

# A Community Engagement Project

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<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>3</b>
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN KINGSTON AND REGION	6
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS</b>	<b>8</b>
WHAT WE LEARNED	8
THIS IS WHAT WE HEARD...	8
<b>OUR PROPOSED VISION AND CONCEPT</b>	<b>20</b>
THIS LAND IS LAND THAT HEALS.	21
THE FIRST KILOMETRE	21
THE FIRST FOUR SEASONS	22
THIS WAY TO PEACE	22
<b>OUR RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CLOSING WORDS</b>	<b>31</b>

# Walking the Path of **Peace** Together

## Community Voices Report

### Background

*“If we are going to move forward, there has to be enough bravery to look back. That history is real, and we must know it can’t and won’t ever happen again.”*

Kingston Indigenous Community Member

Faith United Church was founded as on the east side of Kingston 28 years ago, and though at that time, the Presbytery purchased land on Highway 15 for the construction of a church building, the congregation made a defining decision that they did not wish to put their energy into building and maintaining a church. As they surveyed the City, it seemed there were already many churches, most with fewer and fewer attendees, and they felt their energy and resources were better used in building their community, caring for one another, and supporting needs in the wider community. As a result, Faith United has always been a nimble, people-centred community, full of compassion and generosity.

The people of Faith United Church began talking more than a year and a half ago as to what alternative purpose that land might have in our local community. Deeply moved by the report and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, (TRC), it was proposed that this property be offered to promote reflection and reconciliation with the Indigenous community in this region.

Although they are a fairly small church comprised of mostly retired people, since that time, members and leadership of the Faith United Church have met with dozens of Indigenous community members having the opportunity to listen and learn in meaningful dialogue. They have participated in local Indigenous celebrations, classes, and events and visited with Indigenous faculty and staff at Queens University, Indigenous language teachers and health professionals. They have met with City of Kingston officials and the local MPP. From this listening and learning there have been many powerful, inspired and relevant ideas shared about how Faith United Church, other faith groups, organizations and non-Indigenous residents and the Indigenous community can walk, side by side, in the ongoing process of honouring this land. The people of Faith United Church may be limited in numbers and capacity, but they are prepared if seen as desirable to widen the circle of settler participants to include other churches, faith communities, and others when and if the time is right, as they know that many other churches and others share the same desire for a genuine walk of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples expressed in concrete actions. This would happen later as a joint decision of the Council/Circle (please see further in this report).

A highlight of the journey over this past year was the gathering of peoples on Canada Day, meeting together on the land to offer prayers, drum and sing, and to conduct ceremony together. They pledged to continue to walk together into the next 150 years in a new and good way, a path rooted in peace as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

This commitment to action is anchored in the history of the United Church of Canada and their resolve to work towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in regard to their role in the operation of residential schools.

In 1925, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church (Canada, Newfoundland and Bermuda), the Congregational Churches of Canada, and the General Council of Local Union Churches came together by an Act of Parliament to form the United Church of Canada. In that union, the UCC inherited the Methodist residential schools, which were part of the Government of Canada's goal to assimilate Aboriginal people into Canadian society. This was complemented by a complacency that allowed for damages to be done, both in residential schools and helping shape or influence government policy. For example, in 1947, United Church official George Dorey told a federal parliamentary committee that he questioned whether there was such a thing as "native religion."

These policies and schools, simply in their being and enhanced by the potential for and reported cases of abuse and violations towards First Nation children, created a lasting scar on survivors, their families and communities. Mistrust of governments, systems and churches became, (and remains) not simply a reaction to the victimization of those taken to residential schools, but a survival strategy. To stay alive and unharmed by settlers and their doctrines, there needs, and some would suggest, must be apprehension and caution paid to the engagement of said institutions.



The path to healing has and will continue to be a long and challenging road, riddled with pain and discomfort, for Indigenous Peoples and settlers alike. In particular, churches who were often seen as the cause of said hurts, regardless of the direction coming from the Government of Canada, have had to undertake a great deal of work in order to create change, within themselves and for Indigenous Peoples. It needs to be noted that the United Church of Canada,

and many individual United Churches have been on the forefront of this self-reflection, realization and action that follows honouring the truth.

Some of the steps, particularly focusing on truth, that the United Church of Canada have undertaken include:

- United Church Apology to First Nations (1986)
- Creation of the All Native Circle Conference as a Conference (regional body) committed to understanding and honouring the cultural values, mission and ministry of Native Peoples
- United Church Apology to Former Students, Their Families and Communities (1998)
- Circle and Cross, Dialogue Planning Tool (2008)
- Living into Right Relations Gathering (2008)
- United Church Statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2014)

These steps have allowed for the path towards reconciliation to be more accepted as genuine and rooted in love and compassion. Support for Indigenous youth programming throughout Canada, ongoing community engagement and participation of Church members and leaders in the reconciliation activities, along with the work internally as seen above have resonated with many Indigenous Peoples. This said, there must be continued action.

*“The apologies don’t come readily. They don’t come easily. And when we heard the apology in 1986, those of us First Nations members of the United Church didn’t accept the apology but we agreed to receive it and watch and wait and work with the United Church to put some flesh, to put some substance to that apology. And we all believed that apologies should be words of action, words of sincerity that should mean something.... Our task is to make sure that the United Church lives up to that apology in meaningful ways....”*

Alvin Dixon  
Chair of the United Church of Canada’s Indian Residential  
School Survivors Committee  
2011

Mr. Dixon's sharing that apologies should be words of action can be seen in Kingston with the commitment of Faith United Church. It is important to note that there are those in Kingston's



Indigenous community who feel anxious, nervous and skeptical – yet many more are feeling optimistic and excited about what this process – this path, can mean for the community. We heard from our visits that the healing, not only between the United Church and the Indigenous community but also within the Indigenous community are meaningful outcomes that can be generated from this journey together. We believe that this movement, to walk together in a good and honourable way, is what the authors of the apologies, tools and responses (authored by Indigenous United Church members) envisioned.

The ongoing development of this relationship, between Faith United Church and the local Indigenous community, along with the proposed concept to share responsibility for care of the land, with a commitment to working collaboratively until a time that the local Indigenous community is positioned to be solely responsible to care for the land speaks directly to Call to Action #61. It could be suggested that this action is what the TRC Commissioners envisioned when crafting this particular call: providing space for community-controlled healing, reconciliation, culture and language projects.

### Indigenous Community in Kingston and Region

After being de-funded in 2013 the Katarokwi Native Friendship Centre, a meeting place for many in the community, permanently closed its doors several years ago. While this created a gap and removed a community space, it also drove others in the community to create new opportunities for ceremony, reflection and traditional activities. It brought together organizations to work collaboratively on projects supporting youth and families; local grandmothers began a community council, and non-Indigenous organizations and systems responded by exploring with greater focus how they can best support and serve Indigenous clients and community.

