

# UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples) Strategy Engagement - Urban Indigenous Peoples

## Plain Language Summary - November 2023 and February 2024

### Engagement at a Glance

Engagement with the diverse Indigenous peoples living and working in the City of Vancouver commenced November 2023 – February 2024, with the objective of fostering dialogue around the City of Vancouver’s UNDRIP Strategy, sharing priorities and perspectives, and establishing pathways for future engagement.

#### November 2023 Engagements:

- Two engagement events (one online, one in-person).
- External Urban Indigenous Facilitator.
- Indigenous Relations team.
- Public Engagement team.
- Indigenous Reconciliation Planners for CoV.
- Talking Circle Facilitators.
- 3 witnesses from Urban Indigenous population and 1 City Councillor.
- 2 Speakers and 1 Floor Manager from the Squamish Nation.
- Approximately 50 participants engaged.
- Potluck Catering.

#### February 2024 Engagements:

- Two engagement events (one online, one in-person).
- External Urban Indigenous Facilitator.
- Indigenous Relations team.
- Public Engagement team.
- Indigenous Reconciliation Planners for CoV
- Talking Circle Facilitators.
- 4 witnesses from Urban Indigenous population.
- 1 Speaker and 1 Elder from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.
- Approximately 84 participants engaged.
- Friendship Centre Caterer.

## Summary of Final Report

In 2021, the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and the City of Vancouver came together to start the UNDRIP Task Force. They wanted to create a plan to put the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into action.

After a year of working together, in 2022, the Task Force finished their report called "The UNDRIP Strategy." All four partners, including the City Council, agreed on this plan.

The Strategy includes 79 "Calls to Action" that describe specific things the city will do to follow UNDRIP. It recognizes the special rights of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. It also emphasizes the importance of involving and collaborating with the diverse Indigenous communities living in the city.

### *What happened so far*

The City of Vancouver has been engaging with the Indigenous peoples who live and work in the city to learn more about their needs and perspectives. This engagement, which started in November 2023 and continued into February 2024, involved Urban Indigenous peoples in the development of the UNDRIP Strategy. Engagement work included:

- 5 engagement events (2 online and 3 in person)
- over 150 community members
- an Urban Indigenous Facilitator

### *The process*

Event participants had the chance to share their thoughts on the strategy and how they want to be represented and engaged with by the city. These events were led by Indigenous facilitators, including knowledge holders from different Indigenous nations. The work was supported by various City of Vancouver staff members and Indigenous community members.

During the engagements, participants were asked to provide feedback on the UNDRIP Strategy and discuss how they want to be represented at City Hall and engaged by the City of Vancouver. They identified priorities such as social, cultural, and economic well-being, ending Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination, self-determination and self-government, and rights and title of Indigenous peoples.

### *What we learned*

Feedback from participants highlighted the need for longer and more accessible engagement sessions, clearer communication about the UNDRIP Strategy, and efforts to build trust between the Indigenous community and the City of Vancouver. Participants also suggested ongoing communication through newsletters and the city's website, as well as opportunities for Indigenous-led engagement opportunities.

### *What happens next*

The City of Vancouver plans to:

- Report back to the Host Nations and Urban Indigenous community members
- Share the engagement findings with all City of Vancouver departments
- Continue engaging with Urban Indigenous community members
- Develop an Indigenous Engagement Framework based on the feedback received

## Priorities of the diverse Indigenous Participants

### *UNDRIP as a Guiding Framework*

#### **Recommendation:**

1. The City of Vancouver incorporate both the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the 2022 City of Vancouver UNDRIP Strategy as guiding frameworks when engaging and collaborating with the diverse Indigenous people residing in Vancouver.
2. It's imperative to uphold the principles and articles outlined in the 2007 UNDRIP, including Article 3, which emphasizes self-determination; Article 8, protecting against assimilation, rights erosion, and forced integration; Article 18, advocating for Indigenous participation in decisions affecting their lives; and Article 22 which speaks to gender and other intersections being free from violence.

