

Learning Report

MARCH 2024

7GenCities: Learning Gathering

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



Prepared by the 7GenCities team, this learning report outlines the grounding wisdoms and inspirations for 7GenCities, and a detailed synthesis of the reflections, learnings and possibilities for action and collaboration that emerged from sessions at the Evergreen Conference and 7GenCities: Learning Gathering on October 16 and 17, 2023.

These learnings and resources are intended primarily for the group of Indigenous, municipal, non-profit, foundation, academic and community leaders from across Canada who joined us for the events. We also wish to share the report with interested collaborators who are either new to 7GenCities, or were unable to join us in person but continue to be part of the 7GenCities Learning + Practice Community. (For an in-depth introduction to 7GenCities, see page 58.)



Cover image: **7 foundational keys to unlock 7GenCities imaginaries and possibilities.** Source: *Awakening Seven Generation Cities* by Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook, Jayne Engle, and Julian Agyeman (2022).

wijéwínen



Mi'kmaw Native
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA

FONDATIONS
COMMUNAUTAIRES
DU CANADA



EVERGREEN

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Introduction

On behalf of the hosting team at 7GenCities and key partners and co-hosts Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, Dark Matter Labs, Community Foundations Canada and Evergreen, we are delighted to share this learning report.

For the Learning Gathering, our **intentions** were to host a space for a cohort of civic imagineers from different cities and different social infrastructure and Truth & Reconciliation initiatives to:

- » Connect imagineers and leaders working in community and from inside municipal and civic structures together within a learning and practice community that we co-create together.
- » Engage in reciprocal and immersive learning on city-level social infrastructure initiatives, collaborative approaches and Truth & Reconciliation journeys.
- » Lean into and do sensemaking around our shared challenges, complexities, needs, and possibilities for change shaping our work.
- » Radically imagine and explore possibilities, conditions and city demonstrations for manifesting 7GenCities together.

I.

RECAP OF THE GATHERING



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.

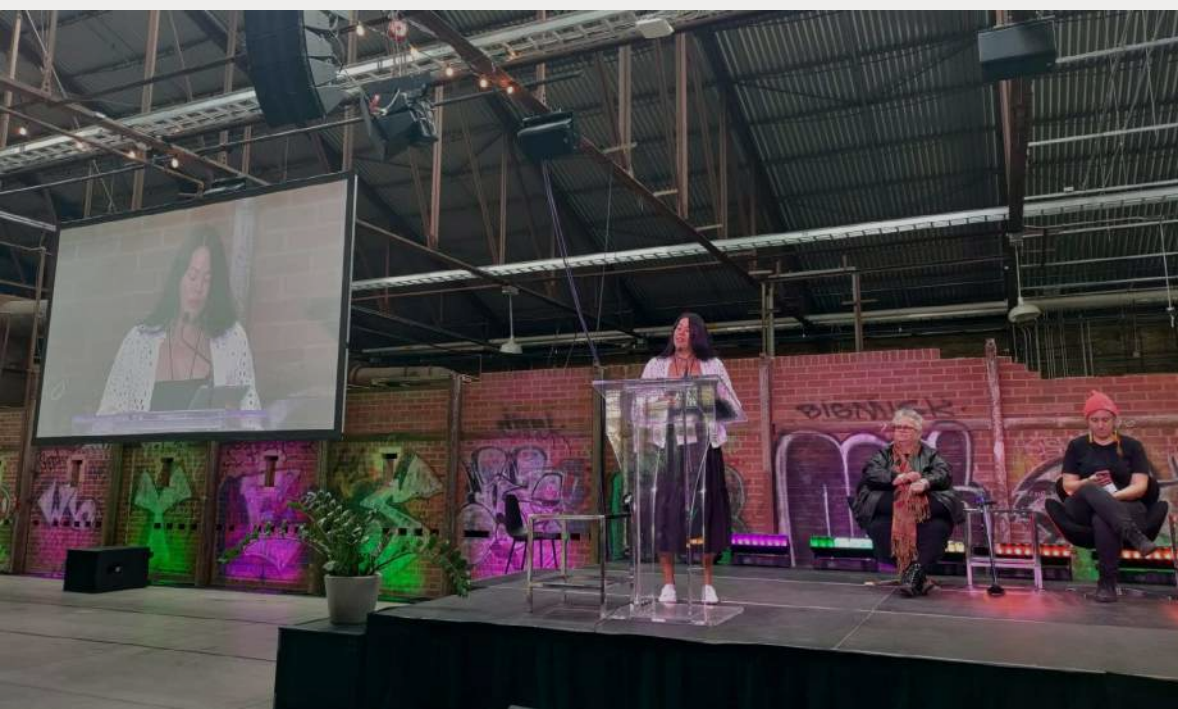
The 7GenCities Learning Gathering invited Indigenous, municipal, civic, and community leaders from across Canada to explore how to co-build inclusive social infrastructure that embeds Truth & Reconciliation. Together, we imagined, explored, and engaged in reciprocal and immersive learning and networking of city-based visions and initiatives. The group also explored whether and how they wished to form a community dedicated to learning and potentially joint organizing to support this work moving forward.

This was the second gathering of 7GenCities and the first to focus on deepening learning about inclusive, long-term social infrastructure planned or underway in multiple cities, and which is being developed with peers committed to embedding principles and actions of Truth & Reconciliation and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the work.

The hosts wish to offer deep gratitude to all participants and partners for their vital role in contributing to rich, generative, and convivial sessions of imagining, sharing, storytelling, learning and connecting around common challenges. We were deeply inspired by the incredible journeys and initiatives being built, cultivated and manifested across this community in various city contexts, and hope that the community we seeded in Toronto will continue to grow in the coming year can be a source of support and solidarity for each of you moving forward.

Day 1: **Grounding Wisdom & Inspiration**

On Day 1, as part of The Evergreen Conference: Making the Case for Place, we hosted a session on Imagining 7GenCities.



Preparing and activating our radical imaginations around 7GenCities

In the spaces of the Imagining 7GenCities conference session and the Learning Gathering, we invited participants to dream expansively, and to be courageous in their thinking and reworlding the city worlds they are working to envision and build.

Day 1: **Grounding Wisdom & Inspiration**

To welcome participants into the space, Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook invited us to join her in a guided futuring visualization and to co-create an artifact from the future. [Here is a link](#) for a podcast recording of the visualization. She invited the audience to breathe and sense into being and place, awakening our radical imaginations to envision new futures and cityworlds together. The work of building 7GenCities is both of this time and ancient, it is about imagining the vital, regenerative city futures for all communities and natural beings by turning our gazes upward and generations into the future, while we remain grounded on the land and in community together, for today and for generations to come. We awakened our mental and body consciousness and then delved into activating our radical imaginations by entering into the realm of ancestral intelligence and wisdom to provide inspiration and guidance in our creation of artifacts of learning, growth, and building transformative futures.

Through the visualization, we explored city worlds of the future, what 7GenCities could be if we transitioned from logics and relationships of extractivism, and human exceptionalism and dominance, and polarizing forms of wealth accumulation – to being part of, being in reciprocal relationship with, and learning from the Earth. We envisioned how we can work in deep collaboration, collectively holding the roles and responsibilities to heal and repair, and create a transformative whole. We envisioned collectively ideas and pathways toward multiple futures, and enabling conditions and peoples for rooting and growing these ideas to help manifest them as proofs of what is possible for 7GenCities.





Modeling Futures & Reworlding

Radical imagination is what is going to transition us into deep, lasting transformative change in our city systems, infrastructures, and bioregions for now, and for generations to come.

We had the honour of engaging in a conversation with three esteemed thought partners—Elder Catherine Tàmmaro, Fanta Condé, and Meagan Byrne. Drawing from their different identities and intersectionalities, ways of being, seeing and knowing, passions and work, they each shared insightful perspectives and possible new worlds through the lenses of their lived experiences and journeys through rupture, repair and reworlding. Guided by spacious question prompts, Catherine, Fanta and Meagan shared affecting stories and insights from the future – year 2163 (7 generations from now), describing in rich detail the challenges facing their communities, and the future worlds they envision and are working in their communities and ecosystems to bring into being.

Day 1:
**Grounding Wisdom &
Inspiration**

Across their different cultural worlds and areas of work and movement building, are synergistic passions and energies around:

- » Breaking cycles of oppression and trauma through new patterning and intergenerational learning, repair, and healing;
- » Decolonial thinking and action and empowering multiple ways of being, seeing and world building;
- » Collaborative work on Truth & Reconciliation, reparative and transformative justice, and radical inclusiveness; and
- » Imagining emerging systems and radical futures rooted in current initiatives and community building.

Four important themes emerged from the conversation that describe deeply vital shifts in mindsets that are necessary to visioning and manifesting 7GenCities including: compassionate decision making; trans-temporality over linearity; utopian thinking; and recognition of trauma.

1. Compassionate Decision Making: Working from a basis of compassionate decision making that considers the well-being of all species, beings, and the natural world is a critical role that we need to step into to reimagine radically different communities & cities. In essence, it provides a guiding principle that acknowledges the responsibility we hold not only to ourselves but to future generations (human & non-human), urging us to make decisions that echo with kindness, consideration, and a profound sense of stewardship for the Earth and her inhabitants.