There are challenges facing the local Indigenous community, both external and internal. Racism, discrimination and the understood fear of systems that do not recognize or respect traditional approaches and ways of knowing are still widespread. Reading the comment

sections of both mainstream and social media sites reinforces the view many people have of the Indigenous community. Poverty and a lack of opportunities face many families and individuals. There is no public space for the Indigenous community. Community controlled space, projects and activities are limited.

Shame and stigma increase the number of Indigenous Peoples in Kingston who do not self-identify and have little to no connection to the greater community. Access to many Indigenous families is restricted to the systems (school boards, children's services etc.) who serve them; limiting how information about the community, activities and opportunities reach them.

This is complemented by challenges amongst individual members of the Indigenous community. No different than other communities, personalities can overpower principles and lateral violence has been identified as a community issue. Different approaches to create change, the diverse world view of a community made up of Indigenous citizens from across Canada and with no identified community leadership structure means that there are varying degrees of community participation

This said, there is a renewed strength within the Indigenous community and the heart of the community is its people. A diverse population, Statistics Canada reports in the 2016 Census an Indigenous population of 4,210 in Kingston. This number, like many self-reporting processes, could be lower than what is actually the case and does not include the surrounding area, which includes Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

There are a growing number of strong Indigenous organizations, programs and allies within Kingston. Some of these include:

Métis Nation of Ontario  
Kingston Thunder Women: Ontario Native Women's Association  
Tipi Moza Housing  
Kagita Mikam Aboriginal Employment & Training  
Katarokwi Grandmothers Council  
Kingston Aboriginal Community Information Network

The River Program (formerly the Katarokwi Aboriginal School)  
Limestone / Algonquin School Boards: Aboriginal Education  
Four Directions Student Centre (Queens)  
Eagle Learning Café (St. Lawrence College)  
The Aboriginal Leadership Opportunities Year (RMC)  
Idle No More Kingston/Katarokwi

Strong community allies include:

Kingston Community Health Centres  
Street Health Centre: Indigenous Health Program  
Kingston Public Library

One Roof: Kingston Youth Services Hub  
Y2K: Kingston Youth Strategy  
Kingston Interval House  
HIV/AIDS Regional Services

## Community Engagement Process

Three Things Consulting, an Indigenous owned company was hired by Faith United Church to help move the idea of sharing the land on Highway 15 from discussion to action. Our goal in this process was to listen and learn from the local Indigenous community and with that, design a vision and concept document for the land, determining key assets the Indigenous community would want to see in such a space and what they would need / want it to offer in order to increase their commitment to use such a resource.

This report includes three key components: an analysis of what we heard and learned, a vision of what this land can both be and represent for the local Indigenous community and Faith United Church and our recommendations to continue walking this path of peace together.

This said, it is with great confidence that we report that the local Indigenous community, albeit with some apprehension, are very interested and excited about how this relationship can further develop in a respectful way and how this land can positively affect the lives of Indigenous citizens in and around Kingston. There has been a great deal of looking forward beyond the immediate positive outcomes related to developing strong allies within Faith United Church and access to land that can bring the two communities together. Many have shared that this is an opportunity for further growth and development within the local Indigenous community, where in collaboration the community can unite, work together and create a lasting space for generations to come.

### What We Learned

In order to develop our vision and recommendations we used three approaches:

- an online survey that was promoted on our website, social media channels, at community events and in communication with our existing networks, partners and relations;
- a series of visits with community members including Elders, organizers and activists, students, Indigenous professionals and educators and families; and
- we held several formal and informal community talking circles that explored key issues raised in the online surveys.

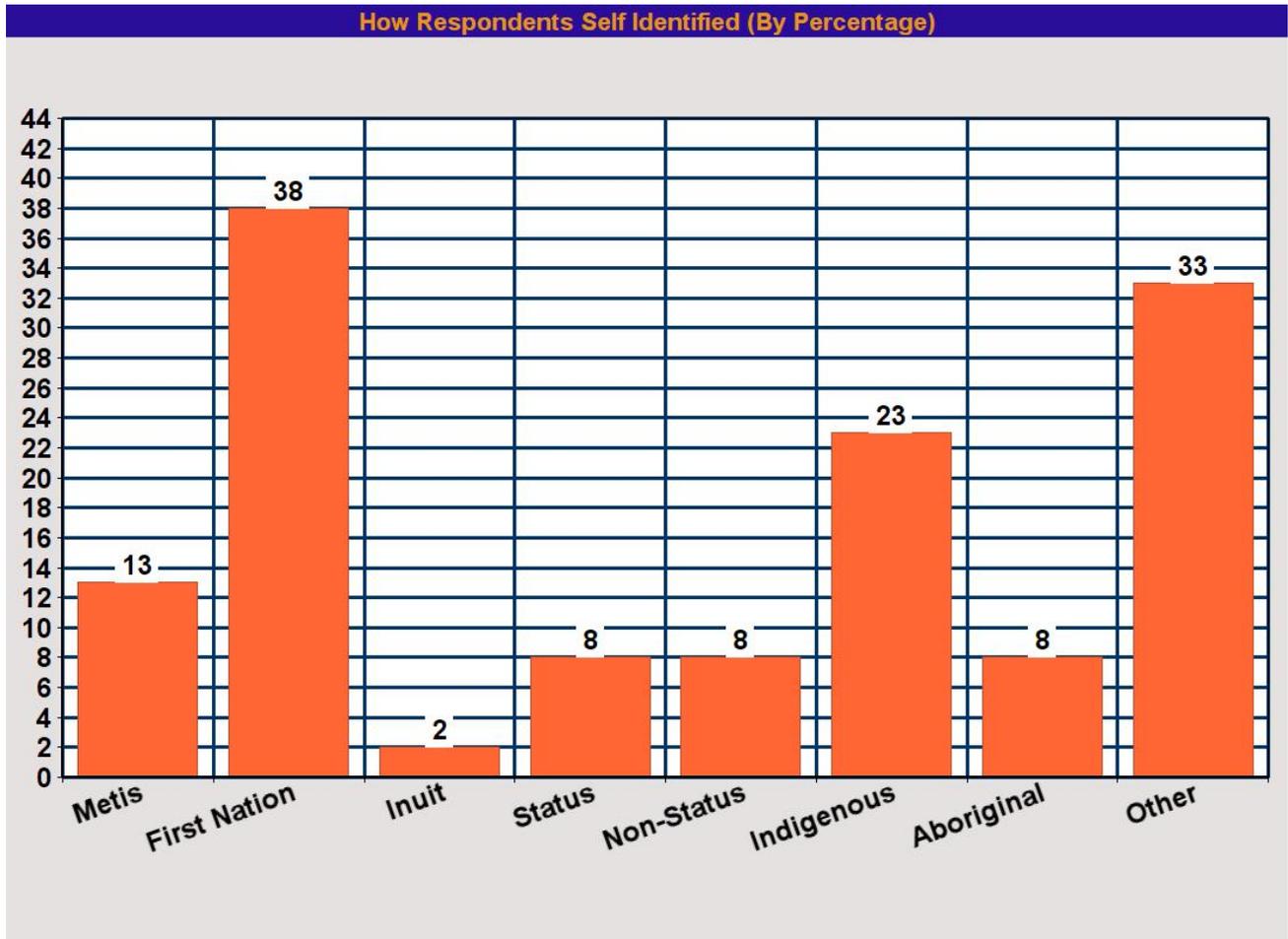
We engaged 91 people throughout this process and appreciate the contribution of all who took time to share their ideas, experiences and expertise. The graphs represent the online survey specifically though it should be noted that the visiting and community talking circles were equally diverse in age and background.

