

# The Tiawenhk Initiative



*“Tiawenhk”, the Wendat word for “thank you”, expresses our gratitude for all the goodness nature provides.*

**Phase 1** - Build a traditional First Nations ceremonial/healing space and organic farm at Rouge Park, to support a land-based healing program; emphasizing an Indigenous worldview of humanity’s connection to nature and promoting the spiritual, cultural, ecological, and socio-economic benefits we can reap through sharing and conservation.

**Phase 2** – Leverage Indigenous-led businesses to execute projects to reforest areas around Rouge Park through the federal **2 Billion Trees** program, to improve biodiversity, conservation and to create employment opportunities.

**Phase 3** – Establish an Indigenous women’s shelter at Rouge Park, aligned with the traditional Huron-Wendat culture (nearby Alexandria, Draper villages), empowering women through a matriarchal approach/hierarchy.

**Future Phases** - Connect all GTA’s parks and forests that have a historical Indigenous heritage, through a “nature-based” network with an enhanced canopy and conservation; integrating other local, provincial and national efforts, while engaging First Nations for ongoing stewardship.



# Phase 1: Construct an Indigenous Ceremonial Site and an Organic Garden at the Park to Promote Land-Based Healing and Conservation

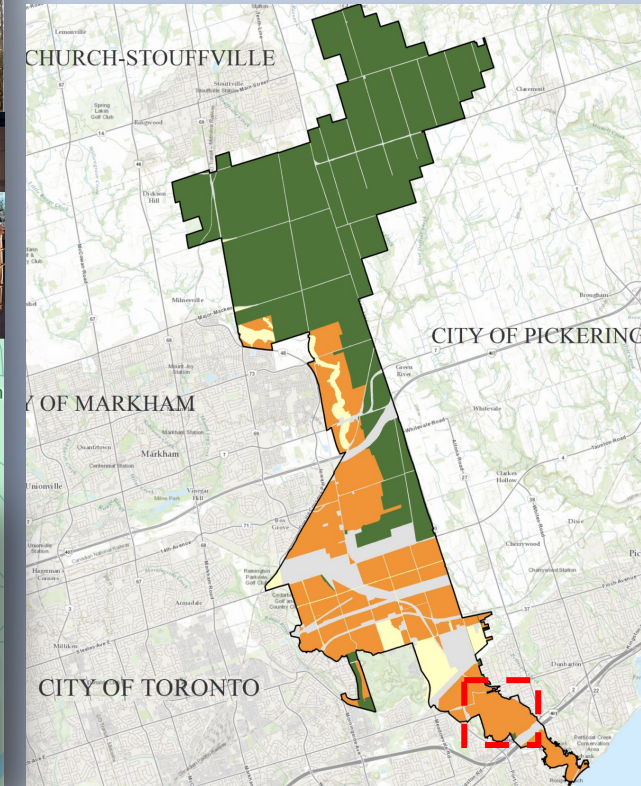
- i. Leverage Rouge Park land at [Morningview Trail and Old Finch Road](#), an ideal location near the Rouge River and across from the Toronto Zoo.



- ii. Engage local [woodworkers](#) and Indigenous craftspeople to construct a traditional First Nations ceremonial space, for use by the Tiawenhk shelter and other Indigenous support organizations for land-based wellness programs and education, building a connection among residents and businesses to help preserve our urban greenspaces.
- iii. Plant an organic garden, supported by the Indigenous women's shelter residents as part of the wellness program, using traditional Indigenous farming techniques.

# Tiawenhk Initiative: Preliminary Location

- [“The Rouge”](#) area at Morningview Trail and Old Finch Road provides a solid starting point for the Initiative that can be used for future program growth:
  - ✓ The Tiawenhk Initiative can eventually connect the vast expanse of Rouge Park through [“Indigenous carrying trails”](#), creating walking paths from Tim Hunter Memorial Park to the Rouge Beach;
  - ✓ The Rouge (Malvern) community offers abundant real estate close to all necessary amenities.



# Phase 2: Execute Reforestation Projects near Rouge Park To Improve the Canopy, Promote Biodiversity, and Enhance Conservation

- The projects will be Indigenous-led with program oversight from the non-profit “Tiawenhk” organization and supported by funding from the [2 Billion Trees Program](#) and other sources.
  - ✓ Reforesting “distressed” areas with a variety of native plant species, along with improvements to the local wetlands, will provide an enhanced urban canopy for the local high-density Scarborough community and support Toronto’s climate action plan, including the City’s key strategies around biodiversity and resilience.
  - ✓ In alignment with the City of Toronto’s Reconciliation Action Plan, the project will promote an Indigenous worldview of the interconnectedness of all things and sanctity of nature, while creating employment for Indigenous, youth, and others.



