

## **Grand Trunk Indigenous Engagement Strategy (non-workplan)**

This Indigenous Engagement Plan is framed with the understanding that the strategy is subject to change to honor and align with Indigenous practices and traditions. Recognizing that conventional work plans may not fully accommodate the relational and holistic nature of Indigenous engagement, this approach emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and respect for Indigenous recognition and self-determination. Unlike traditional project plans that are rigid and time-bound, this plan serves as a flexible framework that prioritizes relationship-building and mutual understanding over strict timelines and predetermined outcomes. It acknowledges that meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities cannot be confined to conventional schedules or processes. Instead, it must evolve organically, guided by the needs, wisdom, and protocols of the Indigenous peoples involved.

Understanding that each Indigenous community is unique, with its own protocols and traditions, we acknowledge that our strategy must remain fluid. The plan serves as a living document that will be continually refined in partnership with Indigenous stakeholders. This ensures that the engagement remains relevant, respectful, and effective. While the plan outlines proposed timelines, these are flexible and will be adjusted as needed to respect Indigenous processes and accommodate meaningful participation. We will involve Indigenous partners in setting agendas, determining consultation methods, and making key decisions that affect them. The project team will engage in continuous learning about Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary issues. This includes being open to feedback and willing to make changes in response to new insights.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline (Quarters)</b>	<b>Integration with Other Parts of Work</b>	<b>Additional Considerations</b>
<b>Pre-Consultation Phase</b>	<b>Identify Interest Holders</b>	List of Indigenous nations, organizations, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Métis groups, urban Indigenous groups, and Treaty organizations.	Q4 (2024), Q1-Q2 (2025)	Ensures the right stakeholders are involved from the beginning and sets the stage for informed consultation.	Representation from a diverse range of Indigenous groups is key to success. Prepare engagement plan based on Indigenous interest holders list.
	<b>Acknowledgment and Education</b>	Conduct workshop for committee and	Q1-Q2 (2025)	Prepares the project team to engage in	Workshop to be conducted before

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		planning department on Indigenous protocols and cultural significance.		culturally appropriate ways and builds internal knowledge to guide the project.	formal outreach. Oonagh to lead development of protocol draft.
	<b>Initial Outreach</b>	Formal invitations sent to Indigenous governments and organizations. Plan follow-up for connecting with Indigenous interest holders.	Q1- Q2 (2025)	Establishes open and transparent communication and ensures that Indigenous partners are aware of their right to be consulted.	Prepare formal invitation letters. Include a follow-up plan to ensure continuous communication with Indigenous communities.
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong relationships built with Indigenous communities, laying the foundation for deeper consultation.</li> <li>- This phase creates the groundwork for integrating Indigenous perspectives into planning, design, and decision-making processes.</li> <li>- Continuous engagement and transparency will be essential for trust-building.</li> </ul>				
<b>Consultation Phase</b>	<b>Culturally Safe Consultation Framework</b>	Framework developed to include ceremonial spaces, protocols (e.g., offering tobacco), and Indigenous languages.	Q2-Q3 (2025)	Ensures that consultation is culturally safe and that Indigenous traditions are respected throughout the project.	Co-develop framework with Indigenous advisors.
	<b>In-Person Meetings and Workshops</b>	Hold regular meetings and workshops at key milestones. Include capacity-building opportunities for community members.	Q2-Q4 (2025)	Direct engagement with Indigenous communities allows for real-time input and ensures community involvement in decision-making.	2-3 in-person workshops planned for Q2-Q3, logistics to be planned with Indigenous leaders to include ceremonial spaces and culturally appropriate formats.

