grounds across Canada into nature rich play and learning environments for both children and their community. Though Canadian school grounds cover hundreds of thousands of acres of land and are found in nearly every municipality, they are an underappreciated asset hiding in plain sight. Currently, Canadian school grounds are mostly covered with asphalt and concrete, significantly contributing to the Urban Heat Island Effect. Within the larger global context of climate change, Canadian school grounds are also becoming major hotspots for flooding during storms. Therefore, it is essential to build climate-resilience within our communities and cities to ensure that these landscapes serve a deeper ecological purpose. Canadian school grounds need to be redesigned for our children, communities and the natural world. Through a participatory design process, the Climate Ready Schools program engages with the entire school community in creating and championing a tailor-made solution for their school grounds.
The **Indigenous Peoples Experience** at Fort Edmonton Park is an immersive and comprehensive exhibit that explores the rich, beautiful cultures of First Nations and Métis Peoples while encouraging visitors to seek out the truths as lived by Indigenous Peoples before and after Canada became a nation state. The Indigenous Peoples Experience is an impactful and grounding opportunity for guests to learn, feel and hear the place-based stories of Edmonton. Deep dialogue and relationships were developed with over fifty Indigenous Elders, historians, educators, and community members to capture and showcase the many stories, musical and artwork traditions, language, lived experiences, memories, local Indigenous perspectives, and voices, reflecting a rich and resilient history and deep connection to the land and seasons of Cree, Dene, Anishinaabe, Nakota, Blackfoot, and Michif Nations.

Located along kisiskâciwanisîpiy (the North Saskatchewan River) bank in Fort Edmonton Park, the Indigenous Peoples Experience is surrounded by lush greenery, gathering places, and columns of trees with words of welcome in Indigenous languages – such as Cree and Michif. The building is a brand new, ashen-grey structure with large windows and a beautiful, artistic façade painted with bands of vibrant colours and patterns. As visitors enter the front doors, they are greeted by a 360° degree view of the kisiskâciwanisîpiy as it runs through the floor, surrounded by lighted pathways symbolising the movement of Indigenous Peoples. As you travel along the path, wooden structures resembling Indigenous architecture rise up to meet the ceiling. Sound fills the room with music and stories of Indigenous Peoples, told by Elders from Treaty 6 Territory and Métis communities.
Languages such as Blackfoot, Plains Cree, Dene, Michif, Stoney, and Saulteaux fill the space. There isn't just sound – the room comes to life as the lights are dimmed and moving images play out on the surface of tipis. Artwork, stories of creation, and our true history plays out in vivid colours on every surface. It's unlike any other exhibit. As visitors continue to take in the vast collection of stories, music, artwork and texts, one thing is clear - this experience was created from the voices and perspectives of local Indigenous contributors.
**Trees As Infrastructure (TreesAI)** is a cloud-based platform, establishing nature as a critical part of urban infrastructure, alongside bridges, roads and rail, enabling investment, profitability and sustainability. Urban forests regulate a number of ecosystem processes (e.g. water and air quality) and provide tangible and intangible benefits vital for living environments. Trees produce goods such as food and timber; and are deeply connected to our societies and cultures functioning as powerful symbols. TreesAI accounts and values a number of tangible benefits—relating to carbon, water, health, energy, biodiversity and the economy—while acknowledging social and cultural co-benefits.

TreesAI has so far been piloted in cities in Europe, and discussions are in process with potential partners in Africa and Canada. The platform provides an opportunity for supporting urban forests and is adaptable to multiple contexts and would benefit greatly from municipal-Indigenous partnerships.
The FreeHouse project is a speculative idea for a new tenure model for housing; combining the concepts of stewardship, perpetual bond finance and zero-carbon construction. The project is aimed to build a single prototype house as a demonstrator of this new reality, with the home itself being represented as a digital autonomous organization and held by a civic trust. FreeHouse sits at the crossroads of a new circular biomaterial economy, open distributed manufacturing capabilities, and a new relationship between home and human, based on reciprocal care and stewardship. The overall aim would be to create a new housing market for high quality, zero carbon homes that become cheaper over time. This housing model could create a new template for public housing provision – one that’s both genuinely affordable, materially circular, and civically governed.

FreeHouse acts as a borrower, issuing perpetual bonds through a public trust. With this capital, it can acquire land and select a construction partner. The residents become legal custodians through a stewardship contract, responsible for the home's maintenance and well-being. Further exploration is underway to determine how to finance civic infrastructures (e.g. a collection of FreeHouses) through entangled value accounting, multi-value business planning, and outcomes-based financing.