### This is what we heard...

Self-identifying as Indigenous can be complex and an emotional process, as the language used, and varying definitions, often come with legal implications defined by government, and social

implications defined by communities. Language and the way people identify are rooted often in two systems, one in legislation, the other in family tradition and community practice.

Respondents were offered 8 options to self-identify and could choose more than one option; which many did.



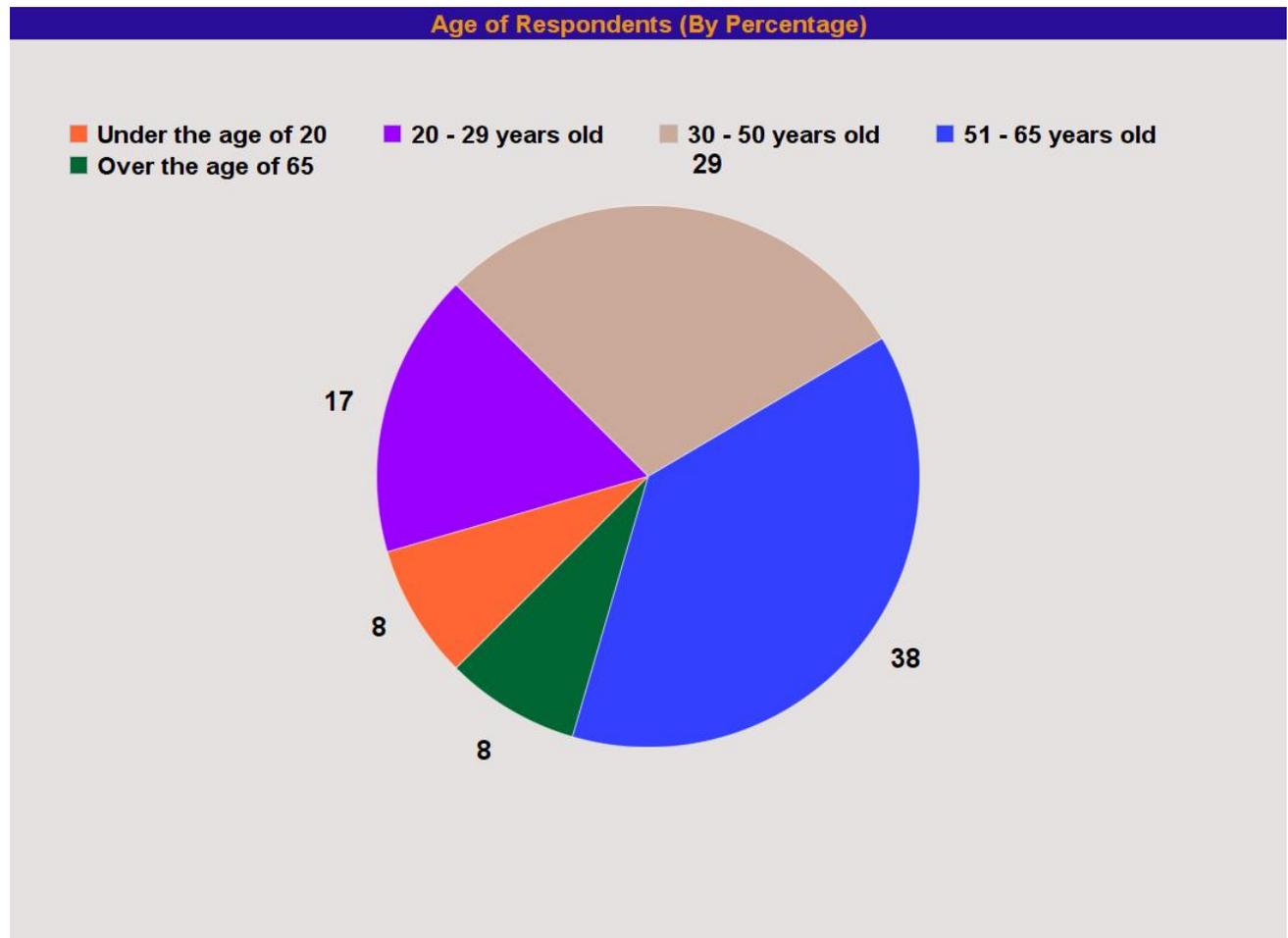
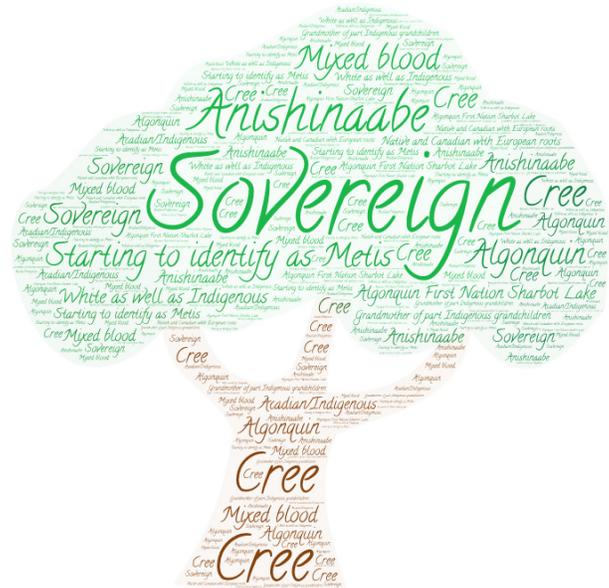
While the greatest number self-identified as First Nation, almost as many choose 'Other' instead, or in addition to that. 16 respondents shared specifically how they self-identify. Some of these included:

- Starting to identify as Metis
- Sovereign
- Anishinaabe
- Algonquin First Nation Sharbot Lake
- Mixed blood
- Algonquin
- Cree

- Native and Canadian with European roots
- Acadian/Indigenous
- White as well as Indigenous
- Grandmother of part Indigenous grandchildren

It should be noted that 4 respondents identified as non-Indigenous.

One of our goals was to engage diverse age groups in this engagement process. We were pleased that throughout the survey and the visiting we were able to ensure younger voices were heard as well as those Elders in our community.



Kingston is made up of 43 distinct neighborhoods, 3 of which represent penitentiaries, 1 that represents the Alcan site, another that represents CFB Kingston and 5 others that are rural (north and east of the City). We were able to identify that respondents to the survey represented at least 19 of the remaining 38 neighborhoods, including the North, East, South and West quadrants of the city.