# Phase 3: Establish Second Stage Housing Near Rouge Park to Shelter Homeless Indigenous Women

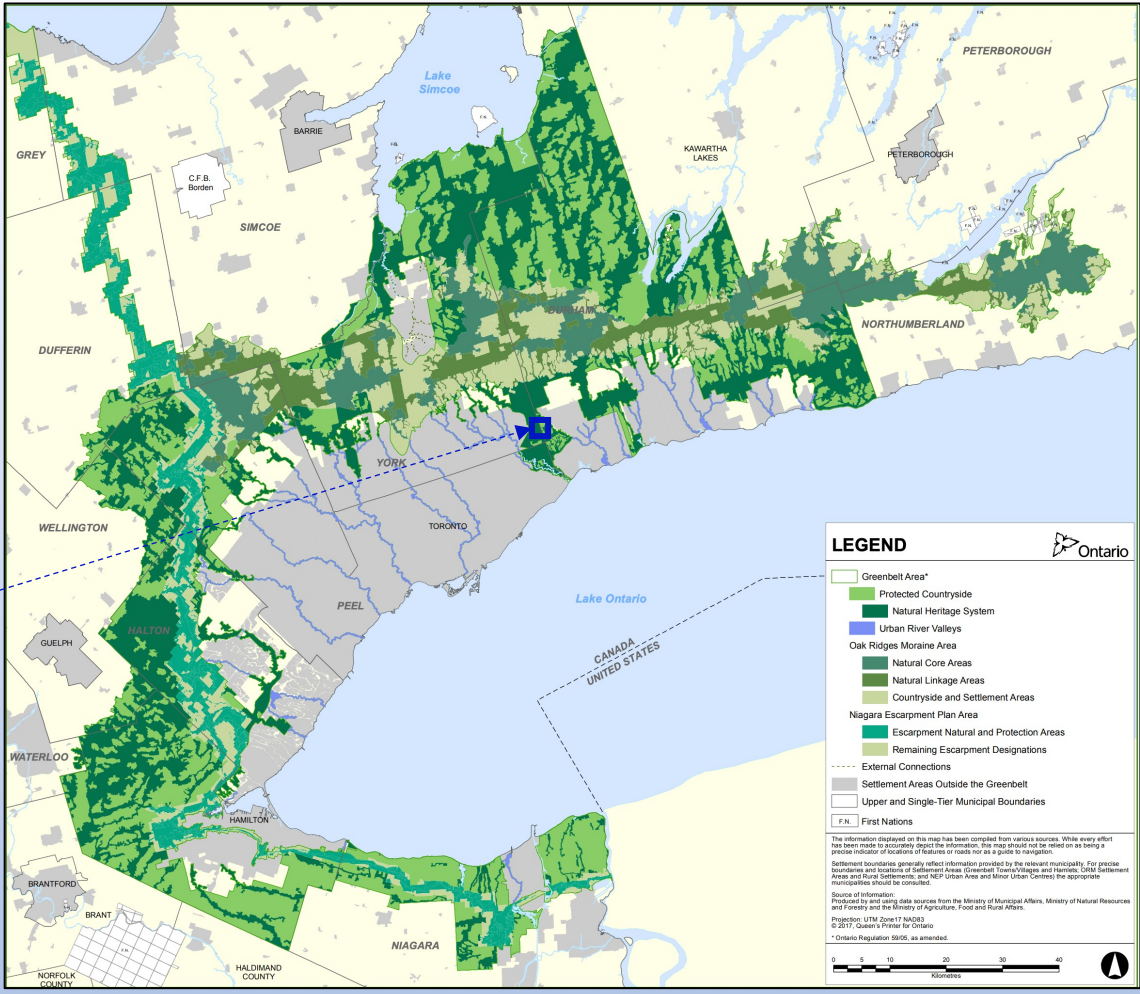
([Anduhyaun Inc.](#))

- Establish [Second Stage Housing](#) (@128 Morningview Trail) to provide safe, temporary housing for Indigenous women. Residents will provide support to the Tiawenhk programs.
  - ✓ 3 x furnished single occupancy rooms with a shared bathroom,
  - ✓ 1 x double occupancy room with a separate bathroom, and
  - ✓ 1 x basement apartment unit to suit families of up to 3 people.
- Shared kitchen and living space on the main floor.
- Secure, nondescript location situated on a bus route and near amenities.