2. Breaking from Linear Progress & Using a Trans-temporal Lens: Linear progress often confines our perspectives within rigid timelines, focusing solely on the present or the future, neglecting the intricate interplay between past, present, and future. Embracing a trans-temporal lens allows us to transcend these limitations and view the continuum of time as a rich tapestry interwoven simultaneously with ancestral wisdom, present challenges, and future possibilities. In particular, many Indigenous and ancient cultures imagine time to be circular and believe that when we tell stories or share experiences from a particular time in history, or outside of a particular historical event, we are able to re-weave the teachings, sensibilities and depth of meaning that the story continues to hold within our current context.

In re-telling and re-weaving the story through the current framing and lenses of today, we can see that there are other paradigms and wisdoms that offer us more life-sustaining and ennobling possibilities

and hope beyond the dominant systems and structures bringing us and our Earth so much harm. Trans-temporality brings these possibilities alive in the now and links us in a continuum to past wisdoms that are resonant with the futures we are creating together.

3. Utopian/Visionary Thinking: Utopian thinking has been so maligned in mainstream discourse because it conjures a reactive response related to empirical realities and seemingly inalterable social constraints. However, it is because our current realities and systems have become so calcified in our thinking that other possibilities feel so distant, that we need utopian thinking. It plays a crucial role in sparking creativity and imagining ourselves out of inequitable, broken systems, and into radical new futures for all peoples, communities and lands. In an imagination crisis, utopian thinking serves as a catalyst for envisioning and cultivating emerging intersectional and transsystemic systems of abundance, challenging the status quo, and pushing the boundaries of what is possible. When individuals embrace utopian thinking, they engage in a process of liberating their imagination from the constraints of the present reality.

4. Recognition of Trauma: Trauma is a bi-product of colonial capitalism that has cut across and impacted racialized and marginalized communities and natural systems in Canada and other present and former colonies and occupied lands. Cycles of genocide, ecocide, extractive growth without limits, enslavement, patriarchy and white supremacy have resulted in unestimable loss, polarity, monocultures, and systemic racism, inequity and oppression. In particular, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have experienced profoundly damaging individual, collective and intergenerational impacts that persist in our current social structures and systems.

How can we hold space for one another and work collectively to learn from and heal past and present-day harms stemming from coloniality and genocide by practising repair and restorative justice and transformative reconciliation? What 7GenCities agreements can we create that will hold our institutions and ourselves accountable for cultivating repair, transformative justice, equity and liberation from oppression for every people, every being, in every place and at every time?

Day 1:
**Grounding Wisdom &
Inspiration**





Credit: Evergreen

Immersive Site Experience & Storytelling

Elder Catherine Tàmmaro, Fire Keeper April Nicole and Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook co-hosted a sharing circle in the Gitigaan (garden) at the Brick Works for the Learning Gathering participants, complete with forest tea and honey harvested on site. The Gitigaan gardens host urban Indigenous agriculture and Earth Working projects focused on medicinal, three sisters, wild rice and pollinator plants and an apiary; a gathering place for urban Indigenous Community; and teaching land and cultural stewardship to younger generations. Held by the land around sacred fire and guided by Elder Catherine's teachings and the cultural protocols of the traditional Anishinaabe and Wendat stewards, we learned about a diversity of local Indigenous-led civic land and waterfront stewardship, Indigenous placekeeping and art projects, Indigenous reclaiming and place renaming of public spaces, Indigenous-civic infrastructures— and the role of Indigenous municipal leadership in 7GenCities city transformations, as inspired by City of Toronto partnerships with Indigenous Community.

Examples of local Indigenous stewardship and engagement include: Ihati'ndouhchou'tenh inlaid bronze clan totems for diverse Indigenous Nations on Queen Street; Fire Over Water exhibition at Crawford Lake and art-making process at Evergreen Brick Works; Evergreen's Indigenous foodways and urban land stewardship partnerships (including City of Toronto) and education and training programs; designated sacred fire sites mediated by Indigenous Affairs Office at the City of Toronto; and embedding City of Toronto Reconciliation Action Plan in placekeeping, waterfront governance, Indigenous co-governance.

Day 2: Reflections from 7GenCities

On day two of the Learning Gathering, we brought together cohorts from six communities across Canada: Halifax, Toronto, Peterborough, Halton, and Saskatoon. (Edmonton is also part of the group but were not able to join us on the day.)



To provide framing for the day and an introduction to 7GenCities, Jayne Engle and Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook presented the why, what, who and how of the work, from the overarching scope of 7GenCities to ways that they can be brought to life through systemic manifestations ([slide deck is here](#)). Together with the community cohorts we were able to bring forward and explore the visions, values, commitments and pathways that we hold within and across our different contexts. We shared from a diversity of experiences, teachings, projects and contexts that breathe life into,

challenge, strengthen, and nuance each others' work. We are creating and contributing to transformative infrastructures, placekeeping practices, and relational and collaborative ecosystems in our cities and communities in such compelling and vibrant ways. We explored the cultural, economic and political challenges, structures and resources we need to engage to enable these shifts and possibilities for manifesting 7GenCities. We also discussed the necessity for rooting our imaginative and speculative thinking in lived experiences and wisdoms, living demonstrations, and practical collaborative work and opportunities.

Day 2:
**Reflections from
7GenCities**



We are looking to deepen, enhance and drive our respective Truth & Reconciliation journeys and social and civic infrastructure projects in ways that right relationships, enable collective and planetary agency and wisdom, and improve the wellbeing and connectivity between communities, ecologies, collaborative ecosystems, and cities. Through our collective work, we are nurturing the following strands of thinking, practice and aspiration, which align beautifully with a 7GenCities ethos for how we can envision and build cities of the now and future, together:

- » Social and civic infrastructures that are deeply inclusive and community-driven
- » Urban Indigenous (co)leadership and community wellbeing

Day 2:

Reflections from 7GenCities

- » Neighbourhood-level social cohesion and local circular economy
- » Urban bioregional regeneration and (blue)green infrastructures
- » Indigenous stewardship and earthwork
- » Actioning Truth & Reconciliation and UNDRIP in municipal and civic structures
- » Land rematriation and reclamation, land self-sovereignty and self-ownership
- » Recognition of the authority and agency of lands and rivers to own themselves; and valuing and investing in lands, rivers and forests outside of extractive capitalist structures - FreeLand, Free River and Trees AI
- » Ceremony, placekeeping and public art practices
- » Tech and innovation stewardship
- » Decoloniality of capital and systemic, long-term financing for civic infrastructures
- » Indigenous and decolonial education and research
- » Municipal-Indigenous treaty partnerships
- » Integration of anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-oppression frameworks in municipal structures and civic infrastructures
- » Support for Indigenous and decolonial governance
- » Local circular economies and collaborative ecosystems

A resounding high note for many participants was that the Conference sessions and Learning Gathering provided a vital and unique space for a diverse group of Indigenous leaders working in community and from inside municipal structures, non-Indigenous municipal and civic leaders, foundation and innovation leaders, and Elders to come into circle and imagine, learn and journey together. People appreciated being able to sit in complexity and the challenges of working from within, and in collision with, institutions built for a different era and colonial capitalist logics and systems – while imagining and embodying regenerative and radically inclusive futures for all communities, lands and natural beings, and for for the next seven generations.

Recap of the Gathering

Day 2:
Reflections from
7GenCities



Day 2:
**Reflections from
7GenCities**

The following quotes shared by Learning Gathering participants eloquently capture these reflections:

The wisdom and experience in the room felt palpable. I kept thinking to myself how wonderful it was to be surrounded by folks who recognize the complexity of the work ahead yet can visualize something better and different for how we live in harmony with each other and the natural world. It's always felt like a challenge working with and across different levels of government, but to sit with Indigenous leaders who are doing the work from inside municipal structures that are deeply colonial, left me with a sort of reverence. We need to be in this work together, and the ability to learn from different teams across Canada who are grappling with similar questions and challenges and visions, is a big opportunity.

– Aimee Gasperetto, Every One Every Day Kijipuktuk/Halifax

Just wanted to get back and say how much I enjoyed the Evergreen conference... The offerings were deeply moving and hopeful.

– Elder Catherine Tammàro, Wyandot Faith Keeper and Elder in Residence at Evergreen

Given the tremendously painful time we are in, this work of repair is necessary for the restoration of human compassion and just futures across our globe. I was heartened to see the Truth & Reconciliation work led by Indigenous communities on the northern side of Turtle Island, and the brilliant work of 7GenCities, [Mi'kwaw Native Friendship Centre], Dark Matter Labs, and Evergreen Canada that center solidarity across identities, humanity and self-determination across spaces. I was comforted by the elevation of song and ritual to center and guide us, and I am grateful once again for the wisdom of elders and peers in that space.