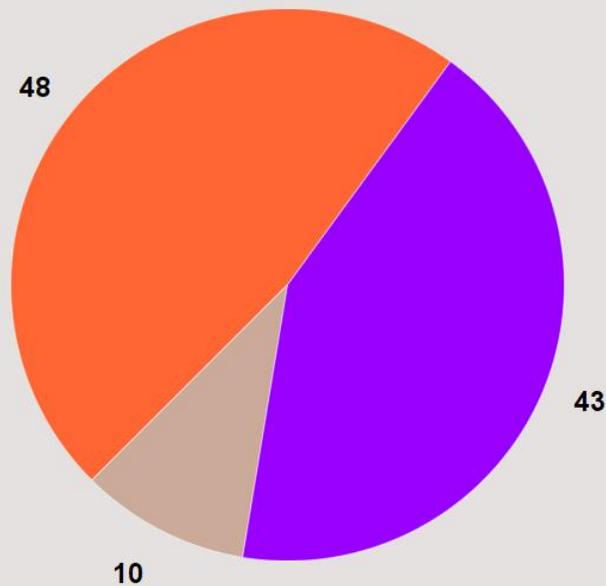
Of those who didn't live in Kingston, but had a connection / attachment to the city we heard from people in:

Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory  
South Frontenac  
Trenton (Niindoonjibaa)  
Crow Lake  
Gananoque  
Verona

Wolfe Island, Frontenac County  
Napanee, but involved in many Katarokwi  
Indigenous events  
Seeley's Bay  
Whitby, ON

**Had you heard about the conversations happening regarding the land on Highway 15? (By Percentage)**

Yes No Unsure



The work by the Faith United Church done prior to this community engagement process was significant, with almost half of respondents having heard of this idea and discussion prior to completing the survey. As the community engagement moved forward an increasing number of respondents identified they had heard about the conversations taking place throughout the city.

We asked respondents, ‘*What were some of the immediate feelings or emotions you felt when hearing/reading about this opportunity for a shared path to peace between Faith United Church and the Kingston Indigenous community?*’, and their answers spoke to the diverse nature of experiences of the Indigenous community. As the path to reconciliation and peace is one that is rooted in emotion, these answers speak loudly, and we must hear each of the voices. It should be noted that respondents were encouraged to check all that apply: so, one person could have expressed a diverse group of emotions.

- A total of 60% felt interested.
- A total of 57% felt hopeful.
- A total of 37% felt optimistic.
- A total of 31% felt open.
- A total of 31% felt excited.
- A total of 31% felt inspired.

There were some who felt the need to continue walking in a good way forward in order to demonstrate strong shared values and the ongoing process of building the relationship, while others were more undecided.

- A total of 17% felt hesitant.
- A total of 14% felt skeptical.
- A total of 9% felt anxious.
- A total of 9% felt vulnerable.
- A total of 6% felt suspicious.
- A total of 3% felt worried.

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<i>Hopeful</i>	58.97%
<i>Interested</i>	58.97%
<i>Optimistic</i>	35.90%
<i>Excited</i>	33.33%
<i>Inspired</i>	30.77%
<i>Open</i>	30.77%
<i>Inquisitive</i>	25.64%
<i>Amazed</i>	23.08%
<i>Respected</i>	20.51%
<i>Eager</i>	15.38%
<i>Energized</i>	15.38%
<i>Hesitant</i>	15.38%
<i>Skeptical</i>	15.38%
<i>Confused</i>	12.82%
<i>Joyful</i>	12.82%
<i>Proud</i>	12.82%
<i>Loving</i>	10.26%
<i>Vulnerable</i>	10.26%
<i>Anxious</i>	7.69%
<i>Ecstatic</i>	7.69%
<i>Suspicious</i>	7.69%
<i>Disappointed</i>	5.13%
<i>Worried</i>	5.13%
<i>Indifferent</i>	2.56%
<i>Judgemental</i>	2.56%
<i>Shocked</i>	2.56%
<i>Frustrated</i>	0.00%
<i>Hostile</i>	0.00%

An example of this was shared by a respondent, “*It sounded good (the idea) but at the end, there was a catch, there seemed to be ulterior motives involved. So, there was the conclusion of*

*the same ole same ole happening in that the idea of gifting the land back to the Indigenous people was another token. And many Indigenous people I'd consulted with felt the same way...and said what's the catch? And the conclusion has been among most of us is that the final decision will be determined by the people making the offer. So, it seems to be a special form of the racist term "Indian Giver" happening. The best kind of reconciliation in this case is allow the people to make use of the land however they feel fit...right now it's like a man paying his ex-wife alimony and making sure she spends it how he wants."*

This comment speaks to the many times Indigenous Peoples are consulted on a process or plan, while a final decision has either already been made or the feedback and insight will be used, only if it fits with what those doing the consulting had originally envisioned. Though we heard several comments similar to this in our visiting, more often we heard about the importance of sharing in the decision making and working together. This said, in almost every reference to this, the goal had to be to collectively work towards having the Indigenous community take on the ultimate responsibility of caring for the land.

This all said, in our visiting and community talking circles we heard an overwhelming sense of excitement about the opportunity for a shared space, working collaboratively and the opportunity presented by this action. We heard from an Indigenous member of the United Church, who shared how powerful the action from Faith United Church was and wondered aloud why her home church wasn't taking on similar actions.

The opportunity to get involved and take leadership in a process of this nature had one speaker share, *'So often we are powerless – or at least we feel that way. This idea is one that can help us take and reclaim our power as First Nation People.'* Another felt the word 'share' was most interesting and relevant, *'It's not up to white people to give us these chances, it's about sharing in it, so we can do it side by side, like all of our ancestors envisioned.'*

This said we heard from several speakers about their experience with religion, and thought not specifically the United Church, they were not all positive experiences. As discussed earlier, the issue of trust between Indigenous People and churches is critical to address. Shared one respondent, *'Considering the history with religions and their non-open mindedness, are they really respecting and being open with Indigenous beliefs and culture or is there an underlying goal to push their religion on people?'* One young man shared his church used to say Native culture/spirituality was witchcraft. Another shared how as a child she was treated very poorly at church because she and her siblings were the only Native children. It is important to recognize, often all churches will represent these painful experiences for Indigenous Peoples. Rooted in hurtful lived experiences it is critical to understand that the emotions shared represent the absence of any kind of acknowledgment, apology or action of reconciliation, which is not the role or responsibility of Faith United Church, (unless there is someone with a lived experience there). There will be an ongoing need to demonstrate to community members how and why the membership and leadership of Faith United Church is different than others, to be clear about intention and motivation.

A critical question to ask of the Church membership is rooted in the comment about this being the 'same ole same ole': what and how does the Faith United Church respond if the Indigenous People involved have a differing view of what could / should be done with the land? Does the Church walk away, taking the land with them? Does the Church walk away and leave it to the Indigenous community to sort out? Does the Church work to convince the Indigenous community that their idea is right/wrong?