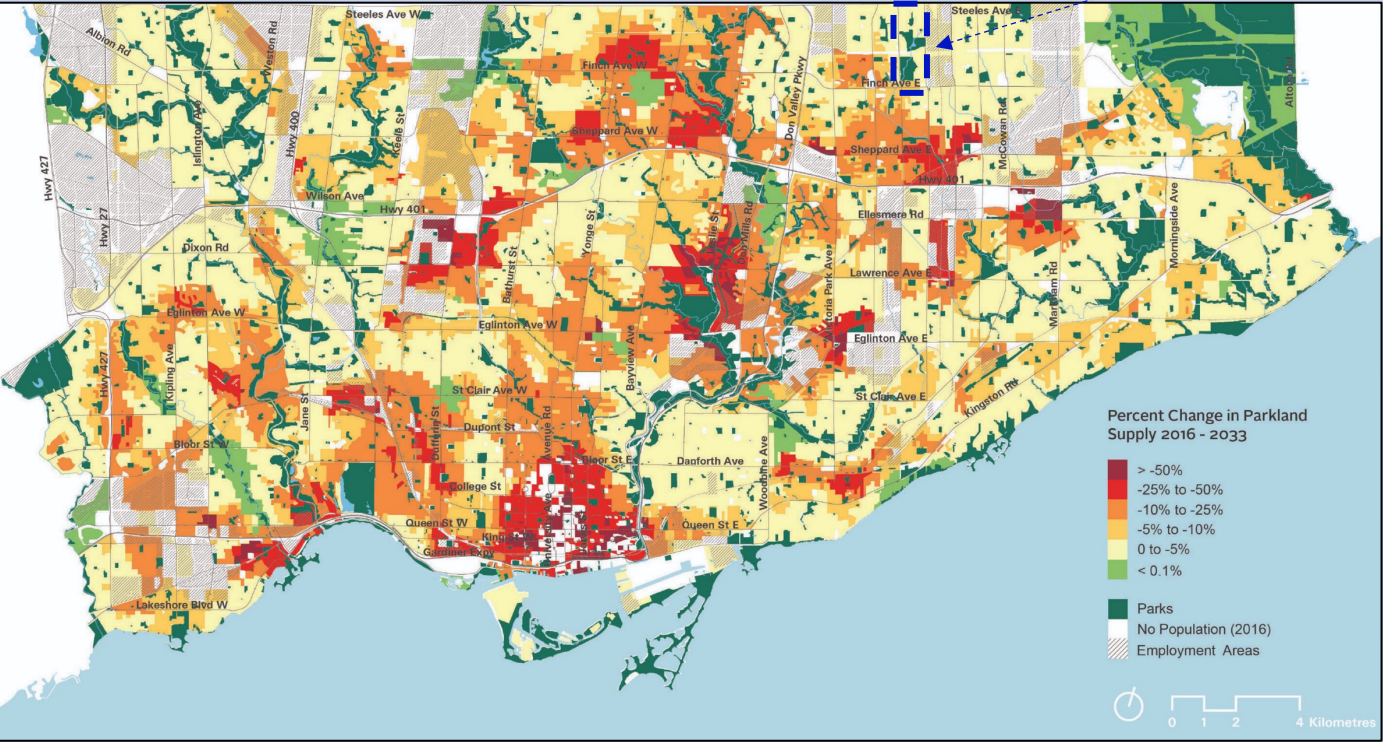


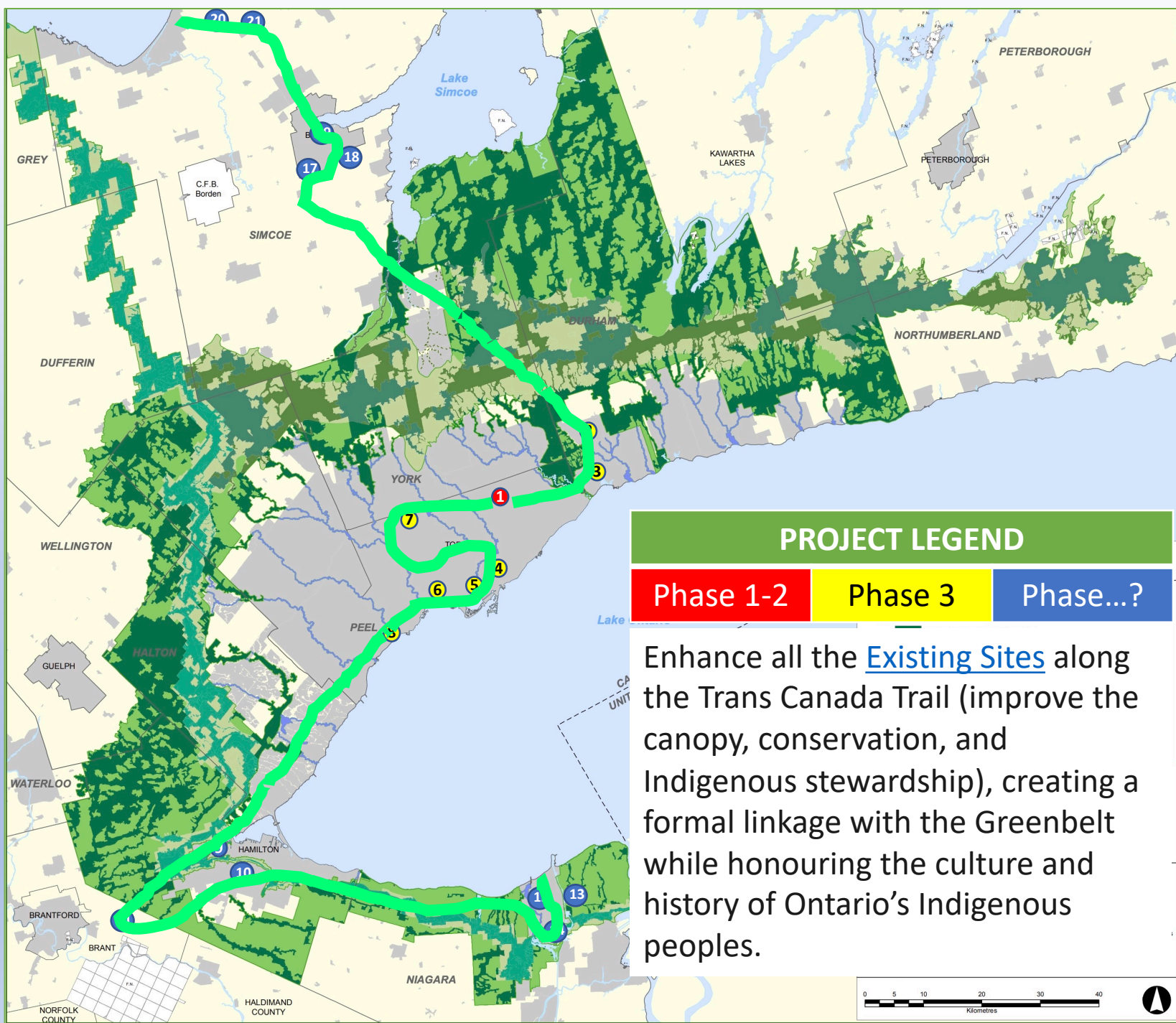
# Future Phases: Connect GTA Urban Forests through a “Nature-based Network” of Historical Indigenous Sites

- The Tiawenhk Initiative is a proposed multi-phase project that will link municipal park strategies in the GTA with other local conservation efforts.
- Future phases will grow the model to connect all historical Indigenous sites across the region, creating a “nature-based” network to improve conservation.



- This network will act as a foundation to create a more robust canopy, improve biodiversity, and protect waterways across the region.
- Indigenous stewardship of this initiative will promote a re-connection to the land with spiritual, cultural, ecological, and socio-economic benefits.





### PROJECT LEGEND

- Phase 1-2
- Phase 3
- Phase...?

Enhance all the [Existing Sites](#) along the Trans Canada Trail (improve the canopy, conservation, and Indigenous stewardship), creating a formal linkage with the Greenbelt while honouring the culture and history of Ontario's Indigenous peoples.



<b>1. Rouge National Park, Toronto (Draper Site - Ancestral Huron-Wendat Village, Pickering)</b>	<b>2. <a href="#">Don River – Former Don River Settlement, Toronto</a></b>
<b>3. <a href="#">Ancestral Huron-Wendat Village, York University, Toronto</a></b>	<b>4. <a href="#">Mouth of the Humber – Toronto Carrying-Place Trail</a></b>