– Fanta Condé, Omidyar Network

I was honoured to cohost a gathering of 7 Generation Cities, a new collaborative of Indigenous and municipal leaders designing cities rooted in care, radical inclusivity, and regenerative ecologies...This community—which has been stewarded by three brilliant leaders Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook, Jayne Engle, and Pamela Glode-Desrochers—grappled with questions like is it possible to build decolonial spaces while working with and through colonial institutions? What are concrete opportunities and ways to return land—quickly and at scale—to Indigenous stewardship? How to embed truth and reconciliation in how we build and steward social infrastructure?

– Panthea Lee, from her blog post on Substack: “Holding brave, tender space in times of war”

I'm so grateful to connect with this outstanding community of champions and visionaries and I look forward to these important and timely conversations on building more equitable futures...Special thanks to [hosts] for reminding us that we were all born at the right time to ignite change...

– Jorge Garza, Tamarack Institute



Reciprocal Sharing & Learning

We know that due to the scope, complexity and nuance of the work and initiatives that each city and collaborators are leading, our ability to grow the work benefits greatly from learning together, resource-sharing, and collective ideating and sensemaking. Connecting and sharing across city, cultural, regional and Indigenous-municipal-civic contexts, Truth & Reconciliation journeys, and social and civic infrastructure initiatives, participants were able to learn from one another, think expansively and build on emerging ideas and synergies. City cohorts and collaborators learned reciprocally of each group's aspirations, projects, challenges, and needs through journey boards that cohorts were invited to map and present to the larger circle for rich and inspiring conversation.

Based on themes that emerged from cohort presentations and collective sensemaking, we voted on the deep dive breakout topics of: creating conditions for relational systems design; Indigenous governance and land repatriation; and strategic opportunities – based on the tensions, challenges and questions we are grappling with in our work. These were dynamic and generative dialogues and yielded important areas for deeper exploration and application of 7GenCities lenses, including collective wisdom and practical examples.

We also discussed ways that 7GenCities could provide support for city initiatives and to navigate these deep dive topics through deep knowledge and deep work contributions. Our harvest and collective sensemaking over the course of this first Annual Learning Gathering generated a lot of new content around our intentions, shared challenges, how we move forward, and how we can together support each other as we build 7GenCities futures in our respective city contexts.



Connecting

The Learning Gathering and conference sessions provided important opportunities for Indigenous and civic leaders to enter into circle together, beautifully guided by Elder Catherine and hosted by Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook, Jayne Engle, and Panthea Lee. We were able to deepen into connection, weaving common threads around building social and civic infrastructures, and Truth & Reconciliation partnerships and journeys. We were able to imagine city and planetary futures together, lifting our gazes upward in terms of collective ambition and possible manifestations of 7GenCities in Toronto, Halifax, Saskatoon, Peterborough, Halton Region and other cities across Turtle Island.

We were able to cast our gazes into the future, thinking about building reconciliation-centered social and civic infrastructures fit for future generations and the conditions and pathways we need to get there. Indigenous, municipal, civic and community leaders from each city, as well as a group of 7GenCities collaborators who work across many cities, were able to connect and map out their journeys, as well as synergies across key areas of transformative city and community building, land regeneration and the work of Truth & Reconciliation.



Lifting Up & Supporting 7GenCities Manifestations

We are committed to lifting up, building and connecting system demonstrations of 7GenCities that show what is possible in civic contexts, as well as change the underlying systems and infrastructures (e.g. social, civic, finance, digital) that can foster deep inclusiveness, equity, care, wellbeing and regeneration across communities and ecologies. They are initiatives that are designed to be fit for complexity and long-term futures, and work at both the levels of place/bioregion and wider systems change.

Manifestations from across the city cohorts demonstrate beautifully how social and civic infrastructure initiatives are prioritizing Indigenous co-leadership and perspectives (please see “City Manifestation Examples” on 64 for more detail). These pay particular attention to urban land rematriation and stewardship, placekeeping and governance, and embedding Truth & Reconciliation and decoloniality, including:

- » **Halifax:** Transformative reconciliation and community-driven social infrastructure, a LandBack process and new friendship centre led by Wije’winen Friendship Centre and Every One Every Day Kjiipuktuk/ Halifax, Halifax Regional Municipality and partners;
- » **Saskatoon:** national urban park designation project focused on collaborative governance and stewardship led by Meewasin Valley Authority with municipal and Indigenous Community partners;

Day 2:

Reflections from 7GenCities

- » **Toronto:** Municipal-Indigenous-civic co-led placekeeping and land stewardship initiatives like: the revitalization of Waterfront Toronto and the Port Lands, in partnership with Indigenous treaty partners and design collectives; and the Waasayishkodenayosh Parklands facilitated by the City's Indigenous Affairs Office with Evergreen and community partners;
- » **Peterborough:** Championing and creating conditions for an Indigenous leadership role and Truth & Reconciliation strategy for the City of Peterborough; and cultivating reciprocal relationships specifically with First Nation treaty-holders and Indigenous urban community (Listen to interview with Reem Ali);
- » **Halton Region:** Debwewin Oakville Truth Project with Oakville Community Foundation, Indigenous treaty partners, and municipal partners to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in a shared Truth & Reconciliation journey focused on honouring Treaty lands, righting relations, and diverse placemaking actions; and
- » **Edmonton:** Indigenous-led cultural gathering spaces that connect across communities and honour land relationships in Edmonton like the Indigenous Experience at Fort Edmonton Park in partnership with Indigenous Community and municipal partners.

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allenges

estions

type of infrastructure

social

ICIE

Selina

Libraries
(ex. Daves Rd.)
Selina

Access
to land
+ water
Selina

Humber
Lodge/
Land
Selina

Spirit
Garden

Selina

Waterfront
Reutilization
FM

Space/
Buildings
- 25 shelter
- ALS
- THEM C
- LTC
Selina

Fear
retri

green/blue

Turtle
Protectors

Selina

Ravine
Strategy

Selina



Seeding
Love
+ Kindness

STAGNANCY

FEAR

Lack
of
\$ \$ \$



Changing
Minds
+ hearts

By laws
Policies
Processes

Fear of
retribution

Relationship
Trust
(lack of)

Realize
communities
hopes
+ dreams

Spirit
infused
into what
we do

LAND-
BACK/
LAND
TRUST

Co-olvp
Partner

7 Sacred
Teachings
Clan Mothers
ET

Fully
Implement
the RAP

Self
Determination
(UNDRIP)

Rematriation

Recap of the Gathering

Day 2:
Reflections from
7GenCities

List of Participants

Participants

Tammy Mudge	Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk	Learning & Evaluation Manager
Aimee Gasparetto	Every One Every Day Kjipuktuk	Director
Andy Filmore	House of Commons	Member of Parliament - Halifax
Michelle Baldwin	Community Foundations of Canada	Senior Advisor of Transformation
Tracey Robertson	Ontario Trillium Foundation	Lead for Innovation, Partnership Investments
Marina Nuri	WES Mariam Assefa Fund	Director of Strategy & Programs
Selina Young	City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs	Director
Jennifer Lafontaine	City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs	Placekeeping Manager
Fred Martin	City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs	Sr. Project Manager - Waterfront
Racheal Courchene- Carter	City of Toronto - Indigenous Affairs	Policy and Development Officer
Catherine Tàmmaro	Toronto Arts Council/ Evergreen/ Artist	Indigenous Arts Program Manager/Wyandot Faith Keeper
Lindsay Kretschmer	Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council	Executive Director
Fanta Condé	Omidyar Network	Programs Associate

List of Participants

Reem Ali	City of Peterborough	EDI Lead
Ian Attridge	Trent University	Community Volunteer
Amy Siciliano	Halifax Regional Municipality	Public Safety Advisor
Nicole Alie	ScotiaBank	Sr Manager, Community Investment
Alex Tveit	Sustainable Impact	Co-Founder & CEO
Meagan Byrne	Achimostawinan Games	Co-Founder
Jorge Garza	Metcalf Foundation	Program Manager
Mary Querques	Town of Halton Hills	Manager of Business Services
Beverley King	Halton Hills Public Library	Chief Librarian
Angela Bellegarde	Truth & Reconciliation Strategist	Tâpwêwin Indigenous Insights Inc.
Sophie Coutu De Goede	McGill University	Graduate Student, Urban Planning
Delanie Passer	Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre	Program Specialist
Ray Laliberte	Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre	Executive Director
Dënë Cheecham-Uhrich	Clearwater River Dënë School	Program Manager
Luis Patricio	Pillar Non-Profit	SDG Cities Co-Lead
Mike Velonas	Meewasin Valley Authority	Manager, Planning & Conservation
Michael MacLean	OSO Planning + Design	Founding Partner

Kieran Stepan	OSO Planning + Design	Founding Partner
Thomas McGuire	Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre	Finance Advisor
Corinne MacLellan	Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre	Communications Principal
Donna Gerber	Fedcap Canada	Indigenous Partnership Manager
Eddy Robinson	Halton Region	Indigenous Advisor & Strategist
Sherry Seavil	Halton Catholic District School Board	Indigenous Advisor
Fiona Deller	Future Skills Centre	Chief Strategy and Operations Officer

List of Participants

Hosting Team

Pam Glode-Desrochers	Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre	Executive Director
Jennifer Angel	Evergreen	Chief Executive Officer
Jayne Engle	7GenCities / Dark Matter Labs	Co-Holder
Tanya Chung-Tiam-Fook	7GenCities / Dark Matter Labs	Co-Holder
Panthea Lee	Independent	Co-Design & Co-Hosting
Nicole Alie	Scotiabank	Sr Manager, Community Investment
Jason Brown	Dark Matter Labs	Project Orchestration
Madelyn Capozzi	Dark Matter Labs	Visual Design



II.