Another critical question is what role, if any, does the Church play in supporting the development of a local Indigenous entity who can eventually take on the role of caring for the land. When asked how she felt, one person asked some key questions that had her feeling that thinking about this idea was like an 'emotional rollercoaster'.

*"Not sure what it all means. Worried we will be told how it will be or what we have to do. How we have to do things. Wonder and worry if the government will try to interfere with projects. Interfere with relationship building that will take place. Will agreements be honoured into the future when people "in charge" or in positions of influence change. Is Indigenous community mature enough to handle this properly and in a good way? Be able to work together as an Indigenous community, to work with others in good way. Do any of us know and understand all the legalities of the process let alone have the skills to mediate through this?"*

Even with honest concerns and painful truths being shared, overall the feeling that this concept and idea was about healing was heard repeatedly: that this process can provide the needed healing for the Indigenous community, and in turn, if completed in a good and honourable way, that of the membership of Faith United Church.



We asked for feedback on how and what the land could be used for. The weighted responses are in the order of importance by those taking part in the online survey.

*'Allow the land and space to gather spirit over time. Bless that land with a fasting ceremony. Any sacred place for indigenous people is blessed in this fashion. When this is done the spirit of the land and space will guide us in what will happen next. We have to allow our ancestors to guide us through our sacred protocols. Otherwise it is not an Indigenous led and reconciled decision.'*

*Somewhere to hold ceremony and teaching circles* was rated at 70% for very important, 29% as important, 1% as indifferent, 0% as not important and 0% as not important at all.

*An educational centre where children and others can come to learn about the history of the Indigenous / settler relationship in Turtle Island* was rated at 71% for very important, 24% as important, 2% as indifferent, 0% as not important and 2% as not important at all.

*A space / garden where the community can grow their own sacred medicines* was rated at 60% for very important, 31% as important, 7% as indifferent, 0% as not important and 2% as not important at all.

*Structured or planned activities and events* was rated at 45% for very important, 48% as important, 5% as indifferent, 2% as not important and 0% as not important at all.

*Creation of structures (long house, teepee, circle, arbor, building) was rated at 57% for very important, 31% as important, 7% as indifferent, 0% as not important and 5% as not important at all.*

*Activities that assist with finding and confirming identity was rated at 60% for very important, 23% as important, 10% as indifferent, 5% as not important and 2% as not important at all.*

*Space for shared ceremony and prayer between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals was rated at 49% for very important, 34% as important, 15% as indifferent, 0% as not important and 2% as not important at all.*

*Unstructured space for individuals / groups to gather was rated at 43% for very important, 45% as important, 7% as indifferent, 5% as not important and 0% as not important at all.*

In our visiting and community talking circles we frequently heard about structure(s) on the land: a wigwam, tent, tipi: somewhere for people to gather in/under. Though several initially mentioned a long house, others shared the need for respect to be given to The Haudenosaunee, or the People of the Longhouse. The Longhouse is the political and spiritual institution of the Iroquois Confederacy and needs to be respected as such. The same respect is required for a sweat lodge or other ceremonial structures. Whatever structure is created, it needs to be done with respect to protocol, ceremony and led by the Indigenous community.

Several mentioned space for a sacred fire, that is lit and kept burning for the duration of a gathering to act as a beacon for the spirits, and to provide a place for making offerings and for quiet reflection.

There was some question as to what or how Faith United Church would be using or sharing the land with Indigenous Peoples. One person shared, *"I like the ideas mentioned, I do hope that they are Indigenous led, meant for celebration of Indigenous peoples, traditions and not the sharing of the church. I feel it is OK for church members to learn and share in the activities, as determined by the people participating but am hesitant on the sharing of church beliefs, in fear of repeating history."*

Another person shared concern around who uses the space, wanting to ensure it is open to all. Speaking to challenges that have existed in the local Indigenous community, they shared, *"As long as it is used for things that are non-judgmental and all-inclusive with leadership that upholds and implements these ideals, I am good. No hierarchies determining who can and cannot be involved. No cliques. No in-crowd. No Indigenous political nonsense such as Kingston has experienced in the past."*

There was also input regarding accessing water (for washrooms and cooking), electricity and transportation to the land. The conversations that have begun with the City of Kingston by the



this must be kept at the forefront and respected. Best shared by another respondent, *“The importance of Nature in our lives - all our relations.”*

*“There MUST be trust!”*, shared one respondent. Acknowledging that there still is work required by the Faith United Church in the process of building trust with the local Indigenous community, is important. *“That we remain true to our roots and not allow the nerves and anxiety about collaborating with a United Church detour from our ancestry and teachings. As important it is to forgive, we must not entirely forget.”* Several spoke about patience, via the survey and in our visiting. This new path won’t always be easy and that is to be expected. *“Cultural unity I would imagine would involve words like respect, open mindedness, compensation, patience but most of all respect for each other’s point of views and understandings. Differences are what make us unique and stronger when we work together and not judge each other.”*

It will be important that the Indigenous community are introduced to and see in practice the key principles moving forward as identified by Faith United Church, for themselves. They include:

- Any use for the land must be developed with the full involvement and partnership of the Indigenous community, based on mutual respect and a deep awareness of the historic injustices done to the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples by the colonial powers upon which Canada was built.
- Faith United Church continues to act in an honourable way to build trust, develop solid relationships and a shared vision, and reach a consensus together and a sense of shared ownership of the project before proceeding.
- The people of Faith United understand that they need to grow in their own understanding of the history, and not look to the Indigenous community to do that work for them.

Many respondents also shared the importance of both groups working with the teachings from the Great Peacemaker (Skennenrahawi) and the Seven Sacred Teachings. The Great Law of Peace was the founding constitution of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and is the underlying basis for Haudenosaunee society. The teachings, shared primarily orally, speak to the idea that peace is the overall will of the Creator and by using the tools of peace, power and righteousness it can be attained. The Seven Sacred Teachings, as shared originally by the Grandfathers in Anishinaabe culture speaks to the values of wisdom, love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, and truth. Activities that promote these teachings amongst those involved in the care for the land will help ensure that they can become practiced and demonstrated as ways to work together.



It should be noted that all of these concepts are as important internally amongst the Indigenous community as between them and Faith United Church.



*“Reconciliation is about forgiveness, trying to work together. Patience and hearing the other person. Everyone feels equal. We have to be open-minded.”*

The question of who to lead this walk together was one that had us engage in very interesting discussions and conversations, along with important input via the online survey. It should be noted that overwhelmingly we heard two clear messages: this needs to be a genuine partnership: one where each group is respected and honoured and contributes to the success of both the journey and the outcome. Yet, we also heard there is a need to be clear with intention and long term planning: if the plan is the eventual repatriation, that must be the goal both communities work towards. If it is not, then the Faith United Church needs to be open about this moving forward. It is important to note that in the survey, the majority of respondents answered ‘*who you feel it is most appropriate to undertake the role of caring the land*’, the strongest response included not only Indigenous People and members of Faith United Church, but also other settlers.