<b>5. <a href="#">Taber Hill, Scarborough</a></b>	<b>6. <a href="#">L'Amoreaux Park, Toronto</a></b>
<b>7. <a href="#">Mantle Site, Huron-Wendat Village, Markham</a></b>	
<b>8. <a href="#">Peel Aboriginal Network &amp; Former Credit Mission Village JC Saddington Park, Mississauga</a></b>	<b>9. <a href="#">Treaty Council at Burlington Heights, Harvey Park; Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Gage Park</a></b>
<b>10. <a href="#">Native Trail Networks, Hamilton</a></b>	<b>11. <a href="#">Brant's Ford on the Grand River, BSix Nations of the Grand River, Brantford</a></b>
<b>12. <a href="#">Indian Council House at Niagara, Paradise Grove Park, Niagara-on-the-Lake</a></b>	<b>13. <a href="#">Niagara Regional Native Centre, Niagara-on-the-Lake</a></b>
<b>14. <a href="#">Niagara Treaty, Fort Mississauga, Niagara-on-the-Lake</a></b>	<b>15. <a href="#">Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, Mather Park, Fort Erie</a></b>
<b>16. <a href="#">Turnbull – Ancestral Huron-Wendat Ossuary, Simcoe County</a></b>	<b>17. <a href="#">Holly – Ancestral Huron-Wendat Village, Barrie</a></b>
<b>18. <a href="#">Dunsmore Ancestral Huron-Wendat Settlement, Barrie</a></b>	<b>19. <a href="#">Wiacek 14<sup>th</sup> Century Ancestral Huron-Wendat Village, Barrie</a></b>
<b>20. <a href="#">Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre &amp; Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Vas Kuchar Memorial Park, Midland</a></b>	<b>21. <a href="#">Huron Park, Midland</a></b>