SYNTHESIS OF CONVERSATIONS



The conversations at the Learning Gathering were rich and vibrant, focused on both the work that participants were engaged with in each of their locations: Kijipuktuk/Halifax, Tkaronto/Toronto, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Peterborough and Halton and ways that a 7GenCities Learning + Practice Community may be able to help support and amplify the work.

Here is a synthesis of key points from the discussions, with a focus on the threads that emerged on Day 2 at the Learning Gathering. Further reflections on these conversations, and recommendations from 7GenCities on how to take them forward, are found later in this document.

Our Intentions



1. We seek to reclaim Indigenous agency, leadership, and capacity in response to how our cities are evolving.

We believe Indigenous leadership is vital for the health and thriving of our communities and lands, and we are committed to championing Indigenous agency and investing in Indigenous capacity. This might look different in each context, but some ideas include:

- » Ensuring Indigenous leadership is centered in city planning processes: nothing for us without us
- » Advancing Indigenous-led environmental conservation and land stewarding
- » Advancing Indigenous governance models and philosophies across our initiatives
- » Driving more declarations of friendship and commitment with the

Our Intentions

National Friendship Center across our communities

- » Cultivating understanding and respect for protocol among non-Indigenous communities
- » Establishing a capacity-building fund to invest in Indigenous leadership
- » Building capacity across our community to help shape policies, processes, and spaces

2. We seek to revitalize Indigenous wisdom to help address the poly crisis facing humanity and Mother Earth.

This community, and others that may wish to join us, is uniquely positioned to seed love and kindness, infuse spirit, and move humanity from thinking to feeling in how humans understand and steward land and space. We can build inclusive communities that help connect people to land and create space for ceremony, so that everyone can thrive. By rooting our advocacy in concrete models and examples of Indigenous-led transformation, we can shift broader narratives to increase the cultural appetite for repair.

3. We seek to drive transformative systems change in how our cities are designed.

The ways this may look include:

- » Creating new governance structures that center those most impacted and the planet
- » Strengthening relationships between Indigenous Nations and among Indigenous urban community
- » Finding ways to sustain innovation systems work
- » Fostering adaptive cultures of innovation
- » Building inclusive local economies
- » Connecting stories across regions and across sectors
- » Advancing sector transformation in the performing arts
- » Creating a fund to support system change through multi-funder partnerships

4. We seek to embed repair and Truth & Reconciliation within city and civic processes, structures, everyday actions and spaces.

Some of the ways we seek to do this include:

- » Embedding Truth & Reconciliation and anti-colonial, anti-oppression and anti-racism frameworks into how we work
- » Making visible the processes and outcomes of reconciliation
- » Creating city-level Reconciliation Plans and implementing them across municipal and civic structures and processes
 - › e.g. Fully implement Reconciliation Action Plan in Toronto, Saskatoon and analogous policies in other cities
- » Creating a strategy for the implementation of UNDRIP as a framework for actioning Truth & Reconciliation across municipal and civic structures and processes
- » Developing and seeding sustainable infrastructure for the “repair” ecosystem

5. We seek to regenerate and steward urban bioregions in ways aligned with Indigenous teachings.

This means recognizing the self-sovereign and self-owning rights of land and Indigenous co-governance; investing in repatriation and Indigenous Land Back efforts, organizing around intentional; reciprocal relationships with land and more-than-human kin; and the establishment of land trusts, national urban parks, and more.

6. We seek to build and strengthen relationships among us, both within Indigenous Communities and with broader collaborator ecosystems.

We believe the 7GenCities Community of Learning and Practice can play a vital role in this. How we go about this strand of work will necessarily evolve, but early work may include:

- » Support a learning journey and sharing what we learn with broader stakeholders, to build understanding, buy-in, and to grow our community
- » Convening “newer” and “veteran” leaders, organizations, initiatives, and perspectives in the space, so that we can learn from and support each other

- » Bringing Indigenous community members in, so that we can increase the number of engaged and empowered individuals that are stewarding this agenda
- » The discussion touched on the idea of creating an Indigenous suburb or urban reserve in cities to provide a dedicated space for the community to come together. The importance of an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and anti-violence framework for a lot of this work was emphasized to overcome fear to protect us that are engaging in the work.
- » The possibility of decolonization within colonial institutions, building trust with communities, securing funding, creating Indigenous spaces, and defining the role of Indigenous governance within such institutions. These topics were identified as key challenges.

Our Intentions

Our Shared Challenges



Participants discussed shared challenges we all face in our work—and our recognition that it is by coming together to grapple with, organize around, and support each other in facing common challenges that we can successfully tackle the barriers in our way, and share knowledge on the best way to overcome barriers. Below are the common challenges that emerged, and the following section (Deep Dives) focused on three key areas (marked with a * below) that the group wished to discuss at the Learning Gathering.

* 1. We face challenges in creating conditions for relational systems design.

True relational work takes time, care, and attention to build relationships, to cultivate trust, to expand the table, and to translate between different cultures and experiences. Yet we are committed to doing work in this way.

Challenges we face in this area include:

- » Ensuring that our communities have a seat and a voice at the table
- » Building trust with communities (given that some of us are seen as representatives of the government)

**Our Shared
Challenges**

- » Building cross-cultural competence within government and amongst collaborators to work with Indigenous communities with respect and sensitivity
- » Finding ways to embed the values of the diverse Indigenous cultures that we are collaborating with

*** 2. We face challenges in identifying and organizing around strategic opportunities and frameworks.**

We recognize that important change can come from organizing around key moments, opportunities, and initiatives—such as UNDRIP and Urban National Parks—yet we don’t always have the infrastructure, relationships, and experience around how to do so. Some of the challenges we face here are:

- » Limited understanding in how to identify strategic opportunities and effective frames for approaching them
- » Limited experience and capacity in developing strategies and building / sustaining coalitions to influence larger frameworks
- » Recognizing that ways of organizing within dominant settler cultural may not align with our values and approaches, and that there is a lack of Indigenous-led, anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-oppression, and anti-violence frameworks from which we can build upon in our organizing efforts

*** 3. We struggle to establish Indigenous governance models within colonial institutions.**

We wrestle with larger questions on how best to work with and within colonial structures (municipal and otherwise) while we work to also decolonize and create space for Indigenous and intercultural forms of governance. Many of us either work with or within colonial institutions, and we recognize that their collaboration is essential for the work we seek to do. And yet, their governance models, norms, and practices can often be at odds with Indigenous teachings and approaches. Our questions include:

- » What does Indigenous governance look like (e.g. the Reconciliation Action Plan) and does it have a place in a colonial institution?
- » How to make the case and secure the ability for meaningful co-governance? How might we effectively shift decision-making power?

Our Shared Challenges

- » How do we manage the challenges that inevitably emerge when diverse Indigenous and Western approaches try to coexist within various legal frameworks, e.g. constitutional, UNDRIP, municipal jurisdictional, etc?
- » How might recognition of land sovereignty and governance change to ensure Indigenous Communities have the opportunity to lead decisions and steward sites in perpetuity?
- » Is decolonization of processes and structures even possible when we work within colonial structures?

4. We face challenges in driving more transformative progress around Indigenous land sovereignty, land repatriation in cities.

Many of us are engaged in land back and other repatriation efforts, and face common challenges:

- » Limited understanding of / protocol around establishing Indigenous land trusts
- » The lack of of Indigenous self-determined spaces in cities especially Indigenous suburbs or urban reserves
- » The opportunity to weave in urban contexts Indigenous legal systems that recognize land as sovereign and as having agency (e.g. [FreeLand](#))
- » Challenges in advocating for and securing more engaged land stewardship and restoration

5. We struggle to combat exploitation of our knowledge.

While we are heartened by growing interest in Indigenous knowledge in our city planning processes, we also recognize that with greater interest comes greater risk of the exploitation and cooptation of our knowledge. We are concerned about our people being treated as an extractable commodity and our knowledge being taken in transactional ways, rather than being seen as inherently worthy and deeply valuable. This is a risk both for the dignity of our communities, but also for the success of our larger vision: If our knowledge is extracted in superficial ways and not deeply integrated, Indigenous washing can simply contribute to the further decline of our cities,