### *Indigenous rights and Self-determination*

#### **Recommendation:**

3. City of Vancouver make a declaration or accord publicly announcing their commitment to relationship building, cooperation, and dedication to supporting and uplifting the diverse Indigenous populations living in Vancouver

### *Relationships with the diverse Indigenous people living in the City and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh*

#### **Recommendation:**

4. Provide an opportunity for the diverse Indigenous peoples living in the City of Vancouver to communicate with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and share their concerns, opportunities to collaborate, and build solidarity.
5. Provide funding for more City staff to engage Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh speakers to open and provide teachings at city led events.

### *Cultivating Allyship and Addressing Bias*

#### **Recommendation:**

6. City of Vancouver educate all City staff on the displacement of urban Indigenous peoples due to colonization and educate staff on current issues such as lack of housing and employment on reserve lands, and anti-Indigenous racism
7. City venues provide support for urban Indigenous led events and reduce barriers

### *Quality Health Services*

#### **Recommendation:**

8. Support the establishment of additional Indigenous-centered treatment centers and detox programs in the City of Vancouver.
9. Enhance Indigenous liaisons within City led/supported health services.
10. Adopt a Public Health approach rather than punitive measures, avoiding incarceration for low-level offenses.
11. The city should provide increased and improved city-wide mental health services for parents (including foster parents) whose children are dealing with mental health challenges. This includes ensuring enough space and funding for these services and removing obstacles such as zoning regulations. Additionally, the city should collaborate with health service organizations to enhance support for families in need.

### *Access to Long term and Affordable Housing*

#### **Recommendation:**

12. Reduce red tape for supportive and market priced Indigenous housing developments.
13. Ensure supportive housing units accommodate multi-generational living arrangements.
14. More affordable housing offered
15. More human support and funding to locate and secure safe, affordable housing and stable housing.

### *Public Safety*

#### **Recommendation:**

16. Racial Profiling, Cultural Safety and Trauma Informed training for all city staff who work with the public. Incentivize or encourage all businesses (i.e. retail stores and security company personnel) by utilizing levers such as permitting and licensing and offering new resources. This could be applied to all Canadians as well as newcomers when they enter Vancouver.
17. Implement a City-Wide alert for MMIWG2S and MMIP (harmonize work with province on red alert).
18. Prioritize the support, identification and advertisement of safe spaces/havens (i.e. 311 and social media) for Indigenous people, it could look like the "Neighborhood Watch" program from the 70's and 80's.

## *Education and Training*

### **Recommendation:**

19. City of Vancouver to educate all city staff on “understanding Indigenous protocols 101” Not all protocols are the same and if staff do not understand they may offend an elder (e.g. giving tobacco to an elder who does not use that medicine traditionally) (Action Group 3).
20. More opportunities for Indigenous people to learn and practice their own culture and learn their diverse histories.
21. Provide opportunities for people living in Vancouver to learn about the rights and histories of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh and how they are upheld and recognized at the municipal level.
22. Ensure all City staff, City leadership and City Council receive training specific to the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh as well as to the experiences of the diverse Indigenous peoples living in Vancouver. This training should not only be about transferring knowledge but also about fostering mutual understanding and respect, paving the way for more effective and meaningful collaborations.

## **Representation of Indigenous Peoples in the City of Vancouver**

### *Recognition of Diversity*

#### **Recommendation:**

23. Acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples living in the City and stress the importance of legislation like UNDRIP in driving positive change. This is not just about having a seat at the table; it's about reshaping the table itself to be inclusive, respectful, and reflective of the diverse Indigenous voices, histories, and futures.
24. Reduce power dynamics in processes such as rotation of consultants, and caterers through more transparent procurement processes.
25. Reduce barriers and increase communication of opportunities where Indigenous people can address Council directly.

### *Indigenous Embassies – Collective of Representative Bodies*

#### **Recommendation:**

26. Support and fund the establishment of a cultural hub of individual Indigenous Nations. This hub could be created with the same idea as Embassies. The purpose is to facilitate support from Individual nations to their off-reserve nation members. Activities could range from resource distribution, community support, representation, and engagement. There could be an opportunity for funding to flow to off-reserve members through this initiative.
27. Provide opportunities to bring diverse Indigenous peoples in Vancouver together with knowledge holders and Elders.