# Proposed Next Steps

Activity	Timing	Status
1. Revise Tiawenhk Initiative Proposal	JUNE/23-JUNE/24	✓ COMPLETE
2. Review Initiative with Anduhyuan Stakeholders	JUNE/24	In Progress
3. Review Initiative with Rouge Park Stakeholders	JUNE/24	TBD
4. Review Initiative with local political leaders (City, Province, Federal)	JULY/24	TBD
5. Develop Detailed Plan Based on Feedback	JULY-SEPT/24	TBD
6. Establish Not-for-Profit Tiawenhk Organization	JULY/24	TBD
7. Initiate Plan Execution	AUG/24	TBD



# APPENDIX: Supporting Information

“Seeing from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other with the strengths of western knowledges and ways of knowing, and learning to use both eyes together, for the benefit of all.”

- *Mi'kmaw principle of Two-Eyed Seeing*

“The Elders say everything has a purpose and everything has a will. We should never interfere with the purpose or the will of anything. Every plant, creature, animal, insect, and human being has a purpose to be here on the Earth. Each has a special medicine to contribute for the good of all things. Each person also has good medicine, a special talent, a special gift. These medicines are to help others or to help make us healthy.”

— *Robin Youngblood*



## THE ALEXANDRA SITE

About 600 years ago, this was the site of a vibrant village of 800 to 1000 people, ancestors of the Huron-Wendat nation. Though their name for this place is lost, their village was discovered under a farmer's field and named the Alexandra site in 2001. In a lengthy excavation, archaeologists revealed evidence of longhouses, sweat lodges, and garbage pits. Nearly 20,000 artifacts were documented and collected from the site before it was developed as a residential subdivision. No human burials were found.

Among this site's artifacts were beads made of sea shell from the eastern seaboard – proof that the people here were linked to extensive trading networks. This was also an agricultural community surrounded by cultivated fields of corn, beans, squash, sunflower, and tobacco. Remains of deer, lake trout and wild berries, among other animals and wild plants, indicate that hunting, fishing, and gathering also supported the community. The village's location on a small ridge above a waterway (now the altered Highland Creek) provided it with fish and fresh water.



Buried for roughly 600 years, these pot fragments were found at the Alexandra site. The small, roughly decorated pot at left is likely the work of a youth learning the art. The larger, more sophisticated pot at right is the work of a skilled adult.

Archaeological Services Inc.



Nearly 250 years after this village was occupied, Samuel de Champlain depicted this Huron woman pounding corn into flour.

Samuel de Champlain, Voyages de la Nouvelle France, 1640



A plan of the community, showing its location over present-day streets.

Archaeological Services Inc.

Constructed without palisades, the aboriginal village excavated here was probably not threatened by extensive warfare. Its people lived together as extended families in sixteen longhouses, the earliest of which were built at the site's southern edge. Later houses were added to the north, while the older longhouses were frequently rebuilt or expanded. A remarkable number of sweat lodges were also built throughout the site. Likely used to communicate with the spirit world, sweat lodges were social venues which may have helped to form and maintain relationships between newcomers and residents.



Archaeologists document one of the longhouses on the Alexandra site. Straws mark where wooden posts had left a stain in the soil, and trace the exact dimensions of the house and its two expansions.

Archaeological Services Inc.

Over the roughly 40 years of their stay here, the people of this village eventually exhausted the surrounding land of its nutrients and resources. As was their custom, they then moved to another site, leaving this one to return to meadow and forest.

Carefully documented, the Alexandra site and its artifacts highlight the long history of human habitation in what is now the City of Toronto.



A recreation of a portion of a village like Alexandra. Longhouses were covered with bark and featured raised bunks for sleeping along the sides of the house, with living and cooking spaces in the middle. The protective palisade or fence in this image was never built around the Alexandra site.

Archaeological Services Inc.

## [A Wendat Village: The Alexandra Site](#)

"The Wendat community is one that revered and honored its women. When a young girl was born into the Wendat society, there was great celebration, as she embodied the promise of a strong community (Sioui, 154-155). Villages were socially organized through matrilineages (Sioui, 66). Joseph-Francois Lafitau, an early eighteenth century Jesuit who lived among various Wendat communities, noted that the women were the "real backbone of the nation" (Sioui, 120). The family followed the line of the women, and when a man married a woman, he would move to her Clan longhouse (Croall). The women cared for the earth, field and crops, and were at the center of political council in the community (Sioui, 120). The women appointed and dismissed Chiefs. It was customary that men who attended council were to listen, interpret and relay the opinions of the women to members of other communities. Thus while the women played a central role within their own communities, the men were responsible for maintaining relationships with other nations (Sioui, 120-121).