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	<p><b>Indigenous Sharing Circle</b></p>	<p>Establish committee of Indigenous leaders, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers for ongoing advice and input.</p>	<p>Q2-Q3 (2025)</p>	<p>Ongoing input ensures that Indigenous perspectives are represented consistently throughout the project.</p>	<p>Indigenous Sharing Circle will meet regularly and provide feedback during key project stages.</p>
	<p><b>Digital Consultation Tools</b></p>	<p>Use webinars and virtual town halls for remote Indigenous communities and urban Indigenous populations.</p>	<p>Q2-Q4 (2025)</p>	<p>Ensures inclusive participation from Indigenous communities that may not be able to attend in person.</p>	<p>Plan digital outreach strategy for remote participants to ensure equitable access to consultation.</p>
	<p><b>Identify Cultural and Environmental Concerns</b></p>	<p>Work with Indigenous partners to identify and protect areas of cultural and environmental significance (e.g., sacred sites).</p>	<p>Q3-Q4 (2025)</p>	<p>Cultural and environmental considerations are central to the project’s sustainability and respect for Indigenous traditions.</p>	<p>Collaborate with Indigenous environmental experts to assess and protect culturally significant sites.</p>
<p><b>Outcome</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusive and culturally safe consultation with Indigenous communities, addressing cultural and environmental concerns.</li> <li>- Consultation phase informs design and environmental protection measures, ensuring Indigenous perspectives are respected and integrated.</li> <li>- Regular communication to Indigenous communities on how their input is shaping the project will be crucial.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge</b></p>	<p><b>Co-Design Process</b></p>	<p>Collaborate with Indigenous architects, planners, and artists to integrate Indigenous design</p>	<p>Q3-Q4 (2025)</p>	<p>Ensures Indigenous cultural expressions are embedded in the design and aesthetics of the project.</p>	<p>Co-design workshops with Indigenous professionals and advisors. Consider integrating natural</p>

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		principles and artwork.			materials and symbols that honor Indigenous traditions.
	<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	Partner with Indigenous environmental experts to integrate Traditional Knowledge into environmental assessments.	Q3 (2025)-Q1 (Following year-2026)	Aligns the project with sustainable practices based on Indigenous stewardship of the land.	Environmental assessments to include both technical and Indigenous ecological knowledge.
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous knowledge is fully incorporated into the design and environmental aspects of the project.</li> <li>- These elements create a project that reflects Indigenous values in both its design and environmental approach.</li> <li>- Ensure that both design and sustainability reflect the principles shared during the consultation process.</li> </ul>				
<b>Post-Consultation &amp; Ongoing Engagement</b>	<b>Feedback Loop</b>	Establish a mechanism for Indigenous communities to provide ongoing feedback and receive updates on the project.	Q4 (2025)-Q2 (Following year)	Keeps Indigenous communities informed and allows for continuous input and adjustments based on their feedback.	Develop communication channels and regular updates for Indigenous partners.
	<b>Monitoring and Adaptive Management</b>	Framework to monitor project impact on Indigenous communities and adapt as needed to address concerns.	Q4 (2025)-Q2 (Following year)	Ensures the project remains responsive to the needs and concerns of Indigenous communities throughout its life cycle.	Set up a committee to monitor cultural and environmental impacts and adapt strategies as necessary.

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	<b>Indigenous Economic Participation</b>	Identify opportunities for Indigenous-led businesses, contractors, employment targets, and apprenticeships.	Q4 (2025)-Q1 (Following year)	Provides economic opportunities for Indigenous communities and supports long-term partnership.	Create an Indigenous hiring and procurement strategy, with defined targets for participation in construction and operations.
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous communities are engaged throughout the project lifecycle, and Indigenous economic participation is integrated.</li> <li>- Ongoing engagement ensures the project continues to reflect Indigenous priorities and fosters long-term relationships.</li> <li>- Continuous feedback and monitoring processes ensure responsiveness and adaptability.</li> </ul>				

**Discussion question**

- Does this draft strategy recognize the roles Indigenous governments must play in stewarding the land, protecting the environment, maintaining cultural, spiritual, and social traditions?
- Will this draft strategy open the possibilities to create a new pattern of interactions to design a space that is just and inclusive and subsequently enable everyone to participate in society in ways that foster true reconciliation?
- What does it mean to conscientiously, in a learning and humble mode in which no people, worldviews or knowledge systems are rendered invisible, and hidden, divisive silos are actively and visibly rejected, truly embrace reconciliation? What is missing from this draft strategy?