Similar to FreeLand, FreeHouse challenges colonial ways of seeing nature and goods as property to be owned. This is a proof of possibility that could be ripe for exploring in a municipal-Indigenous partnership context.
## List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tammy Mudge</td>
<td>Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk Learning &amp; Evaluation Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee Gasparetto</td>
<td>Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk Director</td>
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<td>Michelle Baldwin</td>
<td>Community Foundations of Canada Senior Advisor of Transformation</td>
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<td>Ontario Trillium Foundation Lead for Innovation, Partnership Investments</td>
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<td>WES Mariam Assefa Fund Director of Strategy &amp; Programs</td>
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<td>Jennifer Lafontaine</td>
<td>City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs Placekeeping Manager</td>
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<td>Fred Martin</td>
<td>City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs Sr. Project Manager - Waterfront</td>
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<td>Omidyar Network Programs Associate</td>
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<td>Reem Ali</td>
<td>City of Peterborough EDI Lead</td>
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<td>Ian Attridge</td>
<td>Trent University</td>
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<td>Amy Siciliano</td>
<td>Halifax Regional Municipality</td>
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<td>Nicole Alie</td>
<td>ScotiaBank</td>
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<td>Alex Tveit</td>
<td>Sustainable Impact</td>
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<td>Meagan Byrne</td>
<td>Achimostawinan Games</td>
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<td>Jorge Garza</td>
<td>Metcalf Foundation</td>
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<td>Mary Querques</td>
<td>Town of Halton Hills</td>
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<td>Beverley King</td>
<td>Halton Hills Public Library</td>
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<td>Angela Bellegarde</td>
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<td>Sophie Coutu De Goede</td>
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<td>Delanie Passer</td>
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<td>Ray Laliberte</td>
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<td>Dëné Cheecham-Uhrich</td>
<td>Clearwater River Dëné School</td>
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<td>Luis Patricio</td>
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<td>Mike Velonas</td>
<td>Meewasin Valley Authority</td>
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<td>Michael MacLean</td>
<td>OSO Planning + Design</td>
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<td>Kieran Stepan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas McGuire</td>
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<td>Corinne MacLellan</td>
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<td>Donna Gerber</td>
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<td>Eddy Robinson</td>
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<td>Sherry Seavil</td>
<td>Halton Catholic District School Board</td>
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<td>Fiona Deller</td>
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**Hosting Team**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pam Glode-Desrochers</td>
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<td>Jennifer Angel</td>
<td>Evergreen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jayne Engle</td>
<td>7GenCities / Dark Matter Labs</td>
<td>Co-Holder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook</td>
<td>7GenCities / Dark Matter Labs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panthea Lee</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Co-Design &amp; Co-Hosting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Alie</td>
<td>Scotiabank</td>
<td>Sr Manager, Community Investment</td>
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<td>Jason Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madelyn Capozzi</td>
<td>Dark Matter Labs</td>
<td>Visual Design</td>
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Resources

The following resources are a small selection of materials on the themes of the Learning Gathering.

They are not required readings for participation in the gathering, but are intended as background reading to provoke continued learning and deepening in your own journey to vision and manifest what is possible for future 7GenCities.

7GenCities draws from multiple disciplines, knowledges and sources, including those in our book Sacred Civics: Building Seven Generation Cities (Engle, Agyeman & Chung-Tiam-Fook, 2022) and the Civic-Indigenous Partnerships & Placekeeping Toolkit (Chung-Tiam-Fook, 2021).

Sacred Civics: Building Seven Generation Cities argues that societal transformation requires that spirituality and sacred values are essential to reimagining patterns of how we live, organize and govern ourselves, determine and distribute wealth, inhabit and design cities, and construct relationships with others and with nature. Looking at cities and human settlements as the sites of transformation, the book focuses on values, commons, and wisdom to demonstrate that how we choose to live together, to recognize interdependencies, to build, grow, create, and love—matters.