This matrilineal society was degraded by the linear thinking that followed contact. The ideas that were implemented by the colonial settlers following contact, was to replace women with men within the heads of households and decision-making (Sioui, 122). The degradation of the circular social systems was a result of the adverse conditions imposed on indigenous peoples, particularly war and disease (Sioui, 122-123). Settlers contributed to the dismantling of the Wendat society as they disregarded and undermined the importance of women in decision making, particularly in the aftermath of war and disease. They insisted on negotiating, and governing only with men, and they interfered in village organization by appointing men to control communal matters. However, these men did not have the historical aptitude or instincts to govern their communities without the women, and this further contributed to the degradation of Wendat culture and tradition. (Sioui, 122-123)"

## Words of the Wendat language

Expression

Traduction

Thank you

tiawenhk

- <http://www.letrocdesidees.ca/en/words-of-the-huron-language.php>
- <http://www.letrocdesidees.ca/medias/player/28.mp3>

# City of Toronto: 2022-2032 Reconciliation Action Plan

“The City of Toronto acknowledges and affirms that the city resides on lands and waters that have been occupied and stewarded by Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial, including the Wendat, Anishinaabek, Chippewa and Haudenosaunee, and is the current treaty land of the Mississaugas of the Credit. The City values the history and continued presence of Indigenous Peoples in this place, and acknowledges the meaningful contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in the development and prosperity of what is known as Toronto today. Indigenous Peoples are a vital part of the social fabric of this city and continue to live in neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

The City of Toronto acknowledges that Indigenous communities have the knowledge, experience and ability to pilot and steer the City’s strategic development that is needed to expand Indigenous opportunities and address injustices and inequities. The City also understands the inherent right for Indigenous communities to lead and deliver initiatives that are for and about Indigenous People.

The City of Toronto also reaffirms its ongoing commitment to listen, share and promote learning opportunities for all residents and visitors to Toronto, by understanding and promoting Indigenous values and approaches from First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives in a systematic and holistic way.”



## Return Land and Stewardship Rights

The City acknowledges that Indigenous oppression and genocide is rooted in the impacts of land dispossession and displacement. The City also acknowledges that Indigenous Peoples are experts in local land stewardship and carry thousands of years of collective knowledge of how to live in right relations with the land, water, and all its inhabitants.

### The City of Toronto will:

- A.** Prioritize Indigenous worldviews and relational views of land protection and Indigenous community leadership to enhance climate resiliency.
- B.** Develop a framework to guide the City’s real estate acquisitions and disposal processes and policies that affect Indigenous communities:
  - Ensure all transactions are consistent with legislative requirements
  - Consider the needs of diverse Indigenous communities residing in Toronto
  - Identify and evaluate real estate opportunities to advance Indigenous stewardship, control, and ownership of land within the City of Toronto
- C.** Engage Indigenous Nations, communities and community leaders in the co-development of protocols, practices, and agreements surrounding Indigenous use of and access to land and water within the City of Toronto.
- D.** Make every effort to facilitate the transfer of stewardship, control, and/or ownership of lands and waters to Indigenous Nations, communities, collectives, and organizations and agencies:
  - Where the City can, support Indigenous People in accessing land – in parks, throughways, schools, community centres, etc.
  - Work with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to develop and sustain partnerships and good relations to ensure support for Indigenous access and stewardships of lands

# City of Toronto: 2022-2032 Reconciliation Action Plan (2)

## Vision

### The Action Plan envisions a city where:

- A. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, worldviews, cultures, and ways of life hold a respected, celebrated, prominent, and distinctive place in Toronto;
- B. Indigenous Peoples in Toronto have multiple pathways to prosperity and wellness;
- C. All who live, work, and visit this land acknowledge and understand the true history and contemporary Indigenous realities of this place; and,
- D. Where future Indigenous generations exercise their rights to self-determination, self-governance, and land stewardship in a context of right relations with all relatives.

### The Parks, Forestry & Recreation division will:

- A. Co-develop a PFR Indigenous Placekeeping program with Indigenous communities that is focused on increasing Indigenous access to, planning of and stewardship of areas in parks and ravine areas of historical, cultural and spiritual importance.
- B. Convene an Indigenous circle to advise on placekeeping in parks, ravines, trails, and recreational facilities.
- C. Allocate time and free program space for Indigenous activities at City of Toronto community centres.