- Indigenous People, members of Faith United Church and other settlers (non-Indigenous people): 52% said yes, 15% said no, 21% said maybe and 12% were unsure.
- Indigenous People and members of Faith United Church: 42% said yes, 23% said no, 23% said maybe and 13% were unsure.
- Only Indigenous People from Kingston and Area: 25% said yes, 53% said no, 9% said maybe and 13% were unsure.
- Only members of Faith United Church: 0% said yes, 77% said no, 10% said maybe and 13% were unsure.

We heard from participants:

*I believe if both the United Church and Indigenous people are coming together in an partnership, both should make decisions on both behalf's in an equal manner with the United Church and Indigenous people being respected.*

*It will take everyone working together, sharing ideas and resources to make this happen.*

*A joint venture is important so that the concept of shared faiths and recognition of a reconciliation is maintained in the space. Others can choose to assist, regardless of faith or origin.*

*If it's a shared area, then the work caring for it should be shared as well. Working together to reach a common goal can only strengthen bonds. Much learning and understanding could be accomplished while working side by side*

*Need to do this together to heal.*

*This is shared land so both parties should be committed and willing to care for the land. It is a shared responsibility.*

*If this space is to be a place of ceremony, healing, teaching and learning, then in the true meaning of reconciliation, this space has to be an open space for ALL members of Katarokwi today to participate in these processes... everyone has responsibility to hear/learn truth, and are treaty people that live in Canada today.*

There were other voices that identify the clear role they saw for Indigenous leadership guiding the way and making decisions.

*"Allow the creator to make the decisions but this has to be led and acknowledged and translated by the indigenous people."*

*"I think that needs to be determined by the groups of people involved. I feel that if this land is being donated by the church to the people for reconciliation, that it should be "given" to the people, and used by the people, for the community - and they should be the ones determining who is involved and how."*

*"The reality is that until ownership happens, whether its tomorrow or in like ten years, the reality will be that we are beholden to the Church. That might not be their goal, but it's the reality. Any final calls will be theirs. It has to be. That's their job and duty to the Church. So, what does a partnership really look like when that happens?"*

*"Will you (United Church) know when it's time to stand alongside us?"*

## **Our Proposed Vision and Concept**

The vision and concept we are proposing was easy to see once we completed the listening and learning process. From the majority of respondents and participants there is overwhelming support for this process to be undertaken. For those who are not sure or remain uncomfortable with the idea, this vision, we hope, will help increase the trust and understanding between Faith United Church and the Indigenous community as a whole.

When we close our eyes tightly, and replay what we heard; the moments of powerful emotion complemented by excitement and a commitment to be involved in some way moving forward, we see it...

**This land is land that heals and** it's been waiting for this path of peace to be walked together, much like they did on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to practice ceremony and reflection. What is happening now: discussions over tea, shared meals and ideas, people sharing their experiences over their keyboards – is step one. And the next step is in fact, a leap...of faith, love, compassion, openness and respect. Our recommendations below stretch to 2021: but we see farther than that. We see our grandchildren on this land: bringing their children. We see an urban oasis of healing, teaching, sharing and belonging. We see multi-faith people coming to learn and heal with our great grandchildren. Traditional languages are being spoken, ceremonies that were gifted to us continue to be practiced. People gather and sit in Circle and reflect, share, learn and make decisions for the community as a whole.

**The First Kilometre** is walked together. Creating a council or circle who governs the process of caring for the land. It is a responsible body of people: Indigenous community members and Faith United Church members, working alongside each other. We see the Indigenous Peoples from Kingston and area: Elders, Grandmothers, teachers, youth, families and leaders. We see some of the familiar faces, those who are active in many areas. We see new faces: those who haven't been out to local ceremonies or events. Responding to the voices of the local community, those who shared, *"With us, not for us. That's how they have to build trust."*, this is how we address the need for ongoing relationship development: individual to individual and community to community relations. The Indigenous community members invite their new friends to a community gathering, and the invitation is returned for Sunday dinner. This Council/Circle is initially open to anyone who wants to work, share ideas and sweat collectively. They meet monthly to practice ceremony, plan and reflect. Decisions are only binding when representation of the Council/Circle is made up of 51% or greater of Indigenous membership.

Before anything happens on the land, ceremony takes place. The land is feasted, honoured and thanks is given. Ceremony that is rooted in the diverse culture represented by the local Indigenous community: First Nation, Metis and Inuit Peoples with Faith United Church members in ceremony, offering their prayers and worship in a manner that is respectful of each other; with both communities offering prayers together.

Following ceremony, community-based activities begin to take place on the land. A temporary structure is installed, along with solar lighting and a portable bathroom. A group comes together to ensure that the land becomes accessible. An opening picnic has 100 people join in on sharing a meal and an experience. The Council/Circle determines other activities and goals for caring for the land for the next three years. Twice that first summer the Council/Circle meets in Circle simply to talk, share and get to know one and other. Listen and learning. As this happens, in time a truly share vision emerges together. One highlight that first year is seeing the first of the traditional medicines that have been planted come to harvest. Another will be the July 1<sup>st</sup> Gathering (please see below).

A few committed members help turn decisions made in Council/Circle into action. While Faith United Church plays the role of host in the submission of funding applications agreed upon by

the Council/Circle, each application must be developed in a joint process. This is rooted not only in best practice of genuine partnership but also in recognition that Faith United Church alone does not have the capacity to do so on their own. By the end of fall several applications for funding have been completed and the next stage is being readied.

As the summer becomes fall a finalized Collaborative Agreement with Shared Values and Vision is birthed in ceremony. Authored and agreed to by the Council/Circle this is the bundle that will outline how the two groups will walk together. Representatives of the Council/Circle visit other organizations, City representatives and elected officials exploring new ways to partner and gather support for the land. An intentional process to engage the residents and neighbours of Kingston East is developed and begun. Stories are shared, via social media and in the more traditional news. The Council/Circle demonstrates how two communities can come together to create change; not just for themselves but the generations to follow.

**The First Four Seasons** brings new tasks and activities. The Council/Circle have been actively recruiting within the Indigenous community, with a focus on the three post-secondary institutions, engaging new members. The committed group working on fundraising continues to submit requests and manage existing resources that have been committed. The Council/Circle have partnered with at least two organizations who are using the land to enhance their own activities with Indigenous People. The first school-based programming comes to the land with Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth learning together. Moments for the young ones become powerful memories. On the anniversary of the first year a sharing circle is held between the Circle/Council, the Indigenous community and Faith United Church for reflection, feedback, sharing, ceremony, and celebration. Volunteers are honoured for their contribution. A semi-permanent structure, as determined by the Circle/Council is erected. For the third year in a row, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, members of both communities come together for joint reflection, ceremony/worship, and prayer. This year, two more faith groups join them. This July 1<sup>st</sup> Event becomes an annual occurrence when Indigenous and Church people gather in prayerful community to remember the past and to recommit to a good walk together into the future.