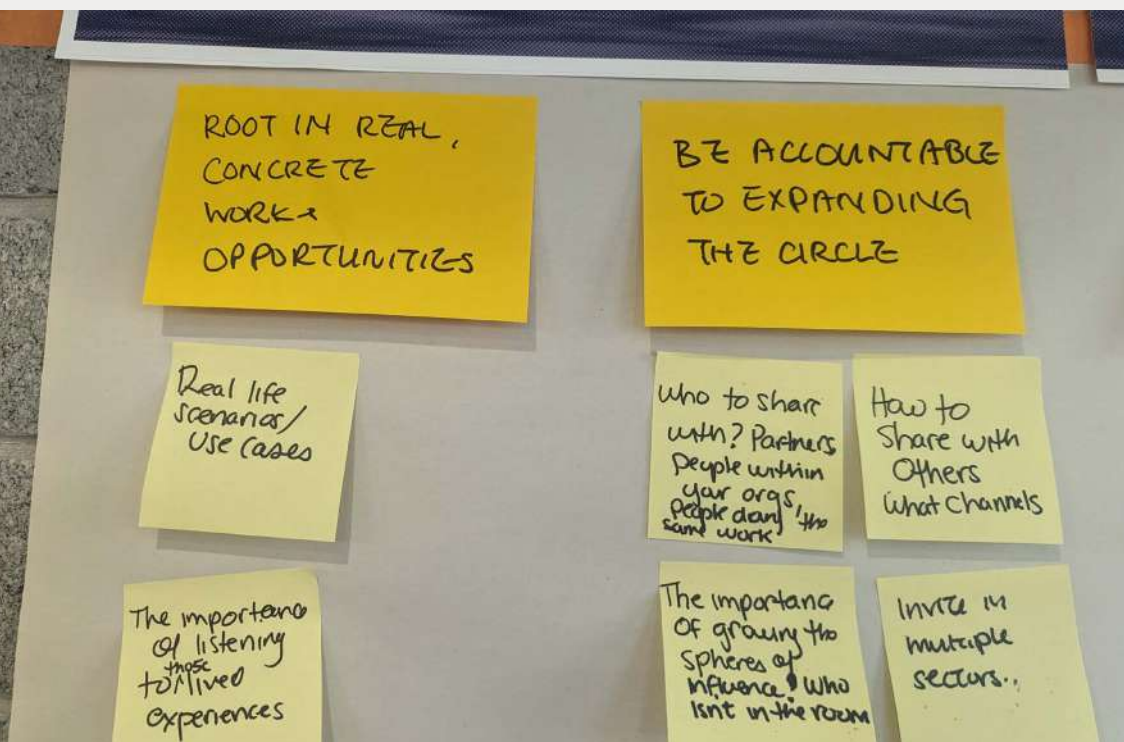
communities, and ecosystems—and to deteriorating agency and hope within our communities.

6. We face challenges in advocating for the criticality of this work, especially in securing transformative and non-transactional funding and in pushing back against unrealistic timelines and inappropriate metrics.

We recognize that this work is vital, and yet it is often difficult to secure the scale and type of funding we need to realize its long-term success. Some challenges we face include:

- » Limited funding, as this work is often considered “extra” work, and for critical relationship building work and other vital aspects of process
- » Working to structurally decolonize capital and financing institutions through actions such as:
 - › Transitioning out of the dominant logics of colonialism, extractivism, and scarcity and philanthropy and developing new logics and valuation for financing institutions based on abundance, gifting, wellbeing, etc.
 - › Generative value exploration and allocation of capital led by communities in support of financing new futures that are inclusive, equitable and embedded in decoloniality and Truth & Reconciliation.
 - › Righting relationships with the Earth and Indigenous Peoples by creating financing pathways that value and prioritize the capabilities and multifaceted wellbeing of all peoples, lands and natural entities through a new generation of social finance mechanisms and asset classes
 - › Ensuring that all future infrastructure investments apply an equity lens, for both current and future generations.
- » Funders not bringing a systems view / approach to funding
- » Capacity challenges: there are not enough people to support the work, and therefore funders pose questions about capacity, sometimes without seeing that it takes time and funding to build critical capacity
- » Funders imposing unrealistic timeframes and funding cycles, based on their own administrative timelines
- » Finding ways to measure and share what matters—that is, of broader social impact, relationship and systems change outcomes, rather than the more basic “counting” metrics

Moving Forward Together



In considering the value of establishing a Learning + Practice Community, participants agree that it was not just about what the Community might do but how it would operate. If we are to establish a Learning + Practice Community, we want it to be rooted in ways of moving and being in community that are nourishing and additive. Thus, participants offered some principles for how we wish to move in community:

1. Root in concrete work and opportunities.

Sharing and learning together is great but there was much more excitement around doing things together. Our work should be rooted in real life scenarios and concrete use cases, e.g. UNDRIP and National Parks, while centering those with lived experiences.

2. Support each other in decolonizing how we work.

We recognize the harm that colonial ideologies and ways of working have wrought on our communities, and we commit to challenging these ideologies and moving in authentic, decolonial ways. This work can take many forms, but it includes creating safe spaces where we can be vulnerable, making space for rest as part of cyclical practice, and having the ability to be inefficient so we can foster our creativity.

3. Develop and share practices around how to work at multiple scales.

The type of transformation we seek requires diverse approaches, at multiple scales. We honour and support each other's need to work at a multiplicity of scales (e.g. personal, team, organizational, sectoral, and across any combination of these scales) and to spread the work among many of us. We commit to sharing resources and experiences so that we can better constellate how systems change is happening, and organize strategically within and across scales and approaches.

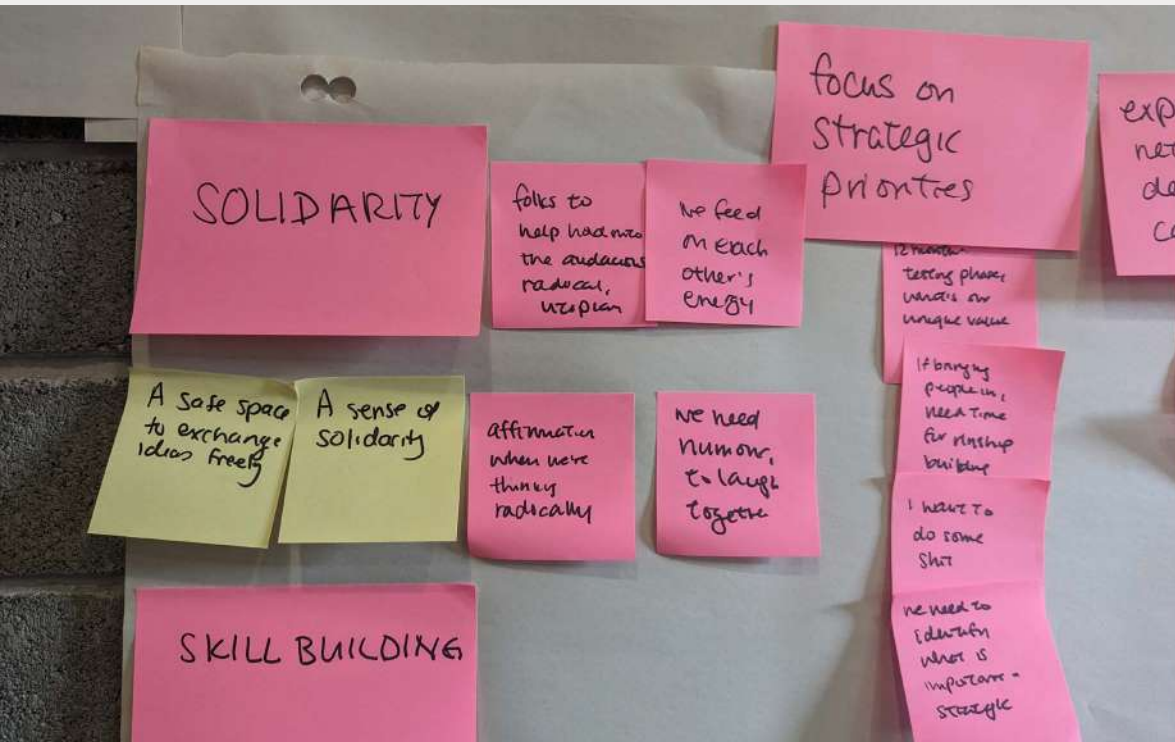
4. Expand the circle in intentional ways.

We will be accountable to centering lived experience and inviting Indigenous Community members to learn from their wisdoms and insights. Sometimes, this may look more fluid and informal; such modes are also valid and valuable. We also recognize the importance of: cultivating a collaborative ecosystem to do this work together and uplift and support each city's initiatives; and growing spheres of influence, including a commitment to inviting in multiple sectors, aligned non-Indigenous leaders and other accomplices. This is part of a larger strategy to expand the channels through which we share knowledge and build community.

5. Build effective mechanisms for follow-up.

We appreciate the immense value of in-person gathering, and we also recognize that to realize our communities' potential, we need timely and effective mechanisms for follow-up, coordination, knowledge sharing, and organizing. We also need capacity dedicated to knowledge capture and mobilization, both so that we can easily bring in new members and so that we are not always starting from the same point.

