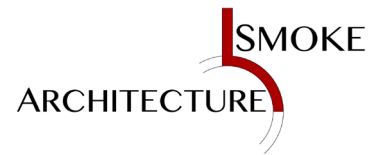


# Indigenous Engagement Summary Report

Project # 24041 Oakville Public Library

Date 2024 December 19th



## Overview

Indigenous Engagement Session Meetings to date:

1. 2024 October 16th (Virtual) @4:30-6:00pm
2. 2024 October 21st At Crawford Lake (In-person and Virtual) @6:00-8:00pm
3. 2024 December 8<sup>th</sup> At Oakville Central Branch (In-person and Virtual) @1:30pm-4pm

Two indigenous engagement sessions have recently been hosted by Marcus Logan - Community Development & Engagement Manager of OPL, Stephen Paquette, and members of the Smoke Architecture team.

The conversations held during these engagements should not only inspire and lead the design team but they are also great opportunities for sharing and trust building.

The first two preliminary engagements presented a range of questions on subjects such as;

- Meaningful stories/ values/ symbols/ plants/ animals/ colours/ graphics/ patterns for design inspiration
- How could the design represent Indigenous Cultures
- What activities should happen here; inside & outside spaces
- Are there specific land stewardship or sustainable design initiatives of interest
- What interactions with the OPL have members had so far

Participants included representatives from the library and community. Engagement dates are listed above. Sessions began with a brief presentation to introduce the project goals, team and provided design precedents from the design team. The sessions continued with a facilitated survey.

## Key Themes

The following is a summary of responses gathered from Indigenous members at the Indigenous Engagement sessions held on October 16<sup>th</sup>, October 21, and December 8<sup>th</sup> 2024.

### October 16th

(4 external participants)

- General Design
  - The design needs to incorporate circles and lots of plantings.
  - boxy buildings / rectilinear designs are too stark.
  - With gathering spaces, it would be best to incorporate a longhouse and a circle. This way Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee cultures are both represented.
  - Architecture inspired by traditional structures would be best. Balancing communities & their particular histories is important.
  - spaces should reflect the diversity of Indigenous peoples, traditional territory, and treaty holders as well as support those peoples coming together & collaborating.
  - graphics/patterns need to come from local indigenous community members and local nations such as MCFN and Six Nations
  - OPL is beside a historic trade route and should represent that. Oakville museum is close to where they used to stop along that trade route. St Jude's Church was another

gathering place for people from Six Nations. Darin Wybenga (MCFN historian) can help out with this.

- Outdoor spaces
  - need to accommodate pipe ceremonies, sunrise ceremonies, round dances, full moon ceremonies, drumming, singing, various performances and sharing circles.
  - gathering spaces should include some protection from weather and/or an alternate inside gathering space
  - an Eastern door is required and needs to be open.
  - need a firepit for a sacred fire, wood storage, medicine garden, medicine processing/drying space, medicine storage, garden tool storage, access to water, large pathways for accessibility and comfortable seats for Elders.
  - outdoor gathering areas need to have accessible washrooms nearby
  - recommend an outdoor movie event space to show Indigenous films / Oakville film festival.
  - spaces for children need to be incorporated as well as words, signage [in Indigenous languages] for plants & activities hosted there.
- Indoor Spaces
  - smudging is needed prior to learning & teaching events; conversation circles, healing circles; Elders lead those circles, and these spaces will need an Elder in residence
  - the design needs to have a place to have feasts and a kitchen to support them
  - Crawford Lake Deer Clan Longhouse should provide some inspiration because it has a kitchen, meeting space, art coming down from the ceiling and an art gallery with local artists represented.
  - should accommodate space for Indigenous musicians, author readings & other programming (right now at performing arts but could be at the library).
  - need spaces and surfaces for art (example of Alex Janvier floor mosaic at Rogers Place in Edmonton)
  - consider food provisions for people who come to the library in states of crisis

### October 21st

(7-10 external participants in person + 5 external participants virtually):

- General Design
  - the building needs an East Entrance
  - we should embed stories in the floor, if possible, it is often the first-place people look
    - examples: Alex Janvier floor mosaic at Rogers Place in Edmonton
    - Dodem Kanonhsa' in Toronto
    - Waabano Centre in Ottawa
    - Guelph University Cedar Round Room
    - First Nations University
  - the design MUST incorporate/represent water somehow
  - many participants shared the design aspects of the Native Child and Family Centre in Toronto including the water feature, readings in several languages near the front door and the frosted glass throughout that is great for privacy as well as an opportunity to showcase indigenous art
  - large screens would allow for rotating artwork
- Indoor Spaces
  - indoor gathering spaces MUST accommodate smudging. Some participants expressed the desire to make the entire building “smudgeable”

- most participants liked the Kalihwiyo Circle at Fanshawe college but noted that the gathering space needs a bit more privacy
- the design needs to incorporate water somehow
- provide space to incorporate social programs such as food sharing, soup kitchen
- Precedents
  - Casino Rama Entrance and Front Lobby
  - Nokom's House at University of Guelph
  - Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig archives
  - Gordie Howe international bridge - indigenous artwork incorporation

## December 8th

(1 external participant):

- General Design
  - The building must be a tool for teaching, in its special features and in its architectural elements.
    - It should invite the youth, elders and all other members of the community to gather and learn from one another.
    - Creating safe and suitable spaces for traditional teaching. Examples: allowing space for sacred fires, gathering in circle, smudging, etc.
    - The building should have physical teaching moments that can spark conversations and moments of teaching and storytelling .
    - The building should allow everyone to come together and discover who they are and who came before them.
  - The building must incorporate/represent water somehow
    - Link us not only through views of the river but also to its teachings, showcasing the expression of the river and its movement.
  - Remembering the different dialects and groups of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people that share this land.
    - Large Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe presence in Oakville, ensuring both teachings are present in the space.
    - Recycling and reusing materials and living elements such as water and trees
      - Utilizing the water cycle to harvest water and to feed new life
      - Making these elements visible to the public, to act as teaching moments
  - Circular expressions are preferred by the participant
- Key Symbols that should be explored
  - The Dreamcatcher, they are traditionally placed in children's room, they hold strong teaching for the youth.
  - The Medicine Wheel, the direction as well as the presence of sacred medicines
    - Information and key landscapes and elements are present in each direction, creek, downtown, etc.
  - Floral Patterns, expression of traditional plants and vegetation that is native to the area.
  - Water – Finding a suitable vessel
    - Hollowed out wood (canoe), representing how traditional our ancestors travelled by water.
  - Key teachings of the area, incorporating the other main forms of life, trees, water, animals, etc.
  - Incorporate spaces for public programming that are linked to the outdoor or to a kitchen.

- Outdoor Spaces
  - Areas for ceremonial fires, smudging and gathering
    - Culturally safe space to reconnect with heritage and teachings
  - Water feature
    - Accessible to the youth, to see and feel.
  - Medicinal garden, accessible to the public for teachings

## New Central Library Design Responses

Below are some of the spaces we have identified to act as direct design responses to the Indigenous Engagement Sessions thus far.

Key potential areas include:

1. Accessible Indoor and Outdoor Gathering Spaces that follow Indigenous protocols, support Indigenous knowledge-sharing and create space for healing. Fostering connections to the land and waterways (Sixteen Mile creek) is paramount.
2. Heritage space that reflects the Indigenous history of Oakville
3. Space for a building host (Elder in Residence) who cares for the space(s) & is available to welcome and orient people, answer questions, etc.
4. Space for Indigenous Art and Live Performances
5. Space for preparing, cooking and eating food