Sacred Civics includes intersectional discussions on social justice, inclusivity, participatory design, healthy communities, and future cities from transdisciplinary and global academics, professionals, and activists to draw on extraordinary wisdom from ancient Indigenous traditions; to social and political movements like Black Lives Matter, the commons, and wellbeing economies; to technologies for participatory futures where people collaborate to reimagine and change culture. Chapters particularly relevant to the context of this Learning Gathering (not required reading for the event):

» Imagine Shaping Cities as if People, Land, and Nature Were Sacred by Engle, Agyeman & Chung-Tiam-Fook

» Awakening Seven Generation Cities by Chung-Tiam-Fook, Engle & Agyeman

» Social Infrastructure For Our Times: Building Participatory Systems that Value the Creativity of Everyone by Engle, Britton & Glode-Desrochers
Honouring the Sacred in Cities: Indigenous Teachings for City Building by Chung-Tiam-Fook

Co-creating the Cities we Deserve Through Indigenous Knowledge by Gosnell-Myers

The Black Commons: A Framework for Recognition, Reconciliation, Reparations by Agyeman & Boone

Radicle Civics: Unconstituting Society by Chang & Johar

The Ceremony of Reclaiming Agency Through Wonder by Támmaro

Unsettling the Coloniality of Foresight by Krishnan.

The Civic-Indigenous Partnerships & Placekeeping Toolkit invites municipal and civic leaders to be better committed to listening to, learning from, building reciprocal relationships with, and ceding power to urban Indigenous communities to ensure we are working together to make visible and honour the persistent presence and activation of Indigeneity in cities. The Toolkit is intended as a resource for users across sectors, guiding them in learning and actioning Truth & Reconciliation commitments, Indigenous cultural competency, community engagement, visioning, design and planning processes on Indigenous and intercultural placekeeping initiatives, and reimagining public spaces. The tools, resources, cases and Indigenous teachings and placekeeping principles, values, and practices showcased here are intended to be an adaptable approach for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities working in the spaces of city building, Indigenous engagement, design, architecture, art, planning, innovation, Truth & Reconciliation, and civic infrastructures and commons.

More Resources


About the Hosts
& Contacts

**Evergreen**

Evergreen is a leader in placemaking and urban sustainability. As a national not-for-profit, we’ve been facilitating change in communities across Canada for over 30 years. Evergreen believes that cities can be powerful levers for change, and that public spaces within our cities can work harder for both people and planet. Our headquarters are located at Evergreen Brick Works nestled in Toronto’s ravine system. Once an industrial brick factory, it is now an internationally renowned showcase of green design, an award-winning public space and a test site to pilot ideas that can be scaled across the country to shape our cities and public spaces for the better.

For more information on Evergreen, visit [www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca).

**Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre**

MNFC has a 50-year history of supporting and providing services to urban Indigenous peoples in Halifax and the wider community, serving approximately 7,000 people per year. MNFC has the support of all Mi’kmaw Chiefs in the region. MNFC has secured funding for the construction of a new building on land in the iconic location at the foot of Citadel Hill. The new Friendship Centre will provide a platform for Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk/Halifax and 7GenCities more broadly across programs and partnerships to support Truth & Reconciliation in Halifax and beyond.

Executive Director of MNFC, Pam Glode-Desrochers is also the Vice President of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), which is a network of 119 Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations that comprise the Friendship Centre Movement in Canada. NAFC is the most significant national network of self-determined Indigenous owned and operated civil society community hubs offering programs, services and support to urban Indigenous Peoples.

For more information on the new Friendship Centre, visit [www.wijewinen.ca](http://www.wijewinen.ca).
Dark Matter Labs

At Dark Matter Labs, we’re working to create institutions, instruments and infrastructures for more equitable, caring and regenerative futures. We believe in taking on planetary-scale challenges via a new, civic economy, exploring how ownership, legal systems, governance, accountancy and insurance might begin to change. We’re working to initiate a boring revolution that will propel wider societal transition. We’re a multi-disciplinary, 60-person team with specialisms ranging from civic economies and collaborative governance, to net-zero cities, nature-inspired infrastructure, legal systemic change, and urban transformation.

To learn more, please visit www.darkmatterlabs.org.

Community Foundations of Canada

Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) is the national leadership organization for Canada’s over 200 local community foundations. Together with community foundations across the country, we help drive local solutions for national change on the issues that matter most to communities. We’re building a movement that connects community foundations, people and partners to create a just, sustainable future. Our programming targets pressing social issues in Canada, including youth engagement, gender equality, support for entrepreneurship and social innovation, and community-level connections with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among many other topics.

To learn more, please visit www.communityfoundations.ca.
Stay in Touch

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Credit: Circle of Change - Every One Every Day Kijpuktuk/Halifax