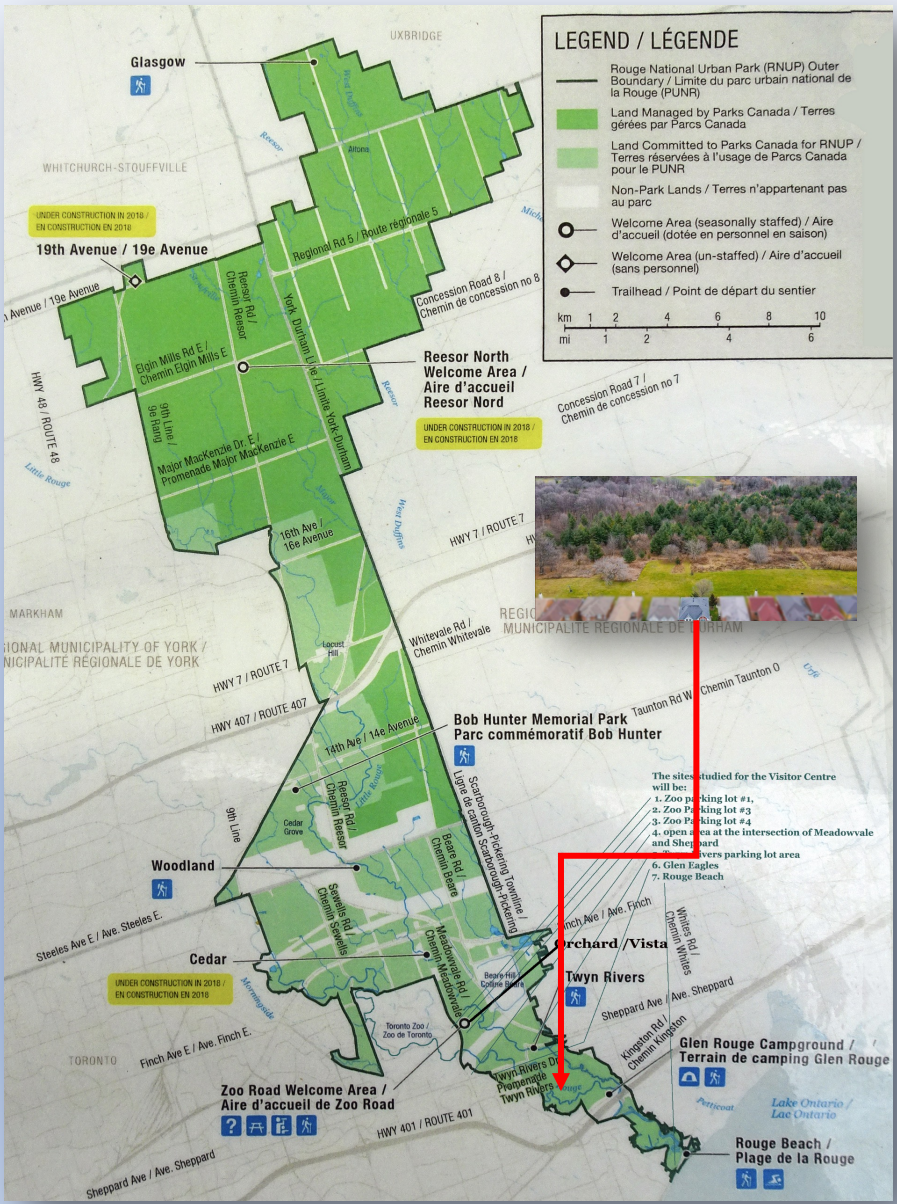
## Support Indigenous Placekeeping

Indigenous placemaking and placekeeping is integral to truth, reconciliation and justice in that it creates and nurtures space, in process and policy, for ceremony, teaching and community; strengthens Indigenous connections with lands and waters; and builds cultural competency and capacity for land-based Indigenous engagement. The outcomes of placemaking and placekeeping initiatives are varied and all are critical for the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples.

### The City will:

- A. Co-develop and implement a strategy for placemaking and placekeeping that addresses the needs of Indigenous communities. This will include, but is not limited to:
  - Providing access to land and waters for ceremony, stewardship and other cultural activities
    - Increased access to ceremony and cultural activities for urban 2SLGBTQ+ relatives and communities
    - Identify accessible spaces for ceremony
  - Decolonizing City processes and policies that create barriers to Indigenous People's access to land and water
    - Elevating Indigenous languages in placemaking and placekeeping initiatives
    - Create a framework for co-management of spaces that have been developed in partnership between the City and Indigenous partners
    - Balancing the representation of the historic presence of treaty and rights holders with the diverse contemporary Indigenous population in the City
- B. Support Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in the establishment of the Spirit Garden in Nathan Philips Square by 2023.
- C. Address barriers that Indigenous people experience when holding sacred fires by 2022 by:
  - Engaging with Indigenous community partners, including Fire Keepers, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Police Services and other City divisions and agencies to develop a holistic approach to sacred fires that centres Indigenous Peoples' self-determination and inherent rights to conduct sacred fires, while ensuring safety measures are in place
  - In partnership with Indigenous community partners, identifying designated locations across the City for sacred fires to take place, barrier-free
  - Develop an approach, with Indigenous community partners, Elders and Knowledge Carriers, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Police Services and other City divisions/ agencies on relations with Indigenous community with respect to sacred fires