Supporting Each Other



We know a community is only as strong as the ways we care for and support each other. The Learning Gathering thus concluded with reflections from participants on the ways we wish to show up in community, and to care for one another. The following reflections may form the basis of community agreements / guiding principles that may inform how we work and be in community:

1. We stand in solidarity.

The visions we are trying to manifest in the world are radical and may seem utopian—realizing them will not be easy. A sense of solidarity among us is thus essential. We need a safe space to exchange ideas. We need affirmation and support when we are pursuing our audacious visions. We need to nourish one another and feed on each other's energies. We need to laugh together. To realize the future we seek, we need to stand in solidarity.

2. We focus on strategic priorities.

We want to do this together. But driving impact is as much about what we don't do as what we actually do. As a community, we commit to identifying what is important and strategic, and once agreed upon, to dedicate ourselves to driving change on our priorities. To start, we will give ourselves a 12-month testing phase to experiment with different approaches and to assess what is the unique value of this community and of our ways of working.

3. We commit to expanding and nurturing our imaginations.

Every day, we are surrounded by stories that sap our energies and cause despair—but to drive systemic transformation requires that we cultivate and maintain hope. Thus, as a community, we commit to holding and encouraging each other's radical imagination, and to sharing stories of what is possible. We will support each other in generating proofs of possibility to counter the nihilism and despair so often peddled by dominant culture.

4. We learn and grow together.

We have the wisdom to honour the deep knowledge within our community, and the humility to know what we don't know. We seek to learn together, by developing a Knowledge Keepers Circle, learning the politics and mechanics of how change happens (and how others have played the game), and to share tactics and strategies to achieve goals and navigate barriers. We will also identify and listen for our shared knowledge / skills gaps, so that we can invest in the development of practical tools for radical change.

5. We expand our network through careful design.

Change is a chain reaction. Thus, we have a responsibility to grow our network. To do this, we will consider who else needs to be part of our circle, what are the capacities and perspectives we're missing, and what is our plan for growing. And we will invite them in—with a focus on centering youth leadership, and bringing in those who do not have such community—while investing in ample space for kinship building. Ultimately, we are all nodes in a network, and so change will only be as strong as our network. That said, we don't all need to show up the same way—there can be different types of membership / engagement for different needs and preferences.

6. We gather in person for strategic goals, and meet in between to drive progress.

We recognize that in-person time is highly valuable, but it is also expensive and time-consuming; thus, when we gather in person, it will be for a strategic purpose. In between meetings, we will meet virtually to drive progress on our strategic goals, continue conversations, and deepen relationships.

7. We customize city approaches based on community priorities.

We need to develop a holistic methodology for valuing natural areas and ecosystem services that accounts for ecological and socio-cultural values and impacts, as well as economic value and impacts, along with economic impacts, along with ecosystem services.

- » 7GenCities can create space for ideated connecting, identifying actions then discussing successes and challenges; ideally we would raise funds to support folks accessing this space
- » Community as pathway to knowledge sharing i.e. opportunities, strategies, challenges, frameworks
- » Ensure Indigenous (co)leadership; access to resources; and protection of Indigenous data and knowledges covered under ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®) principles



III.

DEEP DIVES ON KEY AREAS



Participants at the gathering identified **three key areas** for deepening and growing city-level social and civic infrastructure and Truth & Reconciliation initiatives – and in which they hoped the 7GenCities Learning + Practice Community may be able to organize around in the near-term. A synthesis of the generative discussions and sensemaking from the three breakout dialogue groups are provided here as sticky areas of inquiry, considerations and provocations. We invite readers to engage with these topics as seeding the ground for sensing into and growing their initiatives as part of a larger vision for manifesting and stewarding 7GenCities.

- 1. Creating Conditions for Relational Systems Design**
- 2. Indigenous Governance & Land Rematriation**
- 3. Organizing Around Strategic Opportunities**

Creating Conditions for Relational Systems Design

Key questions:

- » How do you make it about a whole system?
- » How do you make it interconnected from the start? (trans-systemic)
- » How to create pathways for voices that are not often heard?
- » Who needs this cultural shift? How to define?
- » Need for reciprocity
 - › What are the best ways to enter these spaces?

Considerations for an approach:

- » Weekly In person meetings
- » Ceremony – can build trust
- » Space for visioning i.e. local journals, community
- » Create a culture that reimagines what work and innovation looks like
- » Redefining what is valuable
- » Imagination could be reconnecting with ideas from the past, non-linear work
- » Embedding non-linear work in principles and values
- » Finding partners that share the same vision
- » Creating space for self-reflection and connecting to nature
- » Creating space for rest
- » Importance of healing
- » Moving to outcomes and deliverables
- » How are we building spaces to tackle polarization?
- » Lateral violence training

**Creating Conditions
for Relational
Systems Design**

- » Importance of leading with vulnerability
- » Constant work of decolonization
- » Challenge of being punished for pushing back against the system
 - › Cultural hegemony by Euro-Canadian

How does your work impact community?

- » Need for self-reflections
- » Grounding in a sense of place
- » Grounding in truth

Indigenous Governance & Land Rematriation

Considerations for an approach

- » Departure from pre-cooked policy and regulatory frameworks that don't enable genuine forms of community-driven input and decision making – offered downstream in the process and only asking for community approval
- » Indigenous approaches that are community-driven and centered around Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- » Possibility for hybrid, braided forms
- » Web 3 Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAO): concern to minimize appropriation of Indigenous governance
 - › Partner with Indigenous Knowledge Holders to lead and co-design process to understand how to appropriately integrate Indigenous approaches

Key areas for inquiry

- » Urban reserves and passive forms of governance
- » Indigenous Peoples' agency and radical participation in decision making and policy processes
 - › Conscious about public safety e.g. Office of Public Safety at City of Halifax called for the charge for public intoxication to be revamped as it disproportionately targets Indigenous and Black communities
 - › While there was provincial involvement, community leadership drove action
- » Support for community service providers
 - › Navigate liability concerns that pose barriers to Truth & Reconciliation work at the City level
 - › Need for community leaders to champion and model positive change
 - › How can we facilitate stronger push back against legal risk constraints?
- » Encampments in cities
 - › Public spaces are natural places for community to gather but they have become increasingly criminalized
 - › Sacred Fires policy amended by City of Toronto due to actions led by community and facilitated by Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO)

**Indigenous
Governance & Land
Rematriation**

- » **Responsibility-sharing between government departments within the City**
 - › IAO at City of Toronto engaged community and transformed policies around sacred fires
 - › However, IAO should not be responsible for determining who has access and under what conditions (in the best interest of community)? Which department has resources and authority to make those assessments?
- » **Ceremony: very important to governance and systems shift**
 - › Decentralized authority and responsibilities to community: Linking rights with responsibilities
 - › Should municipal level Indigenous Affairs be getting involved in the community affairs that should be ideally self-determined by community members under existing/expanded regulatory and provisioning frameworks?
 - › Can laws enable the rights and responsibilities of communities in different contexts?
- » **“Edge of the Bush” is a liminal space where we can bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches using two-eyed/multi-eyed seeing**
 - › Formal vs. informal governance (including liability concerns)
 - › How can we make governance more relational and aligned with Indigenous forms of governance, which tends to be more informal, fluid, consensual and generative?
 - › Codify precedents for more fluid and relational forms of governance that have worked and under what conditions for making an evidence-based case
 - › What relational frameworks, rights bridges and legal mechanisms and approaches can be adapted or created to enable Indigenous landback, free land and self-owning rights of nature, land trusts? i.e. decolonized and Indigenized forms of commoning regimes for water and land regeneration, guardianship, stewardship
- » **Urban Indigenous reserves and community organizing**
 - › Who is Community? Must be collectively decided i.e. Indigenous urban residents, Indigenous organizations, treaty-holding communities
 - › Duty to Consult – extend to the urban context
 - › Status/Treaty-holders on reserve vs. mixture of Status/non-Status people in cities
 - › Distinction of territories; political tensions
 - › Who should municipalities be speaking to regarding strategic engagement and organizing actions?

- » **How can allies amplify and lift up community land back actions?**
 - › Awareness-raising especially around Indigenous land sovereignty in city contexts
 - › Mobilizing assets, support, networks
 - › New distinction of land holding and land relationships to recognize self-sovereignty and self-owning rights of lands, waters, natural beings/entities

**Indigenous
Governance & Land
Rematriation**

Organizing Around Strategic Opportunities

Key questions

- » Truth & Reconciliation and UNDRIP: what city-level policy and legislation frameworks currently exist?
 - › How do/can those frameworks link to provincial and/or national legislation?
 - › How to turn settler shame into a sense of committed responsibility and long-term, reciprocal relationships?
- » In absence of legislation, how to hold accountabilities to reconciliation, while strengthening trust and legitimacy of this work?
 - › Critical to have official plans/policies in place i.e. Toronto & Saskatoon Reconciliation Action Plans
 - › Manifesting for real what Self-determination means
 - › Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) + Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
 - › Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)
 - › What are people experiencing? i.e. city staff and community members

Key areas for inquiry

- » Evaluation measures: tools for measurement – indication
 - › Immediate reporting and visible accountability e.g. City of Peterborough DG(?)
 - › Reporting on Truth & Reconciliation calls to action by municipalities
 - › Including qualitative data/ narrative reporting
 - › Storytelling workshops at City of Toronto
 - › Narrative therapy: a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work, which centres people as the experts in their own lives.
 - › Hear knowledge > interpret > integration > changes systems + mindsets
 - › Utopian thinking + 7GenCities
 - › Power of seeing – much more important for community than legislation
- » Why here? SDG framework link to UNDRIP and National Urban Parks
- » Identify and leverage strategic opportunities

- » Adapt social infrastructure regarding urban Indigenous needs
- » National urban parks
 - › Framework in legislation for accessibility
 - › New mindset and new traction regarding financing

Considerations for an approach

- » Urban Indigenous Peoples must be at the centre of whatever framework e.g. UNDRIP and TRC, research, funding
 - › “Nothing about us without us”
- » Decentralize ability to innovate e.g. knowledge-sharing e.g. technology, land back, funding community frameworks

Organizing Around Strategic Opportunities



IV.