By the end of The First Four Seasons four exciting developments have occurred. First, water and power service has been brought to the land. Secondly, bus service has been extended creating greater opportunities for the community to reach the land. Third, a bus has been purchased and occasional driver hired to help shuttle community members to/from the land for special events. Most critical is the development of a new Indigenous led organization, a not-for-profit, that will be the community-based partner with Faith United Church. This organization, and its representatives selected as they see fit, (traditional or elected), begins the journey of learning and creating processes that will ensure its long-term success.

**This Way to Peace**, covering almost two years and bringing us to 2021 sees the land being managed no longer by Faith United Church but by the newly found organization. Caring of the land means taking care of all of it: ensuring ceremony is first and foremost, then maintaining the wellness of the land, the security of the land, administering and planning for the future of the

land. Lastly, caring means ensuring that programming or activities are open to the community as a whole, where everyone is welcome, everyone is encouraged, and feels like they belong there. The growing responsibility of and experience carried by the organization allows for this body to become a voice in the city on Indigenous experiences and issues.

The land is being actively used by school groups, community organizations, lighting is enhanced for safety, and more permanent structures, (for example, bathrooms) are built. An increase of ceremony takes place, including the building and caring for a sweat lodge. Together the Circle/Council hosts the local Children’s Powwow and creates partnerships with local school boards and post-secondary institutions to create space and opportunity for Indigenous co-op and field placements.

This Way to Peace becomes an example of what reconciliACTION can look like: the bringing together of two communities to share, learn and create change together. Stories are important as are the lessons that come with them, and to that end the production of a documentary will help tell this story.

We open our eyes now. We aren’t blinded by hopefulness and naivety: we know our vision for this piece of land is grand in size and workload. We also know that when we walk together in a good way; when we root the process in ceremony and healing we are acknowledging we are walking this path alone. Together we can. Together we will. One step along the path of peace together, at a time.

## Our Recommendations

The First Kilometre: April 2018 – September 2018		
Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
<p><b>1) Actively engage those who expressed interest in helping move vision forward.</b></p>	<p>Engage key Indigenous stakeholders in moving forward</p> <p>Set date / location for community gathering to review vision and recommendations</p> <p>Email / telephone to provide update</p> <p>Develop Collaborative Agreement with Shared Values and Vision</p> <p>Determine membership of new guiding Circle/Council</p>	<p>*Ongoing relationship development of Indigenous partners and leaders</p> <p>*Community wide meeting to engage further participation</p> <p>*Development of formal agreement between Faith United Church and Indigenous community members</p> <p>*A Circle/Council comprised of Indigenous and Faith United Church volunteers</p> <p>*Community volunteers comprised of Indigenous community and Faith United Church being active and working together</p>

## The First Kilometre: April 2018 – September 2018

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
	<p>Host monthly meetings for Circle/Council</p> <p>Determine roles / activities that members and other Indigenous and Faith United volunteers can contribute to</p>	
<p><b>2) Author funding proposal(s) for ongoing development and next steps.</b></p>	<p>Faith United and Indigenous community members brainstorm for first funding opportunity (April 2018)</p> <p>Ongoing brainstorming for next 12, 18 and 36 months</p> <p>Apply for up to \$10,000 ReconciliACTION idea grant from The Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund for summer based activities on the land</p> <p>Invite local Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) representative to meet with Circle/Council</p> <p>Register to be OTF Applicant (by July 25<sup>th</sup> 2018) and apply for between \$5000 - \$150000 with Connected People Capital Grant Due August 15<sup>th</sup> – processed: January 2019</p> <p>Attend Community Foundation for Kingston and Area information meeting about Community Grants Program</p> <p>Apply for between \$500 - \$25000, (they like \$3000 - \$7000 grants) by</p>	<p>* A planned process that can be communicated to the community about goals, objectives and strategy</p> <p>*New funding support to allow for future development, capacity building and programming on the land</p> <p>*Key project ideas / initiatives / activities identified by Indigenous community</p> <p>*Faith United Church membership and leadership are able to provide ongoing support via funding applications</p>

## The First Kilometre: April 2018 – September 2018

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
	September 15 <sup>th</sup> for spring 2019 activity	
<b>3) Bring ceremony to the land.</b>	<p>With the Indigenous community members plan ways to prepare the land for use via ceremony.</p> <p>Invite diverse Elders (SLC, RMC, Queens, KCHC, Grandmothers, Tyendinaga) to participate in one/some of the ceremonies.</p> <p>Circle teachings on the Great Law of Peace and the Seven Sacred Teachings</p>	<p>* The spirit of the land is honoured, preparing for an easier walk forward.</p> <p>*Community engagement builds community investment into caring for and sharing the land.</p> <p>*Members of the Circle/Council and community members (both Indigenous and from Faith United Church) build understanding of working together in a good way through traditional teachings and accompanying ceremony</p>
<b>4) Use the land.</b>	<p>Host community picnic</p> <p>Host monthly ceremonies on the land</p> <p>Host Sharing Circle for Indigenous community and Faith United Church members to connect, learn and share together</p> <p>Inform local Indigenous community organizations and allies about opportunity to use the land</p> <p>Work with local Indigenous community to have raised gardens for traditional medicinal plants</p> <p>If funding is available in summer, build a structure as determined by Circle/Council members</p>	<p>*Land is brought to life with people walking gently upon it</p> <p>*Increased awareness about land and work being done by Indigenous community and Faith United Church</p>

## The First Kilometre: April 2018 – September 2018

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
5) Advocacy and Communications	<p>Have Circle members meet with City of Kingston representatives (Utilities Kingston, Kingston Transit, City Councillor(s)) to discuss transportation, (extending bus route, access to buses for special events) and water access</p> <p>Have Circle members meet with Members of Parliament and Provincial Parliament (after June election) on the land to update on what is happening and determine any support that may be available</p> <p>Invite media to local events to promote the work being done by local Indigenous community and Faith United Church</p>	<p>*Beginning discussions to explore how best to ensure access to the land and the supports that are required</p> <p>*Building relationships and increased awareness about innovative community development activity in Kingston area</p> <p>*Communicating to other Indigenous community members who are not connected to existing networks / supports</p>

## The First Four Seasons: October 2018 – September 2019

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
1) Continued engagement of Indigenous community and Faith United Church members via Governance, Planning and Volunteering	<p>Host monthly meetings for Circle/Council</p> <p>Monthly email updates on the land and it's growth and upcoming activities</p> <p>Development of local Indigenous organization (mission, vision, by-laws)</p> <p>Selection process for Indigenous organization leadership (traditional or elections)</p>	<p>*Ongoing relationship development of Indigenous partners and leaders</p> <p>*New Indigenous organization developed and incorporated, in a good way, to support caring for the land</p> <p>*Revision of formal agreement between Faith United Church and Indigenous community members as required</p> <p>*Increased Indigenous community participation in governance, planning and volunteering</p>