# Links to Resources



- [A Prescription for health: city vegetable gardens produce more than just food](#)
- [School-community gardens plant the seeds of change to address global warming](#)
- [How-urban-gardens can boost biodiversity and make cities more sustainable](#)
- [The survival of the endangered monarch butterfly depends on conservation beyond borders.](#)
- [Inspiring Change](#)
- [Reckless use of social media threatens wild species and landscapes](#)

# Links to Resources



## Indigenous Support Organizations:

- [Native Child and Family Services of Toronto \(NCFST\)](#)
- [The Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto \(NWRCT\)](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority: Traditional Wellness & Healing](#)
- [Indigenous-led supportive housing can be transformative](#)
- [Indigenous women in Northern Canada creating sustainable livelihoods through tourism](#)

## Indigenous Conservation

- [Indigenous-led conservation aims to rekindle caribou abundance and traditions](#)
- [Indigenous hunters are protecting animals, land and waterways](#)
- [Indigenous protected areas are the next generation of conservation](#)
- [Indigenous peoples are crucial for conservation – a quarter of all land is in their hands](#)
- [Humans Need To Value Nature to Survive, UN Report](#)
- [Recognizing the transformational potential of indigenous-led conservation economies](#)

## Re-Forestation

- [Rebalancing the Earth is Dead Simple](#)
- [The potential of Amazon indigenous agroforestry practices and ontologies for rethinking global forest governance](#)
- [Small Green Spaces Can Help Keep Cities Cool During Heat Waves](#)
- [Cities need to embrace green innovation now to cut heat death in the future](#)
- [Residential green spaces protect growing cities against climate change](#)
- [Planting Trees in Cities Can Cut Deaths From Summer Heat](#)

# Links to Resources

It is so easy to judge and dismiss that which you do not understand. Most of the world believes that indigenous ceremony is superstition and something that has no grounding in science. To the Indigenous people of North America however, this is the truth of their reality. They believe it in every cell of their bodies. Mankind has moved away from the heart of the world to the logic of the mind, and their belief is in the chemist, the physicist, and the mathematician. Science has proven to them that all this ancient belief in ceremony is simply ignorance... And yet modern man has created, with its great science, which it is certain is the ultimate “truth”, a world on the brink of total destruction in less than two hundred years. Whereas ancient man, with its ceremonies, managed to sustain itself for millions of years. Perhaps we should consider this ancient wisdom, at least to understand, even with our logical mind, how it is possible that ceremony actually can create a world in balance. The only shadow cast here, is that of your own doubt.

— All my relations.. Black Eagle, Niksokowa.. Piita’Siksinam

- [Mapping carbon accumulation potential from global natural forest regrowth](#)
- [Views from COP27: How the climate conference could confront colonialism by centring Indigenous rights](#)
- [Connecting the People Growing a Trillion Trees the Right Way](#)
- [Why Regrowing Forests Naturally is Better Than Planting Trees](#)
- [Ford government's proposed changes to Greenbelt could spell trouble, environmental experts warn](#)
- [Ontario's Bill 23 proposes more homes built faster, but this comes at an environmental cost](#)
- [Hot Dam: Beavers Could Be North Americas Secret Weapon Against The](#)
- [At COP15, Indigenous leaders to show how their conservation efforts can shape global biodiversity agreement](#)
- [Heat Island Compendium](#)
- [Extinctions, shrinking habitat spur 'rewilding' in cities](#)
- [COP15 Biodiversity Summit in Montreal: Canada failed to meet its 2020 conservation targets. Will 2030 be any better?](#)
- [Indigenous Cultures Hold the Keys to Sustaining Our Planet At COP15](#)
- [Healing Lodge for Indigenous Inmates in peril because of cash crunch](#)
- [4 Ways Life Protects Earth](#)
- [Indigenous-Led Conservation and COP15](#)
- [To attain global climate and biodiversity goals we must reclaim nature in our cities](#)
- [Rethinking the World for Survival](#)
- [Are There Such Things As Natural Rights?](#)
- [First Nations are using 'creative disruption' to foster economic growth in their communities](#)
- [Weaving Indigenous and Western Ways of Knowing Can Help Canada Achieve Its Biodiversity Goals](#)
- [New agreements between First Nations and B.C. government a step toward fulfilling Canada's treaty obligations](#)