### *Focus on Various Intersections of Marginalization*

#### **Recommendation:**

28. The City should address (within above noted Friendship Accord) the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in incarceration, childcare, homeless, poverty, and substance use as an outcome of harmful policies such as the Indian Act. Include this context within training and education curriculums on Indigenous histories in Canada.

### *Visual Representation and Cultural Visibility:*

#### **Recommendation:**

29. Poster campaigns increasing visibility and showcasing the diversity of Indigenous people who are living and working on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. I.e. Poster campaign, “ey sweyel!”
30. With permission of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh include diverse Indigenous languages in specific areas (high density areas with diverse Indigenous people) within the city to raise visibility of the diversity of Indigenous people residing in Vancouver (participants mentioned space for Indigenous like the [Punjabi market](#) - street names are in Punjabi)
31. More visuals of the diverse Indigenous people in social media posts by City of Vancouver – Success stories and how the City of Vancouver collaborated and provided support

### *City led Committees and City Hall*

#### **Recommendation:**

32. Ensure Indigenous Elder and youth positions on all committee’s especially UIPAC.
33. Reevaluate the structure of UIPAC to maximize impact.
34. Investigate mechanisms to improve ongoing connections and accountability of UIPAC to the Indigenous community as well as with Indigenous-led organizations.

## **Engagement with the Diverse Indigenous People in Vancouver**

### *Acknowledgment of Population Diversity:*

#### **Recommendation:**

35. The engagement approach should consider the diverse origins and identities within the diverse Indigenous people living in Vancouver, recognizing the unique perspectives of those who are from local First Nations, those living off-reserve or off traditional territories, and individuals who have joined the community through marriage or other means.

### *Accessibility and Inclusivity*

#### **Recommendation:**

36. Make engagement opportunities accessible to all Indigenous people

37. The city needs to do more work to explain UNDRIP Strategy in plain language and to give more time for discussion around this topic
38. City proactively reach out and be present in spaces where Indigenous peoples feel comfortable and can easily participate. City leaders attend engagements.
39. Hire Indigenous influencers. Make videos (TikTok) of Indigenous staff explaining the UNDRIP Strategy to share on social media.
40. Do in person outreach and give out by hand postcard invitations to future engagement events. Also use email, texts, in person meetings and forums, etc. for recruitment and outreach.
41. Offer childcare, transportation for elders and those with different abilities, and substantive support during the events.

### *Participation and Representation*

#### **Recommendation:**

42. "Nothing about us without us,"- involvement of Indigenous peoples in every stage of engagement—from initial discussions to the implementation and review of outcomes. The participants call for non-tokenistic, continuous, and meaningful participation that respects Indigenous self-determination and decision-making.
43. Offer incentives and honoraria for engagement

### *Transparency and Communication*

#### **Recommendation:**

44. The City be open and clear about its engagement processes, intentions, and how input from Indigenous communities will be used. Transparency is crucial for building trust and ensuring that engagement is seen as genuine rather than performative.
45. Create a menu of options of future engagements that Indigenous people can access online on platforms such as Shape Your City website.
46. Create an easy-to-read handout of the City's UNDRIP Strategy
47. Track promises and commitments' that are made at these events and progress.
48. Track implementation actions that emerged from the engagement and let urban Indigenous peoples know how their feedback is being used.
49. Report back on how work is moving forward with Urban Indigenous peoples and next steps.

### *Alignment of Processes and Outcomes*

#### **Recommendation:**

50. Clear communication about how decisions are made and how community input influences outcomes, ensuring that the process is designed to faithfully translate Indigenous peoples' contributions into tangible actions and results.

51. Utilize an Indigenous centered approach that respects and integrates diverse Indigenous cultures, values direct and inclusive communication, and seeks systemic change through informed policy-making and genuine collaboration.
52. After each engagement follow up with a survey for feedback as well as an additional follow up regarding how gathered data is going to be used to inform decisions