## The First Four Seasons: October 2018 – September 2019

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
	<p>Capacity building for leadership of new organization (training, mentoring, support)</p> <p>Active engagement of Indigenous students at Queens, RMC and SLC for leadership roles within Circle/Council and new local organization</p> <p>Volunteer honouring ceremony</p> <p>Supporting Indigenous and Faith United Church leadership in building capacity in becoming trauma Informed, helping ensure strongest quality engagement of other community members</p>	<p>*Community volunteers comprised of Indigenous community and Faith United Church being active and working together</p> <p>*Diverse communities work together to shape community in healthy ways</p> <p>*Increased capacity of Indigenous leaders to lead new organization</p>
<p><b>2) Author funding proposal(s) for ongoing development.</b></p>	<p>Work on fulfilling original work plan from The First Kilometre</p> <p>Apply for new grants (including from sources that were not successful in The First Kilometre) as required to achieve goals</p> <p>Secure funding for a private bus (approximately \$10,000 - \$17000 with occasional driver)</p>	<p>* Capacity to hire full time position to support the care of the land (March – October)</p> <p>*Increased engagement and use of the land via free transportation</p> <p>*Key project ideas / initiatives / activities identified by Indigenous community taking place</p> <p>*Faith United Church membership and leadership are able to continue to provide ongoing support via funding applications</p>
<p><b>3) Bring ceremony to the land.</b></p>	<p>Partnering with local Indigenous organizations for monthly ceremonies on the land</p>	<p>* The spirit of the land is honoured, preparing for an easier walk forward.</p>

## The First Four Seasons: October 2018 – September 2019

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
	Create space/structure and safety for sacred fire available to community as required	
4) Use the land.	<p>Work with local school boards to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together on the land for shared teachings, learning and activities</p> <p>Host Sharing Circle for Indigenous community, Faith United Church members and the community to connect, learn and share together on anniversary of first year</p> <p>Local Indigenous community organizations use the land for their own purposes</p> <p>Work with local Indigenous community to expand raised gardens for traditional medicinal plants</p> <p>Build a (semi) permanent structure as determined by Circle/Council members</p>	<p>*Land is brought to life with people walking gently upon it</p> <p>*Reduced isolation of Indigenous community members</p> <p>*Increased satisfaction for members of Faith United Church in new relationships and outcomes of vision</p> <p>*Increased awareness about land and work being done by Indigenous community and Faith United Church</p>
5) Advocacy and Communications	<p>Secured water and power service to land</p> <p>Secure extension of Kingston Transit Route 12 to the land</p>	<p>*Increased opportunity for use of the land</p> <p>*Increased participation and engagement by extending Kingston Transit route to land</p>

## This Way to Peace: October 2019 – July 2021

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
<p><b>1) Continued engagement of Indigenous community and Faith United Church members via Governance, Planning and Volunteering</b></p> <p><b>2) A plan to transfer the legal responsibility for care of the land</b></p>	<p>Host bi-monthly meetings for Circle/Council</p> <p>Host monthly Board meetings of new organization</p> <p>Monthly email updates on the land and it's growth and upcoming activities and social media updates</p> <p>Application of new organization for Charitable Status from CRA</p> <p>Faith United Church begins process to facilitate repatriation of land to local Indigenous community via new organization</p> <p>New relationship agreement occurs for the Council/Circle, particularly between new organization and Faith United Church</p> <p>Ongoing capacity building for leadership of new organization (training, mentoring, support)</p> <p>Volunteer honouring ceremony</p>	<p>*Ongoing relationship development of Indigenous partners and leaders</p> <p>* Indigenous organization receives Charitable Status allowing them to become self-sufficient to help caring for the land</p> <p>*Land is returned to local Indigenous community and takes responsibility (legally) for care of land on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021</p> <p>*Increased Indigenous community participation in governance, planning and volunteering</p> <p>*Community volunteers comprised of Indigenous community and Faith United Church continue being active and working together</p> <p>*Diverse communities work together to shape community in healthy ways</p> <p>*Increased capacity of Indigenous leaders leading new organization</p>
<p><b>2) Author funding proposal(s) for ongoing development.</b></p>	<p>New organization takes responsibility for being lead applicant for new grants</p> <p>Secure funding and partnerships to host the local Children's Pow Wow</p> <p>Partnerships with local schools (secondary / post-secondary) for co-op placements</p>	<p>* Capacity to sustain full time position to support the care of the land</p> <p>*Increased responsibility taken by Indigenous community for future self-sufficiency</p> <p>*Key project ideas / initiatives / activities identified by Indigenous community taking place</p> <p>*Increased students learning and participating on the land</p>

## This Way to Peace: October 2019 – July 2021

Recommendations	Action Items	Key Outcomes
<p><b>3) Bring ceremony to the land.</b></p>	<p>Partnering with local Indigenous organizations for monthly ceremonies on the land</p> <p>Sweat Lodge brought onsite</p>	<p>* The spirit of the land is honoured, preparing for an easier walk forward.</p> <p>*Increased number of Indigenous Peoples learning ceremony and traditional ways</p>
<p><b>4) Use the land.</b></p>	<p>Work with local school boards to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together on the land for shared teachings, learning and activities</p> <p>Host Sharing Circle for Indigenous community, Faith United Church members and other faith community to connect, learn and share together</p> <p>Local Indigenous community organizations use the land for their own purposes</p> <p>Continue development of land as required / directed by Council/Circle</p> <p>Permanent bathroom / changing area</p>	<p>*Land is brought to life with people walking gently upon it</p> <p>*Reduced isolation of Indigenous community members</p> <p>*Increased satisfaction for members of Faith United Church in new relationships and outcomes of vision</p> <p>*Increased awareness about land and work being done by Indigenous community and Faith United Church</p> <p>*Increased capacity of activities on land with new infrastructure</p>
<p><b>5) Advocacy and Communications</b></p>	<p>A documentary is produced to share the story of one small church created lasting change by partnering with local Indigenous community</p> <p>New organization takes on a larger role within community to be one of the voices heard on Indigenous experiences and issues</p>	<p>*Increased awareness about project, process and outcomes</p> <p>*Increased Indigenous voice within Kingston</p>

## Closing Words

*Sekoh. We have gathered in Circle, as originally instructed, to carry the good minds for the work that we do for the people. We bring our best forward and work together. We have gathered today and made sure that all voices were heard and everything was mentioned and all of the things we are thankful for that we came together in a Circle to say thank you: nia:wen kowa. We chose to work on behalf of the people on a path of peace with another group of people from another faith tradition to make sure that we talk through all of the issues and all of the reasoning and all of the good minds. We are thankful that we now get to go back to our families, back to the places where we came from carrying good minds. We are thankful for the ancestors who have gathered with us this afternoon, as we talked and shared what was needed to do this good work. We say to each other nia:wen kowa for the time, nia:wen kowa for the good minds and be safe on the travels home. Nia.*

*Grandmother Laurel Clause  
Closing our Final Community Talking Circle*

*Nia:wen Kowa, Miigwech and thank you to all who shared  
and shape this first part of our path of peace together.*