NEXT STEPS

Growing 7GenCities Community of Learning + Practice

Based on feedback from Learning Gathering participants, we have decided for now to keep the community focused on a smaller cohort of city groupings and collaborators, of which most (but not all) participated in this first gathering. Aligned with our own goals and recommendations from participants, we also intend to expand membership from those particular city contexts to include more community partners, Elders, youth leadership, and non-Indigenous accomplices.

Another consideration for growing the 7GenCities community is to balance between hosting learning and knowledge sharing across city cohorts, and action-oriented engagement on city-level projects to manifest 7GenCities. In terms of action-oriented engagement with cities, our team is committed to offering: co-building with interested place-based cohorts and supporting 7GenCities city manifestations through journey mapping, light backbone and facilitation support, and 7GenCities Protocols for co-creating deep systems change and deep knowledge.

We are committed to rooting our collective radical imagination, learning, and co-building opportunities in lived experiences and wisdoms. We are also committed to supporting each other in decolonizing how we work, ensuring that all ways of seeing, being and knowing are honoured. We aspire to create a safe space where everyone can be vulnerable, and where acknowledged blind spots and missteps are not judged but seen as ways we can build creativity.

What's next for 7GenCities?

We have been seeding the work of 7GenCities and our growing collaborative ecosystem through our main bundles of Learning + Practice Community, Social Finance, and Field Building. We are keen to work with interested communities within Canada, US and the global south, exploring into the possibilities, conditions, Indigenous and land-centric wisdoms, structural transitions, and innovative funding instruments needed to co-build 7GenCities of the future. The following diagram presents a sample of offerings for next steps and co-building opportunities over the next year. We will share developments of this exciting work as it unfolds, and urge you to get in touch if you are interested in exploring possibilities for 7GenCities in your city.

Co-building Opportunities and Next Steps for 2024



Learning + Practice Community

Co-host Community Conversations with municipal and community partners

on emerging topics such as land repatriation and opportunities for co-building 7GenCities. e.g. Prototype 7GenCities Assembly: akin to a citizens assembly and with representatives of future generations and more-than-human worlds.

Prototype a 7GenCities Knowledge Keepers Circle

including Elders and Youngers from diverse wisdom traditions to guide embedding city and community level Truth & Reconciliation, radical imagination, and braiding knowledges and practices.

Convene next gathering of place-based cohorts

for mutual learning & support and to create and advance bold collective plans (e.g. possible gathering in Halifax, May 2025 w/ CFC conference).

Develop workshoping tools

& teaching curricula (e.g. [Civic-Indigenous Placekeeping Toolkit](#)).



Field Building

Support 7GenCities proofs of possibility

to develop a long-term vision for deep systems change and establish 7GenCities Protocols for how to get there e.g. journey mapping for place-based cohorts.

Grow radical imagination & participatory futuring work

e.g. Imagining 2080 on [Medium](#) and [podcast series](#); [Guided 7GenCities futuring & artifact visualization](#).

Build a major multi-year partnership grant proposal for action-research

with universities, Indigenous orgs, local govts, and other civil society/community orgs (contact us if you have ideas to contribute to building this).



Social Finance

Explore opportunities to build & finance a reconciliation-centered civic infrastructure portfolio

(together with Systems Finance and Transforming Capital ecosystems).

Advance work on Decolonizing Capital

First blog coming soon, building on the first [#CiFi Civic Infrastructure Financing report](#).

Build case for Friendship Centres

including as a new asset class for financing the next generation of social and civic infrastructures (concept coming soon).

V.


**MORE ON
7GENCITIES**

What is 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 + Practice Community. The Learning + Practice 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.

What is 7GenCities?

2. Field Building. Building the field of 7GenCities 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.

3. Social Finance. 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.](#)

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;

Actioning Truth & Reconciliation and
Seven Generation
Teachings

- » 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.



Credit: Indigenous Environmental Network

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.

Actioning Truth & Reconciliation and
Seven Generation
Teachings

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 we 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.



Credit: Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

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 Kijipuktuk-Halifax and 7GenCities more broadly across programs and partnerships to support Truth & Reconciliation in Halifax and beyond.

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre & Every One Every Day Kijipuktuk/Halifax

City Manifestation
Examples

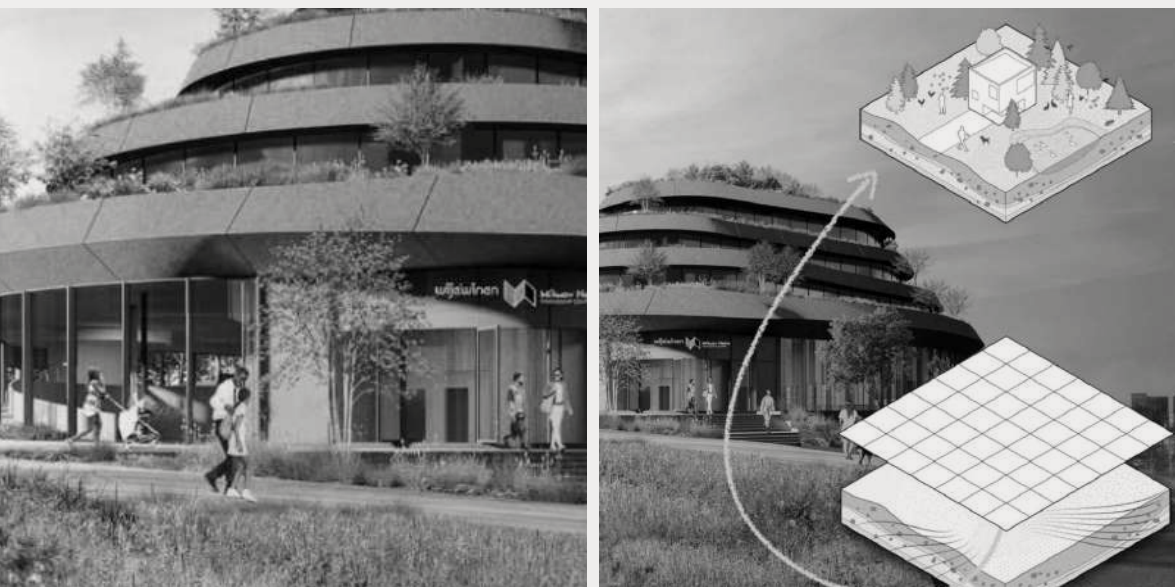
Every One Every Day Kijipuktuk-Halifax is a social infrastructure that invites residents to create, learn, and grow together. Neighbors lead projects that involve sharing their ideas, skills, and capabilities through activities like batch cooking, community meals, and sharing cultural knowledge and traditions, 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.”

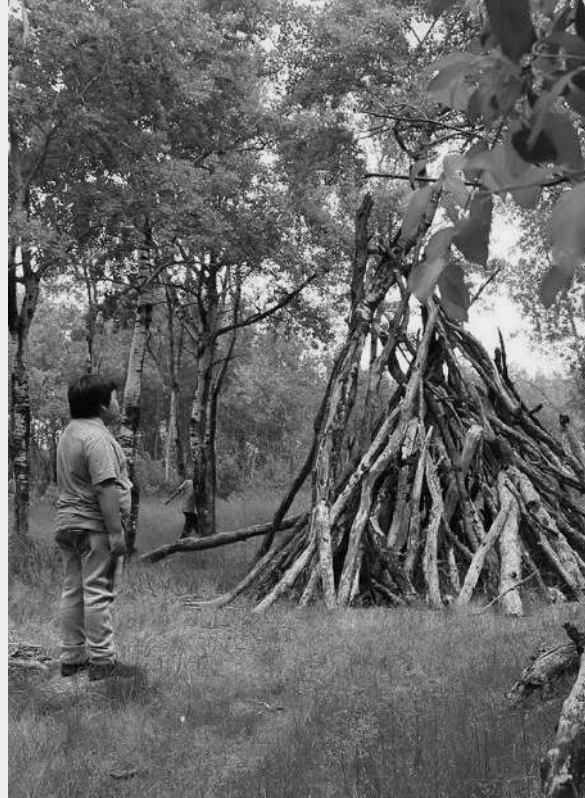
- Pam Glode-Desrochers

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

City Manifestation
Examples



Credit: Meewasin Valley, Tourism Saskatchewan Canada

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.

Meewasin Valley, a potential National Urban Park, Saskatoon

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.

City Manifestation Examples

City Manifestation
Examples



Credits: Evergreen; Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

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:

Waasayishkodenayosh Parkland & Ravine Loop Trail, Toronto

City Manifestation
Examples

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.

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Examples

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.



Credit: Evergreen

City Manifestation
Examples



Municipal-Indigenous relationships and responsibilities within Truth and Reconciliation are cultivated under the thoughtful leadership of DEI Advisor Reem Ali, as well as her embodied experience and understanding of advocating for equity, inclusion and justice within city and civic structures and processes. Reem is deeply committed to working on embedding Truth & Reconciliation and to stewarding reciprocal municipal relationships at the City of Peterborough with urban Indigenous Community and treaty partners. In our interview with her, she shares her goal to create bridges between Indigenous and newcomer communities so that newcomers can become more engaged in Truth & Reconciliation learning and actions with Indigenous Community.

Municipal-Indigenous relationships and responsibilities with the City of Peterborough



City Manifestation
Examples



Credit: Sheridan College (2022)

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.

**Debwewin: The
Oakville Truth Project
& Relationship
Agreement with the
Mississaugas of the
Credit First Nation**

City Manifestation
Examples**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.

City Manifestation
Examples



Credit: Evergreen

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 Brick
Works & Evergreen
Climate-Ready
Schools**

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.

City Manifestation Examples

City Manifestation
Examples



Credit: Fort Edmonton

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.

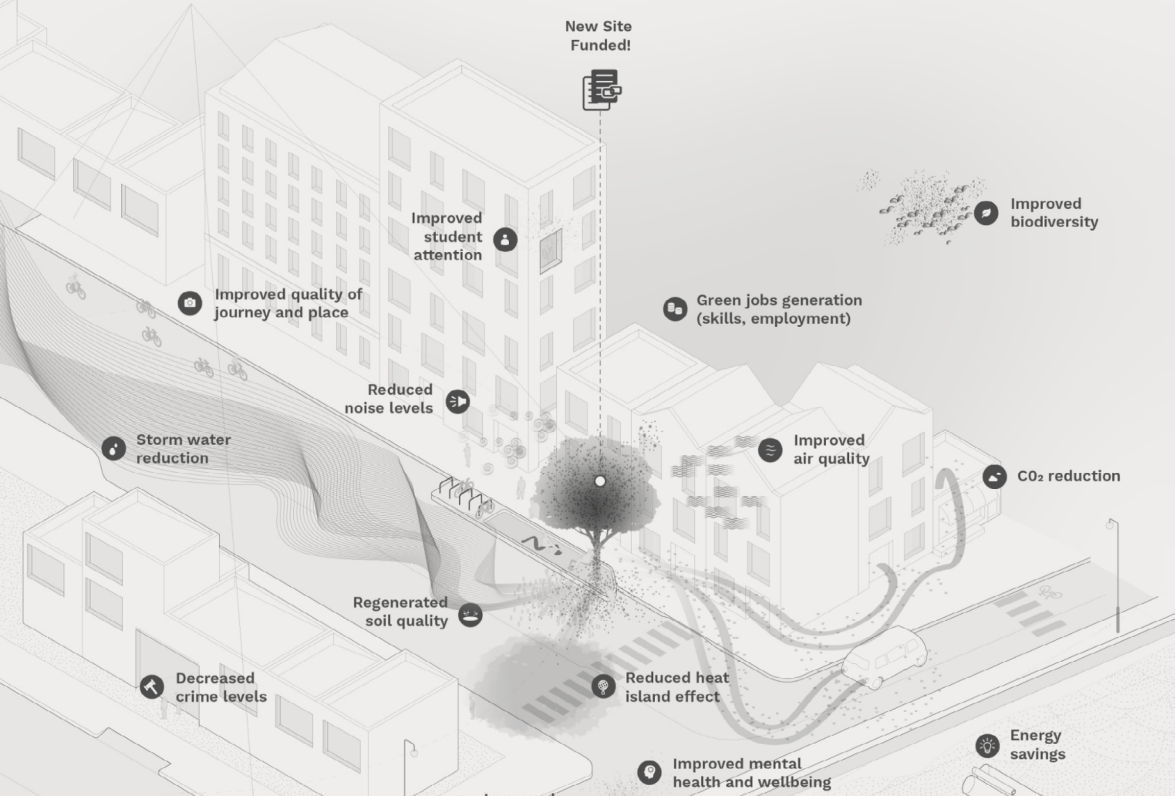
Located along kisiskâciwanisîpiy (the North Saskatchewan River) bank in Fort Edmonton Park, the Indigenous Peoples Experience is surrounded by lush greenery, gathering places, and columns of trees with words of welcome in Indigenous languages – such as Cree and Michif. The building is a brand new, ashen-grey 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.

**Iyiniwak okiskêyihta-
mowiniwaw /
Indigenous
Experience at Fort
Edmonton**

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.

City Manifestation Examples

City Manifestation Examples

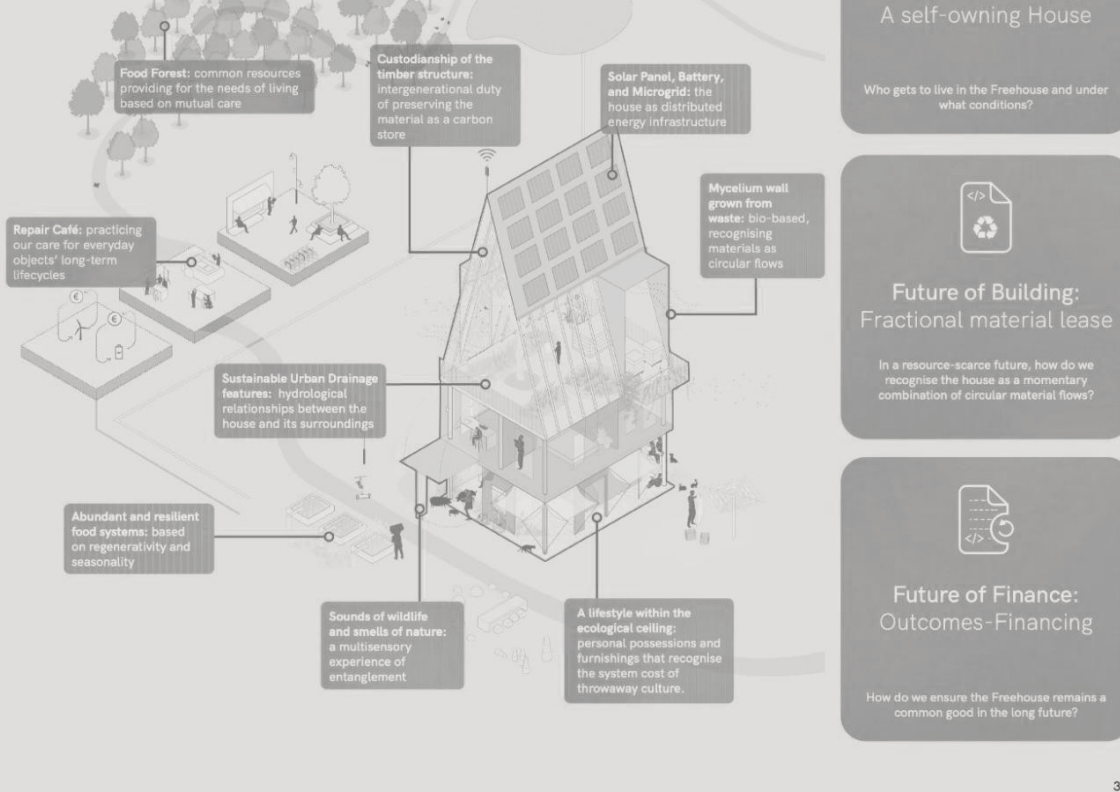


Credit: Dark Matter Labs

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.

TreesAI



More on 7GenCities

City Manifestation Examples

Future of Finance: Outcomes-Financing
How do we ensure the Freehouse remains a common good in the long future?

Credit: Dark Matter Labs

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.

FreeHouse

Resources

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

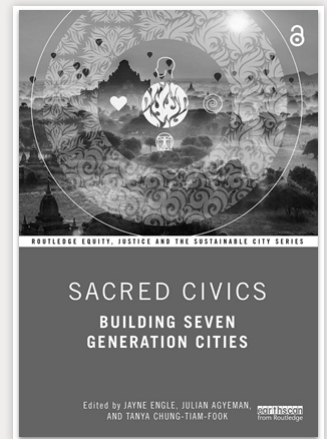
They are not required readings for participation in the gathering, but are intended as background reading to provoke continued learning and deepening in your own journey to vision and manifest what is possible for future 7GenCities.

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



Resources

- » [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 Támarao
- » [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

Bamford et al. (2015). [Stronger Together: A Toolkit for First Nations Municipal Community Economic Development](#). The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Cando and Indigenous and northern Affairs Canada.

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Resources

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About the Partners & 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.

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 Kijipuktuk/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.

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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